

MINUTES OF THE VAN WERT CITY COUNCIL

June 22, 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.

Block made a motion to approve tonight's consent agenda, regular meeting minutes from the June 8th meeting and Council of the Whole Minutes from the June 8th meeting. Roberts seconded; all concurred.

Scheduled Public Speakers:

NONE

Administrative Reports:

Mayor: Markward reported the sidewalk along Fox Rd. is progressing well.

There were no bidders for the Bonnewitz/Washington St. Intersection project, they will rebid late this week for a bidder. Markward does not know next steps if there is no bidder on this project.

A notice will be sent out on THM's on the next water bill around the first of the month. This was due to adding water to the reservoirs along with a lot of rainwater. Clear wells and aeration from the water towers is an ongoing project to help with this issue.

On the 100 block of North Washington Street there has been a request for a handicap spot in this area due to downtown business development. The mayor is suggesting a council member request an ordinance be prepared to allow a handicap parking space be established around the 119 N. Washington area.

Block asked for an update on the THM project mentioned; there is no update at this time.

Safety Service Director: Not present.

City Auditor: Blackmore reported May financials.

Blackmore is working on expected year end appropriations for the tax budget for county taxes for 2027. Blackmore reminds council of the Public Hearing related to the 2027 tax budget that will occur on July 13 @6:15 p.m. in Council Chambers.

There is a tech audit the city is undergoing. There are new State of Ohio requirements the city will need to implement going forward. The city is contracted with Sonnit Tech to undergo these changes.

Block is requesting the “most important” points so far in the tech audit. Blackmore answered the main finding is moving all city employees to Microsoft 365 and all employees are required to partake in cybersecurity training. No one employed with the city is qualified for this; therefore, the city has hired Sonnit.

Law Director: Hatcher researched local ordinances for legislation on smoking in public parks to which he found none. Block may make proposed changes to add more specific legislation to prohibit all smoking in public parks. Moore recalls a discussion in a prior year about smoking and vaping. Block located the ordinance during the meeting to which it was discovered the ordinance covered marijuana only.

Comments, Communications, and Petitions:

Joe Jared, 233 Burt St., made a point that a handicap woman, for example should not have to leave an area to smoke regarding changes to prohibiting smoking in parks.

Committee Reports:

Finance: No report.

Economic Development: No report.

Streets and Alleys: Block made a motion to prepare an ordinance to prohibit smoking in public parks. Agler seconded; Block, Agler, Ringwald, Johnson, Roberts and Moore voted yes. Hurless voted no.

Block also shared suggestions and proposals to an updated noise ordinance for the city. This potential ordinance includes stereos from a house, live music, vehicle/animals, yelling, industrial/data center, etc. Ringwald is suggesting that specific business types not be named in the ordinance and instead the ordinance refer to zoning areas. Hurless is suggesting specific decibel levels be listed. Hurless also wants to have answers on who and how vibrations will be measured in the vibration section of the ordinance. Block states an officer would be able to have a device to measure this. Additionally, Block is suggesting enforcing a more subjective noise ordinance instead of listing specific decibel levels. Block will make a few changes based on discussion and bring this back to council at future meetings.

Block made a motion to have the law director prepare an ordinance to add a handicap parking space to the 119 N. Washington Street area. Agler seconded; all concurred.

Properties and Equipment: Agler opens discussion on a potential solar lease on city property. Hatcher summarizes points of the lease for the city to consider on city owned property on Fife Road. The city currently leases this ground to be farmed. The city would be under a 30-year lease unless negotiated; after the 30 years, the land would be returned in similar conditions (farm grounds). Ringwald is requesting the city be listed on the lessee’s insurance. Block is in favor of leasing the property.

Agler made a motion to have the law director prepare an ordinance to authorize the mayor to sign a lease with Butterfly Meadows for a solar lease project, as an emergency. Block seconded; all concurred.

Parks and Recreation: No report.

Health, Service, and Safety: Moore had a few constituents complain on properties out of compliance; those were reported to administration.

Judiciary and Annexation: Hurless reminded council there was a motion made two meetings ago to rescind the tree commission ordinance (Chapter 98.11); this is still underway and hope to be presented at the next meeting.

Hurless reminded council of suggested changes to peddler's permit he has been working on from the last meeting. No council comment was made against the proposed changes. The mayor confirmed the city has capabilities of producing license sized permits

Hurless made a motion to have the law director prepare amendments to the Chapter 115 peddler's permit including sections 115.02, 115.03, 115.04, 115.05, 115.06, 115.07, 115.08 and 115.99, including but not limited to fee changes, ID requirements and exemptions. Agler seconded; all concurred.

Hurless made a motion to have the law director prepare an ordinance to add a new section to Chapter 115 for an exemption section. Moore seconded; all concurred.

Hurless lastly summarizes final changes to the junk & rubbish ordinance changes that were already presented to council. The biggest change noted is the visibility standard expanding to neighboring/surrounding properties as well. He touches on specific examples to define junk, fence requirements, and exemptions. Agler is requesting when a tenant receives a citation that the property owner is also notified the same way starting from the first offense.

Questions and Comments from Council and Public:

Joe Jared, 233 Burt St., states concerns on the solar lease and requests the city take a soil microbiome sample prior to the lease term and take a similar one once the lease is terminated to make sure the solar company followed through with their part of the contract to return the land to it's similar state. Jared disagreed with Agler's suggestion to notify the landlord immediately for a junk/rubbish citation. Lastly, Jared requests that nuclear energy creation should be prohibited for health and noise concerns.

Mark Davis, 402 S. Tyler St., has disagreements to subjective view of the noise ordinance. Davis also asked several questions on the solar lease proposed by the city.

Lisa Luginbill, 137 Kepler St., is requesting the noise ordinance to address specifics on items like yelling. Additionally she gave input that she would request the prohibition of smoking be limited to no smoking in pavilions but it be allowed in more open areas.

Unfinished Business:

Discussion ensued on wells within the city limits including but not limited to capped wells that are allowed or not allowed to be reused, geothermal wells, drinking water, and wells for sprinklers within the city limits. The law director is suggesting input from the Safety Service Director when he returns on this topic.

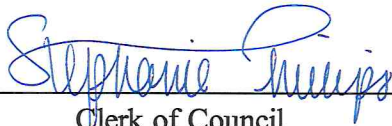
New Business:

A notice was received to President Eikenbary from ODOT who is asking for feedback on proposed roundabout at Van Wert Decatur Road and 224 and is scheduled for 2029. Please do this on the website.

Resolutions and Ordinances:

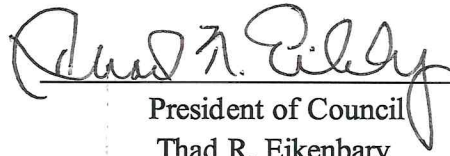
Second Reading Advisory for Ordinance Number: 26-06-033. All concurred.

Agler made a motion to adjourn at 8:25 pm. Ringwald seconded; all concurred.



Clerk of Council

Stephanie R. Phillips



President of Council

Thad R. Eikenbary

Approved on: July 13, 2026