

Wayne Dzwonchyk, *Commissioner*
Roy P. Gilmore, *Commissioner*
Douglas Redd, *Commissioner*
Kenneth Ford, *Commissioner*
Sharon Gibbs Cooper, *Commissioner*



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Director/Emergency Manager
Department of Emergency Management

Lauren R. Thompson
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EMERGENCY SERVICES COMMISSION

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Emergency Services Commission Meeting

January 21, 2026

7:00 PM

Virtual Meeting via Zoom

Meeting Minutes

1. Roll Call

- a. All Commissioners were present except for Commissioner Gilmore.
 - i. Also in attendance:
 1. City of Laurel Department of Emergency Management (DEM)
 - a. Christina Cornwell, Director
 - b. Lauren Thompson, Assistant Director
 2. Laurel Police Department (LPD)
 - a. Major John Hamilton
 3. City of Laurel Department of Public Works (DPW)
 - a. Arman Safakhah
 4. Laurel Volunteer Fire Department (LVFD)
 - a. Chief Brian Cox
 5. Laurel Volunteer Rescue Squad (LVRS)
 - a. Chief Chris Ruehl
 - b. Approval of Meeting Minutes from November 12, 2025
 - i. A motion to approve the meeting minutes was made by Commissioner Ford. It was seconded by Commissioner Redd. All Commissioners voted in favor.
 - ii. The meeting minutes from November 12, 2025 were approved.

2. Staff Reports

- a. Department of Emergency Management (DEM)

- i. Director Cornwell provided an update regarding the emergency action plan and emergency operations plan updates.
 - ii. Assistant Director Thompson gave the Commission a weather briefing about the winter storm slated to impact the City of Laurel from January 24 to January 26, 2026.
- b. Laurel Police Department (LPD)
 - i. Major Hamilton provided an update regarding holiday arrests. LPD found that DUIs increased from the previous year.
 - ii. Recruitment efforts are on-going. LPD has 70 sworn officers when fully staff; there are currently 64 sworn officers.
 - 1. LPD has been in contact with several local police academy programs to fill the open positions.
- c. Department of Public Works (DPW)
 - i. DPW is preparing for a 3-shift 8-hour schedule to cover the snow removal this weekend.
 - ii. The Van Dusen Dam repair has been completed.
 - iii. DPW is inspecting safety measures throughout the city, especially at intersections. They are looking at street signage, crosswalks, and sidewalks.
 - iv. Phase 3 of the Van Dusen Road resurfacing project is underway.
 - v. Request for Proposals (RFPs) were sent out to have a new traffic signal installed at Route 198 and Old Sandy Spring Road.
 - vi. Under the Safe Streets for All grants, DPW is working to identify traffic operations that need improvement throughout the City.
 - vii. A grant was secured for an improvement project specific to Cherry Lane.
- d. Laurel Volunteer Fire Department (LVFD)
 - i. Chief Cox advised the Commission that LVFD has moved to new tracking system to better manage data.
 - 1. In December, LVFD had 84 calls for service, 34 of which were ambulance transports.
 - 2. In January, LVFD had 56 calls for service, 29 of which were ambulance transports.
 - ii. Chief Cox provided an update regarding apparatus repairs on Engine 101, Engine 104, and the Tower truck.
 - iii. LVFD held elections last week. However, there were no significant changes in leadership.
 - iv. In preparation for the potential winter storm, LVFD was working to upstaff the station.
 - v. Over the last 3 months, LVFD added about 20 new members. There are currently 40 new members in the on-boarding process.
 - vi. The cost of purchasing apparatus have significantly increased since covid. LVFD is in need of another ambulance.
- e. Laurel Volunteer Rescue Squad (LVRS)
 - i. LVRS held its elections last week. However, there were no significant changes in leadership.

- ii. A new water rescue chassis was just delivered to Baltimore. This chassis will replace a 20-year old water rescue apparatus.
- iii. Recruitment remains a high priority for LVRS. Eight people are looking to take an EMT course.
- iv. LVRS will be staffed all weekend long due to the winter storm. Chief Ruehl requested support from the City to clear snow, if needed.
- v. LVRS continues to look at other locations for a new station that is outside of the flood plain.

3. Old Business

- a. Annual emergency services commission report was reviewed by the Commissioners, who agreed that it can be submitted.

4. General Public Hearing

- a. The general public hearing was opened at 7:49 PM.
- b. The general public hearing was closed at 7:50 PM.

5. New Business

- a. Director Cornwell provided an update regarding the FY27 budget.
- b. Commissioner Ford made a motion to increase the annual contribution to the volunteer fire department and rescue squad and bring back the ESC grant. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gibbs Cooper.

6. Schedule Next Meeting, Date, and Location

- a. The next meeting will occur on March 18, 2026 at 7:00 PM.
- b. This meeting will be held in-person at the Joseph R. Robison Laurel Municipal Center in Meeting Room 2.

7. Adjournment

- a. The meeting adjourned at 8:00 PM.