

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING
VILLAGE OF LAKEWOOD
February 23, 2026**

The third meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Village of Lakewood, N.Y., was held, Monday,
February 23rd, 2026, 6:30 P.M

Present:	Randall G. Holcomb	Mayor
	Ben J. Troché	Deputy Mayor/Trustee
	Ellen E. Barnes	Trustee
	John L. Shedd	Trustee
	Scott A. Cooper	Trustee

Also Present:	Apryl Troutman	Village Clerk/ Treasurer
	Shaunah Pilling	Deputy Treasurer
	Kurt Hallberg	Fire Chief
	Matthew Bentley	Police Chief
	John C. Certo	DPW Supervisor
	Marilyn Fiore-Lehman	Village Attorney

Absent:	Jeff Swanson	Code Enforcement Officer
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A work session was held with no action taken

ANYONE TO BE HEARD

Mayor Holcomb opened the floor before the regular meeting due to concerns with the upcoming New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) meeting Thursday, March 5th, 2026 from 4:30-6:30pm at the Town of Busti Hall for the Fairmount Ave sidewalk project.

Richard Fischer, 43 West Fairmount, stated as a former Village of Lakewood Trustee he walked the street and talked to the residents to hear what they had to say. He promised to back these residents for as long as he can and that is why he is here today. Going back to the December 11th, 2023 Board of Trustees meeting, Mr. Fischer was concerned about communication when it comes to the New York State Department of Transportation and the Village offices. He also does not believe Chautauqua County Planning did a diligent enough investigation. Mr. Fischer did state multiple resolutions he would like the Village Board of Trustees to consider. He strongly believes the community does not want the sidewalk project to move forward.

- Trustee Troché asked Clerk/Treasurer Troutman if there was a resolution not supporting the design of the original plans from the DOT.
- Clerk/Treasurer Troutman stated there was a resolution December 11th, 2023 – “RESOLUTION #215-2023: APPROVE & SUPPORT NEW YORK STATE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION – REGION 5 APPLYING FOR GRANT FUNDING FOR NY ROUTE 394 SIDEWALK EXTENSION PROJECT.” On October 15th, 2024 the Board discussed and end up tabling denouncing the project. Then on October 28th, 2024 the BOT did pass “Resolution #132-2024: DENOUNCE THE

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING
VILLAGE OF LAKEWOOD
February 23, 2026**

*PROPOSED FAIRMOUNT AVENUE/NYS ROUTE 394 TWO-SIDED SIDEWALK
DESIGN PRESENTED ON SEPTEMBER 26TH, 2024 BY NYS DOT.”*

- Trustee Barnes said that the December 11th, 2023 resolution was rescinded due to Grant funding being denied.

Nancy Jones, 215 Locust Street, explained that those who this project affects the most do not want sidewalks. She does not understand why anyone would want them as it will cause such horrible things for certain residents like losing part of their driveways.

Marcia Lawson, 4460 Fairmount Ave, lives just outside the Village of Lakewood but this project will affect her just up the road. She has lived on Fairmount for 81 years and remembers how the street used to be before the sewer project and others. She said residents have just recovered from these. The trees especially are just regrowing after having to cut down hundreds. She questioned why anyone would even walk on Fairmount as most of the businesses are drive too places, except maybe ice cream. She thinks safety is important but the bigger problem are the drivers themselves speeding or texting and driving. Her grandfather actually died from a drunk driver on Fairmount, which many would think she is pro-sidewalk but she still is not.

Tom Burgess, owner of Lakewood Furniture Galleries at 75 E Fairmount Ave, asked if this project is getting grant funding?

- Trustee Troché said originally the Village passed a resolution supporting the State asking for grant money. Then the Board found out at the last public hearing with the State that they didn't have grant funding. So, the Board agreed that the project's dead. Then they found out that Governor Hochul put this project in DOT's master plan, because it goes through three municipalities. After this the Board questioned what does this means for the Village. The DOT explained that this sidewalk project is fully state and federally funded.

Mr. Burgess is concerned with the impact that this project is going to once again have on the property owners along Fairmount Ave. Also, the fact that people will now be walking past these peoples home and staring through their windows. Mr. Burgess said even though this is state and federally funded there is no such thing as free money. The Village will have to maintain these sidewalks, which means paying more people to plow. The people present tonight do not want this and this money is not free.

- Trustee Troché wanted it to be known that this is state and federally funded, again. The Village is not accepting any money.

Mr. Burgess asked if the community needs to go to Senator George Borello to get this project shut down.

- Trustee Troché said yes. He also wanted to agree with Mr. Fischer that communication between the NYS DOT and the Village has been poor.
- Trustee Barnes spoke to Robert Schaller, the assistant regional design engineer for the New York State Department of Transportation, a few years back and he explained that

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING
VILLAGE OF LAKEWOOD
February 23, 2026**

the Chautauqua County planning department had reached out to the state to start this process.

Unrelated to the Fairmount Ave Sidewalk Project

Burt Meekins, 120 Sunset Ave, spoke about the recent “Flock”, AI surveillance cameras, presentation that occurred during the February 9th, 2026 work session. Mr. Meekins believes our police department does a great job at keeping this area safe, keeping the crime rate low. He never has thought to himself that more cameras were necessary in this area. Mr. Meekins urged the Board to educate themselves and to evaluate whether or not this is something the Village really needs. There are multiple sourced cases on which Flock camera data has been abused by those who have access too them and the cost itself.

Fairmount Ave Sidewalk Project continued

Rebecca Brown, 126 West Fairmount Ave, spoke against the project due to the possible liabilities to the homeowner.

Mayor Holcomb opened the floor for the Board to give their opinions on the Fairmount Ave Project

Mayor Holcomb, 112 West Fairmount Ave, is discouraged to hear that they don’t see people running, walking, riding their bicycles, or just using Fairmount other than cars. He sees it every day, especially with the apartments right up the road. Families are walking to the Dollar General Store and Save-A-Lot because they do not have another form of transportation. Saving one life or one accident by having side walks is worth it.

Trustee Cooper had just spoke with DPW Supervisor Certo this past week about plowing these sidewalks and he is sure his crew can take care of them. The next thing he did is drove down Fairmount Ave to see what would be affected with this project. He understands that their would-be properties affected, but would like clarification on what the eminent domain is. Lastly, he does agree the communication with the NYSDOT is lacking. He is listening to what everyone has to say concerning this project.

Trustee Troché agreed with many others on the issue with communication. He understands that there are many residents concerned and wanted it to be known that they are not 100% of the population, but neither are those that are for them. It is a controversial project that the State is pushing. He believes it is very important to focus on the facts, which is the NYSDOT is pushing this project for public safety. When someone says nobody has died, that is not a positive outlook. Mr. Troché stated before his time on the Board had pushed the NYSDOT to add a traffic light at the Fairmount Ave-Shadyside intersection, but they said nobody has died. This is an awful metric to use, who do we pick to make that sacrifice? It’s just a bad argument that the State gives us right back, which is not productive. Trustee Troché wants everyone to focus on the facts which are the trees, the land, the sidewalk itself, the liability, and appreciates hearing all questions and comments.

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING
VILLAGE OF LAKEWOOD
February 23, 2026**

Trustee Barnes agreed with everyone that the communication has been poor. She has seen what projects on Fairmount do to the property owners and the issues that have been caused. She does believe there is a safety component here, she is not against sidewalks, but accidents will still happen. New York State did put out that they would like communities connected via sidewalks but the way they delivered the information is concerning.

Trustee Shedd again agreed with the poor communication from the State. He is surprised by Mr. Fischer's opinion on the sidewalks, as one of his platforms when running for office was sidewalks. He is concerned that this is a "not my front yard" kind of an issue, sidewalks wherever they are put will affect someone. Mr. Shedd is 100% for sidewalks for the safety purpose because there are accidents and deaths. He sympathizes with the residents along the project that will have property affected, but they are not the whole population of the Village and we need to think about every resident's safety and interest in this. As for the property, most of the work the State will be doing in is in the Right of Way, which is the States property. Mr. Shedd lives on Walnut Street and is aware that his front yard is not all his front yard and would welcome a sidewalk for safety, convenience, health and exercise. There are people walking on Fairmount, especially at night and often in dark clothing. The Village should be thankful that there are not more accidents along this roadway. Along with this the Village has been in contact with the State on the project's construction, in which they have changed the plans to mitigate the impact on properties nearby. If anything, the Village needs more sidewalks and he would not want to push away one that is basically being gifted to the Village by the State.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion by Trustee Barnes, seconded by Trustee Shedd, to approve the minutes of the last meeting of the Board of Trustees held on February 9th, 2026.

Adopted: 4 ayes, no nays (Barnes, Cooper, Shedd, Troché)

AUDIT OF CLAIMS

Motion by Trustee Troché, seconded by Trustee Barnes, that the claims as audited by the Auditing Committee of the abstract dated February 23rd, 2026 be approved and that the Clerk Department shall execute said abstracts and direct payment by the Treasurer Department.

- Abstracts (#40 & #40)
 - o General Fund: \$82387.76 (Checks #22361 through 22387)
 - VOIDED CHECKS:
 - #22378 – National Grid, ACH Payment
 - #22386 – Windstream, ACH Payment
 - o T & A Fund: \$70436.80 (Checks #10040 through 10075)

Adopted: 4 ayes, no nays (Barnes, Cooper, Shedd, Troché)

REPORTS

DPW Supervisor John C. Certo:

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING
VILLAGE OF LAKEWOOD
February 23, 2026**

The crew has received reports of plow damage so they have been assessing the damages and fixing what they can when available. They have also received the last of the salt, which is about 120 ton.

- Both Mayor Holcomb and Trustee Barnes asked how long that would last.

DPW Supervisor Certo let the Board know that it all really depends on how much snow they get from here on. He has communicated with the Town of Busti and has a plan if they need more.

Police Chief Matthew Bentley:

The department has handled 550 incidents since the last meeting. The department is investigating the recent graffiti that was done on Chautauqua Ave, including the Town Court building which happened on the evening of February 21st.

Fire Chief Kurt Hallberg:

160 alarms this year. The Chief car is finally here and in use. The heavy rescue is in and equipment is being installed, as soon as its ready he would like to bring it for the Board to see all that was done. Chief Hallberg has assigned AlStar to be on first due for Brookdale, Connect55, Chautauqua Colony, 880 and 888 Hunt Road, and WellNow Urgent Care. Second due is Ambulance 73 which is stationed in Ashville. In January the department had 70 calls in which twenty of those were at the three locations on Southwestern Drive and a majority are non-emergent. The department is getting burnt out. He is working with dispatch to get a police officer there if available if it is a check the well-being type of call. He stated that is not just here, its every fire department locally.

- Trustee Barnes asked if public service ad campaigns could help educate the community on what an actual emergency is.
- Trustee Troché would like to set up a meeting with the Sheriff and go over the Mutual Aid Agreement to see if they could assist more with medical alarms.
- Trustee Barnes brought up the median on Fairmount Ave, asking how it affects the Fire Department when responding to calls.

Chief Hallberg was ready to speak on this already, it does negatively affect them. It is also the cause of many calls because people aren't aware its even there. If the NYSDOT is going to be doing this project along Fairmount, the Board should ask for the median to be removed.

- Trustee Troché did inform Chief Hallberg that he had been in contact with the State and they will be readding reflective elements to help with visibility of the median which will help until it is hopefully removed.

Lastly, Chief Hallberg asked if insurance is going to cover the damage from the spray-painting vandal.

- Clerk/Treasurer Troutman said she does have the information and would contact them.

Village Attorney Lehman:

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING
VILLAGE OF LAKEWOOD
February 23, 2026**

- No Report.

Clerk/Treasurer Apryl Troutman:

There are two cash receipts to report that the village received. For quarter four of 2025, franchise fee in the amount of \$10,941.27 that comes from Charter Communications, which is everybody's Spectrum bill. The Village also received the first quarter 2026 sales tax distribution through Chautauqua County in the amount of \$266,009.86, which is up from the same time the previous year.

Mayor Holcomb:

No Report.

COMMITTEES

No reports.

OLD BUSINESS

No reports.

NEW BUSINESS

RESOLUTION #15-2026 to authorize the following budget modification for budget shortfalls

Motion by Trustee Barnes, seconded by Trustee Cooper to authorize the following budget modification for budget shortfalls as follows:

- i. \$2,000 from A5110.10 {Street Maintenance – Salaries} to A5142.10 {Snow Removal – Salaries (day hours)}

Adopted: 4 ayes, no nays (Barnes, Cooper, Shedd, Troché)

RESOLUTION #16-2026 – authorize the following fund transfer

Motion by Trustee Troché, seconded by Trustee Barnes to authorize the following fund transfers:

- ii. \$117.46 from T1093.71 {Fuel Facility O&M} to A5110.40 {Street Maintenance – Contractual} for fuel facility repairs
- iii. \$538.32 from T1093.37 {Police K9 Unit} to A3120.40 {Police Contractual}

Adopted: 4 ayes, no nays (Barnes, Cooper, Shedd, Troché)

RESOLUTION #17-2026 authorize Mayor Holcomb to sign the 2026 Chautauqua Lake Community Sailing Foundation, Inc license agreement

Motion by Trustee Barnes, seconded by Trustee Troché to authorize Mayor Holcomb to sign the 2026 Chautauqua Lake Community Sailing Foundation, Inc license agreement.

Adopted: 4 ayes, no nays (Barnes, Cooper, Shedd, Troché)

RESOLUTION #18-2026 authorize the Invitation for Bids (IFB) legal notice publication for Construction of the Fairmount Triangle Stormwater Basin Improvements Project in accordance with General Municipal Law Section 103 and the Villages Procurement Policy.

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING
VILLAGE OF LAKEWOOD
February 23, 2026**

Motion by Trustee Shedd, seconded Trustee Troché to authorize the Invitation for Bids (IFB) legal notice publication for Construction of the Fairmount Triangle Stormwater Basin Improvements Project in accordance with General Municipal Law Section 103 and the Villages Procurement Policy.

Adopted: 3 ayes, no nays (Cooper, Shedd, Troché) – Trustee Barnes recuses herself due to her relationship with the Chautauqua Lake and Watershed Alliance.

RESOLUTION #19-2026 to accept new active members of the Lakewood Fire Department

Motion by Trustee Troché, seconded by Trustee Barnes to allow the Board of Trustees, acting as the Board of Fire Commissioners, to approve Mr. Marion Soldano and Mrs. Carlie Soldano, 4366 Mead Road, Jamestown, NY 14701 to be established as active members of the Lakewood Fire Department and grant out of district status.

Adopted: 4 ayes, no nays (Barnes, Cooper, Shedd, Troché)

RESOLUTION #20-2026 to accept the resignation of Lakewood Fire Department Member

Motion by Trustee Troché, seconded by Trustee Barnes to allow the Board of Trustees, acting as the Board of Fire Commissioners, to accept the resignation of Walker Perry, 39 Cherry Lane, Lakewood, NY 14750 as a member of the Lakewood Fire Department.

Adopted: 4 ayes, no nays (Barnes, Cooper, Shedd, Troché)

**EXECUTIVE SESSION
CONTRACTUAL MATTER**

Present at the executive session, were Mayor Holcomb, Trustees Barnes, Troché, Cooper, and Shedd. As well as Police Chief Bentley, Attorney Lehman, and Clerk/Treasurer Apryl Troutman.

EXECUTIVE SESSION WAS HELD WITH NO ACTION

EXECUTIVE SESSION (Adjournment)

Motion by Trustee Troché, seconded by Trustees Shedd, and unanimously carried to adjourn the executive session and re-open the regular meeting of the Board of Trustees at 8:00pm.

Adopted: 4 ayes, no nays (Barnes, Cooper, Shedd, Troché)

REGULAR MEETING (Adjournment)

Motion by Trustee Troché, seconded by Trustee Shedd, and unanimously carried to adjourn the regular meeting of the Board of Trustees at 8:00pm.

Adopted: 4 ayes, no nays (Barnes, Cooper, Shedd, Troché)

Shaunah Pilling
Village Deputy Treasurer

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING
VILLAGE OF LAKEWOOD
February 23, 2026**