



**TOWN OF LA PLATA**  
**Town Council Minutes**  
April 14, 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  
Todd Pounds, Town Attorney  
Monica Kennedy, Director of Human Resources (virtual)  
Karina Larsen, Town Treasurer  
Matt Norris, Chief of Police (virtual)  
Mike Payne, Major  
Kelly Phipps, Director of Legislative Services  
Shelby Pritchett, Town Clerk

**GUESTS:**

1. Call to Order

1.1. Meeting Attendance and Decorum

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.**

[Join the meeting now](#)

Meeting ID: 271 095 028 035 62

Passcode: vp3Sh6j2

(Calendar Year 2026)

In accordance with the Code of Maryland, General Provisions, Section 3-302 (Open Meetings Act), notice is hereby given that a portion of this meeting will be held in closed session.

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 Gregory Sampson.

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

Nays: None

Abstained: None

Absent:

**Passed**

2. Consent Agenda

Councilman Guttenberg moved to approve the consent agenda as presented.

Moved By: Paul Guttenberg, seconded by Patrick McCormick.

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

Nays: Councilman Johnson

Abstained: None

Absent:

**Passed**

2.1. Board of Appeals Appointment - Hawkins

2.2. Design Review Board Appointment - McCourt

### 2.3. Ethics Commission Appointments

### 2.4. Adoption of Resolution 26-15 Public Works Department Trash Truck Purchase

### 2.5. Adoption of Resolution 26-23 Wastewater Treatment Plant Compliance Support Services

## 3. Petitions, Communications, Appearances and Public Comment

### 3.1. Public Comment

No public speakers were present at this meeting.

### 3.2. Arbor Day Proclamation

Councilman Guttenberg conducted a reading of the Arbor Day Proclamation on behalf of the Town Council.

## 4. Matters of Council Discussion

### 4.1. Charles County Tax Differential

The Town Manager verified there were no further questions or discussions from the Town Council and recommended closing out the agenda item as it was previously discussed at the 5:00 PM Special Meeting on April 14, 2026. The Town Council concurred.

### 4.2. Agenda Item Request: Boards and Commissions Interview Process (Johnson)

Councilman Johnson gave a brief overview of the agenda item request and answered questions from Council. The Town Council reached a consensus to place the item on a future agenda.

### 4.3. Agenda Item Request: Public Hearing Notification Process (Johnson)

Councilman Johnson gave a brief overview of the agenda item request and answered questions from Council. The Town Council reached a consensus to refer the agenda item request to the Town Manager, directing the use of the Town of La Plata's regular social media platforms in addition to the legally required Public Hearing Notification methods to ensure maximum public outreach.

### 4.4. Governance Documents

The Town Council reviewed three draft governance documents: the Rules of Procedure, the Code of Conduct, and Resign to Run.

Council directed the Town Manager to implement multiple edits to the Rules of Procedure.  
Council directed the Town Manager to dismantle the draft Code of Conduct, retain only the Civility Code as a standalone resolution, and extract the anti-harassment provisions for presentation as a standalone ordinance with the requested edits.  
Council directed the Town Manager to update the Resign to Run policy to include all Council-requested edits.

## 5. Legislation

### 5.1. Ordinance 26-03 Resign to Run (First Reading; For Introduction)

AN ORDINANCE concerning

Resign to Run

FOR the purpose of amending Chapter 17 – Elections, requiring current officials, elected or otherwise, of the Town of La Plata seeking candidacy through any Board of Elections for a position other than re-election to the same office, to resign from their current position with the Town; and all matters generally relating thereto.

Ordinance No. 26-03 Resign to Run was presented for consideration. Mayor James asked if there was a motion to adopt the ordinance. No motion was made. Without a motion, no action was taken, and the ordinance was not adopted.

### 5.2. Resolution 26-21 Revision of Town Council Rules of Procedure (For Introduction and Consideration of Adoption)

A RESOLUTION concerning

Revision of Town Council Rules of Procedure

FOR the purpose of revising the rules and guidelines by which the Council of the Town of La Plata (Town Council) operates; and all matters related thereto.

Resolution No. 26-21, Town Council Rules of Procedure, was presented for consideration. Mayor James asked if there was a motion to adopt the resolution. No motion was made. Without a motion, no action was taken, and the resolution was not adopted.

### 5.3. Resolution 26-22 Code of Conduct (For Introduction and Consideration of Adoption)

A RESOLUTION concerning

Code of Conduct

FOR the purpose of formally adopting a Code of Conduct to govern the conduct of elected officials, appointed officials, staff, applicants, and members of the public participating in the

affairs of the Town of La Plata; affirming standards of respectful engagement in the conduct of Town business; and all matters generally relating thereto.

Resolution No. 26-22, Town Council Rules of Procedure, was presented for consideration. Mayor James asked if there was a motion to adopt the resolution. No motion was made. Without a motion, no action was taken, and the resolution was not adopted.

## 6. New Business

### 6.1. Town Manager's Operational Report

The Town Manager gave a brief operational report. The Council reached a consensus to direct the Town Manager to prepare a proclamation for presentation at the May 12th, 2026 regular meeting in support of Bike to Work Day on May 15th, 2026.

### 6.2. Treasurer's Report (Written Only)

### 6.3. Cash Disbursement Report (Written Only)

### 6.4. Future Agenda Forecast (Written Only)

### 6.5. Reports from the Mayor and Town Council

The Mayor and Town Council reported on activities in their respective boards and commissions, and on current and upcoming events and activities in the town.

## 7. Motion for a Closed Session

### 7.1. Statutory Authority to Close Session: § 3-305(b)(7) to consult with counsel to obtain legal advice

Topic: Maryland Department of the Environment litigation

Reason for Closure: Discussion involves communications regarding litigation, not appropriate for public disclosure

Councilman Guttenberg moved to enter closed session under statutory authority § 3-305(b)(7) to consult with counsel to obtain legal advice.

Moved By: Paul Guttenberg, seconded by Gregory Sampson.

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

Nays: None

Abstained: None

Absent:

8. Adjourn

8.1. Adjournment

Mayor James adjourned the meeting at 11:07 PM.

Submitted by:

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Shelby Pritchett, Town Clerk

**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*

Date: 04/14/2026 Time: 6:00 PM Location: La Plata Town Hall at this meeting, a motion was made by Paul Guttenberg and seconded by Gregory Sampson, Jr. to conduct a closed session of the Council of the Town of La Plata.

**Recorded vote to close the meeting:**

<u>Members</u>	<u>IN FAVOR</u>	<u>OPPOSED</u>	<u>ABSTAINING</u>	<u>ABSENT</u>
Mayor Jeannine E. James	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Councilman Paul Guttenberg	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Councilman Patrick McCormick	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Councilman Gregory Sampson Jr.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Councilman Tyjon Johnson	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**(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.

