



March 2026 Work Session Minutes

Tuesday, March 3, 2026, at 6:30 PM

Virtual Meeting

3820 40th Avenue Cottage City, Maryland 20722

This meeting was hosted in person and on Zoom:

https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/PljOQZ1NiHZcNhDmfOExUczvtGHpYOxHRINBxslO4H0ndJ15tCGbOD_TmC2QCwhC.H8c0fk8GX34LjMMG?startTime=1772580609000

Phone: 301-715-8592 | Meeting ID: 824 4965 7189 | Passcode: QU4D^221

Call to Order at 6:31 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. John O'Connor – Grants Manager
9. Kevin Best – Town Attorney
10. Meagan Baco – Anacostia Trails Heritage Area

Agenda

1. Call to Order and Roll Call (0:40)

All Commissioners are present and accounted for. Agenda is fine as is, budget discussion will have to be tabled. There is the addition of a Memorandum of Understanding with the Prince George's County Gateway Development Authority. There is also a new grant from the Chesapeake Bay Trust. Commissioner Givens wants to add a ballot question for the upcoming election.

2. Public Comments (6:22)

None.

3. Presentation by Anacostia Trails Heritage Area (7:09)

AHTA is a non-profit in Prince George's County with headquarters in Hyattsville with a mission to support cultural tourism to benefit residents. Arts, history, culture, and nature tend to intersect in municipalities, especially at community events. They also examine trail connectivity and support public art.

With the 250th anniversary celebrations coming, AHTA is trying to excite people about Passport to History which would have people go to historical sites around the county. There will be a block party on Saturday, May 30 in Bowie and information can be found on www.PG250.org.

AHTA also functions as a grant-making agency with Heritage Area Authority grants and Rocket Grants of up to \$5,000.

4. Police Budget Discussion (20:00)

Chief Martini wants to raise the officer pay scale by 10% in order to remain competitive with surrounding departments and have a pay scale publicly available. He suggested a 6% increase between ranks and annual automatic yearly step increases of 3%. He is asking for \$27,122 to institute this new pay scale this year.

He is also suggesting a signing bonus, again to remain competitive. Colmar Manor offers a signing bonus of \$5,000. He also suggests \$5,000 spread out over the first three years of a new officer's tenure to entice new people and discourage job hopping.

He is also suggesting a longevity bonus, i.e. \$500 per year paid out every five years so that on every five-year anniversary you get \$500 times the number of years in service.

His calculation is that considering how much it costs to recruit, train, and outfit an officer these bonuses will pay for themselves in terms of retaining officers instead of hiring new ones regularly. Having officers remain for a long time also increases the feeling of safety and helps maintain institutional knowledge.

Commissioner Henderson does not think Cottage City can afford this. Chief Martini believes that you get what you pay for. Commissioner Wheatley is also concerned about the cost. Chief Martini responded that programmed increases are easier to budget for than ad-hoc ones. Speed cameras are projected to add \$500,000 to the town budget. Commissioner Givens noted that a pay scale was rejected previously because it would be fiscally challenging and that perhaps police staffing levels would have to be reduced in order to sustain that kind of pay scale. Commissioner Brooks would like to know where in the budget the extra policing expenses could come from.

5. Resolution 2026-03, Language Access Plan (1:08:20)

To recover \$62,000 from the USDA for a grant to purchase a new police vehicle the town needs to adopt the USDA's Supplemental Language Plan, which requires Spanish translation. The Town already meets or exceeds the requirements of this plan.

Town of Cottage City Resolution 2026-03, a resolution of the Commission of the Town of Cottage City adopting a language access plan to ensure meaningful access to town programs, services, and activities for individuals with limited English proficiency.

6. Resolution 2026-04, The Urban Tree (1:11:36)

This grant from the Maryland Department of the Environment and the Prince George's County Department of the Environment is designed to lower the temperature at no cost to the Town of Cottage City. It will mean that approximately \$600,000 to \$900,000 worth of work will be done improving the Town's tree canopy in publicly owned areas.

A resolution to approve and grant permission to the Prince George's County Department of the Environment and its authorized agents, or assigns, to allow access and entry to municipal properties and right-of-way within the Town of Cottage City in order 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.

7. Resolution 2026-05, Health Insurance (1:18:12)

A resolution to approve a town health and life insurance policy for employees of the Town. This codifies policies that already exist and adds that the town will cap payments to the first \$1,000 of health and life insurance plans. This will be codified in the Employee Handbook.

8. Resolution 2026-06, Holiday Schedule (1:28:23)

A resolution to add President's Day, Native American Day/Columbus Day, and Veteran's Day as official holiday observances.

Commissioner Brooks supports adding Christmas Eve as a holiday.

9. RFP 2026-01, Old Firehouse Architect (1:30:55)

Three options for the renovation of old firehouse.

1. Continue with previous architect, Sultan, Campbell, and Britt now that they have their license issues sorted.
2. Charles P. Johnson & Associates engineering firm, which would take 15 to 17 months to complete the project.
3. Putting out an RFP to find bids for new architects which would reset the clock.

10. Lawn Maintenance Contract (1:43:35)

Two options for lawn maintenance contracts:

1. American Landscaping contract for \$13,288 per year.
2. Shamrock contract for \$10,000 per year.

Commissioner Henderson would like a clearer contract from Shamrock. Commissioners Givens and Brooks suggest staying with Shamrock.

11. America in Bloom Renewal (1:51:11)

Winter symposium for America in Bloom will be in Alexandria in September. Should Town renew contract for \$1,700? Commission agrees that it is worth renewing.

12. Drone Flight over 3342 Bladensburg Road (1:54:39)

Ware Space contracted with Drone Drafting to fly a drone to map the rooftop of their building for the design and installation of a solar array. They need a letter of support from the Commission to request a waiver of the Federal restrictions on a one-time drone flight.

13. Memorandum of Understanding with Prince George's County Gateway Development Authority (2:02:14)

PGGDA will provide \$100,000 towards firehouse project if Memorandum of Understanding is in place.

Commissioner Wheatley wants the chair to have authority to sign off on grants so there are no unnecessary delays when a meeting of the full Commission is not possible. Commissioner Brooks thinks the Commission still needs to convene and vote on grant items. The Commission will take this week to think about what to spend the money on.

14. Chesapeake Bay Trust Award for Community Resilience (2:13:45)

\$40,000 grant for the community garden to develop a fully functional community resilience hub, i.e. expand raised garden beds, install rainwater harvesting, install solar lighting, plant trees, purchase seeds, and workshops on gardening, composting, and emergency preparedness.

15. Ballot Initiative (2:18:42)

Commissioner Givens proposed a ballot initiative to give residents the chance to weigh in on the new Public Works staffer. He feels that two full-time staff will be able to accomplish everything that needs to be done in the town. Commissioner Brooks wants all options presented to the town.

16. Adjournment (2:38:07)

The motion to adjourn was made at 9:08 PM by Commissioner Brooks and seconded by Commissioner Wheatley. Salsich-Aye, Henderson-Aye, Wheatley-Aye, Givens-Aye, Brooks-Aye. Motion passes without nays or abstentions.