

Village of Walden
Village Board of Trustees Meeting
September 15, 2026
Meeting called to order at 6:30 PM
Total duration: approximately []

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	Absent
Trustee	Jose De Jesus	Present
Village Attorney	Maria Donovan	Present
Deputy Clerk	Kaitlyn Laux	Present
Village Manager	Kate Luciani	Present
Village Manager	Tony Cardone	Present

1. Call to Order / Pledge of Allegiance

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Pearson at 6:30pm, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Roll Call

All members of the Board were present with the exception of Trustee Sanusi, who was absent. A quorum was present. Mayor Pearson thanked Kaitlyn Laux, Deputy Clerk, for filling in for the Village Clerk.

3. Public Hearings

a. Intro to Local Law – Night Sky (Exterior Light Standards)

Motion to open the public hearing was made by Trustee Thompson and Trustee Mishk. All ayes. Motion carried.

Board discussion. Trustee Hall asked that it be clarified that the law does not apply to holiday string lights or small solar lights. Trustee Thompson understood the law to target bright, obtrusive LED fixtures, not decorative lighting. Village Manager Luciani noted that the draft as written contains an exemption for holiday lighting, which must be shut off by midnight. Mayor Pearson added that the draft also contains standards for floodlight and spotlight aiming (no more than 45 degrees above ground level), fixture height and shielding.

Public comment. Building Inspector Kathy Stegenga stated that complaints fall into two groups: (1) commercial properties, where the State-mandated conversion to LED fixtures has produced much brighter lighting, and (2) residential properties where lights mounted on top of fences shine into neighboring homes, a problem made worse by the village's hillside topography. She recommended that fence-mounted lights be mounted below the top of the fence and questioned

whether the law could be applied to fixtures approved before adoption, a question she said would be for the attorneys. She noted that she is not on duty at night, which makes documenting complaints difficult. Trustee De Jesus reported a third location on Main Street where lighting shines into bedrooms and onto the sidewalk. Mary Ellen Matise cautioned the Board against making the village too dark, citing a recent incident at a residence that had no lighting on one side.

Motion to close the public hearing was made by Trustee Mishk, seconded by Trustee Thompson. All ayes. Motion carried.

b. Intro to Local Law – Fire and Burning

Motion to open the public hearing was made by Trustee De Jesus and seconded by Trustee Baker. All ayes. Motion carried.

Motion to close the public hearing was made by Trustee De Jesus and Trustee Mishk. Vote interrupted --

Trustee Hall stated continuing concern that the draft's propane provision is ambiguous: because the draft permits only charcoal or dry, untreated, unpainted wood, propane grills could be read as prohibited. Attorney Donovan advised that the draft would need to be revised and the hearing continued. Following discussion of the notice requirements raised by Mr. Cardone, the Board agreed to specify a continuation date rather than re-notice the hearing.

Motion made by Trustee Mishk, and Trustee De Jesus as amended to keep the public hearing on the Fire and Burning local law open until the next regular meeting on **October 6, 2026**. All ayes. Motion carried.

c. Code Revision – Chapter 132, Double Pole Utility

No members of public spoke.

Motion to open the public hearing was made by Trustee Mishk and Trustee Thompson. All ayes. Motion carried.

Motion to close the public hearing was made by Trustee Mishk and Trustee De Jesus. All ayes. Motion carried.

d. Code Revision – Chapter 67, Planning and Zoning Board

Motion to open the public hearing was made by Trustee Hall and Trustee Baker. All ayes. Motion carried.

Mayor Pearson summarized the revisions: updated training requirements for board members, replacement of “master plan” with “comprehensive plan,” and removal of a list of original members dating to 1947. No members of the public spoke.

Motion to close the hearing was made Trustee Hall and Trustee De Jesus. All ayes. Motion carried.

e. Code Revision – Chapter 74, Traffic

Motion to open the public hearing was made by Trustee De Jesus and Trustee Mishk. All ayes. Motion carried.

Mayor Pearson explained that the revision removes references to a Traffic Violations Bureau, which the village does not have. No members of the public spoke.

Motion to close the hearing was made by Trustee Thompson and Trustee Baker. All ayes. Motion carried.

f. Code Revision – Chapter 94, Animals (retitled “Dogs”)

Motion to open the public hearing was made by Trustee Mishk and Trustee Hall. All ayes. Motion carried.

Mayor Pearson explained that the revision retitles the chapter “Dogs” and adds language concerning visually impaired persons.

Public comment. Building Inspector Stegenga reported calls about chickens and ducks and noted that the village code does not address backyard poultry; some municipalities allow a limited number of hens by lot size and prohibit roosters. Mary Ellen Matise recalled an earlier, unresolved effort to regulate kennels and commercial dog breeding and noted that State law treats the sale of more than 25 animals per year as a kennel. Trustee De Jesus suggested the Board consider a comprehensive animal amendment covering dogs, kennels and poultry. Mayor Pearson responded that Chapter 94 as revised addresses dog control only (leashing, curbing, impoundment, penalties); that dog licensing is handled through the Town of Montgomery; that the village has no dog control officer; and that a separate animal law could be drafted later.

Motion to close the hearing was made Trustee Hall and Trustee De Jesus. All ayes. Motion carried.

4. Manager’s Report

Village Manager Kate Luciani reported on the following:

- **Operations:** Meetings with the DPW, the Sewer Department (generator outage; engineer to provide a quote), the Water Department (maintenance of wells), the new DPW Superintendent, and the Parks Director regarding the stone path at the park. Thanked DPW for overnight storm cleanup following the September 4 storms and for work on the commuter parking lot.
- **Risk management:** Met with the village’s insurance risk manager, who issued a favorable report with recommendations.
- **Department heads:** Monthly department-head meetings begin next week.
- **Personnel:** A full day of interviews was held for police dispatcher (40 applications; 10 candidates interviewed). PBA negotiations were held and described as productive. Time-clock options were reviewed, including the Police Department’s existing system; other options will still be explored.
- **Training:** Training was arranged and Montgomery and Maybrook were invited to attend.
- **Housing presentation:** A representative of USDA (Rich Mayfield) has requested to present the agency’s housing programs (similar to CDBG moderate rehabilitation, including small grants for homeowners over 62 and homeownership loans). The Manager asked to place the presentation on the October 6.
- **Community events:** Thanked all who took part in the 9/11 ceremony. Senior barbecue on September 23, 12:00–3:30 P.M., at the community center at James Olley Park. Harvest Fest on September 26.

- **Law enforcement and code enforcement:** Praised the Police Department for increased traffic enforcement and noted coordination with the Building Department on new codes.
- **Intergovernmental:** Met with Assemblyman Brian Maher on the day of the meeting and introduced the new DPW Superintendent.

Additional report (Mr. Cardone): Sidewalk improvements on Pleasant Avenue began this week. Civil Service deficiencies, including improperly filed paperwork for the Highway Superintendent position, have been corrected. As recommended by risk management and required under New York State rules, the village website must be made ADA-compliant (descriptive text for images, color contrast, labeling and zoom capability). The current webmaster quoted \$1,800 and \$3,000; the lower quote would shift more archiving work onto village staff. The Manager holds the proposal and will bring it to the Board. In response to questions about procurement, Attorney Donovan advised that obtaining three quotes is best practice, though the work may qualify under the specialized-services exception. Mr. Cardone will ask the village's IT contact whether other vendors could handle the work.

5. Minutes – September 1, 2026

Trustee Hall noted that the minutes incorrectly recorded Trustee Baker's vote on an executive-session matter as "yes"; it should read "no." Board members agreed that personnel details and individuals' names should not appear in the minutes.

Motion to approve the minutes of September 1, 2026, as corrected, made by Trustee Mishk, seconded by Trustee De Jesus. All ayes. Motion carried.

Trustee De Jesus asked that the Board settle on a standard minutes format (verbatim versus motions and votes only). Trustee Baker and Mayor Pearson recalled that the Board had previously voted to use a synopsis format, and that format was confirmed to remain in use.

6. Payment of Audited Bills

Motion to pay the audited bills made by Trustee Thompson, seconded by Trustee Mishk. All ayes. Motion carried.

7. Public Comment on the Business of the Board

Jerry Hanen addressed the Board regarding the Building Department fee schedule. He stated that the fee schedule is not accessible on the village website, that the code provides that fees may be set by resolution, and that he was recently charged under the new schedule (a 2.5% fee on a siding-replacement project, totaling \$429, plus a separate \$200 permit) although he could find no resolution adopting it. He questioned a percentage-based fee for jobs that involve limited inspector time, and objected to the proposed reduction of the permit term from one year to six months, noting that homeowners doing their own work may need more time and would pay an additional fee to extend. Trustee De Jesus stated he did not recall the Board voting on the fees.

8. Business of the Board of Trustees

a. Park Use Request –

i. Brad & Layla Scott

The Board considered the requests individually. Trustees noted that one application did not appear to include proof of insurance; it was located on the reverse side of the form and showed liability coverage up to \$1 million.

Motion made by Trustee Hall and Trustee Mishk to approve the request of Brad and Layla Scott with complete documentation. All ayes. Motion carried.

ii. Gissel Filion

Motion made by Trustee Hall and Trustee Mishk to approve the request of Gissel Filion with complete documentation. All ayes. Motion carried

iii. Raul Sampedro

The Sampedro application was missing the park-department signature and Manager approval, and no fee amount had been entered (fee schedule shows \$100 for a non-village resident using the kitchen). The event is scheduled for October 3, before the next regular meeting.

Motion made by Mayor and Trustee Hall to approve the Sampedro request contingent on the Village Manager obtaining the missing information and approvals. All ayes. Motion carried.

Trustee Thompson observed that every application in the packet was incomplete and asked that the Manager address the issue again with the Parks Department. Trustee De Jesus noted that applications must clearly describe the use, particularly where participants are being charged. The Board directed the Manager to follow up; the Manager will meet with the Parks Director on September 16.

b. Building Department – Fire Safety – Presentation & Discussion

Building Inspector Stegenga reported that the village's fire-safety code follows the New York State Uniform Code. She recommended extending the periodic fire-safety inspections, now required for non-owner-occupied multi-family properties, to **single-family rental homes**, noting that this is standard practice in other municipalities where she has worked. Inspections occur every other year, with the village divided into two sections. She reported a significant backlog (approximately 350 properties unregistered, not inspected or not re-inspected, some dating to 2023), with one part-time fire-safety inspector working one to two days per week. She also stated that she would like to discuss stronger penalties for non-compliance. Inspectors do not wear body cameras.

Trustee Mishk noted that a local law imposing standards stricter than the Uniform Code requires notice to, and approval from, the State Fire Prevention and Building Code Council. Attorney Donovan advised that this step occurs after a proposed local law is drafted. Trustee Mishk stated that existing penalties should be enforced before they are increased. Village code penalties were clarified as \$250 per incident, with each calendar week of a continuing violation constituting a separate offense (State law allows up to \$1,000 per day).

Direction: The Board will consider adding single-family rentals to the fire-safety inspection requirement.

c. Building Department – Fee Structure – Presentation & Discussion

Building Inspector Stegenga presented a proposed flat fee schedule to replace the itemized schedule adopted in 2024: a **\$200 minimum fee for projects up to \$8,000, and 2.5% of project cost above \$8,000** (for example, \$250 on a \$10,000 project). She explained that the proposal is intended to be simple and predictable, reflects fee levels in comparable Orange County municipalities, and is meant to keep the department self-sustaining. She estimated that a full permit involves six steps and two and a half to three hours of staff time.

Trustees Hall and Baker expressed concern about the burden on residents making home repairs, particularly seniors and low-income owners. Trustee Baker proposed a hardship fee-waiver mechanism; Ms. Stegenga supported the concept, noting that applicants would need to show proof and that waivers would need Board approval. Questions about volunteer labor, liability and workers' compensation were referred to Attorney Donovan. Trustee De Jesus asked about work that does not require a permit; Ms. Stegenga clarified that like-for-like replacement (e.g., cabinets, toilets, flooring) does not require a permit. Trustee Mishk opposed shortening the permit term to six months; Ms. Stegenga stated that the change would not apply to all permit types.

Ms. Stegenga also described escrow handling for Planning and Zoning applications (project numbers assigned by the Building Department; checks deposited through the Finance Department), and a proposed public information session on building permits.

In response to questions from the presiding officer, Ms. Stegenga acknowledged that the new fees had been charged **without a Board resolution**. Trustee Hall asked that refunds be considered.

Direction: The Building Department is to revert to the previously adopted fee schedule until the Board acts on the proposal. The item will return to the October 6 agenda. Questions for the Building Inspector are to be routed through the Village Manager, and trustees were asked to retain their packets.

d. Intro to Local Law – Night Sky – Discussion

After discussion, the Board determined it was satisfied with the draft. A typographical error on page 2, line 3 (identified by Trustee De Jesus) is to be corrected before filing.

Resolution: The introductory law entitled “Exterior Light Standards” was introduced on August 3, a public hearing was duly noticed and held on September 15, 2026, and the matter is a Type II action under SEQRA. The law is **adopted as Local Law No. 11 of 2026**.

Motion to adopt Local Law 11 made by Trustee Baker, seconded by Trustee Thompson.

Roll call: Hall – Yes; De Jesus – Yes; Baker – Yes; Mishk – Yes; Thompson – Yes. **Carried.**

e. Intro to Local Law – Fire and Burning – Discussion

Tabled. The public hearing remains open and will continue at the October 6, 2026 meeting (see Item 3b).

f. Code Revision –

i. Chapter 132, Double Pole Utility

Resolution: After a public hearing duly noticed and held on September 15, 2026, and determination that the action is Type II under SEQRA, the introductory law is **adopted as Local Law No. 13 of 2026**.

Motion to adopt made by Trustee De Jesus, and Trustee Mishk.

Roll call: Thompson – Yes; Mishk – Yes; Hall – Yes; De Jesus – Yes; Baker – Yes. **Carried.**

ii. Code Revision – Chapter 67, Planning and Zoning Board

Resolution: The introductory law, introduced August 18, 2026, was the subject of a public hearing held September 15, 2026, and is a Type II action under SEQRA. It is **adopted as Local Law No. 14 of 2026.**

Motion to adopt made by Trustee Hall and Trustee Baker. All ayes. Motion carried.

iii. Code Revision – Chapter 74, Traffic

Resolution: The introductory law (removal of the Traffic Violations Bureau), introduced August 18, 2026, was the subject of a public hearing held September 15, 2026, and is a Type II action under SEQRA. It is **adopted as Local Law No. 15 of 2026.**

Motion to adopt made by Trustee Mishk, and Trustee Baker. All ayes. Motion carried.

iv. Code Revision – Chapter 94, Animals (“Dogs”)

Resolution: The introductory law entitled “Dogs,” introduced August 18, 2026, was the subject of a public hearing held September 15, 2026, and is a Type II action under SEQRA. It is **adopted as Local Law No. 16 of 2026.**

Motion made by Trustee Hall and Trustee Thompson. All ayes. Motion carried.

9. Public Comment

Wenda Heaney announced a pre-Harvest community gathering with food, music and games on **September 25, 4:00–7:00 P.M.**, at Olley Park, and invited all residents to attend.

10. Correspondence

- Emails from former Police Chief William (Bill) Herlihy and Marisa Kraus were received by several trustees.
- Trustee Baker received an email from Assemblyman Maher regarding the veterans banner program.
- Trustees Thompson and Pearson each received a resident email about an awning on Main Street and the design guidelines for the historic downtown district.
- The Mayor received an email from a resident (name withheld at the resident’s request) concerned that the new building fee schedule appeared to be in effect without Board action, and about the cost burden on residents making repairs.

11. Miscellaneous Comments from the Board of Trustees

- **Go Electric:** At Trustee Hall’s request, Mayor Pearson reported that the village attorney advised the applicants to apply through the Building Department to the Zoning Board to amend the prior decision on their property, and to consider retaining counsel. The pending comprehensive plan may later broaden permitted uses.
- **Parking (Gladstone area):** Trustee Hall noted the absence of no-parking signage at the location in question. The matter will be placed on a future agenda.

- **Not-for-profit hall rental:** An organization requested a reduced or waived fee for use of the village hall for an event on the Saturday after Thanksgiving. Trustees agreed the request should not wait; Trustee Thompson noted the Board must treat all not-for-profits uniformly and therefore needs a policy. The item will be placed on the **October 6** agenda.
- **E-bikes:** The Manager reported that a working group (Police, Building Department, Manager, Trustee Mishk) will reconvene around September 20–22; there is no urgency.
- **9/11 ceremony:** Trustees thanked the Walden Fire Department and all who organized and attended the 25th-anniversary ceremony.
- **Community notes:** Trustee Thompson praised the drug-awareness vigil organized by Jody Nicoli and a new entrance sign at Bradley Park created by Logan Heaney. Trustees Thompson and De Jesus plan to tidy the landscaping at the sign on Saturday and invited others to join.
- **Social media matter:** Trustee Hall raised concerns about a social-media post and related emails and requested a public apology. Trustee Thompson stated the post was meant as a private message, was removed promptly, and offered her apology.

12. Executive Session

Motion by Trustee Hall and Trustee De Jesus to enter executive session to discuss the employment history of a particular person. All ayes. Motion carried.

13. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at [time not captured].

Respectfully submitted,

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED BY
Anisetta Valdez, Village Clerk

**Village of Walden Board of Trustees
Regular Meeting
September 15, 2026
Motions & Resolutions**

Approval of Minutes – September 1, 2026

Motion to approve the minutes of September 1, 2026, as corrected, made by Trustee Mishk, and Trustee De Jesus. 6 Ayes 0 Nays 0 Abstains

Payment of Audited Bills

Motion to pay the audited bills made by Trustee Thompson, seconded by Trustee Mishk. 6 Ayes 0 Nays 0 Abstains

Code Review

Public Hearing -- Introduction to Local Law – Nightsky

Motion to open the public hearing was made by Trustee Thompson and Trustee Mishk. 6 Ayes 0 Nays 0 Abstains

Motion to close the public hearing was made by Trustee Mishk, seconded by Trustee Thompson. 6 Ayes 0 Nays 0 Abstains

Local Law #11 – Night Sky

Motion to adopt Local Law 11 made by Trustee Baker, seconded by Trustee Thompson.
Roll call: Hall – No; De Jesus – Yes; Baker – Yes; Mishk – Yes; Thompson – Yes. Carried.

Public Hearing -- Introduction to Local Law – Fire and Burning

Motion to open the public hearing was made by Trustee De Jesus and seconded by Trustee Baker.
6 Ayes 0 Nays 0 Abstains

Motion made by Trustee Mishk, and Trustee De Jesus as amended to keep the public hearing on the Fire and Burning local law open until the next regular meeting on October 6, 2026.

6 Ayes 0 Nays 0 Abstains

Public Hearing -- Code Revision – Chapter 132 Double Pole Utility

Motion to open the public hearing was made by Trustee Mishk and Trustee Thompson.
6 Ayes 0 Nays 0 Abstains

Motion to close the public hearing was made by Trustee Mishk and Trustee De Jesus.
6 Ayes 0 Nays 0 Abstains

Local Law #13 – Chapter 132 Double Pole Utility

Motion to adopt Local Law 12 made by Trustee De Jesus, and Trustee Mishk.

Roll call: Thompson – Yes; Mishk – Yes; Hall – Yes; De Jesus – Yes; Baker – Yes. Carried.

Public Hearing -- Code Revision -- Chapter 67 Planning and Zoning Board

Motion to open the public hearing was made by Trustee Hall and Trustee Baker.

6 Ayes 0 Nays 0 Abstains

Motion to close the hearing was made Trustee Hall and Trustee De Jesus.

6 Ayes 0 Nays 0 Abstains

Local Law #14 -- Chapter 67 Planning and Zoning Board

Motion to adopt Local Law 13 made by Trustee Hall and Trustee Baker. 6 Ayes 0 Nays 0 Abstains

Public Hearing -- Code Revision -- Chapter 74 Traffic

Motion to open the public hearing was made by Trustee De Jesus and Trustee Mishk.

6 Ayes 0 Nays 0 Abstains

Motion to close the hearing was made by Trustee Thompson and Trustee Baker.

6 Ayes 0 Nays 0 Abstains

Local Law #15 -- Chapter 74 Traffic

Motion to adopt Local Law 14 made by Trustee Mishk, and Trustee Baker. 6 Ayes 0 Nays 0 Abstains

Public Hearing -- Code Revision -- Chapter 94 Animals, Retitled "Dogs"

Motion to open the public hearing was made by Trustee Mishk and Trustee Hall.

6 Ayes 0 Nays 0 Abstains

Motion to close the hearing was made Trustee Hall and Trustee De Jesus.

6 Ayes 0 Nays 0 Abstains

Local Law #16 -- Chapter 94 Animals

Motion to adopt Local Law 15 made by Trustee Hall and Trustee Thompson. 6 Ayes 0 Nays 0 Abstains

Business of the Board

Park Use Request -- Brad & Layla Scott

Motion made by Trustee Hall and Trustee Mishk to approve the request of Brad and Layla Scott with complete documentation. 6 Ayes 0 Nays 0 Abstains

Park Use Request -- Gissel Filion

Motion made by Trustee Hall and Trustee Mishk to approve the request of Gissel Filion with complete documentation. 6 Ayes 0 Nays 0 Abstains

Park Use Request – Raul Sampedro

Motion made by Mayor and Trustee Hall to approve the Sampedro request contingent on the Village Manager obtaining the missing information and approvals. 6 Ayes 0 Nays 0 Abstains

Executive Session

Motion by Trustee Hall and Trustee De Jesus to enter executive session to discuss the employment history of a particular person. 6 Ayes 0 Nays 0 Abstains

Adjournment

(Not Recorded)

DRAFT