September 8, 2026 LaFayette Town Board Meeting Minutes

LaFayette Town Board Meeting held on September 8, 2026, at 6:00 p.m. at the LaFayette Jr/Sr High School Auditorium, LaFayette, NY.

Present: William McConnell, Supervisor
Melanie Palmer, Town Councilor
Jerry Marzo, Town Councilor
Councilor Nate Loughlin
Michele Pirro Bailey, Town Councilor

Recording Secretary: Kristin Shute Colburn, Town Clerk

Town Attorney: Jeff Brown

Others Present: Ralph Lamson, Bldg. & Code Enforcement
Sue Marzo, Information Officer; Steve Robson, Highway Superintendent; Jessica Rice, Library Director
David Hoxie, Ambulance VP; Several other residents

1. Supervisor McConnell called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.
2. Town Clerk Kristin Shute Colburn took the roll; all present.
3. Councilor Loughlin led the pledge to the U.S. flag.
4. Motion to accept the Regular Meeting Minutes of August 11, 2026
   R-90-26 Councilor Palmer moved, and Councilor Marzo seconded, to accept the August 11, 2026 regular Town Board meeting minutes as submitted by Town Clerk Kristin Shute Colburn. Motion carried 4-0-1

William McConnell	**Supervisor**	**Voted**	**Yes**
Melanie Palmer	**Councilor**	**Voted**	**Yes**
Jerry Marzo	**Councilor**	**Voted**	**Yes**
Nate Loughlin	**Councilor**	**Voted**	**Abstained**
Michele Pirro Bailey	**Councilor**	**Voted**	**Yes**

5. BOARD ACTIONS

   A. Ambulance Service Referendum Presentation – Town and LaFayette Ambulance representatives reviewed the history of ambulance staffing and the proposal for 24/7/365 coverage. The presentation explained that the service shifted from relying on part-time paramedics and volunteers to staffed crews as volunteer participation declined, particularly after the COVID-19 period. Current staffing is a minimum contractual requirement of 100 staffed hours per week, with approximately 106 hours provided on average. Present coverage leaves approximately 37% of the week without a staffed LaFayette ambulance. The presentation stated that 178 calls were missed in 2025 because the ambulance was out of service and that 83 calls had been missed to date in 2026, including five occasions when the ambulance was already committed to another call.
   When LaFayette Ambulance is unavailable, the Onondaga County 911 Center dispatches mutual-aid resources. Tully, TLC and AMR were discussed as common

mutual-aid providers, with more distant agencies potentially responding when those resources are unavailable.

Response-time data presented showed an average response of approximately 6 minutes 30 seconds when LaFayette Ambulance is in service, compared with approximately 14 minutes 29 seconds when mutual aid responds. Examples of longer mutual-aid response times were also reviewed.

The proposed plan would expand staffing to provide continuous 24/7/365 coverage. Existing volunteers and part-time employees would continue to have roles, and the proposed schedule was described as improving recruitment and retention while reducing the number of shifts that must be filled.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

The presentation reviewed the current 2026 ambulance contract and the proposed 2027 contract. The proposed increase was stated as approximately $583,000. The estimated tax impact was presented as $1.66 per $1,000 of assessed value. Officials emphasized that the calculation is based on assessed value rather than market value.

Ambulance representatives explained that patient insurance is billed through a third-party billing company. Insurance reimbursement varies by carrier and by Medicare/Medicaid reimbursement rates. Residents may receive bills and payment plans are available; representatives stated that LaFayette residents experiencing inability to pay are not intended to be sent to collections, while non-residents may be subject to collections.

Representatives stated that no current federal, state or county grants are available specifically to fund ambulance staffing, although the department continues to pursue equipment grants when available. Approximately 87% of the ambulance budget was described as staffing and benefits. The ambulance reported that it is on track for approximately $180,000 in revenue for the year and receives roughly 60% of amounts billed. Capital reserve funding and the future replacement of an ambulance were also discussed.

REFERENDUM / BUDGET PROCESS

The referendum is scheduled as part of the November 3, 2026 General Election, with the referendum appearing on the back of the ballot. The presentation stated that, if the referendum passes, the Town Board would consider adoption of the full-time ambulance budget at the November 5, 2026 budget meeting/public hearing. If approved, hiring would begin immediately with the goal of having the additional full-time staff in place around January 1, 2027. Officials explained that the 2027 budget would apply for that budget year and that ambulance funding would continue to be reviewed annually through the Town's regular budget process. Long-range five- and ten-year tax projections were described as difficult because of changing expenses, insurance costs, assessments and revenues.

PUBLIC QUESTION-AND-ANSWER SESSION

Residents and attendees asked questions and offered comments regarding the value and affordability of 24/7 ambulance coverage, current and projected response times, missed calls, insurance billing and reimbursement, Medicare and Medicaid rates, grant availability, staffing levels, supervision, medical supplies, mutual aid, the relationship between LaFayette Ambulance and the LaFayette Fire Department/Rescue, annual budget review, and the sustainability of the proposed funding level.

Questions were also raised about whether the ambulance cost could be assessed in a manner similar to trash service rather than by property assessment. Town

officials stated that the legal structure differs and indicated that additional information would be obtained regarding that question.

B. Cardiff Water District Engineering Proposal – Jacqueline Jones of Barton & Loguidice provided an overview of the water project and the funding secured thus far:

- 70% Bipartisan Infrastructure Law General Supplemental Grant for $3.4M
- Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) Hardship Grant for $588k
- Joint Congressionally Directed Spending Grant with the Town of Tully for $1.092M ($546k each)
- Funding expected this Fall for the remaining gap of $974k

Supervisor McConnell noted that there was a lot of information to review and said he would support accepting the engineering proposal, contingent on Attorney Jeff Brown's approval.

R-91-26 Supervisor McConnell moved, and Councilor Pirro Bailey seconded the motion to accept the engineering proposal as submitted by Barton & Loguidice, contingent on the approval of Town Attorney Jeff Brown. Motion carried 5-0

William McConnell	**Supervisor**	**Voted**	**Yes**
Melanie Palmer	**Councilor**	**Voted**	**Yes**
Jerry Marzo	**Councilor**	**Voted**	**Yes**
Nate Loughlin	**Councilor**	**Voted**	**Yes**
Michele Pirro Bailey	**Councilor**	**Voted**	**Yes**

C. Christian Hollow Cemetery Maintenance – Discussion regarding the upkeep and maintenance of Christian Hollow Cemetery located on Otisco Road. Bill Carr of California spoke about his distant relatives buried there and his desire to visit the cemetery.

D. 2026 Apple Festival Mass Gathering Permit

R-92-26 Supervisor McConnell moved, and Councilor Pirro Bailey seconded the motion to approve the public assembly permit for the 53rd Annual LaFayette Apple Festival. Motion carried 5-0

William McConnell	**Supervisor**	**Voted**	**Yes**
Melanie Palmer	**Councilor**	**Voted**	**Yes**
Jerry Marzo	**Councilor**	**Voted**	**Yes**
Nate Loughlin	**Councilor**	**Voted**	**Yes**
Michele Pirro Bailey	**Councilor**	**Voted**	**Yes**

E. LaFayette Legends Wall (left-hand wall of the Judge Malcom Knapp Court Room) – Supervisor McConnell discussed the idea of a wall in the Town Meeting Room dedicated to individuals in the Town who have made a difference with their contributions to our community. This would be at no cost, and the Historian would lead the effort.

F. Andy Ohstrom, human resources specialist, former town board member, and former town supervisor, has agreed to provide HR support to the town. His expertise & guidance will be a great asset to the town and its employees, helping the Town of LaFayette stay in compliance with changing regulations.

R-93-26 Councilor Palmer moved, and Councilor Loughlin seconded the motion to temporarily appoint Andy Ohstrom, independent contractor, as our Human Resource and Safety Training Officer until such time as the Local Law establishing the office of Town Human Resource Public Officer is filed. Motion carried 5-0

William McConnell	**Supervisor**	**Voted**	**Yes**
Melanie Palmer	**Councilor**	**Voted**	**Yes**
Jerry Marzo	**Councilor**	**Voted**	**Yes**
Nate Loughlin	**Councilor**	**Voted**	**Yes**
Michele Pirro Bailey	**Councilor**	**Voted**	**Yes**

6. COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC – No further comments
7. MONTHLY REPORTS –
   A. Town Supervisor – Report from Jim Pompo

- Most budget requests for 2027 have been received. A follow-up will be sent to those who have not submitted their requests next week. The budget preparation is underway. A draft will be sent in advance of our first budget workshop meeting.
- Below are budget transfer requests for approval. These are routine transfers, mostly to cover one-off expenditures. Public Information expenses have run over budget due to mailings related to the Ambulance mailer (printing, postage, etc.). There will most likely be more transfers as we head into the end of the year.
- Overall, budget to actual for this year looks pretty good; I don't think we will have any huge overages.
- There is an invoice to be paid this month from C&S related to Clark Hollow Road. Once this invoice is paid and the check is cashed, a request for reimbursement to NYSDOT will be submitted. The payment should be about $37,000.

General Fund

Purpose: To increase revenue related to the Hometown Heros Banner Program, and to increase celebrations line for the related purchase of banners.

To:	A7550.4	Celebrations - Contractual	4,200.00
From:	A2770	Miscellaneous Revenue	(4,200.00)

Purpose To increase the budget line for public information due to higher than anticipated printing and mailing costs

To:	A1480.4	Public Information - Contractual	1,900.00
From:	A1996.4	Contingency	(1,900.00)

Library Fund

Purpose: To increase the budget line for Library Supplies per the Library's request.

To:	L74304	Supplies	600.00	
From:	L7435.4	Travel		(100.00)
From:	L7438.4	Dues		(500.00)

Highway Fund

Purpose: To increase the snow budget to cover anticipated shortfall due to harsh 2026 winter, to be funded by unassigned fund balance

To:	DA5142.4	Snow Removal - Contractual	35,000.00
From	DA917	Unassigned Fund Balance	(35,000.00)

Purpose: To fund engineering fees related to the Deer Run Culvert project, to be funded by FEMA Deer Run reserve account

To:	DA5112.4	Improvements - Contractual	15,640.00
From		FEMA Deer Run Reserve	(15,640.00)

R-94-26 Councilor Palmer moved, and Councilor Marzo seconded the motion to approve the above-referenced budget modifications. Motion carried 5-0

William McConnell	**Supervisor**	**Voted**	**Yes**
Melanie Palmer	**Councilor**	**Voted**	**Yes**
Jerry Marzo	**Councilor**	**Voted**	**Yes**
Nate Loughlin	**Councilor**	**Voted**	**Yes**
Michele Pirro Bailey	**Councilor**	**Voted**	**Yes**

B. Attorney – Nothing further to report

C. Highway Dept. - Roads:_Miscellaneous general maintenance to our roads, mowing, shoulders, ditches, and culverts will continue through the summer. Surface treatments on Colton Road, Markland Road, Bella Vista Drive, and Pioneer Road were completed on August 6th. Ashburn Drive "Cross Culvert pipe replacement" is complete. Final concrete gutters and lawn restoration will be completed by August 14th.Highway Business: FEMA: Deer Run Project - After receiving $300,650.00 over two years ago from FEMA, we were finally released by FEMA in April to move forward with our town engineers, Barton & Loguidice, for the design and specifications. This project was released to contractors on August 20th

D. Town Clerk – Monthly report is on file; she also advised that the camera has been installed in the rear parking lot at the library entrance.

E. Building & Zoning Code Enforcement / SPDES – Monthly report is on file

F. Justice Court

Judge Perrin had 286 cases and turned over $15,630.00 to the Town of LaFayette for August 2026.

Judge Shute had 245 cases and turned over $10,926.00 to the Town of LaFayette for August 2026

G. LCC – Monthly report is on file. Councilor Nate Loughlin advised that the new LCC board would like to discontinue the landline at the Ron Bush Senior Community Center, as they do not actively use the phone number and rely on other means of communication, and they want to save money.

R-95-26 Councilor Loughlin moved, and Councilor Pirro Bailey seconded the motion to allow the LaFayette Community Council (LCC) to discontinue their landline. Motion carried 5-0

William McConnell	**Supervisor**	**Voted**	**Yes**
Melanie Palmer	**Councilor**	**Voted**	**Yes**
Jerry Marzo	**Councilor**	**Voted**	**Yes**
Nate Loughlin	**Councilor**	**Voted**	**Yes**
Michele Pirro Bailey	**Councilor**	**Voted**	**Yes**

H. Library – Monthly report is on file
I. LaFayette Fire Dept. financial report is on file
J. LaFayette Ambulance Dept.- No written report was submitted
K. LACC – No written report was submitted

8. New Business – No New Business to discuss.
9. Executive Session – No Executive Session required
10. Motion of Audit & Pay Bills

R-96-26 Supervisor McConnell moved, and Councilor Palmer seconded the motion to audit and pay bills. Motion carried 5-0

William McConnell	**Supervisor**	**Voted**	**Yes**
Melanie Palmer	**Councilor**	**Voted**	**Yes**
Jerry Marzo	**Councilor**	**Voted**	**Yes**
Nate Loughlin	**Councilor**	**Voted**	**Yes**
Michele Pirro Bailey	**Councilor**	**Voted**	**Yes**

11. Motion to Adjourn

R-97-26 Supervisor McConnell moved, and Councilor Pirro Bailey seconded the motion to adjourn at 7:37 pm. Motion carried 5-0

William McConnell	**Supervisor**	**Voted**	**Yes**
Melanie Palmer	**Councilor**	**Voted**	**Yes**
Jerry Marzo	**Councilor**	**Voted**	**Yes**
Nate Loughline	**Councilor**	**Voted**	**Yes**
Michele Pirro Bailey	**Councilor**	**Voted**	**Yes**

Respectfully submitted,

Kristin Shute Colburn
Town Clerk