



TOWN OF LA PLATA
Town Council Minutes

May 12, 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
Matt Norris, Chief of Police
Shelby Pritchett, Town Clerk

GUESTS: Anthony Olekson, COA Barrett LLC.
Brent Hutchinson, COA Barrett LLC.

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. 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.

No portion of this meeting was held in closed session.

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 Sampson moved to amend the agenda to include Resign to Run as item 4.7 and Ordinance 26-03 as item 5.11.

Moved By: Gregory Sampson, seconded by Patrick McCormick.

Ayes: Councilman McCormick, Councilman Sampson, Councilman Johnson

Nays: Mayor James, Councilman Guttenberg

Abstained: None

Absent:

Passed

2. Petitions, Communications, Appearances and Public Comment

2.1. Dorchester Community Center Presentation

Anthony Olekson and Brent Hutchison of COA Barrett, LLC, virtually presented the phased plan and projected costs for the Dorchester Community Center Project. The Town Manager and representatives from COA Barrett, LLC answered questions from the Town Council.

2.2. Proclamation: National Police Week (May 10-16, 2026)

Mayor James read the National Police Week Proclamation on behalf of the Town Council.

2.3. Proclamation: Bike to Work Day (May 15, 2026)

Councilman Guttenberg read the Bike to Work Day Proclamation on behalf of the Town Council.

2.4. Proclamation: National Public Works Week (May 17-23, 2026)

Councilman Johnson read the National Public Works Week Proclamation on behalf of the Town Council.

2.5. Public Comment

No public speakers were present at this meeting.

3. Consent Agenda

Councilman Johnson moved to approve the consent agenda as presented.

Moved By: Tyjon Johnson, seconded by Gregory Sampson

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

Nays: None

Abstained: None

Absent:

Passed

3.1. Adoption of Resolution 26-28 Financial Auditing Services - Award of Contract

4. Matters of Council Discussion

4.1. Town Council Board and Commission Assignments

The Town Manager provided a brief overview of current assignments. Mayor James requested volunteers for the ex officio vacancies. The Town Council reached consensus to assign Councilman Guttenberg to the Sustainability Advisory Committee and Councilman McCormick to the Historic Preservation Commission, with the condition that Councilman McCormick attend virtually. All other ex officio assignments remain unchanged. Mayor James nominated Councilman Guttenberg to serve as Mayor Pro Tem, and Councilman McCormick seconded. The Town Council reached consensus to confirm Councilman Guttenberg as Mayor Pro Tem.

4.2. Memorandum of Understanding with Maryland State Highway Administration - Waterline Replacement

The Town Manager gave a brief report and answered questions from the Town Council. The Town Council reached a consensus to proceed with legislation.

4.3. MD 6 Streetscape Project — Pedestrian Lighting Options

The Town Manager gave a brief report and answered questions from the Town Council. The Town Council reached a consensus to proceed with Option A: US 301 to Willow Lane (full corridor) pedestrian lighting.

4.4. Town Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy

The Town Manager gave a brief report and answered questions from the Town Council. The Town Council reached a consensus to proceed with legislation.

4.5. Employee Handbook Update

The Town Manager gave a brief report. The Town Manager and Director Kennedy addressed the questions and concerns from the Town Council. The Town Council reached a consensus to proceed with legislation.

4.6. Dorchester Community Center

The Town Manager gave a brief report and answered questions from the Town Council. The Town Council reached a consensus to move forward with the staff recommendations.

4.7. Resign to Run

Note: This item was added to the agenda by majority vote during agenda item 1.4, Approval of the Meeting Agenda

Councilman Sampson addressed concerns with the Town Council and the Town Manager regarding the item not being reflected on the original agenda. There was a unanimous consensus not to forward the item to legislation.

5. Legislation

5.1. Ordinance 26-04 Sustainability Advisory Committee (Green Team)(Second Reading; For Consideration of Adoption)

AN ORDINANCE concerning

Sustainability Advisory Committee (Green Team)

FOR the purpose of creating a Sustainability Advisory Committee (Green Team); and all matters generally relating thereto.

Councilman Sampson moved to adopt Ordinance 26-04 as presented.

Moved By: Gregory Sampson, seconded by Paul Guttenberg.

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

Nays: None

Abstained: None

Absent:

Passed

5.2. Ordinance 26-05 Anti-Harassment Policy for Elected Officials (Second Reading; For Consideration of Adoption)

AN ORDINANCE concerning

Anti-Harassment Policy for Elected Officials

FOR the purpose of adopting an Anti-Harassment Policy applicable to elected officials of the Town of La Plata; establishing a framework for responding to complaints of harassment made against elected officials; providing standards of conduct; and generally relating to the protection of Town officials, employees, and others from harassing conduct in connection with Town business.

Councilman McCormick moved to adopt Ordinance 26-05 as presented.

Moved By: Patrick McCormick, seconded by Paul Guttenberg.

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

Nays: None

Abstained: None

Absent:

Passed

5.3. Ordinance 26-06 Town of La Plata Fiscal Year 2027 Financial Plan/Budget (Second Reading; For Consideration of Adoption)

AN ORDINANCE concerning

Town of La Plata Fiscal Year 2027 Financial Plan/ Budget

FOR the purpose of adopting the Town of La Plata Fiscal Year 2027 Financial Plan/Budget; and all matters generally relating thereto.

Councilman McCormick moved to adopt Ordinance 26-06 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

- 5.4. Ordinance 26-07 Town of La Plata Fiscal Year 2027 Fee Schedule (Second Reading; For Consideration of Adoption)

AN ORDINANCE concerning

Town of La Plata Fiscal Year 2027 Fee Schedule

FOR the purpose of adopting the Fee Schedule, dealing with fees set by the Town of La Plata; and all matters generally relating thereto.

Councilman Sampson moved to adopt Ordinance 26-07 as presented.

Moved By: Gregory Sampson, seconded by Tyjon Johnson.

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

Nays: None

Abstained: None

Absent:

Passed

- 5.5. Ordinance 26-08 Town of La Plata Fiscal Year 2027 Tax Rate (Second Reading; For Consideration of Adoption)

AN ORDINANCE concerning

Town of La Plata Fiscal Year 2027 Tax Rate

FOR the purpose of adopting the Town of La Plata Fiscal Year 2027 Tax Rate; and all matters generally relating thereto.

Councilman McCormick moved to adopt Ordinance 26-08 as presented.

Moved By: Patrick McCormick, seconded by Paul Guttenberg.

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

Nays: None

Abstained: None

Absent:

Passed

- 5.6. Ordinance 26-09 Chapter 191 – Zoning Ordinance for the Town of La Plata, Maryland (Second Reading; For Consideration of Adoption)

AN ORDINANCE concerning

Chapter 191 – Zoning Ordinance for the Town of La Plata, Maryland

FOR the purpose of amending the Zoning Ordinance to comprehensively update the Town Zoning Ordinance, requiring the demonstration of adequate public infrastructure capacity prior to development approval; and all matters generally relating thereto.

Councilman Guttenberg moved to adopt Ordinance 26-09 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

5.7. Ordinance 26-10 Chapter 173 - Subdivision and Land Development (Second Reading; For Consideration of Adoption)

AN ORDINANCE concerning

Chapter 173 – Subdivision and Land Development

FOR the purpose of amending Chapter 173, Subdivision and Land Development, redefining the process by which annual school seat allocations are calculated and establishing a formal Development Agreement process; and all matters generally relating thereto.

Councilman Johnson moved to adopt Ordinance 26-10 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

5.8. Ordinance 26-11 Revision of Employee Handbook (First Reading; For Introduction)

AN ORDINANCE concerning

Revision of Employee Handbook

FOR the purpose of amending certain personnel rules and regulations regarding policies on Civility in the Workplace, Gift Acceptance, Workplace Communication, Vacation Accrual, Sale of Leave, and Heat-Related Illness Prevention and Management in the Town's Employee Handbook; and all matters generally relating thereto.

The Town Manager conducted a first reading for introduction.

- 5.9. Resolution 26-29 Memorandum of Understanding – Maryland State Highway Administration – Maryland Route 6 (Charles Street) from US Route 301 to Willow Lane Waterline Project (For Introduction and Consideration of Adoption)

A RESOLUTION concerning

Memorandum of Understanding – Maryland State Highway Administration – Maryland Route 6 (Charles Street) from US Route 301 to Willow Lane Waterline Project

FOR the purpose of authorizing the Town Manager to execute a Memorandum of Agreement with the Maryland State Highway Administration related to the construction of a new waterline concurrent with improvements along Maryland Route 6 (Charles Street) from US Route 301 to Willow Lane; and all matters relating thereto.

Councilman Guttenberg moved to adopt Resolution 26-29 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

- 5.10. Resolution 26-30 Town of La Plata Artificial Intelligence Policy (For Introduction and Consideration of Adoption)

A RESOLUTION concerning

Town of La Plata Artificial Intelligence Policy

FOR the purpose of adopting the Town of La Plata Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy; and all matters relating thereto.

Councilman Sampson moved to adopt Resolution 26-30 as presented.

Moved By: Gregory Sampson, seconded by Tyjon Johnson.

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

Nays: None

Abstained: None

Absent:

Passed

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

Note: This item was added to the agenda by majority vote during agenda item 1.4, Approval of the Meeting Agenda

AN ORDINANCE concerning

Resign to Run

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

Mayor James called for a motion to adopt Ordinance 26-03; no motion was heard. Ordinance 26-03 failed.

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. Future Agenda Forecast (Written Only)

6.5. Reports from the 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. Adjourn

7.1. Adjournment

Mayor James adjourned the meeting at 9:27 PM.

Submitted by:

Shelby Pritchett, Town Clerk