

VILLAGE OF WILSON

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Gregory Martin, Mayor
Carey L. O'Connor, Clerk-Treasurer
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Village of Wilson Board of Trustees Minutes - April 7, 2025

Village Representatives	Present	Absent	Village Representatives	Present	Absent
Mayor Greg Martin	X		Superintendent Keith Lepine		X
Deputy Mayor Joanne Seefeldt	X		CEO Travis Evans		X
Trustee Bob Morgan	X		Attorney Michael J. Dowd	X	
Trustee Aaron Pringle	X		Engineer Mike Marino		X
Clerk-Treasurer Carey L. O'Connor	X		Legislator David Godfrey		X
Deputy Clerk-Treasurer Nicole Martin		X			

OATH OF OFFICE

Mayor Greg Martin gave our new Trustees Bob Morgan and Aaron Pringle their Oath of Office.

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Greg Martin called the Village Board meeting to order at 7:03pm. We then proceeded with the Pledge of Allegiance.

STATE OF THE VILLAGE

Before I get into anything else, I want to take a moment to recognize the people who actually keep this village running.

We're welcoming two new trustees this year — Bob Morgan and Aaron Pringle. I'm glad they stepped up, and I'm looking forward to working with them.

Our full team:

Mayor Gregory Martin
Deputy Mayor Joanne Seefeldt Outgoing
Trustee Ellen Hibbard Clerk-Treasurer Carey O'Connor
Deputy Clerk Nicole Martin
Code Enforcement Travis Evans, with Carey O'Connor also credentialed
Superintendent of Public Works Keith Lepine
Deputy Superintendent Joe Zastrow
WWTP Trainee Kevin Peck

This group serves approximately 1,200 residents and roughly 600 homes. A lot of what they do never gets seen. It just gets done. And this village functions because of them.

Where We're Headed — and Why It Matters

Hopefully this will shed light on how we think about running this village, because residents deserve to understand the logic behind our decisions.

Our approach needs to come down to three things working together: growth and infill development, water and sewer infrastructure that can support that growth, and utility rates that are fair and accurate enough to prepare us for what's coming.

Those three things aren't separate priorities. They feed each other. Growth helps carry infrastructure costs. Infrastructure makes growth possible. Responsible rates protect the whole system over time.

But there are two other pieces I want to be focus on this upcoming year: **zoning and tourism**.

Our zoning needs to be addressed. The way our code is currently written creates barriers — to housing, to business, to the kind of development we actually want. That has to change, and we're working on it.

And tourism matters more than people sometimes give it credit for. When visitors come to Wilson — to our waterfront, to the marina, to the farmers market — they spend money at local businesses. Those businesses pay taxes, create jobs, and make this village more livable for the people who already live here.

Here's the reality we have to be honest about: without a significant business base, we are just 600 homes trying to carry these costs alone. That is not a sustainable position. Attracting visitors and supporting businesses isn't separate from fiscal responsibility — it is fiscal responsibility.

Planning and Investment

This past year was heavily focused on planning, and I know that's not always the most exciting thing to report. But it matters more than almost anything else we do.

We completed more than \$75,000 in planning work in the past year alone. Looking ahead, we've been granted over \$130,000 in additional planning work over the next few years, with a local match of just over \$30,000. We're leveraging outside funding to do the groundwork now, so our future decisions are smarter and more competitive.

We wrapped up a NYMS Technical Assistance grant. It opens the door to Target Area grants — and those grants can help property owners, both new and existing, turn a vision for a vacant building into something real. If you've driven down Young and wondered what could go in the empty storefronts, these are the tools that make those conversations possible. We want to attract investors and people with ideas, and we want to be able to say: here's a program that can help make it happen.

We finalized a comprehensive Water Asset Management Study — a living document that maps the condition and expected lifespan of our infrastructure and identifies where the priorities are. Water meters came out as the number one need. We submitted a funding pre-application to begin addressing that, though we were denied just last week. We're not done pursuing it. That will be the first step to fair utilities.

No secret we have a lot of infrastructure that needs to be replaced or repaired. Water lines, sewer lining, roads — these things age, and the cost of addressing them is significant. It's not a crisis yet, but it is a reality we have to plan around honestly and consistently. The studies and grants we're pursuing now are how we get ahead of that.

We're also working on a Wastewater Treatment Plant engineering planning grant focused on efficiency and long-term system performance.

This summer, we completed roadwork across most of the south end. We're pleased with the results and will continue improvements next year.

Growth, Business, and Making Wilson a Destination

Housing is central to our long-term stability. More homes spread the financial burden. We can only cut so much before we have to increase costs.

We applied for a Pro-Housing Technical Assistance grant and did not receive it this cycle. That's disappointing, but it doesn't change the underlying need. We have housing opportunities we are currently missing — homes that aren't being built, rental units that aren't being created, properties sitting underutilized. That has real consequences for our infrastructure cost base and our long-term financial health. A bigger housing base is also better for our businesses, and like I mentioned before, that matters a great deal. We're going to keep pursuing this.

We're developing a Local Waterfront Revitalization Program that will serve as a true master plan for the waterfront. The LWRP will include the lakefront, the wetlands behind Krueger Park, the west side of the village, the central commercial district, and the area surrounding 12-Mile Creek. Community input is going to be essential as that moves forward.

We want Wilson to be a destination — not just for the people who already live here, but for visitors, business owners, and families looking for a place to grow. We are the business center of this town, and we want to build on that role while drawing interest from larger hubs like Lockport and Niagara Falls.

Part of that is simple things like signage and expanding our free bike program, Wander About Wilson, to 20 bikes placed throughout the village. Get out, ride around, see the waterfront, and spend money. That's the idea.

The Wilson Farmers Market is moving forward under new management with a full, stacked schedule that we expect will bring more people in and give the community real momentum.

And we were awarded a public EV charger at zero local cost. It'll be installed at Harbor Park and operational by September. Those maps bring people to Wilson.

The Questions Everyone's Asking

I hear the same two questions constantly, so let me address them.

Dollar General: I'm glad to report real progress. Dollar General has now met all local and state regulatory requirements. The building is clear from our end and the state's end. Reopening is now entirely in the hands of the corporation. We've done our part— the rest is theirs to decide, and we hope they decide soon.

The grocery store: This one is more complicated. Before anything can move forward, an engineering report is needed to confirm the structural integrity of the building. In the meantime, we're preparing to remove the rear structure to address safety concerns.

I know both of these matter a lot to people here. We're not going to stop pushing, and we understand the need for them.

Legislative Work

We've been doing work on the laws that govern how this village operates. We're looking at new fine schedules and created a solar law. Four local laws are currently in various stages of review and adoption.

01 Blighted Property Law FIRST READING

A point-based system to designate and address blighted properties, with annual registration fees, compliance plans, and lien authority. Bridges the gap between our existing demolition and vacant building codes.

02 RV & Camper Law (Ch. 105) READY FOR ADOPTION

Updates temporary occupancy rules with a Harvest Host special use permit framework. Fee discussion ongoing (\$200 → \$500). Also opens a potential DPW dump station revenue opportunity.

03 Battery Energy Storage (BESS) PENDING COUNTY PLANNING

Establishes a Tier 1 / Tier 2 framework for battery energy storage systems. Tier 1 is permitted by-right; Tier 2 requires a special use permit in industrial zones. Pending Niagara County Planning Board approval.

04 Temporary Storage Units (Ch. 145) READY FOR ADOPTION

Creates a permit system for POD-style storage units. \$50 permit, 30-day period, one unit per property at a time. Includes a complimentary 15-day permit for new residents moving in.

Community Improvements

A few things happening at Martin Park that I'm super excited about.

The fully enclosed fence at the children's playground has just been installed. This was about more than just a fence — it was about making a space where every child can actually play safely. None of Wilson's public playgrounds were fenced before this. For families with children with disabilities or special needs, that was a real barrier. With roughly 16% of students in our district having disabilities, this project addressed an immediate need, and it's done. I hope we can draw families from other communities that don't have a play area like ours. We're grateful to Woodsmith Fence and the American Fence Association for making it happen through their charitable initiative.

The Austin Wilson Memorial Fund is bringing a new splash pad to Martin Park — a major addition that's going to be a great resource for families. They also funded the new bathroom facility and sidewalks in the park, both significant and lasting upgrades. Their generosity has made a real difference in this community, and it shows. I cannot personally thank Jason and Mandy enough.

Recognition

We're a Pro-Housing Certified Community. We have an application in to become a Climate Smart Community. We're recognized as an AARP Livable Community and a proud Tree City USA member.

I want to put those certifications in perspective, because the numbers are worth sharing.

There are only 190 Tree City USA communities in New York State. Only 407 Pro-Housing Certified Communities. Only 168 Climate Smart Communities. And only 48 AARP Livable Communities across the state.

We will soon hold all four.

The odds of any one community achieving all four of those designations? Roughly 1 in 8,673.

We did it.

That was not an accident. It was a deliberate path with a consistent commitment to building a better, more resilient village. These designations open doors to funding, provide tools for long-term planning, and signal to investors, grant agencies, and families looking for a place to land that Wilson is serious about its future. Getting these designations was not easy and We're proud of the progress we have made.

The Budget — Honest Talk

This month (April), we'll conduct a full water and sewer rate analysis to make sure we're covering what we need to cover and preparing responsibly for future infrastructure costs.

Here's where the current budget stands: the total village budget is approximately \$1.38 million — about \$918,000 in general operations, \$101,500 in water, and \$361,000 in sewer. Of that total, roughly \$581,930 needs to be raised through taxes, with the rest covered by revenues like sales tax, state aid, and service charges.

One of the things I'm most proud of in this budget is what we've done with fund balance. Fund balance is essentially our savings cushion — the reserves we draw from to keep taxes stable. For years, we've budgeted and relied on it heavily at times. In FY 2023/24 we appropriated \$245,431 from fund balance to balance the budget. In FY 2024/25 it was \$206,645. Last year, \$173,534.

This year: \$44,946.

We cut our fund balance draw by nearly 75% with only a modest bump in property tax. Hopefully this is responsible budgeting. We're not allowing ourselves to cover costs with savings anymore — we're building toward funds that can actually stand on their own. In FY 2026/27 we use fund balance only in the Sewer Fund, our strongest fund, and we're letting the General and Water funds grow. That becomes a reserve for future repairs and capital needs.

The pressures we can't control are real — inflation, rising electricity costs, growing contractual obligations, higher professional service costs. We look for the best value, we bid, we shop around. But some of it is just the cost of running a municipality in 2026.

What I want people to understand is this: we are asking approximately 1,200 residents and roughly 600 homes to support an entire municipal system. That's a small base. It makes careful, honest planning essential, and it's exactly why growing our business base and attracting new investment isn't optional. It's part of how we keep this village affordable for the people who live here.

Every person on this board is also a village resident. We pay the same rates. We feel the same pressures. We do not make these decisions lightly.

What Sustainability Actually Means

When we talk about sustainability, it means a stronger — maybe larger — downtown. More housing options. Utility funds that can stand on their own.

That's the goal we're working toward.

What Comes Next

We have most of the plans. Now it's about executing them carefully and responsibly.

I'll ask one thing of you: stay involved. Reach out. Ask questions. Come to meetings. You don't have to agree with every decision — but be part of the conversation and try to understand why the decisions are made.

And I want to close with something I think about a lot.

"No" is easy. It's low risk, low cost, low effort.

But "Yes" is work. "Yes" means making hard decisions and building a real plan. "Yes" can be uncomfortable — and sometimes it should be.

But "Yes" is what this village needs. It's what our future will require.

It's what growth demands. And it's what a strong, stable, sustainable village is built on.

That is the commitment we're making. And we will keep working to move this village forward in the best way we know how. Thank you.

PUBLIC HEARING FOR TENTATIVE BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 2026-2027

Mayor Greg Martin opened the public hearing/discussion on the tentative budget and asked if any of the Trustees had any comments on the budget. Resident Karen Kiel asked how the budget breaks down. Mayor Martin and Clerk O'Connor explained that we have three funds. General, Water and Sewer. Within those funds, we have Revenues and Expenses. On the budget worksheet, we explained the breakdown and how it comes to our overall budgeted totals. Alexandria McKenzie asked how the payroll is broken down among the funds. Mayor Martin went through the General, Water & Sewer expenses and briefly explained each line item, including each individual payroll line item. Mayor then asked if anyone had any questions. No additional questions were asked from the residents or Board. Mayor Greg Martin closed the public hearing and proceeded to ask for a motion to approve the Village Budget for Fiscal Year 2026-2027. Trustee

Joanne Seefeldt made a motion to accept the budget as presented, seconded by Trustee Bob Morgan. Roll Call was taken by Clerk O'Connor, Trustee Joanne Seefeldt, yes; Trustee Aaron Pringle, yes, Trustee Bob Morgan, yes; and Mayor Greg Martin, yes. All in favor, Village Budget for fiscal year 2026-2027 has passed unanimously.

MINUTES

Mayor Greg Martin asked for a motion to accept the meeting minutes from March 19, 2026. Motion was made by Trustee Joanne Seefeldt seconded by Trustee Bob Morgan. Mayor Greg Martin stated that you can find a copy of these minutes in the Clerk's office or online. All in favor, motion passed.

BUSINESS

Resolutions:

Fiscal Year 2026-2027 Appointments: Mayor Martin read the appointments for the Fiscal Year 2026-2027. Mayor Martin asked for a motion to accept the appointments as read. Trustee Joanne Seefeldt made a motion to accept, seconded by Trustee Aaron Pringle. Clerk O'Connor took roll call. Trustee Aaron Pringle, yes; Trustee Bob Morgan, yes; Trustee Joanne Seefeldt, yes; and Mayor Greg Martin, yes. All in favor, motion passed.

08-2026 Advance Payment of Claims: Mayor Martin read the attached resolution and then asked for a motion to approve. Trustee Bob Morgan made a motion to approve resolution, seconded by Trustee Joanne Seefeldt. Clerk O'Connor took roll call. Trustee Aaron Pringle, yes; Trustee Bob Morgan, yes; Trustee Joanne Seefeldt, yes; and Mayor Greg Martin, yes. All in favor, motion passed.

09-2026 ACH Authorization: Mayor Martin read the attached resolution and then asked for a motion to approve. Trustee Joanne Seefeldt made a motion to approve resolution, seconded by Trustee Bob Morgan. Clerk O'Connor took roll call. Trustee Aaron Pringle, yes; Trustee Bob Morgan, yes; Trustee Joanne Seefeldt, yes; and Mayor Greg Martin, yes. All in favor, motion passed.

10-2026 Designating Depositories: Mayor Martin read the attached resolution and then asked for a motion to approve. Trustee Joanne Seefeldt made a motion to approve resolution, seconded by Trustee Bob Morgan. Clerk O'Connor took roll call. Trustee Aaron Pringle, yes; Trustee Bob Morgan, yes; Trustee Joanne Seefeldt, yes; and Mayor Greg Martin, yes. All in favor, motion passed.

11-2026 Mileage Allowance: Mayor Martin read the attached resolution and then asked for a motion to approve. Trustee Bob Morgan made a motion to approve resolution, seconded by Trustee Aaron Pringle. Clerk O'Connor took roll call. Trustee Aaron Pringle, yes; Trustee Bob Morgan, yes; Trustee Joanne Seefeldt, yes; and Mayor Greg Martin, yes. All in favor, motion passed.

12-2026 Attendance at Schools and Conferences: Mayor Martin read the attached resolution and then asked for a motion to approve. Trustee Aaron Pringle made a motion to approve resolution, seconded by Trustee Bob Morgan. Clerk O'Connor took roll call. Trustee Aaron Pringle, yes; Trustee Bob Morgan, yes; Trustee Joanne Seefeldt, yes; and Mayor Greg Martin, yes. All in favor, motion passed.

13-2026 Village Board Meetings: Mayor Martin read the attached resolution and then asked for a motion to approve. Trustee Joanne Seefeldt made a motion to approve resolution, seconded by Trustee Aaron Pringle. Clerk O'Connor took roll call. Trustee Aaron Pringle, yes; Trustee Bob Morgan, yes; Trustee Joanne Seefeldt, yes; and Mayor Greg Martin, yes. All in favor, motion passed.

14-2026 Fair Housing Officer: Mayor Martin read the attached resolution and then asked for a motion to approve. Trustee Joanne Seefeldt made a motion to approve resolution, seconded by Trustee Bob Morgan. Clerk O'Connor took roll call. Trustee Aaron Pringle, yes; Trustee Bob Morgan, yes; Trustee Joanne Seefeldt, yes; and Mayor Greg Martin, yes. All in favor, motion passed.

Mayor Greg Martin stated that this is not on the agenda but we need to enter into a MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) with the Austin Wilson Memorial Foundation. Mayor Martin read the attached MOU and then asked for a

motion to approve. Trustee Joanne Seefeldt made a motion to approve MOU, seconded by Trustee Bob Morgan. Clerk O'Connor took roll call. Trustee Aaron Pringle, yes; Trustee Bob Morgan, yes; Trustee Joanne Seefeldt, yes; and Mayor Greg Martin, yes. All in favor, motion passed.

Policies

Review of Sewer and Water Connection Policy: Mayor Martin would like to forgo this policy as they're still working on this. He stated that each Superintendent has had their little bits of information they wanted to put into it. We now have our CEO Travis Evans that wanted the Board to bring it together with new information. Mayor Martin asked for a motion to table this until next meeting. Trustee Joanne Seefeldt made a motion, seconded by Trustee Aaron Pringle. All in favor, motion approved.

Proposed Refuse tote Policy: Mayor Martin wanted to create a policy as there have been many questions about the program and to simplify the process, the Clerk's will have a policy to follow without having to ask the Village Board for approval every time a resident requests one. Mayor Martin read the attached policy. Mayor Martin asked for a motion to pass the Refuse Tote Policy. A motion was made by Trustee Bob Morgan, seconded by Trustee Aaron Pringle. All in favor, motion passed.

Fund Balance Policy: Mayor Martin wanted to review and update our current Fund Balance Policy. We currently have one that states that we will maintain 30% of our appropriations for the next fiscal year. This is high for Village's. This proposal would bring it down between 20-30% and anything over 30% would be put away into a reserve. Mayor Martin stated that he reached out to our Village Accountant to review. Mayor Martin asked for a motion pending the accountants approval. Trustee Bob Morgan made a motion pending the accountants approval, seconded by Trustee Joanne Seefeldt. All in favor, policy passed.

POLICY REVIEW

Tree Assessment Policy: The Board reviewed and Trustee Joanne Seefeldt recommended to update that the tree has to be the village's or in the village right of way. Mayor Martin stated it should specify that and to add "in the Village right of way". Mayor Martin asked for a motion to pass once it's amended. Trustee Joanne Seefeldt made a motion to approve it as amended, seconded by Trustee Bob Morgan. All in favor, motion approved.

Water Bill Credit Request Policy was reviewed and all is good.

Rodent Trap & Remove Policy was reviewed and all is good.

Winter Maintenance Policy update "h" and to change "The Village of Wilson will" to "The Village of Wilson may". Mayor Martin asked for a motion to update policy. Motion to approve was made by Trustee Joanne Seefeldt, seconded by Trustee Bob Morgan. All in favor, update approved.

Village of Wilson Water and Sewer Billing and Collection Policy will need the months that they are billed updated. Change July, October, January and April to March, June, September and December. Mayor Martin asked for a motion to approve update. Trustee Joanne Seefeldt made the motion, seconded by Trustee Aaron Pringle. All in favor, motion passed.

SOP for Planning and Zoning Board Alternate. Mayor Martin stated that we no longer have a Planning Board so we will need to remove that. Mayor Martin asked for a motion to approve the update. Trustee Bob Morgan made a motion to approve, seconded by Trustee Joanne Seefeldt. All in favor, motion passed.

Donation policy. Mayor Martin would like to update the "Business District" he'd like to up date that to "within the Village". Motion to make update made by Trustee Joanne Seefeldt, seconded by Trustee Aaron Pringle. All in favor, motion approved.

Mayor Martin brought up two Wendel invoices for the LWRP that need paid and were not on the abstracts. Trustee Bob Morgan made a motion to approve payment of the invoices, seconded by Trustee Joanne Seefeldt. All in favor, motion approved.

Mayor Martin wanted to give a few updates before we close the meeting. Engineering planning grant for the I & I. Mike Marino has been working on responses, they are due 4/20/26. Engineering planning grant is ongoing, the LWRP is ongoing, the ZEV grant should be done by September, the Niagara County Youth grant has been executed. American Fence Association fence is completed. The Ralph C. Wilson grant application is still pending. The Northern Border Commission has denied us for water meter replacements. The did not agree that there meters were construction. Others were funded in other means but not just meters. Put our an AARP grant. Asked for money from Tenney's office and were denied. We are waiting to hear from Schumer and Gilibrand. The new WQIP has not been put forward yet. The Tree Inventory has not been put forward yet. SAM Grant is still pending. We need to get the money to put forth our match. The NY Main Street grant is over, CDBG is over, the CDBG for other funding was pulled. We were denied the NY Technical Assistance grant and the Smart Growth plan study. One of the reasons is because they want a large amount of money to come from the Village. It was recommended to team up with the Town. He reached out to Tony Evans and they're not in a position to apply.

REPORTS

Mayor Greg Martin opened reports.

Trustee Joanne Seefeldt had nothing to report.

Attorney Mike Dowd had nothing to report.

Clerk Treasurer Carey O'Connor had nothing at this time.

Trustee Bob Morgan reported that he and Deputy Mayor Seefeldt went out to the community to get more people to report on the R-Cap survey. They had some success. With the Mayor's direction and approval, he was able to get additional bikes for the Wander about Wilson program. He was promised more later if we would like them.

Trustee Aaron Pringle had nothing at this time.

Mayor Greg Martin reported that he has a Zoom meeting with Steve Barth from Barth Consulting tomorrow, with some type of number to work with us. He understands what our needs are. Water, Sewer, Housing. He works with businesses to bring them into the Village. He has been highly successful in other areas. He looks forward to hearing what his thoughts are. Mayor Martin found a neat 2024 project that was done by LaBella that stated that the old Pfeiffers building is a great building for meat packing. If anyone knows of anyone wanting a meat packing business, we have the building for you. Sent an email to e360 Code to see what it would take to update our code. We would need to form a committee and we would do our homework to get it updated. They would review it and make sure it's legal and good to go. We will be receiving a quote on that project. Clerk O'Connor thanked the Mayor for everything!! Not sure how he keeps it straight but he does.

Mayor Greg Martin closed reports.

CLOSING

Mayor Greg Martin stated that our next Meeting will be on Thursday, April 16, 2026 here at the Town Hall at 2:30pm, and our Board meeting will be that evening at 7:00pm. Mayor Greg Martin requested a motion to adjourn the Board meeting at 8:23pm. Trustee Joanne Seefeldt made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Trustee Bob Morgan. All in favor, meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

Carey L. O'Connor

Carey L. O'Connor
Village Clerk-Treasurer