

MINUTES OF THE VAN WERT CITY COUNCIL

April 13, 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, Agler, Roberts, Moore, and Hurless were present.

Agler made a motion to approve tonight's Consent Agenda and minutes from the March 23rd meeting. Roberts seconded; all concurred.

SCHEDULED PUBLIC SPEAKERS

NONE.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

MAYOR: Mr. Markward asked for council to move into executive session for a personnel matter concerning negotiations of a union.

Hurless made a motion to move into executive session for discussion of a personnel matter regarding police contracts. Ringwald seconded; all concurred.

Council resumed regular public session at 6:43 p.m.

SAFETY SERVICE DIRECTOR: Mr. Fleming stated brush pick-up dates were established for the summer; those will take place the week of May 11, week of July 13 and week of September 14.

Fleming also requested council pass an ordinance tonight to allow the Safety Service Director to accept bids for street painting.

An unwanted vehicle owned by the city will require an ordinance passed to allow Fleming to sell it via a govdeals auction.

Several months ago speed limits were discussed on Van Wert Decatur Rd. A concept has been formed between the city and county to make a 35 mph start at Burger King and stretch to Elk's Drive clear out by Kim Hohman's and then put in 50 mph for the rest of the stretch of road. An

ordinance will need requested to make this change and the Safety Service Director will work with the county engineer to see it through.

There is also a salt contract that will need prepared tonight to allow Fleming to be involved in ODOT's salt bidding.

Reservoir capacities are above 75% and we are in good shape for the summer.

Moore is proposing we do an additional "spring cleaning" clean up voucher for the city to pick up trash from in town twice a year versus once a year. The mayor expresses worry that citizens may stockpile trash and wait on those 2 dates each year in order to get rid of it for free.

AUDITOR: Mrs. Blackmore presented March financials following a snapshot that was sent via email to council.

Blackmore also presented one Then & Now needed for the city's insurance deductible totalling \$5,000 to take care of a claim that happened in the winter time when a plow truck hit an AEP pole.

Two Supplemental appropriations (one ordinance) will need prepared tonight for moving funds. One is needed for debris escrow for a house fire that occurred where the property was deemed to release funds back to the property owner in the amount of \$18,139.05. The second is needed for the road and bridge tax service payment that came due for \$944.83.

All checks that the city cut for Tax Refunds in December are now stale dated and will need reissued if citizens have not cashed those. All funds that are not requested to be reissued will be sent to unclaimed funds.

Lastly, the auditor is requested two salary ordinances be prepared to reflect a 1% raise for both the service and safety department.

LAW DIRECTOR: Mr. Hatcher is requesting a brief executive session at the end of the meeting for the purpose of two pending litigation with no action taken after the session.

COMMENTS, COMMUNICATIONS & PETITIONS:

NONE.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

FINANCE: Ringwald made a motion to approve the Then & Now as presented by the City Auditor in the amount of \$5,000.00. Moore seconded; all concurred.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: Johnson stated the answers to council's questions regarding the data center have been printed and are available at both the library and the van wert city economic development office. The answers are also available online and the media has also assisted by advertising where the answers can be found. A video has also been released by VWAED Director Brent Stevens about the data center.

STREETS AND ALLEYS: Block stated he is hearing concerns about seeding that was used on Leeson Avenue that should have been a specific blend made for urban areas, but instead, a highway type blend was used and now the residents are experiencing areas of dead grass. Fleming stated that due to drought conditions experienced recently, the blend would not have mattered and dead grass was inevitable. ODOT is not interested in reseeding this area.

Block addresses the procedural redo on Mega Site to reiterate the steps taken and where he stands on the matter. Block believes there has been poor communication with the community on the matter; he expressed concerns regarding the prior annexation process, stating it was completed without conditional zoning or public notice, which effectively bypassed the public participation process. Block indicated no officials have acknowledged this as an error. Block asks for Hatcher to explain how a previous council can require current council to take action based on actions of previous council members; in addition, what would the ramifications be if current council voted against this matter. Next, Block wants to maximize public process to make sure they are fully involved going forward.

Hatcher responded by sharing that the pre annexation agreement was passed by council in 2014 bounding future council perspective by contract long before a data center was ever entertained. Voting outside of this could in turn breach the contract and hold the individual council person at risk for being sued by not only surrounding jurisdictions, but also by the developer involved.

PROPERTIES AND EQUIPMENT: No report.

PARKS AND RECREATION: Roberts stated old tennis courts are being removed at smiley to get some new pickle ball courts. There is no estimated completion date at this time.

There is also a new boat ramp at the reservoir available for public use on the south side of Reservoir 2.

HEALTH, SERVICE AND SAFETY: A citizen reached out to Mrs. Moore in regards to grass along Leeson Avenue. Fleming does not have a plan in place to address the residents at this time.

Moore had some proposals from citizens that the city should consider keeping the board for the parks department. Roberts confirmed that it is not in the interest of Parks Department Director Kyle Klinker to entertain a board at this time; therefore, he believes council should follow through with removing the board from the ordinance requirements.

JUDICIARY AND ANNEXATION: No report.

QUESTIONS/COMMENTS FROM COUNCIL and PUBLIC:

Jody Huth, 668 N. Walnut St., reiterates the public's want for someone to take the blame for the procedural redo.

Lisa Lugenbill, 137 Keplar St., states the public has had no community vote or involvement in other businesses that have come to Van Wert and believes the data center should be no different. She expresses excitement for Van Wert's growth.

Jeremy Boroff, 9088 John Brown Rd., Van Wert, wants to know how the city will make money and how the community will benefit from it. He also shares concern about Lima wells that have dried.

President Eikenbary reminds the public of the website available to answer questions surrounding the data center.

Kelly Ripley, 8847 Germann Rd., Convoy, Shares insight she learned from her child who studies Environmental Science. She shares that the answers on the site seem to be vague. Ripley's concerns consistently remained around water usage and how it would affect the aquifer surrounding her. She suggests bringing in a hydrologist to study the usage.

Van Ripley, 8847 Germann Rd., Convoy, continues worry on water concerns and well concerns. Will there be funding available to help residents who experience wells that dried up?

Dave Roehm, 3145 State Route 118, Willshire, expresses concerns of wells drying up near his farm.

Mark Lippi, 12529 Dixon Cavett Rd., Van Wert, is requesting a community vote.

Fleming assures the public that Lima is purposely dewatering wells to keep a certain site dry, and wells are not being dug for the data center located there.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: The blighted property will be discussed in the executive session due to pending litigation.

NEW BUSINESS: Council President Eikenbary reiterated the public hearing shall be held on May 4, 2026, at 6:30 p.m. at the NPAC. There will be sign-up sheets provided for people who wish to speak. Eikenbary stated there will be a two-minute time limit for people to be heard by the council, and this is not a time for questions.

RESOLUTIONS & ORDINANCES:

Third and Final Reading for Resolution Number: 26-03-014; A RESOLUTION TO REPEAL VAN WERT, OHIO CODE OF ORDINANCE SECTION 32.03(B). All concurred. Ordinance passed.

Ringwald made a motion to prepare an ordinance amending ordinance 25-11-053 by amending the salary ordinance for safety department employees as an emergency. Moore seconded; all concurred.

Ringwald made a motion to introduce Ordinance Number: 26-04-017. 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: 26-04-017; AN ORDINANCE AMENDING ORDINANCE 25-11-053 BY AMENDING THE SALARY ORDINANCE SAFETY DEPARTMENT EMPLOYEES PROVIDING FOR THE SALARIES AND COMPENSATION OF EMPLOYEES IN THE POLICE DEPARTMENT AND FIRE DEPARTMENT, NON-BARGAINING UNIT MEMBERS OF THE CITY OF VAN WERT, ESTABLISHING JOB CLASSIFICATIONS, SALARY RANGES AND LIMITATIONS, AUTHORIZING SPECIFIC NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES, PROVIDING IMMUNIZATION AGAINST COMMUNICABLE DISEASES, AND OTHER BENEFITS AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY. Roberts seconded; all concurred. Ordinance passed.

Ringwald made a motion to prepare an ordinance amending ordinance 25-11-055 by amending the salary ordinance for service department employees as an emergency. Moore seconded; all concurred.

Ringwald made a motion to introduce Ordinance Number: 26-04-018. 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: 26-04-018; AN ORDINANCE AMENDING ORDINANCE 25-11-055 PROVIDING FOR THE SALARIES AND COMPENSATION OF EMPLOYEES IN THE SERVICE DEPARTMENT, AUDITOR'S OFFICE, INCOME TAX AND ADMINISTRATION OF THE CITY OF VAN WERT,

ESTABLISHING JOB CLASSIFICATIONS, SALARY RANGES AND LIMITATIONS, AUTHORIZING SPECIFIC NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES, ALLOWANCES, IMMUNIZATION AGAINST COMMUNICABLE DISEASES, AND OTHER BENEFITS AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY. Moore seconded; all concurred. Ordinance passed.

Block made a motion for the law director to prepare an ordinance to allow the safety service director to accept bids for street painting as an emergency. Roberts seconded; all concurred.

Block made a motion to introduce Ordinance Number: 26-04-019. Agler seconded; all concurred.

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

Block made a motion to pass, on it's first and final reading, Ordinance Number: 26-04-019; AN ORDINANCE TO AUTHORIZE THE SAFETY -SERVICE DIRECTOR TO ADVERTISE FOR BIDS AND AWARD CONTRACTS TO THE LOWEST AND BEST BIDDER FOR THE 2026 STREET PAINTING AS AN EMERGENCY. Agler seconded; all concurred. Ordinance passed.

Block made a motion for the law director to prepare an ordinance authorizing participation in the ODOT road salt contracts awarded in 2026 as an emergency. Agler seconded; all concurred.

Block made a motion to introduce Ordinance Number: 26-04-021. Agler seconded; all concurred.

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

Block made a motion to pass, on it's first and final reading, Ordinance Number: 26-04-021; AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING PARTICIPATION IN THE OHIO DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (ODOT) ROAD SALT CONTRACTS AWARDED IN 2026, AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY. Agler seconded; all concurred. Ordinance passed.

Agler made a motion for the law director to prepare an ordinance authorizing the safety service director to advertise and sell an unneeded vehicle by internet auction as an emergency. Moore seconded; all concurred.

Agler made a motion to introduce Ordinance Number: 26-04-020. Moore seconded; all concurred.

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

Agler made a motion to pass, on it's first and final reading, Ordinance Number: 26-04-020; AN ORDINANCE TO AUTHORIZE THE SAFETY -SERVICE DIRECTOR TO ADVERTISE AND TO SELL THE CITY'S UNUSED, UNNEEDED, OBSOLETE, OR UNFIT VEHICLES BY INTERNET AUCTION, AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY. Moore seconded; all concurred. Ordinance passed.

Ringwald made a motion to have the law director prepare an ordinance to make supplemental appropriations to fund 101 and declare the same as an emergency. Roberts seconded; all concurred.

Ringwald made a motion to introduce Ordinance Number: 26-04-022. Roberts seconded; all concurred.

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

Ringwald made a motion to pass, on it's first and final reading, Ordinance Number: 26-04-022; AN ORDINANCE TO MAKE SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS TO FUND 101, AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY. Roberts seconded; all concurred. Ordinance passed.

Ringwald made a motion to have the law director to prepare, as an emergency, an ordinance to authorize the mayor and safety service director to contract with the Ohio Patrolman's Benevolent Association relevant to wages, hours, terms and other conditions of employment. Agler seconded; all concurred.

Ringwald made a motion to introduce Ordinance Number: 26-04-023. Agler seconded; all concurred.

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

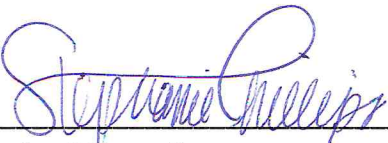
Ringwald made a motion to pass, on it's first and final reading, Ordinance Number: 26-04-023; AN ORDINANCE TO AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR AND SAFETY-SERVICE DIRECTOR TO CONTRACT WITH THE OHIO PATROLMAN'S BENEVOLENT ASSOCIATION (OPBA) RELATIVE TO WAGES, HOURS, TERMS AND OTHER CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT, AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY. Agler seconded; all concurred. Ordinance passed.

Block made a motion to have the law director prepare an ordinance relative to the speed limit changes discussed on Van Wert Decatur Road. Roberts seconded; all concurred.

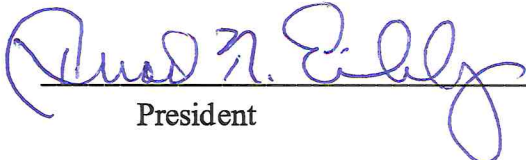
Block made a motion to move into an executive session for the purpose of pending litigations at 7:42 p.m. with no action to be taken after the session. Johnson seconded; all concurred.

Council came out of executive session at 8:08 p.m.

Agler made a motion to adjourn at 8:09 p.m. Hurless seconded; all concurred.



Clerk of Council



President

Stephanie R. Phillips

Thad R. Eikenbary

April 27, 2026

DATE