



TOWN OF LA PLATA
Town Council Minutes
June 23, 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
Don Dooley, Director of Planning
Karina Larsen, Town Treasurer
Matt Norris, Chief of Police
Kelly Phipps, Director of Legislative Services
Shelby Pritchett, Town Clerk

GUESTS: Puskar Kar, Brudis & Associates (virtual)
Jill Miller, Chesapeake Insurance Trust

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)

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 Tyjon Johnson.

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 June 23, 2026

In accordance with the Maryland Open Meetings Act § 3-306(c)(2), Mayor James disclosed the conduct of a closed session on June 23, 2026.

3. Public Hearing - Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance - Roads

3.1. Call to Order (Presiding Officer)

Mayor James called the public hearing to order at 6:03 PM.

3.2. Review of Public Notices (Town Clerk)

The Town Clerk conducted a review of public notices.

3.3. Summary of Town Staff Report and Recommendation

The Town Manager gave a brief summary of the Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance - Roads Zoning Text Amendment (ZTA 02-2026).

3.4. Questions by the Town Council to Town Staff

The Town Manager, the Director of Planning, and Puskar Kar answered questions from the Town Council.

3.5. Written Documents Entered into the Record (Town Clerk)

No additional written documents were entered into the record beyond those provided from the Planning Commission Public Hearing.

3.6. Speakers from the Public

No public speakers were present at this public hearing.

3.7. Additional Questions by the Town Council

There were no additional questions from the Town Council.

3.8. Closing of Public Hearing

The Town Council reached a consensus to close the public hearing and to proceed with legislation. Mayor James closed the public hearing at 6:21 PM.

4. Consent Agenda

Councilman Guttenberg moved to approve the consent 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

4.1. Approval of Minutes from Regular Meetings on May 12, 2026, and May 26, 2026

4.2. Adoption of Resolution 26-36 La Plata Police Department Fiscal Year 2027 Vehicle Purchase

4.3. Adoption of Resolution 26-38, Charles County Public Library - Amendment to Ground Lease

5. Petitions, Communications, Appearances and Public Comment

5.1. Public Comment

Public Comment was given by:

- Maggie Larrick (Town Resident) spoke on the topic of the Town Council's proposed charter amendment.
- Tanisha Woodland (Town Resident) spoke on the topic of traffic lanes.
- Mike Gahan (Town Resident) spoke on behalf of the Port Tobacco Players on the topic of the MD Route 6 streetscape project.
- Jamie Smith (Volunteer Fire & EMS) spoke on the topic of the MD Route 6 streetscape project.

Written comments on the topic of the MD Route 6 streetscape project were received from Jennifer Howard. The Town Clerk provided the written comment to the Town Council via email and paper forms.

5.2. Chesapeake Insurance Trust Presentation

Jill Miller from Chesapeake Insurance Trust presented a dividend return check to the Town of La Plata in the amount of \$110,518.

6. Matters of Council Discussion

6.1. Policy on Requests for Letters of Support or Recommendation

The Town Manager gave a summary of the proposed Policy on Requests for Letters of Support or Recommendation and answered questions from the Town Council. The Town Council reached a consensus to proceed with legislation.

6.2. Letter of Support - Maryland Department of Transportation/State Highway Administration

The Town Manager gave a summary of the Letter of Support and answered questions from the Town Council. The Town Council reached a consensus to proceed with legislation. Councilman Sampson voted in opposition.

7. Legislation

7.1. Ordinance 26-14 Revision of Employee Handbook (Second Reading; For Consideration of Adoption)

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.

Councilman Guttenberg moved to adopt Ordinance 26-14 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

7.2. Ordinance 26-03 Resign to Run (Second Reading; For Consideration of Adoption)

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.

Councilman Johnson moved to adopt Ordinance 26-03 as presented.

Moved By: Tyjon Johnson, seconded by Patrick McCormick.

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

Nays: Mayor James

Abstained: None

Absent:

Passed

- 7.3. Ordinance 26-15 Chapter 191 - Zoning Ordinance for the Town of La Plata, Maryland - Roads (First Reading; For Introduction)

AN ORDINANCE concerning

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

FOR the purpose of amending Article X of the Zoning Ordinance of the Town of La Plata to include processes for creating, managing, and maintaining adequate public road facilities in the Town of La Plata; and all matters generally relating thereto.

The Town Manager conducted a first reading for introduction.

- 7.4. Resolution 26-37 Town of La Plata Policy on Letters of Support or Recommendation (For Introduction and Consideration of Adoption)

A RESOLUTION concerning

Town of La Plata Policy on Requests for Letters of Support or Recommendation

FOR the purpose of defining an administrative framework for processing requests for Letters of Support or Letters of Recommendation from the Town of La Plata; and all matters relating thereto.

Councilman McCormick moved to adopt Resolution 26-37 as presented.

Moved By: Patrick McCormick, seconded by Tyjon Johnson.

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

Nays: None

Abstained: None

Absent:

Passed

- 7.5. Resolution 26-39 Maryland State Highway Administration – Letter of Support (For Introduction and Consideration of Adoption)

A RESOLUTION concerning

Maryland State Highway Administration – Letter of Support

FOR the purpose of authorizing the Mayor to execute a Letter of Support to the Maryland State Highway Administration relating to the Maryland State Highway Administration MD Route 6 Streetscape Improvement Project; and all matters generally relating thereto.

Councilman McCormick moved to adopt Resolution 26-39 as presented.

Moved By: Patrick McCormick, seconded by Paul Guttenberg.

Council conducted a discussion before making final votes.

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

Nays: Councilman Sampson

Abstained: None

Absent:

Passed

8. New Business

8.1. 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.

9. Adjourn

9.1. Adjournment

Mayor James adjourned the meeting at 7:34 PM.

Submitted by:

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: 06/23/2026 Time: 5:00 PM Location: La Plata Town Hall at this meeting, a motion was made by Paul Guttenberg
and seconded by Patrick McCormick 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	☒	☐	☐	☐
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.

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

**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

- (7) **Topic:** Town Manager Performance Appraisal
Reason for Closure: Discussion concerns the evaluation of an individual employee.

Persons attending closed session:

Mayor Jeannine James	Councilman Tyjon Johnson	
Councilman Paul Guttenberg	Ms. Emily Groo, Zelos LLC	
Councilman Patrick McCormick		
Councilman Gregory Sampson Jr.		

Action(s) Taken:

- (1)(i) **Topic:** Town Manager Performance Appraisal
Reason for Closure: Discussion concerns evaluation of an individual employee

Time closed session opened: 5:06 PM

Time closed session adjourned: 5:33 PM

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

