

THE TOWN OF LAUREL
MAYOR AND COUNCIL MEETING
Laurel Town Hall
201 Mechanic Street
October 19, 2026
7:00 p.m.

1. Opening Prayer
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. Tribute RE: Former Mayor John Shwed
4. Mr. Seyan Deer RE: Poplar Street Food Truck Request
5. Minutes –September 21, 2026
6. Department Head Reports September 2026
7. Old Business
 - Communication Committee Report RE: Website – Councilman Lodato
 - Vacant Structure Ordinance Update – Town Manager Smith
 - Zoning Ordinance Updates – Town Manager Smith
8. New Business
 - FOIA Information Guide Consideration – Town Manager Smith
 - Upcoming Events – Town Manager Smith
 - Upcoming Holidays – Town Manager Smith
9. Mayor and Council Comments
10. Citizens Comments
11. Closed Session RE: Personnel Matters
12. Adjourn

Note to the Public: In accordance with 29 Del. C. § 1004 (e) (2), this agenda was posted on October 8, 2026, at 3:04 p.m. at the time it was prepared by the Town Manager and at least seven (7) days in advance of the meeting. This agenda is subject to change to include the additional items including Executive/Closed Session or the deletion of items including Executive/Closed Session, which arise at the time of the meeting. Agenda items listed may be considered out of sequence.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85958987590?pwd=shazRZnva0wNna2a0b6uSBrdCExY2w.1>

Meeting ID: 859 5898 7590

Passcode: 774176

The Town of Laurel
Mayor & Council Meeting Minutes
September 21, 2026

A Mayor & Council Meeting was held at Laurel Town Hall in the Mayor & Council Chambers on Monday, September 21, 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 Chief Robert Kracyla, Judge Ruffin, Finance Manager Melissa Naselli, Recording Secretary Alexis Oliphant, and Town Manager Jamie Smith. It was noted that Public Works Director James Foskey and Director of Code Enforcement Dan Hogg was absent.

The Mayor & Council Minutes of August 17, 2026, were presented for review. Councilman Holden made a motion to accept the August 17, 2026, minutes as presented. Councilwoman Fisher seconded the motion. Vote was 7-0.

The August 2026 Department Head Reports were presented for review.

- Town Manager Smith stated Public Works Director Foskey is not in attendance tonight but she is proud to report that the town received over \$3 million in SRF funding that is 100% principal forgiveness. This will repair the sewer main that runs down Sixth Street from West Street headed east to town limits. It'll be some lining and some replacing areas of old terracotta sewer.
- Town Manager Smith stated Director of Code Enforcement Hogg is not in attendance tonight, but can answer questions that Mayor & Council may have.
- Judge Ruffin stated she has no changes on her report and can answer any questions that Mayor & Council may have.
- Finance Manager Naselli stated she submitted her July and August Reports for Mayor & Council's review.
- Chief Kracyla stated the department held their Youth Police Academy where 15 individuals attended. The academy consisted of several presentations where the youth were able to interact with the police. He stated he has been meeting with Mr. Patel from Bryan's Bowling Center regarding the Laurel Night Out Event that is scheduled for Thursday, October 1, 2026. Laurel Night Out is a community night sponsored by the police department in the town. There will be several police activities and exhibits to explore. He advised Patrolman Greogry Catts recently graduated the Delaware State Police Academy where he received two awards at the ceremony. He advised last month 10 DUI's were issued with a majority of them not being for alcohol. They had 21 felony investigations as this is due to the new unit that's been working who are focusing mostly on gangs and drug violence in town. Chief Kracyla provided Mayor & Council with a memo that pertains to the Laurel Police Department being awarded funding through the FY 2026 Delaware Local JAG allocations. Captain Bryan applied for this and successfully secured this funding on

behalf of the department. This is a shared award between Laurel, Seaford, Milford, and Georgetown Police Departments, totaling \$74,449 with Laurel receiving \$15,038. The funding will be utilized to assist with the outfitting of a new police vehicle. He is requesting Mayor & Council make a motion for the Town of Laurel to formally accept the \$15,038 awarded to the Laurel Police Department and authorize its use toward outfitting a new police vehicle. Town Manager Smith stated this motion can be completed under new business.

President of Council Calio inquired where the funding came from to purchase the flock cameras.

Chief Kracyla stated the funding came from an ARPA Grant approximately about two and half years from Senator Blunt-Rochester's Office.

- Town Manager Smith stated Wawa has settled on the property earlier this month, and hopefully we'll start seeing things move forward out there quickly. She advised she has been working with FEMA regarding reimbursement on expenses from the second snowstorm in February. She stated overtime is not eligible for reimbursement. The town experienced water leaks and a truck was damaged when an employee was coming into town which are eligible for reimbursement which have been submitted. She advised the town is eligible to submit \$13,000, which the town is awaiting approval. She advised the 410 units on the east side of Discount Land Road received their Preliminary Approval from Del-Dot. Public Works Director Foskey and the towns engineer did talk to the developers engineer regarding utility designs to get water and sewer on their property. She advised they will still need to come back to P&Z for final approval once they receive all their state approvals.

Councilman Lodato stated on Town Manager Smiths report you mentioned the Audit Follow-Up pertaining Mayor & Council and Mrs. Ardisana were provided with documentation in regards to concerns she raised in reference to the FY24 Audit. This document provides what steps will be taken based on the auditors recommendations and processes. He advised he did not see the document as part of tonight's packet and inquired if it would be provided.

Town Manager Smith stated what Mrs. Ardisana presented at last month's Mayor & Council Meeting she typed out the response and sent to Mrs. Ardisana and Mayor & Council.

Councilman Lodato inquired if copies would be made.

Town Manager Smith stated that is not something that would normally go in the minutes unless Mayor & Council requested it to be included in the minutes.

Mayor Oliveras presented the 2nd Reading of Ordinance 2026-4, Chapter 92, Licenses. Town Manager Smith stated Ordinance 20026-4, is amending Chapter 92 Licenses for properties within the town, this allows exemptions for persons who are allowing immediate family to reside in their properties. Immediate family is defined as a parent, child, sibling, and/or spouse. If there's no monetary rent the property owners may apply for an exemption from the rental license fee. An application is attached but it is separate from the ordinance for Mayor & Council's review. She advised the ordinance was amended at last month's meeting regardless of whether any staff member knows them formally they will still be required to submit an exemption application. President of Council Calio made a motion to accept the 2nd and Final Reading of Ordinance 2026-4. Councilwoman Fisher seconded the motion. Vote was 7-0.

Town Manager Smith stated the Town of Laurel and Bryan's Bowling Center will be collaborating this year to hold a Community Trunk or Treat on Saturday, October 24, 2026, at Bryan's Bowling Center from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. She thanked Operations Manager Oliphant and Mr. Patel for their effort and lead on this event.

Town Manager Smith stated in recent years Mayor & Council have approved Halloween to take place on October 31st. She requested approval for Halloween to take place on Saturday, October 31, 2026, from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. President of Council Calio made a motion to accept Halloween for October 31, 2026, from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. Councilman Kellam seconded the motion. Vote was 7-0.

Town Manager Smith stated the Laurel High School Homecoming Parade will take place on Friday, October 9, 2026, with line-up at 6:00 p.m. and the parade beginning at 7:00 p.m. She is requesting the Mayor & Council's permission to allow the school to hold the parade as the route takes place on a state maintained road. She advised an application has already been submitted. She stated Mayor & Council are invited to participate in the parade. Councilman Holden made a motion approve the Laurel High School Homecoming Parade to take place on Friday, October 9, 2026. Councilwoman Fisher seconded the motion. Vote was 7-0.

Councilman Lodato made a motion for the Town of Laurel to formally accept the \$15,038.00 awarded to the Laurel Police Department and authorize its use toward outfitting a new police vehicle. Councilman Kellam seconded the motion. Vote was 7-0.

Councilman Kellam thanked the town staff for their hard work.

Councilman Lodato made a motion that we make the answers to Mrs. Ardisana's questions on the audit part of the minutes of tonight's meeting, so that the public can review on how the town plans to move forward on the issues that were raised. President of Council Calio seconded the motion. Vote was 7-0.

Councilman Lodato stated on January 27th a Hollybrook meeting was scheduled to be held and he sent a text message on Sunday January 26th, asking the Mayor about the community meeting at Hollybrook. The reply was that we should reach out and cancel it under the circumstances of snow. He was thanked for staying on top of it. He later, found that meeting was held, and he was never notified. He advised on February 23rd, there was a community meeting with the Haitian community, an email saying that he was not to come. On May 7, 2026, the Laurel Star newspaper pertained to town violence, town officials acknowledged the seriousness of the situation and confirmed that decisions are already underway with law enforcement. The Mayor noted that a meeting had been held earlier that day with police leadership to develop strategies moving forward. We are very concerned, he said, stating public safety budget impacts and a strain on police resources. The key fact is that the Haitian community requested a meeting with the town about actions allegedly taken by the chief of police in his official capacity, that makes subject matter plainly connected to town government and the operation of the Laurel Police Department. The Laurel Charter gives town council, not simply the mayor or town manager, important authority concerning the police department. The charter states that council makes the rules and regulates necessary for the organization, government, and control of the police force. Operational control of the police department's daily routine belongs to the chief, where the town manager communicates policies adopted by council to the chief. That makes the exclusion more a council member asking to attend a meeting concerning allegations about police department conduct and asking to observe, discuss something feeling within the area of which council itself has charter responsibilities. He still does not find anything in the charter establishing a general power of mayor or town manager to tell an elected council member that he or she may not attend such a meeting. He was told that the mayor was following protocol. He asked for a protocol in writing. He advised Section 12 gives council authority to establish its own rules and order of business. If there really is a council protocol prohibiting attendance, there should therefore be something identifiable: a council, ordinance, resolution, policy, or other authority, not merely an administrative assertion. Delaware FOIA doesn't automatically make this a public meeting merely because town officials and community members meet. Several council members, along with our town manager, have been present at numerous meetings related to our town. One example is the One Laurel meeting, which three or more council members and a town manager attend. Other meetings including SCAT, Western Chamber in meetings with representatives, but there is another example that cuts against the claimed protocol. Delaware law expressly provides that a public body is not held solely because of a quorum of members attending a meeting of another public body. An example he provided is that five members from the Laurel Council meet at a Seaford Town Hall meeting is not constituted to a quorum, and we can do that. Thus, a council member cannot attend because he, his or her presence would automatically create a FOIA violation. The actual facts: how many council members were present, who organized the meeting, other, whether the group itself was a public body, and whether council business was deliberated is the matter. The charter repeatedly assigns authority to town council as a body. The larger pattern, taken individually, each instance might have an innocent or legally permissible explanation. Taken together, however, they raise a legitimate governance question that is more precise. Does anybody have to invite every council member to everything? The question becomes: Are the mayor and the town manager controlling

the flow of information concerning town business in a way that selectively prevents certain elected members of council from observing, participating in, or exercising their charter responsibilities, the charter does not expressly say all council members must receive identical information, but neither does it establish the mayor as the gatekeeper of council information. There is also a potentially important Delaware FOIA issue of the information sharing arrangement results in some council members privately deliberating about town business, while others are excluded. He advised Delaware DOJ has specifically found that communications among council members can't create a constructive forum, even when everyone isn't physically together. In a 2023, case involving Ellendale, the DOJ found FOIA violations where council members use email exchanges to discuss and reach consensus on public business outside of properly notice public meetings, the DOJ reached a similar conclusion in 2024 on the Town of Greenwood matter. He is raising this issue because on many occasions he has told the mayor that he is available to attend meetings that affect our town. He has not been invited and has been denied access to participate in these meetings. He has been told by the Mayor himself that he attends many meetings concerning our town. After many months of waiting, the town council still has not been briefed on what was discussed or the outcome of these meetings. He stated he is willing to offer his time and serve the Town of Laurel as member of council and he wishes to participate in all aspects of the town but he continues to be locked out of meetings with no protocol provided.

Councilwoman Fisher stated a Laurel Family Day Peace Festival will be held on Saturday, September 26, at Janosik Park from 1:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Councilman Taylor stated he has a new appreciation for everybody else sitting at the table as it's a lot of work and a lot of reading. He advised there is a lot that goes on behind the scenes to keep everything running smoothly and he's looking forward to contributing. He encouraged residents to volunteer and to get involved.

Mayor Oliveras highlighted the following events:

- September 26, 2026, Laurel Family Day Peace Festival, Janosik Park, 1:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.
- September 25th, 2026, 54 Miles Evening with Author Leonard Pitts, Jr, Dunbar Gymnasium, 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.
- October 3, 2026, Purple Night Out Event, sponsored by Laurel Public Library.
- October 1, 2026, Laurel Night Out, Bryan's Bowling Center
- October 17, 2026, OWL Community Awards, held at Dunbar at 5:00 p.m.
- November 23, 2026, ARK Bake Sale.
- December 4, 2026, Town of Laurel's Christmas Parade, 7:00 p.m.
- December 19, 2026 Coat Drive, Laurel Public Library.

Councilman Lodato on September 22, 2026, the Laurel Middle School will be holding their WAVES Meeting, at the Laurel Middle School Library. He advised WAVES stands for willingness, attendance, voice, engagement, and success.

Mrs. Cheryl Barber, resident of Gibson Avenue, stated OWL will be holding their Community Clean-Up on September 26, 2026, from 10:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Mr. Richard Otwell stated when his parents passed his siblings and himself inherited their home. He advised three years ago his taxes were \$540.00 and they increased to \$750.00 for hiring new police officers. He stated this year they increased almost \$600.00, and questioned why they increased so much in one year.

Town Manager Smith stated the tax assessment is based on the Sussex County Tax Assessments and she would need to look at his assessment to see what it was last year and what it went to this year and stated she will follow-up with him.

Mr. Jay Hoffman, resident of 412 East Sixth Street, questioned what his tax dollars were doing for him at this point. When he purchased his home in 2019, he paid \$740.00 in town tax and this year he has been charged \$1,085. He stated he does not understand where this money goes and he has seen the breakdowns of what the towns intake and the towns outflow is. He stated the town has 250 new affordable houses getting ready to come to town and three or four years ago the town hired two new police officers. He inquired with the new homes getting ready to come how many more cops are the town going to need to employ. He inquired what is the tax base that's going to be generated from? What is the town doing to help lower our tax burden? He stated bringing affordable housing is not going to help lower the tax burden and how is it going to affect the utilities in town. He inquired what the town is doing to be more business friendly. He stated there was an opportunity to bring a business to the corner of Rt.9 and Rt. 13 and he was told by state representatives that it was denied by the town for a concession of a closed system port-a-pot that was going to be under the utility building that was going to be placed on the property. They needed a concession of six months and it was denied. He stated he goes down Central Avenue, right across from Davelli's, and he see's a business in a utility trailer, with a port-a-pot in the back corner of the lot that is visible to the public. He inquired if that as permitted by Mayor & Council and if it's not permitted where is our code enforcement. He stated 250 affordable houses is not what this town needs. This town needs more concessions to businesses to bring a bigger tax base business-wise and not to the people of this town.

Mr. Alan Little, resident of Seventh Street, inquired about the business license increasing by \$75.00. He stated the Town of Delmar charges \$50.00, the City of Seaford charges nothing, the Town of Dagsboro charges \$150.00, the Town of Greenwood charges \$75.00 and the Town of Blades charges \$100.00.

Mr. Blair McFarland, resident of East 4th Street, stated his taxes went from \$700.00 to \$1,400.00 and he inquired the justification of his taxes doubling.

Town Manager Smith stated it was based off the assessment and she will need to look at his assessment from last year and she will follow-up with him.

Mrs. Stacy Lane, Laurel Public Library, stated they will be hosting their 54-Miles, Lenoard Pitts, Jr Author Event on Friday, September 25, 2026, at Dunbar Gym from 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. She stated Delaware Goes Purple Event is a statewide event that runs from September through November and it focuses on prevention. Her Kickbutt Generation is a group that is against nicotine, tobacco, and vaping usage and they have planned a health fair with different resources. She provided a brief overview of the Story Walk in Market Street Square Park that was helped funded by the American Lung Association Grant.

Mr. Seyan Deer, stated he rents a place on Poplar Street and he was notified the week before last that his business is shut down. He advised that his food trailer has water and electricity for that particular unit and he was advised food trailers were not permitted in the town. He stated there's a business in a trailer with a toilet outside in the open right down from his and they're permitted to operate. He stated he is trying to bring business into the town but he was told he is not permitted.

Regular Session Recessed at 7:51 p.m.

Regular Session Reconvened at 8:06 p.m.

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 8:07 p.m.

Mayor

President of Council

Town Manager

Recording Secretary



Town of LAUREL DELAWARE

August 27, 2026

Mayor and Council

REFERENCE: August 17, 2026 Concerns from Ms. Ardisana as it relates to financial management, internal controls, budget oversight and the FY2023 and FY2024 Audit

In response to the concerns shared by Ms. Ardisana at the Mayor and Council meeting on August 17, 2026, I have prepared the following information addressing the nine items raised regarding the Town's financial management, internal controls, budget oversight, and FY23 & 24 audit. The information provided below is intended to clarify the Town's current practices, explain the processes and controls that are in place, and provide factual information regarding the concerns presented.

Item 1: FY2023 Financial Information and Prior Period Restatements

The FY2024 audit identified four prior period corrections to the Town's beginning net position. The nature and circumstances of each are as follows:

Community Reinvestment Fund (CRF): When the grant was awarded and funds were received by the Town, they were recorded as revenue. The funds were received prior to any expenditures being incurred. Governmental accounting standards require that expenditure-driven grant revenue not be recognized until there are eligible expenditures. The FY2024 audit corrected this by deferring the funds as unearned revenue until expended.

Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (SRF): When the auditors confirmed the outstanding debt with DNREC, the SRF obligations were not identified by DNREC at that time. In FY2024, DNREC subsequently classified the funds as debt. It is also important to understand the nature of SRF funding: funds are disbursed only after eligible work is completed, the contractor's invoice is submitted, and DNREC authorizes the draw. The Town did not receive these funds as unrestricted cash. The FY2024 audit corrected this by reclassifying the draws from revenue to long-term debt. Although this is a principal forgiveness loan, it is reported as debt until the project is completed and forgiveness criteria are met.

ARPA/SLFRF: Similar to the CRF, when the ARPA funds were received they were recorded as revenue before eligible expenditures had been incurred. The FY2024 audit corrected this by deferring the unexpended balance as unearned revenue.

Pension: The correction related to the application of GASB Statement No. 68, which governs accounting for the Town's participation in the state's multiemployer pension plans. This is a highly technical area of GAAP for local governments involving actuarial calculations of the Town's proportionate share of net pension liability and deferred inflows and outflows of resources. A computational error in applying the standard resulted in an overstatement, which the FY2024 audit identified and corrected. This type of adjustment is not uncommon given the complexity of applying the standard.

Item 2: Segregation of Duties

The Town has taken steps to address the auditor's recommendations regarding segregation of duties. The employee who prepares the deposit documentation no longer takes deposits to the bank. Deposits are taken by a separate employee, and that employee does not go alone. The Finance Manager does not authorize purchases; ordering of supplies and services is handled by other designated personnel depending on the department. Department Heads prepare purchase orders for invoices, which are then provided to the Finance Manager. The Finance Manager prepares checks based on the invoice and purchase order, but does not sign checks. Checks are signed by other designated staff, and all checks require two signatures. Invoices accompany the checks for review prior to signing.

The Town recognizes that with its current staffing resources, complete segregation of all duties is not always achievable, which is common among municipalities of similar size, as mentioned by the auditor in his July presentation. The Town will continue working to improve its controls based on the auditor's recommendations and available resources.

Item 3: Journal Entries and Adjustments

The Town's accounting system contains a large chart of accounts, and the manner in which the system was configured contributes to the number of journal entries required.

It is important to clarify that the need for adjusting journal entries does not mean revenues and expenditures were unrecorded or that financial activity was unknown or questioned. The adjustments often relate to ensuring transactions are properly classified and assigned to the correct accounts and funds within the chart of accounts, to help ensure consistency between reporting periods. In periods in which there are significant changes, like when changing Finance Directors, more adjusting journal entries are typically required to help ensure consistency in the reported financial statements.

The Town is working with its auditors to streamline the chart of accounts and reduce the number of adjustments required going forward. This process will be completed in coordination with bringing the Town's audits fully current, as restructuring the chart of accounts will reset the existing account structure.

Item 4: Material Weakness

A material weakness is an internal control finding. It should not be interpreted as noncompliance, and it does not affect the auditor's opinion on the accuracy or reliability of the financial statements as a whole. The finding does not mean that revenues and expenditures were unrecorded or that funds were missing. It does not mean that the Mayor and Council were making decisions based on known inaccurate financial information. The underlying financial transactions are recorded in the Town's accounting system. The

finding relates to the processes, controls, classifications, reconciliations, and adjustments necessary to ensure that the financial statements accurately present the Town's financial position in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP).

Under Government Auditing Standards, a control deficiency and noncompliance are separate reporting categories, and one can exist without the other. The auditor reported a material weakness because the Town's internal controls were not adequate to prevent or detect misstatements on a timely basis. That is a control finding. Noncompliance would require a violation of a law, regulation, or contractual provision that is material to the financial statements. The auditor did not detect any such violations, and thus no noncompliance was reported. In addition, the Town received an unmodified opinion on its financial statements, which independently assures they are fairly stated as presented.

The Town's limited staff size is relevant context. Smaller municipalities have fewer personnel available to maintain the level of segregation of duties and financial review that larger organizations can support. This does not eliminate the need for appropriate controls, and the Town is committed to strengthening them. The Town will continue working with its auditors to bring reporting current, improve reconciliation procedures, and reduce the volume of adjustments required.

Item 5: Budget Variances, General Fund and Police Department

The approximately \$2.9 million variance noted is primarily attributable to capital improvement expenditures funded through dedicated grants and other nonroutine funding sources. These were not unrestricted operating expenditures.

The Police Department renovation (Paul Laurence Dunbar Public Safety Building) was not included in the Town's annual operating budget because it was not an anticipated operating expense. The project proceeded after the Town secured funding specifically designated for the capital improvements. The Mayor and Council were aware of the funding sources and the projects for which those funds were received.

Capital improvement projects funded through dedicated grants, loans, or other restricted sources are accounted for separately from normal operating expenditures. The receipt and expenditure of project specific funds should not be characterized as the Police Department or General Government exceeding their operating budgets by \$2.9 million. These were capital improvement expenditures supported by funding received for those specific purposes, and they are subject to review as part of both the annual audit and by the applicable funding agencies.

Further, the budget to actual schedules presented in the audited financial statements are required supplementary information. The auditor applied limited procedures to that information and did not audit it or express an opinion on it. Professional standards do not require the auditor to test budgetary compliance at the individual line item or account level. On the Enterprise Fund side, nearly \$978,000 of the variance is depreciation, which is a non cash GAAP entry that municipalities do not typically appropriate in their operating budgets, as it is not a use of cash. These variances were discussed by the auditor in the presentation to Council and are also explained in the MD&A section of the report. They are normal for a local government that budgets on the cash basis but reports on the full accrual basis of accounting.

Item 6: Grant and Loan Accounting

The circumstances for each grant and loan program are described in Item 1 above. In each instance, the Town maintained records of the funds received and the expenditures made for the applicable projects. The FY2024 restatement reflects corrections to the accounting treatment and classification of these transactions based on the auditor's review procedures. The restatement should not be characterized as millions of dollars being unaccounted for. The funds were received for identified projects, expended for those purposes, and documented. The corrections primarily address when and how those transactions were recognized and classified in the financial statements under the Town's required reporting framework. In other words, they were timing and classification issues. The Town is working with its auditors to ensure proper accounting procedures and classifications are applied going forward.

Item 7: Problems Spanning Multiple Fiscal Years

The FY2023 audit was not completed and issued until September 2025, approximately fifteen months after the end of the fiscal year. By that time, FY2024 was already closed. The Town could not act on the FY2023 auditor's recommendations until those recommendations were received.

The delay in completing the FY2023 audit was driven by the condition of the Town's records, staff turnover, and the time required to complete the engagement. These same factors contributed to the conditions identified in the FY2024 audit.

The Town is now working with its auditors to bring its financial reporting fully current and to implement corrective actions on a forward focused basis. The Town is addressing the recommendations that have been made and establishing procedures to prevent these conditions from recurring.

Item 8: Custodial Risk and Protection of Deposits

At the recommendation of the Town's auditor, the Town has taken steps to address custodial risk exposure on its bank deposits. The Town has discussed arrangements with its banking partners and the Mayor and Council were previously made aware of these efforts. The Town will continue to evaluate its banking arrangements to ensure deposits are appropriately protected, including options such as collateralization agreements, sweep arrangements, or distribution of funds across multiple institutions.

Item 9: FY2024 Expenditures With Zero Adopted and Amended Budget Amounts

The Town adopts an annual budget by department. However, the structure of the Town's chart of accounts does not always correspond directly with individual line items as they appear in the adopted budget. As a result, an expenditure may appear in the accounting system under an account with a zero budget amount even though the department as a whole has an adopted budget and sufficient funds within its overall departmental allocation.

When unforeseen expenses arise, such as emergency sewer repairs or unplanned overtime, Town staff identifies available funding sources or reallocates within the department's existing budget. The Mayor and Council are notified when major issues arise. The department's practice is to remain within its overall

approved departmental budget, with flexibility to address legitimate expenses that cannot be anticipated when the annual budget is adopted.

It is also important to distinguish between the Town's annual budget and its annual audit, as they serve different purposes. The budget is the Town's financial plan for the upcoming year. The audit is an independent examination of actual financial activity after those transactions have occurred. A difference between a budgeted amount and an actual expenditure does not, by itself, establish that funds were improperly spent. The Town is working with its auditors to improve its chart of accounts and reporting structure so that departmental budgets and actual expenditures can be more clearly presented and understood.

The auditor also tested expenditures as part of their audit procedures, including whether they were properly recorded, classified, supported, and reported in the correct period. An audit is designed to provide reasonable, not absolute, assurance. The auditor applies materiality thresholds and directs testing toward areas of highest risk, which is what professional standards require. Whether each individual expenditure had corresponding budget authority is a question of appropriation compliance, not financial statement accuracy, and is outside the scope of a financial statement audit.

Sincerely,

THE TOWN OF LAUREL



Jamie T. Smith
Town Manager

CODE REPORT SEPTEMBER 2026

- 147 COMPLETED ACTIVITIES , 58 GRASS NOTICES , 31 WORK ORDERS
- 51 RENTAL INSPECTIONS
- 15 BUILDING PERMITS ISSUED , \$4927.08 IN REVENUE
- 6 STOP WORK ORDERS

Permits Issued List

From Date: 09/01/2026

To Date: 09/30/2026

Permit Type	Sub Type	Permit#	Address	Issue Date	Permit Fee
Building Permit	Addition	B26-000095	1158 South Central Avenue	09/10/2026	97.50
Building Permit	Addition	B26-000104	404 Center Street	09/28/2026	50.50
Building Permit Total	Addition Total			2	148.00
Building Permit	Alteration	B26-000101	1014 Central Avenue	09/17/2026	82.50
Building Permit	Alteration	B26-000102	110 Brooklyn Avenue	09/17/2026	415.00
Building Permit	Alteration	B26-000103	401 South Central Avenue Unit 5	09/24/2026	190.00
Building Permit	Alteration	B26-000091	220 East Front Street	09/03/2026	55.00
Building Permit	Alteration	B26-000092	427 North Central Avenue	09/04/2026	580.00
Building Permit	Alteration	B26-000097	30425 SEAFORD	09/11/2026	159.62
Building Permit	Alteration	B26-000099	401 South Central Avenue Unit 5	09/11/2026	515.00
Building Permit	Alteration	B26-000094	402 Willow	09/09/2026	190.00
Building Permit Total	Alteration Total			8	2,187.12
Building Permit	Repair	B26-000105	10907 Fourth Street	09/30/2026	490.00
Building Permit	Repair	B26-000100	107 Greene Avenue	09/14/2026	398.96
Building Permit	Repair	B26-000098	101 West Market Street	09/11/2026	1,015.00
Building Permit	Repair	B26-000093	518 Fourth Street	09/09/2026	185.50
Building Permit	Repair	B26-000096	30425 SEAFORD	09/11/2026	502.50
Building Permit Total	Repair Total			5	2,591.96
Building Permit Total				15	4,927.08
All Permits Total				15	4,927.08

Completed Activities By Type and Users Report

Completion Date From: 09/01/2026

Completion Date To: 09/30/2026

User	Activity Type Test	Completed Activities
Charlie Wheatley	Send Housing Violation Notice	58
Charlie Wheatley	Work Order	29
Charlie Wheatley	Total Completed	87
Don Atkinson	Mow Property	1
Don Atkinson	Rental - Inspection	51
Don Atkinson	Rental - Re-Inspection	4
Don Atkinson	Rental - Re-Inspection Due	1
Don Atkinson	Send Housing Violation Notice	1
Don Atkinson	Vehicle - Expired/No Tags	1
Don Atkinson	Work Order	1
Don Atkinson	Total Completed	60
Code Enforcement Total		147

Town of Laurel Monthly Report for September 2026
Public Works Department
Prepared by James Foskey on October 05, 2026

Septage receiving station

Intake for September was 1,056,476 gallons - which resulted in income of 474,901.28

- PW's department for the month of September. Staff continued to clean catch basins from debris along the streets to help with MS4 compliance and meter reads. Staff continued cutting tree branches over hanging sidewalks and signs around town, repaired the fence at Webb Ave BB court, repainted wheels on dump truck, repaired bricks in walk way at Tidewater Park, Assisted with Townsend St. asphalt patch, and replaced missing street signs around town.

- Water Plant- Staff performed monthly Bacteria & Fluoride testing of the Town's water system and reported to the State. Staff continued working with 120 Water for lead and copper compliance, and Hydro Corp for cross connection compliance. Staff replaced caustic pump injector, bands and pump head, replaced hypochlorite supply line to day tank, and trimmed growth around the fences. Lead and copper results are completed and we are in compliance,

- Waste water-Staff continued routine maintenance at the WWTP facility, and provided monthly reports to the state. Staff replaced AC unit for blower #1, replaced MP-100 at methanol pump, replaced 4 flex hoses at BNR basin, Septage receiving frac tanks were cleaned and 20 tons of solids removed. Pleased to report Wes Peek has started training courses for his level 2 license.

- We are continuing to work with GMB on a new water treatment facility located at Dunbar, and various sewer and street paving projects. Assisted Contractor working on utility's at the Promenade and temporary paving was done on Poplar St.. Continued working on Sewer to the Eley property and a contractor has been selected and work should begin.



LAUREL POLICE DEPARTMENT

1110 W. 6TH STREET, SUITE #1
LAUREL, DELAWARE 19956
Phone: 302-875-2244/ Fax: 302-497-3003



Robert F. Kracyla
Chief of Police

MAYOR AND TOWN COUNCIL REPORT September 2026

- For the month of September 2026, the Laurel Police Department handled a total of 373 complaints/calls for service.

Complaint Breakdown

- Motor Vehicle Collisions: 14
- DUI: 4
- Felony Investigations: 27
- Misdemeanor Investigations: 60
- Follow-up investigations: 94
- Crime Prevention Checks: 20
- Other calls for service: 228

Crime Breakdown

- Felony Charges: 12
- Misdemeanor Charges: 17
- Fugitive Charges: 8

Traffic Breakdown

- Traffic Citations Issued: 98
- Parking Tickets: 6
- Warnings: 65

Assist Other Agencies

- Assist DSP: 12
- Assist other Police Departments: 11
- Assist Fire and EMS / Fire: 7

“Laurel...Our Community...Our Commitment”



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Robert F. Kracyla
Chief of Police

Warrants Generated/ Executed

- Felony Warrants: Generated 11 Executed 12
- Misdemeanor Warrants: Generated 9 Executed 7
- Search Warrants: Generated 18 Executed 13

Notable Incidents/ Investigative Updates

- 2 - US Capitol Police and Congressional Visit to Hollybrook Apt. Complex.
- 8 – Statewide Police Chief meeting and SLEAF award of \$8K to be used for outfitting a new police vehicle.
- 9 – One Laurel Meeting
- 11 - Laurel Night Out, organizational meeting with community partners.
- 14 – Meeting with Laurel Middle School Principal to discuss programming for students.
- 16 – Chief attended the FBI Officer Safety Awareness Training at Wilmington University.
- 17 – Chief attended the CHEER Patriot Day Ceremony in Georgetown.
- 22 – Chief taught a Health and Wellness Class for Youth at Laurel Middle
- 23 – One Laurel meeting. / Meeting with Mr. Patel ref Laurel Night Out.
- 25 – Hosted a community event at Dunbar / Evening with Author Leonard Pitts.
- 28 – Hollybrook Town Hall meeting.
- 29 – Radio Interview with Mike Bradley.
- 30 – Firearms Qualifications / Laurel Night Out meeting as well.

“Laurel...Our Community...Our Commitment”

ALDERMAN COURT 35

ACCOUNT RECEIVABLE REPORT BY CATEGORIES

SEPTEMBER 2026

	26-Aug		26-Sep
TOWN FINES	\$97,221.97		\$98,943.27
VICTIMS COMP. FUND	\$16,657.45		\$16,524.45
COURT COSTS	\$41,293.74		\$40,841.49
VIDEOPHONE FUND	\$1,437.50		\$1,410.50
TRANSPORTATION FUND	\$38,534.85		\$39,092.20
COURT SECURITY FUND	\$44,702.54		\$44,473.32
STATE POLICE FUND	\$13,276.35		\$13,201.35
LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT FUND	\$13,326.86		\$13,259.36
VICTIM RIGHTS FUND	\$569.40		\$552.40
AMBULANCE FUND	\$14,954.05		\$14,806.05
MAIL IN LATE FEE	\$6,283.84		\$6,193.84
RESTITUTION	\$0.00		\$0.00
TOTAL	\$288,258.55		\$289,298.23
3-10+ YEARS	\$135,613.06		\$133,053.42
TOTAL TO TOWN	\$138,515.71		\$139,784.76

LAUREL ADLERMAN COURT 35

SEPTEMBER 2026 MONTHLY COLLECTION REPORT

	<u>CHECKS & CASH</u>	<u>VISA/MASTERCARD/DEBIT</u>	<u>DISCOVER</u>	<u>EPAY - VISA/MASTERCARD/DEBIT</u>	<u>EPAY - DISCOVER</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
VIDEO PHONE	\$17.00	\$38.50	\$1.00	\$50.50	\$5.00	\$112.00
VCF	\$268.00	\$373.50	\$10.00	\$517.25	\$50.00	\$1,218.75
VRF	\$20.00	\$20.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$40.00
COURT COSTS	\$533.00	\$1,283.50	\$40.00	\$1,258.26	\$100.00	\$3,214.76
FINE	\$742.94	\$1,923.00	\$29.00	\$2,304.17	\$148.00	\$5,147.11
CT. SEC. FEE	\$630.00	\$1,280.00	\$30.00	\$1,643.81	\$150.00	\$3,733.81
TRANSP. FUND	\$293.75	\$1,027.00	\$14.50	\$1,071.50	\$74.00	\$2,480.75
DSP FUND	\$157.50	\$336.50	\$7.50	\$427.50	\$37.50	\$966.50
LOCAL LAW ENF. FD	\$157.50	\$337.50	\$7.50	\$420.00	\$37.50	\$960.00
EMS FUND	\$192.00	\$500.00	\$10.00	\$539.16	\$50.00	\$1,291.16
OVERPAYMENT						
APPEAL FEE						
TOTAL:	\$3,011.69	\$7,119.50	\$149.50	\$8,232.15	\$652.00	\$19,164.84

LAUREL ADLERMAN COURT 35

SEPTEMBER 2026 MONTHLY DISTRIBUTION REPORT

		CHECKS OR CREDIT CARD RETURNS	
VIDEO PHONE	\$112.00		\$112.00
VCF	\$1,218.75		\$1,218.75
VRF	\$40.00		\$40.00
COURT COSTS	\$3,214.76		\$3,214.76
FINE	\$5,147.11		\$5,147.11
CT. SEC. FEE	\$3,733.81		\$3,733.81
TRANSP. FUND	\$2,480.75		\$2,480.75
DSP FUND	\$966.50		\$966.50
LOCAL LAW ENF. FD	\$960.00		\$960.00
EMS FUND	\$1,291.16		\$1,291.16
OVERPAYMENT			
TOTAL COLLECTIONS			\$19,164.84
TOTAL FINE & COSTS			\$8,361.87
TOTAL BANK FEES			\$268.20
TOTAL COURT SECURITY FEE			\$3,465.61
TOTAL FINE & COSTS			\$8,361.87
GRAND TOTAL FOR DISTRIBUTION			\$18,896.64

Town of Laurel 9/30/26
Finance Report - FY 2026

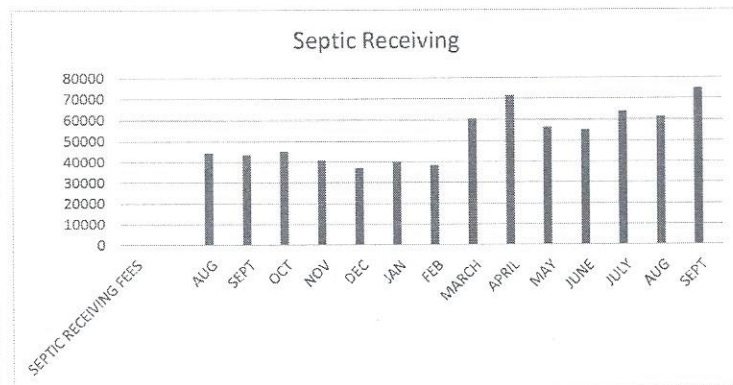
Budgeted Revenue as of September 30, 2026

Below are some revenue items & their year-to-date totals.

	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Realized</u>	
Alderman Court Fines	275000	25660	9%
Fees - Court Security	85000	11848	14%
Fines - Court of Common Pleas	10500	1702	16%
Fines - Voluntary Assessment	17000	2854	17%
Services Provided & Billed (through violations)	52000	19611	38%
Building Permits	86500	4190	5%
Public Facilities Impact Fees	45000	2258	5%
Transfer Tax	191000	88358	46%
Dunbar Rental Income	82000	25910	32%
Water Fees (billed)	1170400	259925	22%
Wastewater Fees (billed)	1546000	339480	22%
Water Impact & Connection Fees	48000	0	0%
WW Impact & Connection Fees	71000	0	0%
Septic Receiving Fees (billed)	605000	200445	33%
Grants (MSAF,CTF,SRF,others)		831248.79	

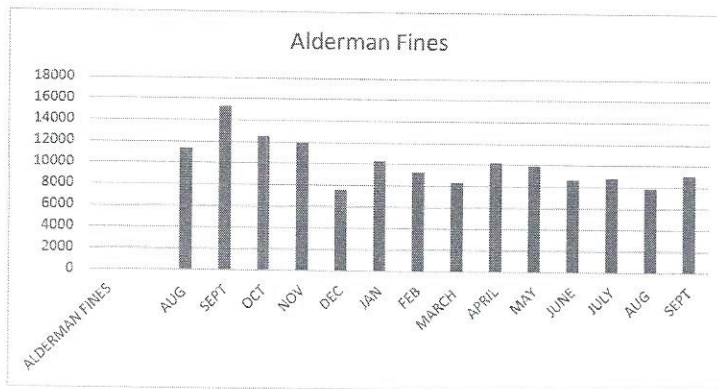
Budgeted revenue that is higher than average for this time of the year are in bold.

The following two graphs have been added to this report to show the trend of two major revenue items. The graph covers the past fourteen months.



SEPTIC RECEIVING FEES

AUG	44316
SEPT	43668
OCT	45058
NOV	40798
DEC	37249
JAN	40114
FEB	38574
MARCH	60420
APRIL	71631
MAY	56334
JUNE	55338
JULY	64007
AUG	61537
SEPT	74901



ALDERMAN FINES

AUG	11337
SEPT	15268
OCT	12538
NOV	11929
DEC	7544
JAN	10315
FEB	9243
MARCH	8290
APRIL	10141
MAY	9897
JUNE	8613
JULY	8783
AUG	7837
SEPT	9039

	<u>YTD Donations</u>	<u>YTD Expended</u>
Police K-9	49895	41727.33

The following box represents preliminary department expenditures for FY 2027.

Department Expenditures

	Budget	Expended	
General Government	661080	282023	43%
Dunbar Maintenance	1800	1249	69%
Administration	293014	54525	19%
Public Works	483029	202225	42%
Alderman Court	230697	47783	21%
Police	3704704	749157	20%
Code Enforcement	230546	44910	19%
Mayor & Council	7000	2331	33%
Water	1026613	163386	16%
Wastewater	1402601	229954	16%
Septic Receiving	128314	26606	21%
Trash	400000	98624	25%
Totals	8569398	1902773	22%

Cash Accounts		<i>as of September 30, 2026</i>
Operating Funds		
General Fund		1072949.73
Payroll		2251.61
Capital Funds		
Capital Reserve Fund - Community Bank		104256.96
MMS - Grants		313861.76
Special Purpose Funds		
Municipal Street Aid		2649.51
Police - EIDE		6709.62
Police - GCCJ		9957.00
Police - SLEAF		38955.29
Police - FFA		3650.79
Community Revitalization	<i>per Town Manager</i>	55508.22
Chief's Account		46986.66
Independence Day Account	<i>per Operations Mgr.</i>	4641.25



Town of LAUREL DELAWARE

Jamie Smith, Town Manager
201 Mechanic Street
Laurel, Delaware 19956
302-875-2277
laureltm@comcast.net

TOWN COUNCIL REPORT

September 2026

- **Economic Development** – The town staff continues to work with a commercial and a residential developer for two properties along U. S. Route 13. The developer of McDonald is currently working with DeIDOT for an entrance only permit from U. S. Route 13 and the town continues to discuss this matter further with the developer and state officials. Mayor and Council have provided letters of support for same. Wawa had their site plan recorded with Sussex County, settlement has taken place and site work has begun. Continue to work with a developer for the development of residential property located on Central Avenue and the same developer is looking at developing property on Discount Land Road for the development of a mixed use residential parcel. The Promenade has started with site work. Once site work is completed, construction of the homes will begin.
- **TAP Funding Update** – Phase 1 of the Walkway install, is to begin at Roger C. Fisher Park. In order to completed this, a waiver and easement is needed from the Railroad company to go under the railroad bridge, due to the time it is taking to obtain the necessary easement. Contact has been made from the Railroad Company and they were supportive as long as we meet the requirements for a safety structure. However, it has been determined, it is almost impossible to meet the requirements of a safety structure. Funding is still needed for this phase and we will continue to apply for TAP Funding when it is available.
- **Main Street Assessment** – I have been working with Stephanie Moody and Teresa Lynch on a Main Street Program for Laurel. The first step is to apply for grant funding, which we received to complete the assessment. Teresa Lynch held workshops on June 2nd and 3rd

with various officials, residents and representatives from community organizations. She will be compiling on all information and it is expected to approximately 90 days to finalize the assessment. Communication continues with Teresa throughout this process to answer any questions or provide any information she may need.

- Janosik Shore Line Stabilization – We have worked closely with the Nanticoke Watershed Alliance on the obtaining funding/grants for the implementation of the shoreline stabilization along Janosik Park. Permits have been applied for and we are waiting approval.
- Audit 2025 – Staff continues to provide all requested information to the auditor so they can complete the FY25 audit.
- Zoning Ordinance – Delaware State Housing Authority offered a Zoning and Land Use Reform Pilot Program that they will be funding to help towns modernize land use codes to increase housing options. Laurel was selected and Mayor and Council chose to focus on Accessory Dwelling Units. The Rossi Group is the group that we are working with on this. Our Public Workshop will be held on October 13, 2026 They are also going to be the group we complete our Zoning Ordinance Update with, however Rossi is working with DSHA to see what other potential areas, if any, they would cover the cost for in the complete update, which will help reduces the town's overall cost.
- MS4 – In 2016 we established an agreement with The City of Seaford and Sussex Conservation District to work as Co-Permitees which will allow costs of the MS4 Program to be shared. We have adopted the Coalition agreement between Laurel and Seaford. We have yet to receive any updates on our comments submitted on the proposed MS4 Permit, There has been no further meetings or discussions on this topic
- One Laurel – Steering Committee is a two time a month meeting. The 2nd Wednesday is at 9 a.m. at Vital Church and the 4th Wednesday is at 9 a.m. in the Community Room of the Paul Laurence Dunbar Public Safety Building.

FEMA Recovery– I am currently working with FEMA in hopes to recovery some funds that were utilized during the snow storm of February 20 & 21, 2026. There are guidelines of what can be submitted for reimbursement. Overtime and/or plowing is not a criteria for reimbursement. Damages, equipment, cleanup, supplies, etc. meet that criteria. I have submitted projects for tree clean up, water leak, and damage to some equipment. All

photos and paperwork have been submitted. Upon submittal, the project(s) still have to be reviewed and go up the chain to determine if any funding recovery will be received. It is noted one project did receive obligation and award of \$3,500 is forthcoming for reimbursement to the town.

- **Open Matters – Zoning Ordinance Update(s)** – In regards to grandfathering uses in our Zoning Ordinance, the attorney is reviewing various requirements, laws, etc. to determine the best way to move forward on this matter. Follow up communication has been sent to the attorney. **Vacant Structure Ordinance** – Along with Director of Code Enforcement Hogg, we have been meeting with Councilman Lodato to review the ordinance, review other municipalities' Vacant Structure Ordinances and will be compiling a list of recommended amendments to our ordinance. I will be sending you information and recommend holding a workshop to begin discussing. **FY25 Audit** – Staff are working closely with the auditors to provide them all the requested information they need to complete the audit. Information includes Aging reports, bank information for all accounts/departments, any leases the town has, expenditure transactions, purchase order reports, Federal and State Quarterly Tax Information, Pension information, Loan (includes principal forgiveness projects) information, payments, draws, etc, expenditure list for all projects completed through grants for all town departments. Meeting minutes from Mayor and Council. Those are just a few documents we are working to provide the auditor.
- **Concerns/Questions Raised for Town Staff By Citizens – Two individuals** inquired about the tax amount they were billed. Staff followed up with them after the meeting and explained the amount their assessments increased (almost 1500%) which, even after lowering our tax rate by 400% there was an increase in their tax bill. **One individual** raised various concerns about their taxes, businesses, expenses, etc. town staff is working with that individual to provide them information they are requesting under Freedom of Information Act.
- **Meetings Attended** – September 1st met with Town Attorney; September 3rd met with FEMA; September 8th Chamber Economic Business Meeting; invited to attend the announcement of MeadowView Subdivision; September 9th DFIT Meeting; September 10th met with USDA Reps; September 11th PD Night Out Meeting; Library Leaders Meeting; & Nanticoke Watershed Alliance Open House; September 14th Project Safe Neighborhood; September 16th WIAC Meeting; September 17th met with rep about town email update; September 21st met with Rep. Tim Dukes; SRO Zoom Meeting; Mayor and Council Meeting; September 22nd Main Street quarterly meeting; WAVES event at LMS; September 23rd DNREC EECBG Update Meeting; Zoning Reform Meeting; September 24th Grow with Google Meeting; September 25th SB 23 Zoom Meeting Update; Library 54 Mile Book Talk Event; September 28th USDA Compliance Meeting; September 29th PD Night Out Meeting; September 30th Grant Writer Update Meeting.

Report Date	October 12, 2026
Prepared By	Communications Committee
Subject	Communication, community outreach, and Town website modernization

Town of Laurel, Delaware

Communications Committee Report and Website Modernization Recommendations

1. Executive Summary

The Communications Committee was established to identify opportunities to improve communication among the Town of Laurel, the Laurel School District, and our Laurel residents. The Committee consisted of three residents and two Town Council members; a Laurel School District representative was unavailable to participate.

The Committee recommended that our town newsletter be updated and developed a **Welcome to Laurel** brochure. The newsletter received a positive community response, and the Mayor and Town Council approved the brochure, which was printed and recently distributed at a Laurel event.

The Committee's website reviews identified opportunities to improve navigation, accessibility, online services, public information, and security. It recommends replacing the ageing site with a resident-focused municipal website. The most effective way to do that is to utilize current development software to redesign a new website that can meet all requirements and be easily maintained.

Appendix A contains the Website Requirements Document which outlines a detailed website design.

2. Findings

- Website is useful but difficult to navigate.
- Missing access to important public documents (i.e. audits and budget vs actual reports).
- Forms and applications process is outdated. There should be fillable forms online with status tracking capability.
- No comprehensive calendar of events/meetings.
- Missing links to important community resources and civil organizations.

3. Recommended Website Features

The new website should be easy to navigate and maintain, secure, comprehensive and provide fillable forms for online services.

- **Navigation:** Should be intuitive and include search capability, quick links, and reliable access on all devices. A language translation function should also be included.

- **Maintenance:** Should be easy for administrative staff to update monthly reports and documents. Whenever possible, links to relevant sites/information should be utilized to minimize maintenance required by town staff.
- **Secure:** Role-based access, confidentiality, recovery, backups, scheduled publishing, and assigned maintenance.
- **Comprehensive:** Should provide organized access to budgets, audits, financial reports, agendas, minutes, recordings, ordinances, permits, forms, and other public records.
- **Online Services:** Fillable forms for permits, rentals, licenses, concerns, and status tracking.

4. Proposed Website Layout

Attachment 1 approximates the new website home page. Main tabs at the top include:

- **Our Town:** History, community information, newsletters, transportation, schools, services, and notices.
- **Mayor & Council:** Officials, wards, elections, agendas, minutes, and meetings
- **Departments:** Finance, Public Works, Code Enforcement, Alderman's Court, and Police.
- **Civic Organizations:** Local civic organizations.
- **Applications & Forms:** Permits, licenses, registrations, and frequently used forms.
- **Documents:** Important public documents
- **Resources:** Community assistance and social services.

Also included on the home page should be "Quick Links" which will give residents direct access to the most-used services. Finally, a comprehensive calendar and news/events will also be displayed.

Attachment 2 shows the next level of menu options for each of the main tabs listed on the home page.

5. Cost

As a small town, Laurel has funding challenges. During the committee's research, we came across a Delaware State organization that provides website development, training, and maintenance for municipalities at no cost. The organization is the Delaware Government Information Center (GIC). Detailed information on GIC can be found at <https://gic.delaware.gov/website-design-and-development-services/>. Committee members contacted GIC in June but were advised that GIC was unable to take on any new development efforts at that time. This is obviously a great option for the town. The committee feels that perhaps if Town Management were to contact them, GIC might be more responsive. Even if there is a waiting list, the fact that it would not cost the town money makes it an excellent option.

Tim Smith from Delmarva Digital presented his thoughts in a workshop held in May. The Committee advised him that we were looking at a very similar website to the one they developed for Georgetown. Without more detailed requirements, Mr. Smith could only provide a range of costs from \$15,000 to \$50,000.

In the absence of being able to use GIC, the Committee would recommend a competitive bid process to get the best value. The Committee has generated a draft Request for Proposal (RFP) and it is provided in Appendix B.

6. Recommended Actions

1. Re-engage GIC about no-cost assistance or placement on a waiting list. If GIC is unavailable, utilize attached RFP to solicit competitive bids. The draft RFP was developed with AI assistance and should be reviewed and verified before use. Recommend Town management confirm Charter, procurement, bidding, and legal requirements are met before finalizing the RFP. **The website requirements document and RFP should be updated as the town finalizes its objectives and scope. If requirements are modified, the RFP will need to reflect those changes.**
2. Finalize project objectives, scope, priorities, and requirements for accessibility, security, services, and content management.
3. Review existing website content and decide what to migrate, revise, archive, or remove.
4. Set an affordable budget for implementation, hosting, maintenance, licensing, training, security, and updates. Funding is better spent on developing a new website with current software and more capabilities.

7. Conclusion

The Committee recommends a comprehensive redesign and replacement of the existing town website rather than continued incremental updates. A modern website would improve public access to information, simplify navigation, expand online services, strengthen security, and reduce routine maintenance demands while supporting the Town's future needs.

The immediate priorities are to revisit the no-cost GIC option, finalize the town's requirements, and pursue competitive proposals, if necessary. Establishing the Communications Committee as a permanent standing committee would provide continuity and ongoing oversight of the town's communication initiatives.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Website Requirements Document - Outlines the recommended design and functional requirements for the new website.

Appendix B: Draft Request for Proposal (RFP) - Contains a Request for Proposal template which can easily be tailored as the website needs evolve.



[Our Town](#) ▼

[Mayor and Council](#) ▼

[Departments](#) ▼

[Civic Orgs](#) ▼

[Applications](#) ▼

[Documents](#) ▼

[Resources](#) ▼



Photos by Paula Shannon



[Pay Bills Online](#)



[Report an Outage](#)



[FOIA Request](#)



[Apply for Permit](#)



[How do I](#)



[FAQ](#)

News & Announcements



Laurel Independence Celebration

Join us July 4th at the Cannery Park for live music, food trucks, activities, and fireworks!

[JUN 10, 2025](#)



Road Work on Central Avenue

Utility work will begin next week. Please expect temporary lane closures.

[JUN 9, 2025](#)



Bulk Trash Collection

Bulk trash collection will be held June 23-27. Click to view acceptable items and guidelines.

[JUN 5, 2025](#)

Upcoming Events

[VIEW CALENDAR](#)

JUN
16

Town Council Meeting

🕒 6:30 PM

📍 Laurel Town Hall

JUN
21

Farmers Market

🕒 8:00 AM – 12:00 PM

📍 Central Avenue

JUN
28

Movie in the Park

🕒 8:15 PM

📍 Cannery Park

[VIEW FULL CALENDAR](#)

June 2025						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					
Council Meeting Event Holiday						



Attachment 2:
Website Menu
Structure



WEBSITE MENU STRUCTURE



What Can I Do if My Records Request is Denied?

A citizen who believes a public body other than a State agency wrongfully denied access to public records can file suit in state court or submit a petition to the Attorney General's Office, which will investigate and determine whether the public body violated FOIA. A citizen who believes a State agency wrongfully denied access to public records can file suit in state court or submit a petition within 60 days to the Chief Deputy Attorney General, who will investigate and determine whether the State agency violated FOIA. The Attorney General may file suit on behalf of a citizen to compel the public body to comply with FOIA.



The Town of Laurel

You may contact the FOIA Coordinator with any FOIA-related questions you may have. To make an official FOIA request, it must be made in writing either via the Town website online form, email, letter, fax, or FOIA form, which can be found on the Town website under "Connect/FOIA Request Form."

Website: www.townoflaurel.net

A Guide to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)

A Guide to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) & What it Can Do For You



Town of Laurel
201 Mechanic Street

Laurel, De 19956
Tel: 302-875-2277



What is FOIA?

The Freedom of Information Act (29 Del. Code, Chapter 100) establishes that "it is vital in a democratic society that public business be performed in an open and public manner" and that "it is vital that citizens have easy access to public records in order that the society remain free and democratic."

The Freedom of Information Act, Delaware's "sunshine law," helps ensure transparency and government accountability through informed citizens. Specifically, it gives **Delawareans** the right to:

- Access public records
- Be made aware of and attend gatherings of public bodies where public business will be discussed or conducted
- Challenge a public body's denial of access to records or actions taken by a public body at a meeting that violated FOIA

FOIA also imposes certain obligations on public bodies, including the duty to:

- Provide reasonable assistance to the public in identifying and locating public records
- Give advanced public notice of meetings and provide meeting agendas beforehand
- Prepare meeting minutes and make those minutes available for public inspection

The Delaware Department of Justice helps enforce FOIA in several ways. Its Civil Division provides legal advice to many State agencies, including guidance on meeting their obligations under FOIA. It is also charged with investigating complaints by citizens who believe their rights under FOIA have been violated by state and local public bodies.

How Can I Look at Public Records Under FOIA?

A Delawarean can submit a detailed written request to the public body. Requests may be submitted in person, by mail, email, or fax. Public bodies are also required to accept online requests; an online re-request form for the Town of Laurel are available at www.townoflaurel.net Other public bodies maintain their own online re-request portals. Public bodies must designate a FOIA coordinator to assist citizens in obtaining records and to assist the public body in locating and providing them. Public bodies must generally respond within 15 business days. If a request is granted, citizens can inspect the records or obtain copies during regular business hours. Public bodies are not required under FOIA to create documents or reports, but rather give access to already existing documents.

What Records Are Not Public Under the Law?

Certain files, records and information are exempt under FOIA from public inspection. :

- Medical and Pupil Files;
- Trade secrets and confidential commercial or financial information;
- Civil or criminal investigatory files; open or closed;
- Records pertaining to pending or potential litigation;
- Emails received or sent by members of the General Assembly or their staff;
- Records that could jeopardize the security of a government building or endanger an individual; and
- Communications between members of the General Assembly, between those members and their constituents, and by members of the General Assembly on behalf of their constituents.

Will Copying Public Records Cost Me Anything?

FOIA permits public bodies to charge photocopying, administrative, and other fees associated with processing a records request and to require payment of a portion of estimated fees before processing a request. The Town of South Bethany FOIA fees are as follows:

- First 20 pages & first hour search for documents: **FREE**
- Over 20 B&W pages for 8.5"x11," 8.5"x14", and 11x17" sized paper: \$0.10/pg. (\$0.20 for a double-sided sheet)
- B&W pages larger than 11x17" 2.00 per sheet; documents larger are cost by copier provider
- Staff time to fulfill FOIA requests after first hour (this will be in addition to any duplicating/copying charges): \$20.00/hour

Can Meetings be Closed to the Public?

FOIA permits public bodies to meet in executive session, out of public view, to discuss sensitive matters, including: job applicant qualifications; collective bargaining or pending litigation; documents that are not public records; disciplinary and dismissal cases; and personnel matters.

Do I Have the Right to Speak at a Public Meeting?

Under FOIA §10004-2, each public body has its own rules and procedures for public meetings and must allow time for public comment.

TO: Mayor & Council

FROM: Alexis Oliphant

RE: Upcoming Events & Upcoming Holidays

UPCOMING EVENTS:

Listed below are the events that will be occurring at the end of October for your review.

Broad Creek Bash – (POSTPONED DATE)

- **DATE:** Saturday, October 24, 2026
- **LOCATION:** Janosik Park
- **TIME:** 7:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Laurel Community Trunk or Treat

- **DATE:** Saturday, October 24, 2026
- **LOCATION:** Bryan's Bowling Center
- **TIME:** 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

Town of Laurel Christmas Parade 2026

- **DATE:** Friday, December 4, 2026
- **LOCATION:** Line-up on Evergreen Drive & Laurel Elementary School – Bus Parking Lot
- **TIME:** Parade begins at 7:00 p.m., Line-Up begins at 6:00 p.m.
- **PARADE THEME:** "Christmas Through the Years: 250 Years of American Cheer."
- **APPLICATIONS:** Applications are available at Laurel Town Hall and online at www.townoflaurel.net.

UPCOMING HOLIDAYS:

Listed below are the upcoming holidays that town hall will be closed for the month of November for your review.

- ***Election Day:*** Tuesday, November 3, 2026
- ***Returns Day:*** Thursday, November 5, 2026
- ***Veterans Day:*** Wednesday, November 11, 2026
- ***Thanksgiving:*** Thursday, November 26, 2026
- ***Thanksgiving Friday:*** Friday, November 27, 2026