

JOHNSON VILLAGE TRUSTEE BOARD MEETING MINUTES
JOHNSON MUNICIPAL BUILDING
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 2026

Present:

Trustees: Will Jennison, Ken Tourangeau, Darrell Wescom

Others: Erik Bailey, Rosemary Audibert

Absent: Ellis O'Hear, BJ Putvain

Note: All votes taken are unanimous unless otherwise noted.

1. Call to Order

Ken called the meeting to order at 6:00.

2. The Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge was recited.

3. Review of Agenda and Any Adjustments, Changes and Additions

Ken added discussion about veteran banners on Main St.

4. Approve Articles for Village Meeting

The board reviewed the draft warning for the annual village meeting.

Ken asked about Article 2, on borrowing \$415K to support cash flow for a pending rate case increase before the Public Service Board. If the rate increase is approved, will it bring in an additional \$415K, so the \$415K loan will not be needed? Erik said at least some of that amount will still be needed. It will take $\frac{3}{4}$ of the year before the rate case is approved. Will asked what stage the rate increase is at. Erik said we are getting all our books in order so we are ready to start it. The audit needs to be finished off first. We probably won't have the ability to raise rates until November or December, so raising rates will have little to no effect on this year's rates.

Another article is about providing notice of availability of the annual report by postcard rather than automatically mailing the report to all village voters. Ken asked how much we would spend on postcards. Rosemary said probably less than \$100. Ken asked, it costs about \$700 to print annual reports for all voters? Rosemary said at least that. Will said we would still be printing some reports. Rosemary said we would not be printing as many. Ken said he thinks this change is a good idea because many people throw the reports away at the post office.

There is an article on establishing a Fire Department Capital Building Maintenance Fund. Ken asked if the \$50K we already designated for exterior work would go into that. Or was it all spent? Rosemary and Erik said the money is still available. Ken asked, if the article is approved, would that money be transferred to the new fund? Will said the board would need to vote to put it in the fund. We will determine how much goes into the fund each year. Rosemary said there could be a line in the budget for it. Ken said \$50K was budgeted last year. Will said if the article is approved, we will put that money into the fund. Ken asked if there should be a vote on the floor at the annual meeting to move it. Rosemary said the board can make the decision.

Ken asked if the reserve fund will be in the general department budget or the fire department budget. Erik said he will put it in the fire department budget. Will said the only issue with that is that it will look like an increase to the fire department budget. But he is not opposed to it. Ken said he wants the fire department to fund this through increases to other towns. They need to help maintain our buildings. Will said doing that in the future makes sense.

Will moved to approve the warning for the annual village meeting on April 7, 2026 as written, Darrell seconded and the motion was passed.

5. *Members of the Public*

No members of the public were present

6. *Discuss and Select Village Report Dedication Recipient*

The board discussed possible village report dedication recipients and agreed on one.

7. *Presentation and Possible Approval of Draft General Dept. 2026 Budget*

Erik said he assumed a 2% grand list reduction due to the buyouts. Ken asked, isn't the state covering the lost taxes? Erik said that doesn't help us with the 10% on the grand list. Will said he feels we need to gradually budget for the reduction in taxes over the next 5 years.

Erik said with the general department budget he drafted there would be a 4.9% tax increase. Rosemary said the average homeowner probably pays about \$250 per year in village taxes. Erik said the increase for a person paying that amount would be about \$12.50 per year, or about \$1 per month.

Erik said he could probably get rid of the projected 2% reduction in the grand list for this budget, but he doesn't want to. He budgeted to borrow \$35K from the revolving loan fund. General department expenses went up because we had been underallocating labor going toward it. He increased revenue from rent because we have a new building. There hasn't been a rent increase for the garage in the time he has been here. That is mostly paid by the electric department, but some is paid by the water and sewer departments. He budgeted for a minor increase in trustee board salaries in case the board wants to increase them. Ken said he doesn't want to.

Ken asked, if we replace Nate's truck, will the cost be split among the departments? Erik said 25% will come from the general department and 75% from the electric department. The board already approved water and sewer budgets so he couldn't put any of the cost in there.

Will asked if we can borrow from ourselves. Ken said yes. He asked how much is in the revolving loan fund. Rosemary said she thinks about \$180K. Will said borrowing \$35K from the revolving loan fund sounds fairly reasonable.

Ken said the new truck and body will cost almost \$70K. There was discussion about reusing the plow blade from the current truck. There would be some cost to switch it over. Erik said he has Nate checking state bid prices, which we are eligible for. A dealer said they will match the state bid price to keep our business. The truck purchase will be discussed at a future meeting.

Erik and the board reviewed the draft budget and the actuals from last year. Erik said if all goes well we will have \$1400 to spare with this budget.

Darrell asked if there is anything unnecessary in the budget. Erik said the only thing you could call unnecessary is the reserve fund contributions, which he does not consider unnecessary. Ken said if we pulled out money for parades, parks, beautification, etc. that would hardly make a difference to the tax rate increase.

Will moved to approve the 2026 general department budget of \$1,377,365 as presented, Darrell seconded and the motion was passed.

8. *Presentation and Possible Approval of Draft Electric Dept. 2026 Budget*

Erik said electric department revenue is down in the 2026 budget. For about 10 or 12 years we were including \$50K revenue for a job on 100C that has finally been completed. Now that that money has been used it is no longer in the budget. A load reduction is predicted. Will noted that revenue is down and expenses are up.

Rosemary asked if we are going to budget revenue and expense for the FEMA-funded work on the pole by Union Bank. Erik said we don't have a project cost yet. The study is still being done. Rosemary said she put some of the study cost in the 2023 flood category. Erik said it should be in the 2024 flood category.

Erik discussed how he budgeted for labor. He included money in the budget that could be used for assistance with the smart meter conversion or for an additional part-time office employee.

The total budget amount is \$3,076,840. Will asked, without the rate increase, this budget will put us at a \$400K deficit? Erik said that is right.

Will moved to approve a 2026 electric department budget in the amount of \$3,076,840, Darrell seconded and the motion was passed.

9. *Veteran Banners*

Will said BJ is going to get cost figures for banners. He needs to know how many poles can receive the banners and the length and width of the current banners, so nothing needs to be changed to put up the veteran banners.

Will said he will make an appeal to people he knows to see if he can get private funding. Ken said the banners will cost about \$70-100 each.

Ken suggested reaching out to the Historical Society to get names of veterans from the past. Will said his preference is to start with living veterans. Then maybe we can make a plan to include more in the future. Ken suggested setting parameters so people are not upset if we don't put up a banner to their person in the first round. There was discussion about the legal definition of veteran. Erik suggested people should have specific paperwork. It was agreed that Erik will work on drafting something on eligibility requirements. It was agreed that veterans don't have to be village residents to be eligible. They can also live anywhere in Johnson. Darrell suggested we could take applications for any veterans, living or not, and then separate out the names of the living, while keeping the other names for possible future use. Erik suggested it would be simpler to restrict it to living veterans. Will said he thinks that is reasonable. Ken suggested maybe asking the Historical Society to suggest 2-4 names of deceased veterans from long ago.

10. *Adjourn*

The meeting was adjourned at 7:58.