



**Town of Cottage City  
REGULAR TOWN MEETING**

**Wednesday, January 08, 2025, at 7:00 PM**

**Hybrid Meeting**

**3820 40th Avenue Cottage City, Maryland 20722**

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**This meeting will be hosted via Zoom Only Due to Weather**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82573671277?pwd=Unl6eEJrNTVoNjFmTHULzViZlITdz09>

**Phone: 301-715-8592 | Meeting ID: 825 7367 1277 | Passcode: 361522**

**Call to Order 7:00 PM**

**Roll Call:**

- 1.) Commissioner Chair Wheatley
- 2.) Ward 1-Commissioner Young
- 3.) Ward 2- Commissioner Henderson
- 4.) Ward 3- Commissioner Wheatley
- 5.) Ward 4- Commissioner Givens
- 6.) At-Large Report- Commissioner Brooks

**Attendees:**

- 1.) John Hoatson-Town Manager
- 2.) Todd Frankenfield- Alta CPA Group
- 3.) Michelle Kokolis -UMD EFC
- 4.) Bryan McKnight
- 5.) Aquilina Thurston-PayChex

**Consent Agenda (4:40)**

**1. Public Safety Report -**

Waiting for permit for redlight cameras. Once the permit is received the cameras will be back up. Town Manager sent email to the state. The state is working through the permit stages to get the permit push through.

**2. Approval of Financials**

**Motion (8:39)**

**Motion to approve Public Safety Report & Financial Report for December.**

The motion was made by Commissioner Brooks and seconded by Commissioner Henderson Vote 5-5 Young, Henderson, Wheatley, Givens, & Brooks.

**Commissioner Reports (9:40)**

3. **Ward 1:**  
No report
4. **Ward 2:**  
40<sup>th</sup> Avenue right on the corner across from the Firehouse. There is a ladder that's been up on a building for two months. Safety Hazzard. The Town Manager will have someone investigate the situation.
5. **Ward 3:**  
No Report. Commissioner Chair Wheatley thanks the Town Manager, Commissioner Brooks, Commissioner Givens, Chief Ayers, & Joe Mayo for the snow cleaning. Kudos to the contractors, they did a great job. There were no complaints.
6. **Ward 4:**  
Commissioner Gives second the thank you and stated that the Chief, himself and John, put together a program for helping the elders remove the snow from their houses and throughout the town was successful.
7. **At-Large Report:**  
Commissioner Brooks also gave thanks to the Town Manager John, Chief Ayers, himself, and Commissioner Givens for supporting the elderly with the snow removal. Commissioner Brooks is hopeful that they can get some volunteers in the future to assist with the snow removal for the elderly.

In the past Commissioner Chair Wheatley stated that a list was created to assist with the snow removal. Commissioner Brooks stated that he and Commissioner Givens have created a list.

#### **Presentation (16:18)**

##### **8. Walkable Watershed Presentation Michelle Kokolis, Bryan McKnight:**

Walkable Watershed Project is slated to end this coming April 2025. The goal is to get some projects in place before the end of the project. Features include:

- Improvements to Rain Garden
- Native Plant Garden
- Tree Removals Where Overcrowding Has Occurred
- Slope Stabilization / Reduced Stormwater Runoff
- Improved Drainage from Parking Lot to Rain Garden
- Retained or Relocated Cedar Tree
- Stone Separation Between Rain Garden and Native Plant Garden
- Native Plants
- Symmetry with Existing Garden on Other side of Entry
- Possible Seating Area
- Sample Plants: Winterberry Holly, Inkberry Holly, Northern Sea Oats Prairie Dropseed, Purple Love Grass, Black-eyed Susan, Foxglove Beardtongue.
- Funding in the Grant will be used for the initial reconstruction of the current Rain Garden. The Town matched funds will be used for the new projects. A decision needs to be made about which projects need to be pushed forward so that the plans can be made to get the projects pushed into action.

Attorney Kevin Best inquired if there was a grant agreement in place. Michelle Kokolis -UMD EFC stated that there is an agreement between the four Port Towns. The University of Maryland has a formal grant agreement with the funder, which is the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. This is a \$500,000 grant that was received to work with the four Port Towns and that covers everything

from the contractor's time, some supplies. The implementation funds that the University of Maryland are all covered in the grant agreement.

The four Port Towns as part of the proposal committed to a certain amount to match the project that is in writing. The Town did not actually sign the grant agreement with the funder they were just put into the grant project. Michelle Kokolis -UMD EFC stated that by April plans need to be in place and contractors would need to be established with whomever will be doing the work. There will be some flexibility, but they will need to be able to show that all the towns' matches are allocated and accounted for before the close out and final report with the funder by the end of April. Need information as soon as possible.

**9. Retirement Programs with Paychex - Aquilina Thurston**

Aquilina Thurston- PayChex Retirement Service Department for the State of Maryland.

PayChex is an administrator of 401k plans, which means that they oversee the setup, all the testing and movement of the money. It is incorporated into the PayChex portal. The employees can see their pay stubs, W2's, health benefits, and their Retirement plans. The employees can see how much their retirement is, if it goes up or down, what their deferral rate is where their money is located. What mutual funds do they possess and if they have any outstanding loans or outstanding rollovers from another retirement plan. PayChex would like to integrate the retirement plan with the payroll. The employees can keep the 457 also have 401K. 401K allows you to put up to 23.5% every year and it doesn't matter if the Town of Cottage City matches the employees. The 457 only lets you get up to 23.5% if the employees don't contribute. If The Town of Cottage City would contribute to the employees 401 K it would allow the employees to have a little bit more than 23.5%. If the employees wanted to make changes, they would be allowed to make a change each pay period. With the 401 K plan interest is compounded every day. Will check with the staff to see if they would be interested in the 401 K option with PayChex and will bring a presentation on the issue another day.

**Old Business**

**10. Town of Cottage City Air Monitoring Program MOU (Tentative Commission Vote)**

**New Business (55:10)**

**11. Resolution 2025-01: Budget Calendar (Commission Vote)**

Town Of Cottage City Resolution 2025 the commission is establishing a budget calendar for the fiscal year 2026. This outlines the calendar for the budget cycle for this upcoming fiscal year and 2026. Discussing the calendar and approving the calendar and at the next work session on February 4, 2025, hearing from the public. From 7:00 PM- 7:30 PM there will be a chance for the public to weigh on important things in the budget that need to be addressed. On February 12, 2025, the commissioner's priorities and goal settings at the regular town meeting. Mainly looking at the commission budget priorities. Tuesday March 4<sup>th</sup> at the work session the anticipated revenue expenses, and town tax rate discussion. March 12<sup>th</sup> the anticipated revenue expenses, department, departmental and CIP discussion. April 1, 2025, at the work session looking for the public comment about the proposed town tax rate schedule and if the CYTR hearing is applicable. April 9<sup>th</sup> at the regular town meeting discussions on the draft budget, ordinance and budget book. A budget book will be prepared to help the residents see where their money is being spent and to provide some clarity to the public and receive public comments. May 6<sup>th</sup> at the Commission work session it will be an introduction to the budget ordinance and public comment. It is important to have the public input on the budget ordinance and budget book. Tuesday July 1<sup>st</sup> the fiscal year 2026 budget will be in effect.

**Motion (59:08)**

**Motion to approve Resolution 2025-01 Budget Calendar**

**The motion was made by Commissioner Brooks and seconded by Commissioner Henderson Vote 5-5 Young, Henderson, Wheatley, Givens & Brooks. Motion Passes no nays or abstentions.**

**12. New Computer Equipment Approval (Commission Vote)**

Commissioner Chair Wheatley needs a brand-new laptop, she's having some technical issues with her current equipment. Her previous laptop was purchased back in 2022, she can't perform the necessary tasks. A quote was obtained from Peake Technology Partners to replace the laptop. The total cost with the setup items and upgrades is \$1,260.37 for a Dell latitude 14inch Laptop. Commissioner Chair Wheatley stated that she has contacted Peake Technology multiple times and they were unable to solve the problem. Microsoft office suites don't work at all, it's very difficult to open attachments also get regular documentation.

**Motion (01:02:56)**

**Motion to approve New Computer Equipment**

**The motion was made by Commissioner Givens and second by Commissioner Brooks Vote 5-5 Young, Henderson, Wheatley, Givens & Brooks. Motion Passes no nays or abstentions.**

**13. Commission Goal Setting - Next 6 Months (Commission Discussion)**

The Town Manager asked what goals and priorities and projects the commissioners are looking to create for the Town of Cottage City. By the next scheduled meeting because some of the items may have budgetary implications. Commissioner Givens stated that he will work on a list. He also stated that he would like to get back to providing patrol during the morning and afternoon at the bus stops as a mandatory assignment. Creating a schedule with the working police officers ensuring that someone is there during that block of hours. The purpose is to keep any incidents from re-occurring. Commissioner Brooks wanted to discuss how to tailor and slow down traffic, he stated that he would discuss it more at the next work session. Commissioner Young stated that there are issues on 38<sup>th</sup> with people speeding through the street. Commissioner Henderson agreed about the people speeding on 38<sup>th</sup> and he also feels that in the future there will be issues with people riding motorbikes. Running the lights, not stopping at the stop signs and maybe hitting a child.

**14. Mayor's Conference (Commission Consent)**

The Mayor's Conference is coming up on March 6<sup>th</sup> & March 7<sup>th</sup> at the Governor Calvert House in Annapolis. The cost for the event is as follows: Registration \$195.00, Meals & Incidents \$120.00, Gas \$76.16 for to and from the total amount is \$391.16. Need to receive consent from the commission so that we can register Commissioner Chair Wheatley for the event. There is a consensus so Commissioner Chair Wheatley can be registered for the event.

**15. Black History Month Program**

Decided to have the Black History Program on February 22, 2025

**Updates (01:19:22)**

**16. Town Manager Update**

Air Monitors Update: CEEJH Incorporated is becoming a non-profit organization so this may create delays with the project. The Town Manager will continue to work with them and provide updated information.

Leaf Machine Repair: The total cost of the repair is \$3,040.25.

**Motion (01:23:25)**

**Motion to approve the repair of the leaf machine**

**The motion was made by Commissioner Brooks and second by Commissioner Henderson**

**Vote 5-5 Young, Henderson, Wheatley, Givens & Brooks. Motion Passes no nays or abstentions.**

**Public Comments (01:25:12)**

**Rules of Public Comment**

Anyone seeking to speak under Public Comments must sign in prior to the end of the Town Meeting. There is a 3-minute time limit. When you come up to speak, you will need to state your name, address, what organization that you represent and your topic of concern(s).

**Motion To Go into Closed Session 01:27:02**

17. This meeting will be closed under General Provisions Art. § 3-305(b) only: (1)\_\_\_ “To discuss the appointment, employment, assignment, promotion, discipline, demotion, compensation, removal, resignation, or performance evaluation of appointees, employees, or officials over whom this public body has jurisdiction; any other personnel matter that affects one or more specific individuals”; (7)\_\_\_ “To consult with counsel to obtain legal advice”;

The Commission proposes to go into closed session following the January Regular Town Meeting to discuss the Architect and Firm for the Old Firehouse Project and Town Public Works and Public Safety Employees.

**Motion (01:27:53)**

**The motion was made by Commissioner Brooks and second by Commissioner Henderson**

**Vote 4 -5 Young, Henderson, Wheatley, & Brooks. Motion Passes no nays or abstentions.**

**Closing Statement**

All meetings are subject to closure pursuant to the Maryland Open Meetings Act: Pursuant to the Annotated Code of Maryland, State Government Article Section 10-508(a), the Council by majority vote may retire to executive or closed session at any time during the meeting. Should the Commission retire to executive or closed sessions the Chair will announce the reasons, and a report will be issued at a future meeting disclosing the reasons for such a closed session.

**Open Session Following Closed Session**

**Adjournment**