



March 2026 Regular Town Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, March 11, 2026, at 7:00 PM

Virtual and In-Person Meeting

3820 40th Avenue Cottage City, Maryland 20722

This meeting was hosted on Zoom:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/cwQqMALNw7dPXLXPn8QrLVM4yJxTomMU0VIhwOw - UQeGcjqv4Ryyd4Xhdbl9Ck5.5fEBKeAlvWGZxq77?startTime=1773270076000>

Phone: 301-715-8592 | Meeting ID: 834 4058 9894 | Passcode: Ua@cgFi7

Call to Order at 7:11 PM

Attendees

1. Ward 1 – Commissioner Salsich
2. Ward 2 – Commissioner Henderson
3. Ward 3 – Commissioner Wheatley
4. Ward 4 – Commissioner Givens
5. At-Large – Commissioner Brooks
6. John Hoatson - Town Manager
7. David Martini – Chief of Police
8. Kevin Best – Town Attorney
9. Todd Frankenfield – Town Treasurer
10. Denise Hamler – resident
11. Bill Kopecki – resident

Agenda

1. Call to Order, Roll Call, and Pledge of Allegiance (10:33)

All Commissioners are present and accounted for. Agenda item number 21 is being tabled.

2. Public Comments (12:26)

Denise Hamler updated on behalf of the Community Garden and Green Team. Bee colonies are in good shape. New metal beds have been installed using the last of the APRA funds. There is space for 32 families. Sign up is Saturday. Thank you to the town for securing the \$40,000 Chesapeake Bay Trust grant. Co-leaders for the garden are Denise Hamler, Desiree Williams, and Ben Rockey-Harris. Thank you to Diana Guespe for her previous work as co-leader.

Green Team co-leaders are Denise Hamler and John Brooks. Meetings are on the third Tuesday of the month at 6:30. All are welcome. Tree City USA designation was received again

this year, with 200 new trees being planted and invasive vines being addressed. Upcoming projects include the Climate Action Plan, more crosswalks and murals, and further addressing of invasive species. Funding requests have been submitted to the Town Manager. They have also reviewed the businesses of the commercial corridor and are looking forward to reviewing the Port Towns Sector Plan for the Gateway Corridor.

There is a meeting with Audubon Advisors on April 21 at 6:30 on how to incorporate native plantings in residents' yards.

Dueling Creek cleanup is scheduled for April 4 at 10 AM.

Bill Kopecki mentioned that there is still water coming into his yard from the alley. CPJ will come out to review.

3. Old Business – Approval of January and February Minutes (20:58)

January 6 work session, add Laura Guischart as an attendee.

January 14, add Tonya Williams as an attendee. Red light camera program brings in \$50,000 per month.

Commissioner Brooks proposed a motion to accept the January and February minutes. Commissioner Henderson seconded the motion. Salsich-Aye, Henderson-Aye, Wheatley-Aye, Givens-Aye, Brooks-Aye. Motion passes with no nays or abstentions.

4. Old Business – Approval of January and February Financial Statements (23:25)

Savings accounts were consolidated into one operating account to save on fees.

Commissioner Brooks proposed a motion to accept the January and February financial statements. Commissioner Henderson seconded the motion. Salsich-Aye, Henderson-Aye, Wheatley-Aye, Givens-Aye, Brooks-Aye. Motion passes with no nays or abstentions.

5. Public Safety Report (25:32)

Crime is at an all-time low in Maryland; homicides are the lowest since 1985.

In February, Cottage City had 71 calls for service, including a call about puppies in a van. Animal control said it was ok. One breaking and entering at the EZ storage facility. Three domestic calls for service, two in one location. Four loud music complaints, two noise complaints. Three of four loud music complaints and one of the two noise complaints came from the same residence on the 3700 block of 37th Place. They were served with a party letter and discussed the possible sanctions with the residents. Another loud music complaint came from 4000 Bladensburg Road and a party letter and discussion ensued.

A couple of people saw a body floating in the Anacostia River on Saturday. Prince George's County Homicide Unit is managing that case; it is a person who lived in Colmar Manor who had not been heard from. Foul play is not suspected.

Chief Martini has participated in the Black History Month event, Coffee with the Chief, and Desserts with Dave. On April 23 there will be pizza with the chief and on April 4 there will be an Easter egg hunt.

Commissioner Givens asked that parking on the sidewalk of 40th Avenue continue to be monitored.

6. Public Works Report (33:44)

Jorge continues to clean trash and fix areas that need attention, including the asphalt in front of Town Hall.

Some signs need to be replaced and some roads need stripes re-painted.

7. Commissioner Reports (38:31)

- Ward One – no report.
- Ward Two – Commissioner Henderson underscored Commissioner Givens' point about the 40th Avenue sidewalk being blocked. He also mentioned the need for more police officers and a full-time code enforcement officer. He wants to know the schedule for when officers are working. Town laptops need to be updated. He would like to see more traffic enforcement on 40th Avenue and Parkwood.
- Ward Three – Commissioner Wheatley attended a conference in Annapolis and flagged the Bladensburg Road pedestrian bridge repair to the county delegation and Lt. Governor Miller. Delegate Ivey does not think a youth transition center is slated to be put in Cottage City, but information is mixed. Thank you to the organizers of the Black History month event.
- Ward Four – Commissioner Givens suggested the former furniture store on Bladensburg Road for the transition center. He also suggests the chief use the speed monitoring unit and move the decoy car more often. He suggests putting bollards to protect the fire hydrant on Bunker Hill Road.
- At Large – Commissioner Brooks wants the County Parks and Planning Department to refresh the Cottage City park, especially as Colmar Manor has three recently updated parks. Commissioner Givens suggested looking for grants for soccer goals. There is already a plan for the park to be updated, including a soccer field and a walking track. John O' Connor will look for grants.

8. Old Business – FY27 Budget Presentation (1:00:55)

The town has approximately \$2 million in reserves, which is about six months of expenditures, three times the suggested minimum. Town Treasurer suggested a break-even budget for FY27.

Commissioner Henderson asked several clarifying questions which were answered by the Town Treasurer and Town Manager.

Further conversation on food share program that should be taken to December 2026. No food pantry, no summer camp.

Red light and stop light camera revenues are in the budget. Spending has been better controlled owing to better oversight.

9. Old Business – Resolution 2026-03 (1:23:47)

Resolution of the Commission to adopt a language access plan in order to receive \$62,000 reimbursement from the USDA for the purchase of a police cruiser.

Commissioner Givens proposed a motion to enact the resolution. Commissioner Brooks seconded the motion. Salsich-Aye, Henderson-Aye, Wheatley-Aye, Givens-Aye, Brooks-Aye. Motion passes with no nays or abstentions.

10. Old Business – Resolution 2026-04 (1:27:31)

Resolution of the Commission to grant permission to Prince George's County Department of the Environment to design, survey, locate utilities, test soil, locate and plant trees, and perform other duties in connection with the installation and establishment of a variety of native trees and plants in Cottage City.

Commissioner Brooks proposed a motion to enact the resolution. Commissioner Henderson seconded the motion. Salsich-Aye, Henderson-Aye, Wheatley-Aye, Givens-Aye, Brooks-Aye. Motion passes with no nays or abstentions.

11. Old Business – Resolution 2026-05 (1:29:39)

Resolution of the Commission to approve a town health and life insurance policy for employees. First \$1,000 will be paid by the town, the rest to be covered by the employee. All employees covered by a \$50,000 life insurance policy.

Commissioner Givens proposed a motion to enact the resolution. Commissioner Henderson seconded the motion. Salsich-Aye, Henderson-Aye, Wheatley-Aye, Givens-Aye, Brooks-Aye. Motion passes with no nays or abstentions.

12. Old Business – Resolution 2026-06 (1:32:21)

Resolution of the Commission to include President's Day, Native American Day, and Veterans Day, Christmas Eve, and Inauguration Day as official holiday observances.

Commissioner Brooks proposed a motion to enact the resolution. Commissioner Givens seconded the motion. Salsich-Aye, Henderson-Aye, Wheatley-Aye, Givens-Aye, Brooks-Aye. Motion passes with no nays or abstentions.

13. Old Business – Lawn Maintenance Contract (1:34:02)

American Landscaping is licensed but it seems that Shamrock Lawn Maintenance is not on the Maryland official registry of licensed landscaping businesses allowed to fertilize and apply weed control.

Discussion tabled.

14. Old Business – America in Bloom (1:38:51)

Town plans to implement their recommendations. To renew the America in Bloom membership is \$1,700 with a 20% discount making it \$1,360. There's a separate lodging fee when they come to assess the town.

Commissioner Henderson proposed a motion to renew the America in Bloom contract for \$1,700. Commissioner Brooks seconded the motion. Salsich-Aye, Henderson-Aye, Wheatley-Aye, Givens-Aye, Brooks-Aye. Motion passes with no nays or abstentions.

15. Old Business – Letter of Support for Drone Flight (1:42:11)

Supporting Warespace's plan to have a drone fly over their building to help them implement a solar panel system.

Commissioner Brooks proposed a motion to send a letter of support a drone flight over 3342 Bladensburg Road. Commissioner Henderson seconded the motion. Salsich-Aye, Henderson-Aye, Wheatley-Aye, Givens-Aye, Brooks-Aye. Motion passes with no nays or abstentions.

16. Old Business – Old Firehouse (1:44:20)

CPJ's proposal is \$235,000 for design, bidding, and administration. Information can be discussed at the April work session. This needs to get underway or the state will pull back the grant money.

Discussion tabled.

17. New Business – Resolution 2026-07 (1:52:06)

Resolution of the Commission in support of Maryland HB1142 establishing a task force to modernize county and municipal revenue sources.

Commissioner Henderson proposed a motion to enact the resolution. Commissioner Brooks seconded the motion. Salsich-Aye, Henderson-Aye, Wheatley-Aye, Givens-Aye, Brooks-Aye. Motion passes with no nays or abstentions.

18. New Business – Resolution 2026-07 (1:55:13)

Resolution of the Commission to accept a gun violence reduction grant from the Maryland Governor's Office of Crime Control and Policy. It is \$15,000 and would be applied to law enforcement overtime and associated fringe benefits to reduce gun crime.

Commissioner Brooks proposed a motion to enact the resolution. Commissioner Henderson seconded the motion. Salsich-Aye, Henderson-Aye, Wheatley-Aye, Givens-Aye, Brooks-Aye. Motion passes with no nays or abstentions.

19. New Business – Volunteer Agreement with Joseph Mayo (1:55:13)

His responsibilities are to operate the town shuttle and other town vehicles and assist with share food program. He is a volunteer with no compensation. Commissioner Givens noted that volunteers are entitled to free lunch.

Commissioner Brooks proposed a motion to adopt the volunteer agreement. Commissioner Henderson seconded the motion. Salsich-Aye, Henderson-Aye, Wheatley-Aye, Givens-Aye, Brooks-Aye. Motion passes with no nays or abstentions.

20. New Business – Performance Review Evaluation Form (2:02:34)

New evaluation form for rating employee performance. Commissioner Henderson proposes separating administrative from public works. Commissioner Wheatley proposes a field for the Commission to review the Town Manager. This is effective May 1.

Commissioner Brooks proposed a motion to adopt the employee performance evaluation form. Commissioner Givens seconded the motion. Salsich-Aye, Henderson-Aye, Wheatley-Aye, Givens-Aye, Brooks-Aye. Motion passes with no nays or abstentions.

21. Town Manager Update (2:10:10)

- Easter Egg Hunt – April 4
- Candidate Information Night – April 18
- Pizza with the Chief – April 23
- Election – May 4
- Thank you to the election supervisors, Angela Jenkins, Frederick Hill, Richard Anderson, and Demetrius Ramsey.
- Drug disposal event is April 24.

22. Public Comment (2:17:00)

Bill Kopecki wants a list of disturbances from neighbors that Chief Martini mentioned earlier. It will be put in the newsletter.

23. Move to a Closed Session (2:18:46)

Closed session proposed to be able to discuss personnel matters under Article 3-305 (b), 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, to consult with attorney to obtain legal advice, and with staff or consultants or other individuals about pending or potential litigation.

The motion to move to a closed session was made at 9:20 PM by Commissioner Brooks and seconded by Commissioner Givens. Salsich-Aye, Henderson-Aye, Wheatley-Absent, Givens-Absent, Brooks-Aye. Motion passes without nays or abstentions.

24. Report From Closed Session (2:20:22)

Town Commission, Town Manager, and Town Attorney had a discussion regarding commission teamwork.

25. Adjournment (2:21:06)

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 10:19 PM by Commissioner Brooks and seconded by Commissioner Givens. Salsich-Aye, Henderson-Aye, Wheatley-Absent, Givens-Absent, Brooks-Aye. Motion passes without nays or abstentions.