

**Village of Walden
Board of Trustees Regular Meeting
December 3, 2024**

Mayor Ramos called the regular meeting of the Village of Walden Board of Trustees to order at 6:30pm.

On roll call the following were:	Mayor:	John Ramos
Present:	Deputy Mayor	Chris Batson
	Trustees	Becky Pearson
		Liz Kyle
		Kristie Hall
		Ralph Garrison, Jr

Absent: Bill Taylor

Also Present:	John Revella, Village Manager
	Marisa Kraus, Village Clerk
	Dave Donovan, Village Attorney

Village Manager's Report

- Met with the Librarian, working on how new funding source will work with the town
- Went through messages, agenda items
- Attended the Transportation Council Zoom meeting to update projects
- Treasurer went over payroll and audit, A/P and A/R
- Went over building maintenance and alarms for this building and the Rec buildings
- Went over updates with the DPW Super
- Conducted additional Chief candidate interviews
- Went over a few violation issues with the Building Dept. and updates from the hearings
- Talked to contractors, along with the DPW Super and Building Inspector for quotes for those properties to be done
- Went over the town budget proposals at their meeting
- Met with Toshiba and Village Clerk to go over contract and services for the machines that we have
- Attended the Hazard Mitigation meeting for OC Emergency Management. Those are getting updated plans
- Covered for departments during time off
- Went over a couple complaints and hearing issues with the Village Attorney
- Went over updates with the Village Planner for the Hazard Mitigation plan and comp plan
- Met with the grant writers for the Restore NY and the potential developers. I have a proposal for us to review after the meeting. But it's a little way away before we get to that point. That's why it came off the agenda
- Conference with the IT, contractor and Treasurer to update the phone transition. Needed another router for the library
- Have issue at the pumps at the Tin Brook Pump Station. Have temporary solutions there and are hopeful that the long-term plans come to fruition soon
- Parks Dept. Had the Jets trip this past Sunday. No issues. All the programs are still going well. Christmas in the Square is on December 5th, out front at 6:30pm. Olley Parking lot got paved and was striped today

- Building Dept. issued 26 new permits, 50 violations, 8 CO Reports and had 3 court proceedings
- Clerk's been updating Facebook and website, workers comp, helping out with different things in the office to make sure we're covered. FOILs, handicap requests, dig permits and resident responses
- Finance Dept. has been working on issues with Edmunds, reconciliations, billing, journal entries, vouchers and some online billing for vendors
- DPW, maintaining vehicles, stations. Water Dept. did 10 mark outs, replaced 17 meters, 3 endpoints and 1 closing. They also assisted with the water main break on East Ave, monitoring Tin Brook Pump Station. Did the decorations for the season along with the Parks Dept., Patching, catch basins and cutting back routes for plowing
- Police Dept. They are now on 12-hour shifts. Have 2 more full time candidates that should be starting. Patrols did 51 traffic stops, issuing 24 summonses, 10 parking complaints, 5 mvas, 11 arrests and 351 blotters

Trustee Pearson: The sewer pump station fail that was there. Where we at with that?

Manager Revella: We had 1 pump come in for replacement, so that's here now. Other 1 was in transit, was supposed to be here at the same time, but it didn't make it for some reason. They were tracking it today. But they got the 1 in so it's actually functioning. It's not overflowing. We were bypassing through a truck.

Trustee Pearson: How many water meters do we not have outstanding? Do we know? Have we started fining those people that are supposed to be fined?

Manager Revella: If you look at your bills this time, it has the actual notice on there that you're being fined \$75 a quarter for not updating your meter. Probably a thousand still need work.

Trustee Pearson: There was something in here about the lights on the bridge. Did we take care of that?

Manager Revella: Yes. Somebody had put something on the sensors. He's been checking it to make sure they don't put it back on it. Some kind of tape to put on there to make the light go off.

Trustee Pearson: Manpower for PD. We're okay for the 12-hour shifts?

Manager Revella: Yes. We're hiring 2 more right now. So, we should be full staff once they're in. Then as we lose, we'll replace.

Trustee Pearson: When they go to 12-hour shifts, talk to me about the overtime, how does that roll out? Do they get overtime? Do they punch out? They can stay longer than 12 hours?

Manager Revella: Up to 16 max in a day. They can work on days that they're off for overtime if they need to.

Trustee Hall: Talking about the water bill. I had a couple people stop me because their water bill was quite high. I received 1 e-mail, I don't know if anyone else received it, from a resident, their water bill was insanely high.

Manager Revella: How high is insane?

Trustee Hall: I believe was over \$600.

Manager Revella: Not insane. \$6,000 maybe is insane...

Trustee Hall: That's a lot more than he's used to paying so.

Manager Revella: Understood. And it was blind copied. But it was handled already. If I knew other people were on the e-mail, I would have responded to everybody. Just so you know, there were a lot of people that were concerned, because as your meter is not working, you're getting estimated. Estimates could be high or low. We don't know.

Trustee Hall: For the last 2 years, I think somebody said they were being estimated.

Manager Revella: Yes, because they didn't make arrangements to get a meter change.

Trustee Pearson: If you have a new meter, you're getting read.

Manager Revella: Not if your cell endpoint's not working. If you have the old end point.

Trustee Pearson: If you have a new meter put in. You're going to be getting billed strictly on somebody driving by with a meter reader and reading?

Manager Revella: No. The new ones are cellular. We don't go anywhere. I can read them from here. It's called the endpoint; it is what is sending the cell signal. If that fails, they can't read it at all, so they have to estimate until we get in their house.

Trustee Pearson: Does it say estimated on the bill?

Manager Revella: Should have an E on it.

Trustee Hall: If it fails, is somebody going to, just say Ralph's house and say, hey, your meter isn't working properly, can I come in to fix it, change it, do something?

Manager Revella: Once they realize it, and sometimes it takes a cycle before they even know. They have to postcard it, if they're not getting a reading. Post card will say either make an appointment or call in your reading.

Trustee Pearson: Do we know if that's happening?

Manager Revella: I'm sure it doesn't every single time. Sometimes they may miss a house, depending on where the meters are, where they are in the day, they may be busy. It may take us 2 cycles to find it.

Trustee Pearson: Do we have a list of people who have changed out their meters now? Then there's a list of people who haven't changed it out.

Manager Revella: If you go on the Badger website, that shows where the meters are and who's changed and who hasn't.

Trustee Garrison: Just to clarify on the water meters, if somebody does get a bill that's exponentially higher than normal, can they work something out with the village on the bill, set up a pay plan or divide and conquer somehow?

Manager Revella: Yes, they do. Often.

Trustee Garrison: I just know we're coming into the holidays, I know it's the end of the year, so this is when everything goes from estimated to actual, usually for most utilities. I just want the people to know that if they contact the village, you can work with them to make sure everything gets settled properly.

Manager Revella: Yes, we absolutely offer payment plans for people. They propose something reasonable, usually granted without a problem.

Deputy Mayor Batson: Any quick updates on the previous unsafe properties that we discussed in the last meetings?

Manager Revella: 60 Main St, we got 1 quote in. Waiting for 2 other quotes. 48 Riverview, there's 2. We're waiting for the 3rd. Then 36 Orange Ave, that's a little more complicated because engineering involved. So, we're bidding that with a 5-day public bid.

Deputy Mayor Batson: Sounds like we're moving forward. All right, perfect.

Trustee Pearson: I thought we'd have a report. Just where we stood on it because we were adamant about getting it done.

Manager Revella: Just waiting for the final quotes and then I'll give you a report. I'll send an e-mail to you all once I have the quotes. Just to let you know, we're going with the lowest bidder and they're getting it done and moving forward.

Public Comment

Cheryl Baker: I did send an e-mail of a possible draft on the parking passes that I had suggested that some businesses. Just wanted to briefly go over that. *read email into minutes*

Olley Park Kitchen Bid

Village Engineer Queenan: Today I sent in our recommendation letter for the bid that was received for the kitchen at the Anita Vandermark Community Center. John wanted me to come in and see if the board any questions regarding it or if you wanted to discuss anything regarding that bid.

Manager Revella: I just want to say that the contractor is reputable. They've worked in this building many times. Contractor's not an issue. The cost we have to talk about.

Deputy Mayor Batson: Let me just first start by saying I'm not super mechanically sound. I went through and I looked at all of the model numbers. I looked at all the prices and the 1 that I am just perplexed by is item number 2 on here. Furnish and install a stove, lists stove model number, any associated stuff, pipe, ventilation, range hood. Has to go through the wall. Again, I looked at all the prices and they're fairly accurate and consistent with what I could just go buy them. This stove I can find for \$2,600, item 1 is \$37,320. What on Earth is that \$32,000 to put a stove in?

Village Engineer Queenan: There's a lot of components just with that stove. There's actual physical cutting of the building. There's ventilation has to go out. The range hoods have to go out, fire suppression system that goes with that range hood as well. I'm sure there's also contractor mark up on it, but it isn't just purchasing of the stove itself. It's all of the accessories and pertinences that go with that stove to get it operational.

Deputy Mayor Batson: Understood. Is this wall that it's going through, is it located on an exterior wall?

Village Engineer Queenan: Yes. If you're coming in the kitchen from the great room, the stove goes basically on the exterior wall next to the exit doors.

Manager Revella: You know how much the ANSI system usually is? It has to have an ANSI system.

Village Engineer Queenan: Correct. Yeah, they're usually, to be quite honest, probably \$15,000. In the code there's 2 different types of stoves. We chose the higher one because you probably want to have you like a griddle there.

Deputy Mayor Batson: I get it, need commercial grade equipment.

Village Engineer Queenan: Exactly, so that lifts the requirements of what you have to put in there. There is another grade that wouldn't require the fire suppression system, but it's pointless to put that one in because you're not able to do full kitchen. But it's certainly a number that I can talk to the contractor, if you want it further broken down. We always have that ability to ask them.

Deputy Mayor Batson: I get it. Everything on here, I looked it up. It's all industrial grade quality stuff. It's things that we would absolutely want in there. They have tremendous warranties that the quality is there and the price of the installation for all of these against the rest of it, I thought was reasonable given the amount that I found. That 1 was just 1 that I struggle with. But I understand that if it does require different fire suppressions and we have to reroute sprinklers and things like that, I am closer to understanding the cost on that.

Mayor Ramos: And because it's natural gas, we're under different standards. NFPA and the Building Inspector can chime in on other items that we need to secure, obviously the kitchen as a self-contained area where the suppression system will keep that in the kitchen itself and not expose it to the great room or the other rooms where people are going to be.

Village Engineer Queenan: Correct. It does tie in all together. The suppression system for the range and the hood is a totally separate system that would activate based on, it's essentially for a grease fire is what it's based on.

Trustee Pearson: I thought at 1 time that this kitchen was just supposed to be not for cooking, but for reheating and like people were coming in with caterers. I didn't know that this kitchen was going to be a cooking kitchen. When did that change?

Manager Revella: I don't know. I've always thought it was in a commercial kitchen. It's prepped. It's stubbed for a commercial kitchen.

Trustee Pearson: There's a drain in the in the floor, in the corner?

Manager Revella: Yes. Everything's in the walls, ready to go.

Trustee Pearson: All the electric is put in that needs to be for all the electrical components?

Village Engineer Queenan: There will be some adjustments here and there, but everything is there. Has a separate drain line for the grease. Grease trap's already installed. It's outfitted for what this is.

Manager Revella: It's ready for the wash station, the dishwasher, everything.

Trustee Pearson: My only other question is and you keep telling me it needs to happen, is why do we pay for their bonds and their insurance? Why are we paying to do that?

Village Engineer Queenan: It's mainly for the bond, it's for the material and performance bond. We usually call that in a separate line item so that we know what that cost is. If the board in the past, if you would like to waive that so he doesn't provide that bond, that can happen.

Trustee Hall: No, we want the bond. Don't know why we're paying it.

Village Engineer Queenan: You're going to lose the protection that if for whatever reason he walks away; you don't have any recourse.

Trustee Pearson: But he'd have to have a bond and insurance. Why are we paying for it?

Village Engineer Queenan: You always pay for it. We call it out as a separate line. If I didn't have it as a line item, he would just mark up all the other line items to account for it.

Trustee Pearson: I understand that. I just don't think it's right. It looks like the village is paying for him to come in and do the work and pay his insurance and bond for him. Is it the same thing when people come to do something in the village, gonna build a development and they have to bond for that. Is the village paying for that too? What's the difference?

Village Engineer Queenan: It's a private improvement at the point time. This is not a private improvement. It's being installed on behalf of the village. The bond is here to protect the village, that if the contractor walks away, you pull that bond, you take the money and you finish the project.

Trustee Pearson: Thank you. And where is our money coming from?

Manager Revella: Partially from Parkland and partially from surplus. If it's approved.

Trustee Pearson: How much is in there?

Manager Revella: I don't know. I can get that number for you tomorrow.

Trustee Pearson: Please and the other fund as well. Thank you.

Trustee Kyle: They have a timeline for the project?

Manager Revella: Once you award the bid, we would do a contract that will tell them how long they have to do.

Village Engineer Queenan: Time of completion, 60 days from the time of award.

Deputy Mayor Batson: If I remember right and these are very, very rough numbers, there was \$40,000 or so set aside for this. Am I wrong on that?

Manager Revella: That's different. Will confirm the numbers from each fund and where it's coming from. If it gets approved. That's pending a breakdown of item 2, as well.

Deputy Mayor Batson: Item 2 is not my hill to die on. If the engineer comes in here and says this is what it is, at this point there has to be a level of trust. That was just a shocking amount.

Village Engineer Queenan: Correct, but I don't disagree with you. That is definitely the fire suppression system that goes with that unit. Certainly, it's within our right to ask for the breakdown.

76-80 West Main St – Unsafe Building

Andrew Concolino: I just wanted to say we're making steps, we're still on schedule for the beginning of the new year to have the plans finished. I'm just waiting on a final plan from the engineer who couldn't make it tonight. He said that he'll have it in the latest December 11th and we'll be starting work as soon as the permits are cleared and we're on track to get it done.

Trustee Pearson: Can you say how many stories it's going to be?

Andrew Concolino: I would like to have 2 stories there. Just the store front and then an apartment above top. If I could get that approved. If not, I'll just make it 1 story again with the 2 stores.

Trustee Hall: You were on track for demolition for the by the end of the year, right?

Andrew Concolino: Yeah.

Manager Revella: Neighbor still causing issues?

Building Inspector Wallner: They came to an agreement.

Discussion – Municipal Parking

Deputy Mayor Batson: If we choose to move forward with municipal parking. This probably has 2 things that we need to discuss from prior meetings. The 1st is that perhaps we did land with the timing of the municipal lots and I just didn't like where we landed so I'm bringing it up again or the discussion around the issuing of the permits. Let's just start off with if we opt to issue permits, does this require any sort of code creations, local laws passed, anything like that?

Attorney Donovan: So, you have 2 options. 1, you would definitely need a local law and then you could reserve in the local law your right to amend it by resolution. If you want it. But in the first instance you should adopt the local law and set forth exactly how you want to handle this entire kind of situation.

Deputy Mayor Batson: And within that, we have a healthy amount of autonomy like I mean, Cheryl laid out plenty of suggestions there. Some, I would love to challenge. Most, I would love to just blatantly adopt, but we can just choose a template of other municipalities that have some sort of something like that in place and then just simply amend as we see fit that works best for us.

Attorney Donovan: Yeah, within the framework of the law. So, you can adopt regulations and for instance, the property and affairs of government. So, in doing, you can't act in a way that's arbitrary capricious. That's a pretty big framework within which to work. So long as you're within that framework, then you're fine.

Deputy Mayor Batson: We've looked at a healthy amount of codes and they range anywhere from some municipalities like Walden are 7 pages. Others have things that are 1 page. I would just love to stay in the 1-page range for new things that we create. I was looking to simplify some of the

things like for example, I understand that we would love to review things annually, but I'm not sure that parking passes need to be reviewed annually. I don't want parking passes issued by person. Perhaps we issue them to the business. The business can manage who has them within. Are we're able to create pieces within our local law like that?

Attorney Donovan: Yes.

Trustee Garrison: My first question is logistically, could we handle giving out parking passes to businesses for owners and employees and sustain the necessary municipal parking for patrons or even village residents, you know that need to go to the library, the police station, school, whatever the case may be. I think that's been a concern since we started talking about parking passes, with me. I think we would need to know how many each business we need and then do our due diligence to see how many actual parking spaces we have available. I don't want to take away from patron parking or somebody that needs to park for official business because you know 78 to 85% of our parking lot is filled with employees and I know it's hard and I feel bad for some of the businesses on Main Street with the amount of limited parking. We got to figure out a way to balance the 2. I think if we give out 130 parking passes and there's 160 parking spaces, it's going to really hurt us more than help us. I think we definitely need to look before we make any decisions on parking passes.

Deputy Mayor Batson: I agree. But what if they're already there now? Hypothetically, I think the point of this would be to encourage the businesses that now park on the streets to take advantage of municipal parking, freeing up more desirable parking for patrons.

Trustee Garrison: Define desirable because I would rather not park on the street. I'd rather park in the parking lot.

Trustee Pearson: You don't want your mirror taken off on that Main Street.

Trustee Hall: Cheryl had a roundabout number, I believe, of how many she was hoping to get or hoping to obtain.

Cheryl Baker: As far as businesses that I have solicited, you're not looking at more than 35 passes.

Trustee Hall: I think you're trying to do a good thing here, but in the same aspect. There's people who live on Main Street who might work at night and sleep during the day, who have to get up, move their car every 2 hours. So, if we're going to do something like that for business owners, who's to say that we shouldn't be doing something like that for if they're paying for a daily pass or something? Residents are going to want that. That's the same thing like the street parking. That brings us right back to metered parking like Beacon or Lake George or something like that. You go on an app; you pay for the day.

Deputy Mayor Batson: What if rather than letting businesses dictate how many spots or passes that the village just simply secured X amount. They're available first come, first serve by the businesses and that's it. 1 business can't say, well I need 10. The other business say that I need 3. We're constantly trying to rotate it through that. They come back, they say, well, we've grown, now we need 11.

Trustee Hall: But what about the residents who are living above those businesses?

Deputy Mayor Batson: I understand that. There is no perfect solution, but I don't know that doing anything is also a solution. If there is a solution for that, hypothetically if you came to me and said

these businesses are going to pay for that if those people want to pay for that, I'll take their money and make that concession too. But I don't know that that's on the table and I don't see any representation from people in that spot that have participated in this, have voiced any concerns, Cheryl or have shown up and spoken about it even though municipal parking has been on this agenda no fewer than 5 times. While that may be out there, nobody's voicing that concern. Doesn't mean it's not, simply means they haven't. I don't want to over complicate things. If somebody wants to come in and pay us for that too. I think that's a different discussion.

Trustee Kyle: I do think that the business district is hurting. I feel like I would want to do whatever we could to help out and help Walden businesses thrive.

Trustee Pearson: I have some questions, but they were because I just got that e-mail tonight. What would the fee be? Do you want yearly, monthly, or every six months? Proof of employee. How do you know that they're really an employee? Who does this within our department? Who's going to offer this and how many are we talking? I still say that people walk for miles, going to the mall. You go to Walmart, you can't find a parking space, you park out somewhere else and walk into Walmart. I get it that's in the village. I've worked in the village for 38 years on that Main St. Sometimes people park in the lot. You're taking away parking from employees. If businesses want to thrive, they need the people to be able to park there. In the lots and on the street. We have an empty lot on Oak Street that they can park for free unless we'd like to permit them and let them all park in in the Oak Street parking lot. Why would we want to permit them if they can already park there for free? And they can walk up the hill and go to their stores. I don't know. I don't understand. I understand businesses and my heart is in it all. But if you don't have customers coming to your store and a place to park, they're not going stop at all. If you have no parking for them. That's where I'm coming from. People don't like to park in the Main Street, the mirrors get ripped off, cars get banged. The Main Street is not the prettiest place to park, so they do want to go to the parking lots and walk to the businesses. I still say we have a free parking lot for anybody who wants to utilize it during the day, and I've been by there many, many times and it's still not filled up. I know she's saying 35 spots, but people work different hours, different times of the day, so I don't know. I don't think I'd want to permit them to go there in Oak Street when we already have it for free. Why would we want to make money when we don't have to? For keeping employees and businesses in the area. Just my thought. Those were just some of my questions that we were discussing and I don't know if we're at that point to really have the main discussion on it.

Manager Revella: There's been a couple comments online. 2 different people said to consider a kiosk and the people pay. The first couple hours are free. You pay after that and overnight it's free as well.

Trustee Kyle: As far as signage, I did look at the sign that is owned by the Hannaford complex and all the slots in that are full. That's not an option for signage, but I do think that it is important. I don't know what the other options are or pricing or where we would get the funds or how we go about that.

Manager Revella: We can budget for signs in this upcoming budget. It's not too expensive.

Mayor Ramos: Would we be inserting the signs on the roadways? Or can we get DOT to at least do 52 directing them to Oak St?

Manager Revella: I think that we can get some assistance from NYSEG to use their poles to put some signage, especially Maple and Orchard. Oak is a little hard, which a kiosk would be helpful if we can get to that.

Discussion – Noise Ordinance

Manager Revella: Just wanted to reiterate we had great discussion from the board. Some feedback, but not real decisions to get to a deliverable for Dave so he can get that done.

Attorney Donovan: Marisa was kind enough to send me the minutes. I was at 1 meeting, wasn't at the other meeting. I spent some time going through them. I think Trustee Pearson asked me to put something together and I was aware of that and I actually sat down, attempted to do that, but I didn't feel like I knew where the starting place was. In other words, are we starting with our existing noise ordinance and modifying that? Trustee Pearson would have taken some time to get some other ordinances from Rhinebeck and Mamaroneck and Warwick and try to model and work off those and make modifications. Just as an example, from the November 12th meeting, it says that Trustee Pearson read part of the Rhinebeck that spoke about noise disturbance, definition. We don't have that. It was a simple definition to add to ours. Maybe make it a little stronger and then there was a discussion.

Trustee Pearson: Yeah, I don't think it went anywhere.

Attorney Donovan: In other words, I'm looking for like a kind of a, not a vote, but a general board consensus, that, hey, we want you to start with the Village of Walden noise ordinance as a template, and there's certain areas we would like to see modified. Certain areas we want to have deleted. Certain areas we want to leave alone. That would give me direction for a product that would go to you and the manager stolen my line because Chris has no idea the impact he has on my vocabulary, so we could get the deliverable. Something that you can have in front of you that says, okay, this is something that we can now discuss. Otherwise, this stuff I'm just making up and that's not what you want from me. Doesn't get you where you need to be. It's for you to give me some direction and for me to translate that to you for something that you could really chew on, work on and end up in a place for the village.

Deputy Mayor Batson: I have that, I think, if you'd like it.

Attorney Donovan: Absolutely, would love it.

Deputy Mayor Batson: Becky had the lead discussion, but here's my notes from it is that we start with ours as a template. I feel like we universally agreed on and I would be up for another debate on that. I know we don't have everything in front of us, but you did talk about add in what the definition noise disturbance was. It's specifically in Warwick's, I have 94-2-4, I believe that is the code they had.

Attorney Donovan: Chris, is that something that you can scan an e-mail?

Deputy Mayor Batson: I can probably have Marisa help me scan that in e-mail. The other pieces that we very distinctly talked about were, is that there appears to be nothing in our ordinance about how to waive penalties or create any sort of permit for variance or relief. Specifically, within that the manager had the authority to waive a noise ordinance temporarily based on, I guess the authority vested to them within other parts of the code. And those are the 2 couple of deliverable points that I have marked down in my notes.

Trustee Pearson: Clarification, it was actually the Rhinebeck definition noise disturbance. Which was 75-4

Deputy Mayor Batson: I have Warwick 94-2-4, but I could have transcribed it.

Trustee Pearson: Look at both of them and put something together. And just looking at the 1 you put together. Still, the residential zones are wrong and the non-residential zones. Do we have an I-1 and I-2 still?

Manager Revella: Yes, I updated those on mine.

Trustee Pearson: The 1 he just sent us is still on there.

Manager Revella: We didn't do any modification at all yet.

Trustee Pearson: So, this is just sending it back again.

Manager Revella: Correct. Just so you had it for the meeting, if you need to make any more notes.

Trustee Pearson: We were going to add to 181-4, letter B about the meters were to be checked and calibrated at least once a year. That was going to be in there. We were looking at letter E for social gatherings, whether we needed a definition for a social gathering. I don't know if anybody wanted to expand on that. You are looking at the decibel levels, whether you want to keep them what we had now or whether you wanted to go other higher because other people have them higher. I think I'm fine with what we have. Then we talked about hours and Kristie was the one who said to keep them. I don't know how people feel about the hours and that was all I had for that.

Mayor Ramos: 181-4, method of sound level measurement. Obviously, we're going to penalize people for violating this law. We need a little bit more clarification on what type of instrument. A, says all personnel, so that means everyone up here can run tests measuring devices. It needs to be defined as all personnel, Police Department, Building Inspector, Code Enforcement Officer. We need to figure out what instrument we're using.

Manager Revella: Just has to meet that standard.

Mayor Ramos: Consensus everyone?

All: Yes.

Public Comment

Theresa Brown: I was requested to come to this one instead of the zoning specific. I'm kind of glad I did, because now I have a 2 part. I am speaking on behalf of the citizens of Walden as well as Northgate specifically. For the zoning laws and violations that we've been receiving since March of 24. Now just again a little history to go back. I purchased my house in April of 2001. The townhouse that I reside in. When I purchased the house, I had a lawyer which I have all my deed and everything. I had an inspector I had a real estate agent. Everyone who I paid for to follow the appropriate laws and codes in which the Village of Walden has put in place. Now I understand that we make modifications to laws. Whether because our village has gotten bigger or whatever have you. I have received 2 violations, 1 in March of 24 and then the second one just recently in October for having a shed on my property. Now, not only does New York State law say that you can have a shed on your property as long as it does not exceed 144 square feet. Mine does not even go 12 by 12. It's an 8 by 10. I was told before coming to the board meeting last year that the only thing that was on the record was a metal shed. I went to the surrogate court and there is actually the property search and which it has the fence and a shed and the shed is made of composite, which is wood and other materials. Since March, I've spoken to and I'm using just the last name, no disrespect, Steady and Stickles. I've spoken to Wallner and Roosa and of course, John. I made it very clear that I needed to understand why I needed to have the shed removed. As eight months go by, I come to

even more of as the weather changes, I purchase a townhouse without an HOA. So, I don't have lawn maintenance. I don't have anybody coming and doing anything. In a townhouse, will I bring my lawn mower and my snow blower? All my tools into the house? First of all, it's a safety issue, right? If there's a reason that you're updating a code, I understand any residents that come in, we should follow it, but anybody that's been here for, myself for decades, and at the house over 2 decades, there should be in the 14th amendment some sort of due process clause that legacies or grandfathers me in, unless there is a safety issue. I'm using my house as a definition, but I am speaking on behalf of anyone that's been violated for a small offense for partition. In the code in which you were getting violation of 121 construction codes 4A through K and building permits 4 A and B. It was specifically written on both of mine that I was observed putting up a shed. I'm a 3-time cancer survivor and I currently have MS. You are not seeing me putting up any sheds. When I spoke to each individual. Last year, was Steady and Stickles and I said, how were we updated? I didn't know anything about this until I received a violation. They said the newspapers. My background before I became unemployed was research. He said in the newspaper. There were 2 articles about Walden and that was about putting mattresses out with a free sign and then some construction that's going on past my residency around the curb. Nothing else was mentioned. No updated codes. What am I supposed to do with my invested equipment that I have to maintain my house and my property? What are other citizens supposed to do if we can't have things laying around? Don't want a lawnmower on the property. Don't want this in the property. How am I supposed to protect the investment? Different weather, different issues. Is there a safety concern? If there's a safety concern, instead of giving a violation, express the safety concern. I don't see anything in here and again, it's been there forever. Now it's an issue. The last time that I left here, I said I would really like to hear something back. Unfortunately, I didn't. I followed up. To boot, 2 individuals that I spoke to recently said something in the manner that the shed may be too close to the house. Respectfully, I said okay, so there could be a safety concern. Let's talk about this. Where would I put my equipment then without having another violation? Immediately. It has to come down. All right, so do I need a permit to take it down? No. We know that's not the truth because demolition needs a permit. I have a problem with inconsistencies in which I'm getting communicated. I am on a fixed income, unfortunately and not by my wants. I'm trying to make improvements within my house and being hit with this and then possibly if I paid somebody to remove the shed and didn't know or trusted who I spoke to on the council, then I would have been violated or in prison. I think that's ridiculous. The second person that I spoke to, which I have a very big respect for who asked me to come to this meeting, actually gave me information about the demolition needing a permit. But the bottom line is, guys, we can't just get rid of a shed. Not going to happen overnight and it's not going to happen unless I have a reason in which you think that it needs to come down. But I'm saying you should legacy me. It's been there forever and a day. It's something that I utilize to keep my stuff. And because you can't get access to the back of all of the townhouses, then Google Maps is your friend. I'm not about to lay out names of people, but this, it's crazy.

Manager Revella: I think what Ms. Brown is asking for is, would the board consider some kind of exemption for permits for small sheds in the townhouses since they don't have technically too much storage in that area? There's been a shed on your property since 1981.

Mayor Ramos: What do you store?

Theresa Brown: I have a lawnmower, snow blower. All my gardening tools that I need. Any dirt. That I may be using for the future. Salt for any paving that we have.

Trustee Hall: Shed stuff.

Theresa Brown: Yes. Basic outdoor and indoor maintenance, all my tools.

Trustee Hall: It's been there since I've been born. Let's be honest. Is there nothing anyone can do to let her keep her shed?

Manager Revella: It's a violation right now in the code. That's the problem. Code Enforcement people are trying to do their job.

Trustee Hall: There's nothing that can be done to help her?

Trustee Pearson: Yes, the board can make a decision to pass it. Can I just ask, is it right on the fence? Do you have any pictures of this?

Theresa Brown: Yes. Just give me a moment.

Deputy Mayor Batson: Becky, you have the most planning, zoning experience. Is there a reason why that would have existed? Why would a code, is just oversight?

Trustee Pearson: I was trying to look that up. You can see the date on the code is and tell you when it was revised. If it was revised at all.

Deputy Mayor Batson: John, would you know of some reason out there that would prohibit a shed from being on the property of townhouses?

Manager Revella: I think you need to be under a certain square footage. The issue right now is set back.

Trustee Pearson: Yeah, she has to be 3 feet off the fence line. But again, it's an older piece of property and you bought it that way.

Attorney Donovan: Rob, can you tell me what the violation was issued for?

Building Inspector Wallner: The problem is setbacks. Those properties are, I think, 20 feet wide. There's really not much room. It was my suggestion that she come and discuss this with board. Is it possible to create, I'm not big on grandfathering anything, but if we come up with some sort of an exemption for a much smaller shed that's attached to the house per say.

Attorney Donovan: Typically, Rob, if it's under 144 square feet isn't it exempt from the New York State Building Code?

Building Inspector Wallner: That's the New York State Building Code, but it's not the Village Code. Village Code requires building permits for any structure.

Attorney Donovan: If the board is interested that the process could be a local law to change what's in the code now for it to say over 144 square feet or it needs to be consistent with whatever is required by New York State.

Trustee Pearson: Why do we have to do that? Why can't we just give an exemption for this one piece of property?

Attorney Donovan: Based upon what? Based upon what for the next person that comes in?

Trustee Pearson: Then you'd have to do the next person that comes in, or each case is going to be like Zoning Board. Normally they would go to the Zoning Board.

Attorney Donovan: You so articulately said to the Zoning Board how important establishing precedent was.

Trustee Pearson: It is, I agree with you 100%, but it's not like this board hasn't waived other things for people in years past.

Manager Revella: I think that it's important to have a standard. So, townhouse zone. Only in the townhouse zone. You may exempt those structures under whatever square footage and the setback exemption. Dave can draft something to look at next meeting.

Attorney Donovan: It would be a local law to not require a permit for any accessory structure under certain square footage in the townhouse zone.

Trustee Pearson: We have a big townhouse coming up.

Attorney Donovan: Well, we can't go only for 1 property.

Trustee Pearson: You can if you want to.

Attorney Donovan: Unless you can establish that it's a pre-existing non-conforming situation. I don't know what the facts are. How do you go about establishing that?

Manager Revella: The sheds were put in after the zoning code was put in place because the buildings weren't built before 1962.

Attorney Donovan: In order to get that protection, have to demonstrate that it was legal when it was built.

Manager Revella: It was not.

Trustee Pearson: Can we do it for lot size as opposed to townhouse zone?

Attorney Donovan: Could you do it? Because then you have established a general perimeter. Yes, you could.

Manager Revella: That's much better. We can check that and put it in.

Attorney Donovan: My other question is do we have any issue with New York State Fire Code in terms of 10-foot separation from the main structure?

Building Inspector Wallner inaudible from audience

Mayor Ramos: All right, we're going to work the issue.

Theresa Brown: I have 2 additional things. I was told that with any permits that you get that it's supposed to give you a tax break. Is that correct?

Manager Revella: I never heard that.

Theresa Brown: I knew it. In regards to my property, just one other thing is there's 100 feet or telephone pole distance between the left and right side of Northgate. The left side is managed by the village of all property and the right side is not. I have to go in the ditch and obviously you can tell I can't go in a ditch and clear back trees. And I've had an officer tell me that the trees need to be cleared back. I've had to call in August to have the state come out. Now you know what the seat does during the winter time? Piles all the snow on the corner of my yard, and that becomes then my issue. Plus, you have the other side that has a hydrant, so 100 feet your village worker could walk and clear out the high grass instead of having the state come in or I should not be liable for that? I don't want anyone to have an accident, so we do what we can. But in all reality, the sign starts before the townhouse. It says Welcome to the Village of Walden and I pay Village of Walden taxes and Town of Montgomery. So, in all due respect, I'd like to mention that again. And then you just recently brought up about the water meters. 3 years ago, I received a letter about possibly upgrading the water meters. Nothing else was discussed and I literally tooth and nail my water my water bill. Typically, \$234.00 a month, and I'll be honest, I pay every 2 periods because of my fixed income. I know that there is an increase of fine or whatever, but my \$234 went to over \$400 and something dollars and what I'm noticing is when I started out 24 years ago, I know costs go up. It was \$1.34 per cubic square feet to \$234 to now over \$5 per square feet, are we absorbing in our square cubic feet of sewage and water? What's going on with your sump pump, and if not, then why is there such a 50% or 150% increase on that per cubic square feet? You talked about the bills having a fine for not updated meters. I haven't heard anything more about that, and I don't see that on my bill, but my bill is twice as much for the period.

Manager Revella: Your current bill.

Trustee Garrison: It's on the bill. I just saw mine today.

Manager Revella: And the rates were not changed since I think 2015.

Theresa Brown: And when should I expect to possibly hear something?

Manager Revella: The next board meeting there will be a draft local law on the issue.

Mary Ellen Matise: Quiet hours in Walden 10pm or 11pm? Weekend.

Trustee Pearson: Friday, Saturday, Sunday was 11pm.

Mary Ellen Matise: Sunday wouldn't be 11.

Trustee Pearson: That's what it says, at 11.

Mary Ellen Matise: In conversation, somebody was talking to me about the Firehouse and noise from the Firehouse affecting them. I said come to the Village Board and talk to them, and obviously they're not here tonight, but I don't know if you've heard any complaints from people. I know when Chet was alive, they used to come down when we had dances down there and 10 o'clock, bingo, start packing up and he would get right out of there. I don't know, but it might be something you want to find out about before you do get complaints. The Community Center. Aside from summer camp use and we know that the seniors have been using it for their club. Do we have any accounting for the percentage of usage of that building by the community or just by rental? Did we have a breakdown that we're keeping track of? Because it seems to me just from all the people who come in for waivers that we're using it more as a venue to rent out than as a Community Center and we just used it recently, Community Council did 2 events down there. The events were well publicized. It wasn't that there weren't publicized. Nobody came. Nobody showed

up. The one about the volunteers. All the organizations. I understand that's not a magnetic draw for people.

Trustee Hall: No, but I don't know what you're talking about well-publicized because...

Mary Ellen Matise: It was all over Facebook and it was on the village sites and stuff. It was all over.

Trustee Hall: We'll talk about that because we have a different opinion there.

Mary Ellen Matise: It was as well publicized as it can be in the Village of Walden right now because the paper has limited circulation, I didn't even get my paper because of the mail. There's issues about getting the word out, but Community Council really does a good job about getting the word out. And of course, the event itself was not going to be a big draw.

Manager Revella: The facility is used very often.

Mary Ellen Matise: By who?

Manager Revella: The village.

Mary Ellen Matise: Besides summer camp and besides the seniors.

Manager Revella: Yes, all year. There's a calendar of events if you want to stop by and check it out.

Mary Ellen Matise: But in terms of other usage, I'm wondering if community groups are really using it in any way. They can, but then there's an issue too at night or on weekends about who opens it. Does somebody have to stay there with the community group while they're using it? Does it cost the village personnel time to have it open? It doesn't seem from these general events, that Community Council had, seems out of the way. I've already booked this room for Martin Luther King Day for the Youth Awards. We fill this room. Pack it. It's right here in the village. It's open. I don't have to call you, call Marisa and say come open the door for me or the PD, if it's locked. So, it's a whole different issue. I'm just curious about that. Animal control, I know I sent John stuff. Sent Becky stuff. I know it's a town issue and I know Ann got up here and I was trying to understand what she said and after she said it, and evidently the state law is changing. All along, the town was supposed to be if they pick up a stray, but this is a canine, not a feline, if they pick up a stray, they have to hold it for 7 days. Now they did get this little shed that has 2 pens and they're responsible for it, if it doesn't get claimed by the owner, if it's a stray, then they can bring it to a shelter. But they have no agreement with Walden Humane Society. They have no written MOUs or agreements with any other shelters. I understand that the Chief is working on this because it comes under the PD in the town. I think it's incumbent on us to make sure that's January 1st they do have something in place. They put money in the budget. We're all being taxed for it in the A fund. And yet they have no way to really bring an animal that they pick up and hold once they need, they can pass it on. They really have no place to bring it. And cats, they have no place to bring cats at all. Of course, we all know we continued to have a feral cat issue in the village. I just think we need to be more proactive with the town and make sure that they really do put something in place for January when their budget starts. I think they made 1 payment to the Humane Society this past year and then never made the other payments. So, the Humane Society doesn't want to take them. That's their prerogative. There's no written contract.

Payment of Audited Bills

Trustee Garrison made a motion to approve payment of audited bills. Seconded by Deputy Mayor Batson. 4 ayes. 2 abstentions (Trustee Hall & Trustee Pearson). Motion carried.

Miscellaneous Comments from the Board of Trustees

Trustee Pearson: See, you gave us this list last time of streets.

Manager Revella: Yes. Will be on next agenda to designate streets for Overlook at Kidd Farm.

Trustee Pearson: You're going to get information on the accreditation for PD. Where we're at?

Manager Revella: No change. They have to come in come quiz them, but they're not ready for that because they're all new.

Trustee Pearson: We haven't had any budget transfers in a while.

Manager Revella: There will be some budget transfers, especially water and sewer, hopefully next meeting.

Trustee Pearson: I would like to one-day look at the fines for abandoned buildings because I know I don't think we fine them. Do we? I know it's in our law and we fine for and they have to register with you for an abandoned building. They do that?

Manager Revella: That they pay a fee. It increases annually.

Trustee Pearson: I didn't realize that we were doing that. You knew all those buildings for all those years, they've been paying us, all those abandoned buildings on Main Street. Every year.

Manager Revella: Yes. Might want to consider increasing those fees on the next fee schedule. They're a problem.

Trustee Pearson: You said the blacktop was done and the part next to the building is in A-OK condition.

Manager Revella: Yes. It's redone. Check it out. They striped today.

Trustee Kyle: I wanted to ask about the budget for next year, I know we do the budget in March. When do we start getting figures for it?

Manager Revella: March 20th or 21st.

Trustee Kyle: I had a question about fines too, with winter coming up, I know it's kind of the same with mowing, the Rec Department mowing for people that don't or shoveling. Did we talk about doing possibly like compounding fines for that? If there's repeat offenders, like if somebody's consistently not shoveling, each fine being compounded?

Manager Revella: Like first offense x, second offense y.

Trustee Kyle: Yeah, if people are just throwing out \$250 to pay the fine, I feel like they would shovel if the fine was \$1000 after they didn't do it four or five times.

Manager Revella: Definitely, something to consider.

Attorney Donovan: The issue I can think, the idea behind it right now is supposed to do a couple of things. 1 is make it safe for the people that are walking down the sidewalk and 2 the village is supposed to recoup what it basically costs. If you're going to increase that over a period of time. Then there's going to be a different element, going to end up with a court proceeding to make sure these people have due process. Because if you're going to end up, somebody decides I'm not going to shovel it. So, the 5th time is now the \$2500 fine. That's out of proportion to what it cost the village to do that. I would think that you would need that some court proceed to recoup that money. Which is not required now.

Trustee Kyle: Someone had asked me about crosswalks on Ulster. Did there used to be crosswalks on Ulster?

Manager Revella: No.

Trustee Kyle: Do they plan on putting any?

Manager Revella: The village cannot put crosswalks on Ulster Ave only the state can. If there's a certain spot that's desired, we can ask.

Trustee Kyle: I will find out about that. Thank you.

Trustee Pearson: Somebody was trying to cross over here today by Roosa's and we used to have those signs that said stop for people that go across. Do we still have those signs?

Manager Revella: No, but we can get some for the spring. I wouldn't put them out right now.

Trustee Pearson: People just keep driving by and the people are standing on the sidewalk to get across the street.

Manager Revella: And we had one here and down by before the ice cream stand.

Trustee Hall: I had a couple people approach me about Christmas in the Square to see if there was, who do they talk to or how they can go about possibly about switching the days to a Saturday to where it's not so late so the kids not going to school the next day. Waiting for Santa to 9 o'clock at the church and then it's late for the young kids. Who do they talk to about that?

Manager Revella: Yeah, talk to me about it and I'll talk to the department.

Trustee Hall: I don't know if you saw there was some questions online, some personal Facebooks and other people had reached out about Rec Center being closed while schools closed. What are the kids going to do? Is there something that could be done there that it could be open when schools closed on holiday weekends or is there something that maybe can be done other than just basketball for the other kids who don't play basketball or the girls?

Manager Revella: We would just have to consider additional staffing and cost for staffing. We don't have right now.

Trustee Hall: Is it paid staffing down there? Is it volunteers?

Manager Revella: Yes, paid.

Trustee Hall: Is volunteer something that would be considered?

Manager Revella: Volunteer staffing doesn't help us too much because we still have to pay comp and liability insurance and I'm not sure if we can do that. We have to find out with the civil service if it's allowed. I don't see why not.

Trustee Hall: I was at the vendor fair this past weekend up at the Firehouse. There was over 30 vendors. I don't know if anybody else was up there. It was a really good turnout; a lot of local residents were in there selling stuff. Santa will be up there on the 8th next Sunday. There will be a breakfast with Santa from 7am till noon.

Trustee Garrison: We touched on it already, but I promised Ms. Host I would just follow up on 48 Riverview. You had mentioned we got some bids coming in. Waiting for one more for that. She had just asked me to follow up on that. I do want to offer my condolences again to Trustee Taylor for the passing of his mother. I know we did a moment of silence, but I feel it's appropriate to let him know that we are thinking about him in these trying times.

Deputy Mayor Batson: In the last meeting we talked about there was a letter that we were going to send Town of Montgomery and some challenges or issues with the taxing roads, but I also saw some responses that said the information that we got on that might not be correct.

Manager Revella: There were issues. They're taxing us. They say they're taxing us for culverts and bridges in the villages, but they're still not fixing our bridge. Now they're going to tax us for it. But they're not going to do ours. They're doing Wallkill Rd is what they said. That's not in the village or any village. So, I'm not sure how that works, but if you're doing a culvert or a bridge, you're doing the road. That was the argument.

Deputy Mayor Batson: Fair. The other issue there, is that should we consider because that came in a bit of a last minute to us, that letter had to go out almost immediately. Should we consider putting some mechanism in place for us to look at other issues that are going to pop up on Montgomery's agenda? So, we're not scrambling for last minute letter writing or decisions. If there's a way, I don't even know if there's a way for us to operate 2 weeks behind or whatever. Looking at the previous issues, I don't know if that issue was discussed, but I assume the answer is as simple as Chris go on their meetings.

Trustee Pearson: It was also their budget time, that's why that was all coming up for budget basically. They do other things throughout the year.

Deputy Mayor Batson: But for those of you that are more experienced on this board, is that a best practice that we as newer members should look at?

Trustee Pearson: You could go or you could watch. They're televised, so you can watch and see what's going on.

Trustee Garrison: Are we allowed to speak at those meetings?

Manager Revella: Absolutely.

Deputy Mayor Batson: Are we allowed to speak as citizens of Town of Montgomery, or in the capacity that we have as a Trustee of Walden?

Manager Revella: As a Trustee, you'd have to get the board's consent to speak on behalf of the board. You can't just go up there as a Trustee without that. No individual should anyway, without that consent. Otherwise, as Joe Citizen, you're the citizen of the town, you can absolutely talk.

Mayor Ramos: That letter was generated and it was read at their board meeting at that time for and a copy of it was handed to the Town Clerk, with all those outlining things that we discussed during our meeting. Went to the football game with the 27 other patrons. Little chilly. We had a great time. Everybody was returned safe and sound and it was a good event to have by all. Sorry I couldn't make the craft fair. I definitely need to buy some things. I'm a little bit behind.

read events into minutes

Executive Session – Collective Bargaining Negotiations CSEA, PBA, Personal History of a Particular Person

Trustee Pearson made a motion to enter into executive session to discuss collective bargaining negotiations with the CSEA, PBA, personal history of a particular person. Seconded by Trustee Hall. All ayes. Motion carried.

Reconvene

Trustee Garrison made a motion to reconvene the regular board meeting of the Board of Trustees, Seconded by Trustee Kyle. All ayes. Motion carried.

Resolution – 4-24-25 - 48 Riverview Street

Deputy Mayor Batson made a motion to adopt Resolution 4-24-25 – 48 Riverview Street. Seconded by Trustee Kyle. All ayes. Motion carried.

Payment of Audited Bills

Trustee Garrison made a motion to approve payment of audited bills. Seconded by Deputy Mayor Batson. 4 ayes. 2 abstentions (Trustee Hall & Trustee Pearson). Motion carried.

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