

**MINUTES OF THE  
VAN WERT CITY COUNCIL**  
September 9, 2024

Council President Thad Eikenbary called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Pastor Gary Ginter from Willshire Union UMC gave the invocation.

On call of the roll: Ringwald, Kallas, Agler, Dettrow, Moore and Marshall were present.

Ringwald made a motion to dismiss Bowers. Dettrow seconded. All concurred. Bowers dismissed.

Kallas made a motion to amend the agenda allowing the guest speakers to present after Administrative Reports instead of Committee reports. Agler seconded. All concurred.

Dettrow made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. Agler seconded; all concurred.

**ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS**

**MAYOR:** The mayor spoke about a court proceeding on blighted property #1. The agreement being a party that is interested in buying the property currently standing, tearing it down, and rebuild a new home there. The city has a “hold” on it. If the owner chooses not to go through with it, the city does not have to go back to square one.

For the blighted properties, even though we are allowed to, the city chooses not to blight properties that are being lived in. That is because there is a slight possibility the occupant would have to forfeit the home; the city does not want to do that to the occupants.

The property at the corner of Chesnut and Central was addressed tonight. The city has had issues and received complaints with this property, but the ordinance does not prohibit working lawn mowers/ functioning bicycles from being in the yard, hence this property is not a code violation. The law director expanded to share he has spoke with the property owner on resolving the complaints. A renter currently lives in the property and has been taken to court 4-6 times. The landlord has approached the law director about assisting with addressing the property. Council questioned if the resident was selling the items in the yard, which would then address a zoning issue versus an ordinance violation. The law director stated he does not think the property is functioning as a business.

Agler suggested for this and future issues that the owner of the property should be addressed immediately versus trying to address issues with the tenant first. The law director clarified the ordinance allows the city to approach the occupant or owner. Agler expressed frustrations about the promptness of the property being addressed and wants action to be taken immediately as this is in his ward.

**SAFETY SERVICE DIRECTOR:** Mr. Fleming addressed an ongoing problem with total trihalomethane in the water system. The fourth quarter sampling was just completed; the running annual average is 86.3%. The limit is 80% so we are, as expected, in violation. This was expected due to extreme hot weather and recurring algae issues. October water bills will address this with a public notice. A positive to come of this is through a pilot study with aration which has been tested at the plant and each of the water towers. The first round of testing showed a 50% reduction in THM's. There is capital cost involved with installing equipment, but there are very positive results to come of this should the city choose to take this route.

Weeds and tall growth on the curbs and gutters were all treated this past week and the city will continue working on those treatments.

The Bonnewitz project will need dedication plats approved by council. There are pieces of property that the city owns that need approved in right ways. There is about a 700 ft x 60 ft strip dedicated by First Federal and 0.013 of an acre by Jay Petroleum. Bids are opening this Thursday with 8 interested contractors. Fleming is requesting these dedication plats be prepared as an emergency and signed next meeting.

Leeson Ave. mass excavation has begun to remove all old material. Storm, sewer, sanitary and water main are all complete; everyone is hooked up to the new water main and all new hydrants are installed. A dirt base needs laid and then built back up with stone over the next month. The safety service director addressed buzz around people being out of their homes. When curb and driveways are poured, yes, residents will temporarily have to park on the street—approximately 3 days. Pavement goal is scheduled to complete by end of October or early November; black top will be completed next spring.

Agler commented on the overgrown weeds stating a street sweeper could easily take care of weeds and the city would no longer need to spray if the street sweeper just drove closer to the curb. Fleming countered by stating it would eat away at the sweeper brushes; the purpose is to clean the debris from the streets, not used as a weed eater. Fleming says ideally property owners and residents would just address the weeds directly in front of their property and this would solve the issue all together.

**AUDITOR:** The auditor had shared August financials, revenue, and expenses which she shared were in great standing and all positive. She shared that this is under new advisory of the investment company Red Tree.

The auditor is also working on the budget to get that passed before year end. This is her first year in the budgeting process. She also stated city employees who receive health insurance premiums have a 0% increase in the year 2025.

Preliminary audits are back, the auditor will share results one final drafts are in, but in conclusion, everything looks good.

**LAW DIRECTOR:** Mr. Hatcher addressed two TIF's tonight. IDH Echo Ventures and Jennings Crossing.

IDH Echo Ventures is awaiting approval from developer before being presented to council.

Jennings Crossing is working out details with Vantage to be included in the TIF and a prior ordinance that was passed in 2023 may need amended because of this. The law director requested the finance committee to request the ordinance be prepared.

Hatcher addressed a disgruntled citizen with issues on ebike laws that he will be doing additional research on. The citizen had two of his parked cars hit by an ebike where no citations were given and currently, the ebike owner is not being held accountable for any damages.

Lastly, Attorney Robert Young passed away Sunday, 9/8/2024 and Mr. Hatcher took a moment to recognize him.

### **COMMENTS, COMMUNICATIONS & PETITIONS:**

Scott Bear, 339 N. Market St., shared information and research on eBike laws and some “gray areas” surrounding driver’s and equipment being operated in the city. eBike’s do not have to be covered under insurance. eBike’s can be ticketed for failure to control, but since the vehicle owners were not in the vehicle and the vehicles were parked and not in use, the eBike owner was not ticketed. Bear mentioned addressing not only eBike’s, but mopeds, electric scooters, and other battery operated traveling equipment. Mr. Hatcher plans to bring back research to the next council meeting in hopes of some legislation being prepared.

Aaron Montgomery, EHS Manager of Tenneco, was present and spoke over the safety of employees at Tenneco. Tenneco’s parking for their employees is across the street (Fisher Ave.) from their facility. Employee’s are crossing here during shift changes, lunch, breaks, etc. 24 hours a day 5 days a week. Montgomery estimates a person crosses there 500-600 times a day. Montgomery thinks the road is unmarked; driver’s will drive at very high speeds down this road. There is concern for the safety and well being of the employees crossing the street. There is currently one worn cross walk, but there are at least 2 other access points Montgomery was suggesting be addressed by adding paint, signs, speed bumps, elevated cross walks, etc. whatever would get the attention of a driver on that road to slow them down. Safety Service Director Jay Fleming stated there are easy fixes such as painting additional crosswalks and adding signage in the area. He also suggested moving the speed trailer onto that road to notify driver’s of their speed as they are driving by. Fleming cannot entertain speed bumps on a public roadway and also stated a raised/light up crosswalk is quite costly, especially for the area.

Joe Jared, 113 W. Main St., was analyzing components from the sky and periodically noticed microscopic plastic spheres which is ultimately ending up in our food since they are everywhere. He stated this has been going on for years and it is a known health issue that humans have plastic in our bodies.

Kallas communicated that Van Wert Goedde and Lee Kinstles are partnering to honor Veteran's with a "Breakfast with the Vet's" on September 18th at 9:00 am. Flyers will be released, but veterans and their families are invited to attend and be recognized.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**FINANCE:** Ringwald made a motion to prepare an amendment to ordinance 23-01-008 and 23-02-011 to add Vantage throughout the TIF agreement and to the compensation agreement as an emergency. Agler seconded; all concurred. Auditor Blackmore clarified a few other points that will need addressed as this amendment is prepared including flow of funds/how they will be handled and the fact that the three parcels are now only two parcels.

**STREETS AND ALLEYS:** Kallas made a motion to prepare an ordinance that would allow the city to accept a dedication plat from First Federal Savings & Loan to allow the Bonnewitz extension to proceed in the right-of-way as an emergency. Ringwald seconded; all concurred.

Kallas made a motion to prepare an ordinance that would allow the city to accept a dedication plat from Jay Petroleum to allow the Bonnewitz extension to proceed in the right-of-way as an emergency. Ringwald seconded; all concurred.

Kallas made a motion to prepare an ordinance that would allow the city to accept a dedication plat from the City of Van Wert to allow the Bonnewitz extension to proceed in the right-of-way as an emergency. Ringwald seconded; all concurred.

**JUDICIARY AND ANNEXATION:** Not present.

**PROPERTIES AND EQUIPMENT:** No report.

**PARKS AND RECREATION:** No report.

**HEALTH, SERVICE AND SAFETY:** No report.

Agler requested a Leeson Ave. property on the South Side of the street right along the railroad tracks be added to the blighted property list.

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:** No report.

**QUESTIONS/COMMENTS FROM COUNCIL and PUBLIC:** None.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:** None.

**NEW BUSINESS:** None.

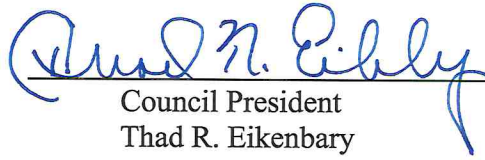
**RESOLUTIONS & ORDINANCES:**

**Third and Final Reading for ORDINANCE Number 24-08-046; AN ORDINANCE MAKING A NO PARKING ZONE ON THE EAST SIDE OF THE STREET FROM THE PROPERTY LINE OF 800 SOUTH TYLER AND 802 SOUTH TYLER CONTINUING SOUTH TO THE END OF THE STREET. All concurred. Ordinance passed.**

Kallas made a motion to adjourn at 7:37 p.m. Agler seconded; all concurred.



Clerk of Council  
Stephanie R. Phillips



Council President  
Thad R. Eikenbary

September 23, 2024

DATE

