



**TOWN OF LA PLATA
Town Council Minutes**

February 10, 2026, 6:00 PM

Regular Meeting

Council Chambers, La Plata Town Hall

305 Queen Anne St.

La Plata MD

PRESENT: Mayor Jeannine James
Councilman Paul Guttenberg
Councilman Patrick McCormick
Councilman Gregory Sampson, Jr.
Councilman Tyjon Johnson

ABSENT:

TOWN STAFF: Chuck Stevens, Town Manager
Michelle Miner, Assistant Town Manager
Monica Kennedy, Director of Human Resources
Karina Larsen, Town Treasurer
Martha Tennison, Accounting Manager
Matt Norris, Chief of Police (virtual)
Mike Payne, Major
Shelby Pritchett, Town Clerk

GUESTS: Dan Kenney, Financial Auditor (Virtual)

1. Call to Order

1.1. Call to Order

Attendees, please use meeting courtesy. Virtual attendees are asked to mute microphones when joining the meeting. Participants may be muted by the Town Clerk and meetings will be recorded.

In accordance with the Open Meetings Act, the public has the right to view/listen to the discussion only. At their discretion, the Town Council may allow participants to voice questions or provide comments on the topics under discussion. Written comments may be submitted via email to Legislative@townoflaplata.org. Individuals wishing to address the Town Council may sign up in advance on the Town's website ([Public Communications](#)) or on the meeting sign-up sheet.

Join on your computer, mobile app, or room device.

[Join the meeting now](#)

Meeting ID: 271 095 028 035 62

Passcode: vp3Sh6j2

(Calendar Year 2026)

Mayor James called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

1.2. Roll Call

The Town Clerk conducted Roll Call.

1.3. Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor James led all assembled in the Pledge of Allegiance.

1.4. Approval of the Meeting Agenda

Councilman Guttenberg moved to approve the agenda as presented.

Moved By: Paul Guttenberg, seconded by Patrick McCormick.

Ayes: Mayor James, Councilman Guttenberg, Councilman McCormick, Councilman Sampson, Councilman Johnson

Nays: None

Abstained: None

Absent:

Passed

2. Disclosure of Closed Session

2.1. Disclosure of Closed Session on February 10, 2026

In accordance with the Maryland Open Meetings Act § 3-306(c)(2), Mayor James disclosed the conduct of a closed session on February 10, 2026.

PRESIDING OFFICER'S WRITTEN STATEMENT FOR CLOSING A MEETING ("CLOSING STATEMENT") UNDER THE OPEN MEETINGS ACT (General Provisions Article § 3-305) <i>This Certification Must Be Completed Before a Closed Session May Be Held</i>				
Date: <u>02/10/2026</u> Time: <u>5:00 PM</u> Location: <u>La Plata Town Hall</u> at this meeting, a motion was made by <u>Paul Guttenberg</u> and seconded by <u>Patrick McCormick</u> to conduct a closed session of the Council of the Town of La Plata.				
Recorded vote to close the meeting:				
Members	IN FAVOR	OPPOSED	ABSTAINING	ABSENT
Mayor Jeannine E. James	☒	☐	☐	☐
Councilman Paul Guttenberg	☒	☐	☐	☐
Councilman Patrick McCormick	☒	☐	☐	☐
Councilman Gregory Sampson Jr.	☒	☐	☐	☐
Councilman Tyjon Johnson	☒	☐	☐	☐
(Note: If any member of the public objects to conducting the closed session, a copy of this certification must be sent to the Maryland Open Meetings Law Compliance Board.)				
STATUTORY AUTHORITY TO CLOSE SESSION, State Government Article §3-305(b) (check all that apply):				
☐ (1) To discuss:				
☒ (i) the appointment, employment, assignment, promotion, discipline, demotion, compensation, removal, resignation, or performance evaluation of an appointee, employee, or official over whom it has jurisdiction; or				
☐ (ii) any other personnel matter that affects one or more specific individuals;				
☐ (2) protect the privacy or reputation of an individual with respect to a matter that is not related to public business;				
☐ (3) consider the acquisition of real property for a public purpose and matters directly related to the acquisition;				
☐ (4) consider a matter that concerns the proposal for a business or industrial organization to locate, expand, or remain in the State;				
☐ (5) consider the investment of public funds;				
☐ (6) consider the marketing of public securities;				
☐ (7) consult with counsel to obtain legal advice;				
☒ (8) consult with staff, consultants, or other individuals about pending or potential litigation;				
☐ (9) conduct collective bargaining negotiations or consider matters that relate to the negotiations;				
☐ (10) discuss public security, if the public body determines that public discussion would constitute a risk to the public or to public security, including:				
☐ (i) the deployment of fire and police services and staff; and				
☐ (ii) the development and implementation of emergency plans;				
☐ (11) prepare, administer, or grade a scholastic, licensing, or qualifying examination;				
☐ (12) conduct or discuss an investigative proceeding on actual or possible criminal conduct;				
☐ (13) comply with a specific constitutional, statutory, or judicially imposed requirement that prevents public disclosures about a particular proceeding or matter;				
☐ (14) discuss, before a contract is awarded or bids are opened, a matter directly related to a negotiating strategy or the contents of a bid or proposal, if public discussion or disclosure would adversely impact the ability of the public body to participate in the competitive bidding or proposal process; or				
☐ (15) discuss cybersecurity, if the public body determines that public discussion would constitute a risk to:				
☐ (i) security assessments or deployments relating to information resources technology;				
☐ (ii) network security information, including information that is:				
☐ 1. related to passwords, personal identification numbers, access codes, encryption, or other components of the security system of a governmental entity;				
☐ 2. collected, assembled, or maintained by or for a governmental entity to prevent, detect, or investigate criminal activity; or				
☐ 3. related to an assessment, made by or for a governmental entity or maintained by a governmental entity, of the vulnerability of a network to criminal activity; or				
☐ (iii) deployments or implementation of security personnel, critical infrastructure, or security devices.				

**PRESIDING OFFICER'S WRITTEN STATEMENT FOR CLOSING A MEETING ("CLOSING STATEMENT") UNDER THE
OPEN MEETINGS ACT (General Provisions Article § 3-305)**
This Certification Must Be Completed Before a Closed Session May Be Held

For each citation checked the reasons for closing and topics to be discussed:

- (8) Topic: Pending Maryland Department of the Environment litigation
Reason for Closure: Discussion involves communication regarding pending litigation, not appropriate for public disclosure

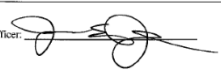
Persons attending closed session:

Mayor Jeannine James	Councilman Tyjon Johnson	James Jeffcoat
Councilman Paul Guttenberg	Town Manager Chuck Stevens	
Councilman Patrick McCormick	Assistant Town Manager Michelle Miner	
Councilman Gregory Sampson Jr.	Mr. Todd Pounds	

Action(s) Taken:

- (8) Legal Consultation: The Town's Special Counsel provided legal updates and consultation on matters within attorney-client privilege. The discussion involved communications regarding litigation with the Maryland Department of the Environment, not appropriate for public disclosure.

Time closed session adjourned: 5:44 PM

This statement is made by Mayor Jeannine James, Presiding Officer: 

3. Petitions, Communications, Appearances and Public Comment

3.1. Public Comment

No public speakers were present at this meeting.

3.2. Fiscal Year 2025 Audit Presentation

Dan Kenney from Mitchel Titus Company presented his audit report for the Town of La Plata.

3.3. Fiscal Year 2026 Budget Performance

The Town Treasurer provided a 2026 Budget Performance presentation to the Town Council and answered questions.

4. Matters of Council Discussion

4.1. Dorchester Community Center

The Town Manager presented to the Town Council the historical background and status of the Dorchester Community Center. The Town Council reached a consensus to direct the Town Manager to explore viable options to bring to the Council for review and decision on the ability to move the project forward.

4.2. Law Enforcement Officers Pension System (LEOPS)

The Town Manager, Town Treasurer, and Director of Human Resources answered questions from the Town Council regarding the impact of transferring the current pension plan for the La Plata Police Department to the Law Enforcement Officers' Pension System (LEOPS). The Town Council reached a consensus to proceed with the transfer to LEOPS. Mayor James opted for requesting additional information.

5. Legislation

5.1. Ordinance 26-01 Town of La Plata Employee Handbook (Second Reading; For Consideration of Adoption)

AN ORDINANCE concerning

Town of La Plata Employee Handbook

FOR the purpose of rescinding the personnel rules and regulations of the Town of La Plata, as adopted August 2013, and adopting a new comprehensive Employee Handbook; and all matters generally relating thereto.

Councilman Johnson moved to adopt ordinance 26-01 as presented.

Moved By: Tyjon Johnson, seconded by Paul Guttenberg.

Ayes: Mayor James, Councilman Guttenberg, Councilman McCormick, Councilman Sampson, Councilman Johnson

Nays: None

Abstained: None

Absent:

Passed

5.2. Ordinance 26-02 Amendment of Fiscal Year 2026 Financial Plan-Budget (Second Reading; For Introduction)

AN ORDINANCE concerning

Amendment to Town of La Plata Fiscal Year 2026 Financial Plan/Budget

FOR the purpose of amending the Town of La Plata Fiscal Year 2026 (FY26) Financial Plan/Budget to reflect a realignment of the La Plata Police Department; and all matters generally relating thereto.

Councilman McCormick moved to adopt 26-02 as presented.

Moved By: Patrick McCormick, seconded by Gregory Sampson.

Ayes: Mayor James, Councilman Guttenberg, Councilman McCormick, Councilman Sampson, Councilman Johnson

Nays: None

Abstained: None

Absent:

Passed

6. New Business

6.1. Town Manager's Operational Report (Written Only)

6.2. Treasurer's Report (Written Only)

6.3. Cash Disbursement Report (Written Only)

6.4. Reports from the Mayor and Town Council

Councilman Guttenberg reported that the Planning Commission approved keeping the public record open for the Adequate Public Facilities Order public hearing, and the Charles County Library Major Site Plan was approved. Councilman McCormick reported the reasoning for his absence during the January 27, 2026, regular meeting and informed the Town Council that he requested a Charter Amendment agenda item for a future agenda. Councilman Sampson reported on participation in a Democratic meeting. Councilman Johnson had no report. Mayor James reported on the selection of Todd Pounds as Town Attorney.

7. Adjourn

7.1. Adjournment

Mayor James adjourned the meeting at 8:17 PM.

Submitted by:

Shelby Pritchett, Town Clerk