

Town of Laurel Communications Committee
Meeting Minutes
September 10, 2026

Time: 6:30 p.m.

Location: Laurel Town Hall

Communications Committee Meeting Minutes

Call to Order: 6:38 p.m.

Members Present: Councilman George Lodato, Ms. Anderson, and Cheryl Barber.

Website Redesign

The Committee continued its review of the proposed redesign of the Town of Laurel website and the website requirements document.

The Committee reported that it had contacted the Delaware Government Information Center (GIC) regarding possible assistance but was advised that GIC is not currently able to take on the project. A follow-up request explaining the Town's financial limitations was submitted, with no additional response received.

The Committee also met with Delmarva Digital, which maintains the Town of Georgetown's website. The company provided an estimated cost of **\$15,000 to \$50,000** for a comparable Laurel website. The Committee discussed the broad range and agreed that more detailed proposals should be sought.

The Committee's proposed website structure is intended to make information accessible to residents and visitors with minimal navigation. Proposed primary sections include **Our Town, Mayor & Council, Departments, Civic Organizations, Applications & Forms, Documents, and Resources**, with quick-access links for frequently used services.

The Committee recommended that the redesigned website include:

- A comprehensive search function.

- Language translation, including Spanish and Haitian Creole.
- Accessibility features.
- Online and fillable applications and forms.
- News, notifications, and a public calendar.
- Access to budgets, audits, financial reports, meeting materials, ordinances, forms, and other public documents.
- Role-based administrative permissions and appropriate security controls.
- Regular backups and other standard security measures.
- Testing of all links, forms, documents, and website functions before launch.

The Committee emphasized that the website should minimize the amount of ongoing maintenance required of Town staff. Where appropriate, the Town website should link directly to information maintained by other departments, agencies, and organizations rather than duplicating that information.

Website Content

The Committee reviewed proposed content for Code Enforcement, Public Works, the Police Department, Alderman's Court, boards and commissions, Town committees, civic organizations, applications and forms, documents, and community resources.

The Code Enforcement section should include commonly requested information, a "**Did You Know?**" feature, applicable ordinances, and information concerning fines and fees.

The Committee also recommended making the Comprehensive Plan, meeting materials, presentations, grant information, applications, and other public documents readily accessible.

The Resources section would provide links to financial, governmental, health, mental health, legal, public safety, and other community services. The Committee noted that the resource list could be expanded as additional information becomes available.

The Committee reviewed websites from several Delaware municipalities, including Georgetown, Seaford, Milton, and Milford, to identify useful features and approaches that could be incorporated into Laurel's website.

Website Development, Procurement, and Budget

The Committee discussed potential methods for developing the website, including professional development services and other available resources. The Committee noted that the Town had declined the use of a student or intern for website development due to concerns regarding licensing, bonding, accountability, and access.

The Committee discussed the distinction between website development and access to confidential Town information and recommended that appropriate access controls be incorporated into any new system.

The Committee noted that **\$15,000 is currently budgeted for the website project**, with an additional **\$15,000 anticipated in the following fiscal year**.

The Committee also reviewed a draft **Request for Proposal (RFP)** prepared to provide potential developers with a detailed statement of work and project requirements. The Committee agreed that the RFP could be included as an appendix to its final report and modified by the Town as necessary.

The Committee discussed whether the Town Charter or applicable procurement requirements require competitive bidding and agreed that the requirements should be reviewed before the project proceeds.

Committee Report

The Committee continued preparing its final report to the Mayor and Town Council. The report will summarize the Committee's purpose and work, including the Welcome to Laurel brochure, newsletter recommendations, website research, proposed website structure, requirements, and recommendations.

The Committee will continue refining the report and supporting documents before presenting them to the Mayor and Town Council.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at **7:51 p.m.**

Chairman George Lodato thanked the committee members for their participation.

George Lodato

Committee Chairman

Jill Cranmer

Recording Secretary