

Village of Woodstock
Board of Trustees Personnel Hearing
March 2nd, 2026
9:00 AM
Masonic Hall & Zoom
Minutes

Draft minutes are subject to approval.

Trustees Present: Chair Seton McIlroy, Vice Chair Jeffrey Kahn, Lisa Lawlor, Brenda Blakeman, Frank Horneck

Staff: Eric Duffy

Lawyers: Attorney Brian Monaghan Esq., Attorney Kendell Hoechst Esq., Attorney Linda Fraas Esq.

Public: Pamela Clarke

Call to Order

Chair Seton McIlroy to called the March 2nd Village Trustees meeting to order at 9:00 AM.

Preliminary Matters and Ground Rules

Attorney Monaghan established several important ground rules for the proceeding. He instructed all attendees to silence their phones and refrain from any comments, reactions, or disruptions during testimony. He explained that unlike regular board meetings, this quasi-judicial hearing would not accept public comment, and anyone disrupting the proceedings would be required to leave. The hearing was being conducted both in-person and via Zoom for public access.

The hearing officer outlined the schedule, planning breaks at 10:30 AM and noon, with the possibility of continuing into the afternoon and potentially a second day, if necessary. He noted that written statements addressing conflict of interest allegations from Trustees would be made available.

Opening Statements

9:06 AM Attorney Fraas, Attorney for the Mr. Joseph Swanson presented her opening statement.

9:26 AM Attorney Fraas concluded her opening statement.

9:26 AM Attorney Hoechst, Attorney for the Village of Woodstock, presented her opening statement.

9:34 AM Attorney Hoechst concluded her opening statement.

Evidence and Exhibit Disputes

9:25AM Attorney Fraas presented her Evidence and Exhibit Disputes, Attorney Hoechst refuted Attorney Fraas Evidence and Exhibit Disputes. Both Attornies went back and forth taking turns speaking.

Hearing Officer's Evidence Rulings

After deliberation, Attorney Monaghan admitted most exhibits with specific exceptions:

- Most portions of Exhibit K (complaints about Manager Duffy) were excluded as irrelevant

- Exhibits R and T were excluded from being submitted.
- The employee exit survey and initial email in Exhibit K were admitted
- All other exhibits were admitted into evidence

Municipal Manager Duffy's Testimony

11:30 AM Attorney Fraas called Municipal Manager Eric Duffy to the stand.

11:30 AM Attorney Fraas questioned Municipal Manager Duffy.

12:26 PM Attorney Fraas temporarily concluded her questioning.

12:26 PM Attorney Monaghan stated they would be taking an hour break for Lunch.

1:30 PM Municipal Manager Eric Duffy took the stand.

1:30 PM Attorney Fraas questioned Municipal Manager Duffy

3:55 PM Attorney Fraas temporarily concluded her questioning.

Cross Examination

3:56 PM Attorney Hoechst questioned Municipal Manager Duffy

5:02 PM The Hearing was concluded for the day, will reconvene tomorrow March 3rd at 9 AM

*Respectfully submitted,
Kitty Mears Koar*

March 2, 2026

To Woodstock Village Board of Trustees

From: Seton McIlroy, Chair Woodstock Village Board of Trustees

Re: Response to Conflict of Interest Accusation made by Joseph Swanson

I submit this statement for inclusion in the minutes of the quasi-judicial personnel hearing of Joseph Swanson on March 2, 2026 to respond to the accusation that I should recuse myself. Mr. Swanson alleges that I have a conflict of interest because (1) I am named in a lawsuit by the subject of the hearing; (2) I publicly rebutted statements made by that individual; and (3) I had knowledge of the matter from its inception.

Under 24 V.S.A. § 1992, municipal officers must disqualify themselves where they have a direct personal or financial interest in a matter, or where their impartiality might reasonably be questioned. The statute protects the integrity of municipal decision-making while recognizing that not every personal connection or prior involvement requires disqualification. In response to the allegations, I state the following:

1. Having knowledge of the ongoing situation is consistent with, and arises from, my statutory duties as a Village Trustee. Trustees are charged with oversight and with receiving information about municipal matters; being informed does not, by itself, create a disqualifying conflict.
2. My public statements were made to provide accurate information to constituents and to protect the public record. Correcting misinformation prior to the filing or announcement of a quasi-judicial hearing or lawsuit was an exercise of my duty to the public and does not, in itself, constitute the type of prejudgment or personal interest that requires disqualification under 24 V.S.A. § 1992.
3. I should not be required to recuse solely because the subject of the personnel hearing has chosen to name me in a lawsuit. Being named as a party in litigation, without more, does not automatically establish the disqualifying interests contemplated by the statute. Moreover, as I was acting within the scope of my duties as a Trustee, and, to the extent I am a defendant in a lawsuit filed by Mr. Swanson, the Village's indemnitor has provided me a legal defense and I have no basis to believe that I would not be covered in the event of any adverse judgment; thus, I have no financial stake in the outcome of any of the proceedings.
4. That said, I remain committed to fair proceedings. If the Trustees determine, based on the standards of 24 V.S.A. § 1992 and specific, articulable facts, that my impartiality can reasonably be questioned for a particular portion of the hearing, I will consider recusal from that portion.

Respectfully submitted,

Seton McIlroy

Chair, Woodstock Village Board of Trustees



March 2, 2026

To Woodstock Village Board of Trustees

From: Jeffrey Kahn, Member, Woodstock Village Board of Trustees

Re: Response to Conflict of Interest Accusation made by Joseph Swanson

I submit this statement for inclusion in the minutes of the quasi-judicial personnel hearing of Joseph Swanson on March 2, 2026 to respond to the accusation that I should recuse myself. Mr. Swanson alleges that I have a conflict of interest because (1) I was previously named in a lawsuit by the subject of the hearing; and (2) I was involved in an automobile incident that was related to, but was not actually a basis for any discipline against Mr. Swanson.

Under 24 V.S.A. § 1992, municipal officers must disqualify themselves where they have a direct personal or financial interest in a matter, or where their impartiality might reasonably be questioned. The statute protects the integrity of municipal decision-making while recognizing that not every personal connection or prior involvement requires disqualification.

In response to the allegations, I state the following:

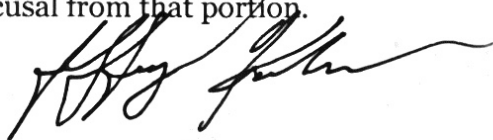
1. I was involved in an auto incident that did not form the basis for any discipline against Mr. Swanson. Accordingly, the situation I was involved in has no relationship to the Manager's decision to impose discipline on Mr. Swanson, and I can make a decision based solely on the evidence submitted in the hearing.
2. That said, I remain committed to fair proceedings. If the Trustees determine, based on the standards of 24 V.S.A. § 1992 and specific, articulable facts, that my impartiality can reasonably be questioned for a particular portion of the hearing, I will consider recusal from that portion.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeffrey Kahn

Member

Woodstock Village Board of Trustees



March 2, 2026

To Woodstock Village Board of Trustees

From: Brenda Blakeman, Member, Woodstock Village Board of Trustees

Re: Response to Conflict of Interest Accusation made by Joseph Swanson

I submit this statement for inclusion in the minutes of the quasi-judicial personnel hearing of Joseph Swanson on March 2, 2026 to respond to the accusation that I should recuse myself. Mr. Swanson alleges that I have a conflict of interest because he alleges that I made a gesture to his husband who was filming me while I was giving a haircut to a customer.

Under 24 V.S.A. § 1992, municipal officers must disqualify themselves where they have a direct personal or financial interest in a matter, or where their impartiality might reasonably be questioned. The statute protects the integrity of municipal decision-making while recognizing that not every personal connection or prior involvement requires disqualification.

In response to the allegations, I state the following:

1. As the incident occurred long after the time period for which the Municipal Manager sought to impose discipline on the employee, it is irrelevant to the issues in the case. Moreover, I considered it to be inappropriate for a member of the public to be filming me while I was giving a haircut to a customer, thus, my reaction.
2. That said, I remain committed to fair proceedings. If the Trustees determine, based on the standards of 24 V.S.A. § 1992 and specific, articulable facts, that my impartiality can reasonably be questioned for a particular portion of the hearing, I will consider recusal from that portion.

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda Blakeman
Member

Woodstock Village Board of Trustees



Signature: E. Seton L. McIlroy
E. Seton L. McIlroy (Mar 17, 2026 13:15:28 EDT)
Email: smcilroy@townofwoodstock.org

Signature: 
Jenny Kahn (Mar 17, 2026 16:26:25 EDT)
Email: unicornvt@gmail.com

Signature: 
Frank Horneck (Mar 17, 2026 18:55:43 EDT)
Email: fhorneck@townofwoodstock.org

Signature: Lisa Lawlor
Lisa Lawlor (Mar 17, 2026 13:00:31 EDT)
Email: lwlawlor321@gmail.com

Signature: Brenda Blakeman
Brenda Blakeman (Mar 17, 2026 17:36:53 EDT)
Email: blakemanblb@aol.com