

The Town of Laurel
Mayor & Council Meeting Minutes
February 17, 2026

A Mayor & Council Meeting was held at Laurel Town Hall in the Mayor & Council Chambers on Tuesday, February 17, 2026, beginning at 7:00 p.m. The following persons were in attendance Mayor Carlos Oliveras, President of Council Chris Calio, Jim LaRue, RogJenea Fisher, George Lodato, Jonathan Kellam via ZOOM, and Donald Holden. Also, in attendance were Public Works Director James Foskey, Chief Robert Kracyla, Judge Ruffin, Finance Manager Melissa Naselli, Recording Secretary Alexis Oliphant, and Town Manager Jamie Smith. It was noted that Director of Code Enforcement Position is vacant.

The Mayor & Council Regular and Closed Session Minutes of January 20, 2026, were presented for review. Councilman Lodato made a motion to accept the meeting minutes of January 20, 2026, as presented. Councilman Holden seconded the motion. Vote was 7-0.

The January 2026 Department Head Reports were presented for review.

Mayor Oliveras applauded Public Works Foskey and his staff for the snow removal during last month's snowstorm.

- Public Works Foskey stated they made it through the first snowstorm, and due to the extreme cold, there have been a lot of frozen pipes. He stated 8th Street Watermain Transite Replacement Project has begun with test pitting. He stated the town has submitted ten projects to the State Revolving Fund and are awaiting to see if the town is awarded funding if the projects rank high among the state.
- Town Manager Smith provided an update on the Director of Code Enforcement Position. She stated a Mr. Daniel Hogg will be starting March 2, 2026, and he has all the certifications except for one that the town requires.
- Judge Ruffin stated she had no additions to her report.
- Finance Manager Naselli stated Town Manager Smith secured a grant in order to receive three new computers downstairs, which will allow the staff to wait on two customers at a time.
- Chief Kracyla stated they were awarded a \$9,000 grant for overtime. An offer of employment was provided to a proposed candidate where the candidate will attend the Delaware State Police Academy. He stated he will be attending an Exploration of Casing Analysis and a Regional Crime Efforts known as "GOLD." They have re-submitted a congressional grant to re-surface the P.D. and the car port. A Citizen's Police Academy will be held consisting of 8 weeks with a maximum of 25 people.

Councilman Lodato inquired if Chief Kracyla could provide an update on PAC. Chief Kracyla stated last months meeting was very insightful where Haitian delegates and Las Speranza Delegations attended to provide transparency.

Councilman Lodato inquired an update pertaining the camera installation. Chief Kracyla stated they will be installing poles shortly as they're coordinating with the City of Seaford as they will be installing the poles.

- Town Manager Smith thanked the Public Works Director Foskey and his staff for the snow removal. She advised the walkway restoration at Janosik Park has slowed up due to the weather, but they have started up again. She stated she is working with the Realtor Association for a complete assessment where a grant opportunity is available under the Main Street Program.

Councilman Lodato made a motion to accept the January Department Head Reports as presented. President of Council Calio seconded the motion. Vote was 7-0.

Mayor Oliveras presented the 2nd Reading of Ordinance 2026-1, pertaining a Grease Trap Ordinance. Town Manager Smith stated Ordinance 2026-1 is an amendment to Chapter 125 Sewers, to address fats, oils, and grease (FOG) interceptors and traps. She advised quarterly inspections would be completed for commercial properties. Councilman Holden made a motion to accept the 2nd and Final Reading of Ordinance 2026-1. Councilman Lodato seconded the motion. Vote was 7-0.

Town Manager Smith provided an Update on Developments.

- **Whaley Property – Rt. 9 & Rt. 13:** She advised she met with the developer last week and draft plans were dropped off. They had to make an amendment to meet Soil Conservations requirements. They are awaiting Soil Conservation and Del-DOT permits and once received they will meet with P&Z for Final Approval.
- **WAWA** – There project is moving forward and once they receive all state permits they will be back to P&Z for Final Approval.
- **Truitt Farm** – An amended Preliminary Site Plan was submitted to P&Z last week that included to three additional pad sites to go along with the McDonald's. They have four pad sites filled with one pad site still vacant.
- **Promenade** – She advised the project has been at a stand still and she spoke with a representative from the LRC and they were changing up some financing.

Mayor Oliveras presented the March Meeting Dates. Town Manager Smith advised a Mayor and Council Workshop will be held on Monday, March 2, 2026, at 7:00 p.m. and our next regular scheduled meeting will be held on March 16, 2026, at 7:00 p.m.

Councilman Lodato inquired when a budget meeting will be held. Town Manager Smith stated she will be meeting with the Department Heads in March. She advised the Budget Committee will meet next and then the budget will be presented to Mayor & Council for their review.

Councilman LaRue thanked the town staff and the Mayor & Council for their hard work. Councilwoman Fisher thanked everyone who attended tonight's meeting.

Councilman Lodato thanked Public Works Director Foskey and his staff for snow removal and his additions to his report as it was very insightful.

Councilman Kellam thanked the town staff for their hard work.

Mayor Oliveras presented the following agency introductions:

- Mr. Brian Garcia stated he is the Executive Director of Las Esperanza a non-profit organization based out of Georgetown.
- Mrs. Andrea Sipple stated she is founder of the Haitian Coalition of Delaware.
- Mr. Ron Handy stated he is the Leader and Transition Coordinator of GVI. He has been working with Laurel community for two years. Their motto is Safe, Alive, & Free. He stated an office was recently established in the Social Service Building.

Mayor Oliveras stated a Town Hall Little Creek Meeting will be held on February 23, 2026, at 6:00 p.m. and a Town Hall Hollybrook Meeting will be held on March 3, 2026, at 6:00 p.m.

Mayor Oliveras encouraged residents to take advantage of the Delaware Relief Fund that was presented at last month's meeting. Residents can receive up to a \$500.00 rebate.

Mayor Oliveras stated the Laurel Public Library will be hosting a "Know Your Rights, Program on February 21, 2026, from 10:15 a.m. to 11:45 a.m.

A representative from BHS Hope Inc; provided a handout regarding an initiative of Trap & Release for feral and stray cats.

A resident of 1012 Sharptown Road, addressed his concerns regarding 11th Street, a single dirt lane street. He advised Sussex County has installed a new double lane black top to VanBuren Street. They're receiving more traffic and inquired if 11th Street could either be a dead end or closed when it reaches the county. Mayor Oliveras stated the town follows a procedure and inquired if he could please provide an email to provide updates.

Mrs. Elzey stated that she is grateful that our neighbors are coming together as Laurel needs healing. It's important that we get to know one another to break down barriers to help build Laurel.

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Councilman Lodato made a motion to hold a closed session to discuss personnel and contractual matters. Councilman LaRue seconded the motion. Vote was 7-0.

Regular Session Recessed at 7:38 p.m.

Regular Session Reconvened at 8:14 p.m.

Councilman Holden made a motion for a Resolution to apply for a loan to pay off the M&T Bank Line of Credit. Councilman Lodato seconded the motion. Vote was 7-0.

With there being no further business, Councilman LaRue made amotion to adjourn the meeting. Councilman Holden seconded the motion. Vote was 7-0.

Meeting Adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Mayor

President of Council

Town Manager

Recording Secretary