

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

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

President Eikenbary gave the invocation.

The director of the brumback library came prepared to present the winner of the ugly Christmas sweater that won at their open house. As promised, Mayor Markward attended, dressed in the first place sweater made by the Van Wert Humane Society.

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

Kallas made a motion to move into executive session for the purpose of appointing a public official. Bowers seconded; all concurred.

Council reconvened at 7:08 p.m.

Kallas made a motion to appoint Greg Roberts as second ward councilman. Ringwald seconded; all concurred. At this time, Law Director Hatcher swore in Roberts.

Kallas made a motion to amend the Agenda to allow the public speakers to speak before the administrative reports and to add ordinance 24-12-075 and 24-12-076. Ringwald seconded; all concurred.

Bowers made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda from the December 9th meeting. Agler seconded; all concurred.

**COMMENTS, COMMUNICATIONS & PETITIONS:** Meghan Klinger-Dallas, the mother of the little boy who was hit by a car within the city limits on U.S. 127 near Crawford St., is speaking to council on what potential next actions are so an accident like her and her son experienced is unlikely to occur again. Suggestions included additional signage, lights, crossing guards, additional police patrolling during school walking hours, slowing the speed limit down sooner and her main concern was parking that occurs on the side of the street on the main highway near the crosswalk. She also addressed the response time/functionality of the crosswalk buttons.

Fleming mentioned that the crosswalk was adjusted to allow pedestrians the right-of-way quicker. Fleming also mentioned the topic came up to slow the speed down a few blocks sooner. He also reiterates that schools should be educating children who walked to school because after some surveying, there are many pedestrians and students who do not push the button at all.

Hall Block, Fort Wayne, shared his expertise as a civil engineer and mentioned the amount of space in the crosswalk area is approximately 1000 square feet which is rather large and gives

driver's an impression of "going fast" since it is so wide. He makes a suggestion to make the roadway more narrow to encourage drivers to slow down naturally.

Moore suggests a voluntary crossing guards for the morning which the city has done before by partnering with the school and providing barricades. Fleming clarifies that while adults could assist students in waiting at the crosswalks; they would have to follow the traffic signal laws, they could not stop traffic outside of the lights/crosswalk signals. Kallas has taken initiative to address the school on future plan of action on this topic.

Greg Roberts introduced himself being born and raised in Van Wert County. He works at the Marsh Foundation, drives bus for a local school and works at the bowling alley part time. The reason he ran for council was because he always wanted to do so and now seemed like a perfect opportunity.

## **ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS**

**MAYOR:** The mayor mentioned that crosswalks were already in discussion prior to public speakers tonight, but mainly turned over his report as a "joint report" with the safety service director.

**SAFETY SERVICE DIRECTOR:** The Safety Service Director addressed with council about raising water bills in the city. He mentioned several wastewater projects over the last 10-15 years that cost the city millions while they fought to keep the cost of water down; over the last 10 years, the city has had to utilize the water fund. With a THM issue that has occurred over the past year, it is time to address the issue; the best course of action is an aeration system in the waste water plant. This is a \$1.3MM project in which a portion of the funds could be borrowed at a low interest rate. This will have to take place immediately after design is completed this coming summer. With this, along with the age of the water plant, the safety service director is proposing a 10% increase in water rates to go into effect March of 2025. This will generate around \$230,000 for the city per year in which around \$100k will be used toward the debt service on the THM project. The rest would begin to grow the water fund balance for ongoing projects including a reservoir project.

In the summer of 2026 there is a \$5000 grant coming available from State Issue One that the SSD applied for that will be earmarked for water plant projects and has traditionally been used to keep water rates down over the last 20 years.

A citizen from Cable Street mentioned sewage issues that have since been fixed in front of their house, but was inquiring for neighbors on their street and down Burt Street potentially having issues. The Safety Service Director encourages all city residents to call the city for sewer issues before a plumber so residents may be able to avoid a fee if the city can fix it first.

**AUDITOR:** The city auditor reported year end supplementals that would need appropriated for year end including, EMS Billing, Street Light Contracts for over budget electricity, Fringe Benefits that were under budgeted from last year, Law Director phone transfer, Fringe and personal benefits for council, fringe benefits for city employees, CBB supplemental for Hotel

Motel Tax, Airport funding (that was missed in the budget last year), Municipal Court Fund, Insurance Company, Sewer Fund Fringe Benefits. Most of these include transfers as well that will be passed in Ordinances this evening.

Next, Blackmore pointed the council's attention to parts of the 2025 final budget to make them aware that Economic Development, Main Street Van Wert, and Airport Authority's request are within the budget. If the budget passes tonight as planned, the aforementioned entities requests would also be passed.

Lastly, there was a request from the city auditor and safety service director for council to add into an existing policy that the auditor has authority to use credit card rewards points to distribute gift cards to the city employees as a Christmas gift. This is in lieu of a party that the city employees use to hold prior to COVID.

**LAW DIRECTOR:** No report.

Joe Jared requested follow up on the fluoridation issue. The Law Director drafted a letter to the Ohio Attorney General and is waiting to hear back. Ultimately, the city will take guidance or clear finding from Ohio EPA or State Legislature when it is available.

Jared also requested to know how much fluoridation is costing the city. Fleming does not have the figure on hand and plans to bring it to the next meeting.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**FINANCE:** Ringwald made a motion to prepare an ordinance to make supplemental appropriations to funds 101, 205, 214, 305, 602 as an emergency. Kallas seconded; all concurred. Ringwald made a motion to introduce Ordinance Number: 24-12-069. Moore seconded; all concurred.

Ringwald made a motion to suspend statutory rules. Moore seconded; all concurred.

Ringwald made a motion to pass on it's first and final reading, Ordinance Number: 24-12-069; An ordinance to make supplemental appropriations to funds 101, 205, 214, 305, 602 and declaring an emergency. Kallas seconded; all concurred. Ordinance Passed

Ringwald made a motion to prepare an ordinance to transfer funds from multiple accounts to fund 550 in the amount of \$75,056.61 as an emergency. Kallas seconded; all concurred.

Ringwald made a motion to introduce Ordinance Number: 24-12-070. Bowers seconded; all concurred.

Ringwald made a motion to suspend statutory rules. Moore seconded; all concurred.

Ringwald made a motion to pass on it's first and final reading, Ordinance Number: 24-12-070; An ordinance to transfer funds from fund 101, 201, 230, 301, 601, 602 and 701 to fund 550 and declaring an emergency. Agler seconded; all concurred. Ordinance Passed.

Ringwald made a motion to prepare an ordinance to transfer funds from multiple accounts to fund 560 in the amount of \$26,243.57 as an emergency. Bowers seconded; all concurred.

Ringwald made a motion to introduce Ordinance Number: 24-12-071. Moore seconded; all concurred.

Ringwald made a motion to suspend statutory rules. Moore seconded; all concurred.

Ringwald made a motion to pass on it's first and final reading, Ordinance Number: 24-12-071; An ordinance to transfer funds from fund 101, 201, 230, 301, 601, 602 and 701 to fund 560 and declaring an emergency. Agler seconded; all concurred. Ordinance Passed.

Ringwald made a motion to prepare an ordinance to transfer funds from fund 101 to fund 215 in the amount of \$53,291.13 as an emergency. Agler seconded; all concurred.

Ringwald made a motion to introduce Ordinance Number: 24-12-072. Bowers seconded; all concurred.

Ringwald made a motion to suspend statutory rules. Agler seconded; all concurred.

Ringwald made a motion to pass on it's first and final reading, Ordinance Number: 24-12-072; An ordinance to transfer funds from fund 101 to fund 215 and declaring an emergency. Bowers seconded; all concurred. Ordinance Passed.

Ringwald made a motion to prepare an ordinance to transfer funds from fund 602 to fund 603 in the amount of \$150,000.00 as an emergency. Agler seconded; all concurred.

Ringwald made a motion to introduce Ordinance Number: 24-12-073. Bowers seconded; all concurred.

Ringwald made a motion to suspend statutory rules. Bowers seconded; all concurred.

Ringwald made a motion to pass on it's first and final reading, Ordinance Number: 24-12-073; An ordinance to transfer funds from fund 602 to fund 603 and declaring an emergency. Agler seconded; all concurred. Ordinance Passed.

Ringwald made a motion to prepare an ordinance to transfer funds from fund 550 to fund 101 in the amount of \$106,579.75 as an emergency. Moore seconded; all concurred.

Ringwald made a motion to introduce Ordinance Number: 24-12-074. Bowers seconded; all concurred.

Ringwald made a motion to suspend statutory rules. Agler seconded; all concurred.

Ringwald made a motion to pass on it's first and final reading, Ordinance Number: 24-12-074; An ordinance to transfer funds from fund 550 to fund 101 and declaring an emergency. Agler seconded; all concurred. Ordinance Passed.

Ringwald made a motion to prepare an ordinance to transfer funds from fund 101 to fund 302 in the amount of \$50,000.00 as an emergency. Agler seconded; all concurred.

Ringwald made a motion to introduce Ordinance Number: 24-12-075. Agler seconded; all concurred.

Ringwald made a motion to suspend statutory rules. Bowers seconded; all concurred.

Ringwald made a motion to pass on it's first and final reading, Ordinance Number: 24-12-075; An ordinance to transfer funds from fund 101 to fund 302 and declaring an emergency. Agler seconded; all concurred. Ordinance Passed.

Ringwald made a motion to introduce Resolution Number: 24-12-076 as an emergency. Bowers seconded; all concurred.

Ringwald made a motion to suspend statutory rules. Moore seconded; all concurred.

Ringwald made a motion to pass on it's first and final reading, Resolution Number: 24-12-076; a resolution to amend ordinance 11-08-046, and to establish charges for emergency medical

services and motor vehicle accident rates in the city of Van Wert, and declaring an emergency. Agler seconded; all concurred. Ordinance passed.

Ringwald made a motion to have the law director prepare an ordinance to increase water rates in the city of Van Wert by 10% effective March 1, 2025. Agler seconded; all concurred.

Ringwald made a motion to approve the process of allowing the city auditor to utilize rewards points from the city credit card to issue gift cards to city employees as a Christmas gift. Agler seconded; all concurred.

**STREETS AND ALLEYS:** Kallas received an email addressing traffic lights on a Main St. Intersection. Sometimes the lights on Main and Washington will stay green for an extended period of time while other times it changes quickly. The Safety Service Director explained that this intersection is controlled by radar. The radar detects cars and is designed to facilitate traffic movement. This particular intersection also has railroad preemption tied to it giving southbound traffic priority to help with traffic from an oncoming train. Fleming encourages the public to report odd activity in intersection lights.

Kallas received an email addressing pot holes at Rural King. A few years ago, there was discussion on the city doing something about this. Ultimately, it's private property and Rural King stated they would patch the parking lot and the following year it would be finished. The follow through never happened so the parking lot is still an issue.

Lastly, Kallas provided an example of changes that are proposed for the change in Rule 30 for the Agenda in accordance to the ordinance that is set to pass tonight ending in -068. Feedback was positive.

**JUDICIARY AND ANNEXATION:** No report.

**PROPERTIES AND EQUIPMENT:** No report.

**PARKS AND RECREATION:** No report.

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

Law Director Hatcher has offered up a meeting with Agler and Moore to have a summary/ action item meeting over Blighted Properties since there are several.

Agler is still pushing to have the property owners at fault and be held responsible for the blighted property action items.

Agler mentioned the property on the corner of Jackson and N. Franklin that has already been cleaned once by the city. This property has had multiple complaints including their neighbors.

A Van Wert resident was asking for clarification on why we only approach the occupant or the owner and not both. This ordinance was changed several years ago for ease of contacting

someone with action items. Sometimes the owner does not live locally, is difficult to contact, or in some cases is even deceased.

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:** No report.

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

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:** None.

**NEW BUSINESS:** There is one notice for a transfer of a liquor license from what is locally known as The Edition to a business known as "MAW SKI". Any objection to this needs brought to councils attention.

**RESOLUTIONS & ORDINANCES:**

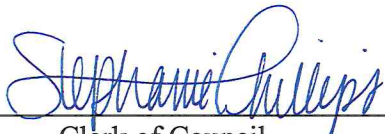
**Ringwald made a motion to untable ORDINANCE Number: 24-10-060. Agler seconded; all concurred.**

**Third and Final Reading for ORDINANCE Number: 24-10-060; AN ORDINANCE TO MAKE PERMANENT APPROPRIATIONS FOR THE CURRENT EXPENSES AND OTHER EXPENDITURES FOR THE CITY OF VAN WERT, OHIO, FROM JANUARY 1, 2025 TO DECEMBER 31, 2025, AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY. All concurred. Ordinance passed.**

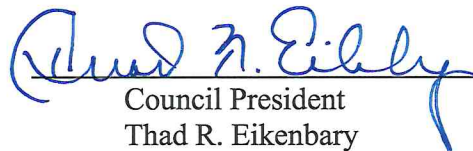
**Kallas made a motion to amend Ordinance Number: 24-11-068 to add updated titles in the order of business. Agler seconded; All concurred.**

**Third and Final Reading for ORDINANCE Number: 24-11-068; an ordinance to amend chapter 30 of the Van Wert Code of Ordinances. All concurred. Ordinance passed.**

Agler made a motion to adjourn at 8:40 p.m. Bowers seconded; all concurred.



Clerk of Council  
Stephanie R. Phillips



Council President  
Thad R. Eikenbary

December 23, 2024  
DATE