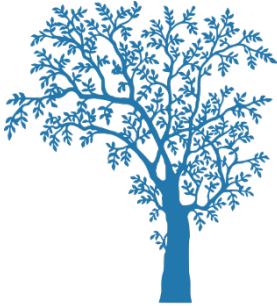


TOWN ADMINISTRATOR MONTHLY MEMO

April 2025

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



Spring has Sprung! April is finally here, and we are working on all of the activities that will get the Town into shape for the new season. Last fall, the Town received funds from the Maryland Energy Administration for a joint grant with the Port Towns. Part of the funds will go to building two new Green Bus Shelters within the Town, greatly improving and providing a valuable amenity to transit riders.

FY 2026 Budget | As we navigate ongoing economic and political shifts, my commitment to the Council and residents is that financial responsibility and community well-being remain steadfast. Rising costs for goods and services and planned utility rate adjustments present challenges, but they also offer an opportunity to reassess priorities and ensure that our budget continues to support essential services while enhancing the quality of life for our residents.

Over the past few weeks, we have worked diligently to refine the FY26 budget, considering various approaches to maintain fiscal stability while addressing community needs. Initial drafts included cost-of-living and merit increases, but as projections evolved, we explored adjustments to revenue sources, expenditure reductions, and strategic use of grant funding to minimize financial impact.

One approach considered adjustments to property and business tax rates and targeted use of ARPA funds for critical infrastructure projects like flood mitigation. Various drafts focused on maintaining current residential tax rates at .74 while making selective reductions in expenditures, including administrative adjustments (reduced paid hours to a 37.5 work week). We have also carefully reviewed our grant activity to ensure that we are reimbursed. Throughout this process, our goal has been to balance financial sustainability with responsible investments in our town's future.

The most recent draft, completed on April 1, maintains residential tax rates while ensuring that commercial and apartment properties contribute equitably. We have also made adjustments to health insurance deductions, instituted a hiring and capital purchase freeze, and continue to carefully manage compensation levels to keep expenditures in check. While the current budget still reflects a modest deficit, it represents significant progress in closing the gap while preserving core services. We will close this gap with more tough choices, but I remain confident


and focused on a responsible and forward-thinking approach. Ongoing discussions will be essential as we align our financial strategy with the evolving needs of our community. Your input and collaboration will be invaluable as we finalize the FY26 budget, ensuring that we make thoughtful, well-informed decisions that support both short-term stability and long-term success. Here are the subsequent upcoming **FY 2026 Budget Sessions**:


- Session #6 – April 14, 2025 – Town Council Meeting Update
- Session #7 – April 29, 2025 – Town Council Work Session
- 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 | The Town of Bladensburg’s Green Team is making great strides in advancing our commitment to sustainability! Our next meeting is April 10, 2025, to prepare for the Spring Events! The Green Team is instrumental in developing policy and keeping us on track for many of our programs.

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.

Winners will be notified in advance and honored at the Town Council Meeting on June 9, 2025. 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 as we gather monthly to discuss regional issues. In the April 2nd meeting, we met to discuss the Homeland Security Funding and FEMA programs and the impacts on the local government's budget from the effects of the recent Federal reductions in force. These meetings continue to be helpful to get a gauge on where things are going and what we can expect.



Bostwick House Event | Discover Bostwick – May 3, 2025: The Discover Bostwick event will 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.

Event Offerings:

- Vendors – Artisans/Makers: Small, local businesses and makers will offer items for sale.
- Food Options: Local food trucks will be on-site, and necessary applications and health inspections will be coordinated in advance.
- Music: Performances from musical artists, DJs, or school groups will be featured.
- Arts: Collaborative arts-related activities in partnership with local arts organizations.
- Local/Cultural Organizations: Participation from local nonprofits and groups, including the library, Anacostia Watershed Trust, Eco City Farms, UMD, M-NCPPC Port Towns team, and Sankofa Arts on a Roll.
- Children's Activities: Games and activities designed to engage young attendees.

Town Annexation Update: The Town of Bladensburg is actively moving forward with the revised annexation plan, which no longer includes Hospital Hill, and is in the process of finalizing a resolution to expand our municipal boundaries. A Public Hearing is scheduled for April 14, 2025, at 7 PM to discuss revisions to the Hospital Hill Annexation proposal and gather community input.

This annexation effort is key in strengthening our town by enhancing municipal services, improving public safety, and expanding access to community programs. Bringing adjacent properties into Bladensburg ensures residents and property owners benefit from dedicated town resources, infrastructure improvements, and a stronger local economy. Additionally, this expansion supports environmental protection efforts and contributes to the Town's long-term fiscal sustainability.

Bladensburg remains committed to a transparent and thoughtful annexation process. We encourage residents to stay informed and engaged as we move forward with this critical initiative. We will provide more updates as we continue working to shape the future of our community together.

Best Regards,

Michelle Bailey Hedgepeth.

Michelle Bailey-Hedgepeth, Town Administrator