

Village of West Salem  
Regular Meeting  
March 3, 2026

Regular meeting called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Village President Scott Schumacher. Trustees present: Anderson, Curtis, Hennessey, Lautz, Leicht, and Twining. Also present: Katherine Geary, Susan Foster, Police Chief Scott Alo, Parks and Recreation Director Tony DeGaetano, Public Works Director Loren Schwier, and Village Clerk/Treasurer Ashley Bohl.

Public Comment

Katherine Geary, W3207 County Rd Q, Mindoro, spoke before the Board to address compliance failures, misuse of taxpayer funds, and legal liability exposure resulting from deviations from required disciplinary procedures.

Minutes

Motion by Trustee Twining, seconded by Trustee Leicht to change verbiage in the minutes from public hearing to regular meeting and approve the minutes of the February 17, 2026, regular meeting. Roll call vote: Unanimous aye. Motion approved.

Claims

Claims were presented for payment totaling \$151,534.

Motion by Trustee Leicht, seconded by Trustee Curtis to approve all claims as presented. Roll call vote: Unanimous aye. Motion approved.

Special Event Application

Susan Foster spoke before the Board on an event request that is new this year. The River City Running Club, along with Road Runners Club of America, are looking to host a 5K Run that includes stops around the Village (such as parks and the bike depot) with fun challenges for participants to complete. The event will be held on May 9, 2026, starting at 10:00 a.m. at Swarthout Park, continuing south on Leonard Street to the bike depot, then to Mill Street, East Avenue, Leonard Street, and back to Swarthout Park.

Motion by Trustee Curtis, seconded by Trustee Twining to approve the Special Event Application submitted by River City Running Club and Road Runners Club of America on May 9, 2026, starting at 10:00 a.m., as presented. Roll call vote: Unanimous aye. Motion approved.

Special Event Application

Motion by Trustee Anderson, seconded by Trustee Leicht to approve the Special Event Application submitted by River City Running Club to hold the Annual Running Race on May 2, 2026, starting at 7:00 a.m. at Greene Park. Roll call vote: Unanimous aye. Motion approved.

### 2025 Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System Permit Annual Report

Clerk Bohl made the following announcement: Joe Pingel with Cedar Corporation is working on the 2025 MS4 Annual Report, which is due March 31, 2026. The draft report is available upon request. Please contact Joe Pingel, Cedar Corporation, with any questions.

### Law Enforcement Committee

Trustee Lautz reported on the February 17, 2026, Law Enforcement Committee meeting minutes. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss an Application to Exceed Animal Limit, submitted by submitted by Mason and Susan Hardy, 830 Wagon Drive, who presently keep a spayed Border Collie, a spayed Shih Tzu, and a neutered Husky. The Committee then reviewed an Application to Exceed Animal Limit, submitted by Jilayne and James Karr, 356 Hamilton Street West, who presently keeps a spayed Brussels Griffon, a neutered Maltese, and 3 (three) in-tact Brussels Griffon and 1 (one) in-tact Hungarian Vizsla. The Karr's recently moved to the Village from the Town of Bangor, and are active breeders of Brussels Griffon. The Committee asked the Karr's about their breeding program, whether or not their yard was completely fenced, and about noise. The Committee recommended approval of both requests to the Board.

Motion by Trustee Lautz, seconded by Trustee Curtis to approve the February 17, 2026, Law Enforcement Committee meeting minutes as presented. Roll call vote: Unanimous aye. Motion approved.

Motion by Trustee Lautz, seconded by Trustee Leicht to approve the Special Application to Exceed Pet Limit submitted by Mason and Susan Hardy. Roll call vote: Unanimous aye. Motion approved.

Motion by Trustee Lautz, seconded by Trustee Anderson to approve the Special Application to Exceed Pet Limit submitted by Jilayne and James Karr. Roll call vote: Unanimous aye. Motion approved.

### Buildings and Grounds Committee

Trustee Curtis reported on the Buildings and Grounds Committee meeting minutes of February 19, 2026. The purpose of the meeting was to review and discuss Village Hall Assessment Report dated February 11, 2026, prepared by River Architects; update on discussion with Tri-State Ambulance regarding potential inclusion in the new public safety building; and presentation and overview of current design plans for the public safety building. Mike Adler of River Architects presented the assessment report on Village Hall. Mr. Adler described the condition as "interesting," and advised the Committee that the structure is corrugated concrete (single-masonry), with the outer walls being all load-bearing with steel columns run through-out. There are noticeable cracks that were found on the outside of the building, which can show that it is shifting. Tuck-pointing all joints would be required to maintain structural integrity. Vertical reinforcing would be needed, but can be challenging to do. Mr. Adler also advised the Committee that if 50% or more of the building is renovated, the whole building must be brought up to ADA compliancy, which would increase the cost. Discussion then commenced on the potential addition of Tri-State Ambulance to the Public Safety Building design. Tri-State is most definitely interested and would potentially be willing to lease a space in the new building. Chief Scott Alo advised the Committee that the Central Pacific Railroad Police also approached

him with a request to lease an office space in the new building. Current design plans for the proposed Public Safety Building were reviewed by the Committee. Two options were outlined and included a Public Safety Building with Police only, or a Public Safety Building that includes community rooms, space for Administration, and Parks and Recreation.

It was determined through the Village Hall Assessment report and design plans that it would be monetarily comparable to move the Police, Administration, and Parks and Recreation Offices to the new building. This was further apparent based on numbers provided, which included any potential tax impact on bonding for the financing of the build; showing it makes the most economical sense to relocate the Police Department, Administration, and Parks and Recreation to the new building instead of maintaining two buildings, one being close to 50 years old. The Committee discussed methods of mass communication, including public hearings and potential referendums, in which to inform the public of the direction the Committee is looking to head in concerns to the critical need for a Public Safety Building in the Village of West Salem. Discussion included looking into marketing firms to assist.

Motion by Trustee Curtis, seconded by Trustee Anderson to approve the Buildings and Grounds Committee meeting minutes of February 19, 2026, as presented. Roll call vote: Unanimous aye. Motion approved.

#### Finance and Personnel Committee

Trustee Leicht reported on the Finance and Personnel Committee meeting minutes of March 2, 2026. Greg Hutson, West Salem Fire District Chief, presented an updated proposal to purchase a new Pierce Velocity PUC Top Mount Rescue Pumper for \$1,125,628. Mr. Hutson explained that the existing rescue pumper is 22 years old, and replacements ordered now would take at least three years for build-time until delivery, which is why this needs to be taken under consideration now. Mr. Hutson continued to explain that the Fire District has between \$200,000 and \$250,000 to put towards a down-payment for the pumper. If the \$250,000 down payment were made, it would save the Fire District Municipalities (Towns of Barre and Hamilton and Village of West Salem) roughly \$25,468, bringing the purchase price down to \$1,100,170. Jim Leicht asked Mr. Hutson if the Fire District had applied for any grant funds. Mr. Hutson explained he has looked into the grant application process, but that it is very confusing and can be hard to understand. Lill Twining asked Mr. Hutson if he has spoken to either the Town of Barre or the Town of Hamilton in regards to this request. Mr. Hutson advised the Committee that he had not. John Lautz asked Mr. Hutson if the Fire District Board has endorsed or approved the request. Mr. Hutson said the Fire District Board had not taken action on it, but that they were aware of it. There was discussion on potentially repairing and upgrading the existing pumper versus purchasing a new one. Mr. Hutson said the biggest pieces of the need for a new pumper includes more storage, better suspension (for comfort), and more safety features. Lill Twining advised the Committee she would like to see the Fire District Board vote or approve such a request before the municipalities should consider it. Ms. Twining would also like the Fire District to approach the Towns of Barre and Hamilton for their Board's input and feedback. Jim Leicht and John Lautz both agreed, with no recommendation to the Village Board action being taken. Public Works Director Loren Schwier presented to the Committee an update on the status of the Wastewater Treatment Plant, more specifically on its operator status. The Department of Natural Resources recently inspected the West Salem Wastewater Treatment Facility and upgraded its status from a general operations plant to an advanced operations plant.

The DNR requires operators of advanced wastewater treatment plants to hold additional certifications (a total of ten, which includes six credits of classes and testing and four for on-the-job experience). The schooling and tests are able to be done fairly quickly; the on-the-job experience requires time (it is expected the four credits are obtained within three years). With the departure of both of our current operators, the Village is in need of someone who has the proper certifications to take over as operator. A job opening for a Wastewater Treatment Plant Operator was posted recently, however, no one with the proper qualifications applied. Lee Schwier, current Water Superintendent, passed and received a general sewer license with one sub class back in March of 2025. This, essentially, started the on-the-job training clock for Lee. He has one year of experience under his belt, with three years to obtain the additional years of experience, while also taking and passing tests. Canaan Schwarz will also be studying and taking his general sewer license test to begin earning his certifications. The Committee was advised that in order to properly compensate the individuals for their certifications and for taking over operation of the plant, it was proposed that both receive a \$2.50/hour raise, in lieu of the standard \$.25/hour raise per certification. The Committee was in agreement with this and was appreciative as to the quick problem-solving that occurred to ensure the Waste Water Treatment Plant continues to operate under the newly required advanced status, given the expected and unexpected changes in operator-status.

Two proposals from Winona Heating and Ventilating to replace or repair the RTU-2 at the Hazel Brown Leicht Memorial Library were reviewed. The existing unit's inducer motor stopped working, causing wires to get hot, which melted causing the transducer board to fry. The current system is almost 26 years old, and it was not known if the repairs would fix the issues or whether or not they were only temporary. The Committee recommended approval of the Winona Heating and Ventilation proposed bid for replacement of the RTU-2 unit to the Board. The Committee reviewed proposed changes to the employee handbook. The reason for the requested changes is to align with the recently approved Police Union Contract. The following changes are proposed:

- changing accumulated sick leave at retirement by increasing the benefit amount from 60% of unused, accrued sick leave to 100% for those with over 20 years of service to the Village, and capping at 60% for those with less than 20 years (previous was 60% at 25 years) of service at time of retirement
- changing the paid funeral leave for a defined immediate family member from three consecutive days to four consecutive days.

The Committee recommended approval of the proposed changes to the employee handbook to the Board.

Motion by Trustee Leicht, seconded by Trustee Lutz to approve the Finance and Personnel Committee meeting minutes of March 2, 2026, as presented. Roll call vote: Unanimous aye. Motion approved.

Motion by Trustee Lutz, seconded by Trustee Twining to accept the replacement bid in the amount of \$38,890 from Winona Heating and Ventilating to install a new RTU unit at the Hazel Brown Leicht Memorial Library as presented. Roll call vote: Unanimous aye. Motion approved.

Motion by Trustee Anderson, seconded by Trustee Curtis to approve of the proposed changes to the Employee Handbook as presented. Roll call vote. Unanimous aye. Motion approved.

Motion by Trustee Leicht, seconded by Trustee Hennessey to adjourn the meeting at 8:24 p.m. Motion unanimously approved by voice vote.

Ashley M. Bohl, Clerk/Treasurer