

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

A Mayor & Council Meeting was held at Laurel Town Hall in the Mayor & Council Chambers on Tuesday, March 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, and Donald Holden. Also, in attendance were Public Works Director James Foskey, Director of Code Enforcement Dan Hogg, Chief Robert Kracyla, Finance Manager Melissa Naselli, Recording Secretary Alexis Oliphant, and Town Manager Jamie Smith. It was noted that Judge Ruffin was absent.

Mayor Oliveras stated Mrs. Bertine Alfreide from Seed of Hope is in attendance tonight to give a presentation. Mrs. Alfreide stated she is the Community Outreach Specialist of Seed of Hope where they specialize in youth trauma. They have mobile therapists who work with children from ages seven to seventeen. They offer free services throughout the state, and their goal is prevention and intervention. Mayor & Council thanked Mrs. Bertine for her presentation and time.

The Mayor & Council Regular and Closed Session Minutes of February 17, 2026, and the Mayor & Council Workshop Minutes of March 2, 2026, were presented for review. Councilman Lodato inquired if there was an update regarding Mrs. Barbers recommendation at the workshop to see if residents would be able to access their tax bill from the town website. Town Manager Smith stated Finance Manager Naselli reached out to the town's software company and they stated it would be compatible. She advised there will be cost associated and it would be discussed during the budget process. President of Council Calio made a motion to accept the meeting minutes of February 17, 2026, and March 2, 2026, as presented. Councilwoman Fisher seconded the motion. Vote was 7-0.

The February 2026 Department Head Reports were presented for review.

- Public Works Director Foskey stated 8th Street Watermain Transite Replacement Project is moving along.
- Town Manager Smith introduced Dan Hogg, Director of Code Enforcement. She stated he has over 30 years of experience in code enforcement, inspections, and plan review. Over the next few months, he will be reviewing our current ordinance to identify any areas where updates or improvements are needed. He will also be obtaining his DELJIS Certification to allow him to take persons to the Alderman's Court who fail to comply with codes and/or ordinances. The code enforcement department falls under the administration of the Town Manager due to the department being administrative and focusing on civil code compliance.

Director of Code Enforcement Hogg stated he has 35 years of experience in working in code enforcement and is looking forward in working with the town.

- Town Manager Smith stated Judge Ruffin is not in attendance, but her report was submitted for Mayor & Council's review. She advised Assistant Alderman Nick Mirro is in attendance tonight and he fill's in when Judge Ruffin is absent.
- Finance Manager Naselli stated she had no additions to her report.
- Chief Kracyla stated he attended the bi-weekly town hall meetings held at Hollybrook Apartments. The department has filled their final (21st) position and offered a conditional offer of employment to Gregory Catts. They're currently accepting applications for the upcoming Citizen Academy scheduled to begin April 1st through May 20th. He stated Seaford PD and Laurel PD have completed an MOU for our officers to participate in SWAT operations with Seaford PD. They have partnered with Sussex Technical High School to paint the acquired fleet vehicle from blue to black. They will be partnering with the Laurel Women's Civic Club to hold a sticker drive/bake sale to fundraise the K-9 Program. The event is scheduled for April 18, 2026, from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. They have partnered with ECVN to install a flower garden at the department.
- Town Manager Smith stated a public hearing was held last week pertaining the Truitt Farm Retail where they're proposing five commercial pad sites. There next step is to receive all state agency permits and submit a Final Site Plan to P&Z for approval. She advised they will be meeting with WAWA on March 18, 2026, pertaining infrastructure on their site plan. She provided an update on the Mainstreet Program where funding was secured to complete a Mainstreet Assessment. She advised concrete has been poured at Janosik Park and the installation of the bricks and the lighting will follow. She stated hopefully this work will be completed prior to the town's Heritage Day but a back up plan will be made. She stated the State Revolving Drinking Fund is funding a grant application of \$100,000 for assessment management to the towns water drinking system. She advised a resolution is needed to more forward with the grant application and is asking for Mayor & Council's approval for Resolution 2026-2.

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

Mayor Oliveras presented the Communication Committee Appointments. Mayor Oliveras appointed the following individuals to the Communication Committee: Councilman George Lodato, Mrs. Sharon Ardisana, President of Council Chris Calio, and Mrs. Cheryl Barber. Councilman Lodato stated he will be attending the Board of Education Meeting this week to see if anyone there would be willing to serve on the committee.

Mayor Oliveras presented the Emergency Operation Plan Information. Town Manager Smith stated and Public Works Director Foskey attended a Emergency Operation Plan Meeting at Sussex

County Emergency Center. She advised the town is responsible to implement an emergency plan and renew. The next step will be meeting with the Chief Kracyla, Laurel Fire Dept. and any other personnel who play an intricate role in the plan. The Sussex County Emergency Center is willing to help us update the plan for 2-hours at no cost. The plan will come in front of Mayor & Council once completed.

Town Manager Smith presented the following Upcoming Community Events. She stated a Spring Clean-Up Hosted by One-Laurel will be held Friday, April 10, 2026, from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. She advised volunteers are needed and more details will be provided once they're available. She stated the Inaugural Laurel Heritage Day will be held on Saturday, April 11, 2026, at Janosik Park from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. The following events will be held a car show, Charlie & The Cool Tones, a Mayor's Challenge, a Cornhole Tournament, Laurel Historical Society Tours at the Rosemont & Hitchens Homestead, a petting zoo, and food/non-food vendors. She stated the 5th Annual One-Laurel Plein Aire Event will be held on Saturday, May 9, 2026, at Janosik Park. They currently have 30 painters registered for the event. She stated St. Phillips Strawberry Festival will be held on Saturday, May 16, 2026, from 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Town Manager Smith presented Resolution 2026-2, a resolution approving the pursuant of no match grant funding from the Delaware Drinking Water State Revolving Fund Asset Management Plan Grant Program. Councilman Holden made a motion to accept Resolution 2026-2. Councilman Kellam seconded the motion. Vote was 7-0.

Councilman LaRue thanked everyone for attending and thanked the town staff for their hard work. He stated he is looking forward to working with Director of Code Enforcement Hogg as he has a business within the town.

Councilman LaRue stated he will be resigning from his position as Councilman as he has purchased a property outside town limits.

Councilwoman Fisher provided an update on the Laurel Youth Council. She advised that she is working on the Laurel Youth Council Interview Panel and that she has been working with Dr. Nibblett the Assistant Principal at Laurel High School.

Councilman Lodato thanked the town staff for their hard work and welcomed Director of Code Enforcement Hogg.

Councilman Lodato inquired if the Mayor & Council would be willing to be sponsor in this year's upcoming 2nd Annual Broad Creek Bash taken place on Saturday, August 22, 2026. He proposed either a Silver Sponsor for \$500.00 or a Bronze Sponsor for \$250.00.

Councilman Kellam thanked the town staff for their hard work and welcomed Director of Code Enforcement Hogg.

Mayor Oliveras thanked Councilwoman Fisher for her hard efforts on the Laurel Youth Council.

Mayor Oliveras presented the following events:

- A garden installation will take place at the Laurel Police Dept. on April 25th. Volunteers are needed.
- A Town Hall Meeting at Little Creek will be held on March 23, 2026.
- Presented the ARK Tutoring Program at Little Creek.
- On March 25, 2026, a walkthrough will be occurring at Hollybrook.

Mayor Oliveras stated thanked everyone who has offered support and help throughout his first year of administration.

Public Works Director Foskey stated Will Warren from the Wheels and Heels Car Club will be organizing the Heritage Day Car Show. He wanted to thank Steve Breasure and Phil Shedaker for their hard work in obtaining donations. They have received \$800.00 in donations and the donors names will be listed on the car show trophies.

Councilman Kellam stated a June 19th Celebration at Jason Beach, Trap Pond will be held this year. Once more details are finalized he will share them.

Councilman LaRue stated a Celebration of Life for his wife Kathy LaRue will be held on Saturday, March 21, 2026, at Centenary Church from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Dr. Michelle Harris stated she is from Hopes Helping Hands, LLC and they're looking into opening a second practice and a second ministry within the town.

Mr. Carle Howard, resident of the Villas, inquired if Janosik Park will be ready for the Heritage Day and inquired why the Shoreline Stabilization Project at Janosik Park was not done simultaneously with the ongoing project.

Town Manager Smith stated she has reached out to Del-DOT and the walkway is expected to be completed prior to Heritage Day. She advised a silk fence will still be located on the walkway as well.

Mr. Jim Emrich stated he is on the Habitat for Humanity Board and they will be doing their 34th Home Blessing in the Town of Laurel on March 30, 2026.

Mr. Emrich stated he attended a ride-along for four hours with Officer Tindley where he witnessed community policing. He encouraged residents to take part of a ride-along.

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President of Council Calio made a motion to hold a closed session to discuss contractual matters.
Councilman Kellam seconded the motion. Vote was 7-0.

Regular Session Recessed at 8:07 p.m.

Regular Session Reconvened at 8:19 p.m.

With there being no further business, Councilman Kellam made a motion to adjourn the meeting.
Councilman Lodato seconded the motion. Vote was 7-0.

Meeting Adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

Mayor

President of Council

Town Manager

Recording Secretary