



TOWN OF WILLSBORO

5 FARRELL ROAD WILLSBORO, NY 12996

518-963-8668

TOWN OF WILLSBORO TOWN BOARD MEETING WILLSBORO TOWN HALL AUGUST 13th, 2025

ATTENDES- Win Belanger, Polly Belanger, Thomas Doolittle, Margery Doolittle, Roger Sayward, Cathy Alden, Ashley Murphy, Robin Belzile, Daniel Koenig, Jeffery Bigelow, Derek Crowningshield, Nicole Crowningshield, Barbara Paye, Lloyd Wilson, Justin Drinkwine, Vic Putman, Greg Gorgon, Robin Belzile, Tracie McGill, Mark McGill, Chris Jase, Bill Hauser, Cindy Samuelson, Susan Fahey, Darren Dickerson, Taylor Lorman, Travis Crowningshield

BOARD MEMBERS- Steve Benway, Lorilee Sheehan, Lane Sayward, Scott Christian, Shaun Gilliland

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Meeting CALLED TO ORDER @ 6:30pm

Sayward made the motion to enter into executive session to speak with the town council to get legal advice for the town board. Christian seconded the motion.

6:43pm. out of executive session. The regular board meeting resumed.

Minutes of the July 17th, 2025 Town Board meeting were accepted as written.

Supervisors Report-

Correspondence-

None

Town-

-Water restrictions have been set in place for the Town of Willsboro today to conserve water usage due to weather conditions and excess water use.

-Code enforcement officer wrote a letter with concerns regarding Commercial Fire Inspection for commercial buildings business/churches/schools. These need to be done every year. The town is behind on this and it will be put in the budget for a fire inspector to do these. Codes and Zoning officers will be putting together a list and estimated cost for the 2026 budget.

-The town attorney has notified Supervisor Gilliland that the appeal Bigelow vs. Planning Board will be argued at the pellet court on September 2, 2025.

-All Departments, Commissions, Contract agencies, Cemeteries, etc are asked to provide inputs to go into the budget to the Supervisor by 9/17. Formats are available at the Town Hall.

Tentative Budget is due to be given to the Town Clerk by 9/30. The Town Clerk submits a tentative budget to the Town Board on 10/3. The Town Board will schedule and review tentative budget funds at the Town board meeting 10/15 and use the next two weeks to go over these

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funds. The Town Board has to approve the tentative budget as amended, as Preliminary Budget 10/30. The preliminary budget will have to have a Public Hearing no later than 11/6. Final adoption of the budget as the final budget will be done if approved on 11/12 at the Town Board meeting, (but not later than 11/20. If an agreement is not made by 11/20 the preliminary budget becomes the final budget.

County-

-Emergency order for a Burn Ban was signed today. This was needed due to the amount of brush fires that have been happening in the county.

-The County has a new Emergency Services Director and also a new EMS Director.

Sayward made the motion to accept the warrant. Benway seconded the motion.

Roll Call-

Sayward, Benway, Sheehan, Christian, Gilliland

Ayes-4

Nyes-0

Clerks Report- verbally by Susan Thompson

The clerk's office in the month of July took in \$8095.46 paying \$9.00 to NYS Ag and Markets. Decals for the month took in \$1,142.00 of which \$1,079.01 went to the state and the town's commission was \$62.99. Water/Sewer took in \$72,221.40.

Benway made the motion to accept the Clerks Report. Sayward seconded the motion.

All in Favor

DPW-Verbally by Travis Crowningshield

-The pad for the new dog kennel was just finished and the new dog kennel is due to arrive on August 28th.

-The soccer fields at the Florence Hathaway Park is all set. They just need to paint the lines and await the new goals to put those up.

-Over Head Door came down and serviced all the doors and changed 15 rollers and replaced a new door panel on one of them that was rotted out.

-Patrick McCaullife's last day will be August 15th. Crowningshield stated that it was a pleasure to work with him for the seven years he was with the Town of Willsboro and he wished him the best of luck in his new journey.

-interviews for the water/waste water position were done and the recommendation for this position is Scott Thomson, he is already licensed with a 2A in sewer and he has a C license in water and is willing to get his DN2A license for water. He has also already taken the class for 3A for sewer and just needs to test out. With his qualifications he would be hired at a rate of \$26.38 per hour per union contract.

Sheehan made the motion to hire Scott Thomson as a Water/Wastewater Treatment Plant Operator/Trainee at a rate of \$26.38 an hour. Benway seconded the motion.

Roll Call-

Sayward, Benway, Sheehan, Christian, Gilliland

Ayes-4

Nyes-0

WATER/SEWER- Written report submitted and verbal report by Justin Drinkwine

-Water restriction was just issued and they are hoping that this helps.

-they are making 420 gallons of water per minute and that is at maximum capacity and that is barely keeping up. The water tower is at 22 feet and the normal perimeters are 24-30 feet. The pumps have been running on high 24/7 and hopefully the water ban will help to take the stress off of the pumps.

Benway made a motion of appreciation and a Thank You to Patrick McCaullife. Unanimous second.

Youth Commission- No Report

Parks Commission - Lloyd Wilson received a complete final report and plan from the planner, GPI today. This report will be reviewed by the Parks Commission, Town Board and the County Engineer. Wilson stated a lot of work has gone into this project from the Parks Commission in the last year. Gilliland asked if full size prints could be obtained for review? Benway will get the full size prints. Sheehan asked what the time frame of this would be after review from the parks commission and town. Gilliland stated that the County Engineer will review and will be working with community resources. Once all is passed it will be sent to the State and then the Town Board will have the option to make any changes.

Old Business-

Bids were received from two companies for roofing bids for the Visitors Center, Noblewood and the Band Stand. ACT Contractors from Albany, New York and RWS Construction from Willsboro, New York. Travis Crowningshield reached out to both companies and ACT could not tell which shingles would be used in his bid packet and when asked what shingles they would be using and he stated "whatever you guys want" and when asked if they would be using 40 year singles he stated "that will be fine" and asked what shingles he put in the bid and he couldn't answer the question. The metal ACT had put in the bid packet was 20 gauge and it was 26 gauge that it was specced out for. Crowningshield also called Stockwell's company and everything was in the bid packets that they sent in with no questions of what was being used. Crowningshield recommended that the town go with RWS Construction and to go with the metal roofing instead of the shingles as it will last over fifty years. Gilliland stated that the roofing was not in the budget this year. The board could A- Shift line items from other priorities or B- go to the bank and get a short term bond note. The two roofs Noblewood and the Visitors Center replacement would be approximately \$100,000.00 using metal material and they could put the bandstand roof in next year's budget. Discussion of what color and what material. Noblewood has to be dark green in color. Contractors from the public suggested using medium bronze on the visitors center.

Benway made a motion to go with RWS Construction to replace the roofs on Noblewood and the Visitors Center and to hold off on roofing the bandstand. This would be done with metal 26 gauge material and Noblewood would be dark green in color for \$58,000.00 and the Visitors Center would be a medium bronze color for \$37,500.00. Sayward seconded the motion.

Roll Call-

Sayward, Benway, Sheehan, Christian, Gilliland

Ayes-4

Nyes-0

Derek Crowningshield suggested adding vent channels in the roof at Noblewood. Travis Crowningshield stated that there is venting in the roof and Derek Crowningshield stated as long as it is there and RWS knows to vent it, it will be fine. Travis Crowningshield stated he will let RWS know.

New Business-

Parks Commission Chairman asked if a porta potty could be placed at the fishing parking lot on Gilliland Lane.

Sayward made a motion to place a porta potty at the fishing parking lot on Gilliland Lane. Benway seconded the motion.

Roll Call-

Sayward, Benway, Sheehan, Christian, Gilliland

Ayes-4

Nyes-0

Supervisor Gilliland offered a resolution of appreciation to Summer Program Camp Directors Jenna Ford and Mckinley Belzile for a fantastic job this year. He stated they made it great and those two women are going to go far and will be real leaders in the community. He also stated Jenna Ford is going to Ithaca College in the graduate program and she told Gilliland that a lot of it was based on her experience as Director at the Summer Program. Gilliland stated “they are two tremendous ladies that did a great job under a lot of stress.”

Sheehan made a motion to a Resolution of Appreciation for Jenna Ford and Mckinley Belzile for the outstanding job they did as Directors of the 2025 Willsboro/Essex Summer Program. Unanimous second to the motion.

Sayward made a motion to accept John Carver, Maureen Moynan and John Hubbard letters of interest and to appoint them to the Planning Board for the Town of Willsboro. Sheehan seconded the motion. All in Favor.

Board Comments-

-Scott Christian wanted to bring it to the boards attention as a board member he took it upon himself at getting a couple quotes to clean up Noblewood from the road down to the beach, clean the beach up, clean the bath house, trim off all the vines and trim it back and it will cost approximately \$50,000.00. He made the recommendations that if the Highway department cannot do this, that the town puts it out to bid. He stated that the town needs to take care of this and it is a Fire access and an ambulance access to the lake. He also stated there are trees down to the way to the access. Crowningshield stated that they got a report that just today, someone went in and cut the trees and left them piled and also stated that the town cannot clean up the beach area at all according to the Nature Conservancy. Christian stated it has been neglected for a long

time and needs work and that the town cannot let a building that was donated by a community business look like a dump. Gilliland stated the bathhouse was closed during COVID and has not been used since. Sayward stated she agrees with taking care of the building but would like to see a copy of the easement to see what exactly can be done and not done. Gilliland stated he has a copy of the Deed, the easement and the APA permit. Gilliland stated the board made the decision not to staff rangers in the budget at Noblewood and that is who maintained the bathhouse. Gilliland said he recommends that if they want this to be taken care of to put it in the budget for next year. Bud Wilson asked to comment and stated that he had walked down to the beach with his family recently and thinks it is a very easy walk, although not handicapped accessible. Agreed the bathhouse needs work. Sheehan stated that she spoke with the two Directors from the Summer program and that they sounded like they wanted to return next year and they had inquired about bringing the program back to Noblewood. Benway suggested that the next Parks Commission meeting be held at Noblewood.

Public Comment-

Daniel Koenig

-asked why is Noblewood in the shape it is now? Who is responsible for cleaning Noblewood up? Who is the top guy to decide what needs to be done? Who is the person to make sure all this happens?

Gilliland stated that untimely it comes to him to execute the board and that he responds to people's inquiries and complaints and prioritizes these. Whenever anything is brought to his attention he tries to address it and that nobody had made him aware that there were trees down or any other complaints until recently. Buildings and grounds go down everyday to check the lodge and plow the roads in the winter making sure everything is safe, etc. He stated that he apologizes it has gotten into this condition and appreciates the input that has come in and the town will take action.

-Did the Adirondack Land Trust get grants for the purchase of the Lily Property?

Chris Jase, Conservation Program Director of the Adirondack Land Trust stated that they receive donations, state grants and private foundation grants and that approximately 15% of their revenue is from government grants. The Lily property was purchased entirely by private donations.

Win Belanger

-he wanted to commend Councilmen Christian for looking into Noblewood and he remembers when the town tried to get rangers and lifeguards for Noblewood and no one applied. He believes that if it is put in the budget for Noblewood to get rangers that the recruitment for this needs to be done early and we need to make the pay wage compatible with other places.

Derek Crowningshield

-he feels that the concentration should be to work with the Nature conservancy and get the Beach and Noblewood back to what it was instead of planning anything at the Lily property.

Bill Hauser

-Stated he feels it would be a travesty if the Town of Willsboro did not acquire the Lily Property if for no other reason than to protect the water shed and the water supply for the town.

Greg Gordon

-As Chairman of the Planning Board wanted to publicly thank Brian King and Chauntel Gilliland for their dedicated service on the Planning Board and that the Comprehensive Plan committee will be putting out a survey with a link attached. People will be able to get this survey

off the town's website and there will be hard copies distributed to different locations in town and can be dropped off to the codes office.

-Jeffrey Bigelow

Asked if there was any way that the Town of Willsboro board members could adopt a local law to have the Amish wear poop bags on their horses? He has looked into these and even stated he would be willing to purchase 5 for \$25.00 each.

Gilliland stated that there is only one village that has adopted this law.

Susan Fahey

-Stated that she does not understand how the town can contemplate purchasing this Lily property without being able to tell the community what the tax implications will be down the road. Without a plan you cannot come up with a cost and the Town will lose \$6,300.00 loss in tax revenue. She stated it does not make sense to not have a plan for the property and an estimated cost to the taxpayers.

Scott Christian

-Stated he has been against purchasing the Lily property since the beginning. He feels that in 25 years the town will be looking at this property the same way as Noblewood. The Town does not have the money or the manpower to maintain what they have now.

Roger Sayward

-The Fish and Game Club is going to continue to run Constitution Day on September 13th. He asked if the Town of Willsboro could hang the banner over the road and install the tents at the Fish and Game Club. Crowningshield stated he could borrow the bucket truck from Chesterfield to hang the banners.

Cindy Samuelson

- Asked why the town has to purchase the Lily property? Why isn't there another conservative organization?

Gilliland stated when the property came up for sale he was approached by a constituent and said wouldn't this be a great park? Gilliland looked into it and briefed the board and called the Adirondack Land Trust and notified them it was for sale and asked if it was something that they could partner with the town? After the Adirondack Trust looked at the land they did a contract for sale to conserve the property. Gilliland came back to the board and they agreed to sign a contract contingent on a sales contract with the trust being able to have the cost being of no cost to the town. Then they applied through the county for a grant with the Lake Champlain Basin program for \$1,079,000.00. While that was happening the town signed a three year contract contingent on 100% financing. This was brought up at multiple board meetings, it was put in the newspaper. The Town received a grant. There is a contract signed to execute the sale and then there is a movement to breach the contract. Gilliland explained that by breaching a contract there are two things to consider. The first the town could be taken to court for breach of contract and force the sale and the Lake Champlain Basin program in which the grant is coming from has been a frequent grantor to the town and they most likely would not give another grant if the town refused a grant of that size. He stated that those are the areas that the town is liable for and asked if he answered the question? -Samuelson asked if the land could ever be sold?.

Gilliland stated that the EPA, the source of the grant, is for water quality and the land could never be sold.

Ashley Murphy

- Asked what is the status of the contracts? Is it moving forward? Are there dates?

Gilliland stated that the reason for the executive session was to confer with the attorney about the status of the contract. A motion was made at last month's meeting to go forward with a referendum. Gilliland took the referendum as stated and moved it forward and immediately the attorneys said it did not meet legal requirements to go to referendum. Once a town board makes a motion to put forth a referendum it is a mandatory referendum, however a mandatory referendum can only be put on if it meets the requirements of a permissive referendum. The board passed a bond resolution and the period to have a permissive referendum is during the estoppel period which is after the publication of the bond referendum in the newspaper, which is 45 days. The Town board is committed to go to closing on the property unless the decision is made to willfully breach the contract

Sheehan asked if the town board had 2 years to make the final decision to go forward? Gilliland stated that the final decision has been made; it's a matter of when. Gilliland stated he does not know the time frame on the grant.

Barbara Paye

-stated that she does not understand how the town board could consider breaching the contract and giving up that money. She feels that the town's first priority is not recreation and that the first priority should be water quality preservation. Nothing has to happen on that property and people can come to the budget meetings to decide what happens to that land every year.

Bill Hauser

-Asked, does the grant include money for the engineering/architecture/planning study to establish the possible development alternatives?

Gilliland stated the purchase price was \$840,000.00 and the grant is for \$1,079,000.00.

Thomas Doolittle

-Asked if there were any concerns of the present residents that are on Lily Lane?

Gilliland stated that if this goes through, and a planner is hired, everyone gets heard and it is based on what the community wants.

Win Belanger

-Asked if we are going to wait 2 years or what the board wants to do?

Sheehan stated that she feels there is time and she would like to put things on pause and give whomever is on this board or whoever is our Supervisor a chance to prove to the people that they are able to take on what we have before we take on more. "Let's just breathe".

Barbara Paye

-Stated she does not agree with waiting. She feels that the board will change and a planning session will take longer than two years. She also feels that everyone has an agenda in the room and she feels that 3 out of 5 have a financial agenda. She stated the town is already involved in one legal issue that is going to be going to court on a zoning matter. She doesn't want another legal issue because a contract was breached. She feels that the presentation on the Lily property was very informative and they stated the only thing that has to be done on that land is it has to be hayed to prevent fire.

Derek Crowningshield

-he asked if there were any restrictions on the property once it is purchased by the town?

Chris Jase stated that he wanted to make it a 100% clear, there are no contingencies from the Land Trust only that it be accepted as a park by the town and it is subject to the states regulations as a park.

Christian stated that he wanted to make a resolution to back out of the contract and he takes offense that it is said he is financially involved. He stated he is against it because the town can

not take care of what they have and you cannot put a dollar amount on what it is going to take to maintain it and it has to be a park.

Sheehan stated that the board has an obligation to listen to all the constituents and if their petitions were valid or not, there were over 100 people that had concerns and it is unfortunate that it is not able to go to a vote because it is the board's job to listen to the people that have a concern.

**Christian made a motion to breach the contract with the Adirondack Land Trust.
No second.**

**Benway made a motion to secure financing and go to closing for the Lily property.
Sayward seconded the motion.**

Reverse order of rollcall requested by Gilliland

Rollcall-

Gilliland, Christian, Sheehan, Benway, Sayward

Ayes-3 Gilliland, Benway, Sayward

Nyes-2 Christian, Sheehan

Adjourned @ 8:36pm

Submitted by Susan Thompson