



**Town of Bladensburg Council Work Session Meeting | July
13, 2026 Meeting Minutes July 13, 2026, 5:30 PM
4229 Edmonston RD, Bladensburg, MD 20710**

1. Call To Order

The Mayor called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM, welcoming those present in person and those watching online.

2. Approval of Agenda

Motion to approve the agenda as presented was made by Council Member Dixon and seconded by Council Member McBryde. The motion carried unanimously.

3. Approval of Minutes

a. Approval of June 8, 2026 Work Session Minutes

Motion to approve the June 8, 2026 work session minutes was made by Council Member McBryde and seconded by Council Member Dixon. The motion carried unanimously.

4. Unfinished Business

The Mayor noted there were no items under unfinished business.

5. New Business

a. 52nd Avenue Update

Town Administrator Brian Wood opened the discussion by noting that the scheduled guest attendees — a SHA representative and Senator Augustine — were unable to attend. He provided a status update stemming from conversations that began at a May meeting with SHA.

Mr. Wood reported that a significant joint cleanup effort took place on July 9th, 10th, and 13th along 52nd Avenue, involving both town staff and SHA crews. Activities included realigning barriers, installing flexi poles, clearing shrubbery, and collecting trash. Mr. Wood expressed gratitude to both teams and noted that residents and passersby were already using the road again following the cleanup.

Regarding the path forward, Mr. Wood explained that the town is approximately two years away from the permanent redesign of 52nd Avenue as a one-way road, and that a key question before the town is whether to remove barriers in the interim or maintain the

current configuration. The town shared a draft MOU with SHA proposing quarterly joint cleanups, though he noted SHA's team resources are limited. The MOU is currently under review by SHA's in-house attorneys, and a draft response is expected within a few weeks.

The Mayor confirmed that Senator Augustine intends to attend the September meeting when SHA is present, and expressed optimism about his involvement. Mr. Wood added that SHA also hopes to present a 30% complete design of the 52nd Avenue redesign at that September session.

Council Member Dixon asked about the expected timeline for the MOU, and Mr. Wood indicated he is pushing to have something ready before the town's upcoming retreat. Council Member Brown echoed the desire to have sufficient time to review and comment before that date.

b. Port Town Bus Operations

Town Administrator Wood provided background on the Port Town bus program, which was originally a joint effort among several Port Towns communities. The current bus — the second vehicle in the program — is nearing the end of its useful life. Ridership analysis showed that approximately 90–95% of usage comes from Bladensburg residents, with Colmar Manor contributing minimal ridership. Colmar Manor currently administers the program, handles payroll for the two part-time drivers, and collects a 10% administrative fee, while Bladensburg covers the majority of costs — approximately \$60,000 annually — through a per-rider payment structure.

Mr. Wood noted that Colmar Manor has expressed willingness to transfer full ownership of the program to Bladensburg, including the bus and its personnel. Discussions have included the possibility of offsetting the residual value of the bus through in-kind rides for Colmar Manor residents over a defined period.

Council Member Blount expressed surprise at the administrative fee arrangement and questioned the overall value being received. She noted that Colmar Manor has indicated it does not wish to retain control of the program. She also raised concerns about inefficient routing — for example, the bus making multiple separate trips to Emerson House for individual passengers — and expressed opposition to using the bus for casino trips. Council Member Dixon asked whether the bus drivers would be brought onto Bladensburg's payroll in a transition scenario, and Mr. Wood confirmed that would be the case.

The Mayor clarified the history of the arrangement and pointed out that seniors retain access to alternative transportation options, including "The Bus" (Prince George's County's transit service), Metro Access, and other free county services. She argued that the town should explore more cost-effective alternatives, such as contracting with a local transportation company in the Bladensburg Business Park, which already provides vehicles for town events. The Mayor also raised the possibility of a public-private partnership using the existing MEA electric vehicle grant — potentially passing the grant funds through to a transportation company that would then provide contracted service to the town.

Mr. Wood explained the fine print of the MEA grant: it covers 75% of the additional cost of an EV bus over a standard combustion engine vehicle, meaning the town would still owe a significant out-of-pocket difference. Additionally, buses available under the grant categories

are large vehicles requiring CDL licenses, which neither public works staff nor the current drivers possess.

Council Member Brown agreed the program's costs no longer match the demand, noting that ridership has declined and more flexible solutions would better serve the community. Council Member McBryde asked whether the service could be extended to non-senior apartment residents; the Mayor and others confirmed it was designed specifically for seniors, with limited exceptions for town events.

There was broad consensus that the current model is unsustainable. Mr. Wood indicated he would draft a transition process with Colmar Manor, which would need to go before both town councils for formal approval.

c. PALS Project Poster Presentation (Wayfinding and Port Town Branding)

Town Administrator Wood provided an overview of the PALS Project, a University of Maryland partnership that engages undergraduate and graduate students in community planning and design work. The most recent project — focused on placemaking and wayfinding across the Port Towns communities — produced design renderings for shared public spaces such as bridges, using a cohesive color palette of yellow, orange, purple, and blue, with each community receiving a slightly distinct design. The physical poster boards displaying these renderings were not available at the meeting, as they were recently in use by Cottage City.

Mr. Wood noted that new grant funding from the state has been received, and the BCC is considering investing a portion of those funds into the next phase of the project — an engineering and fabrication cost assessment for the proposed pocket parks. This next PALS project is estimated at approximately \$30,000 and would be grant-funded. Mr. Wood proposed bringing the visual renderings to the upcoming retreat, where Council Members can provide input that will inform the fall PALS request. Council Member Dixon asked whether the town would need to contribute staff or public works resources, and Mr. Wood confirmed the next phase would be completed entirely by students.

d. Town Manager's Report — Gloves Up Guns Down Grant Update

Town Administrator Wood provided an update on the Gloves Up Guns Down program, a youth boxing initiative partially funded by a \$78,000 state grant. He thanked the Police Chief, Alicia, and county and municipal partners for their coordination. A kickoff was held in June, and a boxing clinic is scheduled for July 27–31 at the Salvation Army on Edmonston Road.

Chief Frishkorn provided additional detail, noting that 19 youth are currently registered, with space for approximately 25. The year-round program will run from September 14, 2026 through June 30, 2027, meeting twice weekly from 5:30–7:30 PM. Two locations will be used: the Salvation Army and Prince George's County Police Department District 3 on Barlowe Road. Chief Frishkorn also noted that discussions are underway about having Sugar Ray Leonard speak with participants.

Council Member Dixon asked about transportation for participants; Chief Frishkorn confirmed that parents are responsible for drop-off and pick-up. Council Member Blount expressed enthusiasm and mentioned a personal connection to Sugar Ray Leonard, prompting the Mayor to jokingly request notification of any planned appearances.

e. Town Manager's Report — PILOT Program Discussion

Town Administrator Wood presented a payment in lieu of taxes (PILOT) proposal related to the Hamlet Woods project — 59 units of workforce housing nearing completion, with a projected grand opening in mid-August. Public Works Supervisor Purnell Hall confirmed the project is approximately 85% complete.

The project was financed through a combination of state, county, and private funding, and the developer previously negotiated a 50% tax reduction with Prince George's County under CR-036-2023. Hamlet Woods has now approached the town requesting a similarly structured arrangement. The town's proposal counters at \$600 per unit — compared to the developer's ask of \$500 per unit — with a 2% escalator at the 10, 20, and 30-year marks. Mr. Wood explained that the \$600 figure represents approximately a 43% reduction based on the 2023 assessed value of roughly \$7.97 million, and noted that current market conditions likely place the assessed value between \$10–12 million, meaning the proposed deal is still favorable to the developer relative to a current-market assessment.

The Mayor elaborated that the town cannot afford to match the county's 50% reduction given the direct cost of services that would need to be provided to the development, including code enforcement apartment inspections, public safety calls, and fire and emergency services. She expressed support for the \$600 per unit figure as a reasonable middle ground that avoids operating at a deficit.

Council Member Dixon raised several questions, including how a future property sale would affect the PILOT agreement — Mr. Wood indicated the agreement would typically stay with the property, not the owner — and whether the program would cover the cost of public safety and code enforcement services, to which Mr. Wood acknowledged it would not fully cover those costs, consistent with how most new development is treated.

Mr. Wood noted that Town Attorney Suellen and Finance Director Vito Tonelli are finalizing specific language for the resolution. The Mayor clarified that a formal vote cannot occur at a work session or retreat and would require a properly noticed Council meeting, which may need to be scheduled — potentially via Zoom — given the developer's timeline.

6. Financial Business

a. Grant and Scholarship Program Discussion and Funding Recommendations

Town Administrator Wood introduced the grant program discussion, noting that the three applicants for the educational scholarship program did not meet the established criteria. Rolling those unawarded scholarship funds into the general grant pool would bring the total available grant funding to \$15,000 — approximately \$3,000 short of fully funding all nine applicants at \$2,000 each.

A scoring rubric was distributed as a discussion tool. The Mayor recommended funding six organizations and proposed substituting Good Intentions Foundation — a Port Towns-based youth program — in place of GHEP, despite GHEP's slightly higher rubric score, citing Good Intentions' demonstrated local impact and direct work with Bladensburg youth. The Mayor reviewed the recommended recipients as: Carrison, Anacostia Watershed Society, ECO City Farms, End Time Harvest Ministries, We Lead By Example, and Good Intentions Foundation.

Council Member Blount noted that discretionary funds could potentially be used to support organizations not selected in this round. The Mayor indicated that the allocation of FY26 discretionary funds should be added to the agenda for a future meeting.

Mr. Wood confirmed he would notify recipients and proceed, with a formal vote to be conducted at the 7:00 PM Council meeting.

Motion to adjourn was made by Council Member Dixon and seconded by Council Member Blount. The motion carried unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 6:40 PM.