



**TOWN OF LA PLATA**  
**Town Council Minutes**  
March 17, 2026, 8:00 AM  
Special Meeting - Budget Work Session  
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  
Kelly Phipps, Director of Legislative Services  
Monica Kennedy, Director of Human Resources  
Don Dooley, Director of Planning  
Karina Larsen, Town Treasurer  
Martha Tennison, Accounting Manager  
Colleen Wilson, Procurement and Asset Manager  
Aaron Mosrie, Director of Inspections  
Matt Norris, Acting Chief of Police  
Wilson Cochran, Director of Public Works  
Kirk Parks, Wastewater Superintendent  
Shelby Pritchett, Town Clerk

**GUESTS:**

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](mailto: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.**

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Meeting ID: 271 095 028 035 62

Passcode: vp3Sh6j2

(Calendar Year 2026)

Mayor James called the meeting to order at 08:00 AM.

## 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 Johnson moved to approve the agenda 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**

## 2. Department Budget Briefings

### 2.1. Budget Intro, Fees and Tax Rate Assumptions, General Fund Summary

Mayor James, the Town Manager, and the Town Treasurer provided introductions to the budget, fees, tax rate assumptions, and a general fund summary. The Town Manager and Town Treasurer answered initial budget questions from the Council.

### 2.2. Administration & Community Promotions

Legislative

Human Resources

The Assistant Town Manager gave a brief overview of administration, community promotions, information technology, and general service statuses and funding needs. The Town Manager and Assistant Town Manager addressed questions regarding IT capital projects and Operation CleanUp.

The Director of Legislative Services provided a department overview, including budgetary details, and addressed the Council's questions regarding the next community surveys, Keep La Plata

Beautiful, ADA compliance, and legal fees.

The Director of Human Resources provided a departmental overview of budgetary details and addressed the Council's questions on leave sellback, compensation studies, employee benefits, health exam expenses, and attorney fees. The Town Manager and Director of Human Resources acknowledged a need for staff to come back to Council with more information on compensation studies.

Mayor James departed to support a community ribbon-cutting event at 8:19 AM, citing Councilman Tyjon Johnson as Mayor Pro Tem and Presiding Officer of the meeting until Mayor James returned at 8:56 AM.

### 2.3. Break

The Town Council and staff recessed for a 13-minute break before continuing the meeting.

### 2.4. Finance

Planning

Code Enforcement

The Town Treasurer presented the Finance Department budget, addressing questions from the Council and Town Manager on budgeting applications, AI integration, Local Government Insurance Trust (LGIT), contract services, capital projects, fuel expenses, staffing, paperless billing, fringe benefits, LaPlata Community Foundation Grants, and legal fees.

The Director of Planning provided a department overview, including FY2027 budgetary details, and addressed the Council's questions on funds to address pedestrian safety, land use contracts, Historic Preservation Commission expenses, staffing, major site plans, and the Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance.

The Director of Code Enforcement provided a department overview, including FY2027 budgetary details, and addressed the Council's questions on Plan Check, Town Code, burn ordinances, false alarms, community cleanliness, police assistance, professional certifications, and additional staffing needs.

### 2.5. Lunch

Council and staff recessed for lunch immediately following the completion of the Work Force Compensation discussion at 12:02 PM, and the meeting resumed at 12:33 PM.

### 2.6. Work Force Compensation

LPPD

The Director of Human Resources presented on Work Force Compensation and FY 2027 budgetary impacts, answering questions from the Council on market increases, service recognition programs, leave sellback, new positions, performance appraisals, bonuses, retention, legacy

positions, and pay scales. The Town Manager and Director of Human Resources acknowledged that staff owes Council a draft org chart.

The Chief of Police provided a departmental overview, including FY2027 budgetary details, addressing questions from the Council on staffing, overtime hours, call logging, agency service duplicity, CODY software and crime types.

## 2.7. Break

The Town Council and staff recessed for a 17-minute break before continuing the meeting.

## 2.8. Public Works

Waste Water

Capital Improvement Plan

The Director of Public Works provided a departmental overview, including FY2027 budgetary details, and answered questions from the Council on staffing, facilities, salary matching for public works staff in arduous duties roles, parks, response times, and Highway User Revenue (HUR). The Town Manager and Director of Human Resources acknowledged a need for staff to provide ideas and recommendations on additional compensation for public works staff.

The Stormwater Utility Manager provided a brief overview of duties and FY2027 budgetary details, answering questions from the Council on Mason's Law, legal fees, easements, and major drainage projects.

The Wastewater Superintendent provided a departmental overview, including FY2027 budgetary details, and answered questions from the Council on overtime, staffing, meter upgrades, retention, trainee partnerships, fees, and upcoming major projects.

The Town Manager, Director of Public Works & Wastewater Superintendent addressed the Council's questions on capital improvement projects, including the Dorchester Community Center, La Plata Firehouse, Wills Park, La Plata Bikeway, southwest access management, roll-down vehicles, trash truck replacement, street paving, lead service line study, Wills Park amphitheater, new police facility, comprehensive master facility study. The Director of Public Works acknowledged the request for a prioritized list to address park upgrades needed. The Town Council reached a consensus not to go forward with the Wills Park amphitheater; Mayor James declined to answer due to not enough information.

## 2.9. Wrap Up, Next Steps

The Town Manager and Martha Tennison provided a brief summary of the responses and follow-up tasks that staff owe to Council based on the day's budget discussions.

3. Adjourn

3.1. Adjournment

Mayor James adjourned the meeting at 4:13 PM.

Submitted by:

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Shelby Pritchett, Town Clerk