Village of Walden
Village Board of Trustees Meeting
October 6, 2026
Meeting called to order at 6:30 PM – adjourned at 9:43 PM
Total duration: approximately 3 hours 13 minutes

Attendance

Role	Name	Attendance
Mayor	Becky Pearson	Present
Trustee	Lynn Thompson	Present
Trustee	Gerald Mishk	Present
Trustee	Cheryl Baker	Absent
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	Kate Luciani	Absent
Temporary Village Manager	Tony Cardone	Present
Building Inspector	Kathy Stegenga	Present

1. Call to Order / Pledge of Allegiance

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

2. Roll Call

All members of the Board were present except Trustee Baker, who was absent. Village Manager Luciani was also absent; Tony Cardone attended as temporary village manager.

3. Public Hearings

Introductory Local Law – Fire and Burning (Burning and Recreational Fire Regulations)

The public hearing, previously tabled, was reopened.

> **Motion** to reopen the public hearing made by Trustee Mishk, seconded by Trustee De Jesus. All ayes. Motion carried.

Mayor Pearson noted that a corrected version of the law, reflecting the draft Trustee Hall and the Village Attorney had worked on together, was emailed to the Board that day because the version in the packet was not the correct one. There were no comments from the Board or from the public. The Mayor reported that one resident had called her that evening in favor of the law as written.

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Attorney Cappello advised that the law as it is to be adopted should be on the Board's desks seven days before adoption. Because that period had not elapsed, the Mayor said the Board would vote on adoption at its next meeting.

> **Motion** to close the public hearing made by Trustee De Jesus, seconded by Trustee Thompson. All ayes. Motion carried.

Following the hearing, the Mayor raised the word "wood" in Section 1(a), which lists materials that may not be burned, noting that other sections of the law permit wood in fire pits and for outdoor cooking. Trustee Thompson asked whether the intent was simply to remove the word. Attorney Cappello cautioned that removing "wood" from that list could allow someone to burn a pile of wood in a front yard outside of a fire pit or cooking use. The Board agreed to leave the language as written. The local law was tabled to the next meeting for a vote.

4. Manager's Report

Temporary Manager Cardone presented the report on behalf of Village Manager Luciani and added one item of his own.

- Thanked Parks, the trustees and the Police Department for the Senior BBQ.
- Work on Pleasant Avenue is moving along. Obstacles that arose were addressed by the contractor working with new DPW Superintendent Kyle Livesey, who the Manager said is doing an excellent job.
- The trail around Olley Park was completed by DPW and Parks; thanks to Mike Bliss and DPW.
- The Manager met with Trustee Mishk and the Police Department about eBikes and the related laws. Information will go out to the public before any laws are created.
- The first department head meeting, almost two hours long, was productive and everyone is on the same page.
- Harvest Fest was rescheduled because of the nor'easter, held the following weekend, and was extremely successful.
- The Village joined the Orange County Partnership. Connor Eckert presented on the comprehensive plan at a recent meeting.
- The Manager met with Congressman Ryan to set up a meeting about grants; met with the school district and Police Department about the DARE program; and toured the Buddhist Temple, which said it would accommodate organizations needing its grounds for charity events. The Manager suggested Trustee Hall consider it for children's events such as a graduation party.
- **Added by Mr. Cardone:** Rich and Kevin completed their water licenses. This should save the Village money, as VRI can be released from the water services it has been providing.

There were no questions for the Manager.

5. Minutes – September 15, 2026

There were corrections to the minutes.

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> **Motion** to accept the minutes as corrected made by Trustee Hall, seconded by Trustee Mishk. All ayes. Motion carried.

6. Payment of Audited Bills

> **Motion** to pay the audited bills made by Trustee Mishk, seconded by Trustee Sanusi.

Discussion – EZ Pass bill. Trustee Thompson asked about the EZ Pass bill and said she would not sign it; Trustee De Jesus said he had not signed it either. Trustee Mishk reported speaking with Roberta: the EZ Pass account is under the name of the former village manager and former clerk and no one has been able to access it. He suggested calling the State to explain the situation, followed by a letter if needed, and noted the Village is paying more in tolls billed by photograph than it would with EZ Pass. He signed the bill because the tolls are owed and delay could bring penalties.

Trustee De Jesus asked who is using the vehicles and for what purpose. Mr. Cardone said DPW uses a materials supplier in Dutchess County, which accounts for the trips he had seen. Trustee Mishk noted that the latest statements show two different trucks, one of which continued north on the Thruway and the Mid-Hudson Bridge, and that an explanation should be obtained. Trustee Thompson said all village vehicles are supposed to have an EZ Pass and the problem has gone on for months. Mr. Cardone said Trustee Sanusi and Roberta had been looking into a different system for the past two months; Trustee Sanusi said six vehicles would need passes. Trustee Hall noted that EZ Pass accounts can now be registered by license plate without a physical tag. Trustees agreed the matter needs to be resolved promptly, with each village vehicle individually accounted for.

All ayes. Motion carried. Trustee De Jesus, who had stepped out during the vote, asked to be recorded as voting yes on the audited bills and the Mayor so directed the Clerk.

7. Public Comment on the Business of the Board

Jerry Hanen, 190 Walnut: Spoke on the permit time limit rather than the fee structure. He believes the limit should stay at one year rather than six months, particularly for those doing their own work. He hopes to finish in less than a year but it may take longer.

8. Business of the Board of Trustees

a. Park Use Requests

Each request was approved by a vote of all ayes after the Mayor asked for discussion.

- Ann Hoornbeck (Galick wedding) – motion by Trustee Hall, seconded by Trustee Thompson.
- Scott Quick – motion by Trustee De Jesus, seconded by Trustee Hall.
- Lindsay Corbet (wedding) – motion by Trustee Mishk, seconded by Trustee Hall.
- Moesha Fancy (wedding) – motion by Trustee De Jesus, seconded by Trustee Mishk.

b. BAN Renewals

Mayor Pearson presented two bond anticipation notes (BANs) for renewal, both at an interest rate of 5.59%; it was noted that rates continue to rise.

> **Motion** to accept BAN 146 Capital Projects 2025, $330,000 made by Trustee Hall, seconded by Trustee Sanusi. All ayes.

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> **Motion** to accept BAN 147 Capital Projects – Sewer 2025, $210,000 made by Trustee Sanusi, seconded by Trustee Thompson. All ayes. Motion carried.

c. Building Department – Fire Safety – Discussion

Mayor Pearson noted that the fire safety inspections are governed by State fire code and are being followed in any case. Trustee Mishk said the State mandates inspection once every three years and that the Village, as it has for as long as he can remember, inspects multiple dwellings every two years. The building inspector had told the Board it was already difficult to complete the two-year multiple-dwelling inspections, so he questioned why the Village would add single-family rentals, which the State does not require.

Trustee De Jesus said the Village would not be the only municipality to do so (Maybrook does), and that with roughly 1,200 rentals the Village should consider its liability in the event of a fire. He was not ruling it out and felt it deserved a closer look rather than a yes-or-no vote. Trustee Thompson agreed, citing the Village's small lots, closely spaced homes and some unscrupulous landlords, and asked why the Village would inspect commercial rentals but not all residential rentals.

Mayor Pearson proposed forming a committee to review fire safety inspections together with the building department fee structure.

> **Committee formed:** Trustees De Jesus, Mishk and Hall will review fire safety and fees and report to the Board. Trustee Hall noted she is unavailable during the day; it was agreed the committee can start on its own and bring in Building Inspector Stegenga, and the Village Manager when she returns, at a suitable time.

Attorney Cappello suggested the committee also show the Board that this is not a money-making scheme, and recommended gathering budget numbers on the cost of running the building department, since fees should bear a relationship to those costs. Trustee Thompson asked for a firm deadline. The Mayor first set the end of November and then moved it up so the committee's guidance would be ready for the first November meeting; the Board is to decide at that meeting. Trustee Hall noted that because of Election Day there is only one November meeting, on November 17, and the Clerk will confirm the November calendar. Committee members will send the Board a short summary of the changes they are considering; other trustees may email their thoughts to the committee.

d. Building Department – Fee Structure and Permit Time Limit – Discussion

Mayor Pearson invited trustees to share their views so the committee could take them into account; no decisions were made.

- **Permit time limit:** Trustee Hall and Trustee Sanusi favor a one-year permit over six months. Trustee Sanusi said owner-builders are not all hiring contractors, that a shorter term forces re-permitting and added fees that discourage investment, and that tracking permit expiration is the department's task regardless of term. The Mayor observed that commercial projects tend to move quickly while residential owner-builders may be slower and asked the committee to consider whether the two should differ.
- **Building Inspector Stegenga** explained that many permits remain open and expire because owners and contractors do not call for inspections; she cannot inspect after the fact (for example, roofs completed within 48–72 hours) and the department does not have staff to chase them (she said three more people would be needed). Under New York State

code the owner is responsible for calling for inspections. New permit paperwork includes an explanatory sheet that must be initialed, as about 98% of permits are pulled by contractors. She plans a meet-and-greet to explain the process to homeowners. She said the six-month limit was meant only for short jobs and that leaving it at one year is fine, though owners will be charged to renew. Trustee Mishk suggested flagging contractors who do not call for inspections; Ms. Stegenga said she already does.

- **Department finances:** Ms. Stegenga said the department spends more than it takes in and lacks budget lines for professional services and vehicles. She estimated a budget of roughly $200,000, about $185,000 of it personal services. Mr. Cardone said the fees date from the 1970s and are exorbitantly low, and that the department is losing money; citing his former municipality (Monroe), he later corrected himself to say its budget this year was $322,000 against $717,000 already collected in fees. Trustee De Jesus said the fees must at least cover current costs and that the inspector's research is largely done. Trustee Hall cautioned against rushing, and Trustee Mishk said the previous inspector's one-size-fits-all fee schedule, adopted about two years ago, cost the Village revenue.
- **Permit application:** Ms. Stegenga said the revised building permit application is separate from the fee changes and can be implemented now.

e. Introductory Local Law – Fire and Burning

Heard as a public hearing under Item 3. Tabled to the next meeting for a vote.

f. Code Revision – Chapter 284, Abandoned Vehicles – Discussion

Mayor Pearson said the chapter came to the Board from the previous building inspector and the prior board, which dealt with a property on Ulster Avenue with many vehicles. Residents with unregistered vehicles are an enforcement problem: the Village currently allows one unregistered vehicle, which has grown into several, and the Mayor noted that a vehicle being replaced typically gets 30 days. Antique vehicles on historic plates, she said, should be able to run and should not be used to repair other cars. Trustee Hall found the current law acceptable. Building Inspector Stegenga provided sample language, including a provision limiting antique or restoration vehicles to two.

Attorney Cappello said the sample law's definitions of "junked" and "abandoned" vehicles contain too many "and/or" conditions and that the Village should clearly define what is abandoned; he suggested choosing a model law from the General Code library of municipal codes. The Mayor will have the Clerk circulate the materials. **This item was tabled** to the next meeting.

g. Code Revision – Chapter 291, Vehicles and Traffic – Discussion

The Mayor placed the chapter back on the agenda to revisit the taxicab provisions, a proposed reduction of the park speed limit from 15 to 10 miles per hour, the three-way market parking provision, and no-parking restrictions on Gladstone (west side). The taxicab stand and unloading zone on West Main Street will be discussed with building owners once Manager Luciani returns.

Trustee Hall described parking on both sides of the street between Clinton Street and Kelmore Street that blocks sight lines (she nearly had an accident) and noted the code already prohibits parking there but there are no signs. Trustee Thompson said the problem occurs on several streets, including Walnut and Prospect, Millard and Walnut, and Bergen and Bank, and has emailed the

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Village Manager a list; she will send it to all trustees. The Mayor said the Board will review all locations together rather than one at a time. **This item was tabled** until the November 17 meeting.

h. eBikes – Presentation and Discussion

Trustee Mishk reported on his review of New York State Vehicle and Traffic Law and other municipalities' laws, and on discussions with the Police Department and Village Manager, who agree the Village is on the right path. Points he raised:

- Class 3 eBikes (over 30 mph) are not permitted outside New York City; no one under 16 should operate an eBike (State law), and the eBike should be confiscated from the child.
- Helmets are required; eBikes are for one rider, not two; they may not be ridden on sidewalks or in parks.
- Fines should be levied on parents of a child under 16, on a progressive scale for repeat offenses.
- Impounded bikes could be stored in a metal storage container, as the Village has done before, allowing storage fees; transporting impounded bikes remains a safety and logistics question.
- Registering eBikes for a $1 fee, so the Village knows who owns them, was also raised.
- Many of the riders causing problems appear not to live in the Village.

Mayor Pearson said many of these ideas appear in the laws she reviewed and added others: a speed limit (20 mph), no towing or attaching scooters to other vehicles, a prohibition on riding under the influence, lights and reflectors, and no parking at curbs, ramps, doorways, fire hydrants or transit stops. She will write up her suggestions; trustees were asked to send any ideas to Trustee Mishk within about a week. Trustee Mishk, the Police Chief and the Village Manager will then develop a proposal for the Attorney to put into legal form.

i. Time Off – Presentation and Discussion

Mayor Pearson said the Board has received new time-off sheets and timesheets from the finance department to better track time off. Trustees Sanusi and Thompson are to continue working on this, meeting that Friday. Trustee Thompson said the proposal needs to be checked against the employee handbook and the CSEA contract (which these employees follow in many respects), with Roberta's information, before it comes to the Board.

j. Hall Rental – Discussion

The Mayor said this item, added to the agenda late, follows up on the earlier discussion of discounted rental of the community center to nonprofits and community groups and where to draw the line.

- Trustee Hall favored a discount for true 501(c)(3) nonprofits (for example, $100), with the deposit returned and proof of insurance required. Trustee De Jesus agreed but cautioned that discounts should not crowd out paying renters; he also favored priority for village organizations and said Valley Central School District should not be excluded because it serves the Village's children. Trustee Mishk likewise favored priority for local nonprofits.
- Trustee Thompson explained that the pending request is from the parents' group that runs the Valley Central All-Night Grad party, which asked for the discounted rate that the Villages of Montgomery and Maybrook gave them, or for free use. Trustee Thompson

reminded the Board that every use costs the Village for staffing, utilities and cleaning. Mr. Cardone later confirmed that the group is a 501(c)(3). The quoted fee was $375 with a $250 deposit for a 4:00–9:00 PM event without the kitchen.

- Attorney Cappello advised that the Board needs written criteria and cannot pick and choose among applicants individually; it can, for example, favor the school district or Walden-affiliated 501(c)(3)s, but must apply the rule uniformly. Trustee Sanusi noted the Community Council is a nonprofit but not a 501(c)(3).
- Trustee Mishk proposed instead that the fee at least cover the cost of the employee on duty and opposed donating the space.

> **Motion** to donate the hall to the Valley Central All-Night Grad party for this one event, with the deposit and certificate of insurance still required, made by Trustee Hall, seconded by Trustee De Jesus. Roll call: Sanusi – aye; Thompson – aye; Mishk – no; De Jesus – aye; Hall – aye; Pearson – aye. **Motion carried, 5–1.**

The Mayor stated the Board will not do this again without a policy in place, and Trustee De Jesus agreed the policy must include all costs. Trustee Mishk expressed concern about possible objections from future applicants. Attorney Cappello said the Village's exposure here is $375 but advised adopting a policy sooner rather than later so that decisions are not made case by case.

9. Public Comment

Jerry Hanen, 190 Walnut: Asked that the packet available at Village Hall for meetings be posted on the website so it can be read at home. The Mayor noted only the agenda is currently posted.

Brenda Adams, 31 Valley Avenue: Asked where the comprehensive plan stands, noting it was passed from the committee to the Board months ago and has not been on the agenda. She asked the Board to look at the townhouse project described in the plan, whose traffic, water and sewer studies are more than a decade old and which she believes should go back to the drawing board. She also noted that zoning changes cannot take effect until the plan is adopted. Mayor Pearson said the Board must read the plan and either amend it before or after adoption; she had put it on the agenda twice for that purpose. Attorney Cappello said the Board must also hold a public hearing and conduct a SEQRA review, as the plan is now the Board's document to consider and adopt. Trustee Hall asked about a work session; Trustee Thompson asked that a deadline be set, and a December target was discussed without formal action.

Ms. Adams also explained that the Community Council is a 501(c)(6) organization that works in conjunction with the Village (which cannot fundraise), supporting Harvest Fest, Music in the Grove, Veterans Park and Christmas in the Square; she described student contributions from the library volunteers, JROTC and the Valley Central pep band. She said two meeting dates, one of them National Night Out, had been changed, and asked that the corner of East Main Street and Valley Avenue be added to the no-parking list because sight lines there are blocked.

Susan Taylor, 128 Ulster Avenue: Spoke against extending fire safety inspections to single-family rentals. She said the Uniform Code (1981) was meant to standardize requirements and, under Article 18, to lower the cost of doing business; that the State requires multiple dwellings to be inspected only in common areas every three years, which the Village is not meeting; and that added fees raise costs for taxpayers and tenants. She urged the Board to meet the minimum

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requirements first, noted the inspector said three more inspectors would be needed, and offered to share information from the Department of State. She is a landlord of 40 years.

Mary Ellen Matise: Said the community center was built to shelter the summer camp children and asked whether it is for the community or for parties, noting four events were approved that evening. She believes it should be used more by the community, including charities in the Town of Montgomery. She also asked about sign permits, recalling a prohibition on signs at the McKinley Monument, and said a sign recently placed there should not have been.

10. Correspondence

Trustees Hall, De Jesus, Thompson and Sanusi had no correspondence. Trustee Mishk said Mr. Sullivan emailed the Board after the last meeting about how difficult it is to hear the board on YouTube and suggested cordless microphones worn by trustees; Trustee Mishk asked that the idea be reconsidered. Mayor Pearson reported a call from a resident in favor of village action on eBikes.

11. Miscellaneous Comments from the Board of Trustees

Trustee Hall: Harvest Fest was a great turnout; she thanked the Community Council, Parks and DPW, and Ms. Adams for clarifying the Council's role.

Trustee De Jesus: Also attended Harvest Fest, which was well attended despite the rescheduling. He agreed with Ms. Matise that the community center is a community center, not a party venue.

Trustee Mishk: Unable to attend Harvest Fest because of a prepaid vacation, but followed it on Facebook and congratulated those who worked on it, especially the Community Council.

Trustee Thompson: Thanked Jerry Hanen for helping her get the right weight for her derby car, which finished ahead of the Police Department's; thanked the volunteers, PD, Parks, DPW, vendors and Community Council, and Trustee De Jesus for helping spruce up the village entrance signs. The farm crawl raffle and baking contest were highlights.

Trustee Sanusi: Ran the third Pinewood Derby and hopes it continues (the PD beat Parks and Rec); enjoyed seeing the village come together.

Mayor Pearson: Apologized for missing Harvest Fest because of work and thanked everyone who contributed.

Clerk's announcements:

- A third session of Mahjong has been added at the Josephine Louise Library, Wednesday evenings at 6:00 PM.
- The Orange County Mobile DMV will be at Wooster Grove on October 28, 10:00 AM–12:00 PM and 1:00–3:30 PM.
- Sergeant Dudas shared a call for young artists to design a flyer on traffic safety; submissions are due November 20 at midnight (see the Governor's Traffic Safety Committee website).
- The penny social has been canceled and will be rescheduled for the spring; the updated calendar is on the website and in the hallway.

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- The finance department will have extended hours until 6:00 PM on October 28 and 29 for property taxes. Drop boxes are in front of Village Hall at the PD entrance and on the third floor. The final due date is October 31.

12. Executive Session

Mayor Pearson stated the Board needed to enter executive session to discuss the employment history of three individuals.

> **Motion** to enter executive session made by Trustee De Jesus and Trustee Hall. All ayes.
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> **Motion** to close executive session made by Trustee De Jesus, seconded by Trustee Sanusi. All ayes. Motion carried.

13. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:43 PM, motion by Trustee De Jesus, seconded by Trustee Sanusi. All ayes. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Anisetta Valdez, Village Clerk

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Village of Walden Board of Trustees
Regular Meeting
October 6, 2026
Motions & Resolutions

Motion	Moved	Seconded	Vote
Reopen public hearing – Fire and Burning	Mishk	De Jesus	All ayes
Close public hearing – Fire and Burning	De Jesus	Thompson	All ayes
Approval of Minutes – September 15, 2026 (as corrected)	Hall	Mishk	All ayes
Payment of Audited Bills	Mishk	Sanusi	All ayes; carried
Park Use – Ann Hoornbeck (Galick wedding)	Hall	Thompson	All ayes
Park Use – Scott Quick	De Jesus	Hall	All ayes
Park Use – Lindsay Corbet	Mishk	Hall	All ayes
Park Use – Moesha Fancy	De Jesus	Mishk	All ayes
BAN 146 renewal	Hall	Sanusi	All ayes
BAN 147 renewal	Sanusi	Thompson	All ayes; carried
Donate hall – Valley Central All-Night Grad (one time)	Hall	De Jesus	Carried 5–1 (Mishk no)
Enter executive session	De Jesus	Hall	All ayes
Close executive session	De Jesus	Sanusi	All ayes; carried
Adjournment (9:43 PM)	De Jesus	Sanusi	All ayes; carried

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