

**Village of Walden  
Board of Trustees Regular Meeting  
February 6, 2024**

Mayor Ramos called the regular meeting of the Village of Walden Board of Trustees to order at 6:30pm.

On roll call the following were:	Mayor:	John Ramos
Present:	Deputy Mayor	Willie Carley
	Trustees	Becky Pearson
		Chris Batson
		Kristie Hall
		Patricia Maher

Absent: Ralph Garrison Jr

Also Present: John Revella, Village Manager  
Marisa Kraus, Village Clerk  
David Donovan, Village Attorney

**Public Hearing – Local Law 2 of 2024 Double Utility Poles**

Trustee Pearson made a motion to open the public hearing for Local Law 2 of 2024 Double Utility Poles. Seconded by Deputy Mayor Carley. All ayes. Motion carried.

**Attorney Donovan:** This is legislation that other communities have adopted where we have the ability to go after utilities to have them take down poles that are no longer in service that present not only a potential threat, but also an eyesore.

**Mary Ellen Matise:** They're dangerous. The ones by MPB Church are pretty bad. To the point where we have to put cones on the sidewalk and tape. Why? Because the cable company can't come and move their line. Easy, it's a snap. One, two, three. It's been one up on Clinton Street now for two years. When you see the double X, you know it's problem.

Trustee Pearson made a motion to close the public hearing for Local Law 2 of 2024 Double Utility Poles. Seconded by Trustee Batson. All ayes. Motion carried.

**Village Manager's Report**

**Manager Revella:** We had a couple more small snow storms. Coordinated with Parks and DPW to make sure everything went smoothly. Unfortunately, the Building Department had to go out and site for sidewalks again. Had a lot of concerned residents that; some because of absent mindedness didn't realize some were hoping it would melt before there was a problem; and others, I don't know, were away. There are different reasons, but I try to work with people as much as possible as the code allows. Doesn't give us much discretion. Try to explain to the residents as much as possible, calmly as possible what the obligations are and what they need to do so. Most people were okay with it after explaining. We try to put those notices out every year, put on Facebook, put on the calendar, so that people are up to speed. I had a couple discussions with, attorney and also the Clerk with a couple FOILs. Met with the Comptroller for progress on their stuff that they're doing for the audit. Met with the DPW Superintendent and engineer to go over some issues with the Sewer Department, including the siphon on East Main Street. Had some problems there we had to fix due

to emergency. Some other things at the Tin Brook Station and also had a meeting with the DEC. and engineer, regarding our funding and the sewer upgrades that are going to be done. Should get some designs back on that to go over with the board as well. I had a conference with special counsel and village attorney on the Hill Street Bridge litigation, a decision. Which he'll touch on again in attorney client on how to move forward on that. Also went over this with special counsel, the policy changes that may be discussed tonight by the board. I covered for Superintendent for Public Works while he had some time off. Went over the budget prep with the Treasurer and met with some residents regarding some rehab loans. Did Code Enforcement interviews with the Building Inspector. Recreation and Parks. Indoor pickle ball is going very well. Added another session. Basketball is going well. They have about 150 kids participating. Unfortunately, Parks had to clear 71 sidewalks for violations. The Easter Egg Hunt is scheduled for March 24th. Scout cabin work actually started already. Building Inspector issued 16 new permits. Had 90 violation notices sent out for snow removal and 71 done by the village. The rest were done on arrival. Part Time Inspector issued certificate of compliance, had done residential and commercial fire inspections and sent us the follow up memo for 35-37 North Montgomery Street, which everyone should have a copy of. Clerk's been updating Facebook, website. Going over FOILs, handicaps, working with the staff on duties and coverage, preparing for the upcoming election, the minutes and responding to residents. The Finance Department, met with me and a couple department heads go over the initial budget. Edmunds, bank reqs, payroll, year-end balance for 23 audit started, but it's not finished yet. Completed the 1099s, W-2s and IRS docs that are needed for the annual payroll and accruals. Public Works, as usual, working on, vehicles, pumps, pressuring sludge, checking the stations. Water Department had 29 mark outs, replaced 6 meters, replaced 21 endpoints. Conducted 3 inspections, 3 closings. Public Works also assisted contractor at the sewer siphon at East Main for a few days. They had to watch for 24 hours as they bypassed while that work was being done. They cleared the streets and sidewalks from storms, catch basins, flushing and jetting and general practices. The Police Department is still looking for staff. Had a couple more part time applicants come in. We're training the current hires for patrol. They did issue 41 traffic tickets and 22 parking tickets, since last meeting. Had 7 MVAs and 8 arrests and responded to 333 blotters.

**Trustee Pearson:** You put an audit report in the box.

**Manager Revella:** I didn't know that you guys didn't have in your box. I have a copy. I'll put it in. Did you get it?

**Trustee Pearson:** I had Kelly give it to me. Are you going to be going over that? And when? RBT use to come in and go over all that.

**Manager Revella:** They were going to present 22 and 23. They're hoping to do at the same time. I'm just not sure what their status is in 23 now. We have to get an update to see if they can do it soon.

**Trustee Pearson:** Why wouldn't we just have them do 22?

**Manager Revella:** Because we pay for them to come in each time I think. Can ask them. If you want to do 22 now and then do 23.

**Trustee Pearson:** Wasn't that included in the 22 money that you've already spent to have that report done for 22?

**Manager Revella:** We're over budget on the audit report. I'll check.

**Trustee Pearson:** What about the floors in this building? Where we at?

**Manager Revella:** We're waiting for the contractor.

**Trustee Pearson:** Do we have one?

**Manager Revella:** The engineer walked the whole project with the contractor that responded. We're just trying to coordinate because they wanted everything to be empty all at once, to do all the floors and we have no building for several days. And we told them that wasn't possible. It's got to be in sections. So, he's trying to coordinate with them, and if he can't, then he's got to find another contractor.

**Trustee Pearson:** Do we give these people a timeframe to get things organized and a number back and other stuff, or are we just kind of waiting to maybe somebody will get back to us?

**Manager Revella:** We're hoping he'll go to contract with us, and if he doesn't, we're going to try and find another contractor, which has been difficult.

**Trustee Pearson:** Code enforcement. Did we hire somebody?

**Manager Revella:** We had the interviews Thursday. We're hoping to hire one of the three that interviewed. Yes. I have to send out letters for that.

**Trustee Pearson:** Treasurer applications. I need to talk about the Treasurer position because I am very frustrated with what's happening. We knew a long time ago that the Treasurer was resigning and I understand that the Mayor gets to appoint it, but he's not allowing some of his board members to help with the process. Is he asking for salaries for, we don't know who the people are, what their qualifications are. How can you, as a fiscally responsible person of the taxpayers, I cannot, in good faith, come up with a number without knowing the qualifications of people that are applying. I am not going to answer that question. And we already don't even have somebody and Kelly's gone. Here we are in a spot that we really need to work with, and it's not happening. It's frustrating for me sitting here. You don't have to come to me, Mayor, and ask me questions, but you and other board members ran with you last year. Maybe you could talk to them and see what they feel is a good candidate. I don't know. I think that that should be the process. I get you can appoint it, but I think the board should have a say in what's happening. That's just my opinion. I find it very frustrating and we don't even have someone yet. I don't know who you have picked out. I have no clue. I just think that it's, the position needs to really follow through. If you don't have enough people or you don't think somebody is qualified, maybe we need to reapply and talk and put it out there again. I don't know. I don't even know where we are. I email you, you don't email me back. It's very, very frustrating sitting here and not understanding the process that you're going through. That's what I need to talk about with that. Waterfront Park there were two bids in Waterfront Park from the engineering firm. Where are we and what's happening?

**Manager Revella:** What do you want know?

**Trustee Pearson:** I want to know where the bid process is, where we are in bidding? Do we have a bid package ready to go? Can we see it?

**Manager Revella:** No. There's not a bid package ready yet.

**Trustee Pearson:** How much longer?

**Manager Revella:** I don't know.

**Trustee Pearson:** Are we going to put a timeframe on it?

**Manager Revella:** There's always a time frame in a bid packet.

**Trustee Pearson:** Yes, in the bid packet. But getting the bid packet ready and ready to go.

**Manager Revella:** There's always a time frame in the contract as well.

**Trustee Pearson:** What do we have for a time frame.

**Manager Revella:** It's not done. I don't know. When the engineer gets it to me I'll tell you.

**Trustee Pearson:** Can we give the engineer a time frame to have it to us?

**Manager Revella:** You mean the bid packet to us? I don't understand what you're asking.

**Trustee Pearson:** You said we're going back out to bid for the next process. Is there a package ready to go?

**Manager Revella:** No. Not yet.

**Trustee Pearson:** When will that be ready?

**Manager Revella:** I don't know.

**Trustee Pearson:** Can we ask the engineer and find out when that will be ready? And can we, as a board, put a time frame on that?

**Manager Revella:** I did ask for it. Our DEC problems take priority over that. He's doing those right now. He has to have those plans in this week. I'm sure he's prioritizing that. Once that's done, we'll try to mock up the bid packet. I know he was corresponding with Andrew Millspaugh about the bid packet a few times.

**Trustee Pearson:** That's been a month already. How long have the sewer issues been going on that he needs to do?

**Manager Revella:** We just had the meeting with the DEC on Friday. You wanted to know what was next at the waterfront park. They're going to do some more grading and some fencing, for silt fencing is going to go up now that the water is down this week, hopefully tomorrow. Then hopefully the bid packets out soon so we can get that back by sometime in March so they can start in April. That's the goal. I just want to make sure, I don't know, I sent an email out on behalf of the Mayor, he did pick somebody to be the Treasurer. I know that there's other stuff that has to go on, but he did pick a person just so everyone's aware. Besides that, it's you guys.

**Trustee Pearson:** It's not going to be me guys, because I don't know what the qualifications of these people are, so I'm not going to vote on that without knowing what that person's all about being fiscally responsible for taxpayers. I can't make that decision. If everybody else wants to vote on it, that's great. But it won't be me until I see what's going on. Well 5 and 4, how are we doing?

**Manager Revella:** Well 4 has been online. One of them was online immediately. 4 or 5, I don't remember which one was which. The other one just came back on after they did more testing. But

they're on.

**Trustee Pearson:** While I'm talking about the Treasurer position, I think that the village needs to relook at the residency for hires in this village. I understand that you kind of want people to live in the Village of Walden, but I think you're really cutting off your nose to spite your face because you really don't get enough people qualified. Just maybe in Walden, where we could look in the Town of Montgomery. The board should maybe be looking at a little bit more of a distance. If you want miles, if you want time, if you want Orange County, Town of Montgomery, whatever you want. I think we really need to look at that, because I think that can be something that's hindering this village from getting hires into this village.

**Manager Revella:** The only people that are restricted by residency are the Chief and myself for the village, and the Treasurer and the Clerk for the Town of Montgomery. No one else is restricted.

**Trustee Pearson:** They're not restricted for the Town of Montgomery.

**Manager Revella:** The Town of Montgomery residency is the restriction for the Clerk and the Treasurer.

**Trustee Pearson:** I would hope the board would like to readdress that because we'd at least talk about it with new board members and see what their thinking. What does VRI do for us? What is their purpose?

**Manager Revella:** They're our sewer operator. We run under their license.

**Trustee Pearson:** The PD air conditioner that was blown up in the surge. Will that be fixed? Is it under warranty?

**Manager Revella:** Yes. They came here to get a part that was broken to replace.

**Trustee Pearson:** We are going to talk about Hill Street Bridge. Will we be talking about Clinton Street as well?

**Manager Revella:** You guys resolved that last meeting.

**Trustee Pearson:** I would also like to talk about the coming up in April, RFPs for our consultants. Maybe we need to look at that again too, what's out there. Sometimes we should be doing that. I talked about it last year and we didn't. Nobody wanted to consider that. But I think sometimes we need to look and see what else is out there for our village and just see if we have the right people and what's going on. PD accreditation, where are we with that? It's been 3 years. How long does that take?

**Manager Revella:** I know they made a lot of progress with Lexipol and the policies. That was all done. They're continuing that process.

**Trustee Maher:** Are we discussing the Treasurer position at all during the meeting?

**Mayor Ramos:** During the executive session, yes.

**Trustee Pearson:** The position can be talked about without being in executive session. If you're talking about a person, it's a different story.

**Mayor Ramos:** We'll be talking about the particular person.

**Trustee Maher:** I was just asking because it's part of your manager's report that you had reviewed the applications. But if you've already selected a candidate. I was just wondering, we'll find that information out at some point today.

**Manager Revella:** It was in the email that I sent everybody, the person. But you guys can talk about that later.

**Trustee Hall:** How many more part time officers are they looking for?

**Manager Revella:** 4 or 5 more would be good, if we could. We had an applicant drop off yesterday. We're just trying to get them, approved by the county. We hired one who came to see us. Hopefully this other one comes in and then we get a couple more. That would be great. Then during the budget I'll talk about options for the board and for the village.

**Trustee Batson:** The police activity is through the roof. That's more than we've had in the last month. What drove that?

**Manager Revella:** 3 weeks between meetings instead of 2. And the new trainees getting out on the road, that's been helping.

**Trustee Batson:** Officers getting deeper into their role. The other question I had is a couple weeks ago, we still talked about there's potential for 2 high profile cases.

**Manager Revella:** Yes. We're waiting for the DA's office on both. We were told not to really discuss either one until the DA's office comes back. But once they do, they're supposed to do a press release. I can talk to you about maybe about 1 of them in executive.

**Trustee Batson:** If there's media attention or something like that that's gonna be drawn to the town. That's what I'm interested in. The details are may or may not be privileged to. The other thing I just want to talk about is the snow policy. Not the policy itself, but, one of the feedback items that we consistently hear from the public is that, unfortunately, we've got an issue with selective enforcement. There's a healthy amount of these, but can you just briefly walk through how we would determine, I know that it sounds incredibly evident that if you didn't clean the sidewalk within 24 hours, you should be cited. Is there more to it than that? Is there a particular pattern that we follow? Is there just drive around and observe?

**Manager Revella:** Right. Just drive around and observe, take the picture.

**Trustee Batson:** Was there the chance that we have selective routes that we do or do not drive by? Is there any follow up to determine that we've driven the entirety of the village?

**Manager Revella:** The last few storms, we've had both employees out checking areas. They got to all of the areas that they can get within that timeframe cited and sent them out. It was a lot. They go to as many streets as they can, usually go to all streets. Not all streets have sidewalks, so they don't have to go everywhere.

**Trustee Batson:** I see that they are on our agenda, but is where the violations are cited a matter of public record?

**Manager Revella:** Yes.

**Deputy Mayor Carley:** We talked earlier about the sewer smoke test. When is the next one and how many do we have?

**Manager Revella:** We applied for a third one. We were awarded 2 so far. The first one we just did, because we can't do the work until the county gives us the contract because it's through CDBG, the grant. The county finally gave us the contract and we had to get it done within a month. So, we did it. We were waiting for 2 years for the contract. The next one from 2022, we're still waiting for it to be done. That'll be Main Street. Once they give us the contract, we'll do it. We just don't have it yet. We have to wait for their contract approval, and then we send it out to bid, and then it comes back and they do the work. It's usually pretty quick once we get that. Then we gotta make sure we got the next one.

**Deputy Mayor Carley:** How many more do we anticipate?

**Manager Revella:** I don't know how many more we can do. Depends on if there's funding available. Once we get these 3 done, we'll see if it's even necessary. We found a lot so far.

**Deputy Mayor Carley:** I see the meeting with the residents on 3 Oak regarding rehab loan progress. How is that going?

**Manager Revella:** Okay.

**Deputy Mayor Carley:** The work they were doing on East Main. Can you go over that?

**Manager Revella:** Sewer siphon. Whenever they redid that bridge on 52, I think it was in the 90s. They should have redone the piping there and they didn't, they left it. It was antiquated. It's not efficient and it gets clogged whenever there's grease poured down the lines. And apparently there are a couple places up line that pour grease down and was clogging the siphon. Fills up, overflows, backs up in buildings. We tried to find a way to get around that siphon. We had to have a contractor come in and redo the piping. It's a confined space. Redid it so the siphon is not the way it was constructed before. It's more of a raise and flow, which is safer, less likely to back up, and should be more efficient. They had to do some concrete piping work. They had to stop the flow, bypass it, do the work, wait for the concrete to cure. Check it. It took a few days to get that done.

**Deputy Mayor Carley:** Was this the first time this?

**Manager Revella:** The first time it's backed up? No. It used to have an overflow and the DEC made the village block the overflow. Instead of the overflow going naturally out like it does in the Tin Brook Station like it was designed to do, it goes into residences instead. Hopefully we alleviated that with the work we did in the siphon pit.

#### **Approval of January 16, 2024**

Trustee Batson made a motion to approve the January 16, 2024 minutes. Seconded by Trustee Maher. All ayes. Motion carried.

#### **Public Comment**

**Mary Ellen Matise:** I just wanted to comment about the Comprehensive Plan Committee. We did make a selection at the Zoning Board. 2 people who have never been on the committee before are going to be on. I did mention to the manager I'd like to have my hat in the ring. I'd like to be considered also as maybe historian or at large. Thank you.

## **Local Law 2 of 2024 – Double Utility Poles**

**Manager Revella:** Any board members have any questions, comments, concerns about the local law?

**Attorney Donovan:** It would be a negative declaration and then will be to adopt local law number 2 of 2024 if the board is so inclined.

**Deputy Mayor Carley:** Just for clarity, for me, I'm looking at the section B on the 132-4 B and C \*read section into minutes\* Then I see C, 4th line down, it said it must be removed 30 days.

**Trustee Pearson:** One was a public threat and the other one I think was just to be moved.

**Attorney Donovan:** I believe so, but just give me a second to read through it. I think if you look, plant is defined, there's a distinction between a top plant and a plant. The top plant being on top. Plant in definition has been described as cables, terminals, conductors and other fixtures necessary for transmitting electric, telephone, cable, television or other telecommunications services.

**Deputy Mayor Carley:** I'm good with that. I have one more. 132-6 penalties for offense. It could be in the same vein. \*read section into minutes\* Then in B, now I see the difference. That's all I had. Thank you.

**Trustee Pearson:** 132-3. I think we should, because we are not a town or city, I think we should add sidewalks. I know it says rights of way, but I would like sidewalk to be put into that and put a definition in as well. Because when I went out here last night, there are 3 polls on this corner and there are 3 on that corner. When I sent you all pictures of that just recently. I think we should add sidewalks and that would be on 132-4 as well. Everywhere that you have the right of way, I think we should add a sidewalk. 132-4 A, at the very end, failure to comply with the requirements of this provision may, I don't want "may". I want "will" or "shall" to be put in there instead of may. I think it needs to get done. And when we have may it doesn't mean it has to get done at all. That's also down in letter C. That same last word. When we get to number 132-5 somewhere in there which is extensions authorized, I really think that when there is a problem with a pole or it's not taken care of, I think that we should have the Superintendent of Public Works also, report to the Public Service Commission at the same time, because they're the ones who will help follow through with that as well, not just the Village of Walden. I think that that should be a letter that gets written at the same time. I don't care where you want to add it.

**Attorney Donovan:** It's not up to me to add.

**Trustee Pearson:** I'm just saying to the board, I think that because the Public Service Commission is the one that can actually make things happen more so than probably even this law. I think we really should have that in there, that when there's an issue that the Superintendent or whoever is going to be in charge of that, sends the letter or talks to the Public Service Commission at the same time, what the pole number is, because then the Public Service Commission will look that up. They only have 30 days, I think it is, to finalize that. I read that somewhere. They have to complete the pole transfer within 30 days when the Public Service Commission gets in. I know we're making our own, but I also believe we should have that put in there. That's just my thoughts. You guys will decide that. Also, when they start taking down the poles, they should be pulled out and not cut off. I would like that in there as well. I talked to somebody from NYSEG who is retired now. A lot of times he'll come along and cut them off and then later on they get covered up and they go to put another pole in in the future. You can't get it in. But they can pull the pole out most of the time and not have an issue. They can also be responsible to fix the sidewalk that they're taking it out of. I believe that should also be in the law. Fix the sidewalk. Pull the pole out.



**Trustee Maher:** I agree with getting the whole pole out, so the wording should be in there for that and agree with changing "may" in those 2 paragraphs.

**Trustee Hall:** I agree with them and also with the sidewalks.

**Trustee Batson:** I agree with everything, but can you just expand on the idea of providing the additional documentation to the other position that you referenced?

**Trustee Pearson:** You can go right now to the Public Service Commission and report a pole that there's an issue with a pole and I don't know all the laws, but with the zombie pole, they finalize it and go forward and help get that process finalized. I know we have the law and sometimes maybe it's not going to be strong enough that we're just a village doing that. But if we include the Public Service Commission in our law, that we will notify them that there is a pole that needs to be taken care of, that maybe we can follow up with that as well, and they'll be a little stronger for getting things done. You're talking about 3 poles right out here on a corner. It's amazing and a big rock. When they pull those poles out, I believe the sidewalks should be repaired by the people taking the pole out. Why should the village be responsible to repair the sidewalks?

**Trustee Batson:** I agree that they should they should fix any damage. I just didn't understand that the Public Service Commission also had a role in this. If they have a role in doing this, why are we doing it?

**Trustee Pearson:** Because probably we don't probably follow up enough. If we're going to put this law in and they'll make our people responsible and go one more step and make them also responsible, maybe John can answer that.

**Manager Revella:** Public Service Commission is in direct oversight of the utility companies in New York State. When they change a pole over, the lines over, the Public Service Commission doesn't really care if they leave another pole or damage the sidewalk. That's not under their oversight. Their oversight is that the wires for utilities for the public are maintained and transferred. That's why they don't really go that far or in-depth as this does.

**Trustee Pearson:** It also could maybe get those wires transferred quicker than 6 months or 3 months or whatever time that's taking to do that. Once the process starts, we could probably have that letter go or something be addressed to that Public Service Commission and maybe they can help facilitate the process.

**Trustee Batson:** The policy asks just simply that we provide the documentation that we are doing to the Public Service Commission as well.

**Trustee Pearson:** Because John, could right now report a pole to the Public Service Commission and say this is what's going on with it and they probably would have to come look at it. I don't know the details. I didn't read every law of the service commission, but I read the zombie law.

**Trustee Maher:** Maybe we should add that to section C, right after the first sentence. 132-4 C.

**Trustee Pearson:** Make it a D.

**Manager Revella:** You can put it in C, after you notifying public utility and Public Service Commission.

**Trustee Pearson:** That's fine.

**Deputy Mayor Carley:** But with the plug in and fix the sidewalk, will that be combined and make it a D?

**Trustee Pearson:** That's probably a whole other sentence somewhere, because we don't have it in this law now, fixing the sidewalk because it talks about rights of way, doesn't talk about fixing a sidewalk, but we should put it in there. Why not? Why should we be responsible for them? Why wouldn't we be able to say to them, why can't you coordinate with us if we have any work happening in the village of putting new sidewalks in that you have to kind of coordinate with the village. They just put new sidewalks in, and somebody comes up the street to me and says, why are they putting poles in? You just put in new sidewalks in. I said, I don't know. I called John and said, what is going on? Why couldn't we coordinate that ahead of time and then put the sidewalks in? Again, you're still going to have 2 poles there for a while. I don't know how long it takes to do that.

**Trustee Batson:** As long as there's no legal ramifications of changing may to shall. It does force us into action, which I like.

**Attorney Donovan:** Ultimately, the court opposes the fine.

**Trustee Batson:** Changing may to shall just ensures that we, from an accountability standpoint will do that.

**Attorney Donovan:** We don't do that. But if you feel more comfortable with that language, I'm certainly more than happy to put that in.

**Trustee Batson:** That's my point, does it change anything?

**Attorney Donovan:** It changes to the extent, the changes that you have expressed interest in tonight. You can't adopt this law. You would need to have me prepare it and like before, I think I gave it to you in October, kind of reviewed in October, November, December, January. Ready for public hearing. Now it's public hearing you decide it's appropriate to make a bunch of changes. I'd have to get those changes to you. You'd have to be, comfortable enough with the changes to schedule again for a public hearing because these are not insubstantial changes.

**Deputy Mayor Carley:** Echo everything that Trustee Pearson has said and everyone else. Especially the D, about fix the sidewalk and the plug. Whatever language we can use for that so that the village wouldn't have to incur the cost. If possible.

**Trustee Pearson:** 132-6 D, it says such action may seek to remove damaged poles. I think, "will" seek to remove it. Let's take that and change that around to from may to will. Then also 132-6 A, \*read section into minutes\* per pole is not in there location.

**Attorney Donovan:** Each pole would be a violation.

**Trustee Pearson:** I would like it in there.

**Deputy Mayor Carley:** I read it as per pole already. It's a zombie pole, a bad pole in that particular area. Correct?

**Manager Revella:** Yes.

**Deputy Mayor Carley:** That means that that's a violation on that street.

**Trustee Pearson:** But you have 2 or 3 poles out here.

**Deputy Mayor Carley:** Each area where there's a pole, a zombie pole or dual pole is a violation. That's 3 violations.

**Trustee Hall:** But by having per pole in there just kind of takes the guesswork.

**Deputy Mayor Carley:** There is no guesswork. A pole is a violation.

**Manager Revella:** In case there's more than 2 in 1 location. Is that what you're saying?

**Trustee Pearson:** There's 3 right here and 3 on the other corner.

**Attorney Donovan:** If that's what you want, that's fine. Understand, for a practical point of view, the Superintendent of Public Works is going to notify for each pole. Each pole has a number. But if you feel better to say per pole, we're making a bunch of changes now.

**Manager Revella:** Let's make them all. But you need consensus on those changes for Dave. Any changes that are not in consensus. I don't want to waste his time putting something in you don't agree on.

**Mayor Ramos:** Maybe a clerical error, but 132-4 B, 10 is 10 days or 10 hours.

**Attorney Donovan:** 10 days.

**Mayor Ramos:** Can we put days there? Obviously, when the notice of violation goes for the public utilities, it's going to identify how many poles, there going to be evidence that these poles are situated at this corner with the numbers. I have no problem with the verbiage that is included right now. 132-6 B any public utility found guilty of violating this chapter and it fails to remove its plant. Can we put like a slash plants?

**Attorney Donovan:** Absolutely.

**Manager Revella:** Everybody agrees with those comments as well?

All Yes.

**Deputy Mayor Carley:** What about the comment that was made? So that is clear, if we're going to take the suggestion on the violations. I don't think that's clear with the board.

**Attorney Donovan:** Let me suggest this, we have a bunch of changes. Let me red line it, so you have all the changes and then you can decide which ones you may or may not want. I just ask that you maybe communicate that to me before the hearing. Discuss it at the meeting, but generally speaking, once you get to the public hearing, something can always come up. That's generally for the public to say, hey, we don't like this or that. It would be helpful, I think, for the process if the board communicated that. I like to say this is not my local law. People used to say you wrote this, it's your local law. This is obviously a format. If you look at other communities, I didn't invent the double pole law. It's in other communities. As much as you can give me as we go through the preparation process, it would be helpful.

### **Review of Potential Village Policy Updates**

**Manager Revella:** When we were doing audit, there's been a couple of things that have come up that need to be addressed in our policy for the nonunion members. There may be more that come up. Then there's also some updates to the laws as well that needed to be addressed. I don't know if anyone has seen the red line version in the policy packet. One of the big things that the auditors brought up as well is that there wasn't an updated policy on insurance on retirement. One from 1994. We want to include it with it. Then it didn't really address things for employees before 2010. Then another change about time for breastfeeding that had to be updated as well in the policies. Just so that everyone's aware it came up today in my discussions and our discussions with the auditors, from the Comptroller's Office, that they didn't notice anything about holidays in the nonunion packets. But we have been following the CSEA holiday schedule, so we will need to include that as well.

**Trustee Pearson:** At another time or are you including that in here now?

**Manager Revella:** We want to include it. If you agree with that schedule, we can include it. It's not in the red line version now though.

**Trustee Pearson:** Do you know what you want it to be?

**Manager Revella:** It should mirror the CSEA one, which is what we're mirroring now. Martin Luther King Day, Presidents day, Memorial Day, 4th of July, Labor Day, Columbus day, Veterans Day, Thanksgiving and the day after, Christmas and the day after and New Year's Day.

**Trustee Pearson:** The people who are nonunion don't get those holidays?

**Manager Revella:** They do, it's just not in the packet. We've been following CSEA's holidays.

**Trustee Pearson:** Where do the dispatchers lie?

**Manager Revella:** CSEA contract. Union members.

**Trustee Pearson:** The only people not are the Clerk, the Treasurer, the office, the secretaries.

**Manager Revella:** Building Department, Rec Coordinator, DPW Superintendent. Part Time Court staff. Full Time Court is a member. The judges are not. The Police Chief.

**Trustee Pearson:** Police is all covered already.

**Manager Revella:** Except for the Chief. Part Time Rec staff as well. Part Time people don't get insurance or holidays.

**Trustee Pearson:** Can we go back to the breast milk part of it?

**Manager Revella:** That was actually verbatim from the state law that's required. I don't know if we're allowed to deviate from that at all.

**Trustee Pearson:** Home rule, we can't make whatever we want?

**Manager Revella:** I think that's a state law.

**Attorney Donovan:** You have to be careful. The state has what's called preemption. If they've

preempted the field. I analyze on a case by case basis, then you can. I'll give you a total opposite example which is the Zoning Board Area Variance balancing test. The board can't deviate from that. They have to follow that. That's state law. You have labor counsel. I don't want to offer an educated guess on what you can do with this or not. I would just tread lightly.

**Trustee Pearson:** I don't mind it at all. I think it's great. I think it is necessary. But it was kind of contradictory where you have to supply something in every building or then it talks about at the end, if you don't have something in every building, it could be in one central location.

**Manager Revella:** It's like if you don't have, for example, you don't have the room in a certain building, it could be a central location instead. If there's a small office and there's just cubicles, there's no separate room. Obviously, it wouldn't be conducive. You offer a central location for that employee instead.

**Trustee Pearson:** That's acceptable as well so you don't get in trouble for not having it.

**Trustee Batson:** Can I just ask that we discuss, there are 3 policies here for retirement, breastfeeding, and the holiday schedule. Can I ask that we complete the discussion on each one of these before we move to the next from an organizational standpoint? Since Trustee Pearson started breastfeeding, can we completely discuss that before we move on to retirement or the holiday schedule?

**Trustee Maher:** I'm good with the breastfeeding.

**Trustee Hall:** I'm good with it.

**Trustee Batson:** If we're required supply a location that may be challenging. Have we identified any place for that?

**Manager Revella:** We've had it happen here before and we got a location for the person to do that.

**Trustee Batson:** Is there a plan to make a permanent location?

**Manager Revella:** It's only as needed. You don't have to have it permanent. For example, if somebody in our office had a need here in this office, they would have, say, the server room for that purpose. Whenever they needed, they'd go in, lock the door and do their thing.

**Trustee Batson:** It just had some physical requirements to it. Access to water. I did not understand it was as needed. I interpreted as having to be a permanent basis.

**Deputy Mayor Carley:** I didn't see, I think it should say a locked door because anyone can walk in. Not all rooms will be locked. It said just a room and it talked about the water, talked about all that. Just a locked door because someone can walk in. Part of the policy is covering. How free somebody feels, but it could become offensive to another person.

**Manager Revella:** New York State also allows male and females to be topless in public. You have to be careful how you tread on that as well. I don't want to tread on anyone's rights.

**Trustee Batson:** Holiday schedule. It is in essence, you're asking to create a policy for what we already do.

**Manager Revella:** Yes, sir.

**Mayor Ramos:** It should mirror the CSEA.

**Trustee Hall:** I think that's fair.

**Trustee Maher:** I'm good with it.

**Trustee Pearson:** I'm okay with it.

**Trustee Batson:** The proposed changes to the health insurance policy. As I understand this, I think looking through the outline policy, the changes are it looks like there's a change in the buyout goes from half to \$4,000. The other change, I'm not so sure on this one, but I believe we discussed it, that there was discussion around the payment post retirement day. What is in the draft is what we discussed finally there?

**Manager Revella:** Yes.

**Trustee Batson:** We're looking at three things. A change in the date to address the dates of it, the change in the buyout from half to \$4000 and then the basically dependent coverage against how long people have this continuous service. I'm good with what we have in this document.

**Trustee Hall:** I'm good with what we discussed.

**Trustee Maher:** Same. I'm good with what we discussed.

**Trustee Pearson:** I'm good

**Deputy Mayor Carley:** Are you talking about the whole document? Because I want to discuss personnel. Talk about the counseling and it could be a law. Forms of discipline. Last sentence, the counseling will be documented in writing and the employee will be required to acknowledge receipt by signing the memorandum. If any employee who fails to follow a supervisor directive to sign the counseling memorandum to acknowledge receipt will be subject to disciplinary action. If a person doesn't want to sign something, you saying by law they have to sign something? That's their right not to sign.

**Manager Revella:** That's not the law. That's the policies of the village. You can change or amend them anytime you want.

**Deputy Mayor Carley:** You always follow the law side. I just want to make sure. I think somebody should have the right to say I don't want to sign and whatever they get wrote up about is what they get wrote up about.

**Manager Revella:** You are correct. They should be able to refuse to sign. I would just write on there refuse to sign. I don't disagree with that at all.

**Trustee Maher:** Isn't that already what happens?

**Manager Revella:** Our policies right now, this policy would require, if someone's written up to sign off that they received it, whatever it is. That's not the best practice, because they should have the right to say, I don't want to sign it. Then whoever's giving it to them would say, refuse to sign. You take that whatever way you want. But this is saying it's disciplinary to do that. I don't think it should be that. But that's up to you guys. I know that union members have that right to refuse. This

is just for nonunion.

**Trustee Pearson:** I'm fine with the way it is.

**Deputy Mayor Carley:** The suggestion was that someone has the right to say I don't want to sign it without having disciplinary action because they didn't sign it. The way that it reads that if a person doesn't sign it, will be subject to disciplinary action. You should have the option to sign something or not and be fine with it.

**Trustee Pearson:** This wasn't part of what we were doing tonight, right?

**Manager Revella:** It's not a red line change. It's something he noted in there that he'd like to change besides what we already had red lined.

**Trustee Pearson:** I would like to read it.

**Trustee Maher:** I think it should be updated. That's how it is at most places of employment currently.

**Trustee Hall:** I agree. They shouldn't have to sign something if they don't want to and shouldn't get in trouble for not wanting to sign.

**Trustee Batson:** I agree it should not be additional disciplinary action if they refuse to sign.

**Mayor Ramos:** I agree. I've done a few disciplinary actions and especially when it comes to performance appraisals and they don't have to sign it if they don't feel that they're just in your verbiage. I agree with removing that.

**Trustee Pearson:** How does somebody discipline somebody if they don't have to sign something?

**Manager Revella:** They don't have to sign it to discipline.

**Mayor Ramos:** But you got to remember that action has another action to it. If it's a job issue, then obviously the disciplinary section will get advanced into another area. That's why they have steps.

**Trustee Pearson:** That's fair. That's good. I'm fine. Can you send me that change when you get it done, please? Thank you.

**Deputy Mayor Carley:** Under separation from employment.

**Trustee Pearson:** I wish I knew we were going to go through this whole thing.

**Deputy Mayor Carley:** Page 16, it says the notice of resignation. Village officers. It says the village officers, as defined in public office law must resign by delivering a written notice to the Village Clerk. Shouldn't it go to you also? I would say Village Clerk and/or Village Manager.

**Manager Revella:** I think you can do and. You can't or. I think it's required under state law, that it goes to the Clerk. Dave would have to look.

**Attorney Donovan:** That's state law. You resign to the Village Clerk.

**Deputy Mayor Carley:** We don't get the Village Manager involved?

**Attorney Donovan:** No, it's been uniformly done wrong by town officers, village officers. But the law requires the resignation go to the Clerk.

**Deputy Mayor Carley:** If the Clerk is not around, for whatever reason.

**Manager Revella:** The Deputy.

**Deputy Mayor Carley:** The Deputy Clerk will receive. I just thought it was a good idea for the Village Manager to be involved with it. That's fine, I'm good with it.

**Trustee Hall:** Are we are we going through this whole thing tonight?

**Deputy Mayor Carley:** Based on your discussion last time, you said yes.

**Trustee Hall:** But it was just red line stuff.

**Deputy Mayor Carley:** Willie Carley said.

**Trustee Hall:** I understand what Willie Carley said, but that's not what was in there for tonight.

**Deputy Mayor Carley:** I did not read policies.

**Trustee Pearson:** The red lines.

**Deputy Mayor Carley:** Policies. I didn't say red line, I said policies. I said I want to review it because I may have some questions. And you said we should be able to talk about it in public. So, I'm talking about.

**Trustee Pearson:** Okay, but I'm not prepared to talk about other things that you're going to bring up.

**Trustee Hall:** Me neither.

**Deputy Mayor Carley:** If you already read it, I can just bring it up and you can have a discussion about it.

**Trustee Hall:** I didn't read the whole thing.

**Trustee Pearson:** I didn't read that part of it.

**Trustee Hall:** I read what we what we were sent to read for tonight.

**Deputy Mayor Carley:** Maybe we should go back and read the whole thing.

**Trustee Hall:** I didn't have that kind of time to do that. I'm sorry.

**Deputy Mayor Carley:** I'm sorry too. I read it.

**Manager Revella:** What's the next one you have?

**Deputy Mayor Carley:** If they haven't read it, let's give some people some time to read it. Then



outside of the red line.

**Manager Revella:** These ones that we have so far, there are 4, the boards okay with those. I would just need you guys to make a motion for those 4. For the breastfeeding change in policy, the holidays, the health care and that they can refuse to sign a counseling memo.

Trustee Hall made a motion to approve the change to the 4 sections of the official policies of the Village of Walden as discussed. Seconded by Trustee Maher.

**Trustee Pearson:** I'm not comfortable voting for 2 of them because I didn't read it and I didn't go over that. I'm fine with the breastfeeding and the health care. But the other 2 I'm not. I'll just make that known.

Motion carried.

### **Orange County Transit**

**Manager Revella:** Forwarded the email that I received from Orange County Transit to all the board members. \*read email into the minutes\*

**Trustee Pearson:** They still have a couple of months, so I guess it really don't pay to wrap my head with it, because it's not going to make a difference anyway.

**Trustee Maher:** They refused to come in and give us an update in person?

**Trustee Hall:** I don't think they have to. I don't think we asked them to.

**Mayor Ramos:** We they didn't require them here.

**Trustee Pearson:** You asked them to come to this meeting.

**Mayor Ramos:** I didn't ask them.

**Trustee Pearson:** I'll go back through the minutes. They're not here and it's the same thing over and over again. Can I ask for reports from this company? I'd like to get the reports from the attorneys and the engineering firm to the DOT, so we can actually read what's been going on. They're just giving us this little letter. And I'd like to actually see their reports that are going back and forth between them. How do I get that information?

**Mayor Ramos:** We can't compel the private company to divulge any of their internal documents. All we could do is just receive the document that the manager got and we take it as face until March comes along.

**Trustee Pearson:** We can't compel them to give us information?

**Attorney Donovan:** You could always FOIL DOT. Generally speaking, I have no specific knowledge over the Orange County Transit. Generally speaking, a submission is made to the DOT. That submission then waits for comments. Sometimes those comments come in a brief period of time. Sometimes they come with a lengthy period of time. Then when comments come, it would be incumbent upon the applicant's consultants engineering firm to respond for those comments. What we're being told relative to Orange County Transit is they're waiting for their permit. In my experience, this sometimes takes a long time. I'm not familiar with this specific project and what they may have done with the DOT. I'm not saying to you that you don't have the legal ability to

FOIL their documents. You do have a legal ability to FOIL the DOT to see what's been submitted, if that's what you want to do.

**Deputy Mayor Carley:** As a board or as an individual?

**Attorney Donovan:** Either.

**Set Committee for Comp Plan Review**

**Manager Revella:** I didn't hear back from, Zac on the Planning Board on who he wanted to come, but you can say 2 members of the Planning Board, and we can name them when he gets back to me. I did get the names for the Zoning Board, Brenda and Lisa. Trustee Pearson, Trustee Batson and Deputy Mayor Carley said they wanted to be on. That should be noted.

**Trustee Batson:** Can I just ask on the timing of that? My only call out would be that there's an election in 6 weeks. Should we choose the representatives after the election?

**Manager Revella:** You're choosing a Trustee, a Trustee and a Deputy Mayor. If they were not to be Trustee or Deputy Mayor, you could replace them at any time. 2 members of the Planning Board. We'll have to name them when Zac gets back to me. Myself, 2 members of the public. I'll have 1 member of the Building Department there. Anyone else is allowed to come.

**Trustee Pearson:** Who are you selecting for the public?

**Manager Revella:** I need 1 more person. I didn't have a lot of people say, hey I want to be on the Comprehensive Plan Committee, besides, Mary Ellen as historian would make sense. But we would need 1 more from the public. I'm not sure if anybody had anybody reach out to them.

**Trustee Batson:** Do we need 1 more or do we want 1 more.

**Manager Revella:** Be nice to have 1 more.

**Trustee Hall:** Did Lynn comment last month?

**Manager Revella:** Oh, yeah. Lynn Thompson.

**Trustee Hall:** I just saw it in the comments.

**Manager Revella:** That was the last meeting. She talked to me about it. They could be the 2 at large.

**Attorney Donovan:** Just to kind of respond to Trustee Batson, the Village Board can actually do this yourself. You have to appoint a special committee. If you do decide to appoint a special committee, you can have whatever numbers of people that you think are appropriate on a special committee. Which then has to report back to you and then you have to deem their report or their modifications or update to the comprehensive plan sufficient for public review. It goes to County Planning as a public hearing.

**Manager Revella:** Does that make up the committee, okay?

**Mayor Ramos:** Is everybody okay with the 11?

**All Yes.**

**Mayor Ramos:** Is there a start time?

**Manager Revella:** I'll correspond with the committee to make sure we have a date together.

Trustee Hall made a motion to approve the Comprehensive Plan Committee as discussed. Seconded by Deputy Mayor Carley. All ayes. Motion carried.

**Trustee Pearson:** Can I just ask a question? In our packet, we have this resolution related health insurance. We're grouping them all together in 1 vote. Can we not just go back to the resolution and do this 1 separately? Why aren't they separate? You have this whole resolution that we should be voting on in here. I don't know why they're all grouped together in 1. Maybe we should be doing the resolution for this. The resolution for the breastfeeding. The resolution that Willie wants. I think they should be done separately.

**Manager Revella:** You already voted on all.

**Trustee Pearson:** I know it the why is this in the packet and why wouldn't we just do what we have in the packet?

**Manager Revella:** Can't tell you. The board made a motion, voted on those 4 things.

**Deputy Mayor Carley:** We talked about the policies. That's what I brought up in the very beginning. I said we talked about the policies. It wasn't just one thing. It's a packet of policies.

**Trustee Pearson:** Right. But the issues were 2 issues, wasn't the whole policy when we had the issues before us. I don't care going through it all, but I want to be prepared for it. I don't want to all of a sudden, come on, let's talk about this too. And you have this written up as a draft for a resolution. Why wouldn't we be using this? We don't have a resolution now that you've just voted on.

**Mayor Ramos:** But we voted on the 4 issues.

### **Resolution – Records Retention**

Deputy Mayor Carley made a motion to approve Resolution 15-23-24 Records Retention. Seconded by Trustee Pearson. All ayes. Motion carried.

### **35-37 North Montgomery St**

**Attorney Donovan:** On January 2nd, in response to information provided by the Building Department and Village Engineer, the Village Board convened a hearing on 35-37 North Montgomery Street. \*read notice into minutes\* the property owner was present at that time. He indicated that he was going to do some work. The Village Board continued the public hearing, till this evening with the specific direction that the property owner, between January 2nd and today, secure the building and remedy the hazardous conditions to the satisfaction of the Building Department, as well as present an engineer's plan with structural evaluation plus a time frame for full remediation at tonight's meeting. We have communication from the Building Department that there has been no work at all. Nothing. No structural evaluation, no securing the building, nothing has been done in the last month. We did get an email from the property owner that came to the Building Department today. \*read email into minutes\* interestingly enough, the property owner does not request an adjournment. He just says that he can't be here. The board has the ability tonight to adjourn the hearing again. You also have the ability to close the hearing. If you decide to do so, then you can set a time frame within which the building, I would recommend at this stage, because

the recommendation is now coming from the Village Engineers as well as the Building Department, that the building be demolished. You give him a time frame to do that. If he does not do that, that the village will then arrange to have the building demolished and removed with the, as provided by our code, with the costs associated with demolition and removal being placed on his taxes for collection.

**Trustee Batson:** He didn't respond. I don't know that I'm, from a discussion standpoint, prepared to do anything but adjourn. I just think from a layman's perspective, I don't know that he would have had the legal knowledge to make that. If I was in his position, I think I would have assumed, but that his contacting that was an ask of adjournment. This is a significant decision. My opinion was 1 of 6 tonight, so that would be where I am.

**Trustee Hall:** I think I'd have to disagree. I think I'd go to close. He's had a month to do something. Anything. And he did absolutely nothing. I understand that he may be sick at this point. But he wasn't the last 3 weeks and if he was, he didn't contact anybody. He didn't say anything. He made no attempt. If that was my building, I would make some kind of attempt. I would do something. If it was me, I'd go to close.

**Trustee Maher:** I agree. It's a safety issue. Thinking back on when he was here in front of us, his reasons for not making the required fixings that we needed him to make, to bring it up to a safety standard, because he was busy with another project. I just feel like that's not a good enough reason. At the end of the day, it's a safety concern. Either way, it needs to be condemned and I think we should move forward.

**Trustee Pearson:** I was reading our law today about the demolishing and maintenance of buildings and structures. It talks about order to repair. We did the sketch, we did the hearing notice and then he has to give the receipt of that. Have we had a copy of notice filed in the Orange County Clerk's Department that as pursuant to article 65 of civil practice law, before we move forward, have we done any of that? I don't want to start doing stuff without knowing we have all our ducks in a row without knowing we're covered for everything, that if something happens and we do decide to demolish it, that we are not covered for not doing what we're supposed to be doing. I don't know if that's been done. Those filings have to be done to the clerk's office in the county. Then failure to comply. It also talks about any contract or repair, demolishing, removal of a building or structure in excess of \$5,000 should be awarded a bidding process. It would have to go before bid. That's a whole process in itself. I just want to know we have our ducks in a row first and then assessment of expenses. It talks about, levied on their taxes if they don't pay. But I couldn't find article five of village law and what that says. I'd like to see what that says before I make a commitment to demolishing something. Maybe somebody can get me that information, would be great before I make a decision. I know that it looks ugly and but it just didn't happen overnight. That building's been there like that for what 11 months already. I get that it's deteriorating. But I think 2 more weeks, I can get to my answers. I'd be comfortable doing that. Then maybe at the next meeting, making a final decision.

**Deputy Mayor Carley:** I'm good with going forward as long as we do it within the legal limits of the law with demolishing.

**Trustee Maher:** Tonight we're just voting to close the hearing?

**Attorney Donovan:** It's up to you. The hearing which, the gentleman was here last month, you listen to what he has to say and then you make an order. Building Inspectors Department has made a recommendation and so has the Village Engineer. You could close the hearing and not take any action. You could close the hearing and ask for more information. You could close the hearing, give

him a date certain at which to do the work, whatever work you decide or order the property demolished. Article 5 is New York State Village Law. Applies for a collection of taxes. It's up to the board. He did communicate Trustee Batson and I said he didn't specifically ask for adjournment, but he did say that he had Covid. His wife was in the hospital with Covid. I would never accuse anyone of saying anything that's not true. On the other side of that, this has been a condition of disrepair for quite some time. I'm not pretending that it's an easy decision for you to make.

**Mayor Ramos:** I'm all for closing the hearing and proceeding as dictated by Deputy Mayor in accordance of the law.

Deputy Mayor Carley made a motion to close hearing for 35-37 North Montgomery St. Seconded by Trustee Maher.

**Roll Call:**

Trustee Pearson: Yes

Trustee Maher: Yes

Trustee Hall: Yes

Trustee Batson: No

Deputy Mayor Carley: Yes

Mayor Ramos: Yes.

Motion carried.

**Attorney Donovan:** Let me suggest this at this time. I will ask the board not to take any further action. We'll discuss this matter in attorney client privilege. I want to discuss a legal issue that's been raised tonight. Trustee Pearson has raised the issue that I think deserves discussion and you may or may not wish to take action after that discussion.

**Mayor Ramos:** How do we communicate to the owner that we closed the hearing?

**Attorney Donovan:** We have to communicate, say the hearing was closed and then you have to decide if you want to take action later or not.

**Public Comment**

**Mary Ellen Matise:** This morning, Vision Hudson Valley had the pathways meeting and they're looking for support for the Orange County Bikeway Vision, which is on the county website under documents. The idea that Alan Sorenson has put forward about the rail with trail is in there on page 15 and 17. The pathways committee is trying to find ways to support the vision vis-a-vis the county. The vision was done by the County Planning Department. But adoption, of course, would be by the legislature. It might behoove us, because this is a possibility for us to get connected to the whole system that really is focused on the south and the county, Goshen and south and connecting into Sullivan County, to maybe adopt a resolution of support and send it to the county legislature. So that it carries more weight than just you, the mayor saying, I support it. In fact, I'm going to bring it up at the Town Board tomorrow night. I think they should support it. Becky brought up the school tour. Quite a few of us went on the school tour last week and there was one tonight. I made a little, it's hard to make a good comparison of the 4 elementary schools. Using the whatever data that NYSED has on their website, the 4 elementary schools in Valley Central, the comparison is pretty close. Dollar amounts spent per student. Then this is New York State figures 2021-22 range from Walden being the lowest \$23,076. Berea being the most \$26,100 per student. The ratings of the schools are pretty bad. Lower in the bottom 50% statewide, below 50% statewide. Different websites are giving you different readings. This one public school review was saying that there are 2439 elementary schools in New York State and all 4 of our schools come in 1326, 1334, 1356 and

Walden the lowest, at 1379. Out of 2439 schools. The test scores are terrible. Only school that isn't around 50% economically disadvantaged students is Montgomery, which is only 37%. Everybody else is 49-50, and we're 52, meaning that that percentage of the schools of the students qualify for a free lunch. We went to their house. I think school board should come to our house. I think that you guys should have a joint meeting with them. For them to say every option is on the table, what does that mean? I think they need to come here really and explain themselves in plain English.

**Christine Scieurca:** I just want to let you guys know that I'm adjusting. Thank you. Some of you may not realize, that little resolution for the Local Government Records Management Improvement Fund is a big deal to me. I don't know if any of you have been in the basement lately to look at our records, but it's a shame. It really is a shame to see our historical documents in the disarray that they're in down there. I'm on a very tight time frame. I'm calling out to you. To the public. Of course, Mary Ellen, our historian has offered help as well and one of the Sergeants in the Police Department also offered help. We just need to categorize. We need to get an idea, they could they measure it by cubic feet to give us a price and the amount of a grant that I need to apply for and I need to do it by March. I'm on a tight time frame, but everybody's probably sick of my wanting to organize everything in the office, clean up the boxes and put it in binders and get it nice and neat. It's just the way I operate. I know Marisa probably kills me every time I walk into her office and say what can I put away now? Some stuff I can't because we all know that there's an audit going on, but it's just really important to me. I'd like to take the step in the cellar this year and step for the attic next year.

#### **Payment of Audited Bills**

Trustee Hall made a motion to approve payment of audited bills. Seconded by Trustee Maher. All ayes. Motion carried.

#### **Miscellaneous Comments from the Board of Trustees**

**Trustee Pearson:** I was going to talk about the school, but I think if you can get to the school to see what it's like and maybe the mayor knows more than because you were on a committee before. You still on that committee?

**Mayor Ramos:** Yes.

**Trustee Pearson:** Do you know what's happening? Can you fill us in?

**Mayor Ramos:** They're doing tours.

**Trustee Pearson:** There's nothing concrete, really. They really don't have concrete anything. If you can get to the tour of the school, it might be nice to see. Take a look at the audit, was pretty interesting.

**Trustee Hall:** Last Sunday, American Legion held a barbecue. Unfortunately, I did miss it, but I heard it was a great turnout. I also took the tour at the school. If you have not, I know there was one tonight, and there's going to be more. I encourage everybody to go. It's been a long time since I've been in there, so I know a lot of people haven't been. It was nice to see the different things going on. If you haven't, I encourage you to go. The other thing that I wanted to bring up, I know that it was brought up back in May of last year. New York State has adopted a new statewide exemption for volunteer firefighters and ambulance workers. Valley Central just adopted 10%, I believe in January. The Walden Fire District adopted it, February of last year. I would like to bring it up for next month, maybe put it on the agenda and talk about it and have the village take a look at it. We do have something right now going on with it, but, I do believe this has to take over for that one.

**Attorney Donovan:** By 2025. You have something that like this. This is something that came out, probably in December of 2022. I've done this for the Town of Hamptonburg, they adopted it. It was like 6 local laws because they expanded it to, like widows of firefighters or first responders was killed on duty. There are more things that you can do. I can provide copies of what was done in the county and in the Town of Hamptonburg, if you're interested in that. Just kind of as a baseline. You may want to just do a research to see what we're physical impacts. What we found and what I found in other places, basically the people who have it now will apply for this expanded one. But in terms of your budget, it's not that significant of an impact. While it's a benefit to the first responders.

**Mayor Ramos:** We'll put that on the February 20th agenda.

**Trustee Batson:** Have some questions about the structure of the agenda. Is there an intent behind it? I understand the purpose of these meetings that we obviously have business to do and there's some things on here. There are plenty of times where we either have to look back to our notes or we have to just simply remember to ask questions about particular projects. Is it possible, we can take it separately. I'm just looking for a basic answer tonight, to consolidate some of these questions that we constantly ask into a project list. Here are the projects that we have open. Here's the funding for them. Here's the budget for them. Any updates there? It may just help to streamline some of the questions that we consistently ask. We didn't ask about cameras tonight. We probably should have. We did hit Millspaugh Park, but they're just these consistent projects over and over again. In general, is it possible to discuss? I'm not asking for it to be done without consensus amongst my peers, but a minor structural change so we consistently adjust projects on here.

**Mayor Ramos:** Give me a template.

**Trustee Maher:** Like maybe old business as a bullet point.

**Trustee Batson:** Old business is an outstanding way to describe it.

**Trustee Maher:** Interestingly enough, the state law doesn't require an agenda. What that means, though, is that you can do what works best for you.

**Trustee Batson:** I want to make sure it works best for everyone. But it also leads me to the second part of that is from a public standpoint, does what we discuss on the agendas meet, what the public wants out of these meetings as well? I know that's sort of an abstract question. We'd have to somehow get feedback. I'm not willing to go down that, but just as I constantly speak to people out in the public, it often gets brought up. I will attempt to build a template. The other thing is, is there a potential funding or budget item for things like employee recognition? I'm not looking to spend the town's money frivolously. Does it exist in the government? I've worked in the corporate world my entire life. We have things like a Christmas party. The people of the employees of this town do an outstanding job. From a government perspective, there's not the same level of recognition that I see in the private sector.

**Trustee Pearson:** There used to be a Christmas party.

**Manager Revella:** Yes. Too many people scrutinize that you're spending tax dollars on a Christmas party. They said no.

**Trustee Batson:** That's a fine answer. I see comments of you know it's just Walden and things like that. I don't think the employees of this town or the people of this town deserve anything less than the best. Just something to discuss. Again, as we roll around budgets, I would love for us to have a discussion around the budget for this meeting. I know that there is a cost associated with it, but I

would love a little more flexibility on it, because I don't want these meetings or discussion to ever be stifled over a minor amount. Just something that comes up. One more statement, I do agree with Trustee Pearson that we should, as we review policies, make a motion separately for each one of them. I think that's a great idea. Tonight we didn't. But I would ask that we agree, as we move forward, that each of the policies that we discuss and if we discuss them all, they should be separate. I don't see it much different than the code. The last thing, there was quite a bit of discussion around the treasurer's position. I don't think that we should shy away from that discussion tonight. If there's a discussion to be had around the treasurer's position. Let's have it.

**Deputy Mayor Carley:** Just going back to the review of the policies as stated before, I would like to make sure we put that back on the agenda so we can go through each thing if we're going to talk about policies, not just one part of the policy. I prefer a work session, but the board, said that they don't want a work session. That's fine. We can do it via our board meeting here. But if we're going to go through it, we go through it, we read through it and we be prepared to discuss each section of it, just like we do in the code, so that no one can go back and say, this wasn't addressed or I don't feel comfortable. They have an open and honest conversation about. Second one was, I thought it was pretty good. I saw Congressman Pat Ryan, C.A.R.E.S. I just want to put a plug in for our community. Just in case you don't know, Collaborative Assessment Response and Engagement and Support. It centers around families and their mission is to help children and adults with mental health concerns and/or developmental disabilities across New York State. Help them to obtain quality care, compassionate support, and comprehensive services they need to achieve their full potential. C.A.R.E.S., we create home and community and site based solutions to assist each individual to maximize their abilities, integrate into the community and achieve sustainable, long term progress. I just want to put that out there that I think this is something that's important, especially, with a special needs community and that if you have your congressman, it's going to be in your in your town, city, in your village and you're going to have that conversation that as many people as possible just should be there with some Q&A in regards to that. I think it's a good idea about that joint meeting with the school board. Personally, I wish we could go back to committees. Maybe put that on the plate of the board to reconsider going back to committee so that we can report back when things are going on and have a liaise. In my opinion, I think that's a good idea on this. I think it's a sad that we went away from it, but I think if managed correctly, it'll work.

**Mayor Ramos:** SPOMA, we have a wonderful program that's going to be on Saturday, February 10th at 11 am. Which is Sacred Place Of My Ancestors, located at 416 right in front of Medline driveway, in Montgomery. It's a nice event and a lot of influential people will be there to support SPOMA. John, code review?

**Attorney Donovan:** I am making my way through the minutes. I'll have an update for you by the next meeting.

**Mayor Ramos:** As for, just a comment on the going ahead and motioning for each policy. Once you dive into the policies, if you motion on a specific policy and it's reviewed again or touched in another paragraph or another, we were already made a motion to pass that. There is going to be some redundancy in the 125 pages. There will be some redundancy in some issues that roll over into certain sections of the policies. If everybody still wants to motion each category, be mindful that you will be touching upon it in certain other sections in the policy.

\*Read Community Events into Minutes\*

**Executive Session - Employment History of a Particular Person, Attorney Client to discuss litigation regarding the Hill St Bridge, 35-37 North Montgomery Street and issues related to the camera contract.**



Deputy Mayor Carley made a motion to enter into executive session to discuss the employment history of a particular person, attorney client to discuss litigation regarding the Hill St Bridge, 35-37 North Montgomery St and issues related to the camera contract. Seconded by Trustee Pearson.

**Manager Revella:** I just want to let the public know that if there is any vote on salary for a treasurer it would be done in public after that meeting.

**Reconvene**

Trustee Hall made a motion to reconvene the regular meeting of the Board of Trustees. Seconded by Trustee Pearson. All ayes. Motion carried.

**Treasurer Salary**

Trustee Batson made a motion to set the Village Treasurer's salary at \$88,500. Seconded by Trustee Maher. 4 ayes. 2 nays (Trustee Pearson and Trustee Hall). Motion carried.

**35-37 North Montgomery**

Trustee Hall made a motion to give owner 30 days to remedy the situation or the Village would take action on March 7, 2024. Seconded by Deputy Mayor Carley. All ayes. Motion carried.

**Village of Walden Board of Trustees  
Regular Meeting  
March 7, 2023  
Motions & Resolutions**

**Public Hearing – Local Law 2 of 2024 Double Utility Poles**

Trustee Pearson made a motion to open the public hearing for Local Law 2 of 2024 Double Utility Poles. Seconded by Deputy Mayor Carley. All ayes. Motion carried.

Trustee Pearson made a motion to close the public hearing for Local Law 2 of 2024 Double Utility Poles. Seconded by Trustee Batson. All ayes. Motion carried.

**Approval of January 16, 2024**

Trustee Batson made a motion to approve the January 16, 2024 minutes. Seconded by Trustee Maher. All ayes. Motion carried.

**Review of Potential Village Policy Updates**

Trustee Hall made a motion to approve the change to the 4 sections of the official policies of the Village of Walden as discussed. Seconded by Trustee Maher. Motion carried.

**Set Committee for Comp Plan Review**

Trustee Hall made a motion to approve the Comprehensive Plan Committee as discussed. Seconded by Deputy Mayor Carley. All ayes. Motion carried.

**Resolution – Records Retention**

Deputy Mayor Carley made a motion to approve Resolution 15-23-24 Records Retention. Seconded by Trustee Pearson. All ayes. Motion carried.

**35-37 North Montgomery St**

Deputy Mayor Carley made a motion to close hearing for 35-37 North Montgomery St. Seconded by Trustee Maher.

**Roll Call:**

Trustee Pearson: Yes

Trustee Maher: Yes

Trustee Hall: Yes

Trustee Batson: No

Deputy Mayor Carley: Yes

Mayor Ramos: Yes.

Motion carried.

**Payment of Audited Bills**

Trustee Hall made a motion to approve payment of audited bills. Seconded by Trustee Maher. All ayes. Motion carried.

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