

# MINUTES OF THE VAN WERT CITY COUNCIL

*April 27, 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, council of the whole minutes of April 13, 2026 and regular meeting minutes from the April 13<sup>th</sup> meeting. Block seconded; all concurred.

## **Scheduled Public Speakers:**

None.

## **Administrative Reports:**

**Mayor:** Markward provided council with a potentially out of date city ordinance on door-to-door salesperson, peddlers and solicitors. Markward is recommending council review since it was last updated in 1992. A summary of updates to consider include: a fee for a license shall be \$50 per year, income tax payment in the amount of \$100, times allowable are 9am-6pm and fines for violation not to exceed \$200. Council cannot totally ban door to door sales.

Hurless wants clarification on if this is per person or per business. The Ordinance is not clear; therefore, Markward stated this could be an area of clarification as well.

**Safety Service Director:** Fleming reports reservoirs are over 90% full.

May 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> the city is working with ODOT to improve asphalt conditions on the bridge on Franklin Street. There will be limited interruptions these days.

**City Auditor:** Blackmore reported a Then & Now containing two invoices. The first, to Henschen and Associates Inc for a Customer Service Agreement in the amount of \$3,000. A second, to Thomas Reuters for a Case Center Subscription in the amount of \$9,876.05.

On March 11, 2026, the Office of the City Auditor received from the Clerk of the Van Wert County Board of Commissioners the official transcript of proceedings relating to the annexation petition filed by The Marsh Foundation and Van Wert East Owner LLC for certain territory proposed to be annexed to the City of Van Wert.

Pursuant to Ohio Revised Code Chapter 709, when the legislative authority of a municipality receives an annexation transcript from the county commissioners, the city is

required to wait sixty (60) days before the annexation may be presented to City Council for consideration.

The 60-day holding period expires on May 10, 2026.

**Law Director:** Hatcher reported movement on junk and rubbish violations. A couple in process directly with owners and a few pending litigations.

Block requested an update on 113 W Main. Hatcher stated the owner is in process of doing repairs and presented a timeline. Outer windows have been replaced and the owner is currently working on electrical. Hatcher stated he will follow up since it's been more than 30 days since last contact.

**Comments, Communications, and Petitions:**

Faith Wallace, 1014 E Crawford St., voices a complaint of a neighbor's junk/rubbish. She states no matter how many reports she's made, nothing changes.

Agler stated that the council is actively working on a solution.

**Committee Reports:**

**Finance:** Ringwald made a motion to approve the "Then & Now" as presented by the city auditor. Hurless seconded; all concurred.

**Economic Development:** Johnson read a letter on behalf of city council:

"I want to thank the Van Wert Economic Development Corporation for organizing the April 20<sup>th</sup> tour of the New Albany business park and data center campus and Thor Equities for sponsoring the visit. Their work in coordinating logistics, assembling a diverse group of local stakeholders, and ensuring an informative and transparent experience is deeply valued. Their efforts provided our community leaders and residents with a valuable first-hand look at how these facilities operate. We appreciate their commitment to transparency and collaboration as Van Wert evaluates future economic development opportunities."

Block spoke positively about the trip and that it was beneficial. He added that at least three people who voiced opposition to the Data Center. Block offers to answer any questions about the trip.

**Streets and Alleys:** Block reported a speed limit sign that needs erected in Dickinson Farms Subdivision. Fleming stated signs will be erected around the city soon.

Block corrected a previous statement from a prior meeting implying there were meeting minutes missing from a previous Planning Commission meeting. Those have been provided to Block.

Block is requesting meeting minutes from the Planning Commission meeting in 2025 that reference the same property discussed in a Planning Commission earlier this evening.

A member of the public requested a moratorium on data centers; Block does not feel the need to move this request forward at this point in time.

**Properties and Equipment:** No report.

**Parks and Recreation:** No report.

**Health, Service, and Safety:** No report.

**Judiciary and Annexation:** Hurless made a motion to have the law director prepare an ordinance to accept the expedited Type 2 annexation of approximately 901.698 acres into the City of Van Wert, as an emergency. The annexation petition is currently with the city auditor during the statutory waiting period. Once this period ends, at the May 11 city council meeting, council may official consider the annexation ordinance along with the zoning changes at that time.

Roberts abstains from any deliberation that has to do with the land the Marsh Foundations owns or owned; he states this is due to being an employee of the Marsh Foundation.

Agler seconded; Hurless, Agler, Ringwald, Johnson, Block, and Moore voted yes. Roberts abstained.

Hurless made a motion to have the law director prepare an ordinance to amend the city code of ordinances to add the term “data center” to the zoning codes, to modify the definition of a public service facility in the zoning code, and to include data center as a permitted use in the I-2 general industrial district, as an emergency. Agler seconded. Hurless, Agler, Ringwald, Johnson, and Moore voted yes. Block voted no. Roberts abstained.

Hurless made a motion to have the law director prepare an ordinance approving the conditional zoning for that same property, designating it I-2 general industrial district with the appropriate buffering requirements, as an emergency. Agler seconded; Hurless, Agler, Ringwald, Johnson, Block, and Moore voted yes. Roberts abstained.

Hurless requested all above items to be listed on the next regular city council agenda.

**Questions and Comments from Council and Public:**

Kelly Ripley, 8847 Germann Road, asks for clarification on if the items Hurless requested were valid during a regular city council meeting since it was not noted in the paper or on the website.

Hatcher stated that this is ordinary city council business to have a request for an ordinance prepared.

Ripley struggled to understand the schedule of regular city council meetings since it is not displayed where she was looking on the city website. Fleming clarified that council meetings are in Council Chambers every second and fourth Monday of the month for regular business except for a holiday week.

Faith Wallace, wants the term “emergency” explained to the public. Hurless explains that the term emergency waives a 30 day waiting period before the ordinance may go into effect. Hatcher further explains if an ordinance is passed as an emergency, that means it is signed into law immediately upon passage. Wallace wants to know why the ordinances Hurless requested need to be emergencies.

Lisa Luginbill, Van Wert, reminds members of the public that the public does not vote on every business entering town and this is no different.

Claire Smith, Scott, OH also asks why the ordinances Hurless requested needed to be emergencies.

Carol Craig, 14087 State Route 116, also voices concern on the emergency status. Hurless explains via a business perspective; if a business wants to locate somewhere, they may want items to move quickly from their standpoint because they may be working with their own deadlines. If deadlines are not met, there is potential for the loss of money, contracts opportunities, etc. Hurless ensures the public that he has done exhaustive research on data centers and AI; he feels prepared to make informed decisions. He continues to share experience from the New Albany trip where the representatives were up front about pros and cons. One con that seems to be of topic, is noise. The data center representatives provided information on 5 noise complaints since 2015. Of the five, four of them were resolved within days.

Ripley voices a complaint about Van Wert newspapers advertisements advertising the completion of this project which she believes is misinformation be presented to the public.

Moore responds by stating information is everywhere, but it is up to an individual to find the information. She reiterates the meeting times of city council and share that generally the public does not show up.

Hurless reiterates that we cannot control the newspaper.

Tom Morman, Wren, OH, wants clarification on why a data center is considered a business because there is no product. Hurless states it is a business in which collects and/or sells information.

Mark Davis, 402 S. Tyler St., who is a regular attendee of city council, states there are rarely others in attendance, but encourages others to come or watch via live feed on the website. Davis also speaks in favor of council stating they do their due diligence. He also shares helpful navigation on the website.

Andrew Davis, 1061 Linden Dr., states the current code of ordinance shows data center ordinance allowable in I-2. Additionally, part of the project includes a new exit on Mendon Road at the time of construction. Fleming answered there will be a temporarily ramp for construction purposes only. Davis asks if councils intention is to suspend rules on the ordinance at hand. Hurless is stating that he is not predicting what he will do on the eleventh due to the public hearing on the fourth. He also states he wants to review a prepared ordinance before deciding. Lastly, Davis asks Fleming, in a scenario where a data center *would* ask for the city of Van Wert for water to fill their system, if it would even be possible with our current system. Fleming states, no, even if the question presented itself, the city would be incapable of fulfilling the requires. Therefore, the misinformation that the city will be providing the data center with water is not even possible. Fleming adds, he is tasked with making sure the city is never overcommitted. Fleming also clarifies that any time the facility must clean or dispose water, it goes directly to the wastewater treatment plant to be dealt with. It will not be put in the ground, aquifers or town creek.

John Winters, 909 Woodland Ave., asks if the wastewater treatment plant can handle a request like mentioned above from the data center. Fleming states the treatment plant is capable of processing this request when that time arises.

Mark Hartman, Former Economic Development Director, encourages the public to retrieve a copy of the questions the VWAED office has put together and that it is very informative.

Wallace asks who provided the information/answers to the questions. Hurless shared that answers came from Thor, AEP, the Safety Service Director, or any other parties directly involved with their part of the project.

Smith wants to know how many jobs this will create. The end user will create at least 250 jobs. The construction of the project will take several thousand. It will take 5-6 years to complete.

#### **Unfinished Business:**

Hurless presented some Junk/Rubbish wording suggestions to council to consider amending the current ordinances. No further discussion was made at the meeting. The defitions and terminology will be shared with the public once the council has further discussion.

#### **New Business:**

Eikenbary reiterates the public hearing time, date, location and expectations. May 4, 2026 at 6:30 pm. At the PAC lecture hall. There will be sign up sheets for people to speak although it is not required to sign up in order to speak although those who sign up will get priority. This is not intended to be a question and answer meeting, but to hear opinions of the public for 2 minutes. There will be a microphone and podium for the speaker. Markward clarified there would be no action taken at the May 4, 2026 meeting.

#### **Resolutions and Ordinances:**

Block made a motion to introduce Ordinance Number: 26-04-024. Agler seconded; all concurred.

First Reading Advisory for Ordinance Number: 26-04-024. All concurred.

Block made a motion to introduce Ordinance Number: 26-04-025. Roberts seconded; all concurred.

First Reading Advisory for Ordinance Number: 26-04-025. All concurred.

Ringwald made a motion to have the law director to prepare, as an emergency, an ordinance to prepare a CRA agreement between the city and True North Partners. Agler seconded; Ringwald, Agler, Johnson, Roberts, Moore and Hurless voted yes. Block voted no.

Ringwald made a motion to introduce Ordinance Number: 26-04-026. Agler seconded; Ringwald, Agler, Johnson, Roberts, Moore and Hurless voted yes. Block voted no.

Ringwald made a motion to suspend statutory rules. Agler seconded; Ringwald, Agler, Johnson, Roberts, and Moore voted yes. Block and Hurless voted no.

First Reading Advisory for Ordinance Number: 26-04-026. All concurred.

Ringwald made a motion to have the law director to prepare, as an emergency, an ordinance to prepare a CRA agreement between the city and Cool Machines Holdings. Agler seconded; Ringwald, Agler, Johnson, Roberts, Moore and Hurless voted yes. Block voted no.

Ringwald made a motion to introduce Ordinance Number: 26-04-027. Agler seconded; Ringwald, Agler, Johnson, Roberts, Moore and Hurless voted yes. Block voted no.

Ringwald made a motion to suspend statutory rules. Agler seconded; Ringwald, Agler, Johnson, Roberts, Moore and Hurless voted yes. Block voted no.

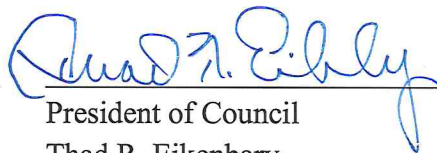
Ringwald made a motion to pass, on it's first and final reading, Ordinance Number: 26-04-027; AN ORDINANCE APPROVING THE COMMUNITY REINVESTMENT AREA AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE CITY OF VAN WERT AND COOL MACHINES HOLDINGS, INC AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY. Ringwald, Agler, Johnson, Roberts, Moore and Hurless voted yes. Block voted no. Ordinance passed.

Hatcher reminds the public that the second regular city council meeting in May will be scheduled on Wednesday, May 27<sup>th</sup> due to Memorial Day on Monday, May 25<sup>th</sup>.

Agler made a motion to adjourn at 7:47 pm. Ringwald seconded; all concurred.



Clerk of Council  
Stephanie R. Phillips



President of Council  
Thad R. Eikenbary

Approved on: May 11, 2026

