

Village of Walden  
Board of Trustees Meeting  
May 5, 2026

Mayor:	Becky Pearson	Present
Trustees:	Cheryl Baker	Present
	Ralph Garrison	Present
	Kristie Hall	Present
	Gerald Mishk	Present
	Jerred Sanusi	Present
	Lynn Thompson	Present
Village Attorney:	John Cappello	Present
Village Clerk:	Anisetta Valdez	Present
Deputy Village Clerk:	Kaitlyn Laux	Present

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Mayor Pearson - Called the Village Board of Trustees meeting to order at 6:30pm with the Pledge of Allegiance.

**I. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE/CALL TO ORDER**

**II. ROLL CALL**

**Mayor Pearson:** Thank you for coming please silence your phone. Welcome our new trustee, Jerred. Thank you for coming. New clerk, Anisetta and our deputy clerk Kaitlyn.

**Trustee Garrison:** Dear village of Walden residents and board it is with solemnity I resign my position as trustee. A copy was given to clerk, it was stamped and received.

*[Reads letter]*

**Mayor Pearson:** Enjoy your new home and we appreciate your service.

**III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**Mayor Pearson:** So minutes, Trustee Baker, were you able to [inaudible]? March 17, concerns thoughts?

**Trustee Hall:** There was a revote, I didn't know what was going on with youtube. You can still see comments.

**Mayor Pearson:** Let's start with the 17th, it was supposed to be the next week but we had it the next day. We were told by the attorneys we still needed those minutes.

**Attorney Cappello:** As long as you adopt what you voted on, it's ok. So the 17th would've been the regular meeting day.

**Trustee Hall:** Everywhere else it was supposed to be that.

**Mayor Pearson:** It wasn't on purpose.

**Attorney Cappello:** The legality is that the meeting was still noticed so if any of the actions were illegal would need to be legitimized.

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**Trustee Hall:** It was redone.

Motion to approve the minutes from March 17. Made by Trustee Thompson. Seconded by Trustee Mishk. The minutes are placed in review. But not approved.

**Mayor Pearson:** Minutes from 3/31.

**Trustee Hall:** It was deemed no more call-ins (for voting).

**Attorney Cappello:** [That's correct.] If you say based upon what I saw in the video and that the minutes reflect the action that were taken by the members that were there – you could vote on the minutes.

**Trustee Mishk:** We immediately went into executive session, [executive sessions are not recorded in the minutes] so there would be no video.

**Trustee Hall:** So if I'm on vacation or in the hospital can I call in?

**Attorney Cappello:** If the board Trustees reflect the vote and the clerk reflects it, you can call in and listen, you just can't vote.

Motion to accept made by Trustee Thompson. Seconded by Trustee Mishk. 3 ayes, 2 abstain.

Motion to accept minutes from April 9 made by Mayor Pearson. Seconded by Trustee Baker. 3 Ayes. 1 abstain.

Motion to accept minutes from April 27 made by Trustee Hall. Seconded by Trustee Thompson. All ayes. One abstain

#### **IV. PAYMENT OF AUDITED BILLS**

**Mayor Pearson:** We need 4 signatures before leaving tonight.

Motion to approve the bills made by Trustee Thompson. Seconded by Mayor Pearson. All ayes.

**Trustee Thompson:** How does everyone feel about that paper? We all need to be looking at the bills, not just checking the paper. We should be physically coming in and looking. Thoughts?

Motion to cancel POI paperwork made by Trustee Thompson. Seconded by Trustee Baker. All ayes.

#### **V. PUBLIC COMMENT ON THE BUSINESS OF THE BOARD**

#### **VI. BOARD'S BUSINESS**

**Mayor Pearson:** [To the community] When you do come and sign-in please sign-in on the sheets by the door. It's for the clerk for minutes accuracy.

##### **a. PARK USE REQUEST – Scott**

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**Mayor Pearson:** Park use – I spoke to Mr. Bliss, and this individual does not live in the village so it should be \$750 with a \$200 deposit and Mr. Bliss will correct it.

Motion to grant made by Trustee Mishk. Seconded by Trustee Thompson. All approved. Motion Carried.

**b. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT – SET PUBLIC HEARING**

**Mayor Pearson:** [We need to] Set a public hearing for the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) money. We don't have a lot of low-income places anymore so we need to think about projects. Handicap accessibility is a good one.

Motion to set hearing made by Trustee Thompson for May 19, 2026. Seconded by Trustee Baker. All ayes. Motion carried.

**c. RE-LEVY RESOLUTION**

**Mayor Pearson:** The re levy. This is when we have people pay the water, trash and sewage in arrears.

*[Reads Resolution]*

**Mayor Pearson:** So we need a motion.

Motion made by Trustee Baker. Seconded by Trustee Thompson. All ayes. Motion carried

**Mayor Pearson:** And [the Deputy Clerk] will have to sign this.

**d. INTRODUCTION OF LOCAL LAW – SUCCESSION**

**Mayor Pearson:** Introductory law of succession which we do not have. We have nothing to say what happens when we lose staff. So we need to know who's going to do what. We are therefore adopting a succession plan. So we talked about succession, I talked about it and we came up with something simple.

**Attorney Cappello:** If the village manager is unable to perform the duties of the position this allows us to designate a person until either that person is restored or another person is found.

**Mayor Pearson:** This is not an easy situation and people thought we were being underhanded and we were trying to be prepared. We didn't know what we didn't know.

**Trustee Hall:** I don't think anyone is qualified to do deposition.

**Mayor Pearson:** That's correct. But we need someone nonetheless.

**Trustee Hall:** It's a hard job. And we had an attorney, so things were a little easier. But now we have to ask every question to an attorney.

**Trustee Thompson:** So, this isn't about that, it's about delegation.

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**Trustee Hall:** So, should it be a department head?

**Trustee Thompson:** No, because they still have their duties.

**Trustee Hall:** I'm saying I don't think anyone has the capability.

**Mayor Pearson:** This is just a go-to plan for if this happens again, we have a plan.

**Trustee Hall:** So, what if the Village Manager is on vacation?

**Mayor Pearson:** They are on call though.

**Attorney Cappello:** This is not for vacation. This is for leave.

**Trustee Hall:** I think this went in a different direction though.

**Mayor Pearson:** The intent is to keep the village going. We can't stop. We met with department heads, and it was very helpful.

**Trustee Hall:** But there was more to that. The department heads get along.

**Mayor Pearson:** But since John has been gone, nothing has happened to bring them together. So, who should it be? Where does it go?

**Trustee Baker:** Why is the clerk more qualified than a board Trustee?

**Trustee Hall:** I don't. I just think it's hard to be your own boss.

**Mayor Pearson:** So other individuals can be assigned. It could be anybody.

**Trustee Hall:** I don't want this to sound the wrong way.

**Trustee Sanusi:** I'm looking at it more because this will become a law. So, looking at it quickly is that it's not anything specific that puts a time limit. So, do we wait till the next meeting? Do we make a decision in a week?

**Mayor Pearson:** It depends on the situation. We were advised to put the manager on leave for reasons so for the future it could be for any reason – if they are caring for a sick parent or spouse.

**Trustee Sanusi:** That's my point. So, there should be limit. So, it says we have to vote on it, so we would have to call a surprise meeting and if we set a time limit then we give ourselves time guided by the law to plan. So as soon as the manager is in hospital we have a week. I'm just saying, we are able to set a time of 24hrs or a week.

**Trustee Thompson:** But the mayor can call a special meeting at any time.

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**Trustee Hall:** Let's give it a proper meeting.

**Attorney Cappello:** A special meeting is 72hrs, an emergency is an emergency. On this law I think the board should consider it. It's not in stone. So it could be that the mayor makes the appointment until the board can meet so that there's no gaps. In the instance where things are scheduled, we can do things on the regular schedule but if there's a true emergency, we can call it. So, you want to make sure what's there is there so there's no gaps. Under any village that isn't under the old system it's the mayor; there are no village managers. So, there is some justification. But there we are not talking about scenarios so much as appointing a person.

**Mayor Pearson:** I think what [Trustee Sanusi] is saying we can put in time to maintain transparency.

**Trustee Hall:** Would it be too far out to ask for department head input? Because it would affect them.

**Mayor Pearson:** It would affect them for a short period of time.

**Trustee Hall:** It's a team meeting – it affects them. And there may be a better idea.

**Mayor Pearson:** That's kind of what we (elected officials) can help with. I think the board needs to make that decision because we are selecting the manager.

**Trustee Thompson:** Ultimately the board is responsible for the village.

**Trustee Hall:** I just want input [from the department heads].

**Mayor Pearson:** Would you like to add one?

**Trustee Sanusi:** I think something saying a special meeting will be called would be helpful.

**Mayor Pearson:** You never know what a new board is going to do.

*[Reads the Introductory Law on Succession]*

**Trustee Thompson:** It talks about delegating.

**Attorney Cappello:** We could put that there is an employee that you give additional duties to, but the actual signing can't be delegated.

**Trustee Sanusi:** I only mention time because of the time between meetings.

**Attorney Cappello:** I suggest in an emergency situation, the mayor or deputy trustee will take over those duties to address that 72hr period so that issue becomes moot.

**Mayor Pearson:** I think that makes sense. Because then people get mad at special meetings.

**Attorney Cappello:** But then we have 72hrs that are accounted for and any vouchers or bills are addressed.

**Mayor Pearson:** So, we're adding special meetings being called. And what do you think about the titles?

**Trustee Hall:** The department heads should be there.

**Attorney Cappello:** So, when you make that department head, make sure they are checking with the unions.

**Mayor Pearson:** Which is why we look at the appointed individuals.

**Attorney Cappello:** The public hearing has to be set 7 days ahead [of the meeting]. So, it can be available for 6/1 as we will discuss changes at the next meeting. To avoid any publication issues.

Motion to set the public hearing for June 2, 2026 made by Trustee Baker. Seconded by Trustee Thompson. All ayes. Motion carried.

**e. INTRODUCTION OF LOCAL LAW – RESIDENCE**

**Attorney Cappello:** You don't have the latest change. So, you are authorized to extend the search to thirty miles from the border of Orange [county]. In looking at the state law itself, to do that you need a special dispensation from the state. The law has a regulation in the municipality. Which means we can do that, but we need to request it from the state. So, if we're taking out the thirty miles for the police chief, we can revise that to say the county of Orange.

**Mayor Pearson:** The first one took out the miles.

**Trustee Hall:** I thought it was within a certain amount?

**Attorney Cappello:** It's not impossible but we need the state.

**Mayor Pearson:** So, you can't make decisions for a place you don't live in.

**Attorney Cappello:** We are flipping C to A so the clerk and others must be in the county.

**Trustee Hall:** It's always been a big thing to have the manager here so why are we changing it now?

**Mayor Pearson:** We had a manager who lived in Newburgh. And a treasurer who lived in Montgomery.

**Trustee Hall:** So, they'll come in the middle of the night?

**Trustee Baker:** Yes.

**Trustee Thompson:** We don't want to shrink the pool and housing is an issue. People can't find housing [in the village].

**Trustee Hall:** It was priority.

**Mayor Pearson:** Times have changed though. I said the same thing. They need to live here. But I understand that we have to make exceptions to get the best possible person.

Motion to cast a wider canvas limited to thirty miles from the border of Orange County made by Trustee Baker. Second by Trustee Thompson. All ayes. Motion carried.

Motion to set the public hearing for May 19, 2026 made by Trustee Baker. Seconded by Trustee Thompson. All ayes. Motion carried.

**f. GARBAGE BID – SET PUBLIC HEARING**

**Mayor Pearson:** Everyone got the bid. I spoke to Marisa [Kellerhouse] today. If you want to come to podium. It's a 3% increase. So it becomes something else – we can look at other programs.

**Marisa Kellerhouse:** If the village went out for bids, we would also participate.

**Mayor Pearson:** The village has never done that. So, the alternative bid for the multifamily and commercial bid.

**Marisa Kellerhouse:** So, when we looked at the overall cost with the increase in disposal. This was a 5% increase so we are union shop, and we've had to work with our labor force as well and to keep to costs down So that way over all we can plan budgets accordingly.

*[Reads resolution]*

Motion to accept the bid made by Member Thompson. Seconded by Trustee Baker. All ayes. Motion carried.

**g. STAFFING ISSUES**

**Mayor Pearson:** I have an issue with paying people who aren't working. And spending money, and saving money, and we do have someone that we are paying not to be here, and I don't think we can keep that person any longer.

**Trustee Baker:** The village manager serves at the pleasure of the board.

**Trustee Hall:** I wasn't here when this happened. The subpoena is for records, correct?

**Trustee Baker:** There were other circumstances.

**Trustee Hall:** So, this is because of other things not related to the subpoena?

**Trustee Baker:** Yes. And he's not here. So why are we paying him?

**Trustee Hall:** I don't necessarily disagree. I just want to make sure I understand why we are terminating him. And some may think this is because of the subpoena. I just want clarity for anyone watching.

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**Mayor Pearson:** This is sad and it was unexpected. And this isn't an easy decision. But as I'm listening to people talking about their taxes, I must be responsible, and we aren't getting a return on that money, and we don't know what the outcome will be on that. They are waiting for records that go back years, and I can't justify paying that.

Motion to terminate the village manager made by Member Baker. Seconded by Member Thompson. 1 abstain. 4 ayes. Motion carried.

**VII. PUBLIC COMMENT**

**Mayor Pearson:** Comments?

**Jerry Hanen: 190 Walnut Street.** A couple of things. First, [Trustees], use your microphones, it was very hard to watch online. Second, item B, CDBG, It should be spelled out in the agenda so that people know what it refers to. Third, on May 16, Boy Scout troop 33 is having a spaghetti dinner please come out and support.

**Trustee Hall:** Is that on Facebook?

**Jerry Hanen:** Yes.

**VIII. COMMUNICATIONS**

**Member Hall:** I didn't print it. The minutes from 4/29 for the budget hearing?

**Mayor Pearson:** They aren't done yet.

**Member Hall:** We raised 4k that put us over 8k. Our best yet. So thank you. Someone sent me a copy of something today and they want us all to know that the previous meeting we had a comment asking for open government.

**IX. MISCELLANEOUS COMMENTS FROM THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

**X. EXECUTIVE SESSION – PERSONAL HISTORY OF A PARTICULAR EMPLOYEE**

**XI. ADJOURNMENT**

Motion to adjourn made by Trustee Thompson. Seconded by Trustee Mishk. All ayes. Motion carried.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED  
Anisetta Valdez, Clerk