



## TOWN ADMINISTRATOR MONTHLY MEMO

May 2025

Dear Town Council, Residents, Business owners, and Employees of the Town of Bladensburg;

**Welcome to May!** Summer is almost here, and the Town is heating up with activities and opportunities. This month's message will center around some of the town's Major items and activities.

May is a busy month in the Town; We have three recognitions this month for various members of our staff:

- **Municipal Clerks Week** | May 4-10, 2025
- **Police Week** | May 11- 17, 2025
- **Public Works Week** | May 18-24, 2025

I am grateful for the work that our staff does. The Council will recognize these weeks at the next Council Meeting on May 12, 2025.



**FY 2026 Budget** | As we navigate ongoing economic and political shifts, I remain deeply committed to ensuring financial responsibility and community well-being guide our decisions. The rising costs of goods and services, coupled with anticipated utility rate adjustments, have posed challenges, but they also present a valuable opportunity for us to reassess priorities, strengthen fiscal practices, and invest where it matters most.

Throughout April 2025, we diligently reviewed and revised the FY 2026 budget, including during the Special Work Session held on April 29. At that meeting, the Town Council introduced additional adjustments designed to address the projected shortfall. These changes reflect our shared commitment to balancing the budget while continuing to deliver high-quality services to our residents.

From the outset of the budget process, we have intentionally weighed the need for increased revenues against the importance of sustaining essential operations and programs. While initial drafts incorporated cost-of-living and merit-based salary increases, we have since explored a range of responsible options — including targeted expenditure reductions, strategic use of available grant funding, and selective adjustments to revenue sources — to reduce financial pressure without compromising service levels.

One example includes carefully examining our grant activity to maximize reimbursements and refining approaches to property and business tax rates to ensure equity and fairness. The most

recent draft, completed on May 5, maintains the residential property tax rate at \$0.74 while requiring more equitable contributions from commercial and multifamily properties. We have also enacted a freeze on non-essential hiring and capital purchases, adjusted health insurance deductions, cut discretionary spending, and shifted to a 37.5-hour work week to help manage personnel costs in the administrative areas only. We are committed to retaining a high level of Public Safety coverage for the community.

While a modest budget gap remains, the recent changes reflect meaningful progress. We understand that tougher choices may be needed, but we approach this challenge with a sense of shared purpose, transparency, and commitment to long-term stability. With continued input and collaboration from the Council and our residents, I am confident we will finalize a budget that reflects our values, sustains core services, and supports the Town's future resilience.

**Upcoming FY 2026 Budget Sessions:**

- Tax Rate Hearing – May 12, 2025
- Introduction of Budget Ordinance – May 12, 2025
- Final Adoption of the Budget Ordinance – June 9, 2025

**Green Team Update** | April was a vibrant and meaningful month for the Town of Bladensburg as we celebrated Earth Day and Arbor Day through community-centered greening efforts. Together with our Port Towns partners and Eco City Farms, we hosted a joint event on April 26, 2025, focused on tree planting, environmental education, and sustainable practices. That same day, the Town proudly hosted an information booth at the Bladensburg Waterfront Park Green Event, where we connected with residents and shared ideas for building a greener future.




In addition, the Town launched its second annual “No Mow April” initiative — lovingly known this year as “No More April.” This program supports pollinators by pausing mowing in designated areas, allowing wildflowers and beneficial native plants (often labeled as weeds) to flourish. By letting these plants grow, we create essential habitats and food sources for bees, butterflies, and other pollinators that are critical to our ecosystem.


We’re grateful for the growing support from residents and community partners and look forward to continuing our sustainability work together throughout the year.



**Keep Bladensburg Beautiful – Youth Poster Contest!** Calling all young artists! The Keep Bladensburg Beautiful – Youth Poster Contest is now open, giving students a chance to showcase their creativity while promoting a cleaner, greener community. This exciting competition invites youth to design a poster that highlights the importance of keeping Bladensburg beautiful through recycling, litter prevention, and community pride.

#### **Important Dates:**

 Submission Deadline: May 16, 2025

 Winner Announcement & Awards Ceremony: June 9, 2025, at the Bladensburg Town Council Meeting

#### **Who Can Enter?**

Students of all ages in Bladensburg are encouraged to participate. Whether you love drawing, painting, or digital art, this is your chance to inspire positive change through creativity!

#### **How to Enter:**

Create a poster that reflects the theme of keeping Bladensburg clean and green. Use bold colors, clear messaging, and creative designs!

Submit your artwork with your name, age, school, and contact information to Town Hall (4229 Edmonston Rd, Bladensburg, MD) or email a high-resolution image of your artwork to [clerk@bladensburgmd.gov](mailto:clerk@bladensburgmd.gov). Winners will be notified in advance and honored at the Town Council Meeting on June 9, 2025. The winning artwork will be displayed in public spaces to inspire the entire community!

Let's work together to **Keep Bladensburg Beautiful**—one poster at a time!

**COG Updates:** As Town Administrator, I remain active in the WCOG meetings, which we gather monthly to discuss regional issues. In May, Administrators will meet to look at the Chesapeake Bay Trust. At the April 2nd meeting, we discussed the Homeland Security Funding and FEMA programs and the impacts on the local government's budget from the recent Federal reductions in force. These meetings continue to be helpful in getting a gauge on where things are going and what we can expect.

**Business Roundtable:** The Town held its Quarterly Business Roundtable on April 28, 2025. During this last meeting, we were able to attract some new businesses and discuss updates from the most recent State legislative session. In the near future, we will be working with the other Port Towns to partner with us on this project and create a Port Towns Business

Roundtable as we develop the new Community Development Corporation (CDC) for the Port Towns.



**Bostwick House Event | Discover Bostwick:** The Discover Bostwick event was held on May 3, 2025, to highlight the historical and cultural significance of the Bostwick property while engaging the local community in a family-friendly, interactive outdoor event. Activities will primarily focus on the lawn and include tours of the orchard and exterior displays showcasing the property's history. This is the first event that will be held to open up the site to residents. This is the first in a series of events where the Town will seek input on the future operations

and use of the site. The Town has been working on a series of stabilization efforts to improve the appearance of the house and mitigate the further deterioration of the property. The hope is to find uses that will support the long-term sustainability and usage.

**Town Hall Update:** On April 29, 2025, the Neighborhood Design Center (NDC) updated the Town Council. This update sought additional Council input on design elements such as styles, colors, and facility sizes. The most recent update reflected reductions in the size of the building for affordability.

**Upcoming Town Events:** Below are the Town Events that will occur in May and June. Please look out for information on the various Town social media platforms:

**Memorial Day Ceremony & New Pearl Harbor Memorial Unveiling**

- Date: Monday, May 26
- Time: 11:00 am to 12:00 pm
- Location: Bladensburg Memorial Grove Park

**Juneteenth: Paint & Unity**

- Date: Friday, June 20
- Time: 5:00 pm to 7:00 pm
- Location: David C. Harrington Park

**Town Annexation Update:** The Town of Bladensburg is taking a bold step forward with its revised annexation plan, which reflects a focused and strategic approach to growth. While the Hospital Hill site is no longer part of the proposed area, the Town is actively finalizing a resolution to expand our municipal boundaries in alignment with community priorities and long-term planning goals.

A Public Hearing on the revised annexation was held on April 14, 2025, where the item was formally introduced. A follow-up hearing is scheduled for June 2025, providing continued public input and engagement opportunities. That same evening, the Council also advanced the

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annexation of the Publick Playhouse site, which is expected to be finalized at the **May 12, 2025**, Council Meeting.

This annexation initiative is a pivotal move to strengthen Bladensburg's economic foundation. By welcoming adjacent properties into the town, we aim to enhance municipal services, improve public safety, and expand access to community programs and infrastructure investment. These strategic expansions not only support local economic development but also reinforce our commitment to environmental stewardship and long-term fiscal health.

The Town remains committed to a transparent, inclusive, and forward-thinking annexation process. We invite all residents and stakeholders to stay engaged as we continue shaping a more connected, resilient, and prosperous Bladensburg.

More updates will follow as we make progress on this exciting initiative.  
Best Regards,

**Michelle Bailey Hedgepeth,**

Michelle Bailey-Hedgepeth, Town Administrator