

**MINUTES OF THE  
VAN WERT CITY COUNCIL**

July 12<sup>th</sup>, 2021

President Jon Tomlinson called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Pastor Keith Stoller gave the invocation.

On call of the roll: Marshall, Kallas, Penton, Agler, Mergy, Hellman, and Davis were present.

Mergy made a motion to approve the agenda for the July 12<sup>th</sup> Council meeting. Agler seconded; all concurred.

Mergy made a motion to approve the minutes for the June 28<sup>th</sup> Council meeting. Agler seconded; all concurred.

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**COMMENTS, COMMUNICATIONS, & PETITIONS**

Tomlinson explained that the evening's Council meeting would not be broadcast live on television due to technical difficulties, but that the meeting would be recorded for viewing afterward.

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Tomlinson made a note that Van Wert Forward has reached out to all Council members and elected officials, offering meetings regarding updates on the Downtown Redevelopment Plan.

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Tomlinson relayed an email he received from the Van Wert County Airport, announcing the grand opening of the J.L. Rice Terminal. The event will be held on Saturday, August 7<sup>th</sup>, with a ribbon cutting ceremony at 10:30 a.m., as well as an open house, food, and activities. For additional information, contact [manager@vanwertcountyairport.org](mailto:manager@vanwertcountyairport.org) or call 419-232-4500.

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Tomlinson then shared information from the Van Wert Area Economic Development Corporation, regarding a Van Wert Energy Special Improvement District meeting that will be held on July 14<sup>th</sup>, 2021, at 4:00 p.m. Tomlinson explained this would be a virtual meeting, and he would provide the information to the Van Wert Times Bulletin and VW Independent.

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## ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

**MAYOR:** Markward informed Council that there was strong interest, with 15 applicants, in the Executive Secretary position. This position had opened with Arica Wermer moving to the Deputy Auditor role. He reported that, after the interview process, they hired Tina Miller to fill that position, and her first day was today, July 12<sup>th</sup>, 2021.

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Markward provided a quick update on the parklet. He stated that they believed they had the next location of the parklet selected, but he was waiting on confirmation from Main Street Van Wert before that decision was finalized.

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Markward provided an additional detail on the Van Wert Forward information, noting that he had explained the concept of a Committee of the Whole. He also suggested that Van Wert Forward contact Tomlinson to inquire on this type of meeting, as it might be a more effective way to share information with members of Council. Tomlinson noted he had not been contacted yet.

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**SAFETY SERVICE DIRECTOR:** Fleming opened with thanking all of the city staff who had worked to complete brush pickup, as well as the work with barricades and traffic control that was done for the 4<sup>th</sup> of July Parade, Town Creek Live, and Van Wert 4-Mile. He also thanked the area organizations for sponsoring and putting on those events.

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Fleming informed Council that the Ohio Department of Transportation would soon be conducting a feasibility study on U.S. Highway 30 from the Indiana/Ohio state line to the area near the former STARR campus. The purpose would be to study the approximate 15 crossings along that stretch. There will be a meeting on Tuesday, August 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2021, from 1 p.m. to 2 p.m. at the Vantage Career Center to discuss the eastern portion of the study (which is the Van Wert City portion), and a second meeting from 5 p.m. to 6 p.m. at the Convoy Community Building to discuss the western portion (Richey Road to state line).

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Keith Stoller asked about the timeframe of the roundabout project at the intersection of U.S. 127 and U.S. 224. Fleming stated that construction is scheduled to begin in the spring of 2022. He also clarified that the project was an ODOT project and not a Van Wert City project.

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**AUDITOR:** Balyeat began with the amount that Van Wert would receive from the American Rescue Plan. She reported that their original estimate was north of \$2 million, but the actual figure is \$1,118,322.31. The city will receive \$559,000 this year, and the remainder in 2022. She requested that Agler would ask the Law Director to prepare legislation to create a new fund, American Rescue Plan Fund 231.

Balyeat stated that she took part in a webinar recently, and there is a registration process that needs to be completed. Once the registration is complete, the funds should be received fairly quickly. Tomlinson asked Agler to ask for that legislation on an emergency, so that a Fund would be ready for the money to be placed in, if received soon.

Tomlinson asked about stipulations of the use of these funds. Balyeat said guidelines were vague at this point, but it could not all be used as general funds. She gave an additional explanation of the details of the American Rescue Plan and the path of the allocations, but also noted that funds don't need to be committed until 2024, with completion of any projects with said funds until 2025. Tomlinson clarified that the use of any funds would be brought to Council, for whoever was on Council at that time.

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Balyeat also stated that she has not had the time to put together financial reports for the past few meetings, but she hopes to provide a review of the first six months of 2021 at the next meeting. This will include bank reconciliation through May at the least, revenues, and expenses.

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Joe Jared asked about the information on the American Rescue Plan. Balyeat said that she would provide him with a link to the information.

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Stacy Adam asked if Council received reports on the gross tax receipts each month. Balyeat confirmed that they did.

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**LAW DIRECTOR:** Hatcher was absent, and therefore no report for the evening. Tomlinson noted that questions for the Law Director could be sent to city administration, or to the Law Director's email.

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## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**HEALTH, SERVICE, and SAFETY:** Marshall opened with reminding those in attendance of the great city that they live in, the fantastic events that the city held recently, and the strong sports accomplishments around the area.

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Marshall reported that there were 14 violations since the last meeting, and 5 of those violations required sending out certified letters due to their serious nature. He stated these are repeat offenses, but he believes they are close to resolution. He also stated he will provide a more detailed report at the next meeting.

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Marshall conveyed that he is not yet finished with the outline of a plan for indigent burials, but he believes he will provide that at the next meeting as well.

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Marshall informed Council that a representative from Young's Trash Service will be present during the July 26<sup>th</sup> meeting to discuss the citywide clean-up. Tomlinson stated they would discuss that during the Comments, Communications and Petitions portion of the meeting.

Health, Service, and Safety had no additional report for the evening.

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**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:** Kallas turned the floor over to Stacy Adam, of the Van Wert Area Economic Development Corporation.

Adam informed those in attendance that the local house constructed by Vantage carpentry students, on property owned by the Land Bank at 148 Keplar St., is nearing completion and auction. She continued that two open houses have already been held, but it was decided to hold a final open house on the day before the auction, as the home will be fully completed at that time. The final open house will be held on July 21<sup>st</sup>, 2021, at 6:30 p.m., and the auction will take place the following day, July 22<sup>nd</sup>, at 6:30 p.m.

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The Land Bank is in the process of transferring the next property, and Vantage will begin their next construction project at 143 East Raymond St.

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Adam reported that the Home Guard building is down, and that project is finished.

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Adam also noted that the negotiations on the spec building project in Vision Park are ongoing. An offer was made for an incentive, according to Adam, but was not as anticipated. The developer called back last Friday, an agreement is hoped for soon, and the intent is to move forward in the near future.

Tomlinson stated that Ordinance 21-06-041, regarding a conveyance of 20 acres to the Community Improvement Corporation, which would be up for consideration during the evening's meeting, was related to the spec building discussion.

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Adam reviewed unemployment rates for Van Wert. She relayed the number for May was at 3.8%, which was slightly up from April's 3.5% mark. She also reviewed the four new grant programs for small to medium-sized businesses that Ohio introduced last month - food and beverage establishments, entertainment venues, lodging, and new businesses. She stated that approximately \$850,000 was allocated specifically to Van Wert County. If those funds are not assigned to Van Wert County businesses by July 31<sup>st</sup>, 2021, then that money is reallocated to other Ohio counties and businesses that have submitted applications.

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Adam also informed Council that Ohio has included \$500 million for Brownfield sites. If that money becomes available, and could be used for the project at the old Van Wert Inn, Adam stated they will try to pursue funds for that project.

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Tomlinson asked if the building to the east of the Home Guard site was tarped due to work that still needed completed on its exterior. Adam confirmed, noting that the tarp was a better sight at the current time than the unfinished wall.

Joe Jared asked if the building adjacent to the Home Guard had a collapse. It was noted that the building that had been directly adjacent to the Home Guard building had already been taken down, as it was supported in part by the Home Guard building. Adam remarked that renovations didn't make sense financially for that party, so that building also came down.

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Economic Development had no additional report for the evening.

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**PARKS AND RECREATION:** Penton relayed that he had received an email about a local boy who was working to receive his Eagle Scout rank.

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Penton also addressed complaints that were brought to his attention about the Parks Department on Facebook, which consisted of drug use and bullying in Franklin Park. Penton said he would look into this matter further, as this was the first he had heard of it. Tomlinson noted that was a police matter as well.

Penton asked if other Council members had heard of these complaints. Davis stated he had read the same Facebook posts. Fleming also mentioned that he would look into the complaints.

Jared stated that he had heard of similar incidents at Fountain Park, especially after school hours.

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Parks and Recreation had no further report for the evening.

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**FINANCE:** Agler made note of the Public Hearing, held prior to the evening's meeting, regarding the 2021 Van Wert City Tax Budget. He relayed that the budget was approved.

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**Agler made a motion to ask the Law Director to prepare legislation creating a new fund, Fund 231 (American Rescue Plan), on an emergency. Mergy seconded; all concurred.**

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Finance had no additional report for the evening.

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**JUDICIARY AND ANNEXATION:** Judiciary and Annexation had no report for the evening.

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**STREETS AND ALLEYS:** Streets and Alleys had no report for the evening.

Jared recommended that the ordinance, which relates to improved areas for parking, be examined, as he felt the time qualifier was obsolete and made newer improved areas illegal by technicality. Tomlinson asked Marshall or Hellman to consult with Hatcher on that request.

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**PROPERTY AND EQUIPMENT:** Property and Equipment had no report for the evening.

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## UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Tomlinson noted both code enforcement and the citywide clean-up were discussed during the night's meeting.

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## NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business brought before Council.

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## CONSENT AGENDA

Hellman made a motion to suspend statutory rules for the Consent Agenda. Kallas seconded; all concurred.

Hellman made a motion to pass the Consent Agenda, **Ordinance Number 21-06-041: AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR ON BEHALF OF THE CITY OF VAN WERT, OHIO, TO EXECUTE AND DELIVER A QUIT-CLAIM DEED TO THE COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF VAN WERT AND COUNTY OF VAN WERT CONVEYING APPROXIMATELY 20 ACRES OF REAL ESTATE LOCATED IN VISION PARK THAT IS OWNED BY THE CITY OF VAN WERT, OHIO AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.**, on its first and final reading. Kallas seconded; all concurred.

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## RESOLUTIONS & ORDINANCES

Davis discussed the meetings and conversations he's had over the past few weeks regarding the charter issue. He relayed that he and Balyeat met with the Rotary Club last week, discussed the charter issue, and answered questions. He also noted that he and the Mayor did the same with the Service Club. He stated that reception has been positive and there are people who are interested. He relayed that citizens who are interested in having their name on the ballot as a charter commission nominee can find the form online at the Ohio Secretary of State website,

with a registration deadline of August 4<sup>th</sup>, at 4 p.m. He believes that the more interested parties there are and the more voices in the process, the better off the community will be, so he encouraged those interested to take the necessary steps. He offered his time to anyone who may have questions. Davis also stated that he had contacted the potential future Council members, and asked if they had any names for possible charter commission nominees.

Mergy made a motion to untable Ordinance Number 21-05-039. Hellman seconded. Mergy made a motion to pass Ordinance Number 21-05-039: AN ORDINANCE SUBMITTING THE QUESTION OF SELECTING A COMMISSION TO FRAME A CHARTER TO A VOTE OF THE QUALIFIED ELECTORS OF THE CITY OF VAN WERT AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY., on its third and final reading. Hellman seconded. Marshall, Kallas, Penton, Mergy, Hellman, and Davis concurred; Agler dissented. Ordinance passed on third and final reading.

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## ADJOURN

Mergy made a motion to adjourn at 7:06 p.m. Agler seconded; all concurred.



Clerk of Council  
Andrew Bittner



Council President  
Jon Tomlinson

**7/26/2021**

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Date

