ghty of Woodstock Board
of Trustees Meeting
January 26th 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

Public: Nicholas Seldon, Ellen Soroka, Wendy Spector, Jon Spector, Wendy Marrinan, Eliza Tarlow, Ben Pauley,

A. Call to order

1. Vice Chair Jeffrey Kahn called the January 26th 2026, Village Trustees meeting to order at 6:30PM.

B. Additions and Deletions

~~Potential Executive Session 1 V.S.A 313~~

FY27 Budget- Move to Discussion

C. Citizens' Comments

Nicholas Seldon commented on the FY27 budget. He also inquired whether Trustee Lisa Lawler had looked into how many police officers have left the Woodstock Police force under the current Police Chief. Lisa Lawler did not respond to his comment.

D. Discussion

FY27 Budget

Eric Duffy presented the revised budget, noting that after requested changes to salary allocations for Water and Sewer staff, cuts to capital reserves, and removal of Trustee stipends, the projected tax increase had been reduced to 9.86 percent. This was a significant reduction from previous projections of approximately 40 percent, which had been progressively lowered to 27 percent and then 13 percent in prior discussions.

The Trustees expressed satisfaction with the current budget proposal. Chair Seton Mcilroy confirmed that the final expense amount was $1,805,116.18, with a tax increase of 9.86 percent.

Motion: by Vice Chair Jeffrey Kahn to approve the FY27 budget with total expenses of $1,805,116.18. (6:37 PM)

Seconded: Brenda Blakeman

Vote: 5-0-0 passed

Design Review Process Recommendation

Chair Seton Mcilroy reported on discussions regarding changes to the design review process following the resignation of all the members of the Village Design Advisory Committee (VDAC) in the fall. She shared that after meeting with former VDAC members, one suggestion was to change the composition of the Village Development Review Board (VDRB) to include two members with design backgrounds (architecture, design, or historical expertise).

This approach would ensure that design expertise exists on the board when applicants propose changes within the Village, allowing for more efficient review on a single board while maintaining necessary expertise. It would also allow applicants to consult with the board before formal submission to facilitate smoother applications.

The discussion focused on whether to increase the VDRB from five to seven members or maintain five members but require that two positions be filled by individuals with design expertise. The board acknowledged the need to clearly define what qualifies as design expertise. The board also discussed having a list of "standards" for changes to homes in the Village that if the applicant was making a change to their home within these standards, they could potentially bypass the boards.

Multiple members of the public contributed to the discussion:

- Ellen Soroka expressed agreement with the approach described by Chair Seton Mciliroy.
- Wendy Spector noted the value of having VDAC input on applications when she served on the VDRB. She explained that the VDAC role had a different mandate than the VDRB, and the structure chosen would reflect the Village's priorities regarding development versus design.
- Wendy Marrinan expressed concern about losing the equal weight currently provided by having separate boards of five members each. She noted the importance of design expertise in applications within the design review overlay district.
- John Spector emphasized that regulations should be the primary focus, rather than relying on individual board members' interpretations. He suggested that clearly defined regulations would allow for consistent decision-making regardless of board composition.
- Eliza ? stressed the historical significance of Woodstock and encouraged public involvement in determining how design considerations should be weighted in the review process.
- Ben Pauley shared his experience on the VDRB and expressed concern about merging the boards, noting that having a separate advisory committee allowed for more informal dialogue with applicants.
- Chair Seton Mcilroy clarified that the Planning Commission has been reviewing the zoning bylaws for the past year and emphasized that anything the Village wants to absolutely require must be in the bylaws, while other considerations remain preferences.

The Trustees agreed to recommend merging the two design review boards function into the VDRB with a minimum of two positions requiring design expertise, with a preference for a five-member board. Chair Seton Mcilroy volunteered to draft a letter to the Planning Commission conveying this recommendation.

J. Adjournment

Motion: by Vice Chair Jeffrey Kahn to adjourn the meeting at (7:14PM)

Seconded: Brenda Blakeman

Vote: 5-0-0 passed

Respectfully submitted,

Kitty Mears Koar