

Village of Walden

Village Board of Trustees Meeting

June 16, 2026

Meeting called to order at 6:30 PM

Total duration: 1 hour 57 minutes

Attendance

Role	Name	Attendance
Mayor	Becky Pearson	Present
Trustee	Lynn Thompson	Present
Trustee	Gerald Mishk	Present
Trustee	Cheryl Baker	Present
Trustee	Kristie Hall	Present
Trustee	Jerred Sanusi	Present
Trustee	Jose De Jesus	Present
Village Attorney	John Cappello	Present
Village Clerk	Anisetta Valdez	Present
Village Manager	Tony Cardone	Present

1. Call to Order / Pledge of Allegiance

Minutes

Mayor Pearson called the Village Board of Trustees meeting to order at 6:30 PM with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Transcript

Mayor Pearson: Let's stand for the pledge. Pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

2. Roll Call

Minutes

All board members present. Interim Village Manager Tony Cardone also in attendance.

Transcript

Mayor Pearson: So we just did the pledge, roll call. We have everyone here. Thank you. Our new interim manager, Tony — thank you for joining us this evening. We're happy you're with us. Thank you for stepping up to the plate and helping us, so we appreciate that.

3. Manager's Report

Minutes

Tony Cardone provided the following update:

- Department head meeting held; toured all village departments.
- Met with engineers (Kristen O'Donnell re: grants; John Queenan re: water).
- Meeting held with the Res Group to review the insurance policy.
- Reviewed an overview of the CSEA contract.
- Toured the village with the Building Inspector to review troubled properties.
- Reviewed canvas reports for the DPW superintendent.
- Two DPW candidates interviewed; one cancelled (commute too far).

Transcript

Tony Cardone: Back two weeks getting acclimated. I started on the third, we toured all departments. I met with department heads. We had a department head meeting. I've met with our engineers, Kristen O'Donnell, to go over grants, John Queenan to go over water. We had a meeting to go over the insurance policy with the Res Group. I've reviewed an overview of the CSEA contract. You and I reviewed the reorg. I toured the village with the building inspector to go over any of the troubled properties, and I signed vouchers today. We also reviewed the canvas letters for the DPW, and we ended up interviewing two candidates — one of them canceled at the last minute due to the fact he felt it was too long of a drive from where he currently lives.

Mayor Pearson: Thank you. Any questions for the manager? No — you're all good.

4. Approval of Minutes

4a. Minutes of 5/19/2026

Minutes

Motion to approve the minutes from 5/19 made by Trustee Mishk. Seconded by Trustee Baker.

Discussion arose regarding a possible name error (Attorney Donovan vs. another name); confirmed to be a different person. Discussion also held on the format of minutes (verbatim vs. concise). Consensus reached to trial concise minutes with the new clerk.

Transcript

Trustee Hall: I thought in one spot I saw Attorney Donovan instead of — but maybe my eyes were crossing.

Trustee Sanusi: There's one thing I want to bring up as a general question. In the minutes, it stated that people stated the code, but if you're doing verbatim, should that code be provided as an addendum on the back of the minutes?

Trustee Mishk: I also agree with that. I think if we're going to use verbatim minutes, I don't think there's any need to really approve them either, because we are saying they are verbatim, word for word.

Mayor Pearson: Let me reiterate — verbatim is the gist of what is being said. For me, if you're going to give me the points of what's being said and why, because 20 years from now I'm going to go back and read those minutes and say who voted on that and why. I want to know why you voted on that. That's the important part of those minutes for me. It's not necessarily for today and tomorrow — it's for the future of this village.

Trustee Thompson: I thought, in this day and age, everything is stored now forever on YouTube. That's why we went to use YouTube.

Mayor Pearson: It is, and what's going to happen in five years from now may not have that at all. Where are you going to find things?

Trustee Hall: I wouldn't want to sit there and watch a four-hour meeting to find something. I want to read it so I can skim. I should be able to look back and say, Deputy Mayor Thompson said this, this, and this.

Trustee Thompson: Can you remember from a month later when these aren't accepted and we have to wait another two weeks? Verbatim means word for word. How do you know they're accurate?

Mayor Pearson: Let's try it a different way with our new clerk and see what happens with concise minutes of what the conversation is — maybe not necessarily every single word, but knowing the direction. If you're

voting no, why you're voting no. I always give a reason why I'm voting yes or no, and I think everyone should do that. Let's try it for one meeting and see how it goes.

Trustee Baker: I feel it should be verbatim.

Trustee Thompson: I'm okay with content.

Trustee De Jesus: I'm fine with that.

Minutes of 5/19/2026 approved. All ayes.

4b. Minutes of 6/2/2026

Minutes

Motion to approve the minutes from 6/2 made by Trustee Thompson. Seconded by Trustee De Jesus. Note: Trustee De Jesus abstained from the 5/19 vote as he was not on the board at that time. All ayes on 6/2 minutes.

Transcript

Trustee Thompson: I'll make a motion to approve the June 2 meeting.

Mayor Pearson: Is there a second?

Trustee De Jesus: Second.

Trustee De Jesus: I'm sorry — I have to abstain because I wasn't part of that meeting. I wasn't on the board then.

Mayor Pearson: All in favor on minutes 6/2/26? Aye — all ayes. Thank you.

5. Payment of Audited Bills & Budget Transfers

5a. Audited Bills

Minutes

Motion to approve the audited bills by Trustee Hall. Seconded by Trustee Baker. All ayes. Motion carried.

5b. Budget Transfers

Minutes

Motion to approve budget transfers made by Trustee Thompson. Seconded by Trustee Hall.

Discussion: Trustee Mishk raised a question about telephone/internet expenses. Trustee Thompson confirmed these were due to the loss of communications in the Building Department and the Alpha Tech work. Trustee De Jesus asked about "publications" (code books, fire/safety) and "education" (classes for building inspectors/code enforcement officers). All ayes. Motion carried.

Transcript

Trustee Mishk: Only question I have is — from what I'm told, this is the building department — why are the telephone and internet expenses so high this time? It's over \$3,500.

Trustee Thompson: I believe that was with all of the issues they had with the computers and the telephones. Alpha Tech had to come in.

Trustee De Jesus: What is publications? And then there is education?

Mayor Pearson: Publications are usually books that they need — their code books, fire laws, new laws that come out. Education — they have to go to classes: code review, fire and safety reviews. There's always additional education for building inspectors and code enforcement officers, and we pay for that. This is probably finishing out last year's.

Mayor Pearson: Any other comments? Questions? All right. All in favor, aye. Thank you.

6. Public Comment on the Business of the Board

Minutes

Brenda Adams, **31 Valley Avenue** — Comments regarding fire hydrant clearing ordinance. Expressed support for the concept but concern that a single property owner adjacent to a hydrant serving an entire neighborhood should not bear sole liability, particularly where multi-family rental properties are involved. Referenced a historical fire tragedy in the neighborhood.

Mary Ellen Matise, **54 Gladstone Avenue** — Raised concern about vehicles parking too close to fire hydrants throughout the village (NY State V&T Law requires 15-foot clearance from center of hydrant). Suggested painted street markings if residents cannot estimate the distance.

Transcript

Brenda Adams: First off, I want to say it's so nice to see a full board two meetings in a row. My comment is about the fire hydrants. I have no problem with what was proposed. I've been cleaning out a fire hydrant in front of my house for over 40 years. I'm concerned about the fact that one person has a fire hydrant that handles a whole neighborhood — yet if it doesn't get shoveled, that one person pays the penalty for the whole neighborhood. In some neighborhoods, the landlord has hired someone who sticks right to their own property line. Many of you remember we lost the lives of two little girls in a fire on our corner. My problem is not that it has to be shoveled — it's the concern that one person will have to pay the penalty of the whole neighborhood.

Mary Ellen Matise: I want to talk about fire hydrants that you can't see because people are parking too close to them. New York State V and T Law — 15 feet either direction from the center of the fire hydrant. Maybe if people can't conceptualize 15 feet, we're going to have to mark the streets, because you've got people blocking fire hydrants all over the village.

7. Reorganization Meeting (Continued)

Minutes

Mayor Pearson noted the reorg meeting had not been completed earlier in the year and resumed it at this session.

7a. Village Clerk

Motion to appoint Anisetta Valdez as Village Clerk made by Trustee Thompson. Seconded by Trustee Mishk. All ayes.

7b. Village Treasurer

Roberta McBride — holdover appointment confirmed.

7c. Village Attorney

J&G Law — previously appointed, confirmed.

7d. Village Engineer

Motion to reappoint Lanc & Tully as Village Engineer made by Trustee Thompson. Seconded by Trustee Sanusi. All ayes.

7e. Board of Ethics Members

Existing members: Ryan Kakeh (term ends 2030), Laura McNamee (term ends 2029). Three additional seats needed, including one required employee seat.

Motion to appoint Nathan Parker to the Ethics Board for a 5-year term (expires 2031) made by Trustee Thompson. Seconded by Trustee Mishk. All ayes.

Motion to appoint Megan Smit to the Ethics Board for a 1-year term (expires 2027) made by Trustee Thompson. Seconded. All ayes.

Employee seat: Outreach made to Mel Wesenberg (library board), Beth Balogh, and Bob Lynn. Appointment deferred to next meeting pending responses.

Village Manager Cardone suggested assigning numbered slots to each board seat tied to expiration dates for easier future tracking.

7f. Special Counsel / Special Prosecutor / Conflict Counsel / Bond Counsel

- Special Counsel: Friedrich Nugent McCartney PLLC (for police department matters). Motion by Trustee Hall, seconded by Trustee Baker. All ayes.
- Special Prosecutor: Rametta & Rametta. Motion by Trustee Thompson. All ayes.
- Conflict Counsel: Friedrich Nugent McCartney PLLC. Motion by Village Manager Cardone. All ayes.
- Bond Counsel: Hawkins Delafield & Wood. Motion by Trustee Thompson, seconded by Trustee De Jesus. All ayes.

7g. Police Department Chaplains

Appointed: Rev. Jim Van Houten, Annie Kunga, Jim O'Connell, Nava Herzog, Gary Swinger. Motion by Trustee Hall, seconded by Trustee Baker. All ayes.

7h. Auditors

RBT reappointed. Motion by Trustee Mishk, seconded by Trustee Sanusi. All ayes.

7i. Official Newspapers

Walden-Wallkill Valley Times and Times Herald-Record. Motion by Trustee De Jesus, seconded by Trustee Sanusi. All ayes.

7j. Official Depository Banks

Key Bank, Chase Bank, M&T Bank, Webster Bank, T. Rowe, Orange Bank, and NYCLASS. Motion by Trustee Hall, seconded by Trustee Baker. All ayes.

Transcript

Trustee Thompson: Do we have to say anything about that New York Forward program that we participate in depositing money?

Tony Cardone: I'll defer to the attorney, but I think you would have to approve them if you're going to transfer money into them, whether it's NYCLASS or the other firm. I would designate it, just to be safe.

Mayor Pearson: We'll add NYCLASS. Good point, Lynn.

7k. Resolution Adopting Investment Policy

Annual resolution adopted, with NYCLASS added as an approved investment vehicle. Motion by Trustee Thompson, seconded by Trustee De Jesus. All ayes.

7l. Resolution Adopting Procurement Policy

Annual resolution adopted. Key thresholds: Purchase contracts \$1,000–\$4,999: 2 verbal quotes; \$5,000–\$20,000: 3 written quotes. Public works contracts \$1,000–\$4,999: 2 verbal; \$5,000–\$35,000: 3 written. Motion by Trustee Thompson and Trustee Hall. All ayes.

7m. Appointments by Village Manager

Village Manager Cardone presented the following slate:

- Planning Board: Leslie Dotson (exp. 4/1/30), Douglas Campbell (exp. 4/1/31) Jerry Hanen as alternate (exp. 4/1/27).
- Zoning Board: Scott Barilli (exp. 4/1/31), Lisa Mazzella (exp. 4/1/31).
- Acting Village Justice: Sean Hoffman.
- Registrar of Vital Statistics: Anisetta Valdez.
- Village Historian: Mary Ellen Matise.
- Deputy Village Clerk, Deputy Treasurer, Deputy Registrar of Vital Statistics: all holdovers.

Note: Board confirmation of Village Manager appointments not required per Village code.

7n. Village Fees

Tabled. Building department and other departments wish to review fee schedules. Fees can be changed by resolution at any time.

Transcript

Tony Cardone: The only person in question is the planning board appointment — position C. We're leaving that vacant right now.

Mayor Pearson: No — Jerry Hanen was not selected for the ethics board, so he's going to remain on the planning board in that spot.

Attorney Cappello: Does the board have to confirm the appointments of the village manager?

Mayor Pearson: No.

8. Business of the Board

8a. Park Use Request

None.

8b. Comprehensive Plan — Discussion

Minutes

Mayor Pearson opened a discussion on the draft Comprehensive Plan previously prepared by the Comp Plan Committee. Village Attorney John Cappello distributed additional materials for the board's consideration and offered comments on potential gaps in the plan.

Attorney Cappello noted the plan focuses heavily on regulating uses but suggested the board consider broader vision elements: filling vacant storefronts on Main Street, flexibility of uses in large underutilized buildings, parking requirements, housing (including accessory dwelling units and first-floor retrofits), and climate smart provisions (solar, geothermal) — noting the current code actually prohibits solar on commercial buildings.

Board consensus: all members agreed the plan deserves further review. The item will be placed on the July agenda. The board may form a sub-committee to work through revisions.

Transcript

Attorney Cappello: Your comprehensive plan is supposed to be your vision and your goals and how to implement those goals. So I would ask the board: what does this plan do to fill the vacant storefronts on Main Street? How does it help property owners make improvements and give them a range of flexibility of uses? We've had this empty restaurant for about 15 years. There's also the issue of housing. If you continue to zone areas where 80% of the uses are non-conforming and keep them non-conforming, you're going to frustrate anybody's ability to maintain or invest money in that property. And if you're a Climate Smart Community, your comprehensive plan should have real provisions that promote and enable climate change measures — such as solar and geothermal. Instead, you have a code that prohibits solar on businesses in commercial districts.

Mayor Pearson: So what you're basically saying is that what was put before us is not complete enough.

Attorney Cappello: When a committee gives it to the board, it's the board's document to review, amend, and adopt after a public hearing. There are very few that come from a committee and are adopted just as-is.

Trustee Sanusi: Well, given this new information, I think it deserves another look on my side.

Trustee Mishk: I agree. I have to take time to look at this and compare it to the original document.

Mayor Pearson: All right — we will put it on for the next agenda again for discussion. Read through it, bring your comments back to the next board meeting in July, and we'll go from there.

8c. Fire Hydrant Local Law — Discussion

Minutes

Trustee Thompson reported on the committee meeting held with Trustees Baker and Sanusi, Fire Chief George Brown, Commissioners Kurtz, Fuller, and Werner, and Water Department employee Richie Nelson.

Key findings: The committee reviewed the draft local law, which was generally agreed upon. Outstanding items relate to board policy (marking hydrants, notification procedures). A follow-up meeting with VRI licensed operator Dale was scheduled for the following day.

Motion to introduce local law amending village law on fire hydrants and to schedule a public hearing for July 7, 2026 at 6:30 PM made by Trustee Thompson. Seconded by Trustee Baker. All ayes.

Transcript

Trustee Thompson: We had three members from the board: Cheryl Baker, myself, and Jared Sanusi. We met with Chief George Brown, Commissioners Kurtz, Fuller, and Werner, and one of our water department employees, Richie Nelson. I thought it was a very productive meeting. We discussed a lot of things. Everyone pretty much agreed with the draft law that's in our packets right now. The only things left up for discussion were some board policy and procedure items about exactly how to mark various hydrants.

Trustee Sanusi: I think we all had everyone's concerns definitely for the safety of the village. What is currently in here is kind of the first steps, but definitely not the end of where this is going to go. The biggest thing we were all trying to figure out is a balance between liability and costs. I think what is in here is a good way to start.

Trustee Baker: Everyone — the only differences that some people had was in regards to policy, which is a further work in progress. But in regards to the law, everyone seemed fine with it.

Trustee De Jesus: My concern is the same as last meeting and also what Brenda was bringing up earlier. Looking at the balance between liability and cost — it's kind of an evolving document. With that in mind, we'll see what happens at the public hearing.

Mayor Pearson: I agree. I think it's a good start. I understand Brenda's concern on the fees, but we can set fees at a later date. I'd like to move it forward to a public hearing. Anyone make a motion?

Attorney Cappello: There should be a resolution prepared that introduces the local law. It would be a motion to introduce introductory local law — amendment of village law: fire hydrants — and schedule a public hearing for whenever you want to schedule.

Mayor Pearson: July 7 at 6:30 PM. All in favor, aye.

8d. Water/Sewer Account Clerk Position

Minutes

Village Manager Cardone presented data showing significant water billing discrepancies:

- 2024: 188 million gallons produced; only 122 million billed (~35% gap).
- 2025: 211 million gallons produced; only 104 million billed (~52% gap).
- Estimated annual revenue loss: over \$500,000. Sewer revenue losses likely additional.

Cardone recommended hiring a full-time Account Clerk focused on water/sewer billing reconciliation. A candidate is available via civil service transfer from another municipality at the same job title. Budget impact: \$56,000 (vs. \$25,000 budgeted for a part-time position); \$31,000 difference to be funded from vacant DPW supervisor salary line.

Discussion: Trustees Hall and Sanusi requested supporting documentation before voting. Trustees Thompson and Mishk noted the issue had been raised at budget and emphasized the urgency. Trustee De Jesus suggested deferring to July to obtain reports; the motion proceeded to vote.

Roll Call Vote:

- Trustee Sanusi — No
- Trustee Mishk — Yes
- Trustee Thompson — Yes
- Trustee Baker — Yes
- Trustee De Jesus — Yes
- Trustee Hall — No
- Mayor Pearson — Yes

Motion carried 5-2. Motion to hire Account Clerk made by Trustee Mishk. Seconded by Trustee Thompson.

Transcript

Tony Cardone: In 2024, you produced 188 million gallons but only billed 142 million. In 2025, the production went up to 211 million and the billing actually went down to 104 million — that's 52% you did not bill for. Traditionally, 15% is the number the state likes under the Water Quality Act. The numbers we figured out were over a half a million dollars per year in revenue that you're losing. I had suggested that you bring in an account clerk focused on those two areas. In one billing cycle you'll pay back for that salary.

Trustee Hall: I think we should find out why before we just hire another person.

Trustee Thompson: The women in the office literally have been trying to spend six hours at a time on the phone with Edmonds to figure this out. They can't get their work done because this is so tedious and time consuming. We have people in the village who don't even have the new meters yet. This is almost an investment, because we need to get to the bottom of this.

Tony Cardone: You're losing half a million dollars — and that's over the last three years. I think you're making a big mistake if you're worried about \$56,000 when you're losing half a million dollars a year.

Trustee Sanusi: I get that you're telling me we're losing this money, but I want to see the paper that says we're losing this money. Can you send me a report?

Tony Cardone: I'll have John Queenan email you the report.

Trustee De Jesus: Maybe Jerry and Lynn would withdraw the motion and we can put this on for the meeting in July. By that time we get a better picture to satisfy other board members who have concern.

Tony Cardone: You've had your engineer present this to you for the last two years and it's been ignored.

Trustee De Jesus: It's the board's decision — it's not a point of argument.

Trustee Mishk: The sewer bill is also happening and we are losing a sizable chunk on sewer as well.

8e. Meeting Rules Presentation

Minutes

Tabled to July 7, 2026 meeting.

8f. Air Conditioning — Bradley Hall

Minutes

Trustee Mishk presented quotes for replacement of two air handling units (heating and cooling) for Bradley Hall:

- Quote 1 (current): \$29,995 from Perfect Temperature (larger units; 10-year warranty).
- Quote 2 (February): \$28,380 from a different company (smaller units; price has since increased due to material costs).

Note: Library moved forward with its own units earlier; village units still pending. Bradley Hall is a county-designated cooling center. Existing boiler and radiators are non-functional.

Trustee Hall requested three bids per procurement policy. The board directed the Village Manager to solicit three bids and meet individually with trustees before the next meeting.

Motion to authorize the Village Manager to award a contract after soliciting 3 bids and meeting with the board, for two air handling machines for air conditioning and heat, made by Trustee De Jesus and Trustee Baker. All in favor. Motion carried.

Transcript

Trustee Mishk: We've been told by many people, starting in February, to price out the air conditioning for this room. For some reason, it fell between the cracks. At the same time, we declared this a cooling center. The ceiling isn't that high — it can barely maintain 74 degrees with the thermostat set at 72. I have a price here of \$29,995 to replace those two units in the back, and at the same time they will also heat the room. Those radiators do not work anymore. The boiler is completely out. With Perfect Temperature, they can actually do it within a week. This comes with a 10-year warranty.

Trustee Hall: Do you have to have three quotes on this because of the price? If it's been going on for months, how is it now an emergency? I just want to see three quotes.

Attorney Cappello: I don't know if you can authorize someone specific — you can authorize the Village Manager to get bids and meet with you individually, and that way you aren't waiting the full two weeks.

Mayor Pearson: Let's leave it at this — Trustee Hall will get the information to Tony quickly and we can do a special meeting to run through it.

9. Public Comment (Closing)

Minutes

Mary Ellen Matise **54 Gladstone Avenue** — Expressed disappointment regarding the comprehensive plan attorney's comments, noting the village's vision is preservationist and rooted in reality. Cautioned the board about certain development approaches.

Wenda Heaney **14 Ridge Avenue** — Sought clarification on fire hydrant liability. Mayor Pearson clarified that the law would be similar to sidewalk liability — the property owner adjacent to the hydrant would bear responsibility for clearing it and could face a fee if not done. Notification to village staff may be part of the final policy.

Transcript

Mary Ellen Matise: I'm surprised to hear the attorney bring up the comp plan when he could have come to any of the meetings or spoken to the previous manager. I do believe we have a vision here — and we work on it everyday as various members of various communities. It's a preservationist, conservative vision and it's been rooted in reality.

Wenda Heaney: I didn't say anything about the hydrant law — and then I'm hearing about having to take care of two sidewalks and now I'm hearing about liability. Are we going to be held liable if something happens up the street?

Mayor Pearson: No — it's like shoveling a sidewalk. There would be a fee that would make you responsible if it wasn't clean and clear. If someone is away, there has to be someone coming to clear your hydrant. If you notify village staff, then we could plan.

10. Correspondence

Minutes

Mayor Pearson — Received an angry voicemail regarding the building department. Item to be discussed.

Trustee Thompson — Received correspondence from the Village Historian about the knife industry in Walden.

Transcript

Mayor Pearson: I got an angry voicemail. We'll discuss what's happening there — it was about the building department.

Trustee Thompson: I received something from the village historian about the knife industry in Walden.

11. Miscellaneous Comments from the Board of Trustees

Transcript

Trustee Sanusi: When we were at the firehouse after our meeting it was great to see all the volunteers working together.

Trustee Thompson: I want to echo Brenda's sentiments about Flag Day.

Trustee Baker: Same. I wanted to thank the elementary students for their presentations.

Trustee De Jesus: Flag Day was very nice.

Trustee Hall: Flag Day was nice. I do want to bring up Gladstone — something has to be done about parking. From Scofield to the westside, people are parking there and it's dangerous. You can't see. I'd like to do something between Grandview and Kelmore. The way people park it's very tight.

Mayor Pearson: We did various meetings there with fire trucks to show what's going on. We do have to let the public know as well. Thank you to Brenda.

12. Executive Session

Minutes

Motion to enter executive session made by Trustee Hall and Trustee Baker. All ayes. Motion carried. No action taken. Executive session closed at 9:24 PM.

13. Adjournment

Minutes

Motion to adjourn made by Trustee Baker. Seconded by Trustee Hall. All ayes. Motion carried.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED BY

Anisetta Valdez, Village Clerk