

**MINUTES FOR THE REGULAR MEETING
OF THE MAYOR & COUNCIL OF THE BOROUGH OF WALDWICK
HELD ON TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 2026 AT 6:30 PM**

Mayor Giordano called the meeting to order and read the Statement of Compliance.

Mayor Giordano asked for a roll call. Present on roll call: Mayor Giordano, Mr. Brennecke, Ms. Cericola-Drake, Mr. Martinello, Mr. Ritchie, Ms. Smith and Ms. Wingate.

Also present: Tatiana Marquis, Borough Administrator; Kelley Halewicz, Municipal Clerk and Craig Bossong, Municipal Attorney.

Mayor Giordano asked everyone to join in the Pledge of Allegiance, remain standing for a moment of silence honoring our Veterans and to remain standing for the prayer.

PROCLAMATIONS & PRESENTATIONS

a. Phoenix Advisor Presentation - PILOT Programs

Brian Morris from Phoenix Advisors provided a brief overview of PILOT programs.

Phoenix Advisors are financial consultants working with entities across the State on financial concerns such as PILOTS. The numbers presented are samples and not tied to any specific project.

A PILOT is a tax abatement tool that is used in the Borough's redevelopment tool kit to spur economic growth and complete projects that would not be financeable.

They may not be financeable due to high-interest rate environment and rents are not as high as needed to support the costs. Additionally, construction costs may be high.

PILOT stands for Payment in Lieu of Tax. It is referred to as tax abatement', but the Developer is still making a negotiated payment instead of conventional property taxes.

The PILOT is the improvement portion of the property only. The land portion of the land taxes are subject to taxation as it would be exempted. It would depend on project basis.

The amounts due under a PILOT are municipal lien. Foreclosure is possible if payments are not made, like others who fail to pay taxes. Tax appeals are not permitted, which give the Borough leverage.

There are two types of PILOTS – a long-term tax exemption law and short-term tax exemption law.

A short term (5-year payment) is used for smaller improvements or additions.

The long-term law offers the Borough flexibility to shape the project the way they want. Unit density and affordable units can be as short as 15 years and as long as 30 years.

The municipality must evaluate the pros and cons of embarking on any PILOT project.

It is difficult for projects to attract private investments. There is high risk. This is a much more speculative asset which commands higher returns.

The conventional taxes are uncertainty around those taxes. If taxes increase 2% per year, it is unknown what they will be over a thirty-year period. When a bank lends on a project for a 30-year horizon, they need certainty that the Developer will repay their loan over a long term 30-year horizon. The PILOT allows this because the payments are structured as a percentage of their revenue rather than a fixed tax obligation that can change year to year without any ability to project.

PILOT is a partnership between the Borough and Developer. If the Developer does well, and income is higher, the PILOT payment rises. If the project is not doing well, they are not saddled with fixed tax obligation that would force into immediate foreclosure. The project has runway to become successful.

The Borough can issue redevelopment area bonds to fulfill a shortfall in the capital stack that is issued for specific purposes such as big public infrastructure costs such as parks.

The PILOT can be calculated under the law in two different ways:

1. 2 percent of total project costs – This is a prohibitably high PILOT has fallen out of favor in recent years.
2. The percentage of annual gross revenue is the most common. For example, if the Developer makes 1 million dollars, 10% is the minimum and the PILOT payment will be \$100,000.

10% is the minimum under the statute. There are exceptions depending on the affordable housing. 15-20% is on the higher end of the range, but it is a negotiation based on financial metrics and the Borough's cost benefit analysis.

The municipality keeps 95% of every PILOT dollar. The remaining 5% goes to the County.

The municipality collects a 2% administrative fee to supplement a finance or tax collection office extra. There is additional work that goes into billing a PILOT.

The municipality may negotiate up front community benefits.

If a developer made 2 million dollars per year and the PILOT was just over \$200,000, removing those items and adding back the admin fee sets the net to the town for \$155,000.

There is also the impact of the project on the new residents it produces. This includes schoolchildren. A cost benefit analysis will confirm the additional revenue being collected is sufficient to offset potential negatives.

Residents and municipal costs are found to be low. Most towns have adequate EMS, Fire, Police, etc.

The number of schoolchildren produced by rental units is not as high as expected. An applicable multiplier from a Rutgers study suggests a 120-unit project produced about 20 children.

The school budget works differently from town budget.

Town is a rate-based budget in which the tax rate can be applied to the assessed values of what it is in the town.

School is a budget-based levy. If the school budget is 50 million dollars, they will spread it to everyone. The school will not gain or lose a dollar by the PILOT going into effect even if there is no carve out for the school district to collect any of the money from the PILOT.

The cost of classroom instruction is used as a benchmark for the school costs. This is the actual variable cost. The teachers and supplies, etc. omit the fixed costs from the schools and administration. This does not count on scale. It depends on order of magnitude.

The PILOT provides a predictable revenue stream to the Borough that can earmark towards future capital projects, supplement future property taxes increases – it is a long-term stable nontax revenue.

The PILOT payment results in more revenue for the municipality than conventional taxes as the Boroughs share of taxes is typically 25-30%.

The PILOT serves as a catalyst for new development in areas that need revitalization.

The PILOT allows for greater flexibility during negotiations as the Borough would have more input on types of units, density, etc.

There is ongoing transparency. Under PILOT law, the developer must provide the Borough with project costs, certifications, annual audits etc.

There are other non-financial benefits such as community impact payments, upfront payments, guaranteed minimums, and on and off-site public improvements.

b. Public Hearing NJDEP 2026 Green Acres Land Acquisition – 197 Wyckoff Avenue

Clerk Halewicz explained that this is the public hearing for the 2026 GA Land Acquisition Grant – 197 Wyckoff Avenue. The property was purchased in 2024 along with 9 Brady for passive recreation. This parcel has restricted uses and therefore no indoor facilities are permitted on this property. The purchase is a total of three acres. This application is only for 197 Wyckoff Avenue which is a two-acre parcel, Block 136, Lot 6.02.

The Borough is seeking funding of the maximum \$700,000 with soft costs of \$20,000. If awarded, the funds pay down principal.

The short-term plans for this property is the two leases will end in May. The house at 197 Wyckoff Avenue will be demolished over the summer. The area will be graded and seeded. The Borough will install a sign for Wagner-Brierley Park.

The long-term plans include grant opportunities for park development through Green Acres and Bergen County. Thank you to the residents who answered the survey online. Based on survey results, this all-inclusive park may include walking trail or path, seating, shade areas, gazebo, water feature, garden and small community playground.

Administrator Marquis added that the survey is open until Friday, so if you haven't completed the survey please do so through Friday.

Mayor Giordano opened comments to the Council.

Mayor Giordano commented that he would like to see a dog park in this location.

Ms. Smith commented that the garden could include raised flower beds for those who cannot get down to the ground to plant.

Ms. Wingate heard from residents who would like to see a dog park and since we are including gardening, a place to compost.

Mr. Ritchie believes we should move forward on this project.

Mayor Giordano closed Council comments.

Mayor Giordano opened the public hearing for Public Comment and asked anyone who wished to be heard to state their name for the record.

No one from the public came before the Council.

Mayor Giordano closed the public hearing for the public.

RESOLUTION NO. 2026-71

AUTHORIZING THE SUBMISSION OF AN APPLICATION TO THE NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION 2026 GREEN ACRES PROGRAM FOR PLANNING INCENTIVE LAND ACQUISITION FUNDING (197 WYCKOFF AVENUE)

WHEREAS, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, Green Acres Program (“State”), provides grants and/or loans to municipal and county governments and grants to nonprofit organizations for assistance in the acquisition, development, and stewardship of lands for outdoor recreation and conservation purposes; and,

WHEREAS, the Borough of Waldwick maintains an established Open Space Tax and an approved Open Space and Recreation Plan and therefore qualifies to apply under the Planning Incentive category of the Green Acres Program; and,

WHEREAS, the Borough of Waldwick desires to further the public interest by seeking Green Acres acquisition funding for real property known as 197 Wyckoff Avenue, Waldwick, New Jersey, identified on the official tax map as Block 136, Lot 6.02 (the “Project”), for the purpose of permanent preservation and use as public open space and recreational land; and,

WHEREAS, the total estimated eligible project cost for the acquisition of 197 Wyckoff Avenue, including eligible acquisition and allowable soft costs, is \$20,000 (rounded to the next \$1,000 as required by Green Acres regulations); and,

WHEREAS, the Borough seeks Green Acres Planning Incentive acquisition funding in the amount of \$700,000, representing 50% of eligible project costs, subject to appraisal review and final program approval; and,

WHEREAS, the Borough understands that the final eligible Green Acres award amount is subject to appraisal review, funding round caps, and approval by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection; and,

WHEREAS, the Borough is willing to use State funds in accordance with all applicable rules, regulations, and statutes, including N.J.A.C. 7:36, and is willing to enter into an agreement with the State for the above-named Project.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Waldwick, County of Bergen, State of New Jersey, that:

1. Mayor Thomas Giordano, or the successor to the office of Mayor, is hereby authorized to:
 - a) Make application to the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, Green Acres Program, for Planning Incentive acquisition funding for the Project;
 - b) Provide additional application information and furnish such documents as may be required by the State; and
 - c) Act as the authorized correspondent of the Borough for all matters related to the Green Acres application.

2. The Borough acknowledges that the Green Acres acquisition grant award, if approved, shall not exceed the maximum eligible funding cap established by the State and shall be subject to appraisal review and final program approval.

3. The Borough certifies that sufficient funds have been appropriated or shall be appropriated to satisfy the Borough’s required local matching share and any costs exceeding the approved Green Acres award amount.

4. The Borough agrees that, upon receipt of Green Acres funding, the Project property shall be permanently restricted for recreation and conservation purposes in accordance with Green Acres regulations and that all required deeds of dedication or conservation restrictions shall be recorded as required by the State.

5. The Borough agrees to comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws, rules, and regulations in the performance of the Project.

6. This Resolution shall take effect immediately.

Council Member	Motion	Second	Ayes	Nays	Abstain	Absent
Brennecke			X			
Cericola-Drake		X	X			
Martinello	X		X			
Ritchie			X			
Smith			X			
Wingate			X			
Mayor Giordano						

MAYOR'S REPORT AND REPORTS OF COMMITTEESMayor's Report.

Mayor Giordano shared that they accepted the resignation of the Planning Board Chair, Adele Badalamenti who has resigned as of last week. Mr. Fink will fulfill her unexpired term as class four, and James Shultz will be moved from an alternate two to an alternate one.

He thanked the residents for their patience during the recent snowstorm. He heard various comments from different outlets. The DPW did the best they could under the situation. There was a lot of snow. Many towns in the area were also hit hard, and some were not, but he feels that the Borough got through it and that the snow will continue to be removed from the area.

Financial & Administrative Committee. Mr. Martinello discussed the 2026 Municipal Budget Discussion.

1. Structure of the Borough Budget

- General Budget: Covers day-to-day appropriations, salaries, and operational costs.
- Capital Budget: Funds infrastructure projects (buildings, roads, equipment) through bonds.
- Water Utility Budget: Has its own general appropriations and capital budget.

Each year, the Council reviews all three budgets to ensure the Borough's needs are met, future planning is in place, and taxes remain as low as possible despite rising statutory costs.

2. Capital review

The initial operating budget was sent over to the auditors for review last week. There is significant increase in the budget due to items outside our control. The state health benefits programs continue to rise at astronomical rate under current state leadership. At this meeting we will review capital expenditure requests for 2026.

The Borough needs to spend a down payment on capital funds this year as part of the operating expense. Last Friday the finance committee met to review capital requests.

We recommend the council limits the capital expenditures this year to roughly \$2 million, which is in line with last year. This includes a list of roads recommended for paving in 2026. This is already filtered down to account for a reduced amount available.

There are roads in urgent need of repair. A few years ago, the Borough's capital budget was in the \$5 million range.

Fire & Police Protection Committee.

Mr. Brennecke reported that there have been 18 calls since the last Council Meeting. There were no calls during the snowstorm. They were prepared for any emergency and thankfully that never took place.

Public Safety Committee.

Ms. Wingate spoke with Loucas from WALVAC. He shared that he was working with the Fire Department and they are set with drivers and are in the process of training them. They are still looking for EMT's. She asked if anyone is interested, please reach out.

Recreational & Health Committee.

Ms. Smith shared that the Board of Health does not meet until April, and she will report back at that time.

The Access for All Committee schedule has been released. Their first meeting is March 9, and she will be in attendance and report back.

At the last meeting one of the residents inquired about the Barn in Midland Park and whether youth from Waldwick could use the facility for their activities. The Administrator had inquired. They are having an Open House on April 11 from 11:00 am – 1:00 pm, and if anyone is interested in the summer camp, the children can go as residents. If there are any questions, they can be addressed to Tatiana, the Borough's Administrator. She does not think there have been any negotiations to use outside dates.

Tatiana commented that she had spoken with the Barn coordinator who will speak to the Administrator in Midland Park to discuss the requests from residents to allow the Waldwick youth to use the Barn.

Mayor Giordano shared that children are required to be accompanied by an adult.

Public Works Committee.

Mr. Ritchie thanked the DPW for their work. It has been a long time since they had one storm, let alone two back-to-back. Logistics are a challenge. He thanked everyone for their patience and feels that they did a good job. He is hopeful that Waldwick will not get more snow, but if it does happen, they will be ready.

There will be a number of items for the Capital Budget. They will review infrastructure, projects and purchase of equipment. He will hold his comments until they get to that section.

Buildings & Grounds Committee.

Mrs. Cericola Drake shared that the Pistol Range is on track to be completed by the end of March. The lighting at the Police Department mentioned in her last report has been completed. The meeting space project at Borough Hall is being finalized. The room needs to be painted.

DEPARTMENT HEAD REPORTS

Administrator. Mrs. Marquis will reserve her comments for later in the evening when they go over the capital budget.

Municipal Clerk. Mrs. Halewicz shared that April 8 is the deadline for Change of Party Affiliations. The forms are on the Election page of the Borough's website.

There have been 699 dog licenses issued to date. She reminded residents to pick up their dog licenses at the Clerk's office.

Wyckoff will hold a Free Rabies Clinic on March 21 from 1:00 pm – 3:00 pm at the DPW Garage located on 475 West Main Street in Wyckoff.

Attorney. Mr. Bossong had no report. There is one item for closed session for potential litigation, and no action will be taken.

CONSENT AGENDA RESOLUTIONS

RESOLUTION NO. 2026-72

Approval of Consent Agenda

BE IT RESOLVED that the following resolutions herewith listed by consent having been considered by the Governing Body of the Borough of Waldwick are hereby passed and approved as amended to include Resolution 2026-82:

- 2026-72 Approval of Consent Agenda
- 2026-73 Approval of Minutes - Amended Regular Meeting, December 16, 2025; Regular & Budget Meeting and Closed Session Meeting, February 10, 2026
- Policy Vote(s)
 - a. Melissa Avgerinos requests to use Pavilion A on June 20, 2026 from 3:00 pm - dusk for a graduation party with alcoholic beverages being served
- 2026-74 Authorize Renewal of Waldwick’s Accident & Sickness Policy for Waldwick Fire Department, OEM and WALVAC, Policy # VFP433105347G00
- 2026-75 Authorizing Approval of Waldwick Volunteer Fire Department By-law Amendments
- 2026-76 Award Open Ended Professional Service Contract to Valley Health System, Inc., for Drug and Alcohol Testing in an Amount not to Exceed \$5,000.00
- 2026-77 Appointment to Green Team
- 2026-78 Authorize Cancellation of Taxes, Block 162.02, Lot 13
- 2026-79 Approval of Appropriation Transfers
- 2026-80 Payment of Vouchers
- 2026-82 Authorize Redemption Tax Lien #23-00635

Council Member	Motion	Second	Ayes	Nays	Abstain	Absent
Brennecke		X	X			
Cericola-Drake			X			
Martinello	X		X			
Ritchie			X			
Smith			X			
Wingate			X			
Mayor Giordano						

PUBLIC HEARING & ADOPTION OF ORDINANCE(S) - none

INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCE(S) - none

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

2026 Municipal Budget Discussion

Mrs. Marquis presented the Capital Budget items to the Council for their consideration.

Hudson Avenue

Hudson Avenue is a project that the Borough has been discussing. We received grants and have broken up the project into phases.

This is phase 2 of Hudson Avenue, which is paving and additional work to be done. The construction costs are \$690,000 with an additional \$134,000 for a cost estimate from the Engineers.

We offset that project with two NJDOT grants that we received over two consecutive years. That total is \$322,199.

The project in this year's Capital budget equates to \$502,000.

Playground Improvements

The Borough had large playground improvements last year. There are no proposed improvements for this year.

Although not on the 2026 budget, Bruno Associates will be consulted about potential grant funding for future.

Acquisition of IT Equipment and Various Other Projects

Switch upgrades are recommended by the IT Consultant. It is \$21,000. This year is Phase 3.

Road Resurfacing

The Superintendent recommend a list of streets that need to be addressed. Some were eliminated in terms of costs and financing for 2026. The total cost is \$287,000, being offset by three prior years. There was an overage on what was bonded for those projects. They can be applied to this year. The new total will be \$59,000.

DPW

The current caterpillar wheel roader needs replacement. The cost is \$345,000.

The snowplow pusher is an additional piece that the caterpillar can perform. This is an additional \$40,000.

A new truck with a body plow salter is needed. The cost is \$311,500. The current truck will be auctioned this summer.

ADA Ramps

ADA ramps have been in the budget for several years. This is preparation for roads to be paved in the future.

Traffic Devices

There is no recommendation for 2026, but adding this to the budget every other year is recommended.

Thermo Striping

The recommendation is \$25,000. We did not utilize our entire account last year therefore we are offsetting that amount and that is where you are getting the \$17,000. This is in line with paving that will be done throughout town.

DPW & Fire

A fuel management system upgrade is highly recommended. This is essential to function of Borough owned vehicles. If the system is down, there is no ability to get fuel which poses a problem.

A garage door upgrade is needed at the DPW facility.

The Fire Department recommendation for PPE equipment is about \$25,000.

The fit test machine for face pieces has reached end of life. The Fire Department recommends that we replace it for \$12,600.

Over the last few years, we funded various nox boxes in different phases. This is the last phase.

Fire suppression system remains the same, which is \$8,500.

Communications is a new line for this year at \$20,000. This will allow the Fire Department to replace any radios that fail. We do not have back-up radios for the Fire Department. They are costly at about \$9,000 each. This would allow for up to two new radios if the need is presented for 2026.

Radio upgrades is a one-time upgrade of the radio system for this year. This will be \$25,000.

Fire had two additional requests. They will be added for potential 2027 capital items or beyond. The rescue engine was discussed, and while the Borough does not have the ability to make that commitment in this year's capital project accounting, we can start to look at some options. A committee will be set up with Mr. Brennecke who will be the point of contact for the Council. There was also a request for the Assistant Chief's vehicle for replacement.

Police

Chief Seifert recommended upgrades to body worn cameras, tasers and processing of information. This is costly. This is a five-year buy in with a fully bonded amount in 2026 for \$414,000. Axon was able to give yearly payment options, but the full amount had to be bonded being that it is a capital project.

A request was on a prior year's list for a standby gas generator. It connects the Police Department and the Administration Building if power is lost. The current generator is at its end of life. This is a \$130,000 expense. There is a potential savings of \$25,000 for a piece that may not be needed.

Sewer Station Improvements

Sewer station improvement projects have been discussed at preliminary meetings with Mr. LaTorre. There is one on Derby and one on Harrison Avenue. The hard costs are over \$500,000. One will require engineering costs. There is possibility of seeing if we can produce a loan and relieve that from General Capital.

NEW BUSINESS - none

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mayor Giordano asked if any member of the public wished to come forward and to discuss anything and if so, please state your name only for the record.

Mr. Sheehy requested a meeting space for his Robotics Club. Due to limited space, he explained that if the issue cannot be addressed, they may have to turn children away. The club is volunteer and parent-run. He appreciates the space the Borough has already provided, however meeting two days per week is not sufficient to accommodate the current interest and participation.

Mayor Giordano received Mr. Sheehy's email and forwarded it to Tatiana. He suggested reaching out to other schools in the area to accommodate the Robotics Club. They are unable to leave their equipment in the room in Borough meeting spaces. There are other organizations that also rent the rooms.

Mr. Martinello asked whether the Robotics Club is affiliated with any school program as there are great STEM programs.

Mr. Sheehy replied that it is not affiliated with the schools.

Mr. Martinello asked if he had reached out to the schools.

Mr. Sheehy replied that he had.

Mayor Giordano asked what size of a room they needed.

Mr. Sheehy asked Christina from the audience to answer. She said between 1,500 and 3,000 sq feet.

Mayor Giordano said we will try and look around.

Ray Cruz thanked residents who participated in the Snow Angels program. He also thanked the DPW as there have been two historic winter storms within three weeks.

Dan Marro invited the Governing Body to the Board of Education meeting Thursday as they will be introducing the new Superintendent of Schools. He also shared that the Board of Ed would like to thank the DPW for their work over the weekend. He also shared that he looks forward to sitting down on the PILOT program with Mr. Ritchie.

CLOSED SESSION - Any matter permitted to be discussed in Closed Session pursuant N.J.S.A. 10:4-12

RESOLUTION NO. 2026-81

Authorize Closed Session

WHEREAS, Section 8 of the Open Public Meetings Act (N.J.S.A. 10:4-12(b)(1-9)) permits the exclusion of the public from a meeting in certain circumstances; and,

WHEREAS, the Mayor and Council is of the opinion that such circumstances exist.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Waldwick, County of Bergen, State of New Jersey, as follows:

The public shall be excluded from discussions of the Closed Session.

The general nature of the subject matter to be discussed is as follows:

Potential Litigation

It is anticipated at this time that the above-mentioned subject matter will be made public within 60 days or as soon thereafter as it is deemed to be in the public interest to do so based on the conclusion of the matter.

This resolution shall take effect immediately.

Council Member	Motion	Second	Ayes	Nays	Abstain	Absent
Brennecke			X			
Cericola-Drake			X			
Martinello	X		X			
Ritchie		X	X			
Smith			X			
Wingate			X			
Mayor Giordano						

The Council convened into Closed Session at 8:20 pm. At 8:41 pm the Mayor and Council came back on the record of the Regular Meeting. Present on roll call: Mayor Giordano, Mr. Brennecke, Ms. Cericola-Drake, Mr. Martinello, Mr. Ritchie, Ms. Smith and Ms. Wingate.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Mayor and Council at its Regular Meeting on MOTION by Mr. Martinello, seconded by Mr. Brennecke and on roll call carried the meeting adjourned at 8:41 pm.

Adopted: March 10, 2026

KELLEY HALEWICZ, RMC/CMC
MUNICIPAL CLERK