

Village of Woodstock
Board of Trustees Meeting
January 13th 2026
6:30 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

Public: Nicholas Seldon, Molly Hutchins, Marie Cross, Mark Harris, Nate Freund, Roger Logan, Amy McElroy

A. Call to order

1. Vice Chair Jeffrey Kahn called the January 13th 2026, Village Trustees meeting to order at 6:30PM.

B. Additions and Deletions

~~Board of Trustees Protocols and Meeting Procedure~~

C. Citizens' Comments

Nicholas Selden commented that the meeting minutes from January 5, 2026, were not comply with the law as they "failed" to summarize the topics discussed.

D. Reports

Manager's Report

Eric Duffy reported:

- A joint meeting with the Trustees and Selectboard will be held Thursday at 6 PM regarding the FY27 budgets, including potential discussion of a new position that would impact the Village
- The Selectboard had met earlier to discuss the Main Wastewater project bond and allocations between sewer users and non-users, with public feedback being requested.
- Public forums had been scheduled for Wednesdays at 9 AM at different cafes across Town, with night meetings also being planned to gather feedback.
- The Wastewater plant renovation bond, estimated at \$33-35 million, will be on the Town meeting agenda.
- The Public Works crew was thanked for their efforts during recent icy conditions.
- The Village was experiencing a shortage of salt and sand, which is a statewide issue.
- Residents were reminded that salt is available for their use outside the gates of the DPW building.

Financial Report

The Board discussed several items from the financial report, including:

- Short-term rental enforcement: Eric Duffy reported they were waiting for the new software to be operational before sending out notices.
- Courthouse parking: Jeffrey Kahn asked about the contract fees, and Eric Duffy clarified that the one-year lease ended in September with an extension through February, explaining the revenue totals.
- East End revenue: Jeffrey Kahn questioned why there were zeros showing despite events having been held there; Eric Duffy agreed to investigate.
- Police communications expenses (dispatch services): Eric Duffy explained this fee would be transferred over, typically as a one-time payment.

- Library lot rent: This had not been paid as negotiations for a new contract were ongoing.

Police Report

Interim Police Chief Chris O'Keeffe reported:

- The new police cruiser is now on the road and working well.
- Updated parking ordinances took effect on January 9th with the new rate of \$1.50 an hour.
- Officer Liz Turco had resigned with her last day being January 21st, and the position would be posted through the Town of Woodstock and the Police Academy.
- Due to icy conditions, weighing trucks was difficult but inspections were still possible.
- End of year training records were complete and being filed with the academy.
- A small uptick in mental health complaints was noted, which he attributed to the time of year.
- The department had partnered with HDRS regarding mental health response.

E. Votes

Glad Rags Banners

Molly Hutchins from Glad Rags requested banner display for April 13-19, 2026, and September 14-20, 2026.

Motion: by Vice Chair Jeffrey Kahn to accept the banner permit as presented (6:45 PM)

Seconded: Brenda Blakeman

Vote: 5-0-0 passed

Artistree – Banner

Marie Cross from Artistree requested a banner for comedian Ashley Gutermuth, performing at the Grange Theatre on March 12-14, to be displayed March 8-14, 2026.

Motion: by Vice Chair Jeffrey Kahn to accept the banner permit as presented (6:47 PM)

Seconded: Lisa Lawlor

Vote: 5-0-0 passed

WAMBA/Ranch Camp – Fat Bike Festival

Mark Harris presented information about the second annual Woodstock Fat Bike Festival, a partnership between Woodstock Area Mountain Bike Association (WAMBA) and Ranch Camp. The event would include group rides, bike games, and catering by Ranch Camp in partnership with Von Trapp Brewing. Mark Harris requested:

1. A parade permit for the ride through Town and Village trails.
2. Use of the East End Park space as the meeting and registration area

The board discussed safety concerns about cyclists riding in the middle of streets. Mark Harris agreed to provide volunteer riders to lead groups safely and have volunteers on the ground to manage traffic flow. They also agreed to post notices on the listserv to alert residents about the event.

Mark Harris was reminded to submit proof of insurance and pay the East End Park fee at Town Hall.

Motion: by Vice Chair Jeffrey Kahn approve both permits pending completion of necessary requirements for the February 28th events (6:55 PM)

Seconded: Lisa Lawlor

Vote: 4-0-0 passed (No Seton Mcilroy)

Pride of Woodstock – Use of the Green

Seton Mcilroy, co-founder and co-chair of Pride of Woodstock along with Gabe De Leon, presented two permit applications:

Use of the Green for a craft fair with 40-45 vendors including food vendors, similar to past years but with the addition of a large tent with a DJ on the west end for dancing. The perimeter of the Green would be fenced for alcohol consumption with signage at entrances and exits. The event would run from 11 AM to 3 PM on June 7, with setup beginning at 9 AM.

Motion: by Vice Chair Jeffrey Kahn to accept the permit pending an updated Certificate of Insurance (7:01PM)

Seconded: Brenda Blakeman

Vote: 4-0-0 passed (No Seton Mcilroy)

Pride of Woodstock – Parade

The High Heel Race would follow the same route as in previous years, starting near the Congregational Church and ending at Gillingham's. The History Center would serve as registration area. Road closures would include:

- Elm Street from Central to Pleasant from 9-11 AM
- Pleasant Street from Frost Mills Road to Elm Street from 9:45-10:30 AM
- Pleasant to River with detour signs in place

The event will be the same weekend as the Covered Bridges Half Marathon.

Motion: by Vice Chair Jeffrey Kahn to approve the parade permit for the High Heel Race (7:07PM)

Seconded: Lisa Lawlor

Vote: 4-0-0 passed (No Seton Mcilroy)

F. Discussion

FY27 Budget

Eric Duffy reported that the budget had been reduced from an initial \$1.9 million (which would have been a 40% tax increase) to \$1.8 million, representing a 13.5% tax increase. He noted that approximately \$7,000-8,000 represents a 1% tax change for the Village.

Jeffrey Kahn presented data showing few incidents in the Village occurring between 1:30-6:00 AM over a six-month period and suggested either reducing overnight police coverage or cutting the force from six to five officers as potential cost-saving measures.

Eric Duffy cautioned against reducing police coverage without proper public input and Selectboard involvement, as:

- The Town pays about 45% of the Police budget for at least 40 hours a week of coverage
- Reducing staffing could impact morale and increase overtime costs

Trustees discussed various considerations:

- The impact of health care costs on the budget
- Questions about how the Town is billed for police services
- Seton Mcilroy noted the 20% increase in police budget while Town's allocation only increased 3%
- A suggestion to remove Trustee salaries from the budget
- Concerns about public safety impacts of reducing coverage

The discussion concluded with Jeffrey Kahn asking the manager and Interim Police Chief to identify ways to reduce the budget to stay below a 10% increase.

Roger Logan commented that the boards should conduct a serious, data-driven analysis of police department needs going forward.

Municipal Permits Update

Lisa Lawlor presented recommendations for streamlining municipal permits:

- Create conformity and simplicity in all permit paperwork
- Designate specific personnel to work on permits
- Establish the municipal manager as the ultimate decision maker
- Distinguish between permits that need administrative review versus trustee review
- Require permits needing trustee approval to be submitted 10 days before a meeting
- Create checklists for both committee and municipal staff
- Develop simplified permit forms with consistent formats
- Consolidate similar permits (e.g., combining use of the Village Green and Gore permits)

Lisa Lawlor proposed continuing to work with municipal staff to update the forms and develop the checklists, with the goal of eventually moving the process online.

Village Meeting Prep and a dedication of the book

The board discussed preparations for the upcoming Village meeting, scheduled to start at 6:30 PM, with voting at 7:00 PM.

Lisa Lawlor proposed dedicating this year's Town report to Don and Betsy Wheeler for their lifetime of service to the Village. Don served as the Village tree warden, conducted tours at the Chamber of Commerce, and served as Clerk at meetings. Betsy taught kindergarten to generations of local children for over 40 years. The board agreed with this selection.

The Trustees also agreed to provide food prior to the Village meeting.

Amendment to Village Parking Ordinance

The board discussed amendments to the Village parking ordinance:

- Ford Street would have one-sided parking with no parking on the east side
- Frost Mills Place was added as an approved street
- Benson Place was removed

Amy McElroy as a resident of Ford Street thanked the board for all their hard work.

Motion: by Vice Chair Jeffrey Kahn to approve the amendments to the Village Parking Ordinance (8:00PM)

Seconded: Lisa Lawlor

Vote: 4-0-0 passed (No Seton Mcilroy)

G. Proposed Executive Session 1 V.S.A 313

Motion: Vice Chair Jeffrey Kahn to enter executive session under 1 VSA section after making a specific finding that premature general public knowledge would clearly place the public body or a person involved at a substantial disadvantage: Contracts (8:01 PM)

Seconded: by Brenda Blakeman

Vote: 5-0-0, passed

Motion: by Vice Chair Jeffrey Kahn to exit executive Session (8:13 PM)

Seconded: by Lisa Lawlor

Vote: 5-0-0, passed

H. Approval of Minutes

Motion: by Vice Chair Jeffrey Kahn to approve the minutes with the changes stated by Vice Chair Kahn (8:15 PM)

Seconded: by Lisa Lawlor

Vote: 4-0-0, passed

J. Adjournment

Motion: by Vice Chair Jeffrey Kahn to adjourn the meeting at
(8:16PM)

Seconded: Brenda Blakeman

Vote: 5-0-0 passed

Respectfully submitted,

Kitty Mears Koar