

VILLAGE OF WASHINGTONVILLE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OFFICIAL MEETING MINUTES

Date: January 20, 2026

Time: 7:00 PM

Location: Village Hall, Washingtonville, New York

Present- Mayor Tom DeVinko, Deputy Mayor Steve Presser, Trustee Susan Walski, Trustee Donna Jacaruso, and Trustee Vernon Coleman

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting of the Village of Washingtonville Board of Trustees was called to order at 7:00 PM.

ROLL CALL

Board Members, the Village Attorney, Village Clerk, department heads, and members of the public were present.

Guest:

Vanessa Kilder, Assessor, Town of Blooming Grove

TAX EXEMPTION – 100% DISABLED VETERANS

Ms. Kilder addressed the Board regarding newly enacted New York State legislation establishing a **mandatory property tax exemption for veterans with a 100% service-connected disability**.

Legislative History

- Original bill introduced January 8, 2025, with an intended effective date of January 2, 2026.
- Bill 1183 was signed by the Governor on January 5, 2026.
- A Chapter Amendment dated January 13, 2026, removed the local option and made the exemption mandatory statewide, defining it as an additional exemption.

Implementation Issues

- New York State has not issued an application, exemption percentage, or dollar value.
- No guidance has been provided regarding Specially Adapted Housing Grant eligibility.
- Assessors are unable to process exemptions prior to the March 1 taxable status date.
- Implementation has been deferred to October 2026 due to lack of State guidance.
- Approximately 838 veterans in Orange County may be affected.

Eligibility Requirements (as written)

- 100% VA disability rating with Permanent and Total designation or Total Disability based on Individual Unemployability (TDIU).
- Inability to work due to disability.
- Discharge other than dishonorable or bad conduct.
- Qualifying medical conditions, including psychiatric conditions, TBI, or MST.
- Qualification for Specially Adapted Housing.

Concerns were raised regarding legislative drafting, lack of consultation with veterans' organizations, and inconsistencies with firefighter and EMS exemptions. Continued advocacy with State officials and legislators was discussed, including outreach to Assemblyman Brian Maher.

ASSESSOR UPDATE

Ms. Kilder introduced herself as the new Assessor for the Town of Blooming Grove. Office hours are 7:30 AM to 4:30 PM. Voicemail and email systems have been updated. A request was made for information regarding residences already adapted for disabled veterans.

PUBLIC HEARING – LOCAL LAW NO. 1 OF 2026

(Film Production)

The public hearing was conducted and closed. The law regulates commercial film and production activities and excludes legitimate news, student films, nonprofit, and educational productions. Permit fees are approximately \$5,000 plus hourly charges.

Resolution Adopted: Local Law No. 1 of 2026.

PUBLIC HEARING – LOCAL LAW NO. 3 OF 2026

(Residency Requirements)

The public hearing was opened and closed. The law expands residency eligibility to Orange County and contiguous counties. Clarifying language revisions were noted.

Resolution Adopted: Local Law No. 3 of 2026.

The tax levy will exceed the 2% cap as a protective fiscal measure.

BUDGET AND FINANCIAL MATTERS

- Sewer bills will include an additional \$25 quarterly charge beginning May 2026 to service the deficit bond.
 - Tax bills will be issued shortly, with online payment available.
 - Approximately \$540,000 will be re-levied to the County.
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DEPARTMENT REPORTS

Department of Public Works

- Multiple fire hydrants damaged by vehicles; police reports filed.
- Drainage pipe collapse on Watson Lane repaired.
- Water levels remain stable at 27 feet.
- Snow removal operations reviewed, including equipment and staffing challenges.
- New heavy-duty dump truck purchased; warranty issues on Dodge trucks noted.
- Two additional employees obtained CDL certification.

Police Department

- One vehicle auctioned for \$3,600.
 - Two new recruits are attending the police academy.
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GRANTS AND CAPITAL PROJECTS

- Village awarded up to \$75,000 for MS4 stormwater mapping grant.
 - GRM archival project initiated with receipt of 100 boxes.
 - Sidewalk permit submitted to NYSDOT near the middle school.
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PLANNING, ZONING, AND BUSINESS

Architectural Review Board approvals were granted for signage at:

- Guilty Pleasures Café, 1 Depot Street
 - Memorable Moments, 32 West Main Street
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HISTORICAL DESIGNATIONS

The Board discussed prioritizing historically significant structures to prevent demolition. The former Porter Candle Store (now Guilty Pleasures Café) was designated. Additional properties under review include 30 Goshen Avenue, the Presbyterian Church, and 36 North Street. Renovations will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

ELECTIONS

Village elections were authorized for **March 18, 2026**, from **12:00 PM to 9:00 PM**, at Village Hall.

RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED

- Resolution 260011 – Adopt Local Law No. 1 of 2026 (Film Production)
 - Resolution 260013 – Adopt Local Law No. 3 of 2026
 - Resolution 260014 – Budget Transfers and Warrants
 - Resolution 260015 – Close Budget Public Comment Period
 - Resolution 260016 – Approve 2% Tax Cap Override
 - Resolution 260017 – ARB Sign Approval (Guilty Pleasures Café)
 - Resolution 260018 – Authorize Village Elections
 - Resolution 260019 – ARB Sign Approval (Orange County Plaza)
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EXECUTIVE SESSION

On motion duly made and seconded, the Board entered Executive Session.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned following Executive Session.
