



# January 2026 Regular Town Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, January 14, 2026, at 7:00 PM

Virtual and In-Person Meeting

3820 40th Avenue Cottage City, Maryland 20722

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**This meeting was hosted on Zoom:**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/Sq1UuJuwNxLPwF9BcCff5GpT4WtmDyBzYZDxywwYNjEFLovFugNFIMU2QOCUJKzD.3O4HGekKkrRr-9w5?startTime=1768434629000>

**Phone: 301-715-8592 | Meeting ID: 896 3829 4683 | Passcode: 52#zNfra**

## **Call to Order at 7:00 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. Kevin Best – Town Attorney

### **Agenda**

#### **1. Call to Order, Roll Call, and Pledge of Allegiance (14:20)**

All Commissioners are present and accounted for. Agenda OK as is.

#### **2. Public Comments (16:27)**

Tonya Williams of 4142 Bunker Hill Road expressed concern over the possible ending of the Share Food program.

#### **3. Announcement of New Chief of Police (19:44)**

Mr. David Martini will be the new Cottage City Chief of Police starting February 4, 2026. Thanks to all who participated in the search team. Salary will be \$92,000.

#### **4. Consent Agenda (23:19)**

Approval of December minutes and financial, public safety, and public works reports.

Red light camera program is bringing in approximately \$50 per month.

Discussion on funding for Share Food program.

**Commissioner Wheatley proposed a motion to transfer \$7,000 for the Share Food Program from the General Fund. Commissioner Givens seconded the motion. Salsich-Aye, Henderson-Aye, Wheatley-Aye, Givens-Aye, Brooks-Aye. Motion passes without nays or abstentions.**

**Commissioner Givens proposed a motion for approval of the December minutes and financial report. Commissioner Henderson seconded the motion. Salsich-Aye, Henderson-Aye, Wheatley-Aye, Givens-Aye, Brooks-Aye. Motion passes without nays or abstentions.**

**5. Public Safety Report (49:48)**

Acting-Chief Thompson reported a call volume of 60 calls. Seven police reports. One robbery, one break-in, and one property damage report at Extra Space Storage. No arrests made.

Code enforcement will be taken care of regarding vehicles in the town.

**6. Public Works Report (51:50)**

Department is running well. There is a plan for curb painting and stop sign repairs.

**7. Commissioner Reports (53:18)**

Ward 1 – No report.

Ward 2 – The car that is having work done on the street will be addressed as Acting-Chief Thompson noted. Someone is leaving food for cats in the middle of the street. People are also feeding vultures. Town Manager will flag something in the newsletter.

Ward 3 – Black History Month event is returning, February 21 from 2 to 4. Mr. Wellington will speak and refreshments will be served.

Ward 4 – No report.

At-Large – Identified 15 lights that Pepco needs to repair.

**8. Old Business – Ordinance 2026-01, Ticket Enforcement (1:03:09)**

First reading:

Cottage City Commission, Town of Cottage City, Ordinance Number 202601, introduced by the Commission, an ordinance of the Cottage City Commission amending Chapter 9 of the Town Code to enhance enforcement mechanisms for unpaid municipal traffic, i.e. automated speed and red-light systems, and parking violations including booting, towing, and impoundment for repeat violators, along with new municipal infraction authorized for violators, i.e, scofflaws, who commit multiple unpaid violations and generally relating to vehicles and traffic safety.

This makes a civil infraction court enforceable having gone through the judicial process. They cannot be put on credit reports. It creates two levels of collection. Rules on collection can be established by the Commission.

**9. Old Business – Resolution 2026-01, Resident Agent (1:17:52)**

A resolution of the Cottage City Commission approving the appointment of a new resident agent for the Town and authorizing the Chairman of the Commission to sign and file with the State Department of Assessments and Taxation all documents necessary to effectuate that appointment introduced by the Cottage City Commission.

Town Manager will be resident agent as authorized by Commission Chair.

**Commissioner Givens proposed a motion to authorize Resolution 2026-01. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Salsich-Aye, Henderson-Aye, Wheatley-Aye, Givens-Aye, Brooks-Aye. Motion passes without nays or abstentions.**

**10. Old Business – Resolution 2026-02, Speed Monitoring System Ombudsman (1:21:33)**

A resolution of the Cottage City Commission approving the appointment of a Speed Monitoring System Program Ombudsman and Program Administrator introduced by the Cottage City Commission. This appoints John O'Connor as the ombudsman, Acting-Chief Thompson as the administrator, and Jenny Davila-Bernal as the operator.

**Commissioner Givens proposed a motion to move forward with Resolution 2026-02. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Salsich-Aye, Henderson-Aye, Wheatley-Aye, Givens-Aye, Brooks-Aye. Motion passes without nays or abstentions.**

**11. Old Business – Professional Services Agreement with Traffic Safety Group (1:23:42)**

This is to help collect outstanding moneys owed to the town.

**Commissioner Givens proposed a motion to move forward with the Professional Services Agreement. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Salsich-Aye, Henderson-Aye, Wheatley-Aye, Givens-Aye, Brooks-Aye. Motion passes without nays or abstentions.**

**12. Old Business – Repair of Police Vehicle (1:25:15)**

Police vehicle 127 needs \$2,900 of repair. It will be ready in four days once authorized.

**Commissioner Givens proposed a motion to pay for repair to vehicle 127 in the amount of \$2,900. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Salsich-Aye, Henderson-Aye, Wheatley-Aye, Givens-Aye, Brooks-Aye. Motion passes without nays or abstentions.**

**13. Old Business – Public Works Structure (1:30:57)**

Should the town hire a part-time or full-time employee to help Jorge in Public Works? Town Manager and Commissioner Givens believe a full-time person is the right solution. Commissioners Brooks, Henderson, and Wheatley think part-time for now. The decision was made to find a part-time employee for now.

#### **14. Commission Budget Priorities and Goal Setting (1:47:10)**

Report from the retreat includes the following priorities:

- Consistent enforcement of Town Code – i.e. Port Town Motors
- Complete old firehouse/community outreach center project
- Implement business license notification
- Hire additional police officers
- Improve salary and benefits for police department
- Decide on Community Center/Town Hall property
- Create fee and fine schedule
- Replace stop signs, paint curbs and crosswalks
- Replace pedestrian bridge
- Improve Bladensburg Road streetscape
- Create Standard Operating Procedures
- Solar lighting on Anacostia Trail
- Create tree maintenance plan with County and MNCPPC
- Work with MNCPPC to improve Cottage City Park

#### **15. Old Business – Proclamation for Mr. James J. Blue (1:55:21)**

WHEREAS James J. Blue, affectionately known throughout the community as Blue, Boss, JJ, and Jerome, was born on June 13, 1943, in Washington, D.C, and lived a life defined by service, dedication, and deep love for family and community.

And WHEREAS Mr. Blue devoted 29 years of honorable service to the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, Metro, contributing to the daily mobility of countless residents and commuters, and retired in 2005, after a distinguished career marked by reliability, professionalism, care for others.

And WHEREAS, following his retirement, James J. Blue continued his commitment to public service by faithfully serving the Port Towns and the town of Cottage City as a bus driver for seniors, ensuring safe transportation, companionship and dignity for older residents, and becoming a trusted, familiar presence in their lives.

And WHEREAS Mr. Blue was known not only for his work ethic, but also for his vibrant spirit and zest for life, enjoying fishing, card playing, traveling, hand dancing, gardening, boating, cookouts, biking and playing pool, and sharing these joys generously with family and friends.

And WHEREAS he was a die-hard Washington Redskins/Commanders fan, whose loyalty and enthusiasm reflected his pride in his hometown and love of community traditions.

And WHEREAS James J. Blue was a devoted husband, father, and family man, and is survived by his loving wife of 45 years, Lois Ann Blue, a respected community advocate whose own service and leadership continue to strengthen and uplift the community.

And WHEREAS, he is also survived by his beloved children Tina Dorsey, Tyrone Blue, Eric Blue, Tracy Dorsey, Myron Anderson, Jamar Blue, Stacey Blue, and the baby Jamie Blue Porter, whose lives reflect his value of hard work, compassion, and commitment to family.

And WHEREAS the Town of Cottage City recognizes that the legacy of James J. Blue lives on through the lives that he touched, the seniors he served, the family he cherished, and the community that was made stronger by his presence.

Now, therefore, be it PROCLAIMED by the Commission of the Town of Cottage City, Maryland, that we do hereby honor and remember James J. Blue for his lifetime of service, generosity, and community spirit, and extend our deepest gratitude for his contributions and our heartfelt condolences to his family and loved ones.

Be it further proclaimed that this proclamation stands as a testament to a life well lived and a reminder that service to others leaves a lasting and meaningful legacy.

In witness whereof, the Commission of the Town of Cottage City hereunto sets their hands and caused the seal of the town to be affixed this 18th day of December 2025.

Signed, the Cottage City Commissioners, Wanda Wheatley, Commissioner Chair, Ward 3. Julia Salsich, Commissioner Ward 1. Reney Henderson, Commissioner, Ward 2. Demetrius Givens, Commissioner, Ward 4, and John Brooks, Commissioner, Vice Chair, at Large.

**Commissioner Givens proposed a motion to pass this proclamation. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Salsich-Aye, Henderson-Aye, Wheatley-Aye, Givens-Aye, Brooks-Aye. Motion passes without nays or abstentions.**

**16. New Business – Proclamation in Support of National Burn Awareness Week (2:01:18)**

A proclamation: 2026 National Burn Awareness Week is burn prevention, where you live, work, and play preventing burns in the workplace.

WHEREAS burn injuries continue to be one of the leading causes of accidental death and injury in our nation, where tragically, children, the elderly, and the disabled are especially vulnerable to burn injuries, and almost one-third of all burn injuries occur in children under the age of 15.

And WHEREAS, in the United States, the CDC reports that 398,000 people received medical care for burn injuries in 2021, with 252,000 deaths from injuries related to hot objects or substances, e.g. contact burns.

And WHEREAS, compared to the overall population children under 5 were 2.0 times as likely to be seen for burn injuries at a hospital emergency department. Young adults from 20 to 29 had 1.4 times the risk, and those in the 30-39 age group had 1.3 times the risk of the general population.

And WHEREAS the primary causes of injury include fire, flame, scalds, contact with hot objects, and electrical and chemicals, many injuries occur in the workplace. Today, 96.8% of those who suffer burn injuries will survive. Unfortunately, many of those survivors will sustain serious scarring, lifelong physical disabilities, adjustment difficulties.

And WHEREAS National Burn Awareness Week, an initiative of the American Burn Association, is a coming together of burn, fire, and life safety educators to make the public aware of the frequency, devastation, and causes of burn injury, as well as the consistent and authoritative measures to prevent these injuries, and how to best care for those who are injured.

And WHEREAS the theme of the 2026 National Burn Awareness Week is burn prevention, where you live, work, and play, preventing burns in the workplace, where a common risk of injury exists from fire injury in the workplace.

And WHEREAS, significant research and medical advances have dramatically improved burn care and treatment, aided rehabilitation, shortened hospital stays, and increased burn survival rates, aftercare support for the physical and emotional effect of burns has also played a key role in the successful reintegration of burn survivors into our communities. Furthermore, burn safety education and prevention efforts continue to reduce the number of people who suffer burns each year.

and WHEREAS many people devote their lives and careers to treating, caring for, supporting, and rehabilitating burn injury survivors, including those performing vital work in burn research and development. Dedicated firefighters risk their own lives every day to protect others, as well as burn foundations and other life safety professionals who promote burn injury awareness and prevention.

Now, therefore, the Cottage City Commission do hereby PROCLAIM the week of February 1st through February 7, 2026 as National Burn Awareness Week. We call upon all government agencies, fire, life safety, and healthcare organizations, communities, communications media, and the people of the Town of Cottage City, Maryland, to observe this week with the appropriate ceremonies and activities and witness whereof.

We have hereunto set our hands this 14th day of January in the year 2026, the Cottage City Commissioners, Wanda Wheatley, Commissioner Chair, Ward 3. Julia Salsich, Commissioner Ward 1. Reney Henderson, Commissioner, Ward 2. Demetrius Givens, Commissioner, Ward 4, and John Brooks, Commissioner, Vice Chair, at Large.

**Commissioner Givens proposed a motion to pass this proclamation. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Salsich-Aye, Henderson-Aye, Wheatley-Aye, Givens-Aye, Brooks-Aye. Motion passes without nays or abstentions.**

**17. Letter Opposing Proposed Data Center – Former Landover Mall Site (2:06:21)**

The Commission supports signing the letter as a town.

**Commissioner Givens proposed a motion to sign the letter as a Town. Commissioner Henderson seconded. Salsich-Aye, Henderson-Aye, Wheatley-Aye, Givens-Aye, Brooks-Aye. Motion passes without nays or abstentions.**

**18. Town Manager Updates (2:11:32)**

None.

Request for information on non-functional sign board with Avio.

Looking to repair doors in advance of Black History Month.

Dicks Skaggs passed away at 98 after living in Cottage City for over 60 years. Perhaps put a notice in the newsletter.

**19. Adjournment (2:17:36)**

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 9:08 PM by Commissioner Givens and seconded by Commissioner Henderson. Salsich-Aye, Henderson-Aye, Wheatley-Aye, Givens-Aye, Brooks-Aye. Motion passes without nays or abstentions.**