

Communication Committee Meeting Minutes – April 30, 2026

The meeting was called to order at 6:35 p.m. Roll call was conducted, and all committee members were present: George Lodato, Sharon, Chris, Cheryl, and Jill. With everyone in attendance, the meeting proceeded according to the agenda.

Trifold Brochure Layout Update

Cheryl provided an update on the trifold brochure layout. The design process has proven challenging, but progress has been made. Cheryl is preparing a version for committee review and will gather feedback on what content should be kept or removed. The Avery program is being used for the layout, which is available for free.

Website Content and Structure Discussion

The committee discussed the website's welcome section, which currently contains historical information and needs to be revised. A message from the mayor will be added, and the town's vision statement is underway. Cheryl is compiling a list of civic organizations and compliance items, including lists of officers and ward leaders. There are sections for the police department, planning and codes, Alderman's Court, Park and Recreation, a photo gallery, and resources, though the resource list is not yet complete.

Clarification was sought regarding the trash collection service, DIEHMS DISPOSAL OF DE, INC including questions about weight limits and proper disposal. It was noted that trash must be placed in the contracted black rolling bin, and recyclables like cardboard boxes should be placed in the yellow bin. The committee agreed on the need to clarify the contract terms regarding trash and recycling. Trash bins should be placed out the evening before collection and removed within 24 hours after pickup.

Department Menu Selections and Website Organization

The committee reviewed menu selections for the website, including tabs for Home, Departments, Documents, and Resources. They decided to prioritize old business before new business on the agenda.

Finance Department

The finance section should include the current course and budget, proposed budgets, and year-to-date budget versus actual. Five years of audit information should be made available, allowing users to view trends. Bank balances will be updated monthly, and current tax rates will be posted for reference. The town uses county assessments and does not conduct its own reassessments.

Code Enforcement

The website will feature an explanation of code enforcement, including landlord and tenant responsibilities, fees for violations (such as grass cutting), and a list of fines. Code enforcement also covers objectionable objects, rental property inspections, vacant property registration, and related ordinances. The committee discussed the importance of listing penalties for nonpayment and vacant house ordinances, as vacant properties are a major concern in the community.

Public Works

Monthly reports and scheduled road closures will be included in the public works section. Infrastructure updates will be provided through detailed reports. Links to county and district resources will be added.

Police Department

The police department section will include monthly reports and links to the Laurel Police website and Facebook page. The committee agreed that these links should be prominent on the homepage. The Alderman Court, which processes tickets, will also be included.

Boards, Commissions, and Committees

Tabs will be created for boards and committees, including members and expiration dates of their terms. Committees such as Communication, Parks and Recreation, Streets, Budget, Annexation, Police, and Personnel will also have dedicated sections. Agendas and meeting minutes for committees will be placed under their respective tabs, not under Town and Council.

The Parks and Recreation Committee's status was discussed, with the possibility of reintroducing it to coordinate community events and activities.

Civic Organizations and Local Charities

The committee listed local civic organizations, including the Arts, Boys and Girls Club, Historic Society, Laurel Women's Civic Club, Operation One Laurel, Veterans groups (American Legion, Vet United Outreach, VFW, DAV), Masons, Lions Club, Ruritans, Odd Fellows, and the Good Old Boys charity. The possibility of creating a separate tab for these organizations was discussed and contingent on their willingness to be listed.

Forms and Applications

Forms and applications will be accessible via buttons for business licenses, building permits, plumbing permits, rental permits, sign permits, special use and subdivision requests, variance and appeal, and special event forms. Additional forms include change of address, employment, FOIA requests, vacancy certification, vacant property registration, and voter registration. Voter registration links will direct users to the state and county offices.

Documents and Presentations

The documents section will serve as a repository for presentations and other important documents, such as the comprehensive land use plan, grant applications, and awards. The content will be fluid, updated as new materials are presented or made available.

Resources

The committee will compile a comprehensive list of resources, using examples from Milford and Milton as reference points. The resource tab will include state agencies, community assistance programs, grant information, and public works dollars. The list will be refined and updated at subsequent meetings.

Newsletter Distribution

The newsletter is published three times a year: spring/summer, fall, and winter. Home delivery will become opt-in, with instructions to register provided in the next newsletter and posted on the website. This change is intended to reduce costs and waste.

Photo Credits for Website

The committee agreed to credit photos by Paula Shannon on the website, pending approval. Paula will be contacted for permission, and the committee will ensure proper attribution without financial compensation.

Assignments and Next Steps

- Cheryl will continue working on the brochure.
- Chris will contact the Good Old Boys about website listing and follow up with Paula Shannon regarding photos.
- Sharon will follow up as needed with Paula.
- George will send the resource list to Sharon and bring up the newsletter opt-in at the next council meeting.
- Jill will receive the meeting minutes and review the provided list of phone numbers and resources for brochures.
- Dan will be contacted about renewing the permits when there's no movement on building repairs and improvements and clarification regarding the vacant house ordinance.

Parks and Recreation Committee Discussion

The committee will consider reintroducing a Parks and Recreation Committee to organize events such as the Heritage Festival, open mic nights, and other community activities. Event budgets will be proposed as needed, and the committee will request funds from the town for specific purposes.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:02 p.m., with Sharon seconding the motion. Members continued informal discussion regarding community events and local regulations.

George Lodato
Committee Chairman

Jill Cranmer
Recording Secretary