

**MINUTES OF THE
VAN WERT CITY COUNCIL**
February 9, 2026

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

President Eikenbary gave the invocation.

On call of the roll: Ringwald, Johnson, Block, Roberts, Moore, and Hurless were present.

Roberts made a motion to excuse Agler. Moore seconded; all concurred.

Moore made a motion to approve tonight's Consent Agenda and minutes from the January 26th meeting. Roberts seconded; all concurred.

SCHEDULED PUBLIC SPEAKERS

NONE.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

MAYOR: Not present.

SAFETY SERVICE DIRECTOR: Mr. Fleming reported passwords for council emails were distributed. Council members were advised not to change passwords until notified by IT.

Snow removal responsibilities for ADA ramps were discussed. Property owners are responsible for clearing snow from sidewalk ramps adjacent to their property. Fleming acknowledged concerns about city plows depositing snow on ramps and stated he would address the matter with the street superintendent.

Fleming requested a supplemental appropriation of \$350,000 for Choice One Engineering for the South Walnut Street project, which includes design, surveying, and geotechnical work. The overall project is estimated between \$7–8 million.

Reservoir levels were reported at 10 and 11 feet, respectively. While levels are above 50%, the city is monitoring conditions.

Fleming requested authorization to advertise, bid, and award contracts for the Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) project. The approximately \$1.5 million project includes construction of a trunk sewer on Blaine Avenue, a siphon near the Wall Street Bridge, and valve improvements at the CSO pump station. The project is part of the city's long-term control plan to reduce sewer overflows into Town Creek. Funding will come from the sewer fund without borrowing.

Fleming also presented a proposed 50-year franchise agreement renewal with AEP to allow continued use of the city's right-of-way. Law Director Hatcher indicated the agreement appeared

consistent with prior arrangements. Council discussed whether an AEP representative should attend a future meeting for questions.

AUDITOR: Mrs. Blackmore has presented 2 Then & Now's that will need passed tonight. One to Wallace Plumbing for an emergency leak at the municipal building. The leak costed \$3471.00 to fix. Another to Century Trading for \$7,460.39 for street department garage equipment, including a band saw.

Blackmore presented three supplemental appropriations: \$7,500 to Fund 701 (Garage Fund), \$350,000 to Fund 301 (Street Construction) and \$200 to Fund 208 (Camper Court donation).

Blackmore reviewed January 2026 financials. Blackmore introduced a new "Council Snapshot" financial summary to provide clearer monthly reporting and indicated detailed reports will continue to be distributed as required by the Ohio Revised Code. Blackmore also reviewed Hotel/Motel Tax receipts. Hurlless is asking the city auditor to consider looking at STAR Ohio for more investment options due to the higher Annual Yield. Blackmore explained that certain funds must remain split among institutions under state guidelines.

LAW DIRECTOR: Mr. Hatcher addressed several code review items: Section 96.26 (Trash Collection Schedule): Hatcher noted recycling schedules have become less consistent since the ordinance was adopted in 2017. Council discussed adding language exempting federal holiday weeks from strict schedule requirements.

Section 150.67 (Board of Zoning Appeals Notices): Hatcher reviewed notification requirements to contiguous property owners. Council discussed potential amendments to also notify tenants or occupants of rental properties in addition to property owners. Hatcher will draft proposed language for review.

Section 32.03 (Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee): Hatcher noted the advisory committee established in 1975 has not been utilized in recent history. Council discussed whether to reestablish or eliminate the committee. Safety-Service Director Fleming indicated council effectively serves in that advisory capacity.

Chapter 100 (Fair Housing): Hatcher is reviewing whether the city's Fair Housing Board is required given overlapping county and state enforcement through the Ohio Civil Rights Commission. He will report back with recommendations.

COMMENTS, COMMUNICATIONS & PETITIONS:

Kirby Kelly, commented that fair housing matters may already be handled at the state level and provided historical context regarding former park advisory committees. Kelly suggested that if a public pool is pursued, council may consider establishing a separate board to oversee that project/entity in it's entirety.

Mark Davis, 402 S. Tyler St., addressed zoning notification procedures and expressed support for expanding notification to tenants of rental properties. He also suggested reviewing application fees to offset mailing costs.

Joe Jared, spoke regarding lead exposure and infrastructure concerns and urged continued attention to the issue.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

FINANCE: Ringwald made a motion to approve the Then and Now certificates totaling \$10,931.39 as presented by the city auditor. Johnson seconded; all concurred.

Ringwald made a motion to introduce Ordinance Number: 26-02-009. 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: 26-02-009; AN ORDINANCE TO MAKE SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS TO FUNDS 301 AND 701, AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY. Moore seconded; all concurred. Ordinance passed.

Ringwald made a motion to have the law director prepare legislation to allow the Safety-Service Director to advertise, bid, and award contracts for the CSO project as an emergency. Roberts seconded; all concurred.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: Johnson reported that the end user for the data center project will be announced in the coming month. A community event at Vantage Career Center is being planned to provide information and answer questions.

Johnson also reported that a spec building is being worked on next to TeknipleX.

STREETS AND ALLEYS: Block discussed snow removal practices, including sidewalk responsibilities and downtown parking during snow events. Fleming acknowledged challenges with vehicles remaining parked during plowing operations and indicated a snow emergency policy should be discussed prior to next winter. Block also proposed the city consider clearing reservoir/walking path sidewalks which they do not currently do. Block encouraged residents to clear sidewalks in accordance with city code.

Block wants to make the data center use conditional in the I2 zoning district. He proposes this to allow the city to set "metrics" or barriers on certain items the city would see fit.

Block made a motion for the law director to prepare emergency legislation to change data center use to conditional in the I2 zoning district. Motion failed for lack of a second.

An overall consensus seems to share the thought that citizens and council members alike wish that the end user/parties involved would be more transparent leading up to large decisions that will affect the city.

Block made a motion to have the law director prepare legislation to approve the 50 year franchise lease for AEP. Roberts seconded; all concurred.

PROPERTIES AND EQUIPMENT: Not present. Ringwald has no report.

PARKS AND RECREATION: No report.

HEALTH, SERVICE AND SAFETY: No report.

JUDICIARY AND ANNEXATION: Hurless mentioned a property the city owns around 38 acres of ground that was given to the city by a gentleman who had wishes of making this area a bird sanctuary. Hurless wants to know how to look up these details. Fleming stated this has been researched in the past with no luck on findings. Hatcher states that for it to be a restriction on the land, it would have to be in the deed itself; he will review the deed and follow up with council.

QUESTIONS/COMMENTS FROM COUNCIL and PUBLIC: NONE.

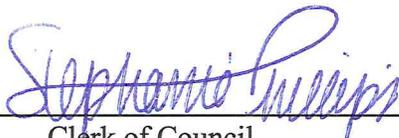
UNFINISHED BUSINESS: NONE.

NEW BUSINESS: NONE.

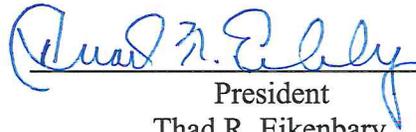
RESOLUTIONS & ORDINANCES:

Third and Final Reading for Resolution Number: 26-01-004; A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE SALE DURING CALENDAR YEAR 2026 OF MUNICIPALLY OWNED PERSONAL PROPERTY WHICH IS NOT NEEDED FOR PUBLIC USE, OR WHICH IS OBSOLETE OR UNFIT FOR THE USE FOR WHICH IT WAS ACQUIRED BY INTERNET AUCTION, PURSUANT TO OHIO REVISED CODE SECTION 721.15(D), AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY. All concurred. Ordinance passed.

Hurless made a motion to adjourn at 8:18 p.m. Block seconded; all concurred.



Clerk of Council
Stephanie R. Phillips



President
Thad R. Eikenbary

February 23, 2026
DATE