

TOWN OF WILTON

22 TRAVER ROAD

WILTON, NEW YORK

PHONE: 518-587-1939

FAX: 518-587-2837

Susan Baldwin, Town Clerk

EMERGENCY TOWN BOARD MEETING-August 31, 2026 9:00

The Emergency Town Board meeting for the Town of Wilton on August 31, 2026, was called to order at 9:00 a.m. by Supervisor Sturm

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Supervisor Sturm opened the meeting, and those present recited the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag of the United States of America.

ROLL CALL

Roll Call by the Town Clerk showed the following board members present:

Toni Sturm-Supervisor

Connor Rohan-Councilman via ZOOM

Erinn Kolligian-Councilwoman

Ray O'Connor-Councilman

Joe Keneally-Councilman

Also present was Ryan K. Riper, P. E., Director of Planning and Engineering, Maria Moran, CPA, Comptroller

Public Comment

Mark Landau (One Challedon Dr.): Said there has been miscommunication from the town. He praised the highway superintendent's help and said Erin Kolligian had visited his backyard, but no one else from the town had. He noted conflicting statements about debris pickup: residents were told the town would not clear road debris beyond the right of way yet observed the town clearing debris at the time of speaking. He demanded that the town repeatedly collect debris raked from yards to the street until it is gone, not as a one-time courtesy but continuously. He said rejected funding or intergovernmental "bureaucratic nonsense" as excuses and warned he would work against re-election of anyone who did not back that demand.

Melissa Thomas (16 Sheffield Road): Expressed disappointment that town representatives only appeared the day before; She criticized officials using cell phones during the meeting; said residents cleared three massive trees that blocked Sheffield Road at both ends. She reported vehicles driving over lawns, leaving tire tracks, and said communication from the town was poor with minimal postings. Many residents incurred significant private costs for tree services; asked for visible, proactive assistance and better communication.

Steve Miller (11 Challedon Dr.): Asked why the state of emergency took so long and what the town's emergency action plan is. Comparing Wilton unfavorably to Stillwater's preparedness and tabletop exercises. He urged the town to have a plan and asked what will be done going forward, noting increasing storms and the need to be prepared.

William Haffner (Richard Sears Tree Experts, 16 Harold Harris Road): Described their activation timeline by National Grid, immediate deployment during the tornado's crossing of I-87, and subsequent clearing to enable power restoration, which he said was among the fastest in National Grid history. He said they assisted the town in clearing major roads, donated crews for neighborhood street clearing, and continued working in the area. He acknowledged communication could have been better but emphasized significant response work occurred.

John McEachron (17 Smith Ridge Road): Said he deployed generators to vulnerable residents the night of the storm and helped cut trees on Route 50 and in affected neighborhoods. He said there had been an emergency response plan in the past and questioned what happened. Praised "neighbor helping neighbor" but stressed communication was the main frustration. He was unsure whether it qualified as a FEMA event but urged the town to prevent residents from being out-of-pocket and to act quickly.

Kristen Czajkowski (55 Glenburnie Dr.): Thanked Sears and other tree companies. She said residents lacked guidance on next steps and how to handle insurance claims; adjusters were delayed; debris included non-tree materials like metal, siding, and shingles. She requested informational support such as a Zoom session explaining insurance processes and protections against price gouging.

Phil Viger (Adirondack Tree Surgeons): Challenged the claim of donated time, asserting companies were being paid. He questioned why the town selected a Queensbury vendor instead one of local Saratoga County firms and claimed local vendors could do the work at better rates. He argued town crews and equipment could have handled it; criticized not having multiple vendors for price fairness and speed. He offered his perspective on fair pricing and local capability.

Doug Niles (33 Tom Sawyer Drive): Reflected on being spared while neighbors suffered major damage. He urged community cooperation and empathy, noting the town must be overwhelmed

and that such events will increase with global warming. He encouraged looking at the bigger picture and wished the board luck with the difficult situation.

Dave Pitaniello (18 Sheffield Road): Reported severe damage to his house and yard and asked what else the town can do beyond the emergency declaration to help homeowners maximize insurance support and navigate recovery.

Unidentified residents (multiple): Raised concerns about delayed communication over the weekend, asked how to trigger county reverse 911 and ensure targeted alerts, pressed for clarity on debris pickup rules, lengths, and right-of-way placement, and requested town support for large non-tree debris such as siding, fencing, gazebos, sheds, and other bulky materials. Asked about staging areas or roll-off containers, earlier bulk-waste options, and whether additional vendors would be engaged to accelerate cleanup. They sought assurance that isolated and elderly residents would receive assistance and that FEMA eligibility would be actively pursued.

Debris pickup and scope

Supervisor Sturm confirmed the town will pick up tree debris placed in the right of way and asked residents not to place piles in the road. An Unidentified Resident asked if curbside branches would be removed; Supervisor Sturm answered yes for right-of-way placement. Unidentified Residents asked about large non-tree debris (siding, fencing, gazebos, sheds); Board Members discussed options such as neighborhood roll-off containers or contracting haulers like J Dog or similar firms and agreed in principle to pursue an option, pending availability and logistics. Councilman O'Connor noted contacts with J Dog but could not commit to immediate availability. Board Members confirmed that under the state of emergency they do not need to bid such services.

Communication and alerts

Unidentified Residents pressed for reliable communications after phones, internet, and the website failed. Supervisor Sturm said email is currently the fastest channel and that they will also post to the website and social media, acknowledging vendor dependencies slowed updates. Another Unidentified Resident said they did receive county alerts on Thursday. John McEachron explained reverse 911 can be geo-targeted and should be explicitly requested by the town during emergencies. Connor Rohan agreed broader technology upgrades are needed beyond reverse 911, citing outdated website and communications systems and committing to pursue improvements.

State of emergency extension

Supervisor Sturm requested and received board approval to extend the townwide state of emergency by five days, through September 1 at 5:45 p.m.

On a motion introduced by Councilman O’Conor, the board adopted the following resolution:

RESOLUTION #208

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, to
extend the declaration of the State of
Emergency through September 1, 2026

The adoption of the resolution was
seconded by Deputy Supervisor Rohan,
via Zoom, duly put to a vote, all in favor.
The motion passed 5-0.

Highway operations and timing

An Unidentified Late-Arriving Resident on Worth Road sought clarity on bundling or bagging rules; the guidance was no bagging or twining requirements—just place in the right of way. An Unidentified Resident from Evergreen Drive described helping a widow and asked about reporting needs in outlying areas. Supervisor Sturm asked him to leave name and address with the highway department and noted Sears Tree Service on Friday passes would target large trunks. The plan is to canvas the town by Thursday and then reassess duration and any cutoff, with sensitivity to cases where residents need more time.

Assistance and services

Supervisor Sturm said they will contact the County Department of Aging and the Red Cross to identify resources for isolated residents. She also said the town will reach out to trash vendors to explore free pickup of bagged yard waste and small debris. Officials reiterated intent to develop a formal debris policy and to study school-district-style multi-channel alert systems alongside upgrades to the website, phones, and rapid messaging.

Adjournment

Supervisor Sturm called for adjournment at 9:59 a.m.. Councilman O’Conor seconded the motion will all board members in favor.

Final notes included that right-of-way tree debris pickup would continue, with heavy-equipment passes on the next two Fridays, and additional information on large-debris options would be communicated via email and postings.