

**Village of Walden
Board of Trustees Regular Meeting
February 03, 2026**

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

On roll call the following were:	Mayor:	Becky Pearson
Present:	Deputy Mayor	Lynn Thompson
	Trustees	Gerald Mishk
		Cheryl Baker
		Bill Taylor
		Liz Kyle

Absent:	Ralph Garrison, Jr
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Also Present:	John Revella, Village Manager
	Kaitlyn Laux, Deputy Village Clerk
	John Cappello, Village Attorney

Manager Report:

- Parks and DPW did their best with the recent snow event we had. They are currently still going around cleaning up and that will continue because we are looking at another five days of cold weather, maybe more.
- Went over some EMS service discussions some I had gotten from Westchester. There is a state mandate out for the counties to have EMS plans in place.
- I had a meeting with the DEC and the EFC regarding the sewer plant upgrades.
- I went over some PBA matters.
- I had to go to court for a building department litigation to help cover some gaps, since we had some staffing change-over.
- I had a couple meetings with the finance department and the consultant going over updates and transitions that are going to be happening in the next couple weeks.
- The new building inspector started working, I also had an interview with a potential code enforcement officer, and fire inspector as well.
- I had a couple conferences with the grant writer on status of the grants and updates on the grants.
- Went over coverage while the clerk is out, with other staff as well. It's been okay so far.

- I had music in the grove committee meeting to go over the line up for this year.
- I had a department head meeting to go over budget deadlines and the phone systems; I just want to make sure there is back up.
- Transportation council committee in Goshen went over capital projects with the county. I'm still trying to push for the bridge on Hill Street.
- Rec Department – Teen center is operating in full swing on weekends, pickle-ball is 4 days a week (8 sessions), community center has corn hole, fitness program, and other things going on. Floor hockey is coming up soon; basketball is still going well. And there is a book club starting soon as of now there are 76 people signed up for it.
- Building Department – The new building inspector is on and trying to get permits resolved, issues with planning and zoning. Working on organization of the department. Trying to get help over there with additional staff. We did end up hiring a fire inspector so that will start soon.
- Clerk - Has been updating Facebook and website, working from home for some of this time. We have Katie Backing up her stuff. Petitions are due so they will be working on that together.
- Finance – Working on bank recs, billing, Edmunds, the W2s and 1099s have went out, NYCLASS is set up for investment accounts.
- Public Works – Doing maintenance on vehicles, and equipment especially after all the snow we had that takes a toll on our vehicles and our staff. 2 new meters put in, 2 endpoints, we did have another water main break up on east avenue. Since last meeting they finished picking up Christmas trees and cleaning up from the last storm.
- Police Department – Working on staffing and getting new people to sign up. We did end up relieving one sheriff officer, so we are down to one, because we have had more staff come on which has been helpful. Since last meeting they did have 297 blotters, 2 arrests, 50 traffic stops, 16 summonses issued, 3 MVAs, and 35 parking tickets.

Payment of audited bills:

Mayor Pearson: Payment of audited bills does anyone want to make a motion.

Deputy Mayor Thompson: Are we still holding on to that one bill.

Manager Revella: Yes.

Deputy Mayor Thompson: Okay I'll make a motion to pay the audited bills, except for that one.

Trustee Taylor: I'll second.

Mayor Pearson: We did have some discussion on those ez-passes. Is that still happening?

Manager Revella: Yes, I had a discussion before the meeting about it as well.

Mayor Pearson: Is there anything different that we need to know about gas and electricity?

Manager Revella: No, but we have been disputing one for almost 4 years and they finally settled with us, and we saved about \$30,000 so that's good. The other one hadn't billed us for 2 years, they were sending it to the wrong email, so we didn't receive a bill. It was for a new meter and we never got it.

Mayor Pearson: Okay, all in favor?

Aye: Deputy Mayor Thompson, Trustee Taylor, Trustee Mishk, Trustee Kyle.

Public Comment on Business of the Board:

Resident: I was seeking through the comprehensive plan to see if I can get a zoning change so that I can convert my house into a two family and have 2 rental apartments. I spoke with several realtors, and they said I would have trouble renting this commercial space in this condition. The last thing the village needs is to have more vacant office space. It is to my advantage, but I do think it would also benefit the village. Can I answer any questions you have and get an idea of where this might be going? Also, I'm very fortunate because I have 8 parking spaces for what will be two-family housing, so parking won't be an issue.

Mayor Pearson: John, what is the zone there now?

Manager Revella: B3

Mayor Pearson: And did you get a variance back then to have the apartment above the business?

Resident: I did not need a variance at that time because of the zone, I believe it was B1 at the time, however I did need to get a special exemption use from the planning board.

Mayor Pearson: And how does it work with an 800 square foot apartment that's supposed to be 900 square feet.

Manager Revella: The pre-existing apartment upstairs I don't know if that's an issue it's pre-existing, but you know you're modifying the downstairs that's more than 900 square feet if you are going to change the zone.

Attorney Cappello: Just for context what we had suggested to the comprehensive plan but was not to change the zoning in B 3 to allow apartments on first floor but to look east that strip going east from this which is the first residential to the rest half of them are one family half of them are multifamily so half of those houses in there are non-conforming which restricts the improvements they can do to their property and kind of you know tamps down the ability to invest.

Manager Revella: You know the comp plan did talk about different areas in the village where zoning didn't make sense the way it was and they were going to look at potentially modifying certain areas to make it more conforming to what's there and practical if that's what the board wants but that's what. They are looking at that.

Mayor Pearson: So that doesn't have to be done at this time we're going to go through that anyway once the comp plan goes through with public hearing then you look at all the immediate changes at the time he made, so you'd be doing that in time anyway. So, the public hearing is at the next meeting.

Manager Revella: Just to clarify the public hearing that's on the 17th is the comp plan committee public hearing to be able to present to the board, then the board will have their own public hearing, after that the village board will be for people to come out and comment.

Business of the Board:

Mayor Pearson: Business of the board we have comp plan review again.

Resident: Hello I don't have much more today but, since last meeting we did get the map updated from Orange County the only one that has not been done is the zoning map but I did speak with the county today and the gentleman that does the maps is out of town and will be back next week but that was just a color issue, the map itself is accurate, so we are working on that.

Manager Revella: Once it is finalized there will be a couple of copies in the clerk's office and in the library.

Resident: The other thing is going over the design guidelines i don't know if you want to go over that.

Mayor Pearson: I would probably do it next meeting. Bill, any comments?

Trustee Taylor: No nothing at this point.

Mayor Pearson: Lynn?

Deputy Mayor Thompson: No, I want to read them tonight.

Intro to Local Law 3 of 2026 – Night Sky

Mayor Pearson: Only comments I got back were people talking about the nuisance of it, the nuisance law, there is a nuisance law in NY State that my strength and some people who have already issues, so I don't know if that can be put in there somewhere.

Attorney Cappello: That rights 168-7 I must put any existing non-conforming lighting fixtures that create disability glare such as it creates a safety hazard or nuisance shall be either shielded or redirected. So that includes this there. I did just so the board knows I sent the mayor a couple light fixtures.

Mayor Pearson: OK and then I did send you all that. I do have a question though. 168-5 does that wording need to be in there? Or can it be simpler?

Manager Revella: I thought the board wanted more technicalities than even this, so they weren't even stronger than what's already here I'm not sure that's enough that number of foot candles.

Attorney Cappello: The New York law that you've provided that's under consideration if adopted would go into effect in 2028 for prior non-conforming on replacement, all the state says is any replacement must be shielded, it doesn't have any specific, but you know illumination guidelines. So, you know I don't know. Once again it gets into commercial uses you have site plans that you have some control, and you have somebody looking at them in housing if someone replaces a light that nobody 's complained about with the light that you know may not be whatever your foot candles. You really must decide how you want to do it, this provides some flexibility but in a residential home for someone to change their light if you want to make sure it's shielded and make sure you have something there to make sure that it meets compliance. If someone is obnoxious you could go comply, but you don't necessarily want to be out at every house with a light meter every time someone decides they want to put additional light. But it's up to you.

Mayor Pearson: I always prefer to keep it simpler.

Deputy Mayor Thompson: I think we should leave it.

Deputy Mayor Thompson: The problem right now is infringement upon personal space, residential neighborhoods so if you take this out the people in the residential neighborhoods that could be impacted will be impacted.

Mayor Pearson: Right, I just read it again and I just want to see your thoughts on it so I think it should stay.

Trustee Taylor: Yeah, my comments are the same as they have always been and it's with any code that we discussed in this village, and we make inference to some technical aspects in this case it happens to be referring to foot-candles and then we get into enforcement. This section here is just totally subjective we're asking somebody to go out and decide whether the criteria that have been delineated in this procedure is being violated so not to have some type of instrument. You don't ask the PD to go out without the proper tools to do the necessary enforcement we should not be asking the building department to go out there with some subjective criteria which is nothing more than I think it's not in accordance with the code well that's not good. So, if you're going to have that technical jargon in here foot candles etcetera then you must provide the person that you're telling to go out there and enforce it, that they have the necessary tools. And I don't see that here.

Mayor Pearson: Agreed and that's why I sent that to the board.

Deputy Mayor Thompson: It's not here yet.

Trustee Taylor: Well, that's my comment you're asking for it and that's it.

Mayor Pearson: Maybe put a little paragraph in there that the code enforcement building department and police officer can each have one, they don't have to be \$3000.00 a piece, there were some that were \$50.00. Usually, during the nighttime the building departments are not going to be open, it's going to be more of a police officer's responsibility I believe if there's an issue then the building inspector would have to go back, maybe the next day. I don't know how it would work.

Trustee Taylor: You must give the foundation okay and I realize we're just asking for comments but until we address that.

Mayor Pearson: So put in that section put in a form of enforcement.

Trustee Taylor: Yeah, and we should make that person purchase if you will before. Yeah, something you know you don't place the onus on the enforcement person without providing them with the necessary tool to enforce.

Mayor Pearson: How does the board feel about adding a sentence like that?

Deputy Mayor Thompson: That's fine but I don't think that was the intent of the paragraph to make it, so the enforcement agent doesn't have a tool I just don't think it was put in that section. I'm not opposed to that I think the whole thing is if we don't have certain guidelines as to the illumination, we're going to have a problem and then the next part would be how to measure, so the measurements would be taken by a tool. But this is mostly about infringement upon residential property I think that's what this is addressing.

Attorney Cappello: Yeah, I mean if you look at 165 168 C it says exterior light fixtures shall be designed in a range not to reflect or shine onto adjoining property and not distributed, light fixtures located in your property lines you'll have back lighting zone classifications of BL so. That's safe zone classification you look on you know the light fixture you can look up it's a light fixture with an upper lighting zoning classification such as ULUH are prohibited. So again, that's something that is designed as a fixture that's something that you would look up like fixtures mounted under roof overhang soffits and canopies she'll be reassessed recessed so that the lamps or lids cover flush with the bottom surface of the canopy or overhang or shielded by the fixture so the light is restrained at an angle no higher than 80% above 80 degrees above Nader once again that's a measurement it's just objective criteria is not subjective. Standards which I think are fairly you know objective the only you know potential nonobjective is nuisance and I think you know a nuisance is it's the same thing as any nuisance what is objectionable noise at a party or what is a nuisance that someone is growing over so. I mean it kind of goes without saying you're not going to measure it without having a device for measuring it's senseless having a law if you're not going to provide your code enforcement.

Mayor Pearson: So, some of the light laws on can be recognized as a new sensing with statutory nuisance and so he believes timers and sensors that need to be put on certain lighting as well I don't know if that's something we want.

Trustee Kyle: Is it supposed to be or intended to be geared towards commercial properties specifically. It doesn't necessarily specify if it's just for commercial properties.

Mayor Pearson: Nothing necessarily has to say commercial; I mean when I look at one of the big ones that is at fault and there's people who live next door, that to me means that it is a medium activity center it's a complex and it's not specific. It's up to the board to decide.

Trustee Taylor: No, I'm fine with all the mechanical aspects of proper shielding etcetera my issue is always going to gravitate towards the enforcement and the onus we're putting on whoever 's doing that.

Mayor Pearson: Anything else from the board. So do you want to set up a public hearing? Are you ready for the changes that were just made tonight.

Deputy Mayor Thompson: Maybe ask the building inspector if she has some type of recommendation for a device. Which we wouldn't even really have to put specifically into the law.

Manager Revella: You'd say something like the luminance shall be determined by approved calibrated instrument for measuring light, something like that.

Deputy Mayor Thompson: She might just have some input or suggestion on that.

Mayor Pearson: Alright, so everyone's good with that to move forward? Yes, alright do we want to make a motion to set a public hearing?

Attorney Cappello: Yeah, I can make these changes and do a quick resolution of an induction. But do you want it for the 17th or for the March meeting?

Mayor Pearson: Let's do March.

Attorney Cappello: March 3rd. Yeah well, I'll have these changes made.

Mayor Pearson: Thank you. Anything else from the board? Anyone want to make a motion?

Deputy Mayor Thompson: I'll make a motion that we have a public hearing on March 3rd about light law.

Trustee Mishk: I'll second.

Mayor Pearson: Any discussion? All in favor?

Aye: Deputy Mayor Thompson, Trustee Taylor, Trustee Mishk, Trustee Kyle.

Veteran Tax Exemption:

Mayor Pearson: Liz sent us an article on tax exemptions for veterans. For disabled veterans.

Trustee Kyle: At the end of last year in New York State for a 100% property tax exemption for the primary residence. Veterans with a 100% service-connected disability. It's just an opt in or opt out, I'm not sure if town of Montgomery is in or out because it's not public record. The current veteran tax exemption is currently through the town of Montgomery.

Manager Revella: We don't know yes, you'd have to be 100% disabled as determined by the United States Department of Veteran affairs they have the permanent disability and primary residency to be the owner, at least one of the owners.

Mayor Pearson: Okay so board your pleasure?

Trustee Taylor: Yeah, I think it's worth looking at and like Trustee Kyle says you know you're talking about 100% service-connected disability you know that has a wide range from catastrophic to a multitude of issues that would warrant that. It's probably easy to find out if we have people over there through the town that opted in it would give us a starting point I would think I think it warrants further discussion and find out you know do we have some residents in this community that are 100% VA disabilities I don't know the answer to that.

Trustee Kyle: I'm not sure there's a way to find out exactly how many 100% disabled veterans that we have but we can certainly see how many have current veteran through town of Montgomery.

Trustee Taylor: Yes, I mean the level of disability number one is none of my business it belongs to the veteran whether they want to share that information is entirely up to the veteran it is none of my business. And I don't believe it's any of this board 's business to dig into that.

Trustee Kyle: So where are we able to find that information though because it seems like it would be like some people's decision on whether we would opt into this.

Trustee Taylor: Well once we have the information and it's public that there is an opportunity if you want to call it that which it's really not, because we're talking about somebody 's disability provide the information and those that warrant that will probably step forward and then address it once they have sufficient information right now they don't. So, I don't know.

Attorney Cappello: Well, if town of Montgomery has that exemption then every village resident who pays town of Montgomery taxes you could find out the number of village residents that have applied and obtained the exemption in town of Montgomery then you would know the number that already exists that already have it they may not be exempt from village taxes yet they would have applied for town and then you know you would at least know the number or if the school they're sort of put it out the school district which is the most important one. If they haven't then yes unless the you know the veteran's administration or something is willing to without giving you a name give you several residents, but I don't know there may be other ways.

Trustee Kyle: You do have to turn a form in and show proof of VA benefits. I feel it would be up to us to opt in or out.

Mayor Pearson: First let's see how many people in the town have it and start there and then go back to it, do you want to follow up on that?

Trustee Kyle: yeah, I mean I can do that.

Mayor Pearson: So, let's do that and we will move forward.

Deputy Mayor Thompson: I would like more information. If anyone knows Brian Maher, he is very invested in the veterans, so Liz if you are taking the lead on this you might want to give them a call.

Trustee Taylor: I tend to agree with my fellow trustees that we should always get as much information as we can because once you opt into something we are obligated to be able to provide our justification to the residents and any associated veterans that might want to get more information. And we need to be able to provide that information to them and not just nod our heads up and down and say you know we're looking at it.

Code Review 174 & 186:

Mayor Pearson: Anybody have anything for code review 174 and 186?

Attorney Cappello: When you do your comprehensive plan do you have any mobile home I know you have a mobile home before, but do you have mobile home quorum? Zoning district. I think that some of the requirements as setbacks and everything.

Attorney Cappello: The only thing is a laundry facility you can investigate.

Mayor Pearson: Then the other part was 174-11. That we talked about. With the posterior water supplies disposal which things some more interaction talked about connecting to village water and sewer.

Manager Revella: So, the only approved systems are the village ones right.

Mayor Pearson: It talks about electrical and I just don't know what it should be.

Attorney Cappello: I mean someone probably should look when these were written. There may be totally new and different standards, and you know different requirements for what a mobile home needs to provide to be qualified.

Deputy Mayor Thompson: Maybe this is something we can give to the building inspector to see what the current standards are for mobile homes.

Manager Revella: Yes, because that's a lot.

Attorney Cappello: And just as the excitement of your comprehensive plan in your mobile home I think I ate about 45 variants for the only mobile home park in the village that's in a zone and to have requirements that your only part doesn't need or really don't make a lot of sense to me.

Mayor Pearson: Outdoor lighting we should look at that too for each lot. 186-4 is that standard should there be more in there?

Attorney Cappello: Yeah, I will double check, but you know these are standard.

RBT Contract:

Mayor Pearson: Alright moving on to RBT contract. We got this a while ago.

Manager Revella: Its has been revised and redone with our attorneys' notes between them and RBT to the best of their abilities.

Mayor Pearson: So is there a dollar amount that we are sending through this or not.

Manager Revella: That's up to the board.

Mayor Pearson: Any questions or thoughts? No, okay and do we want to put an amount in here? It would be through May 31, 2026. Give me a number.

Manager Revella: It depends on how many calls the finance department makes to them.

Trustee Taylor: And what was the previous contract determination how long.

Manager Revella: That was the last one, for 20,000 was for just for that project. Those are not to exceed 20,000, the last one. So, its up to the pleasure from the board, anything and even any comments.

Trustee Taylor: And the caveat is in there to keep us informed status wise correct. Now walk in on a Monday morning and say what we're out of money when in fact they haven't provided a status update on a regular basis as to the success or non-success of this endeavor.

Mayor Pearson: Do you want status from our treasurer or from RBT.

Trustee Taylor: Alright well who's the contract with?

Mayor Pearson: RBT.

Trustee Taylor: Alright then I want to hear from them.

Trustee Mishk: Just I want to see status reports monthly.

Mayor Pearson: That's reasonable.

Mayor Pearson: OK, is there an amount? I would say we need to put one in there if there is not one. We should put up to a certain amount to spend on this village we don't really know what's available.

Trustee Mishk: What have we paid in the past?

Manager Revella: The last project was 20,000.

Mayor Pearson: 20,000 but that was getting a whole slope of stuff.

Manager Revella: So that when the finance department has a question about something, accounting wise, they can call them and ask them for help or advice.

Trustee Taylor: So, this is a consultation contract then not a physical we're going to do this for you, type of contract.

Manager Revella: Correct.

Mayor Pearson: Alright. What do you recommend?

Manager Revella: I wouldn't go over 10,000 to start.

Trustee Taylor: Yeah, I think that's a reasonable number.

Deputy Mayor Thompson: I think it's a reasonable number. I must go really by what John says about our renewal number, so if he thinks 10,000 is a reasonable number I'll go along with that because he's here in the office, he knows what they call for on more regular basis than we do. You know we had an unusual situation. So, if John's recommending that that's our max, I'm okay with that.

Mayor Pearson: Any other comments. Anyone wants to make a motion to set the agreement.

Manager Revella: Accept the agreement and authorize the mayor and I to sign.

Trustee Mishk: I'll make the motion.

Deputy Mayor Thompson: I'll second.

Mayor Pearson: All in favor?

Aye: Deputy Mayor Thompson, Trustee Taylor, Trustee Mishk, Trustee Kyle.

Correspondence:

Mayor Pearson: I did get some correspondence about fire hydrants. They talked about maybe adding something to village code to clean fire hydrants.

Deputy Mayor Thompson: But here's my question I thought I read something in New York State law that whenever a homeowner is within 350 feet of the fire hydrant it should be the homeowner that cleans out around the fire hydrant. I think it's something we should consider because I know if my house was on fire I'd be very grateful that the fire company did not have to waste several minutes looking for my fire hydrant.

Mayor Pearson: So, we'll put this on the agenda for the next meeting.

Trustee Baker: A big shout out to the DPW for cleaning mother nature's mess.

Deputy Mayor Thompson: Yeah, I know this was a tough snowstorm I think our police and our DPW did a pretty good job, but I think we need to, I haven't had any complaints about people parking on sidewalks this snowstorm but what I saw in my own neighborhood and other places in the village, people don't seem to know the law you cannot blow all of your snow out into the road it was a lot of snow and there were areas where it looks like the plows had not even gone through. People need to understand they can't do that.

Trustee Taylor: No nothing that's not already been spoken of again you know catastrophic storm in the sense that it's something we haven't seen in quite a while here the only other comment that I did receive from a resident was the parking on the street they park on both sides and the buses are having an extremely difficult time. Being able to transit up through there with cars on both sides I don't know if there's anything we can do to address that.

Mayor Pearson: Yes, so thank you guys as well it was a long storm. Do we need executive session?

Manager Revella: So, we do have potential property purchase. And that's all I have.

Mayor Pearson: I do have personal history on employee. Make a motion?

Deputy Mayor Thompson: I'll make a motion.

Trustee Mishk: I'll second.

Aye: Deputy Mayor Thompson, Trustee Taylor, Trustee Mishk, Trustee Baker, Trustee Kyle.

Trustee Mishk made a motion to reconvene, Trustee Taylor seconded. All ayes, motion carried. Trustee Kyle had left prior to reconvene.