



TOWN OF LA PLATA
Town Council Minutes

July 28, 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
Wilson Cochran, Director of Public Works
Danny Wood, Assistant Director of Public Works
Monica Kennedy, Director of Human Resources
Karina Larsen, Town Treasurer
Matt Norris, Chief of Police
Kelly Phipps, Director of Legislative Services
Lucinda Anderson, Special Events Coordinator
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. 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 Gregory Sampson

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 July 28, 2026

In accordance with the Maryland Open Meetings Act § 3-305(b)(7), Mayor James disclosed the conduct of a closed session on July 28, 2026.

3. 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

3.1. Approval of Minutes from June 9, 2026, and June 23, 2026

3.2. Adoption of Resolution 26-40, Public Works Trash Truck Purchase

3.3. Adoption of Resolution 26-44 Public Works Pickup Truck Purchase

3.4. Adoption of Resolution 26-42 Water and Sewer Facilities – Professional Engineering Services - McCrone

3.5. Adoption of Resolution 26-46 General Engineering Services – CDM Smith, Inc.

3.6. Adoption of Resolution 26-43 Wastewater Treatment Plant MOD 2 Emergency Repair

3.7. Adoption of Resolution 26-45 Heritage Green Parkway Road and Drainage Improvements Project - Award of Contract

4. Petitions, Communications, Appearances and Public Comment

4.1. Public Comment

Rebecca Turner provided remarks on the following topics:

- Transparency
- Council conduct
- Water management

4.2. National Night Out Grant Presentations

The Town Council presented National Night Out Grants to the following Neighborhood and Community Groups:

- Kings Grant
- Washington Square
- La Plata Church of Christ
- Clark's Run

5. Matters of Council Discussion

5.1. Board and Commission Bylaws

The Town Manager provided an overview of the drafted bylaws for all Boards and Commissions. Council members raised questions about the sign-up process for new members and the verification of receipt of bylaws. Director Phipps clarified the sign-up steps, and the Town Manager acknowledged concerns about oversight of member compliance. The Town Council reached a consensus to proceed with the proposed legislation.

5.2. Sidewalk and Curb Maintenance

The Town Manager presented two policy options for future sidewalk and curb maintenance and noted no formal action was required. The Council asked when enforcement of the current code ceased. The Town Manager explained that enforcement ceased at least ten years ago, but no clear records could be located to explain why. The Council discussed potential approaches, including a

hybrid responsibility model and a cost-share option. The Council confirmed the town will inspect new sidewalks prior to dedication.

5.3. Public Works Department Position Reclassification

The Town Manager gave an overview, and HR and Public Works addressed remaining questions, noting they did not wish to wait for the Bolton Survey before reclassifying the Crew Leader position to Office Coordinator. The Town Council reached a consensus to proceed with legislation.

5.4. "Serious About Safety" Local Leaders Cohort

The Town Manager notified the Town Council of a request from the Secretary of the Maryland Department of Transportation to secure Mayor James' participation in the "Serious About Safety" Local Leaders Cohort.

Councilman Johnson nominated Councilman Guttenberg in lieu of Mayor James as the Town of La Plata representative to the "Serious About Safety" Local Leaders Cohort.

Nomination By: Tyjon Johnson, seconded by Patrick McCormick.

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

Nays: Mayor James

Abstained: None

Absent:

Passed

6. Legislation

6.1. Ordinance 26-15 Chapter 191 - Zoning Ordinance for the Town of La Plata, Maryland - Roads (Second Reading; For Consideration of Adoption)

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.

Councilman Guttenberg moved to adopt Ordinance 26-15, Chapter 191 - Zoning Ordinance - Roads as presented.

Moved By: Paul Guttenberg, seconded by Patrick McCormick.

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

Nays: None

Abstained: None

Absent:

Passed

6.2. Ordinance 26-16 Amendment to Town of La Plata Fiscal Year 2027 Financial Plan/Budget – Reclassification of Position (First Reading; For Introduction)

AN ORDINANCE concerning

Amendment to Town of La Plata Fiscal Year 2027 Financial Plan/Budget – Reclassification of Position

FOR the purpose of amending the Town of La Plata Fiscal Year 2027 Financial Plan/Budget to reflect the reclassification of a position in the Public Works Department; and all matters generally relating thereto.

The Town Manager Conducted a First Reading of Ordinance 26-16, Amendment to Fiscal Year 2027 Plan/ Budget- Reclassification of Position.

6.3. Resolution 26-41 Board, Commission, and Committee Bylaws (For Introduction and Consideration of Adoption)

A RESOLUTION concerning

Board, Commission, and Committee Bylaws

FOR the purpose of establishing a unified set of governing bylaws for all Town advisory boards and commissions; and all matters generally relating thereto.

Councilman Johnson moved to adopt Resolution 26-41, Board, Commission, and Committee Bylaws as presented.

Moved By: Tyjon Johnson, seconded by Patrick McCormick.

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

Nays: None

Abstained: None

Absent:

Passed

7. New Business

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

7.2. Treasurer's Report (Written Only)

7.3. Cash Disbursement Report (Written Only)

7.4. 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.

7.5. Future Agenda Forecast (Written Only)

8. Adjourn

8.1. Adjournment

Mayor James adjourned the meeting at 8:08 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: 07/28/2026 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:

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.

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

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

Persons attending closed session:

<u>Mayor Jeannine James</u>	<u>Councilman Tyjon Johnson</u>	<u>James Jeffcoat, Attorney</u>
<u>Councilman Paul Guttenberg</u>	<u>Chuck Stevens, Town Manager</u>	<u></u>
<u>Councilman Patrick McCormick</u>	<u>Michelle Miner, Assistant Town Manager</u>	<u></u>
<u>Councilman Gregory Sampson Jr.</u>	<u>Todd Pounds, Town Attorney</u>	<u></u>

Action(s) Taken:

- (1)(i) **Topic:** Maryland Department of the Environment litigation
Reason for Closure: Discussion involves communication regarding litigation, not appropriate for public disclosure
-

Time closed session opened: 5:03 PM

Time closed session adjourned: 5:36 PM

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

Jeannine E. James