Village of Walden

Village Board of Trustees Meeting

November 3, 2026

Meeting called to order at 6:30 PM – adjourned at 8:57 PM
Total duration: approximately 2 hours 27 minutes

Attendance

Role	Name	Attendance
Mayor	Becky Pearson	Present
Trustee	Lynn Thompson	**Absent**
Trustee	Gerald Mishk	Present
Trustee	Cheryl Baker	**Absent**
Trustee	Kristie Hall	**Absent**
Trustee	Jerred Sanusi	Present
Trustee	Jose De Jesus	Present
Village Attorney	John Cappello	Present (arrived after the start of the meeting)
Village Clerk	Anisetta Valdez	Present
Village Manager	Kate Luciani	Present
Police Chief	Dan D'Elicio	Present

1. Call to Order / Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Becky Pearson called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM and led the Pledge of Allegiance. She asked those in attendance to silence their phones.

2. Roll Call

Roll was called. Four of the seven members of the Board were present: Mayor Pearson and Trustees Mishk, De Jesus, and Sanusi. Trustees Baker, Hall, and Thompson were absent. The Mayor noted that a quorum was present and stated that some items might be tabled so that the full Board could weigh in.

3. Presentation – Rich Mayfield, U.S. Department of Agriculture (Housing)

Mr. Mayfield asked the Board to partner with USDA Rural Development to help residents. There is no liability to the Village and no contracts to monitor. The Village's role would be its normal code-enforcement function, including referring residents who receive code citations. He described the following programs (handouts were left with the Clerk):

- **Section 504 Home Repair:** a grant of up to $10,000 for homeowners age 62 and older (USDA asks that recipients stay in the home about three years), plus a loan of up to $40,000 at 1% for up to 20 years. The loan is not age-restricted.
- **Section 502 Home Loans:** a direct USDA mortgage (cap of roughly $324,000) with no down payment and no PMI. Income is reviewed at least every five years. Guaranteed loans through USDA partner banks are available where the cap is too low.
- All programs are income-limited to low- and moderate-income households. USDA caseworkers help applicants with paperwork.

Request: that the Village join the "Friendly Home Communities" program by resolution, inviting USDA representatives to hold a public information session (about 6–8 PM) once a year.

In response to Mayor Pearson's questions, Mr. Mayfield confirmed that the grant is income-related and intended for repairs that keep people in their homes. Trustee De Jesus asked about age limits and was told that only the $10,000 grant is age-dependent.

4. Public Hearings

No public hearings were scheduled for this meeting.

5. Manager's Report

Village Manager Kate Luciani reported:

- **Community events:** "Coffee with a Cop" was well attended. Halloween went very well, and she thanked Parks, DPW, and the Police Department.
- **State legislators:** Assemblyman Brian Maher invited her and the DPW Superintendent to meet with Senator Rob Rolison about Village needs, including vehicles.
- **Salt shed:** One bid was received for the salt shed. The DPW Superintendent and the engineer are evaluating it.
- **Christmas tree:** The Parks & Recreation Director and the DPW Superintendent selected a Village Christmas tree.
- **Building Department:** Interviews were held for the Building Department, with many strong applicants.
- **Department head meeting:** The next department head meeting is **November 17 at 10 AM**.
- **Loan program:** Work continues on rewriting the Village loan program documents, with help from the Treasurer.
- **Health plan:** A Zoom meeting with MVP is set for next week (Mayor, Treasurer, Clerk, and Manager) to explore health-plan cost savings for employees, which could be significant.
- **Wooster Grove:** The Parks Director is waiting on specifications for the lights at Wooster Grove.

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- **Condolences:** She extended the condolences of the Board and the community to Goshen Police Chief Post and his family on the loss of his son.

Board questions: Trustee De Jesus objected to wording in the Building Inspector's report suggesting the inspector was awaiting the Board's determination on forms. He said it is the Board's right to review them, that reports should stick to facts, and that any issue can be taken up with the Mayor. He also asked how many officers will assist at the November 14 luncheon, so that patrol coverage is not reduced. The Manager will confirm with the Chief.

6. Minutes – October 20, 2026

Tabled to the next meeting. Trustee De Jesus was absent on October 20.

7. Payment of Audited Bills

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

8. Public Comment on the Business of the Board

Mary Ellen Matise spoke in favor of the USDA program and urged the Board to adopt a resolution to participate. She said a $10,000 senior grant compares very well with other assistance available locally.

9. Business of the Board of Trustees

a. Park Use Requests

i. Regina Drossos: Motion to approve made by Trustee Sanusi, seconded by Trustee De Jesus. All ayes, no nays. Motion carried.

ii. VC Scholarship Council: Motion to approve made by Trustee Mishk, seconded by Trustee Sanusi, conditioned on confirming that this is the same event (pocket bingo / all-night grad party) already approved at no charge, with only a deposit due. All ayes. Motion carried.

b. Building Department – Fire Safety – Discussion

The committee (Trustees Mishk, De Jesus, and Hall) reported that:

- Fire inspections should remain every two years.
- Trustee De Jesus favored also inspecting single-family rentals, but Trustee Mishk reported finding no New York State requirement to do so.
- Trustee Mishk noted that existing state and Village penalties for uncorrected violations are already substantial, and that inspection fees can be set by resolution.

The consensus was to leave the fire-safety provisions as they are. The item will go on a future agenda for formal action.

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c. Building Department – Fee Structure – Discussion

- The committee recommended a one-year term for all building permits and found the proposed permit application form acceptable. It leaned toward a Maybrook-style flat fee, possibly with a per-square-foot component.
- Mayor Pearson supported the Building Inspector's two-tier proposal ($200 minimum, then project cost plus 2.5%) but asked for a lower third tier (for example, $100 for projects up to about $3,500), so that small repairs such as a door or window do not cost more in permit fees than the work itself. She noted that Maybrook is about half the size of Walden, and stressed that the Building Department needs funding for additional staff and for code enforcement, particularly with a housing development under way.
- Trustee Sanusi cautioned that splitting a project into multiple trade permits multiplies the base fee, which pushes the effective rate to 3–4%. He suggested calculating fees on the whole project even when permits are split. Trustee De Jesus could support separate permits for electrical and plumbing only. Trustee Mishk's committee opposed splitting permits.
- Trustee Mishk raised a concern that property-assessment increases following improvements discourage home improvement. The Mayor suggested asking the Town assessor to base assessments on permit value. Trustee Mishk noted this would have to be taken up with the Town.
- Trustee Mishk also observed that some work, such as roofing, is being done without permits.
- Attorney Cappello advised that fees are set by resolution, and that what requires a permit is governed by the New York State Building Code, which the Village has adopted.

Outcome: The current fee schedule remains in effect. Fee structure was **tabled** to the next meeting, and Trustees will review the existing fee schedule and bring suggestions. Trustee De Jesus asked the Manager to request from the Building Inspector a list of minor like-for-like work that should not need a permit. The Board reached **consensus** to proceed with the new permit application form, with no formal vote needed. The Board preferred to continue the discussion at its next meeting rather than hold a separate work session.

The Mayor also stated that the Building Inspector's full monthly activity report is no longer needed in Board packets. A top-sheet summary will suffice.

d. Residential Housing Rehabilitation Program – Discussion

The Mayor reviewed the Village's loan program documents, which the Treasurer annotated:

- The enabling resolution dates from 2015 and must be updated. Fees and cost figures (title reports, credit reports, attorney fees) are out of date.
- Under the prior resolution, the Manager had sole approval authority up to $30,000, with multifamily limits of $20,000 per unit. The cap of $100,000 per owner does not appear in that authorization.

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- The Mayor recommended that approvals require at least two signatures, or go to a loan committee or the Board, rather than resting with one person.
- She said funds that have been repaid ("second-generation" program income) may be usable more flexibly, including for Village projects, at a lower cost than outside borrowing.
- Attorney Cappello said attorney involvement should be limited to reviewing the title report and recording the mortgage, with electronic filing.
- Several residents are waiting on loans. The Manager reported that the Treasurer is speaking with applicants.

Next steps: The Manager and Treasurer will draft a revised program and resolution, for review by the Attorney. The item returns at the next meeting. The Clerk will copy the USDA materials for the Board.

e. Hall Rental Policy for Non-Profits – Discussion

Tabled until the full Board is present. The Mayor emailed information on nonprofit classifications (such as 501(c)(3)). The Board must decide which organizations qualify. The Clerk will include the material in the next packet.

f. eBikes – Discussion

The Board reviewed the revised draft law prepared by Trustee Mishk, with input from Trustee Sanusi and the Police Department. Agreed changes:

- Add an exemption for police officers in the line of duty (requested by Chief D'Elicio).
- Add a provision addressing operators who hold onto a vehicle to achieve higher speeds.
- Keep the prohibition on passengers.
- Revise the provisions on power-assisted mobility devices (PMADs) so they are not restricted to streets and are not barred from sidewalks, since people with disabilities rely on them.
- Reconcile the conflicting park-trail provisions (10 mph limit vs. exclusion from trails). Trustee De Jesus wants e-bikes kept out of the park, while the Attorney noted the current draft allows use in designated areas.
- Storage and processing fees for seized devices will be set later by fee resolution.

Next steps: The Mayor and Trustee Mishk will finalize the edits and send the draft to the Attorney. The Manager, Trustee Mishk, and the Chief will work on implementation logistics. A public hearing will be set once the law is final. Attorney Cappello will prepare an explanatory video, as another municipality did, for the next meeting (November 17).

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

The Board reviewed the Building Inspector's proposed language on classic/historic vehicles.

- The Board expressed concern that the draft could restrict daily use of classic vehicles, which is not a Village matter if the vehicle is registered and operable. That language should be removed.

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- The Chief noted that code compliance officers cannot certify whether a vehicle would pass state inspection. “Registered” or “without a current valid license plate” may be clearer wording, and terms such as “antique” are not defined in the code. Attorney Cappello noted that historic vehicles used only for parades or display may be operable but unable to pass inspection, and the Manager cited car shows as an example.
- The Board agreed to **remove the proposed 30-day limit** on one unlicensed vehicle.
- The original purpose of the chapter is to address multiple inoperable or junk vehicles on private property.

The item returns at the next meeting, with the Attorney to review the language.

h. Code Revision – Chapter 291, Vehicles & Traffic – Discussion

Chief D’Elicio reported on the 16 locations referred to the Police Department. Enforcement is not possible where required signage or legal authorization is missing, and a resolution is needed before the Police Department can enforce. Items for the Board to consider by resolution:

- **Gladstone Street** (Grandview to Kelmore): the Village law lists no parking restriction on the west side, which is needed to clear the corner. The Chief will review the area with the DPW.
- Reduce the park speed limit from 15 mph to 10 mph.
- Remove the taxi stand on Main Street.
- Review the unloading zone in front of Ciardullo’s. It is in the law but not posted. The Chief advised that if loading zones are defined, all should be defined.

10. Public Comment

There were no comments.

11. Correspondence

The Mayor reported an email about a dark intersection on Highland Avenue where drivers are running the stop sign, and asked whether lighting should be reviewed. She also noted an inquiry about an employee, Tony, who is no longer employed by the Village. Kate Luciani is now the full-time Village Manager.

12. Miscellaneous Comments from the Board of Trustees

- **Trustee Sanusi:** Reported on a CivicPlus website demonstration (video link shared). The system is modular, and departments could be added at extra cost. CivicPlus is willing to give another demonstration. He will seek two more vendors’ proposals and pricing. Attorney Cappello advised that it would likely be treated as a professional service, so competitive bidding may not be required.
- **Trustee Mishk:** Commended the Police Department, crossing guards, and residents for Halloween, including those who decorated their yards.

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- **Trustee De Jesus:** Asked that the USDA presentation be placed on the next agenda for a resolution. The Mayor agreed.
- **Clerk Valdez** announced:
  - CARES van, Thursday, November 12, 10 AM–12 PM, second-floor community room.
  - Veterans ceremony and brick dedication, **Sunday, November 8, 1 PM**, Veterans Memorial Park. If it rains, it will be held indoors (see the Village Facebook page).
  - 2027 Leadership Awards nominations are due December 1.
  - Interfaith Thanksgiving service, November 15, 3 PM, St. Andrew's Episcopal Church.
- **Mayor Pearson:** Praised Halloween and the Police Department, and invited all to the Veterans ceremony.

13. Executive Session

Motion to enter executive session to discuss the employment history of a particular person made by Trustee De Jesus, seconded by Trustee Sanusi. All ayes. Motion carried.

It was stated that the Board would not return to open session and that no votes would be taken.

14. Adjournment

The Board did not return to open session.

Motion to adjourn made by Trustee De Jesus, seconded by Trustee Mishk. All ayes. Motion carried.

The meeting concluded at 8:57 PM.

The next regular meeting of the Board is scheduled for November 17, 2026.

Respectfully submitted,

Anisetta Valdez, Village Clerk

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Village of Walden

Motions and Resolutions

Village Board of Trustees Meeting – November 3, 2026 | Trustees Baker, Hall, and Thompson absent; four members present

#	Agenda Item	Motion / Resolution	Moved By	Seconded By	Vote / Result
1	6. Minutes – October 20, 2026	Approve the minutes of October 20, 2026	–	–	Tabled to next meeting
2	7. Payment of Audited Bills	Pay the audited bills	Trustee De Jesus	Trustee Mishk	Carried – all ayes
3	9a(i). Park Use Request – Regina Drossos	Approve park use request	Trustee Sanusi	Trustee De Jesus	Carried – all ayes
4	9a(ii). Park Use Request – VC Scholarship Council	Approve park use request, conditioned on confirming it is the same event already approved at no charge (deposit only)	Trustee Mishk	Trustee Sanusi	Carried – all ayes
5	13. Executive Session	Enter executive session to discuss the employment history of a particular person; no return to open session, no votes	Trustee De Jesus	Trustee Sanusi	Carried – all ayes
6	14. Adjournment	Motion to adjourn	Trustee De Jesus	Trustee Mishk	Carried—all ayes

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