

# CAN Unofficial Notes on the Cambridge City Council Meeting

## August 12, 2024

6:00 pm Mayor convened Commission in Regular Session

### Agenda

#### 1. Mayor and Commissioners to approve or amend agenda as presented.

Lajan Cephas asked that item 12 be moved from Old Business and slotted after item 15. Item 15 changed to Item 14. Public Information Act, City Devices (number 15) and Council Compensation (number 12) topics are related. **The motion was approved by council members.**

### *Presentations from the Approved Guests*

#### 2. Bill Christopher, Dorchester Chamber of Commerce

Announcing 7<sup>th</sup> year of **Dorchester Goes Purple** initiative that Chamber of Commerce originated in Dorchester.  
**Motto is: "Dorchester Goes Purple, Awareness Starts at Home".**

- Multi organization effort - Police, Sheriff's Office, Chamber of Commerce, County Council, State Attorney, Moving Dorchester Forward, Vision Quest, Dorchester School System and about a dozen other organizations.
- Statistics in Dorchester 2023: 91 opioid overdose cases; 11 fatalities. Fentanyl mixed with other drugs is the deadly affect. High School Age Opioid Cases in 2022 (most recent data on school age use): 16% of high school students misusing prescription pain medication; 7% of students using heroin. Overall facts: 29% of drugs are coming from friends or loved ones for free; 22% of drugs are taken without permission. Key takeaway: Lock up your meds and take any unused portion to drop box.
- There will be 519 flags representing overdoses; 434 purple and 85 white flags representing fatalities posted on the lot at Cedar and Race Streets. See consent agenda, item 8, for details.
- Other things to promote awareness: Sport teams will get purple socks for September games, purple wristbands will be available, presentations can be given to any business that wants one, and there will be a social media presence promoting this initiative. Crisis hotlines and QR codes are available throughout the year. Community can use purple lights where appropriate to support the program.

### **Consent Agenda** (Motion and approval given to items 3 through 10.)

3. Meeting Minutes, July 8, 2024, Regular Meeting

4. Meeting Minutes, July 22, 2024, Regular Meeting

(Events 5- 10, see details attached to City Council agenda, August 12, 2024 at [choosecambridge.com](http://choosecambridge.com).)

5. The Garden Church will hold "**Community Block Party**" on **Saturday August 17, 2024**, from 4pm-6pm at the corner of Race and Cedar Street. Rain date of Saturday August 24, 2024.

6. Lisa Ballard will hold **Public Yard Sale** on **Sunday August 18, 2024**, from 6am-6pm at the corner of Race and Cedar Street. Rain date of Sunday August 25, 2024.

7. Temple of God, House of Deliverance Outreach, Inc will hold "**Community Backpack Giveaway**" on **Saturday August 24, 2024**, from 11am-1pm at Cornish Park.

8. Dorchester Chamber of Commerce will hold the following events:

a. **Purple Flag Display** from **Sunday September 1, 2024 to Monday September 30, 2024**, on the corner of Race and Cedar Street.

b. **Dorchester Goes Purple Kick-off** and Flag Presentation on Wednesday **September 4, 2024**, from 5:30 pm- 7:30 pm on the corner of Race and Cedar Street.

9. Living by Truth Ministries will hold "**Outdoor Church Service and BBQ**" on **Sunday September 15, 2024**, from 11am-5pm at Gerry Boyle Park at Great Marsh.

10. Cambridge Main Street will hold "**Taste of Cambridge**" on **Saturday October 12, 2024**, from 12pm-6pm from Poplar Street, Gay Street to Race Street. Road closure from 10am-8pm.

## **Ordinances for First Reading**

**11. ORDINANCE NO. 1240** – Continues the temporary *juvenile curfew* within the city in accordance with ORDINANCE NO. 1207 AND ORDINANCE NO. 1229, as amended, for an added period of 12 months.

- a. **Council Agenda Report from Justin Todd, Chief of Police** – (will be discussed in September)

## **Ordinances for Second Reading**

None

## **Old Business**

(Old item 12 changed to item 16 - Council Compensation moved to New Business. Approved by council members). That was the only item.

## **New Business**

### **12. T-Mobile Hometown Grant Program**

#### **a. Council Agenda Report from Steffanie Malkus, Grant Coordinator**

The City will apply for a \$50,000 grant from T-Mobile's Hometown Grant Project in August 2024. Funds will be used to install four (4) acorn style streetlamp posts on the 500 block of Pine Street. The City believes that enhancing the street lighting will significantly improve the safety and overall quality of the community. City council approved grant application 5 to 0.

### **13. Community Parks and Playgrounds Program**

#### **a. Council Agenda Report from Steffanie Malkus, Grant Coordinator**

The City will apply for approximately \$500,000 in funding from Maryland's DNR Community Parks and Playground Program in August 2024. Funds will be used for the following projects:

- Purchase 17 new picnic tables to replace existing tables
- Purchase five T-tables
- Install "poured in place safety surfacing" at Cosby, Meadow Ave and Great Marsh Parks
- Replace large playground equipment piece at Great Marsh Park
- Replace six trash cans at Cornish Park and along Rails to Trails
- Purchase six benches at Long Wharf

City council approved grant application 5 to 0.

### **14. Closed Session Report Out, Mayor Stephen Rideout**

#### **a. Special Called Meeting Minutes, July 29, 2024**

The mayor, city council members and assistant city manager met with Special Counsel Tim Maloney to obtain legal advice regarding the pending litigation with CWDI. The following items were discussed during closed session: 1. Review of confidential documents. 2. Review of candidates for a specific board to fill a vacancy. Council reconvened in open session at 8:05 pm

#### **b. Special Called Meeting Minutes, August 5, 2024**

The mayor, city council members and assistant city manager met with Special Counsel Tim Maloney to obtain legal advice regarding the pending litigation with CWDI. The following items were discussed during the closed session: 1. Obtain legal advice and consulted with Mr. Maloney regarding confidential documents. 2. Conducted interviews of candidates for a specific board to fill a vacancy.

### **15. Public Information Act, City Devices, Communication Topic**

Lajan Cephas, Ward 2, asked if it is easier to use only the city issued phone to keep city business separate from personal use data. City attorney advises: Should use city issued phone for all city business.

Brian Roche, Ward 1, said his company is using "soft" phone app on personal phone. It is possible to keep personal and city data separate with that app. One drawback: should have unlimited data on your personal phone. The attorney and Lajan Cephas, Ward 2, asked related questions - if there was a city issued soft phone used by other staff. The answer given was that Yes, staff was given the option to use it or not.

## 16. Council Compensation

### a. Council Agenda Report from Council Compensation Committee

- Have city attorney change wording in ordinance 211 to cover the changes proposed and change title to be reflective of content - Salaries, Benefits and Other Expenses of City Commissioners.

#### **Motion and approved by all council members 5-0.**

- **Salary** for new city council members (\$10,000/yr) and mayor (\$12,000/yr) will remain the same. Council president be increased to \$10,500/yr.  
More discussion about this needed if the president must take over the duties of mayor as happened to Lajan Cephas during the current city council term. When the city council member is acting as mayor, they are already entitled to the pay of mayor and city council member as stated in the charter. Lajan Cephas, Ward 2 and Council resident, feels increased compensation should be more than \$500/yr.

#### **Motion withdrawn to approve this item at this time.**

- **Benefits** – workman’s comp, Social Security, Medicare and variety of other things. Committee recommended it remain as it is – no access to these benefits. **Vote not needed** because already stated in ordinance.
- **Reimbursement** for reasonable business expenses including travel. Ordinance should have documented an annual accounting of business expenses. Spatty Cephas, Ward 4, asked question about attending beneficial conferences outside of MML. He feels the ordinance already covers the topic of business expenses. Lajan Cephas, Ward 2, overcomplicates the process and is not needed. Brian Roche, Ward 5, feels an accounting of expenses is needed. **Motion approved by city council 3-2.**
- **Tablet/ laptop** for city business upon request to council members. **Vote not needed.** This is already stated in ordinance.
- **Soft phone solution** given to city council and mayor for city business upon request. Issue a small stipend to cover additional cell phone data usage. This service would be discontinued at the end of the elected official’s term. Estimated cost would be approximately \$2,700 a year. Spatty Cephas, Ward 4, says language should be changed so council members have the option to get soft phone or use city cell phone. Lajan Cephas, Ward 2, agreed with the language change. **Motion approved by city council 4-1.**

## Meetings

All upcoming department meetings were read and are posted on [ChooseCambridge.com](http://ChooseCambridge.com)

## Public Comment

An active-duty police officer from Baltimore spoke about his security business, Nationwide Police Services, that may be beneficial to Cambridge police with areas of town that pose concern. Directed to talk with Chief Todd.

## Department/Division Head Reports

### 17. Administrative Memo

#### a. Council Agenda Report from Assistant City Manager Brandon Hesson

- Finalized list of candidates for mayor and city commissioners posted on [ChooseCambridge.com](http://ChooseCambridge.com).
- Maces Lane project - recent grant applied for to complete project was approved. The Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) asked that the city participate in a three-party lien on the property, made up of the Maces Lane community group, DHCD and the City of Cambridge. Discussion and vote at the next city council meeting on August 26.

#### City Manager Comments

- City engineer was asked to check out the **sanitary sewer system of a large area, including Longboat Estates**, where concerns had been raised, and provide an overview of it. The report is helpful and includes budget to do a study on the sewer system targeting area of concern. Any questions can be directed to city manager.
- 2 key staff positions will begin – **Planning Director, Brian Herman**, from Florida, will arrive on August 26. **Glenn Steckman, new City Manager**, starts Sep 4.

### **Commissioners' Comments**

- Lajan Cephas, Ward 2 - Bishop Dr. Carl Lewis, Ms. Cephas' uncle, a Cambridge resident, just passed. He was head of the Pentecostal Dioceses of the world and in Canada. Cambridge produces great people. Expressed hope that relationships can be renewed with CWDI, and the development can move forward.
- Sputty Cephas, Ward 4 - Apologized for not being physically present for city council meeting.
- Laurel Atkiss, Ward 1 - Get your affairs in order. Have conversation with your loved ones about how you want things handled when you no longer can decide for yourself – living will.

18. Motion to hold a **closed session** pursuant to Md. Code Ann 3-305(b)(1); to discuss personnel matters affecting specific individuals over whom the City Council has jurisdiction, § 3-305(b)(4) to consider a matter concerning a business to locate, expand, or remain in the City, § 3-305(b)(7) and (8) to obtain legal advice from, and consult with, the Special Counsel regarding pending litigation.

Upon their return from closed session, the Council indicated it was nominating 2 city representatives to an unspecified Board (assumed to be CWDI) and stated that they are waiting for the Board to accept the candidates.

Written by Alison Kennedy, CAN member