



## November 2025 Work Session Minutes

Tuesday, November 4, 2025, at 6:30 PM

Virtual Meeting

3820 40th Avenue Cottage City, Maryland 20722

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**This meeting was hosted on Zoom:**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/CThLvfe5n4mTIZQZ5IUGk2bRNLYClpniC0Y63LU3ebwFdWZZTmmTLW3Ldk5wV5Vg.xmJbYBvxh743J5BO?startTime=1762298853000>

**Phone: 301-715-8592 | Meeting ID: 896 3829 4683 | Passcode: ^6=\*G\*?+**

### **Call to Order at 6:30 PM**

#### **Attendees**

1. Ward 1 - Commissioner Salsich
2. Ward 2 - Commissioner Henderson
3. Ward 3 - Commissioner Wheatley
4. At-Large - Commissioner Brooks
5. John Hoatson - Town Manager
6. Kevin Best – Town Attorney
7. Shadi Ayyoubi – Vice President, Divaris Real Estate

#### **Agenda**

##### **1. Call to Order (4:12)**

All Commissioners except for Ward 4 Commissioner Givens are present and accounted for.

##### **2. Public Comments (5:28)**

None. Public Comments have been moved to the beginning of the meeting so that the public will have the chance to comment before votes are taken.

##### **3. Property on Corner of 38<sup>th</sup> and Bladensburg (8:20)**

Shadi Ayyoubi of Divaris Real Estate, the landlord's broker, came to discuss the property on the corner of 38<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Bladensburg Road. Zoning is now NAC which does not allow for a drive-through, which would keep companies like Starbucks and Dunkin' Donuts away. The proposal for a convenience store was previously met with resistance.

The convenience store proposal was very similar to convenience stores in Colmar Manor. The hope was to have more of a mini-grocery store. The only proposal is a convenience store. The

property will otherwise sit vacant. Any other type of business would require a significant investment.

Local businesses have also been contacted but so far there has been no traction. The land does need to be leased. The current landlord is not interested in selling.

**4. Community Garden Petty Cash (35:05)**

Community Garden makes a fair amount of money through sales of flowers and honey, etc. Commission should find a way to oversee the income as that money is made through the investment of Town money. Currently the Community Garden Treasurer does not coordinate with the Town to manage petty cash. Several Commissioners suggested a debit card. Town Treasurer will suggest options at the next meeting.

**5. Ordinance 2025-03, Street Sweeping (49:21)**

Ordinance 2025-03, street sweeping, an ordinance Establishing a street sweeping protocol and enforcement procedure introduced by the Cottage City Commission. This will be voted on in November 12 Town Meeting.

Discussion included a strong preference for the posting of permanent signs rather than movable, erasable ones. Fee structure would be a warning for the first offense, a \$40 fine for the second, and \$75 for the third, and \$100 for the fourth. A provision should be added in case someone is unable to move their car.

Further discussion as to whether the cleaning would follow a set schedule or be on an as-needed basis.

**6. Financial Assistance for Cottage City Residents Impacted by Furlough and Shutdown (1:00:42)**

Cottage City provides ARPA and Food Share programs, but perhaps there could be a food drive or distribution of food cards. Discussion of how much should be given per family and where the money would come from. Some idea of having ARPA funds pay for food as the grocery store receipt is a bill. Another suggestion was to bundle food drives and funds and show residents what resources are available. Decision was made to promote existing resources before creating a new one.

**7. Donations for End Time Harvest Ministries and Brentwood Volunteer Fire Department (1:30:23)**

Cottage City has budgeted \$2,000 for End Time Harvest Ministries and \$1,000 for the Brentwood Volunteer Fire Department. Does the Commission want to add more to help with shortfalls from the County? Brentwood VFD is looking for upwards of \$10,000. End Time is looking for any amount. Commissioners want the Town Treasurer to report on funds available, and possibly restructure the budget factoring in red-light camera income.

Commission agreed to give \$1,000 to Brentwood VFD.

**8. Sunrise Solutions Agreement Renewal (1:30:23)**

Sunrise Solutions manages the Town Hall phones. They bill \$335.21 per quarter. Vote to come on Wednesday.

**9. CivicPlus Statement of Work (1:45:08)**

CivicPlus has proposed moving the Town website from a Drupal platform to one that can be more easily edited by Town Hall staff. Cost is a down payment of \$2,500 and then the rest is to be determined. Commission agreed to move forward with this.

**10. Municipal Government Works Month (1:49:26)**

Proclamation will be made at Regular Town Hall meeting on Wednesday.

**11. Ruby Bridges Walk to School Day (1:50:13)**

Proclamation will be made at Regular Town Hall meeting on Wednesday. There will be a walk to Mt. Rainier Elementary School to commemorate on November 14.

**12. Town Manager Updates (1:51:35)**

Composting will be discussed at the next meeting.

43<sup>rd</sup> Avenue project is almost complete with the trench drain installed; further painting needs to be done and perhaps planting of grass to help with erosion. Green Works may also plant trees. \$21,000 remains of the allocated funds and that is planned to help alleviate the pooling water at the end of Bunker Hill.

Police review panel met on October 30, Kenny Rhodes, Acting Chief Thompson, Chief Stone of Colmar Manor, residents Shonda Gilliland, Tom Campos, and Keisha Barrett. They narrowed the applications down from 48 resumes to five strong candidates and five alternates. First round of interviews is being set up, and questions have been sent to applicants. Three top candidates will ultimately be recommended to the Commission for its selection. Goal is to have the new chief in place by January 2, 2026.

Town Manager recently attended the International City-County Management Association conference. One of the classes he took was Public Engagement for Solving Stubborn City Problems, with the outcome being that data sharing among municipalities is very important. The Love Your Enemies open session showed ways to work with people you might personally disagree with. Reimagining Retention's main message was that happy municipal employees translate to happy residents. There was a general session on Personal Power and Presence, which suggested bringing bold ideas to help solve challenges. Designing Effective Orientation and Onboarding for Newly Elected and Appointed Officials suggested finding better ways to help new officials come up to speed. When Things Got Nasty – How One City Overcame Serious Turmoil was a story shared from a Southern town. Collaborative Fire Protection Service Delivery for the WIN focused on fire safety partnerships. Building a Better Government from Within – Workforce Excellence and Resident Satisfaction with Local Government also focused on retention.

Town Manager and Commissioners also attended the Maryland Municipal League Fall Conference in Wisp Lodge and took classes on budgeting and discussing the current climate of municipalities. Other classes included Basics of Risk Management, Charter Checkup, and Workforce Solutions for Stronger Communities. The class on Conducting Effective Meetings is why public comment is now at the top of the agenda and comments have a three-minute timer.

Port Towns Community Development Corporation has been renamed to Bladensburg, Colmar Manor, Cottage City, and Edmonton Community Development Corporation (BCCE).

Commission Chair Wheatley and resident Karina Young are on the Board. First meeting is scheduled for November 19.

**13. Adjournment (2:11:01)**

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 closed session.

**The motion to adjourn was made at 8:38 PM by Commissioner Brooks and seconded by Commissioner Henderson. Salsich-Aye, Henderson-Aye, Wheatley-Aye, Givens-Absent, Brooks-Aye. Motion passes without nays or abstentions.**