

# MINUTES OF THE VAN WERT CITY COUNCIL

*May 11, 2026*

Council President Pro Tempore Eric Hurless announced due to a prior excused absence of Mayor Ken Markward, Council President Thad Eikenbary would be “Acting Mayor” for tonight’s meeting. Eikenbary cannot act as Mayor and Council President together; therefore, Chairman of the Judiciary & Annexation Committee, Eric Hurless, serves as Council President Pro Tempore. After this announcement, Hurless called the meeting to order at 6:34 p.m.

President Pro Tempore Hurless gave the invocation.

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

Hatcher requested a motion be made to amend the agenda to reflect a change in the title of prepared Ordinance 26-05-028 to read “...Type 1...” instead of “...Type 2...” for a typographical error in the agenda only, the Ordinance title is true and accurate. Block made that motion. Agler seconded; all concurred.

Agler made a motion to approve tonight’s consent agenda as amended. Ringwald seconded; all concurred.

Agler made a motion to approve minutes as presented from City Council Meeting of April 27, 2026 and Public Hearing Minutes of May 4, 2026. Block seconded; all concurred.

## **Scheduled Public Speakers:**

None.

## **Administrative Reports:**

**Mayor:** Acting Mayor Thad Eikenbary had no report.

**Safety Service Director:** Fleming stated a CSO project bid came in at \$2.1 Million (estimate was \$1.85 Million). This was the only bid for the project, the city is obligated to move forward under Ohio EPA guidelines therefore the bid will be awarded to move the project forward and money will need appropriated to cover the difference from the sewer fund.

The gas restoration project is almost complete after blacktop is finished.

A 25-mph sign within the Dickinson Landing subdivision was erected today.

**City Auditor:** Blackmore reiterated the request that a supplemental appropriation be prepared to allow \$700,000.00 be moved from the sewer fund in order to cover the full bid amount for the upcoming CSO project.

Blackmore also read the following:

“Mr. President, Members of Council:

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 expired on May 10, 2026.

Ohio law further provides that after that waiting period expires, the City Auditor shall present the annexation transcript to the legislative authority of the municipality at its next regular meeting.

Accordingly, at this time, and in compliance with Ohio law, I am formally presenting the annexation transcript for the Marsh Foundation and Van Wert East Owner LLC annexation to the Van Wert City Council at this regular meeting of May 11, 2026.

Mr. President, I now respectfully submit the annexation transcript to Council for its consideration and for any action that Council determines appropriate under Ohio law and that the Council minutes so reflect this presentation.

Thank you.”

Blackmore then handed the transcript to President Pro Tempore Eric Hurless.

**Law Director:** No report.

**Comments, Communications, and Petitions:**

None.

**Committee Reports:**

**Finance:** Ringwald made a motion to have the law director prepare an ordinance, as an emergency, to make a supplemental appropriation from the sewer fund for the CSO Project bid in the amount of \$700,000. Agler seconded; all concurred.

Ringwald made a motion to introduce Ordinance 26-05-031. Agler seconded; all concurred.

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

Ringwald made a motion to pass, on it's first and final reading, Ordinance Number: 26-05-031; AN ORDINANCE TO MAKE SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS TO FUND 602, AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY. Agler seconded; all concurred. Ordinance passed.

**Economic Development:** No report.

**Streets and Alleys:** Block inquired on audible and tactile push buttons on the Main/Washington crosswalk. A further discussion will ensue with Fleming on this topic.

**Properties and Equipment:** No report.

**Parks and Recreation:** No report.

**Health, Service, and Safety:** Moore is working with Hatcher on an unmentioned city ordinance relating to a homeowner.

**Judiciary and Annexation:** Hurless noted for the record, City Auditor Erika Blackmore formally presented the petition and related materials to council in relation to the annexation and related zoning ordinances of approximately 902 acres. Hurless also noted for the record, a public hearing occurred on May 4, 2026 concerning amendments to the city code regarding adding a definition for data center, adding a definition for public service facility, and amending section 150.15 to include data centers as a permitted use in the I-2 zoning district.

Before Hurless opened the floor to recognize comments from the public regarding the proposed annexation, a presentation was given by Charles Koch, landowner's agent. Hurless opened for public comment and noted this is the time for council to receive public comments on this annexation and may include any additional comments on the proposed amendments to the city code. Hurless reviewed public comment rules. Hurless also inserted written comments from the public that are included with the minutes. See complete list of speakers attached to these minutes.

During Public Comment Councilman Roberts asked to be excused from the meeting due to needing to abstain from voting or commenting on the annexation matter; Councilman Roberts is an employee of the Marsh Foundation. Hurless excused Roberts. Block assured the public of his confidence in the process.

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

Joe Jared, 233 Burt St., made a public comment about reverse aging.

Brock Roehm, Willshire, OH, inquired on a resolution to the junk and rubbish ordinance. Hurless stated that is on unfinished business and the topic will be addressed in the upcoming meetings.

Dave Roehm, Willshire, OH, states additional concerns on data center environmental usages.

**Unfinished Business:**

Fleming stated an agreement has been made with AEP on a 10 year contract. This info will be presented to council prior to the next meeting in an effort to work toward a signed Lease Agreement for the city.

Agler wants to address door hangers on the junk & rubbish ordinance. If homes are unoccupied, door hangers are ineffective. This will be part of a later discussion on potential amendments to the junk & rubbish ordinance.

**New Business:**

None.

**Resolutions and Ordinances:**

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

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

Hurless made a motion to suspend statutory rules for Ordinance Number: 26-04-026. Agler seconded; all concurred.

Hurless made a motion to pass, on it's second and final reading, Ordinance Number: 26-04-026; AN ORDINANCE APPROVING THE COMMUNITY REINVESTMENT AREA AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE CITY OF VAN WERT AND TRUE NORTH PARTNERS HOLDINGS, LLC AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY. Ringwald seconded; all concurred. Ordinance passed.

Hurless made a motion to introduce Ordinance Number: 26-05-028. Agler seconded; all concurred.

After Hurless made comment on the lengthy process leading up to preparing and passing these ordinances, which included many weeks of research, public hearings and zoning meetings, he made a motion to suspend statutory rules. Agler seconded; all concurred.

Hurless made a motion to pass, on it's first and final reading, Ordinance Number: 26-05-028; AN ORDINANCE TO ACCEPT THE EXPEDITED TYPE 1 ANNEXATION OF 901.698+/- ACRES FROM HOAGLIN TOWNSHIP, PLEASANT TOWNSHIP, AND RIDGE TOWNSHIP TO THE CITY OF VAN WERT, OHIO AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY. Agler seconded; all concurred. Ordinance passed.

This EXPEDITED TYPE 1 ANNEXATION is consistent with the change in the Agenda at the start of the meeting and is consistent with the heading of Ordinance 26-05-028 itself.

Hurless made a motion to introduce Ordinance Number: 26-05-029. Agler seconded; all concurred.

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

Hurless made a motion to pass, on it's first and final reading, Ordinance Number: 26-05-029; AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND VAN WERT CODE OF ORDINANCES SECTION 150.03 TO ADD THE TERM "DATA CENTER" AS A DEFINED TERM AND TO MODIFY THE DEFINITION OF THE TERM "PUBLIC SERVICE FACILITY", TO AMEND VAN WERT CODE OF ORDINANCES SECTION 150.15(h)(1) BY ADDING DATA CENTERS AS A PERMITTED USE IN THE I-2 GENERAL INDUSTRIAL ZONING CLASSIFICATION, AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY. Moore seconded; all concurred. Ordinance passed.

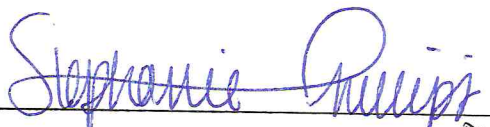
Hurless made a motion to introduce Ordinance Number: 26-05-030. Agler seconded; all concurred.


Hurless made a motion to suspend statutory rules. Johnson seconded; all concurred.

Hurless made a motion to pass, on it's first and final reading, Ordinance Number: 26-05-030; AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE CITY OF VAN WERT ZONING MAP BY APPROVING A CONDITIONAL ZONING PETITION FILED PURSUANT TO VAN WERT CODE OF ORDINANCES SECTION 150.12 (C) TO DESIGNATE CERTAIN REAL PROPERTY CONSISTING OF 901.698+/- ACRES WITH THE I-2, GENERAL INDUSTRIAL ZONING CLASSIFICATION AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY. Agler seconded; all concurred. Ordinance passed.

Agler made a motion to adjourn at 8:05 pm. Block seconded; all concurred.

Approved on 5/27/2026

  
Clerk of Council, Stephanie E. Phillips

  
President of Council, Thad R. Eikenbary

Members of the Public who spoke in regards to annexation:

Brock Roehm, 3046 Willshire Eastern Rd., Willshire, Ohio

Corann Linser, 423 N Cherry St.

Joe Jared, 233 Burt St.

Rylee Oliver, 837 Elson Ave.

Faith Wallace, 1014 E Crawford St.

Dave Roehm, 3145 St. Rte. 81, Willshire, Ohio

Theresa Singer, 8680 Boroff Rd.

Kelly Ripley, 8847 Germann Rd.

Mark Davis, 402 S Tyler St.

Randy Agler, 1043 Mendon Rd.

John Tomlinson, 315 Gordon Ave.

Darin Figel, 325 N Franklin St.

Randy Gardner, 1324 Larry St.

Van Ripley, 8847 Germann Rd.

Faye Craig, 116 (? inaudible)

Brian Zizelman, 5145 St. Rte. 117, Rockford, Ohio

Lisa McDougal, Van Wert

Arlene Hurless, 5 Willow Ln.