

**MONTHLY REPORT**  
**MAYOR TAKISHA D. JAMES**  
**Summer 2024 (July 1 – August 31)**



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## Meetings, Events and Updates

### July 2024

#### **July 3: Meeting to discuss the final decision for the Bladensburg Fireworks**

I participated in the meeting with the staff leads involved in planning the 2024 fireworks. The purpose was to discuss the weather forecast which could've impacted the event and called for postponing it to the rain date. After discussing the weather forecast and looking at past experiences with similar forecasts, we agreed to proceed with the event. This was the right decision, as the event was not impacted by bad weather.

#### **July 5: Bladensburg Fireworks Celebration for Independence Day**

The Town Council held the annual celebration to commemorate our nations Independence from England which occurred July 4, 1776. This celebration brought residents together for an event of family fun and festivities. It was well attended and provided the opportunity for the Port Towns communities to join us for this celebration. We were joined by Senator Augustine, Commission Chair Wheately,

I want to express my gratitude to our amazing staff who worked hard to plan and implement the event, particularly Ray Jeffries. Additionally, I'm immensely grateful to our public safety team (Bladensburg Police Department and the Bladensburg Volunteer Fire Department) for keeping attendees safe throughout the event. I also appreciate the participation of Bladensburg's very own resident, DJ Flava for emceeing the event and keeping the music going strong throughout the program.

I look forward to seeing everyone in 2025!



**July 8: Accepted for the 2024-25 MML Engagement and Outreach Committee |**  
I submitted an application to continue on the E&O Committee in the spring of this year. I was pleased to learn on July 8<sup>th</sup> that my application to participate in the committee was accepted.

**July 9: Maryland Municipal League Virtual Leadership Orientation**

Per guidance first issued during the April quarterly meeting ALL officers of MML affiliates (Chapters, Departments, Caucuses, Constituency Groups) must attend a Leadership Orientation session before convening as a group for the new fiscal year. This particular orientation was geared toward MML Leadership, so as a member of the Executive Committee and Board of Directors, it was important to attend this training meeting.

**July 9: Green Team Meeting**

The team met and reviewed upcoming events and programs relating to the Town's sustainability efforts. We'll plan to hold Growing Green with Pride for the fall beautification and cleanup event on October 19.

**July 12: Meeting to Discuss Summer Jam – Back to School Event**

I joined the CAT Team, members of the Bladensburg Police Department command staff and Prince George's County Council Member Calvin Hawkins' office to brainstorm on a collaboration for this year's event. We were able to confirm the event date of August 24 and the programmatic elements to include. We also agreed to obtain backpacks and school supplies to give to the students as well as

to allow service providers to attend the event and distribute information to attendees for resources.

### **July 12: Bladensburg Day Meeting & Parade Route Research |**

Chief Collington, TA Bailey-Hedgepeth, Ray Jeffries and I met to continue discussing plans for the upcoming event. We also took some time to review potential parade routes for the event.

### **July 15: The Town Council held our monthly Worksession and Council Meetings**

The Council voted to move the July meetings back by one week due to the proximity of the original meeting date (July 8) to the Independence Day holiday and Annual Bladensburg Fireworks event. Making this change allowed the Town Council and staff sufficient time to properly prepare for the July meetings.

### **July 16: Harrington Scholarship Meeting**

I'm continuing to work with the Harrington Family and Mrs. Boursiquot, Director of Institutional Advancement for Elizabeth Seton High School to establish a scholarship in honor of Former Mayor David C. Harrington. We are working to obtain funding to cover the scholarship for four years to ensure we can providing funding to a female student from the Town of Bladensburg for four years.

### **July 16: MML Mandatory Committee Orientation**

The MML Board voted to require all volunteers for Committee and Board participation to attend mandatory training. Since I was accepted as a member of the Engagement & Outreach Committee, I was required to attend this training. A review of MML's policies and procedures was provided to ensure all volunteers are aware of their duties and responsibilities as a committee member.

## August 2024

### August 6: National Night Out

I want to applaud the Bladensburg Police Department for the excellent work that was done on the 2024 NNO event. The event was well attended by community members by representatives from county, state and federal government officials and delegates. Additionally, we had several local law enforcement agencies in attendance. One of the most popular agencies was the Park Police horse mounted officers. I'm also grateful for the support by many vendors and government/non-profit organizations who offered resources to the community. I'm also grateful for the support of the Bladensburg Volunteer Fire Department and the Ladies Auxiliary.



### August 9: Neighborhood Watch Walk

Members of the team walked through Ward 1 to observe and report any concerns identified. We also stopped to visit residents in Ward 1 to inquire about issues or concerns they may have wanted to share. After the walk we followed up with public works to share items we saw that pertained to that department.

**August 12: Town Council Closed Session**

Pursuant to the General Provisions Article §3-305 (b) (4) of the Maryland Code, the Mayor and Council met in a Closed Session to consider a matter that concerns the proposal for a business or industrial organization to locate, expand, or remain in the State. (Annexation and Economic Development)

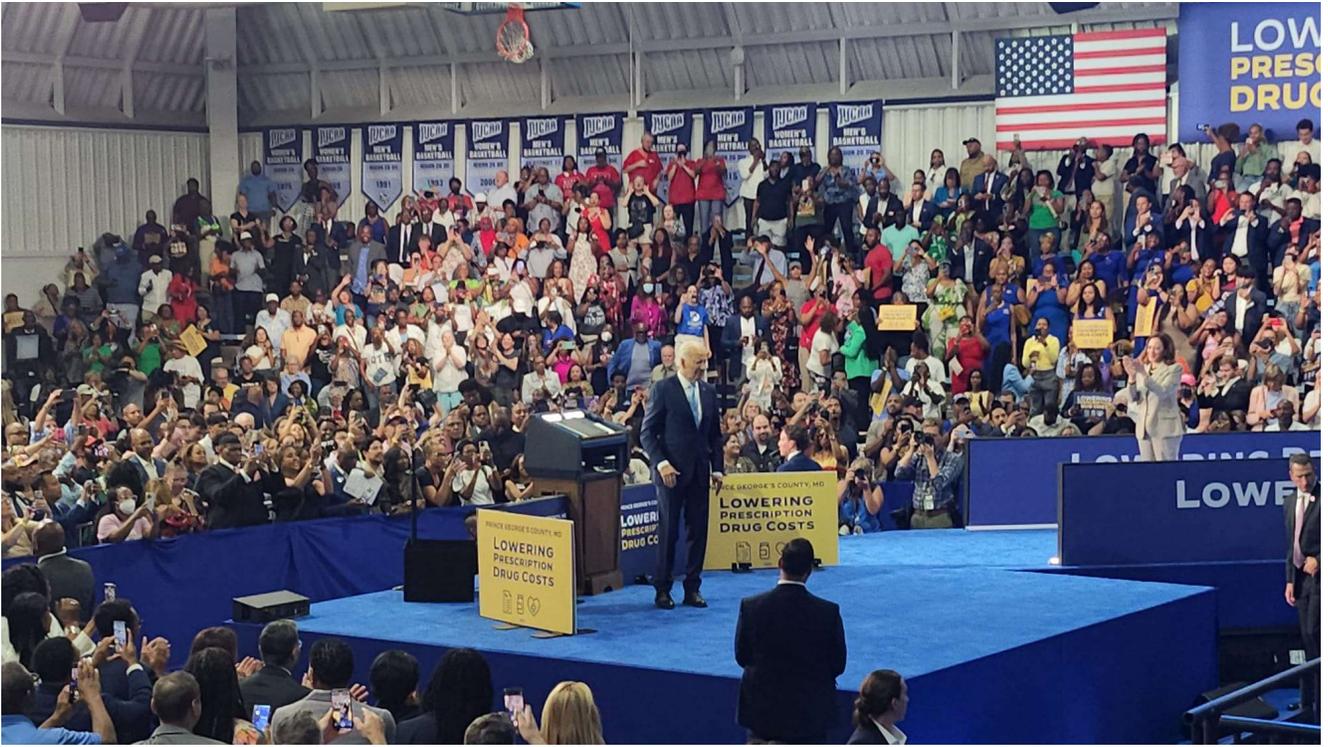
The town provided direction to staff to take action based on information received.

**August 14: Newton Green Community Meeting**

A meeting was organized with the management at Newton Green to discuss public safety concerns of residents. The Bladensburg Police Department led by Chief Collington facilitated the meeting with each division of the department offering updates to residents. This included reports from the Traffic Enforcement, Operations Division, Community Action Team, Code Enforcement, Special Operations Division. Outside of the public safety updates, members of the Town Council and Town Administrator Bailey Hedgepeth shared updates with the community members as well. The meeting also featured dedicated time for the residents to ask questions about their concerns. At the conclusion of the meeting residents noted their appreciation for the Bladensburg Team meeting with them to

**August 15: The Biden Harris Administration Lowers Prescription Drug Prices (see attachment #1)**

President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris announced lower prescription drug prices for Americans enrolled in Medicare during a visit to Prince George's Community College (PGCC) on Thursday. Council Member Dixon, Chief Collington and I attended this monumental event to hear Vice President Harris and President Biden discuss the efforts of their administration to negotiate with major pharmaceutical companies to lower drug prices for 10 drugs that tend to be the most expensive to treat diabetes, cancer and heart disease. This major accomplishment will save seniors across America, including Bladensburg seniors approximately \$1.5 billion dollars in medical expenses. This directly affect those who have Medicare Part D prescription drug coverage beginning January 1, 2026. The full press release is attached with this report.



## August 22: Maryland National Capital Park & Planning Commission Feasibility Team Meeting

The Feasibility Team met with community members to get input on the newly proposed community center. I was away during the meeting but appreciate Town Administrator Bailey-Hedgepeth and Council Member McBryde attending to represent the Town Council's perspective.

## August 24: Battle of Bladensburg Ceremony

This ceremony was held to commemorate a major battle in the War of 1812 in the Battle of Bladensburg. The program featured the Elizabeth Seton High School Choir singing the Star Spangled Banner, Glenn Johnston (Stevenson University), Robert Stewart (U.S. National Park Service), a battle reenactment and remarks from John Sower,

author of *The Last Battlefield Monument in America*. Ms. Renee Green of the Patriotic Team led the ceremony and played a key role with Ray Jeffries in planning the program.

We were honored to have Senator Augustine join us and present a Citation on behalf of the 47<sup>th</sup> Delegation. Prince George's County Council Chair Jolene Ivey's staff also attended to present a citation to the town.



## August 24: Cottage City 100-year Anniversary

I want to congratulate the Town of Cottage City on their 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The town hosted a parade and festival to commemorate their anniversary. At the conclusion

of the program, they asked participants to take part in their 100-year photo which will be placed in a time capsule for future residents to see.

I appreciate Council Member Brown for attending the event as well as the First Gentleman Walter James and Chief Collington.



### **August 24: Back to School Summer Jam**

This annual event was a tremendous blessing to the community by providing free backpacks and school supplies for students. There were also resource tables to help families with counseling/therapy, free food, games and music. I'm especially grateful to the office of Council Member Calvin Hawkins and the CAT Team for leading these efforts. I'm so grateful that we were able to meet the needs of the community with this event helping to prepare our young scholars for the coming school year.



### **August 26: Back to School Visits**

I enjoyed visiting some of our schools on the first day of the 2024-2025 school year. I joined Chief Collington and the command staff, Sergeant Ramirez and Cadet Fuentes in visiting Port Towns Elementary School, Rogers Heights Elementary School International High School of Langley Park, and Bladensburg Elementary School. I pray the students have a safe and wonderful school year!





## August 27: Meeting with the Prince George's County Fire Department & the Bladensburg Team

I was invited to headquarters for a meeting with Deputy Chief James McClelland for a meeting to follow up on communications regarding the summer staffing plan released in June of this year. We were able to discuss challenges faced with remaining in service giving the summer staffing plan changes proposed by the county. This has removed career firefighters from some local stations (outside of

Bladensburg) but has impacted our fire department with the increased volume of calls coming from other jurisdictions. Additionally, there's been a tougher stance on the deadlines for various trainings. We've had to request support with allowing more time for our volunteers to meet those requirements, as they are working full time jobs, taking care of their families and volunteering at the Bladensburg Fire Department. As an example, there are times when the sign up for trainings only to have the required training cancelled because enough people didn't sign up for it. The rescheduling timeframe can set them back with meeting the required deadlines. I want to acknowledge my gratitude to Chief Green and Deputy Chief McClelland for understanding these challenges and working with us so our fire department can remain in service.

We agreed to reconvene in the next 1-2 months to align on where we are with the staffing plan and identify any further support needed from the County.

### **August 30: Prince George's County/America250**

I participated in this meeting to share information regarding the work and events of the MD250 Commission with the Prince George's County group. This meeting also provided an opportunity to also discuss areas for collaboration on upcoming events.