

**LATROBE CITY COUNCIL  
REGULAR MEETING OF COUNCIL  
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 2026  
LATROBE, PENNSYLVANIA**

Mayor Bartels called to order the Regular Meeting of Latrobe City Council at 6:33 p.m.

Mayor Bartels asked all to rise for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Bartels asked all for a moment of silence.

Secretary to Council read Roll Call:

Deputy Mayor Ralph Jenko -- present

Dawn Vavick --present

Sam Leach -- present

Lenor Rivera -- present

Eric Hauser -- present

Ann Amatucci - present

Mayor Eric Bartels - present

Also, present were the following: Sue Trout, City Manager; Lee Demosky, Solicitor; Richard Bosco, Chief of Police; Robert Daerr, Police Captain; Scott Wajdic, Public Works Director; Josh Mayro and Andy Matheny, Code/Zoning Officers.

Mr. Jenko moved to approve the meeting minutes from the Reorganization Meeting on January 5, 2026, the Regular Meeting on January 12, 2026, and the Emergency Voting Meeting on January 26, 2026, seconded by Ms. Vavick. Motion carried 7-0.

Mayor Bartels honored four officers and presented department citations to Corporal Matthew Reeves, Officers Jason Myers, Andrew Ong and Zachary Gustafson. Mayor Bartels spoke on the bravery and heroism shown when Mr. Reeves and Mr. Myers jumped into rushing waters to save a man who fell into the Loyalhanna Creek on April 4, 2025. Mayor Bartels stated both went into the water without hesitation and fully aware of the personal risk involved, driven by an unwavering commitment to preserve human life. Also, their actions went beyond the call of duty through courage, selflessness, resolute teamwork and were instrumental in saving a life that day. Mayor Bartels recognized Officer Ong and Officer Gustafson for handling an officer-involved shooting incident that took place on November 15, 2025. Mayor Bartels stated what began as a support assignment escalated into a critical incident. Amid unfolding danger and uncertainty, Officers Ong and Gustafson positioned themselves to provide cover and tactical support to members of the team operating in harm's way when they arrived at the home of Ryan Huinker in Latrobe. Mr. Huinker was armed and fired in the direction of the two officers; it was then several officers returned fire, hitting and killing Mr. Huinker. Mayor Bartels expressed that the officer's awareness, discipline and resolve under pressure proved essential as the incident reached its most perilous moment. They demonstrated exceptional bravery, professionalism and an unwavering commitment to the safety of others. Officer Ong and Officer Gustafson were also named 2025 Officers of the Year for their response to the November 15, 2025, shooting incident. Members of the Latrobe Police Department nominated the two officers.

Mr. Hauser moved to approve the presentation and review of bills, along with fiscal reports, seconded by Mr. Jenko. Motion carried 7-0.

Mrs. Trout explained the bills were from all funds, and included payroll, for the month of January. Mrs. Trout reported total revenue for January came in at \$559,518.46, which was 7.4% of budget. Expenses were \$615,200.30, which was 8.3 % of budget. Expense over revenues were \$55,681.84 and payroll was

\$199,259.77. Expenses are right on track for this time of the year at 8.3% and revenues at 7.4%. Revenues were 0.9% less for the month.

### **BILLS PRESENTED FOR PAYMENT**

Total Expenses for January for all funds including Payroll	\$683,769.99
General Fund Expenses for January	\$ 615,200.30
General Fund Revenue for January	\$ 559,518.46
Subtotal	\$(55,681.84)

### **CITIZENS' REQUEST (related to agenda)**

None.

### **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Public Safety and Fire Committee – Vavick, Amatucci and Rivera – No report

Finance Committee – Bartels, Jenko and Hauser – No report.

Public Works Committee – Vavick, Rivera and Hauser -- Ms. Vavick expressed her gratitude to the Public Works, Police and Fire Departments for all their hard work during the recent snowstorm. Mayor Bartels shared that he received calls related to the storm and positive feedback about the difficult weather conditions.

Personnel Committee -- Bartels, Amatucci, and Jenko – No report.

Strategic Planning Committee – Amatucci, Jenko and Leach – No report.

Events Committee – Amatucci, Vavick and Leach – Ms. Vavick announced Comedy Night was a success. The Daddy Daughter Dance will be held at Centers for Student Creativity on February 21<sup>st</sup>. The Mr. Rogers Day Committee Kick Off Meeting will be on February 25<sup>th</sup> in the Chamber Room. The Latrobe Volunteer Firemen Guest Bartender Night at Hotel Loyal will be on February 26<sup>th</sup> and all tips go directly to the Fire Department. On February 28<sup>th</sup> Prima La Comunita will host Soup Mania. The soup sampling from local merchants, in downtown Latrobe, benefits events to enliven and enhance the community. Lastly, the St. Patrick's Day Parade will take place on March. 7<sup>th</sup>.

GLSD Student Showcase Committee – Bartels, Vavick and Rivera – No report.

### **BOARD AND AUTHORITY REPORTS**

LMA – No report.

Zoning Hearing Board – No report.

Library -- Mr. Leach reported the library board met January 21st for its first meeting of the year. The board discussed the treasurer's report, an upcoming meeting with architects around renovations, several awarded grants and fundraising items, some personnel and operational matters, and the election of officers. The librarian announced two new initiatives, the first being a partnership with a local occupational therapist to design and install a sensory corner geared toward people with autism and other

disabilities. Second, a partnership with Westmoreland VA to set up Adam's Library as an outreach location. The library is working to reduce its audiobook on CD collection due to new space needs and falling circulation.

Park and Recreation – Mayor Bartels stated the Daddy Daughter Dance was sold out and the Comedy Night was the 2<sup>nd</sup> biggest fundraiser.

## **DEPARTMENT REPORTS**

**Treasurer's Report** See attachment "A"

**Police Report** See attachment "B"

**Public Works Report** See attachment "C"

**Fire Report** See attachment "D"

**Code Report** – No report until new software is installed

**Tax Collector's Report** See attachment "F"

### Police Department

Police Chief, Richard Bosco – Chief Bosco reported the department had 354 calls for service, 200 police interactions via walk ins and phone calls. There were 300 targeted businesses, parks and residential area checks, 40 school arrival and dismissal details with 80 school bus escorts. There were 974 police interactions and 7 arrest warrants served. There were 18 traffic accidents investigated, 45 traffic stops with 3 citations given and 30 parking citations issued. Also, 1 aggravated assault, 3 simple assaults, 1 fraud, and 2 DUI's. Lastly, 8 domestic disturbance calls, 20 assists for other police agencies and 12 mental health. Chief Bosco had the privilege of assisting the Council of Ministries by getting 6 homeless people off the streets during the snowstorms and freezing temperatures.

### Public Works

Public Works Director, Scott Wajdic – Mr. Wajdic reported the department had 371 calls that came in due to the snowstorm. The department created a schedule for snow removal and when they fell behind schedule, due to a truck breaking down, many residents started calling and were wanting to know when the snow would be removed. Hired contractors were put in place to assist with the snow removal. Mr. Wajdic also stated many residents are throwing contaminated garbage into their recycling containers, using them as garbage cans. The department is still educating people about what they can put in the recycling containers and what they can't. Residents were upset if their garbage wasn't picked up and Republic Services would empty the recycling containers whether they had garbage in them or not. This only confused residents because the City of Latrobe garbage men are leaving the contaminated garbage behind. Mr. Wajdic and the department have addressed the challenges with customers calling on garbage not being picked by explaining what goes into the recycling container.

Mayor Bartels asked if the garbage truck was up and running, Mr. Wajdic answered yes and that it was an electrical problem.

Mayor Bartels and Mr. Hauser inquired about any updates regarding funding from the Disaster Declaration that was filed with the state. Mrs. Trout mentioned she had not received any information yet. Mr. Wajdic contacted State Senator Kim Ward and was waiting for a return call.

Mr. Jenko asked if the snow removal expenses were included in the finance reports. Mrs. Trout and Mr. Wajdic both explained that the overtime and invoices for snow removal were included in the report.

Ms. Rivera reported she had received positive feedback with process of the city picking up garbage and getting the job done.

### Finance

City Manager Sue Trout wanted to highlight, from the budget report, revenues and expenses from the general fund for the month of January. Total revenues came in at \$559,518.46, total payroll was \$199,259.77 and this figure was included in the expense amount. Total expenses were \$615,200.30, which was 8.3 % of budget. Revenues are lagging a little behind, and the expenses are right on track. Mrs. Trout noted that she doesn't expect a similar report for February due to anticipated increases in expenses but will monitor how these costs will be offset with the sanitation and stormwater billings.

### Fire Department

No report. Mrs. Trout reported Chief Brasile had a fire call and couldn't make the meeting.

### Code/Zoning

Code Enforcement Officer Josh Mayro – Josh Mayro reported the department issued 15 letters or citations, including multiple letters to local businesses, to clean up their sidewalks from the recent snowstorm. This was the largest complaint for the month of January, and the department wanted to make sure the sidewalks were safe to walk on, especially downtown. Mr. Mayro also stated 6 permits were issued and 5 zoning letters. Mr. Mayro added that the Latrobe Planning Commission did meet to discuss solar farms, data centers and accessory dwellings units, this meeting was a start for brainstorming and the commission plans to discuss accessory dwelling units at the March meeting. Also, Jarod Trunzo was voted Chairman, Matthew Hedman, Vice Chairman and Debra Sardella will continue as the Secretary. Mr. Mayro congratulated Mr. Matheny, who passed his exam for the Building Code Official and is now certified through Pennsylvania Construction Codes Academy. This is the only state certification for the state and Mr. Mayro and Mr. Matheny are both grateful for the opportunities to further their education.

## **PUBLIC WORKS AND PERSONNEL:**

### **MOTION**

Motion to approve the Memorandum of Understanding with AFSCME AFL-CIO Council 83 Local 629 for an agreement to adjust the Saturday shift assignment for the Transfer Station to include the three clerical positions at the Transfer Station. Ms. Rivera made the motion seconded by Mr. Leach. Motion carried 7-0.

Mrs. Trout explained that discussions with the union about the sanitation clerk, the clerical weighmaster and the clerical cleaning weighmaster positions managing the Saturday shifts at the Transfer Station. The clerks work at the Transfer Station every day and from efficiency and operational standpoint it just didn't seem reasonable to be asking the four clerical workers at City Hall to have to rotate into those positions after not working there for a year at a time. This change also allows for weighmaster licenses for two other AFSCME employees who are up there regularly, to be utilized in case of an emergency. Mrs. Trout stated Mr. Wajdic and Ms. McGregor both have a weighmaster license as well and feel this should be the operating procedure.

Mr. Jenko wanted to confirm the reason for the change was having a third person for this Saturday shift

and Mayor Bartels asked if it was Jessica Schober, who moved into the sanitation position. Mrs. Trout answered yes.

## **ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE:**

### **MOTION**

Motion to adopt Ordinance 2026-02 which is the permit parking ordinance to add a section to allow permit parking for business use at a residence located within 100 feet of the business. Chapter 256-16 titled Permit Parking would add a section (F) describing the designation of on-street parking spaces in a residential zoning district for use by employees of a lawfully operating business physically located within 100 feet of the spaces. Mrs. Amatucci made the motion seconded by Mr. Hauser. Motion carried 7-0.

Ms. Rivera wanted to confirm that if there is a residence within 100 feet of business space, is it any resident or does the resident have to approve of the parking permit being allowed in front of their house. Mrs. Trout answered yes, that's the written part of the ordinance.

### **MOTION**

Motion to introduce Ordinance 2026-03 which amends Chapter 51-65, Article VI of the City of Latrobe Code regarding blighted property tax abatement for the Local Economic Tax Revitalization Assistance (LERTA) program. The LERTA will include tax abatement to fight blight through financial incentive for remediation and elimination of blight. Mr. Jenko made a motion seconded by Mr. Hauser. Motion carried 7-0.

Mr. Demosky explained that the LERTA program would include tax abatements to fight blight through financial incentives for remediation and elimination of blight. This amends two key parts, first one is it makes the effective date in March 2026 to match with what Westmoreland County plans to do. This will appear on their agenda this month before the commissioners start it in March as well to match our date. Mr. Demosky reported that the Greater Latrobe School District was invited to be the third component. Mr. Demosky explained when you get your annual tax bills, you have a county tax, you have the City of Latrobe tax, and you have the school taxes. The law permits you to proceed with just the county and the city. Steve Gifford and Mr. Demosky made that amendment to the current LERTA ordinance. The second amendment goes into effect March of this year. What this will do is promote having people improve blighted properties by giving them a real estate tax abatement. This will take 75 % of that abatement, donate to the blight fund, and then the customer retains 25 % of the abated tax for a period of 10 years. The ordinance supplies the procedure on what the customer will go through to obtain that 10-year exemption. This is very strict about what the property owner is required to do to maintain that exception. Mr. Demosky gave an example, if a customer doesn't pay their taxes or the sanitation bill, they're removed from the program. This is outlined in the LERTA program that Mr. Gifford and Mr. Demosky both worked on, the two amendments listed.

Mayor Bartels asked if the school district would decide to opt in, can they vote anytime. Mr. Demosky answered yes and a formal vote is not needed. A preamble has been put in, inviting the school district to join. When Mr. Demosky is contacted by the school district, arrangements will be made with the county solicitor and himself.

### **MOTION**

Motion to accept the Opst and Associates, LLC proposal for auditing services for the 2025 audit. The proposal is a one-year proposal to complete the 2025 audit for \$22,250 and \$4,000 for the GAAP financial statements. Mrs. Amatucci made the motion seconded by Ms. Rivera. Motion carried 7-0.

Mrs. Trout stated an email was sent to all council members describing the pricing and Opst was interested in just a one-year proposal. Opst stated to Mrs. Trout that the 2024 audit was a little more cumbersome than what they had anticipated, mostly due to changing personnel and timing of getting records. Mrs. Trout remarked the sooner we can get Opst started then the sooner staff can get a start organizing to have a cleaner and more efficient audit. Mrs. Trout felt the pricing was reasonable considering the volume of service that they provide and in line with other communities that she had worked with as far as pricing.

### **MOTION**

Motion to approve Resolution 2026-12 for a hold harmless agreement with Lehigh Specialty Melting, Inc. for the 4<sup>th</sup> of July 2026 fireworks. Mr. Jenko made the motion seconded by Mr. Leach. Vote 7-0.

### **MOTION**

Motion to approve Resolution 2026-13 which approves the policies and procedures for the operations of the Police Fundraising account. Ms. Rivera made the motion seconded by Mrs. Amatucci. Vote 7-0.

Mrs. Trout spoke on how this was brought up during the budget process, but some specific policies needed to be developed about what's being spent, why it's being spent, and how that money is being generated. This is formalized in the Policy and Procedure.

Mayor Bartels wanted to confirm that the signature process is still the same with the bank accounts and Mrs. Trout confirmed it was.

### **MOTION**

Motion to approve a one-year agreement with Fight the Blight, Inc. to provide property maintenance services at reduced rates to improve the community and remediate blight on an as needed basis initiated by our code department not to exceed \$9,500 per year. Ms. Vavick made the motion seconded by Mr. Leach. Motion carried 7-0.

Mrs. Trout stated a presentation was made by Matt Williams, Founder of Fight the Blight, and she felt this was a good resource that could be used when the Code Enforcement Department sees it necessary to try to specifically help with challenging situations or smaller projects on the exterior of the property.

Mayor Bartels asked if in the future the Blight Fund will be filled through the LERTA program. Mrs. Trout thought so and said the whole intention here is to bring homes up to code.

Mr. Jenko wanted to confirm that there's no upfront cost with this. Mrs. Trout said yes.

**New/Unfinished Business:**

Solicitor's Report:

No report.

**CITIZENS REQUEST:**

None.

City Manager's Report:

Mrs. Trout reported she had reviewed and closed out the 2025 fiscal year and set up a general ledger budget for all funds for 2026. While performing the duties of Finance Director and City Manager, Mrs. Trout reviewed the Auditing Proposal and discussed the proposal with Opst and Associates for mutual understanding. She also worked with city departments managing the snow removal and weather emergency procedures. She received training for the 457 John Hancock portal to implement employee deductions. Mrs. Trout and Mrs. Glass attended the Westmoreland County Tax Collector training for 2026 tax changes and updates. Other duties Mrs. Trout accomplished were reconciling the Municipal Benefits Services health care invoice and updated changes, completing year-end reports to the State, establishing changes with the payroll procedures and negotiating the Memorandum of Understanding to make changes for the operation affecting the AFSCME clerical union employees.

Mayor Bartels asked if Mrs. Trout had a plan for not having to do City Manager and Administration and Finance duties. Mrs. Trout answered that she's been doing this for 6 months and would like to start the process of interviewing for an Assistant City Manager and/or an Administration and Finance Director and would like to meet with the personnel committee to move forward. She stated that her team has been very helpful but needs someone to take over some of the duties so she can focus on other business.

Mayor's Report:

Mayor Bartels thanked the Public Works Department for all their help during the recent snowstorm, thanked the office staff for attending the council meeting and thanked others for coming out.

The Regular Meeting of the Council adjourned at 7:25 P.M. with a motion by Mrs. Amatucci seconded by Ms. Rivera. All in favor. Motion carried 7-0.

Respectfully submitted,

*Janina Hall*

Janina Hall, Council Secretary