



May Work Session Minutes

Tuesday, May 05, 2026 at 6:30 PM

3820 40th Avenue Cottage City, Maryland 20722

This meeting will be hosted on Zoom:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83633620556?pwd=a3HaK7KY3eiVZPigkWULCq3L94xpUW.1>

Phone: 301-715-8592 | Meeting ID: 836 3362 0556 | Passcode: 295179

Call to Order and Roll Call 6:35 PM

Attendees

- 1.) Commissioner Salsich- Ward 1
- 2.) Commissioner Henderson- Ward 2
- 3.) Commissioner Chair Wheatley- Ward 3
- 4.) Commissioner Givens- Ward 4
- 5.) Commissioner Brooks- At-Large
- 6.) John Hoatson- Town Manager
- 7.) Chief Martini- Chief of Police
- 8.) Kevin Best-Town Attorney
- 9.) Tom Campos-Commissioner Elect
- 10.)Josh Durant-Commissioner Elect
- 11.)Sierra Kim- Resident
- 12.)Conor Grew-Resident
- 13.)Emily Lutz- Maryland National Park & Planning Commission (MNCPPC)
- 14.)Arnald Ruiz- Maryland National Park & Planning Commission (MNCPPC)
- 15.)Jake DiPiazza- Eastgate Industrial Park
- 16.)Chris Hatcher- Attorney - Eastgate Industrial Park
- 17.)Mike Sponseller- Eastgate Industrial Park
- 18.)Phone caller- Resident
- 19.)Amy Sawyer-Resident

Review of Agenda

Commissioner Chair Wheatley suggested moving item thirteen on the agenda motions to suspend the rules to the top of the agenda. The other four Commissioners agreed.

Motion

Commissioner Brooks made the motion, seconded by Commissioner Henderson. Salsich-Aye, Henderson-Aye, Wheatley-Aye, Givens-Aye, & Brooks- Aye. There were no nays or abstentions. The motion passed unanimously.

Public Comments

Anyone seeking to speak under Public Comments must sign in prior to the end of the Board Work Session. 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).

Business

1. Eastgate Industrial Park Zoning Discussion (Commission Discussion)

Mike Sponseller discussed potential county zoning changes and informed the Commission that a hearing regarding the Port Sector Plan and countywide zoning would take place on May 11, 2026. He noted that the Town may testify if it chooses to participate.

Attorney Chris Hatcher stated that Eastgate Industrial Park would request the county maintain the previous zoning designation rather than adopt the proposed zoning changes.

Emily Lutz stated that testimony must be submitted by May 26, 2026, and that testimony during the hearing would be limited to three minutes. She advised that submissions could be made online and shared a presentation with the Commission.

2. FY 2027 Budget & Town Tax Rate Discussion (Commission Discussion)

Commissioner Salsich noted conflicting budget line items, including:

General Government:

5035 Workers' Compensation Insurance

5065 Newsletter

5065 Family Relief

5150 Black History Month

5150 Refreshments

5165 Town Hall Maintenance & Repairs

Public Works:

5230 Equipment Maintenance & Operations

5271 Maintenance

She stated several items appeared lower than the previous year and required updates.

The Town Manager stated he would review the items with Todd, the accountant, and provide updates. He also advised that department salary increases would be discussed during closed session.

Commissioner Henderson requested clarification regarding:

General Government Salary 5005

5065 Crosswalk

5135 Town Hall Subscriptions

5065 Family Relief

Police Department 5405 Salaries

Grant Expenditures 6054.7 and 6054.8

The Town Manager explained that:

The crosswalk was requested by resident Lindsay for town beautification.

Subscriptions included Zoom, Adobe, Constant Contact, Formsite, and other operational software.

Salary discussions would occur in closed session.

Family Relief and Grant Expenditure accounts would be reviewed with Todd.

Commissioner Chair Wheatley requested discussion on:

5065 Scholarships

5065 Family Relief

Port Towns funding

5150 Adult Mixer

5150 Holiday Giveaways

5105 Senior Camp

5160 Town Communications (Newsletter)

5196 Website Hosting

General Government overtime

Police Department salaries

The Town Manager responded that:

Scholarship increases and Family Relief funding would be reviewed with Todd.

He would confirm the Town's Port Towns contribution amount.

Holiday giveaway funding was reallocated to employee appreciation initiatives.

The Adult Mixer would continue.

He would contact Ms. Blue regarding Senior Club funding.

Newsletter and website hosting increases reflected operational and website transition costs.

Overtime increases reflected additional staff participation in meetings and activities.

Police salaries would be discussed in closed session.

Commissioner Givens requested:

Overtime totals for all departments

Updated scholarship percentages

A Public Works training line item

Additional funding for truck maintenance, uniforms, and town signage

The Town Manager stated he would provide the requested overtime information and update the relevant budget items. He also noted he was working with the Grant Manager regarding signage grants.

Commissioner Brooks stated:

Family Relief funding was intended to continue only through July 1, not December 2026

Additional discussion would be needed before using general funds to extend the program

5065 End Time Harvest funding should be removed because no vote had been taken to continue it

The Town Manager stated he would review and update those items.

3. **Resolution 2026-12: Budget Amendments FY 2026 (Commission Discussion)**

The Town Manager explained that the amendment adjusted the FY 2026 budget ending June 30, 2026, to reflect current budget changes prior to approval of the FY 2027 budget.

Commissioner Chair Wheatley requested comments from the Commissioners. Commissioner Givens requested that a full-time Public Works employee position and salary be added to the budget.

4. **Resolution 2026-13: Bullet Proof Vest (Commission Discussion)**

The Town Manager stated that the resolution involved funding for police department body armor through a grant secured by Grant Manager John O'Connor. The grant would provide \$3,500 and require a \$3,500 match, totaling \$7,000. The resolution would be presented for vote on May 13, 2026.

5. **Letter of Support: Project Charge Request (Commission Discussion)**

The Town Manager stated that the Town was requesting:

\$175,000 from the Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission to expand youth development and recreation programming

\$300,000 for town beautification projects including landscaping, streetscape improvements, tree planting, community gardens, and gateway improvements

The letters of support would be sent to Council Member Shayla Adams-Stafford and the Planning Board.

Commissioner Chair Wheatley asked whether the Commission should vote that evening.

Motion

Commissioner Brooks made the motion, seconded by Commissioner Givens. Salsich-Aye, Henderson-Aye, Wheatley-Aye, Givens-Aye, & Brooks-Aye. There were no nays or abstentions. The motion passed unanimously.

5. **Letter of Support for University of Maryland Environmental Finance Center; FY 27 Prince George's County Stormwater Stewardship Grant Program (Commission Discussion)**

The Town Manager stated that the Town received a request from Sustainable Maryland and the Maryland Environmental Finance Center for a support letter. Although the deadline had passed, he recommended sending the letter as soon as possible and voting that evening.

Motion

Commissioner Brooks made the motion, seconded by Commissioner Henderson. Salsich-Aye, Henderson-Aye, Wheatley-Aye, Givens-Aye, & Brooks-Aye. There were no nays or abstentions. The motion passed unanimously.

7. **Lindsay & Associates Engagement Letter: FY 2026 Audit (Commission Discussion)**

The Town Manager stated that Lindsay & Associates submitted a renewal letter and suggested seeking quotes from new auditors.

Commissioner Henderson asked about the results of the previous audit.

The Town Manager stated he would consult Todd, the accountant, and provide the audit results to the Commissioners and post them on the Town website.

Commissioner Chair Wheatley, Commissioner Givens, and Commissioner Brooks agreed that the Town should obtain three quotes for auditing services.

8. **Tree Trimming Quotes (Commission Discussion)**

The Town Manager presented tree trimming quotes and proposals for removal of Tree of Heaven trees on private property.

Commissioner Chair Wheatley requested that each concern be addressed individually.

Commissioner Givens stated that he believed the Town already had a maintenance agreement with American Landscaping for tree services.

The Town Manager stated he was unaware of such an agreement and would confirm with American Landscaping.

Commissioner Chair Wheatley instructed the Town Manager to:

Verify whether the maintenance contract remained active

Use Timberline Tree Service if no contract existed

Add tree maintenance funding to the budget

Establish a townwide tree maintenance contract

The Town Manager then discussed assistance for two residents regarding Tree of Heaven removal and requested \$4,359 be added to the private property tree program.

Commissioner Salsich asked whether the trees had been treated before removal.

The Town Manager confirmed the trees had been poisoned.

Commissioner Salsich stated that she just wants to know the line item this is going under, but she supports it.

Commissioner Henderson stated he believed American Landscaping would be a good option.

Commissioner Chair Wheatley stated she supported using American Landscaping.

Commissioner Givens recommended reopening the private property tree program townwide.

Commissioner Brooks agreed and recommended adding funding for Private Property Tree Maintenance and allowing residents to apply.

The Town Manager stated he would consult with Town Attorney Kevin Best and

agreed the program should be reopened.

Commissioner Chair Wheatley stated the Town could identify funding either in the current fiscal year or the next budget cycle.

9. **Maryland Municipal League Summer Conference (Commission Discussion)**

The Town Manager stated that insufficient funding remained in the General Government training budget due to attendance at the ICMA conference in Tampa.

Commissioner Chair Wheatley supported the Town Manager attending the conference and recommended increasing the training budget.

Commissioners Salsich, Henderson, and Givens expressed support.

Commissioner Givens asked whether the Office Manager would oversee Town Hall operations during the conference.

The Town Manager confirmed that she would.

Commissioner Brooks suggested allowing Public Works employee Jorge to attend the conference to improve morale and training opportunities.

Commissioner Chair Wheatley agreed, noting that Public Works classes were offered at the conference.

The Town Manager stated he would work with Todd to add funding.

10. **BCCE Appointment (Commission Discussion)**

The Town Manager stated that the Town needed to appoint a new representative to the Bladensburg, Colmar Manor, Cottage City, and Edmonston (BCCE) committee following Karina Young's resignation.

Applicants included:

Conor Grew

Sierra Kim

Ben Rocky-Harris

Amy Sawyer

Commissioners discussed the candidates and expressed support for Conor Grew and Sierra Kim.

Motion

Commissioner Givens made the motion to appoint Conor Grew, seconded by Commissioner Brooks. Salsich-Aye, Henderson-Aye, Wheatley-Aye, Givens-Aye, & Brooks-Aye. There were no nays or abstentions. The motion passed unanimously.

The Town Manager stated he would notify Mr. Leckie of the appointment.

11. **New Life Hope Ministries Contract (Commission Discussion)**

The Town Manager stated that Pastor Rena C. Brinson requested a long-term agreement to use Town Hall every Sunday for worship services at a rate of \$600 per month.

Commissioners discussed:

Use of Town Hall for religious services

Contract length

Pricing

Storage requirements

Building wear and tear

Capacity and security concerns

Several Commissioners supported only a short-term agreement, while others expressed

concern regarding pricing and long-term use.

Commissioner Brooks suggested a month-to-month arrangement with a higher monthly fee.

Town Attorney Kevin Best recommended tabling the matter until the next meeting.

12. **Town of Cottage City Hiring Policy (Commission Discussion)**

The Town Manager read Resolution 2026-14 into the record.

Commissioner Chair Wheatley stated the resolution would supersede the 2021 policy and permit Commissioners to participate in candidate interviews.

Commissioners discussed hiring procedures and expressed support for formalizing the process in writing.

Motion

Commissioner Givens made the motion, seconded by Commissioner Henderson. Salsich-Aye, Henderson-Aye, Wheatley-Aye, Givens-Aye, & Brooks-Aye. There were no nays or abstentions. The motion passed unanimously.

13. **Motion To Suspend the 'Rules To Vote In A Work Session (Commission Vote)**

Closed Session 9:37pm

Commissioner Brooks made the motion, seconded by Commissioner Givens. Salsich-Aye, Henderson-Aye, Wheatley-Aye, Givens-Aye, & Brooks-Aye. There were no nays or abstentions. The motion passed unanimously.

Updates

Motion To Go Into A Closed Session: 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”;

The Commission proposes to enter into a closed session to discuss employee performance evaluations and to conduct a discussion regarding a former employee of the CCPD.

Open Session Following Closed Session 10:44pm

Adjournment

Motion

Commissioner Givens made the motion, seconded by Commissioner Brooks. Salsich-Aye, Henderson-Aye, Wheatley-Aye, Givens-Aye, & Brooks-Aye. There were no nays or abstentions. The motion passed unanimously. Adjourned at 10:45pm.

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 session the Chair will announce the reasons and a report will be issued at a future meeting disclosing the reasons for such closed session.