

**Village of Woodstock
Board of Trustees Meeting
September 8th, 2026
6:30PM
Town Hall & Zoom
Minutes**

Draft minutes are subject to approval.

Present: Chair Lisa Lawlor, Brenda Blakeman, Stephen Stuntz

Staff: Eric Duffy, Kitty Mears Koar, Sergeant Gary Salvatore

Public: Robert Pear, Elisa Tarlow, Roger Logan, Keri Bristow, Gay Travers, Peggy Fraser, Byron Kelly, Nicholas Seldon, Sarit Werner, Ellen Soroka, Wendy Marrinan, Susan Neuberg, Alison Taylor, Rick Gaspar,

A. Call to order

Chair Lisa Lawlor called the September 8th, 2026 of the Village Board of Trustees meeting to order at 6:30PM.

B. Additions and Deletions

Vote- Ethics Liaison

~~Middle Bridge Closure for Foliage~~

~~Wassail Update~~

~~Police Detail Fee Increase~~

C. Votes

Permits for Fall Foliage Food

Tree and Seeds

Trees and Seeds was represented by Keri Bristow, who explained that the nonprofit organization has sold homemade food on the Village Green during foliage season for several years, using proceeds to fund student service travel. This year, 20 students are scheduled to travel to Florida to clean beaches and assist with conservation efforts in the Everglades. Ms. Bristow confirmed that dates had been arranged with staff and that the certificate of insurance was in order. The Board expressed support for the program.

[Motion: by Stephen Stuntz to approve the permit for Trees and Seeds \(6:33 PM\)](#)

[Seconded: Brenda Blakeman](#)

[Vote: 3-0-0 passed](#)

Woodstock Elementary School PTO

Sarit Werner representing the PTO for a bake sale on Sunday, October 4 and Sunday, October 11, following the harvest supper. Insurance documentation and prior experience with the permit process were confirmed.

[Motion: by Stephen Stuntz to approve the permit for the PTO bake sale \(6:34 PM\)](#)

[Seconded: Brenda Blakeman](#)

[Vote: 3-0-0 passed](#)

Village Historic Preservation Commission Appointment

Ellen Soroka appeared remotely to address the Board regarding her appointment to the Village Historic Preservation Commission. She described a career as an architect focused on historic preservation in both teaching and practice, and expressed interest in pursuing educational grants to inform the public about preservation issues, including evolving federal regulations. Her application had been recommended by both Wendy Marrinan and Isabelle

Bradley. The Board expressed enthusiasm for her appointment.

Motion: by Brenda Blakeman to approve the appointment of Ellen Soroka to the Village Historic Preservation Commission (6:37 PM)

Seconded: Stephen Stuntz

Vote: 3-0-0 passed

Trustee of Public Fund Appointment

Mark Hall, who had been appointed by the Selectboard the prior week, appeared to address the Board of Trustees. He expressed his willingness to contribute to the community and indicated he had the capacity to help ensure the public fund is used productively. Trustees expressed appreciation for his volunteerism.

Motion: by Stephen Stuntz to appoint Mark Hall as Trustee of Public Funds (6:39 PM)

Seconded: Brenda Blakeman

Vote: 3-0-0 passed

Ethics Liaison Appointment

This item was added to the agenda at the start of the meeting. The Board noted that the Ethics Liaison position, required under state law enacted approximately two years ago, had been vacant following the departure of the previous liaison. Susan Chiefsky volunteered to fill the role. The position serves as the first point of contact for ethics complaints, reviewing whether a complaint is legitimate before passing it along the chain or closing it. Wendy Marrinan asked for clarification on the role, and it was confirmed that Susan would also serve as the contact referenced on the Village's website regarding conflict of interest.

Motion: by Stephen Stuntz to appoint Susan Chiesky as Ethics Liaison (6:42PM)

Seconded: Brenda Blakeman

Vote: 3-0-0 passed

Discussion of Tier 1B

- Chair Lisa Lawlor opened the discussion with a summary of the relevant background. Tier 1B is a designation established under Act 250 and Act 181 as part of Vermont's smart growth framework, applicable to small Village hub sites.
- Windsor County has approximately six such designated areas. The designation would create an exemption from Act 250 permitting for up to 50 housing units.
- March, the Board of Trustees had signed an agreement to join the Tier 1B designation at the request of Two Rivers Ottauquechee Regional Commission (TRORC). Associated zoning Bylaws will not be approved by the October 2026 deadline, subsequently the Village would effectively be removed from the current regional plan's Tier 1B map.
- It was noted that Woodstock could seek reinstatement through an amendment or addendum at a future date.

Public comment:

- Elisa Tarlow called on the Board to rescind its March vote immediately, arguing that the original vote was taken without adequate public discussion and that the public deserved a clean slate from which to engage in a meaningful decision-making process. She urged the Board to organize a special meeting to rescind the vote, to formally communicate to TRORC that Woodstock wishes to be removed from the draft map, and to schedule multiple additional public hearings on the draft zoning bylaws
- She further recommended surveys, phone outreach, and other methods to reach

residents who may not attend public meetings.

- Bob Pear suggested that the Board consider forming a public committee to gather community input, investigate the issues, and bring forward recommendations to the Trustees.
- Wendy Marrinan raised procedural and substantive concerns. She noted that the TRORC draft regional future land use map, available on their website, already shows Woodstock as a Tier 1B community, and expressed urgency around publicly clarifying the Village's position before the regional plan is finalized.
- She also pointed out that the geographic boundaries described in the TRORC map do not align with the Village's zoning overlays, historic district boundaries, or other regulatory frameworks, raising questions about how impact could be properly assessed.
- Gay Travers echoed earlier calls to rescind the vote and noted a pattern of commitments made at meetings that are not followed through on at subsequent meetings, expressing concern about the Board's credibility with the public. She advocated for a dedicated special meeting on Tier 1B where specific questions could be asked and answered by knowledgeable parties.
- Bob Pear read a prepared statement highlighting the historic significance of Woodstock Village. He noted that of the 556 parcels in the Village, the National Register of Historic Places inventory identifies 550 buildings, of which 462 — approximately 84 percent — are considered historically significant.
- Susan Neuberg expressed concern about transparency, questioned the expertise of staff and outside consultants who had advised the Board, and called on the Trustees to rescind the Tier 1B designation before making a more fully informed decision.
- Roger Logan urged the Board not to take any action that would unnecessarily foreclose options for developing housing in a manner sensitive to the community's character, noting that housing growth is critical to the vitality of the Village and the grand list.

After considerable public input, the Chair Lisa Lawlor acknowledged that a vote to rescind could not be taken at this meeting as it had not been properly warned. However, the Board agreed to the following:

- Eric Duffy will research the legal and procedural implications of rescinding or reconsidering the Tier 1B vote, including whether the vote is effectively moot given that new zoning bylaws have not been adopted.
- A formal vote on Tier 1B status will be placed on the agenda for the next meeting.
- TRORC will be notified that Woodstock will not have updated zoning bylaws in place by the deadline.
- Formation of a community committee on zoning regulation will be placed on the next meeting agenda as a discussion item, with the possibility of a vote.
- Additional public hearings on the draft zoning regulations will be planned beyond the September 29 hearing.

Rules and Procedures for Meeting

Chair Lisa Lawlor read aloud the full text of the newly established public comment and rules of conduct policy for Village of Woodstock Trustee Meetings, issued pursuant to 1 V.S.A. §312.

Roger Logan requested clarification that the right to raise a point of order is reserved to Trustees and the Chair, not members of the public, as the language as read was ambiguous. Bob Pear asked whether the rules would be posted to the website, and the Chair Lisa Lawlor confirmed they would. Elisa Tarlow raised three points including that the consequence of a vote taken without a prior public comment opportunity would be an open meeting law violation

requiring a "cure" within 14 days; and that placing Citizens Comment at the end of the agenda is disrespectful to the public and should be moved to the beginning of the meeting. Gay Travers similarly objected to Citizens' Comment appearing at the end of the agenda. Nicholas Seldon asked for clarification on what constitutes an "inappropriate hand gesture" and whether the Chair's discretion to limit repetitive comments could be used to silence persistent concerns from a citizen group. Chair Lisa Lawlor clarified that the rule says the chair "may" alter those provisions, not that the Chair "will," and that it is not intended as a mechanism to silence ongoing legitimate concerns.

No formal vote was required, as these rules are established by the Chair under applicable law.

Bylaw Hearing Date Announcement

Chair Lisa Lawlor announced that the first public hearing on the draft zoning regulations will be held on **September 29, 2026 at 6:30 PM** in the Town Hall meeting room. The draft zoning regulations are available on the Town's website and will also be linked from the Trustees page.

Eric Duffy confirmed that the required 15-day public notice will be published this week, and that once locked, no changes to the draft may be made until after the hearing.

Stephen Stuntz emphasized that this is the beginning of a multi-step process. Following the hearing, it is expected that revisions will be made, triggering another 15-day notice period and subsequent hearing. All Trustee discussions about changes or decisions will take place in public. Notification will be placed in the Vermont Standard, the Valley News, and in three physical locations within the Village, including the library and Post Office. The Board encouraged members of the public to share the notice through their own networks. Those wishing to comment at the hearing were invited to notify the Chair or Eric Duffy in advance so that the meeting may be structured appropriately. Written comments submitted in advance will become part of the public record unless the author requests otherwise.

Wendy Marrinan suggested organizing the hearing by section of the draft regulations, as was done at the Planning Commission's public hearing, to allow more focused and sequential testimony. Chair Lisa Lawlor indicated this approach would be considered as part of the hearing structure.

Appreciation of class of 1963 for Vail Field Water Foundation

Chair Lisa Lawlor offered public recognition and appreciation to the Woodstock Class of 1963 for their donation funding the replacement water refill station at Vail Field. Chair Lisa Lawlor noted that the water station is a valuable amenity for residents and visitors.

Halloween Discussion

Sarit Werner presented a proposed plan for the Board to consider regarding the organization of Halloween candy distribution on the three streets traditionally closed for trick-or-treating: High Street, Golf Avenue, and Maple Street. She had submitted a written plan and sought clarification on several logistical questions, including who would purchase the candy, how it would be distributed, and whether staff or Police could assist in contacting participating households.

- Chair Lisa Lawlor and Eric Duffy clarified that the Trustees' and municipality's role is limited to: purchasing candy (split equally at \$750 from the Village and \$750 from the Selectboard); arranging street closures; providing police, fire, and ambulance coverage; and handling trash and barricades.
- Municipal Staff and Trustees cannot serve as organizers, monitors, or distributors of candy for any community event, consistent with the approach taken for other Village events such as the Wassail parade and Veterans' Day.

- Several members of the public expressed concern about the late-stage nature of this discussion, the lack of a clear plan, and the burden being placed on the PTO, which noted that Halloween has never been part of its organizational mission.
- Elisa Tarlow stated that the PTO has been taking on increasing responsibility for an event that was historically managed by the Village Trustees, and that clarity about roles is essential. She urged the Board to commit to a comprehensive Halloween discussion no later than February or March in order to plan properly for future years.
- After extended discussion, the following was agreed upon: candy will be purchased and available for pick-up at Town Hall; a designated space at Town Hall will be set up for candy storage and distribution; the PTO will discuss at its Thursday's PTO meeting what volunteer support it can offer. Eric Duffy will follow up with the PTO with a clear statement of what the municipality will and will not provide; and the Chair committed to placing a broader Halloween discussion on the agenda after the budget process concludes, no later than February or March 2027.

Foliage Prep

Eric Duffy stated that the Village is still looking vendors for Fall Foliage Food on the Green. Two Vendors have already been approved. The Selectboard at their last meeting approved two port-to-potties for the weekends of peak foliage, Indigenous peoples weekend and the weekend before. They will be stationed at the Welcome Center.

D. Reports

Manager's Report

- Eric Duffy was appointed to the Vermont City Managers Board of Directors and is helping organize the fall conference, scheduled for the day after Town Fair.
- Tax bills are expected to be mailed by the end of the week. Bills will include a one-page summary showing how much revenue stays in Woodstock versus what is remitted to the state for education tax, payment options and associated fees, and information on short-term rental charges. Due dates are the first Friday of November (November 6) and the first Friday of May (May 7).
- The Selectboard is accepting applications to fill two vacancies, with a deadline of September 10. Interviews may be held September 15th.
- Eric Duffy acknowledged that Brad Tuckerman of the Village Public Works department has resigned to accept a position elsewhere in Woodstock, and thanked him for his service.

Finance Report

Eric Duffy presented the finance report, noting that with only two months elapsed in the fiscal year, revenues are still trickling in, and expenditures are largely on track. No significant items were flagged.

Alison Taylor posed several detailed questions regarding the executive section of the budget, specifically the salary and wages line item. Eric Duffy explained that three employees are shared across four funds — the Village, the Town, Water, and Sewer — allocated at 55% to the Town, 25% to the Village, and 10% each to Sewer and Water, as agreed during the joint budget process.

Ms. Taylor also asked why the final reconciled FY 2026 budget has not yet been presented to the Trustees and public, Eric Duffy stated that the FY 2026 books have not yet been fully closed and that the final report will be presented, likely at the next meeting, by the Finance Director.

Ms. Taylor further inquired about the absence of the fourth quarter moving violation revenue in the current budget report. Chair Lisa Lawlor explained that the state issues the

distribution check and is currently running one to one-and-a-half quarters behind, making this a state-level delay rather than a Village accounting issue.

Police Report

Sergeant Gary Salvatore presented the police report for August. He confirmed that all shifts were covered throughout August, including when officers were on vacation.

Nicholas Seldon requested that more radar enforcement be conducted on Route 106 at the transition from a 50/40 mph zone to a 25 mph zone, noting that the area had previously seen regular patrol activity that has since diminished.

Note: Portions of the police report and subsequent public comment were impaired by ongoing audio and technical difficulties with the remote meeting connection. The meeting was adjourned because of technical difficulties.

E. Adjournment

Motion: by Chair Stephen Stuntz adjourn the meeting (8:29 PM)

Seconded: Brenda Blakeman

Vote: 3-0-0 passed

Respectfully submitted,
Kitty Mears Koar

Robert Pear

September 8, 2026 regarding Tier 1b

I don't think many in our community truly understand how unique Woodstock is. We have a history and historic resources that would rival any community in the United States. I'll read from the United States Department of the Interior National Register of Historic Places,

"The Woodstock Village Historic District contains 550 buildings (462 contributing, 88 non-contributing), 11 structures (8 contributing, 3 non-contributing), 6 contributing sites, and 8 objects (6 contributing, 2 non-contributing) on approximately 408 acres of land."

Simply put, of the 550 total buildings inventoried in our Village by the United States Department of the Interior, 462 are considered historically significant enough to be listed on the National Historic Register. That is 84%- you would be hard-pressed to find that in any of our 50 states! Our village is unique and distinct from other communities not only because of the sheer number of homes listed on the NHR, but because of the excellent condition of them.

I am bringing this up because I am concerned how Tier 1b might affect our historic resources that are so unique and vitally important to our community. It goes without saying that these historic resources not only contribute to our quality of life in Woodstock, but are an important asset to our tourist economy and economy overall. People are drawn to Woodstock because of it.

I am pro housing. I spent most of my career as a residential building contractor in the business of building and improving people's homes. I served on the Upper Valley Habitat for Humanity board to help people in need of affordable housing. The problem with our particular situation in Woodstock is that there are very few, if any, vacant lots available for building in the Village. Our grand list for the Village totals 556 parcels. The list buildings in the Village inventoried on the National Historic Register is a total of 550. With so few parcels available, it isn't hard to figure out that in order to build new higher density housing in our Village, existing buildings would have to be demolished in order to make way for it. Since 84% of our buildings are listed on the National Historic Register, that more likely than not would mean the loss of some of our historic buildings and resources. These are important for our economy and our identity as a community. They must be protected because once they're gone- they're gone.