

The Town of Laurel  
Mayor & Council Workshop Minutes  
March 2, 2026

A Mayor & Council Workshop was held at Laurel Town Hall in the Mayor & Council Chambers on Monday, March 2, 2026, beginning at 7:00 p.m. The following persons were in attendance Mayor Carlos Oliveras, President of Council Chris Calio, George Lodato, Jonathan Kellam via ZOOM, and Donald Holden via ZOOM. Also, in attendance were Chief Robert Kracyla, Recording Secretary Alexis Oliphant, and Town Manager Jamie Smith. It was noted Councilman Jim LaRue and Councilwoman RogJenea Fisher were absent.

Mayor Oliveras presented the discussion of the Communication Committee. Councilman Lodato stated he is requesting Mayor & Council to review a request to implement a Communication Committee. The purpose of this committee is to have a centralized location center to provide transparency for residents on how to receive information occurring throughout the town. The committee will consist of four to five residents with one council member meeting weekly to bring ideas forward to Mayor and Council on how we can communicate better with the residents. He stated according to residents the towns website lacks information and the navigation is difficult. He included a Road Map to Mayor & Council outlining the overview of what the committee would like to accomplish. He stated he has reached out to the other towns who utilize the GIC software. He explained the website would be free and free training would be available for town staff. Councilman Lodato inquired if Mayor & Council had any questions.

Mayor Oliveras inquired what the town could add to their current website. Councilman Lodato stated the town's website is one of the least productive websites versus other towns in the county. He is proposing to install a town calendar on the front page to include local events, projects, and meeting dates.

Councilman Holden advised the town has a newsletter that is distributed with meeting dates if the residents wish to attend.

Town Manager Smith stated the newsletter is distributed to property owners and rental properties on a quarterly basis.

Councilman Lodato stated he believes the newsletter needs to be revamped as there is repetitive information including the Trash, Recycle, and Yard Waste Schedule.

Councilman Kellam inquired if the town includes community events within the newsletter. Town Manager Smith stated yes.

Chief Kracyla stated communication needs to be aligned with the town and recommended if each department can find their niche to provide information to the public. He shared variety of examples of police public information that can be shared.

Councilman Holden inquired if they reviewed the costs to include additional resources to the website. Councilman Lodato stated GIC will build and maintain websites at no costs with free training to town staff.

Mrs. Cheryl Barber, resident of Gibson Avenue, stated she cannot retrieve her tax bill on the town website and inquired if there was a way to do so. Town Manager Smith stated the towns software system is not compatible with the towns website and to make a change it would be very costly.

Mayor Oliveras stated he is in favor of the Communication Committee to enhance the towns current website that meets our goals to relay transparency to residents.

Town Manager Smith stated the Mayor is responsible for the appointments of the committee. She advised the committee must follow all state regulations including the posting of agendas and the posting of the minutes.

Councilman Kellam stated the information must be streamlined without cross lining information.

Councilman Holden stated he is willing to try and reminded residents the town has the Five Point Sign for community events to be shared.

Mrs. Jill Kramer, resident of 7127 Airport Road, advised she reviews the town website to retrieve agendas to post on her social media platforms.

President of Council Calio stated he is not in favor of moving the web master from a local vendor regardless of a free software and is not imposed to a Communication Committee.

President of Council Calio inquired how the Communication Committee will receive organization information as the organizations are not currently calling the town know.

Mrs. Amy Handy, resident of Center Street, advised organizations didn't realize they could contact the town to include information to the towns website or towns newsletter.

Mrs. Sharon Ardisana, resident of Turtle Cove, stated she believes this committee will be valuable to the Mayor & Council and to the citizens. The hope is to get other volunteers to join us for transparency and accountability.

Town Manager Smith stated communication is key and there is always room for improvement. She stated the town follows the rules and regulations that they're required to follow. She cautioned everyone utilizing the words transparency and accountability as it can be misleading to the public eye that the town was in violation.

Councilman Lodato stated transparency is a very broad word and his intent in using the term is to provide more information to the public.

Mr. Dave Krimas, Boys & Girls Club, inquired who will be responsible in sharing the information on the town website. Councilman Lodato provided a proposal but discussions will take place once a committee is established.

Town Manager Smith stated the Appointments of the Communication Committee will be included on March 16, 2026, Agenda.

With there being no further business, Councilman Lodato made amotion to adjourn the meeting. Councilman Holden seconded the motion. Vote was 5-0, with Councilman LaRue and Councilwoman Fisher absent.

Meeting Adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

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Mayor

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President of Council

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Town Manager

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Recording Secretary