

Village of West Salem
Regular Meeting
October 6, 2026

Regular meeting called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Village President Schumacher. Trustees present: Anderson, Curtis, Hennessey, Lautz, Leicht, and Twining. Also present: Harry Garbers, Police Chief Scott Alo, Recreation Director Tony DeGaetano, Village Administrator Teresa DeLong, and Village Clerk/Treasurer Ashley Bohl.

Public Comment

Harry Garbers addressed the Board regarding the proposed Public Safety Building. Mr. Garbers questioned the proposed size of the facility and expressed concerns regarding population trends and public safety needs within the Village. He also questioned the use of a media company to assist with public education and outreach related to the project.

Minutes

Motion by Trustee Leicht, seconded by Trustee Anderson to approve the minutes of the September 15, 2026, regular meeting as written. Roll call vote: Unanimous aye. Motion approved.

Claims

Claims were presented for payment totaling \$139,567.08.

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

Special Public Transit Contract

Motion by Trustee Leicht, seconded by Trustee Anderson to act on the Special Public Transit Committee's recommendation from the Committee's September 14, 2026, meeting to approve the proposal submitted by Running, Inc., increase ride fares by \$1.50, increase agency fares from \$7 to \$12, and to utilize up to 50 percent of the net project cost of federal funding. Roll call vote: Unanimous aye. Motion approved.

Special Event Application

Motion by Trustee Curtis, seconded by Trustee Twining to approve the issuance of a Special Event Permit to the West Salem Business Association and the West Salem Parks and Recreation Department to close South Leonard Street from Elm Street to Hamilton Street, and Memorial Drive for public safety reasons for the Business Association Downtown Trick-or-Treat and the Recreation Department Trunk-or-Treat events scheduled for Friday, October 30, 2026, from 2:45 p.m. to 5:15 p.m. Roll call vote: Unanimous aye. Motion approved.

Buildings and Grounds Committee

Trustee Curtis reported on the Buildings and Grounds Committee meeting minutes of September 22, 2026. The purpose of the meeting was to meet with Elevate Media Group and The BLÜ Group to receive proposals for public communication and education as it relates to construction of the public safety building and renovation of the West Salem Community Center. Steve Londre and CJ White presented a public information strategy for a clear, neutral plan to help residents understand the project, process, and next steps.

Elevate Media recommended digital, direct mailings, in person meetings, and community visibility channels to reach residents, and every communication should point residents back to one clear, current, Village-owned source. The Elevate plan is to clearly explain what is planned, why each component is needed, and which details are still being finalized. Three education plans were presented with the full-service scenario including the most public outreach options and dedicated hours. Discussion and questions regarding timelines, ability to focus on certain communication channels more than others, costs, and coordination of Village review and approvals completed the Elevate Media Group presentation. Elevate Media will allow the Village to create a hybrid campaign. Tony Roberts presented The BLÜ Group public information campaign proposal. The BLÜ Group proposal includes clear public explanations for the public safety building and the Village community center. The project goals are to give residents and businesses the full story and facts, what are the current conditions, explain costs in stages, and give residents and businesses clear ways to comment and receive answers. The plan will answer questions before rumors fill the gaps. Mr. Roberts outlined communication strategies, a proposed timeline, communication channels, public information meetings, creating a project landing page where all up-to-date information is always available, and continuing to record, answer, and distribute all frequently asked questions. The intent of the campaign is to educate—not persuade. Resident surveys will gather feedback on what questions or concerns remain, what information residents want next, ask how residents heard about the project, and offering an online link and paper copies at the Village Hall. The survey would not be presented as a scientific vote on the project, but rather to gather feedback. Mr. Roberts presented and thoroughly explained three levels of outreach. Each option would use the same facts. The difference in levels is reach, repetition, and production support. A full community outreach campaign is the widest reach, repeated household contact, more video and full event support. Core community outreach is a strong balance of reach and cost, including the main video, two mail pieces, and public meeting support. An essential community outreach is the basic set of tools needed to give residents fair access to the facts and a way to respond. A hybrid campaign is useful and acceptable as well. The Committee recommended approval to the Village Board to work with The BLÜ Group for public communication and education relating to the construction of the public safety building and the community center renovation projects.

Motion by Trustee Curtis, seconded by Trustee Hennessey to approve the Buildings and Grounds Committee meeting minutes of September 22, 2026, as presented. Roll call vote: Unanimous aye. Motion approved.

Motion by Trustee Hennessey, seconded by Trustee Lautz to approve working with The BLÜ Group for public communication and education relating to the construction of the public safety building and the community center renovation projects.

Buildings and Grounds Committee

Trustee Curtis reported on the Buildings and Grounds Committee meeting of October 1, 2026. The purpose of the meeting was to review and discuss a potential collaboration between the Village of West Salem, the West Salem School District, Friends of West Salem Baseball, and Legion baseball for the installation of artificial turf at the Village baseball field, with a possible recommendation to the Village Board. Mr. Rieber

requested the opportunity to present a proposal to convert all of or portions of the high school baseball field to synthetic turf. He outlined three configuration options:

- Option 1: Full field turf including the infield, outfield, and foul territory
- Option 2: Turf infield and foul lines with a natural grass outfield
- Option 3: Turf infield with natural grass foul lines and outfield

Option 1 is modeled after the River Falls baseball field, which is fully turfed and provides consistent playing conditions. Option 2 reflects Copeland Park in La Crosse, and Option 3 mirrors the Wausau West field. Mr. Rieber described several advantages of turf fields, including extended playing seasons, reduced maintenance, expanded recreation program use, tournament and rental revenue, and opportunities for long-term sponsorships and donations. He noted that the West Salem School District has recently revised its policies on advertising on school properties, creating additional revenue opportunities. If the Village approves the project, he has several donor and fundraising prospects ready to approach. The Committee recommended the Village Board support and approve Friends of West Salem Baseball moving forward with fundraising to install artificial turf at the Village baseball field.

Motion by Trustee Curtis, seconded by Trustee Lautz to approve the Buildings and Grounds Committee meeting minutes of October 1, 2026, as presented. Roll call vote: Unanimous aye. Motion approved.

Motion by Trustee Anderson, seconded by Trustee Leicht to support and approve Friends of West Salem Baseball moving forward with fundraising to install artificial turf at the Village baseball field. Roll call vote: Unanimous aye. Motion approved.

Motion by Trustee Lautz, seconded by Trustee Anderson to adjourn the meeting at 7:50 p.m.

Ashley M. Bohl, Clerk/Treasurer