

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 – February 19, 2026

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 Ellen Hibbard	X		Attorney Michael J. Dowd	X	
Trustee Doug Kepner		X	Engineer Mike Marino	X	
Clerk-Treasurer Carey L. O'Connor	X		Legislator David Godfrey		X
Deputy Clerk-Treasurer Nicole Martin		X			

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Greg Martin called the Village Board meeting to order at 7:00pm. We then proceeded with the Pledge of Allegiance.

MINUTES

Mayor Greg Martin asked for a motion to accept the meeting minutes from the January 15, 2026 board meeting. The meeting minutes can be found on the Village website. Trustee Joanne Seefeldt made a motion to accept the minutes, seconded by Trustee Ellen Hibbard. All in favor, motion passed.

MONTHLY BILLS

Mayor Greg Martin asked for a motion to approve payment of all vouchers (attached). The abstracts are located at the back of the room. Trustee Ellen Hibbard made a motion to approve all payments, seconded by Trustee Joanne Seefeldt. All in favor, motion passed.

BUSINESS

Mayor Greg Martin opened the business portion of the meeting.

Bob Morgan's resignation from the Village Zoning Board of Appeals: Mayor Greg Martin read Mr. Morgan's resignation. Trustee Joanne Seefeldt made a motion to accept the letter of resignation, seconded by Trustee Ellen Hibbard. All in favor, resignation accepted. Mayor Martin stated that he is currently working on a replacement for this position and it will be announced soon.

Mayor Greg Martin announced that there will be a public hearing on March 19, 2026 at 7pm, here at the Town Hall during our Board meeting to discuss Local Law #2-2026 to Override the Tax Levy Limit established in General Municipal Law section 3-c. Mayor Martin spoke:

"Good Evening,

I want to talk tonight about the difficult but realistic possibility: the Village may need to override the property tax cap in this year's budget.

We respect the 2 percent cap. We work hard every year to stay within it. Our actual costs are not capped. Contracts, insurance, fuel, materials, employee benefits, and professional services are all rising faster than 2 percent. Under the cap, the levy would grow by about \$10,800 this year. That simply does not cover the increase in our fixed obligations.

When revenue growth is limited but expenses are not, the difference has to come from somewhere. In prior years, that "somewhere" was fund balance. Fund balance is our un-appropriated savings. It should be there for emergencies, infrastructure failures, and one-time needs. It should not be used to routinely close operating gaps. Five years ago, we were drawing more than \$245,000 from reserves to balance the budget. That pattern was not sustainable. We have made measurable progress since then. The Fiscal Year 2026-2027 draft reduces total expenses to a five-year low. Non-tax revenues are at their highest point in five years. Overall fund balance draws have dropped by 79 percent compared to where we were.

However, we are still in transition. This year, the sewer fund is using fund balance for sewer operations, in part because it is still carrying water-related salaries and benefits. That is not where we ultimately want to be. In April, we will begin a formal rate analysis so we can properly align water and sewer rates with the true cost of providing these services. The goal is long-term self-sufficiency for each fund, without pressure on the general tax levy.

There are other realities that have led to where we are today. We have legally covered water and sewer shortfalls through the general levy in the past. We have planned for employee retirements to maintain service levels. We have absorbed contractual obligations and necessary capital purchases, including garbage totes, new water software, and essential equipment. These are not expansions. They are core service costs.

At the same time, we are funding 2026 expenses using an assessment roll that has not had a full reassessment since 2006. Our current level of assessment is about 45 percent of full value. The taxable value is listed at roughly \$49.6 million, while the implied full value exceeds \$110 million. That imbalance does not automatically increase taxes, but it does show how outdated our tax base measurement has become.

We also have a 30 percent fund balance policy. In the general fund, our target reserve is about \$260,000. We are projected at roughly \$104,000. Water is projected at \$15,000, our target is approximately \$50,000. Continuing to rely on reserves would only widen that gap.

An override of approximately 3 percent, about \$16,000, would allow us to stabilize operations while we complete the structural corrections already underway. This is not about growing government. It is about maintaining services, protecting reserves, and avoiding larger corrections later. This would be a deliberate and transparent decision. Our responsibility is to address pressure early, not wait for it to become a crisis.

We will continue to share the numbers and the options clearly in the months ahead.

Thank you."

Mayor Martin read the attached Local Law.

Mayor Greg Martin closed the business portion of the meeting.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Mayor Greg Martin opened public participation.

No one had anything to report or announce.

Mayor Greg Martin closed public participation.

REPORTS

Mayor Greg Martin opened reports.

WWTP Operator Keith Lepine reported:

Wastewater:

- We received back our sludge cake analysis from Pace Labs. No issues were found. Results were forwarded to Modern. We received back a waste approval, which gives us permit to send our waste sludge to Modern for another year.
- We recently did a filter press. The sludge came out at approximately 18% dry. This is a good low number, resulting in a lower weight and cost to send to the landfill.
- With the snow melting, we have noticed high flows at the wastewater treatment plant, indicating some infiltration in our system. It been more noticeable coming from Sunset Island.
- Overall, the WWTP is running very well. We do have a few items we would like to make repairs on, but we're very conscious of spreading out our costs over time. A few items include concrete work around our drive systems (support), replacing wet-well pump #2, installing a bypass channel bar screen, replacing some heater fan motors that are beginning to fail, and building a cover over our UV system to protect it from the elements.
- We have been doing a good job of staying on top of preventative maintenance, but there are some items that are just past their life expectancy.
- The lab results have been very good and we have been well under our permit limits.
- Kevin and I went to the WNY Water Works Conference today as part of our mandated training hours. We took in sessions on VFD's for process control pumps, membrane filtration principles, ductile iron pipe, PVC pipe, chemical feed systems, valve selection and maintenance, and a very good presentation on UV disinfection.

Water:

- We just received a pocket colorimeter. We now have the ability to test the free chlorine residual in our drinking water at any end user point. This will go a long way to allow us to check the disinfectant residual in our drinking water to ensure our water is always safe to drink, rather than just relying on monthly tests by Niagara County.
- On February 6th, we had a water main break on Mechanic Street. We were able to isolate, find the break and make the repair all in the same day. Thanks to Jimmy Pringle and his staff at the Town of Wilson, David Branch from Niagara County Water, and our fine DPW staff here at the Village of Wilson for their quick response and not quitting until the job was complete.
- We are continuing to contact residents of the Village of Wilson in a street-by-street procedure, to do a water service line check. Our DPW staff is checking to see what material service line feeds in the water service meter. Which ones still are lead. We will be continuing this work over the next few weeks. I'll be calling residents to see when they're available for our technicians to quickly inspect the connection. The actual inspection only takes them 5 minutes.
- Overall, with all the high amounts of snowfall recently, I believe the PW crew did a fantastic job keeping up with all of the snow and ice. They came in early and on weekends when needed to keep up with the snow, that at times seemed like it wouldn't end. To keep costs down, we were able to get a discount on a truck for moving the high hills of snow that were accumulating at certain corners to keep everyone safe.

Roads:

- We sent in our funding requests through the CHIPS and similar roads funding programs this month. Communicating with Jim Cuozzo, the NYSDOT Chips regional rep to decipher what qualifies for future funding under CHIPS, Pave NY, EWR, and POP.

Engineer Mike Marino reported that finished the water plan for the Community Development Block Grant and it has been submitted, getting closed out and using portions of that to leverage funding for various elements of the distribution system. We have EFC meeting to hopefully give us a green light to look at other funding. They have been reviewing our I&I report to hopefully leverage that for lining money.

CEO Travis Evans reported he has issued 2 new permits this month, and 11 are still open. Started 2026 fire inspections. Busy on the 3 new homes going up. Still having issues with Dollar General at the Corporate level. He's pushing to get it open, but corporate is slow at getting things fixed. Storage containers are popping up in the village, we need to figure out how to handle that. Helping a resident to get their house sold, however, they have an apartment above their garage that needs some up dates. Bad news, Wendel Property management has notified us that this is the last year to have the building permit program, we need to look at a new program.

Trustee Joanne Seefeldt is currently working on a new Village newsletter that will go out with March water bills. Good news is the Farmer's Market is going to be a great event this coming year.

Trustee Ellen Hibbard wanted to thank Keith and the guys for keeping the street walkable this winter! Next month will be her last meeting and is looking forward to it. Greg wanted to acknowledge Ellen and the amount of knowledge she has brought to the Village and that she will be missed.

Attorney Mike Dowd has nothing to report at this time.

Clerk Treasurer Carey O'Connor reported that we have been finalizing the December water billing and we have been preparing for the March water billing that will go out on the first.

We have received payment in the amount of \$20,000 for the NY Main Street grant and \$50,000 for the CDBG (Community Development Block Grant). All invoices have been paid.

Reminder to all Village residents that our Annual Village Election is a month away on March 18th from noon to 9pm. This year is to elect two trustees for four-year terms. If you will not be in Town for the election, you can obtain and absent ballot by filling out an absentee application, located in the Village clerk's office.

We had a Hometown Hero family come in to request their banner and wanted to know how quickly the turn a round would be as his father is in hospice. We reached out the the Print Shop in Medina to see if there was anything we could do. They said they could turn it around asap and they did just that and the family was able to present it to their father. Not only that, but the Print Shop donated the banner. I'd also like to thank Bob Morgan for making the trip to Medina to pick it up and bring it back.

Hometown Hero banner applications are due by the end of the month to get them up by May.

Mayor Greg Martin reported:

Mayor Martin read Trustee Doug Kepner's resignation from the Village Board. (attached) Motion to accept his letter of resignation made by Trustee Ellen Hibbard, seconded by Trustee Joanne Seefeldt. All in favor, resignation accepted.

Mayor Martin stated he worked a multitude of things this month. He had CDBG meetings, Village Tourism calendar meeting, and LWRP zoom meeting with Engineers, a CHIPS meeting with Jim Pringle, Keith Lepine & Carey. He met with Syracuse TA to discuss a funding plan, DOS Smart Growth Application meeting, an America 250 Committee meeting, and an LWRP meeting. Spoke with a resident, worked on multiple budget spreadsheets and analyzation, and worked with the accountant a

bit. Worked on some CSC stuff – there will be a climate resilience survey coming out soon. Worked with R-Cap to finish up our resiliency and risk assessment and emergency response plans. Beginning next, a project with R-Cap for a water rate study. He met with Doug Kepner in regards to his resignation. He met with trustee candidate Bob Morgan about the operations at the WWTP. He has been working with the Northern Border Commission in regards to a pre-application for water meters. He is beginning to work on Congressional Funding requests. We will be meeting with LaBella on our grants wish list on March 2nd at 3:00pm, here at the Town Hall. He also worked on filling the vacancy on the ZBA and spoke to Town Planning Board Chair, Mike Seeley who is interested in joining our ZBA and he'd be a great asset with a wealth of knowledge. Looking forward to working with him.

Clerk O'Connor asked before we close, has the Board discussed a date to work on the Budget? The Board discussed a day and came up with Wednesday, March 4, 2026 at 3pm here at the Town Hall Conference room.

Mayor Greg Martin closed reports.

CLOSING

Mayor Greg Martin stated that we will be having a budget meeting on Wednesday, March 4th at 3pm in the Conference room and our next Employee and Board meeting will be on Thursday, March 19th at 2:30pm and 7:00pm here at the Town Hall. Mayor Martin asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:35pm. Motion made by Trustee Ellen Hibbard, seconded by Trustee Joanne Seefeldt. All in favor, meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

Carey L. O'Connor

Carey L. O'Connor
Village Clerk-Treasurer