

**Village of Woodstock  
Board of Trustees Meeting  
November 10th, 2025  
6:00 PM  
Town Hall & Zoom  
Minutes**

**Draft minutes are subject to approval.**

**Present:** Chair Seton Mcilroy, Vice Chair Jeffrey Kahn, Lisa Lawlor, Brenda Blakeman, Frank Horneck

**Staff:** Eric Duffy, Interim Police Chief Chris O’Keeffe, Kitty Mears Koar

**Public:** Ellen Soroka, Beverly Humpstone, Nancy Stockwell, Wendy Marrinan, BJ Dunn, Beth Finlayson, Keri Bristow, Norm Frates, Alyssa Carlo, Harry Falconer

**A. Call to order**

1. Chair Seton Mcilroy called the November 10<sup>th</sup>, 2025, Village Trustees meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

**B. Additions and Deletions**

**C. Citizens’ Comment**

Ellen Soroka who is on the Village Design Advisory Board, commented on having Village application have a mandatory requirement of going in front of the Village Design Advisory Committee (VDAC) and the Village Design Review Board (VDRB). Stating that 10 Towns in Vermont require residents to go in front of both boards with Design applications.

Beverly Humpstone emphasized the importance of having board members with design credentials and expertise. She expressed concern that without proper design advice, the historic aspects of the Town could be compromised, which is a key attraction for visitors.

Nancy Stockwell from Woodstock raised concerns about dangerous parking conditions at the bottom of Charles Street, particularly on weekends when businesses are open. She noted that vehicles parked toward the corner and facing the wrong way create hazardous conditions.

Wendy Marrinan from 39 Mountain Avenue addressed two administrative issues. First, she questioned why the Design Review Advisory Board was recently told that their review was optional for applicants, contradicting years of procedure. She referenced Vermont state statute 24, sections 4414 (e) and (f), and 4433, stating these sections do not support the current administrative interpretation. Second, she expressed concern about the Village Development Review Board going into executive session for deliberations, which had not been the practice previously. She questioned the legal basis for these changes.

BJ Dunn requested three actions from the Trustees: 1) creation of design guidelines for the National Register Historic District, 2) addition of goals to protect historic character of the Village and agrarian landscape to the goals document 3) Trustee involvement with the Planning Commission Board's zoning regulation revisions to ensure historic character is protected. He noted that a \$50,000 grant application for historic preservation was rejected due to lack of matching funds from the Village and Town.

**D. Reports**

**Manager's Report**

Eric Duffy reported that all five members of the Design Review Board had resigned via email the previous Monday. He had met with board members on Friday for a constructive conversation about the future. He emphasized that Municipal decisions are guided by consultation with experts, including the Regional Planning Commission and attorneys. Additional updates included:

- Town Hall will be closed on Veterans Day
- The Selectboard appointed Cliff Johnson as the 5<sup>th</sup> member
- Abby Sherman is working with partners on a federal highways grant application for up to \$2,200,000 for work related to access to the national park.
- Greg Fullerton joined as the Director of Public Works the previous Monday

#### **Financial Report**

Eric Duffy clarified that there was approximately \$98,000 in parking revenue from July through October before expenses. He noted that October brought in almost \$30,000 in parking revenue, the highest monthly total in at least three years. He also explained that certain annual transfers, such as dispatch services and the Town Police Contract, had not yet been processed but would be handled as batch transfers.

#### **Police Report**

Interim Police Chief Chris O’Keeffe addressed the citizen comment about Charles Street parking, acknowledging it as an ongoing issue. He stated that currently their options were limited to ticketing or towing. He mentioned that the new parking ordinance being discussed would designate the area as no parking on both sides.

He also reported:

- The Veterans Day parade will occur tomorrow at 10:55 AM with five officers staffing the event
- A new police cruiser should arrive by the end of the week or mid-next week
- All officers will be full-time certified when Officer Aurora graduates the day before Thanksgiving
- By December 2nd, all officers will be ARIDE (Advanced Roadside Impaired Driving Enforcement) certified
- The department plans to participate in holiday DUI enforcement campaigns with State Police
- The department is focusing on training for mental health crisis response, which can be time-consuming
- The department is developing plans to enforce moving violations, particularly speeding and overweight trucks

Jeffrey Kahn expressed concern that moving violation revenue was at only 1.62% of the budgeted amount for 41.6% of the year. Chris O’Keeffe explained they have developed a plan to increase traffic enforcement, including weighing trucks when weather permits.

### **E. Votes**

#### **Village Parking Ordinance Update**

Eric Duffy reported that a slight change had been made to the parking ordinance draft to clarify that no-parking restrictions on School Street do not apply when school is not in session. Lisa Lawlor explained that the team had been working on updating the parking ordinance since February, with input from multiple staff members and Trustees. The updates include designating Charles Street and Hill Street as no-parking areas and simplifying language by referencing street numbers rather than buildings.

Jeffrey Kahn highlighted two important changes the public should be aware of: the "license plate get out of jail free" option would be limited to once per year rather than twice, and fines have been increased (e.g., from \$10 to \$15 for meter violations).

Eric Duffy noted that in December, the Trustees will vote on a schedule of fees to be attached to the ordinance. The ordinance will take effect in 60 days if not petitioned by residents within 45 days.

Motion: by Chair Seton Mcilroy to adopt the revised parking ordinance, Title 8, Chapter 3, as written with the amendment made today. (6:33 PM)

Seconded: Brenda Blakeman

Vote: 5-0-0 passed

#### **Woodstock Rotary- Carriage Rides – Parade Permit**

Beth Finlayson requested approval for horse and wagon rides for 2026, moving them from the second and third weeks of October to the first and second weeks. The proposed hours would be 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM, though the actual hours might vary based on what the horses can sustain.

Motion: by Chair Seton Mcilroy to approve the permit for horse-drawn carriage rides on October 3-4 and October 10-11, 2026, from 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM. (6:40 PM)

Seconded: Jeffrey Kahn

Vote: 5-0-0 passed

#### **Letter of Support: Woodstock School System**

Chair Seton Mcilroy reads a letter of support for ensuring that Middle School and High School remain in the Town of Woodstock. The letter emphasized that schools are vital to students' education and to the social and economic vitality of the town and the 28 communities in the district.

Keri Bristow from the school board provided an update, explaining that the state task force is sending only one map to the legislature - the cooperative services model that would keep their district intact along with Hartford and Windsor Southeast. She noted that while one senator suggested implementation might take ten years, Woodstock might only have three years to address the situation.

Motion: Chair Seton Mcilroy to approve and sign the letter of support regarding the Woodstock school system. (6:45 PM)

Seconded: Jeffrey Kahn

Vote: 5-0-0 passed

#### **Woodstock Rotary Star Project**

Norm Frates from the Woodstock Rotary Club presented a request regarding a bronze plaque honoring contributors to the replacement of the star on Mount Tom. The plaque would be mounted on a granite pedestal.

Lisa Lawlor suggested placing the plaque on the triangle in front of the covered bridge instead of on the Green, as this would provide good visibility of both the bridge and star while not being on the park itself. Ray Bourgeois Chair of the Selectboard was reportedly open to discussing this option.

Norm Frates expressed concern that the triangle location might present problems with snow removal, as it's an area where snow is piled before being loaded into trucks. Jeffrey Kahn recommended pursuing the triangle location with the Selectboard first, with the Green remaining as a backup option if needed.

The consensus was that the Rotary should approach the Selectboard about using the triangle, with modifications to the pedestal height if needed, before returning to the Trustees.

#### **Halloween Follow-Up**

Alyssa Carlo from the PTO presented a summary of their involvement with Halloween candy collection and distribution. The PTO is willing to continue helping with candy collection,

sorting, and distribution, but could not take on full responsibility for the event or field calls from the public. The PTO expressed interest in possibly holding Halloween events on the Green before trick-or-treating next year and suggested opening trick-or-treating to the entire Village to lessen the burden on the small Halloween section.

Lisa Lawlor from Maple Street reported that most houses gave away 1,000-1,200 pieces of candy and were done by 7:30 PM at the latest. She shared two recommendations from residents: 1) give toddlers and babies dedicated time early in the event, and 2) reduce hours from 5-8 PM to 5-7 PM, as children arriving after 7 PM found no candy left. She noted that houses spent approximately \$100 of their own money on candy, plus decorations.

### **Planning Commission Bylaw Updates**

Harry Falconer from Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Regional Commission provided an update on the zoning rewrite process, which began about a year ago. The major changes include:

1. Updated density and housing allowances to comply with Act 47 served by water and sewer
2. Moving many housing applications from conditional use review to site plan review to make the process less discretionary and more appropriate for housing
3. Reforming the design review process to be more objective and predictable while maintaining strict standards
4. Adding subdivision standards, which are prerequisites for opt-in to Act 250 relief under tier 1B status

Harry Falconer explained that the Planning Commission hopes to vote on sending the final draft to hearing around February or March. The document then would go to the Trustees for their hearing and possible adoption.

Wendy Marrinan expressed concerns about the public engagement process, stating that Planning Commission meetings had not been welcoming to public input and comments were not adequately incorporated into minutes. She also questioned why design review was already being treated as optional when that change was only in the draft regulations.

### **Firework Committee update**

Keri Bristow provided an update from the Fireworks Committee, which has planned a series of events for the 4th of July celebration:

- July 3rd: Pentangle concert in the East End with possible barbecue and food trucks
- July 4th morning: Road race at East End Park as a fundraiser
- July 4th afternoon: Pool party at the rec center for families
- July 4th evening: Dinner on the Green (possibly lobster, chicken, and steak) with music
- July 5th morning: Kids bike parade on the Green starting at 10 AM and a kids market on the Gore
- July 5th afternoon/evening: Fireworks event starting around 4 PM with various activities including a dunking chair, food vendors, face painting, games, and possibly the same band as last year

The committee has commitments from various community groups to help, including Change the World Kids, High School Clubs, and the Chamber of Commerce. For funding, they have \$9,000 from the Selectboard for the first half of the fireworks payment, with another \$9,000 needed. A donor has offered a sizable contribution, but they estimate needing \$25,000 total for all contingencies.

Revenue generation ideas include charging for car entry to the fireworks and asking vendors to contribute a portion of their earnings toward next year's event.

### **Wassail Committee Update**

Beth Finlayson from the Wassail Committee provided an update on the event. Activities include:

- Thursday evening kickoff events at the library and Romney Barn in Barnard
- Friday and Saturday events including horse and wagon rides
- The return of the bell ringers, a key part of the event historically, after about 25 years' absence

The committee is working with the Police Chief on traffic control and has received permission to use the Gore. They have 16 horse entries so far, with a cap of 40 (last year had 32). They plan to close off the area by Positive Pie to keep pedestrians safer and are working on managing crowd flow in problematic areas at the east end of the Green and by the Dummy.

Beth Finlayson emphasized that this is a major community event with participation from churches, Pentangle, the library, Barn Arts, schools, and the Rotary Club (which handles the memory tree, bonfire, and "pooper scooper" for horse cleanup). She also noted that selected businesses will offer late-night shopping on both Friday and Saturday.

Regarding staging for horses, Norm Frates explained they are hoping to use Snow Dump Road instead of the Mill building parking lot, which had issues with cleanup last year. If snow prevents this, they will look at alternate locations including Billings Farm.

#### **Trustee's Specific Goals/Priorities for Upcoming Year**

The Trustees discussed specific goals they would like to accomplish in the coming year:

Jeffrey Kahn mentioned addressing parking meters as a priority for 2026, to implement possible changes in 2027.

Lisa Lawlor expressed a desire to establish a comprehensive, year-to-year overview of Village operations, including staffing, trash collection, fee structures, police costs for events, and when to request contributions from event organizers. She emphasized creating a schedule for discussing recurring topics like foliage season and Halloween.

Frank Horneck suggested focusing on walking and biking initiatives in the Village, including addressing jaywalking.

Seton McIlroy proposed developing a strategic communication plan to better inform the public about Trustee actions. She also noted the need to update the emergency communication system.

Eric Duffy will compile these suggestions and bring them back for ranking at a future meeting, similar to the process used with the Selectboard.

#### **FY27 Budget Discussion**

Eric Duffy reported that he had received the first draft of the budget from departments. He will be meeting with department heads and Stephanie Appelfeller over the next week to review their requests before making his own recommendations.

He also mentioned the need to schedule another joint meeting with the Selectboard for goals and a budget update.

Wendy Marrinan requested consideration for budget funds to match a grant for design guidelines. She explained that the Historic Preservation Commission had applied for a \$50,000 grant but was turned down because there was no matching contribution from the municipality. Eric Duffy suggested she send details of the request to him for consideration in the budget process.

#### **Parking Meter Discussion**

Eric Duffy introduced the discussion of parking meters, noting that the current provider is going out of business. He asked whether the Trustees wanted to explore other parking meter companies, additional kiosks, or moving entirely to an online app system.

Trustees discussed comparing the efficiency of kiosks versus coin meters and reviewing data from when the meters were last changed in 2020. There was agreement to start by gathering information about current options and reviewing previous research.

Seton Mcilroy mentioned she would look for minutes from October 2020 when parking meter changes were previously voted on. Concerns were raised about solar-powered meters not functioning properly after several days without sun, and the aesthetics of kiosks on Village sidewalks.

**F. Potential Executive Session 1 V.S.A 313**

Motion: by Chair Seton Mcilroy enter into executive session under Title 1, Section 313 for purposes of discussing potential contracts.  
(8:20PM)

Seconded: Jeffrey Kahn

Vote: 5-0-0 passed

Motion: by Chair Seton Mcilroy to exit Executive Session (8:36PM)

Seconded: Jeffrey Kahn

Vote: 5-0-0 passed

**G. Other Business – None**

**H. Approval of Minutes**

Motion: by Chair Seton Mcilroy to approve the minutes 10.14.25, 10.23.25  
(8:37PM)

Seconded: Jeffrey Kahn

Vote: 5-0-0 passed

**J. Adjournment**

Motion: by Chair Seton Mcilroy to adjourn the meeting at  
(8:37PM)

Seconded: Brenda Blakeman

Vote: 5-0-0 passed

*Respectfully submitted,  
Kitty Mears Koar*