

MINUTES OF THE VAN WERT CITY COUNCIL

May 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 and regular meeting minutes from the May 11th meeting. Moore seconded; all concurred.

Scheduled Public Speakers:

Ken Myers, Commander of the local Navy Club gave council an update on Navy Club plans and the Fourth of July Parade they are hosting this year for America's 250th Birthday. Myers also revealed the corner of Main and Washington will become "hero's corner" with scarlet and gray signs.

On July 3rd and 4th, a large celebration will occur at Fountain Park, there will be musical guests, food trucks, vendors, a cruise in, inflatables for children and lastly, a parade with a military aviation "flyover".

Administrative Reports:

Mayor: Markward reported on Chapter 115, permits for door-to-door sales. Markward is proposing council view specific dollar amounts referred in the ordinance be adjusted in three spots. The current ordinance also refers to the license expiring in section 2, no matter when it is issued, expires on December 31st of the same year. Council may consider making this one year from the date of sale. Hurless is in agreement with the one year expiration from date of sale.

Hurless is proposing the license application to go from \$50 to \$100 and be completed with a photo to identify the person. Hurless is also proposing the city present the applicant with a badge including permit/license number that door-to-door salesman are required to wear. For the tax exemption section, he is proposing solicitors that reside inside of the city limits be exempt since they pay taxes already. The ordinance also needs updated that applicants background checks would be from Ohio BCI. Hurless also would like the ordinance to mention students/individuals associated with school sponsored sales would be exempt from needing a permit. Hurless more clearly defined language on when it's appropriate to file a complaint. Lastly, the penalty/fine from the city for violation would go from \$200 to \$500.

Safety Service Director: Fleming reports a pre-construction meeting for Fox Road walking path is coming up in Lima where they will learn more about timeline and other details. Fleming has stated the priority area will be the fairgrounds so it is mostly completed before the fair.

Next, AEP has been planning a power line upgrade for about 3 years ago between the Haviland facility and the substation behind the street department in the city. The path of repair includes Dutch John Road where a 135-kilovolt line will be ran to help Industrial Park along with the city's electrical backbone. Fleming reiterated this project was not related to the Data Center. The city is currently in the secure right-of-way stage that requires negotiations. Go Green, an affiliate of Miller Construction is located where the transfer station used to be located, accepts all of the city's brush from pickups; the city leases this land to Go Green. This company has a large dirt pile on the north side of their property and has negotiated removing this dirt to put the AEP poles in. They will receive 50% of the agreed negotiation fee now and 50% upon AEP's satisfaction of completion. Because the city leases the land to Go Green, the money AEP is giving Go Green has to pass through the city. This requires a supplemental appropriation to be prepared by council tonight so that \$474,500 deposited by AEP may be passed on to Go Green.

Johnson asked Fleming on the status of the gas restoration project, more specifically asking when the bags around storm drains will be removed because they are currently preventing water from going through. Fleming stated they cannot be removed until the project is complete.

City Auditor: Blackmore reiterated the dirt removal appropriation from Fleming and also requested an appropriation for the Parks Department for \$1,500 for bench repairs. There are 2 benches in Franklin Park owned by the Van Wert County Foundation that were destroyed. The Foundation will give the money to the city for the repairs of the benches, but the city must actually pay the bill due to the benches being on city property.

April finances were reported as steady and the city has been in a positive position since January.

Blackmore is working on the 2027 Tax Budget where she must project what the city will earn in taxes for 2027 and that projection must be approved by council before it is submitted to the county for a Certificate of Available Resources. The budget must be submitted by July 15, 2026.

Lastly, the auditor's office is currently going through their 2025 financial audit, so far with no negative feedback or verbal comments from auditors on site. They are also going through an IT audit that will be cause for conversation in the near future. Blackmore reiterated that if any of council receives correspondence from a state auditor that they *must* respond.

Law Director: Hatcher reported that blighted property on 227 N. Vine St. had a trial today and there was a finding in favor of the city that they were in violation of the city ordinance.

Hatcher also reported traffic violations for 2026 are low compared to recent past years while other categories for criminal activity has remained about the same.

Comments, Communications, and Petitions:

Joe Jared, 233 Burt St., requested lead inventory on the city's infrastructure and inquired on a half a million dollar grant he believed Delphos and Van Wert received to deal with lead in infrastructure. Fleming confirmed no grant was received and that the city has only sent out letters

to people who had galvanized service lines which they are required to do. As the city continues to work on replacing the galvanized lines, they replace them and ask the homeowner to replace them internally as well. Several steps are taken to notify them and how they should change them. If the homeowner decides to forgo the suggested changes, they must then sign to make sure they understand what the city was trying to do and that they are willingly not changing them. He also gave a property update on his downtown main street property.

John Winters, 909 Woodland Ave., notified council of a belligerent and loud Spectrum representative trying to sell services and retrieve information on their current servicer.

Faith Wallace, 1014 E Crawford St., is inquiring on when side streets will be cleaned. Fleming answered that the street sweeper is out and operating every day. She also inquired on curb repair in front of her property where it was destroyed during the gas restoration project and now there are weeds growing through the curb; Fleming stated he would take a look at her curb. Lastly, she inquired on city action toward a blighted property in her area which council plans to discuss over the next couple of meetings.

Committee Reports:

Finance: Ringwald made a motion to have the law director prepare the tax budget ordinance as an emergency. Agler seconded; all concurred.

Economic Development: No report.

Streets and Alleys: Block plans to meet with Hatcher on noise ordinance and sidewalk ordinance. Additionally, Block plans to propose ideas for revising/adjusting the public service facility definition.

Properties and Equipment: No report.

Parks and Recreation: No report.

Health, Service, and Safety: Moore asked if the Woodland/John Brown Road corner grass lot near Smiley Park could be turned into temporary parking to allow ballfield guests to park on. This land is owned by the city as of last year. Fleming stated he will assess the area.

Judiciary and Annexation: Hurless passed around ordinance 98.11, a tree commission ordinance that was created in 1997 to create a group of members to study the needs of the city relative to municipal tree care and tree planting program. Hurless made a motion to prepare an ordinance to repeal ordinance 98.11 since it is no longer utilized and the safety service director is monitoring this area. Agler seconded. Hurless, Agler, Ringwald, Johnson, Roberts, and Moore voted yes. Block voted no.

Questions and Comments from Council and Public:

NONE

Unfinished Business:

Fleming supplied the updated AEP Lease Agreement to council which took the lease from 50 years down to 10 years.

Hurless made a motion to untable Ordinance 26-02-010. Agler seconded; all concurred.

Hurless made a motion to amend the term of the lease agreement in Ordinance 26-02-010 from 50 years to 10 years. Agler seconded; all concurred.

Hurless provided several suggestions to council on changes to amend the junk and rubbish ordinances including time period for items left out doors, terms better defined, defined and added examples of items considered junk, time limits for construction materials and visibility. He asked that council review suggested changes and come back ready to discuss at the next meeting.

New Business:

Fleming stated issues have been arising with downtown apartment dwellers taking advantage of the downtown parking spaces versus utilizing the dedicated spaces they were provided with their lease. Emails went out to all the tenants reminding them of the rule from the police chief. The city is working on a process to become stricter on this issue so that downtown businesses are not sacrificing parking spaces to apartment dwellers.

Carol Craig, St Rte 116, asked where tenants were supposed to park. Central, Jefferson and Market and many other spaces all provide parking for tenants and they were notified of the parking situation at the time of their lease agreement.

Resolutions and Ordinances:

Third and Final Reading for Ordinance Number: 26-04-024; AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE SPEED LIMIT TO 35 MILES PER HOUR ON ERVIN ROAD/VAN WERT DECATUR ROAD FROM SOUTH SHANNON STREET TO ELKS DRIVE. All concurred. Ordinance passed.

Third and Final Reading for Ordinance Number: 26-04-025; AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE SPEED LIMIT TO 50 MILES PER HOUR ON ERVIN ROAD/VAN WERT DECATUR ROAD FROM ELKS DRIVE TO U.S. 224. All concurred. Ordinance passed.

Second Advisory Reading for Ordinance Number: 26-02-010, as amended. All concurred.


Ringwald made a motion to have the law director prepare an ordinance to make supplemental appropriations to fund 101 in the amount of \$476,000.00 as an emergency. Agler seconded; all concurred.

Ringwald made a motion to introduce Ordinance Number: 26-05-032. 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: 26-05-032; AN ORDINANCE TO MAKE SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS TO FUND 101, AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY. Agler seconded; all concurred.

Agler made a motion to adjourn at 7:44 pm. Block seconded; all concurred.

	
_____ Clerk of Council Stephanie R. Phillips	_____ President of Council Thad R. Eikenbary

Approved on: June 8, 2026

