

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

A Mayor & Council Meeting was held at Laurel Town Hall in the Mayor & Council Chambers on Monday, August 17, 2026, beginning at 7:00 p.m. The following persons were in attendance Mayor Carlos Oliveras, President of Council Chris Calio, Doug Taylor, RogJenea Fisher, George Lodato, Jonathan Kellam, and Donald Holden. Also, in attendance were Public Works Director James Foskey, Director of Code Enforcement Dan Hogg, Captain Tyler Bryan, Recording Secretary Alexis Oliphant, and Town Manager Jamie Smith. It was noted that Chief Robert Kracyla and Finance Manager Melissa Naselli were absent.

Mayor Oliveras had a moment of silence to honor former Mayor John Shwed on his passing earlier this month.

Mayor Oliveras opened the Court of Appeals at 7:00 p.m. Town Manager Smith stated this evening; the town is holding the Court of Appeals as per the Charter. We have the assessment list based on the Sussex County assessment numbers. Mayor and Council adopted the assessment list from Sussex County last month, and these are the assessments that we utilize for our tax billing. The town must hold a Court of Appeals per the town charter. If anybody has any questions or concerns about their assessment, they must bring it forward to the town first and then they're referred to Sussex County.

Mayor Oliveras stated with there being no further comments or questions, he closed the public hearing. The public hearing closed at 7:05 p.m.

Mrs. Sharon Ardisana stated she is a resident of the town of Laurel. She stated she has put together a letter expressing her concerns regarding the FY 24 audit, the findings and the recommendations. She stated the FY 23 audit carries over into the next year. There are recommendations and findings in the year before that are very relevant to the next year's audit. She compiled a list of her questions in a letter to the Mayor and Council and inquired if this would be entered into the public record. She inquired if there is a council member that will do a motion to enter this into the public record.

After a brief discussion, Mayor & Council agreed they would vote to enter her letter into public record after Mrs. Ardisana completed her presentation.

Mrs. Ardisana was under the understanding that Mayor & Council will vote after her presentation. She advised it's a long letter and she was not going to read the letter out loud as she has 10 copies available that she passed around. She stated if you didn't get a copy and you would like one, you can see her at the end of the meeting.

Mrs. Ardisana stated she wanted to first discuss the timeline of events. She advised back on September 19, 2023, the auditors provided a letter to the Mayor and Council as this did not go in as part of the audit package. It was a separate letter addressed to Mayor & Council, and it wasn't given to the public during the presentation made in either October or November. She stated that this is public information and it's probably the most important part of the audit. The auditors work

with the town to make sure the numbers all come out right, and in our case, that's been a huge effort, sometimes to the tune of \$36 million in adjustments. So, the numbers are overwhelming when you look at the report. However, the meat of the document is what problems or what deficiencies did the town encounter because those are the things that need to be addressed for the next year. With being behind two and a half years, again is one of those things the town will find out two years after the fact. She advised if you read the audit, you will find that the data being provided on a monthly basis was not being updated, so the town was running on inaccurate data. She stated the net position at the beginning of the year was misrepresented. She advised imagine if you had a checkbook and you started it out with the wrong balance, and you continue to make decisions based on what the balance is, or you know you think you have more money in there than you do, and you know try to check the balances. She stated that's kind of what she equates it to. A lot of these issues are very serious, and she is really concerned about the fact that that letter did not go out to the public. She stated number two, in the letter, it specifically said that there needed to be improvement in oversight from the Town Manager, to the Mayor & Council and across the board. She advised she came along in April and met with Mayor Oliveras about her concerns that nobody was looking over the financial reports. She met with him privately, hoping to resolve the issue. As again, you know the story, nothing happened. On May 18th she presented to the public what she had found. At that June town council meeting, Mayor Oliveras went over all of her concerns and basically made her look like a bad person because she was concerned about the town and the financial status. She paraphrased a quote from Mayor Oliveras mentioned at previous Mayor & Council Meeting that as long as the workers are getting paid, the garbage is collected, the sewers okay and the town is running, the money is going where it needs to go. She stated that is missing the whole point and that alarms her to say that it's okay that we have all this inaccurate data that we're making decisions on is okay because everything's running. She stated it is the responsibility of the Mayor & Council to oversee financial data and financial information, which is part of their job. She advised this may even be a legal requirement for them to do that. They are dealing with \$8 million of tax payers money. If they're not putting it in the system, which they're not, and 26 adjustments have to be made for \$36 million, is not good, but that's okay. She advised the town can fix things, but the problem is Mayor Oliveras was aware of this oversight issue in September of 2023. She stated she came along in April and May, and he's indignant and acts like he never even heard about it. She has a copy of the letter if you want to see the letter and the date on it. She advised it's the fact that we don't do anything, even though we know there are serious problems that really keep her up at night. At the time I spoke in May, there were eight months to correct issues. The other issue they found was the financial manager had had all the duties assigned to her that should have been segregated. When you have one person that has all the tasks being assigned, what happens when something happens to that person. When unfortunately, the financial manager passed away, there was nobody that could input the data and there was nobody that could run a report for an auditor. She advised the town manager supervises that person and at the very least, they need to understand that person's job enough to step in and help if there is an emergency. That was identified by the auditors and that's a risk in this town to have one person that knows it all and does it all. She keeps hearing that the reason we're two and a half years is because of that incident, when the previous Finance Manager passed away. The

town was three and a half months without a financial manager and she thought the town spent nine to twelve months without a manager. She stated if there had not already been the failure of having one person knowing it all, doing it all, we might have been able to get through that period and when the new manager started, the town should have been able to get on track. She stated the audit indicates that these problems continue throughout the year. She believes all those findings, and there's more, and that 2023 letter are important for the public to understand. Another one she can recall is that the towns software system is way too complicated, and they recommended in looking at getting a new system. She advised in the eight months that have went by has the town looked into a system and she would say no, correct. She stated the fact that all these recommendations and these serious problems are ignored and nothing is being done. She stated she has been getting up here for months, and quite frankly, it's not fun for her and she's to the point where she needs either the town to understand the seriousness and call for action, or she needs to stop wasting her time. She advised that Mayor Oliveras ran on change and transparency. She voted for Mayor Oliveras as she was all about change and transparency. She stated she has seen no change since Mayor Oliveras has been here. She stated Mayor Oliveras agrees with the bad practices that have even been identified by the auditor. She stated he talks about trust, but trust is an earned thing it's not going around shaking hands. Trust is an earned thing, and it's your actions, not your words, that matter. She stated Mayor Oliveras mentioned three months ago that he was going to discuss his first year in office and it never happened. She requested that she wanted to hear Mayor Oliveras point of view as to what he thinks he has accomplished in his year one of service since being Mayor, especially when it relates to change and transparency. She stated every time she tries to say we need to be more transparent, we need to be looking at things Mayor & Council votes me down with the exception of Councilman Lodato. She questioned why, and why do you not want to make things better. She stated she will submit the letter, and if somebody wants to make a motion and inquired if anybody has any questions.

Mrs. Cheryl Barber, resident of Gibson Avenue, requested when Mayor & Council accept her motion to accept her letter, with an amendment that she sits down with the towns financial person and go through it with her. Then she advised they can come back and tell the Mayor & Council and the public her findings.

Mrs. Ardisana stated she met with Town Manager Smith on several occasions and she thinks the meeting with Town Manager Smith is probably sufficient. The purpose of this letter was to take all of that mathematical charts and boil it down to this is what the issues are. She's made it as simple as she possibly can, because she knows, looking at the document gets overwhelming. The important thing, like she mentioned, are the findings and the recommendations and if the town is ignoring these year after year, things are just going to get worse. She stated she can't seem to get anybody to recognize, even though they're documented by the auditor, that we have issues.

Mrs. Melody Davis, resident of East Sixth Street, stated her perspective, is that they've been trying to attend monthly and to be a little more faithful in attending, so that they're engaged citizens in

the community. She's been listening to all of this and hearing different sides of it, and she thinks what it boils down to, and she even asked a question about the audit when he was here, but we know that the 2024 audit showed what they call material items. The town has an accounting system that seems over difficult for what the town needs. The town has numbers that don't balance and we have things in the wrong accounts in the budget. The town has budgets that are being overspent without any documented process to get approvals. What should happen if you're going to go over budget should it never be approved for Mayor & Council or someone else. As Mrs. Ardisana said, one of the concerns from the auditors was that there's no segregation in duty. She advised having worked in HR my entire career she understands the segregations, like the person doing payroll isn't the person that should be doing your monthly reporting or finances. There should be a separate person that's writing checks and signing checks versus somebody that's putting those numbers into your financials and that was something that the auditors recommended. There needed to be some changes and she is pretty sure that they find that in every town they go to when they audit. That's their job to find something. They wouldn't get paid if they didn't find something. But those are significant things, and she thinks fair things. From her perspective, she thinks what she's hearing from Mrs. Ardisana, but she can only speak for herself what she would like to see is from that 2023 audit and that 2024 audit while were getting caught up with 2025 what is the town response to that. She advised that has to come from Mayor & Council, Town Manager Smith, and Finance Manager Naselli and so forth as to what the town is going to do to address each of these issues. If they're not addressed, then the town is open to liability. We're open to concerns, and she knows one of the things that was mentioned in this report was the fact that they recommended changes as to how the town banks their money. Evidently the town has all, if not a large sum, in one or two accounts, and they're not fully insured because the government only insures up to \$250,000. She stated recommendations were made regarding sweep accounts. Which she was not aware of and researched, which are, investment accounts, and each day they go in these sweep funds and are moved to earn interest. Currently right now, according to the auditors, the town is in a position where if the economy went belly up, which she advised can occur anytime. She questioned where that \$5 million or so dollars that we have in the bank where it's going to go if it's not properly insured or have our money in accounts that are properly insured. So those are the things that the auditors have pointed out, and those are the things that myself, as a member of this community, want to see Mayor & Council come back to us and say, these are things that were in that audit report of 23 and 24, and here's what the town is going to do, or what the town is doing, or what the town has done to make these corrections.

Mrs. Ardisana stated one of her recommendations was a comprehensive plan, which is not unusual to do, which is exactly what Mrs. Davis was referring to. She advised you put the concern, who the most possible person is, the estimated date that it's going to be fixed, and then you can give statuses every month at the town council meetings as to the progress the town is making on cleaning up the issues. She advised the town needs a comprehensive plan on how the issues are going to be resolved.

Mrs. Danora Elzey, resident of W. 8th Street, inquired how Mrs. Ardisana received the letter if no one else from the public received it.

Mrs. Ardisana stated it was only when she looked at the FY 23 audit by an electronic copy, and she inquired where the recommendations and findings were as they were in the FY 2024 Audit. She did what would be considered a FOIA request and emailed Town Manager Smith and inquired if they're in another document, is there an attachment she didn't get, and that's when she got the separate letter. She explained if you remember, they were here when the auditor presented and he did not mention any of the findings or the comments, and she does recall him giving them something that he said that's for Mayor and Council. She advised that's not transparency to me. She advised she would never have gotten it if she didn't know that.

Mrs. Elzey stated when you're talking about audits and things, that is a lengthy process.

Mrs. Ardisana stated nothing has been done and she can tell you from the financials when she presented in May. She stated she met with the Mayor Oliveras April 2nd and, she advised that all we're getting in the monthly report are some of the revenues. She stated per the charter, which is so old and so outdated, it doesn't know about computer systems and how easy it is to produce budgeted vs actuals. According to the charter it states all revenues must be reported. She advised reporting some revenues is not reporting all revenues. When she met with the Mayor Oliveras she inquired if he receives reporting's that we don't see on a monthly basis.

Mrs. Ardisana stated they're not looking at the financials. She advised last month the auditor presented the FY2024 Audit and it was supposed to be accepted without even reading the audit. She inquired why wouldn't Mayor & Council read a document before they accept it or adopt it. She advised Councilman Lodato raised this concern prior to accepting. The Mayor & Council are passing important documents through without reading them and they're not doing their legal financial duty.

Mrs. Ardisana stated she met with the Mayor Oliveras on April 2, 2026, at her house. She reviewed all her concerns, which included the vacant house ordinance not being followed and several other things. She stated she opened his eyes to things and she requested to hear back from Mayor Oliveras regarding her concerns raised. She stated she would rather this be resolved without going public. She stated she went back and forth with Mayor Oliveras hoping he would address the issues with Mayor & Council. She stated she would have been fine if he had taken the issues to Mayor & Council, but that didn't happen. She stated a month later, she presented it to the public because she thought it was important enough that people should know. She advised not everybody has the time to look at this stuff, so she took it upon herself because she cares about this town. Contrary to some people's beliefs, and she never said this is the worst town to live in. She advised she does it because she cares, and nobody has come back to me because she base all her information on facts.

Councilman Kellam inquired if her presentation pertaining her questions was submitted to the auditor. Mrs. Ardisana stated the town advised her last month to compile her questions to the town and the town would submit them to the auditor.

Mrs. Davis stated she believes the clarification is when the auditor was here and there were specific questions about the financial information. She advised Mrs. Ardisana is questioning, the auditors' findings, and how is the town going to move forward to resolve the findings.

Councilman Kellam stated he understands what they're saying, but we have to be able to talk with the auditors to see what needs to be done. He stated your addressing Mayor & Council as if nothing has been done.

Mrs. Ardisana stated she doesn't believe that issue was being addressed.

Councilman Kellam inquired if she spoke with the former Mayor.

Mrs. Ardisana stated no, she did not speak with him as he was a very sick man.

Councilman Kellam stated Mayor Oliveras was not the Mayor as of September 2023.

Mrs. Ardisana stated she would like to ask that her letter provided with her comments on be provided to Town Manager Smith for her to submit to the auditor and they would reach out to me on the concerns raised. She inquired if Mayor & Council would make a motion.

Mrs. Robin Fisher, resident of West Sixth Street stated she agreed with some of Mrs. Ardisana's statements about needing to have answers regarding audits. She advised however Mrs. Ardisana needs to give this letter and her questions to the appropriate persons. As Councilman Kellam stated, these would be directed to the auditor and the finance director, who would have a conversation with Mayor & Council once they completely addressed her answers. They would be given to not just her but publicly. Also, her questions about persons not having clarity of what's going on could be addressed to everyone. She advised if your letter goes to the appropriate persons and allow them the opportunity to answer completely, as they're issues that she may not understand.

Mrs. Ardisana agreed with Mrs. Fisher and stated the public received a 16-page document and they were supposed to ask questions on.

Mrs. Fisher stated their times that this information is given, even when the budgets are developed. There are opportunities for people to come in and to have that discussion with Mayor and Council. She advised in most instances that is not done. She stated when the budgets are completed, and when the audits are completed, then there are all these questions after the fact. So if people who are interested in becoming involved with the Mayor & Council on an ongoing basis

with assistance, and maybe you can volunteer for a committee to help along with the administration of Mayor & Council.

Councilman Lodato stated he does not believe that the question that's being presented to us is about the audit. He believes and his understanding, it's what the auditors said that needed to be fixed in the town, and how as Mayor & Council and the town going to resolve the issues that were found in the audit.

Mayor Oliveras stated Mrs. Ardisana's letter is addressing the data inaccuracy, oversight improvements, banking procedures, things of that nature, and any corrections presented in the FY2023 & FY2024 audit.

President of Council Calio made a motion to accept Mrs. Ardisana's letter as public record and to submit her letter to the town's auditor for his review and to provide follow-up on her questions raised. Councilman Lodato seconded the motion. Vote was 6-0, with one vacancy.

Mrs. Ardisana stated having a workshop would have been a really good idea and it would allow for an opportunity to review. Mayor & Council would have had time to read the audit, and the public could have compiled questions. She advised she is not asking the auditor to go back and look at details of the chart. She is asking about the findings and the problems which could have been addressed at a workshop. She advised that would have been her preference, but Mayor & Council voted it down, except for Councilman Lodato voting to hold a workshop.

Mayor Oliveras Mrs. Susan Schandel and Mrs. Anne Spicer are in attendance to present Concerns on Neighboring Property. Mrs. Spicer thanked everyone taking the time to allow her voice to be heard this evening. Before she began she thanked everyone for serving their community their individual roles and on the council. She advised she is a co-owner of a piece of land on the property on West Sixth Street. She stated she reviewed several ordinances and could not find a bamboo restriction within the town. There was some bamboo on our property when they bought it, and they added to it. Bamboo at times can become a mess. It can become a topic of restriction within cities such as Rehoboth Beach. The menace of bamboo normally comes from poor property management, improper care, and lack of control. At that time, it is definitely a nuisance, and she wholeheartedly agrees with that. One of our neighbors took it upon themselves to use a front-end loader or some other form of agriculture equipment to cross property lines, plow over several trees, destroy a stair-step terrace flower garden, eliminate hundreds of dollars worth of flowers and beauty, destroying bamboo and causing land erosion by doing all this. She stated as seniors they have had to try to correct this by doing as much as possible, unfortunately by hand. The erosion on our property continues to be a bit of a problem during storms, in particular. However, we are continuing to work on this. She believes it was the Director of Operation West Laurel Community Garden reported they would buy varieties and leave them on our property so we could plant them

where they destroyed our plants. Does this seem fair? She stated she doesn't think so. She stated that all of these events because grant money has been used for the benefit of the community garden and destruction of our property without resolution. It seems just point blank, unfair, unjust that grant money provided and funded by this community in the state of Delaware is being used in this manner. Do we, as humans, taxpayers, disagree with the goals and objectives of Operation West Laurel. Absolutely not. Reducing gun violence and saving our children from this horrible destruction should be everyone's goal in this entire community, state, and country. As a retired nurse who spent many decades working in trauma rooms, she has seen holes in people and more destruction of families and loved ones than you could possibly imagine. She believes in the founding direction of OWL that started this. Unconditionally, we stand in support of decreasing gun violence. We stand in support of active prayer for the community. We stand in support of an open community garden for assistance, help, and welfare of individuals to provide fresh produce for themselves. Since bamboo originally brought here this evening, she provided benefits of bamboo on land. Bamboo is one of the fastest-growing plants on the face of the earth. After seven years of being planted, bamboo can remove two tons of CO₂ compared to a pine tree. That's five times more efficient. Although every tree has its own CO₂ absorption rate, bamboo is one of the highest. Due to its fast growth, it provides shelter for animals, protects water quality, and helps bind topsoil. Bamboo does not need fertilizer or water to grow, and our bamboo has never ever been fertilizer fertilized. Therefore, fertilizer has never run into Broad Creek. It's an excellent source of nutrition, not only for the ground but for human consumption. After much contact with a variety of support organizations, as we know, our bamboo will grow. She found that when it becomes at its hardest stage, we found an organization in Africa is called Bread and Water for Africa. They will receive fruits that are made here in the United States.

Director of Code Enforcement Hogg stated he is certified in the State of Maryland as a Roadside Tree Expert, as he has a background in landscaping. He advised bamboo is invasive; however, if it's controlled and in his opinion it shouldn't be outlawed in the town. If it becomes invasive, then the town would write a citation.

Mayor Oliveras presented the Laurel Legacy Youth Foundation. Mrs. Precious Henry stated she is representing Laurel Legacy Youth Foundation a 501(c)3 a nonprofit committed to empowering young people, creating opportunities for them to thrive. Their mission is simple: to empower young people to overcome personal, social, economic challenges with mentorship, education, and learning support. Our youth voice project is built on one powerful belief. They're going to build a better future for the youth. They're given young people a safe place to share what they love about Laurel, what challenges they're facing and what they want to see in their community. She stated the youth has ideas, dreams, and solutions and they want to be heard and they want to be a part of creating change. Tonight they were proud to present the town a special banner, creating our youth voice project. This banner is designed by the youth and for the town. It represents the creativity and the voices of the young people. They gave a special thank you to Bill Hanes and Rayshon Bowden for bringing this vision to life with his incredible sketchbook. This banner isn't just artwork; it is where a lot of our young people belong at the

table. LLYF is a towards a larger vision, creating a safe place for youth where young people can have access to mentorships, tutoring, career, and wellness resources, leadership opportunities, creative programs, and positive community experience. She wanted to thank Mayor & Council for allowing them to share this moment and to thank everyone who believed in them.

Mayor Oliveras congratulated Councilwoman Fisher and OW.L. He stated we're approaching the end of the summer, and we've only had two teen takeovers, and although they're never good news, but in the last five or six weekends, because of your activities, because of your praying, because of getting involved in the town, because of caring, because of loving where you live, thank you for saving.

Councilman Lodato stated the Mayor & Council Minutes of July 20, 2026, the minutes, Town Manager Smith presented the request from Ms. Sharon Arsenal from Mayor Council Meeting June 15, 2026. Town Manager Smith stated that Mrs. Ardisana requested at last month's meeting that the May 18, 2026, Mayor & Council Meeting minutes need to be amended to what was typed versus what was already stated were different. She also requested the transcript for her presentation and small exchange be attached to the minutes as well. Councilman Lodato made a motion at that time to accept the request to amend the May 18th minutes and to include her transcript and email exchange into the minutes. President of Council Calio seconded the motion. It was voted 6-0, with one vacancy. Councilman Lodato stated he is looking if the minutes were amended as they were voted on if they were posted on the website.

Operations Manager Oliphant stated the amendments and attachments were included to May 18, 2026, and they were uploaded to the website.

The Mayor & Council Minutes of July 20, 2026, were presented for review. Councilman Holden made a motion to accept the July 20, 2026, minutes as presented. Councilwoman Fisher seconded the motion. Vote was 6-0, with one vacancy.

The July 2026 Department Head Reports were presented for review.

- Public Works Director Foskey stated he wanted to give his condolences to Mayor Shwed's family. He stated Poplar Street is now back open and it's a temporary cleaning of right now. They have gone back to the drawing board and requesting more funds to do more tie-ins before they do a final date. We're still moving forward with DNREC Funding projects with 13 NOI's submitted.
- Director of Code Enforcement Hogg stated it was a slow month for permits the slowest month since he's been with the town. He stated they issued only seven permits, totaling about \$1,300 in revenue and cost value of about \$56,000. There were 144 new activities,

including 91 rental inspections and 53 grass letters. There were two rubbish letters, one stop work order, and an active demolition order.

- Judge Ruffin stated she had no additions to her report.
- Captain Bryan stated he is covering for Chief Kracyla tonight and he stated the Youth Police Academy finished up last week. It was a week dedicated to 14 young men and women who learned about various topics including DSP Aviation, Laurel Fire Dept., Division of Alcohol and Tobacco Enforcement, First Aid, CPR, and partnered with Bryan Bowling Center. He stated it was a great success and thanked Mayor & Council for supporting the program every year.
- Town Manager Smith provided an update on the Main Street Assessment that they continue to work on that by meeting via ZOOM on a monthly basis. They're looking at probably December or January before she comes back with her report on how the town should move forward with the Main Street Program. She stated she has talked to the engineer regarding the Shoreline Stabilization for Janosik Park. The permit is being held. Up.

Councilman Lodato stated Town Manager Smith continues to work with the developer for developing residential property located on Central Avenue, and the developer for the property on Discount Land Road. He inquired if Town Manager Smith had any other information that she can add onto where they are in that process, for both properties. Town Manager Smith stated the Discount Land Road development has come before the town with their concept plan and they're working on getting funding in place. They're working on maintenance procedures as far as who's going to take care of the streets and the infrastructure. She stated she spoke with developers about a month and a half ago pertaining to the Central Avenue development and they will be verifying a few things with the towns engineer.

Councilman Lodato stated on Town Manager Smith report she is currently working with putting together a meeting with the local and state level officials pertaining a commercial development between Bargain Bills and Nanticoke Immediate Car. He advised a housing development was proposed on the other side of Rt.13 has received all their approvals with the exception of soil conservation, and inquired what development is that.

Town Manager Smith stated that is the development behind Exxon, and they're awaiting their Soil Conservation Permit.

Councilman Lodato inquired how he could attend meetings with developers.

Town Manager Smith stated developers don't normally meet with elected officials, but she did advise the McDonald's developers may need some future meetings and have support from the town.

Councilman Lodato thanked Town Manager Smith for her report as open matters were included to her report as this is very helpful.

President of Council Calio made a motion to accept the July Department Head Reports as presented. Councilman Kellam seconded the motion. Vote was 6-0, with one vacancy.

Mayor Oliveras presented the Zoning Ordinance Update. Town Manager Smith stated if Mayor & Council recalls, about six months ago, the town was awarded a grant through the Delaware Housing Authority for zoning reform to allow accessory dwelling units. She advised the town continues to work with the Rossi Group pertaining the zoning reform. In this year's budget, Mayor Council put aside funds to update the town's zoning ordinance as it needs a complete rewrite as she is working with the Rossi Group to get a proposal. She advised it may not cost the town as much as she anticipated as DSHA may take over and help pay for a portion due to being zoning and it can coincide with the pilot program that they're working on. She advised she will keep Mayor & Council updated on where the town stands. She stated she sent an email out to Mayor & Council one month ago to start reviewing the zoning ordinance and to see if there any concerns or questions that Mayor & Council would like to see updated. She advised Mayor & Council to make a list as public meetings will be held for public input possibly in September or October.

Councilman Lodato stated at last months meeting, Chief Kracyla stated that he attended the meeting at the AG's office pertaining to pop-up parties. Councilman Lodato inquired if there was a draft letter to use for the citizens to send to legislators.

Town Manager Smith stated she has drafted a letter and no one has requested the letter as of today. Councilman Lodato stated he would like a copy.

Mayor Oliveras presented the Appointment of Council Ward 1. Mayor Oliveras made the recommendation to appoint Mr. Doug Taylor to fulfill the term as Councilman Ward 1. Councilman Lodato stated he would like to make a point of order. He stated according to our charter, we do not need to take a vote to bring in a new candidate for the council. The charter states that it is the consent of the council. He stated he would abstain from the vote as he does not know anything about the candidate. He asked to meet with him, and he was informed that there was not enough time to do so. He stated he doesn't feel he can, in good conscience, consent for or against the candidate, so he will abstain from the vote. President of

Council Calio made a motion to accept the appointment of Mr. Doug Taylor, to fulfill the term as Councilman Ward 1. Councilwoman Fisher seconded the motion. Vote was 5-0, with Councilman Lodato abstaining.

Mayor Oliveras presented the Oath of Office to Mr. Doug Taylor, Councilman Ward 1.

Mayor Oliveras stated Councilman Taylor has been coming to several of the meetings over the past year. He has had several conversations with him and he seems to be a very caring individual and were looking for people who want to roll up their sleeves and work. Mayor Oliveras welcomed Councilman Taylor and inquired if he wanted to express any words.

Councilman Taylor thanked everyone for this opportunity to serve the whole town, but specifically Ward One. He stated he would do best he can on the towns behalf and what he doesn't have in mental power he will try to do it physically.

Mayor Oliveras presented the consideration of the 1st Reading Ordinance 2026-4, Chapter 92, Licenses. Town Manager Smith stated Ordinance 2026-4, which is Chapter 92, licenses as it relates to rental license, it would allow for an exemption under rental license for anyone who is renting to their parent, child, or sibling, without any monetary rents. She also stated if approved, there is a drafted application that will be required to be completed by the applicant themselves, which would be the property owner. She advised the application is separate from the ordinance. Councilman Lodato stated inquired about paragraph two on page two. He states proof of relationship is not required when town manager or code enforcement has personal knowledge of the relationship and determines, in their reasonable judgment, that the relationship is known without reasonable doubt. He stated he doesn't believe that any one person should be able to circumvent the process of proving that somebody is entitled to the exemption. Town Manager Smith stated she can remove paragraph two on page two in its entirety if Mayor & Council chooses to do so. President of Council Calio made a motion to accept the 1st Reading of Ordinance 2026-4 with the amendment to remove paragraph two on page two in its entirety. Councilwoman Fisher seconded the motion. Vote was 7-0.

Councilwoman Fisher thanked everyone attended and who were part of the Youth Voice Project. She advised her and Mrs. Henry are going through a lot of video footage of editing to make a movie. She thanked everyone for coming and the department heads.

Councilman Lodato stated there were a couple of backpack events this weekend where he attended two. He attended the one at Roger C. Fisher Park, with 25 youths receiving backpacks. The event had activities including a jumping house, food, and they had a great turnout.

He want to thank code enforcement and public works as they are doing a great job throughout town. He thanked Town Manager Smith for the changes she made in her report.

Councilman Kellam thanked everyone for coming out and welcomed Councilman Taylor. He stated he attended the Ark Resource Educational Bookbag Giveaway this month.

President of Council Calio welcomed Councilman Taylor and is looking forward in working with him.

Councilman Holden welcomed Councilman Taylor and is looking forward in working with him.

Mayor Oliveras stated this summer alone, there has been between 20 to 35 events throughout the town. The most important thing in any administration that comes aboard is to build as much relationships as you can, so that we build a coalition that pushes in the same direction, and that's time-consuming, you know, and over the course of the last 16 to 17 months, it's about 100 meetings. Running from place to place. But so much support and love from the community has been given. He stated it's not always a fun job and sometimes people have enough information to just set off a fire and not realize that there's more depth to things. It's not as easy as it being a surface. If you're only looking for surface, then you'll always find something wrong. He is at the mindset that he believes in the glass being half full because he can't stay motivated if it's always half empty. We should always look at the small incremental victories that this town is trying to do, and all the organizations have been doing things to keep our kids safe. That is God's work. He stated it's easy to point out the bad things that we're not doing right and the things that we ought to be at. What is hard is put together and maintain a motivation and a drive and a spirit that allows you to see your vision and just try to follow it through to the best of your extent. To the best of your extent, and that's what he believes every person here does. He respects that because that's how you learn. You don't learn because everyone agrees with you. You learn because you try to see every point of view. He stated it's emotional sometimes because you read certain things and you're constantly being attacked and it becomes personal. He inquired if we can at least be decent to one another after all we live in the same town after all we all have a hand in this.

Mr. Don D'Aquila stated he has spoke with Town Manager this week regarding the flock camera system installation occurring through the town. He stated he is very supportive of the cameras and there's actually a camera system going up on his property. He stated flock cameras, have the reading capability and visual capability, and it is a great tool for our community and especially for law enforcement getting their job done. He made a copies for the Mayor & Council and whoever else regarding the system. He stated there's been some controversy associated with it. There are

20 municipalities in Delaware right now using the tool, and they're doing very well. It helps law enforcement, helps the citizens, and it's a great tool for our community to hopefully send a message to the individuals that shouldn't be here. He advised that he accidentally bumped into a pop-up party while traveling back from Cambridge. He advised the officers were overwhelmed as there were approximately 800 people.

Mr. D'Aquila recommended a Laurel Public Advisory Commission. The committee could evaluate current fees contained in the Laurel City Ordinance, compare findings to other towns and cities on the Eastern Shore and evaluate current construction fees and contributions to increasing city revenues. They can hear public complaints, comments, recommendations, report to Mayor & Council and or appropriate departments, evaluate, recommend city expenditures to the Mayor & Council. The body would take input, ask questions, make recommendations, and forward to mayor and council and appropriate department. He stated this should help alleviate long council sessions and enhance working of city government. Assist with oversight and cost-saving accommodation as well as additional revenues. Help prepare Mayor and Council prior to meetings when agenda topics may come up. In other words, a step prior to Mayor and Council. Make recommendations to Mayor and Council on ways to improve our city workforce, making sure that Laurel does everything possible to attract and retain qualified professional employees. Laurel is a wonderful place to live. Let's keep the good work moving forward.

Mrs. Barber thanked everyone who supported St. Matthew's First Baptist Church with their Vacation Bible School and their block party.

Mrs. Amy Handy stated Councilman Lodato attended Friday with Friends, which was a great turnout with kids, with 30 kids attending each Friday. They had their Project Rise, our Men of Purpose, which was throughout the summer job shadowing stipend program. They followed up with their Camp for Christ which was a four day basketball skills clinic with about 50 kids.. She stated it was a summer for the youth.

Mrs. Davis inquired if Town Manager Smith could provide an update pertaining the Laurel Glen Apartments as she attended a public hearing three years ago.

Town Manager Smith stated they are working on getting their final funding in place and one of their main members who was handling that passed away. They're still working on the project but they're trying to replace the employee who passed away.

Mrs. Davis stated during the public hearing there was a lot of conversation that a certain percentage of the units they had applied for Section Eight rentals. She stated he didn't have a final number for the percentage of the total number of units that would be. She inquired if the town had received an update.

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Town Manager Smith stated no she has not received an update and if she recalled correctly it was only going to be a small portion of the units.

Councilman Lodato inquired if they have to have Section Eight.

Town Manager Smith stated the town has no say whether it can be or can't be Section Eight House as they're entitled to do that under Fair Housing.

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

Meeting Adjourned at 8:33 p.m.

Mayor

President of Council

Town Manager

Recording Secretary