



TOWN OF LA PLATA
Town Council Minutes
January 27, 2026, 6:00 PM
Regular Meeting
Council Chambers, La Plata Town Hall

PRESENT: Mayor Jeannine James
Councilman Paul Guttenberg
Councilman Gregory Sampson, Jr.
Councilman Tyjon Johnson

ABSENT: Councilman Patrick McCormick

TOWN STAFF: Chuck Stevens, Town Manager
Michelle Miner, Assistant Town Manager (virtual)
Monica Kennedy, Director of Human Resources (virtual)
Karina Larsen, Town Treasurer
Matt Norris, Chief of Police
Kelly Phipps, Director of Legislative Services

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. 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)

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.

In the absence of the Town Clerk, minutes were recorded by Director Phipps.

1.2. Roll Call

Director Phipps 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.

Passed Unanimously

2. Disclosure of Closed Session

2.1. Disclosure of Closed Session on January 13, 2026

In accordance with the Open Meetings Act, Mayor James disclosed the conduct of a closed session on January 13, 2026.

3. Consent Agenda

Councilman Guttenberg moved to approve the consent agenda as presented.

Moved By: Paul Guttenberg, seconded by Tyjon Johnson.

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

Nays: None

Abstained: None

Absent: Councilman McCormick

Passed

3.1. Approval of Minutes from Regular Meeting on December 9 and December 16, 2025.

3.2. Adoption of Resolution 26-05 Engineering Services - Water and Sewer Lines

3.3. Approval of Resolution 26-08 Public Works Vehicle Purchase

3.4. Approval of Finance Committee Chair and Vice Chair

4. Petitions, Communications, Appearances and Public Comment

4.1. Public Comment

No public speakers were present at this meeting.

4.2. State of the Municipality

Mayor James delivered the 2025 State of the Municipality.

5. Matters of Council Discussion

5.1. Revised Employee Handbook

The Town Council had no questions about the proposed Employee Handbook, and reached a consensus to proceed with legislation.

5.2. Fiscal Year 2026 Budget Amendment - La Plata Police Department Realignment

The Town Council had no questions about the proposed budget amendment reflecting the realignment of the La Plata Police Department, and reached a consensus to proceed with legislation.

5.3. Wills Memorial Park Playground Project

The Town Manager and Town Treasurer answered questions from the Town Council. The Town Council reached a consensus to proceed with legislation approving the proposed contract with Bliss Products & Services, Inc., and authorizing the required Capital Improvement Plan budget adjustment of \$434,889.00 to fully fund the Wills Memorial Park Playground construction project.

5.4. Appointment of Town Attorney

Mayor James nominated Todd Pounds of Alexander and Cleaver to serve as Town Attorney. The Town Council approved the nomination.

The Town Council reached a consensus to proceed with legislation.

6. Legislation

6.1. Ordinance 26-01 Town of La Plata Employee Handbook (First Reading; For Introduction)

AN ORDINANCE concerning

Town of La Plata Employee Handbook

FOR the purpose of rescinding the personnel rules and regulations of the Town of La Plata, as adopted August 2013, and adopting a new comprehensive Employee Handbook; and all matters generally relating thereto.

The Town Manager conducted the first reading of Ordinance 26-01.

6.2. Ordinance 26-02 Amendment of Fiscal Year 2026 Financial Plan-Budget (First Reading; For Introduction)

AN ORDINANCE concerning

Amendment to Town of La Plata Fiscal Year 2026 Financial Plan/Budget

FOR the purpose of amending the Town of La Plata Fiscal Year 2026 (FY26) Financial Plan/Budget to reflect a realignment of the La Plata Police Department; and all matters generally relating thereto.

The Town Manager conducted the first reading of Ordinance 26-02.

- 6.3. Resolution 26-10 Wills Memorial Park Playground (For Introduction and Consideration of Adoption)

A RESOLUTION concerning

Wills Memorial Park Playground

FOR the purpose of authorizing the Town Manager to enter into a contract for the purchase and installation of playground equipment at Wills Memorial Park; and all matters generally relating thereto.

Councilman Johnson moved to adopt Resolution 26-10 as presented.

Moved By: Tyjon Johnson, seconded by Paul Guttenberg.

Passed Unanimously

- 6.4. Resolution 26-09 Appointment of Town Attorney (For Introduction and Consideration of Adoption)

A RESOLUTION concerning

Appointment of Town Attorney

FOR the purpose of appointing Todd K. Pounds as Town Attorney; and all matters generally relating thereto.

Councilman Guttenberg moved to adopt Resolution 26-09 as presented.

Moved By: Paul Guttenberg, seconded by Tyjon Johnson.

Passed Unanimously

7. New Business

- 7.1. Reports from the Mayor and Town Council

The Mayor and Town Council reported on recent and upcoming events and activities.

8. Adjourn

- 8.1. Adjournment

Mayor James adjourned the meeting at 7:10 PM.

Submitted by:

Shelby Pritchett, Town Clerk