

MINUTES OF THE VAN WERT CITY COUNCIL

July 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, regular meeting minutes from July 13, 2026 and public hearing minutes from the July 13, 2026 meeting. Block seconded; all concurred.

Scheduled Public Speakers:

Tara Heck, a resident of around 15 years shared opposition of data center and apprehension of living in the area due to fear of resources diminishing and complaints of non-transparency from the city. Moore requested sources for Heck's resource diminishing to which she responded "the internet". No further comment from council.

Bob Motycka and Rachel Hoverman were brought by councilman Block to speak in favor of keeping an active Tree Commission Committee and ordinance in the city. Motycka summarized his ties to Van Wert and shared his idea that has come to fruition on a "Tree Scholarship" tied to our community. Motycka then shared information on a tree's life cycle and caring for saplings and effects of mother nature. Motycka shares research within the city parks where he surveyed age/amount of trees within our parks. Hoverman also shared her tie to Van Wert including her position as the OSU Extension office primarily working with agricultur and natural resources within the county. Hoverman shares research gathered on trees in correlation with consumerism and is advocating that trees could be beneficial to downtown businesses. Hurless wants input from the speakers on why it needs to be a law versus just a club or non-profit since there are no "actionables" required from city administration. The main takeaways on keeping the ordinance from the speakers perspective are accountability and possibly even small funding in the future.

Kelly Ripley, 8847 German Rd., Convoy, OH is recommending the tree commission be in place to approve or deny places and types of trees. Block clarified that the tree commission would be in place as a resource and all decisions would need approved by administration. Ringwald requested a parallel club/commission for her to be able to compare. She also is in agreeance with Hurless about seeing it more as a club/group over a law. Markward is

Jody Huth, 668 N. Walnut St., is in favor of a tree commission and recommends taxpayer dollars could help fund it.

Andrew Fox, 14069 US 224, advocates for trees and provides evidence personally that trees block electromagnetic frequencies and would like to see fruit trees for free resources to the community possibly in the parks.

Administrative Reports:

Mayor: Markward reported the city will be redoing clean up vouchers similar to last year. There will be an announcement for this in the August water bill with one voucher per household. There is not a limited number of vouchers total. Residents will need to take their items to Young's Waste to be disposed of. There are a few exceptions that will be listed on the voucher.

Markward also presented a Revenue vs. Expense spreadsheet to help council understand revenue on a best-case scenario and a worst case scenario basis.

Safety Service Director: Fleming reported on the multi-use path for Fox Road. Numerous meetings were held with the fairgrounds to allow the path to run through the fair with right-of-ways due to the area outside of the fairground's fence having elevation and utility complications. Agreements were in place where if the fair is holding a ticketed event, they could lock the gates during the event, but they would remain open for public use of the path at any other point.

Fleming reported the city is ready to move forward with the THM Project at the water treatment plant.

City Auditor: Blackmore reported one Then & Now to Havel for an emergency HVAC repair in the amount of \$3019.32.

Blackmore reported on the initiative petition proposing opposition to the data center stating that according to ORC section 731.28 and 731.34 it was held in her office for 10-day statutory period and then it was provided to the Board of Elections for examination. The Board of Elections oversees validating the signatures of the petition and the proposed ordinance. Monday, July 27, 2026 Blackmore received a certification statement from the board of elections reporting 255 of 323 required signatures there for it was declined. Blackmore read an official "Statement of the City Auditor Regarding Certification of the Initiative Petition" that is attached to these minutes along with the Certification Statement that was received by the Board of Election and is attached exactly as it was received.

Law Director: No report.

Comments, Communications, and Petitions:

Dave Roehm, Willshire, reported a very bright light on the property of Living Truth Ministries across from the Fairgrounds. He is requesting Jay research this issue. Jay Fleming will follow up.

Committee Reports:

Finance: Ringwald made a motion to approve the Then and Now presented by the city auditor. Agler seconded; all concurred.

Ringwald made a motion to introduce Ordinance Number: 26-08-041. 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: 26-08-041; AN ORDINANCE TO AUTHORIZE THE SAFETY-SERVICE DIRECTOR TO ADVERTISE FOR BIDS, AWARD CONTRACTS, AND SIGN CONTRACTS ON BEHALF OF THE CITY OF VAN WERT FOR THE SPRAY AERATION (THM) PROJECT AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY. Agler seconded; all concurred. Ordinance passed.

Economic Development: Johnson reported successful groundbreakings for both the Hampton Inn Hotel and Landing at Dickinson Farms providing over 80 units of housing.

Streets and Alleys: Block presented a copy of the most recent changes in the proposed noise ordinance. Block met with Cheif Weigle and Jay Fleming to discuss some changes including measuring decibels, standardizing hours, explicitly allowing specific sanctioned events to be excluded from the ordinance along with certain contractors, grandfathering industrial districts/uses/sounds. Lastly, commercial garbage collection was removed from the required hours as to not inhibit their hours of operations. Ringwald made a few type-o corrections.

Block made a motion to prepare changes and updates to the city noise ordinance. Hurless seconded; all concurred.

Block lastly advocates for the tree commission and believes the city should be behind and supporting the operation. He proposes amending the ordinance and recommends the city providing seed money and also revising appointing members.

Johnson was approached by a resident who is concerned with noise and speed on West Main Street between Shannon Street and the railroad tracks.

Properties and Equipment: No report.

Parks and Recreation: No report.

Health, Service, and Safety: No report.

Judiciary and Annexation: Hurless first reports on his thoughts of the tree commission ordinance including not repealing due to outpour of support and updating the wording of the ordinance at a later date.

Hurless reports on the private well ban including some recommended exemptions from Johnson. Discussion ensued on conditional uses between the mayor and council members. Fleming suggests not having to submit to the Board of Zoning appeals since they are simply prohibited there should be no exceptions.

Hurless then touches on proposed changes to the peddler's permit including where to get BCI Background checks and fingerprinting, exempting political and religious persons, who to collect income taxes from (residents and/or non residents) and adding language for penalties.

Questions and Comments from Council and Public:

Dave Roehm, expresses concerns of filling the reservoir from town creek. Fleming assures Roehm that town creek will be able to sustain filling the reservoir. Fleming continues to offer time/appointments to go over factual data and truths of the city's water system.

Carol Craig, SR 116, is in agreement that ordinances should be discussed through readings in front of the public versus completely prepared and then ran as an emergency.

Andrew Fox, clarifies where he is located if he would be included in the well ban. He is not currently annexed into the city and administration was able to confirm that it is his choice as a property owner to be annexed into the city therefore, until he would be annexed, he would be allowed to drill a new well.

Kelly Ripley, voiced concerns on research on closed loop systems related to the Data Center. She also voiced a complaint on a paywall from the local News in order to view an article related to the city water. She voices concerns about contaminants being put into the environment/ground by Data Centers in other parts of the United States.

April Miller, Slane Road, is asking if the land in which the data center obtained from residents will be allowed to utilize the wells from those residences. Hurless stated that will be addressed within the well prohibition ordinance that is currently being discussed.

Unfinished Business:

No Updates.

New Business:

President Eikenbary reported a letter from the Planning Commission in which they met on July 9, 2026 and approved unanimously to allow Warren Straley to build a single family dwelling home in an R-2 district. Fleming is requesting a resolution from council to affirm these changes and allowing Straley to build Single Family Dwellings or Duplexes on his housing development land without needing each one individually approved as there are several.

Second, Eikenbary received an invitation to the upcoming public information meeting for the Butterfly Meadows Solar Project on August 12, 2026. The public information meeting will be from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at American Legion Post 178 on W. Main Street. A second public information meeting will be held later this summer and Eikenbary will be notified with a new letter.

Resolutions and Ordinances:

Hurless made a motion to table 26-06-034. Agler seconded; all concurred.

Hurless made a motion to table 26-07-037. Ringwald seconded; all concurred.

Second Reading Advisory for Ordinance Number: 26-06-036. All members voted no.

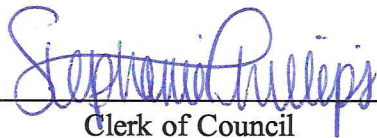
Second Reading Advisory for Ordinance Number: 26-07-038. All concurred.

Second Reading Advisory for Ordinance Number: 26-07-040. Block and Agler voted yes. Ringwald, Johnson, Roberts, Moore and Hurless voted no.

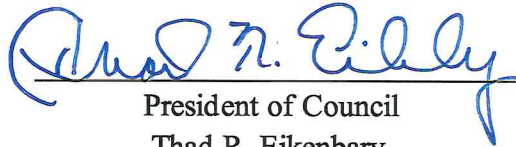
Hurless made a motion to introduce Ordinance Number: 26-07-039. Agler seconded; all concurred.

First Reading Advisory for Ordinance Number: 26-07-039.

Hurless made a motion to adjourn at 8:11 pm. Johnson seconded; all concurred.



Clerk of Council
Stephanie R. Phillips



President of Council
Thad R. Eikenbary

Approved on: August 10, 2026



CITY of VAN WERT

515 EAST MAIN STREET • VAN WERT, OHIO 45891

www.vanwert.org

"Vincit Amor Patriae"

The Love of Country Conquers

ERIKA BLACKMORE
City Auditor

Phone: 419-238-6976
Fax: 419-238-1999
E-mail: vwcityauditor@vanwert.org

Statement of the City Auditor Regarding Certification of the Initiative Petition

As the City Auditor, I am presenting the certification received from the Van Wert County Board of Elections regarding the initiative petition filed with my office.

Pursuant to **Ohio Revised Code Section 731.28**, an initiative petition proposing an ordinance must first be filed with the City Auditor. Upon receipt of the petition, I carried out the duties assigned to my office by the Ohio Revised Code. My responsibilities in this process are **administrative and procedural**, as prescribed by law. They do not include determining the merits of the proposed ordinance, interpreting its legality, or deciding whether it should be adopted.

In accordance with **Ohio Revised Code Sections 731.28 and 731.34**, the petition remained on file in my office for the required **ten (10) day** statutory period following its filing. During that time, the petition was **kept open for public inspection during normal business hours**, as required by law, and any member of the public had the opportunity to inspect it.

At the conclusion of the ten-day statutory period, I transmitted the original petition, together with a certified copy of the proposed ordinance, to the **Van Wert County Board of Elections** in accordance with **Ohio Revised Code Section 731.28** for examination and certification.

Pursuant to **Ohio Revised Code Sections 3501.11(K) and 3501.38**, the Board of Elections is responsible for examining the petition, reviewing the signatures, determining the number of valid signatures, and certifying whether the petition satisfies the statutory requirements for placement on the ballot.

Today, I am presenting the **Board of Elections' certification exactly as it was received**. This presentation should not be interpreted as an endorsement, recommendation, or opposition to either the petition or the proposed ordinance. My responsibility is to ensure that the procedures established by Ohio law have been followed and that the official certification of the Board of Elections is presented to Council as part of the public record.

The following Certification Statement was received in my office on Monday July 27, 2026.
(SEE ATTACHED EXHIBIT)

A copy of the Board of Elections' certification has been provided to each member of Council and will be entered into the official record of these proceedings.

Thank you.

CITY OF VAN WERT

OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK

1000 WEST 10TH AVENUE

ST. LOUIS, MO. 63101

TELEPHONE 434-1234

TO: THE CITY CLERK, CITY OF VAN WERT

FROM: [Name], [Address], [City, State, Zip]

SUBJECT: [Subject Line]

Dear Sir/Madam:

I am writing to you regarding [Subject Line].

On [Date], I received your letter regarding [Subject Line].

I am sorry that I cannot provide a more definitive answer at this time, but I will do my best to resolve this matter as quickly as possible.

Sincerely,
[Signature]

[Name]
[Title]

VAN WERT COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS
VAN WERT COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS
1362 EAST ERVIN ROAD
VAN WERT OHIO 45891

Petition: 260020
Type: Issue
Jurisdiction: City/VWC

Status: H - FAILED - Inadequate Verified
Description: INITIATIVE PETITION-VWCITY-REPEAL ORD#26-05-029

323 Signatures Required

255 Valid Signatures Confirmed

DATED: JULY 27, 2026

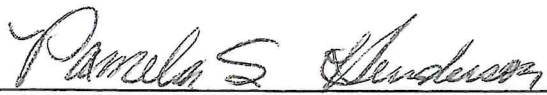
CERTIFICATION STATEMENT

TO: Van Wert City Auditor

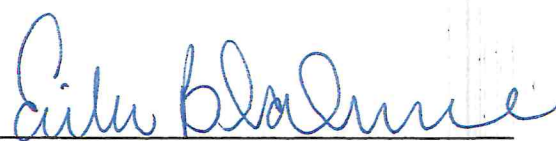
RE: INITIATIVE PETITION - CITY OF VAN WERT - REPEAL ORDINANCE #26-05-029

I CERTIFY THAT THE VALID SIGNATURES REQUIRED FOR THE ABOVE INITIATIVE PETITION IS **323**.
THIS IS TO VERIFY THAT THE NUMBER OF VALID SIGNATURES CONFIRMED FOR THE ABOVE
INITIATIVE PETITION IS **255** WHICH FAILS TO MEET THE NUMBER OF VALID SIGNATURES
REQUIRED FOR PASSAGE.

VAN WERT COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS



DIRECTOR

RECEIVED: 

Van Wert City Auditor

WEST COUNTY BOARD OF
SCHOOL DIRECTORS
WEST COUNTY BOARD OF
SCHOOL DIRECTORS

WEST COUNTY BOARD OF
SCHOOL DIRECTORS

WEST COUNTY BOARD OF
SCHOOL DIRECTORS

WEST COUNTY BOARD OF
SCHOOL DIRECTORS

WEST COUNTY BOARD OF
SCHOOL DIRECTORS

WEST COUNTY BOARD OF
SCHOOL DIRECTORS

WEST COUNTY BOARD OF
SCHOOL DIRECTORS

WEST COUNTY BOARD OF
SCHOOL DIRECTORS

WEST COUNTY BOARD OF
SCHOOL DIRECTORS

WEST COUNTY BOARD OF
SCHOOL DIRECTORS

WEST COUNTY BOARD OF
SCHOOL DIRECTORS



CITY of VAN WERT

515 EAST MAIN STREET • VAN WERT, OHIO 45891

"Vincit Amor Patriae"

The Love of Country Conquers

www.vanwert.org

KENNETH J. MARKWARD
MAYOR
419-238-0308

JAY C. FLEMING
SAFETY-SERVICE DIRECTOR
419-238-1237

July 27, 2026

Mr. Thad Eikenbary
President of City Council
City of Van Wert
515 East Main Street
Van Wert, OH 45891

Dear Mr. Eikenbary:

The Van Wert Planning Commission held a public hearing on Thursday, July 9, 2026 at 4:00 P.M. to review the request from Warren Straley, the option to build a single-family dwelling home with a 5 ft side set back in the Jennings Crossing Subdivision, zoned R-2. The driveways and curb cuts would be fixed with building a single-family dwelling. The Planning Commission voted unanimously to approve.

Sincerely,

PLANNING COMMISSION

Kenneth J. Markward, Mayor
Chairman

Jay C. Fleming, Safety-Service Director
Secretary

tmm

CITY OF VAN WERT

PLANNING AND ZONING DEPARTMENT

1000 WEST 10TH AVENUE

PLANNING AND ZONING DEPARTMENT
1000 WEST 10TH AVENUE
DENVER, COLORADO 80202
(303) 733-1000

The Planning and Zoning Department is a public agency in the City of Van Wert, Ohio. It is responsible for the development and implementation of the city's comprehensive plan and zoning ordinance. The department also provides technical assistance to the city council and the public in the planning and zoning process.

PLANNING AND ZONING DEPARTMENT
1000 WEST 10TH AVENUE
DENVER, COLORADO 80202
(303) 733-1000