MINUTES OF THE VAN WERT CITY COUNCIL

October 26, 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.

Eikenbary announced the Moore requested to be excused early from the meeting. The time at which she exits will be noted in the minutes. Moore excused herself at 7:15 p.m.

Block made a motion to approve tonight's consent agenda, regular meeting minutes and Council of the Whole minutes from October 12, 2026 meeting. Agler seconded; all concurred.

Scheduled Public Speakers:

Brent Stevens, Director of Van Wert Area Economic Development, gave council and public an economic development update including working toward agreements on a benefits package from QTS, construction and local development. Discussions with the city, county and schools are continuing. A preliminary proposal uses CRA with a PILOT returning 100% of the CRA value to the community. A CRA application has been submitted, but terms are not final. Proposed community benefits include school and community support, infrastructure funding for Bonnewitz Crossing and Mendon Rd and relocating a barn from QTS Land to Van Wert County Fairgrounds. Stevens states that the first construction phase covers four buildings on 220 acres with 500 megawatts of power confirmed. QTS has requested up to 800 megawatts which has not yet been approved. Dirt is moving and buildings are expected to rise starting in March. Stevens anticipates workforce population from the General Contractor of the Data Center to grow from around 2,000 in the first year or so up to as many as 5,000 workers at peak construction. Additionally, there are plans for a temporary US 30 construction only access ramp. Stevens also shared in early 2027 there will be a "work and trade fair" at an undetermined time and location to bring an opportunity for the community to present trades, food trucks, screen printing, etc that may benefit from the influx of people coming to town. He also continues to mention an ongoing nine-month city and county comprehensive-plan study with an experienced group hired to create it. Stevens mentions two upcoming opportunities to present empty buildings and prospect areas of Van Wert in both Cleveland and Las Vegas to vet potential interested investors/store fronts. Lastly, Stevens formally requested $80,000 of funding from the city as requested each year; this year, the entire portion will be paid toward the Van Wert Comprehensive Plan.

Block asked clarifying questions about the PILOT's value to QTS, the proposed funding boards and who would have legal control over the funds. Stevens explains that the PILOT could make payments more predictable and preserve payments if property tax rules changed. Block reiterates

this plan may constrain council's control over funds if they are held with Van Wert County Foundation.

Faith Wallace, 1014 Crawford St., requested plans for restaurants or bars to help with the evening load of people; Wallace also inquired on if development of the south side of the city will occur. Lastly, she asks if citizens will have say in funds coming through the city and residential plans.

Kelly Ripley, 8847 German Rd., asked for an explanation/plan for the requested funds from VWAEDC as she studied their financials and had questions about overhead within VWAEDC. Stevens shares that the entire contribution of the city funds this year will go toward the comprehensive plan. Ripley also mentioned that within a week of the original annexation of the QTS data center, QTS requested 800 more megawatt hours. Stevens explains that this is simply a request and has not been approved.

Carol Craig, State Route 116, suggested campers as a form of housing for construction workers. Stevens confirmed the fairgrounds is upgrading their grounds to house some.

Jody Huth, 668 N. Walnut, had questions on the CRA length; Stevens answered that they *requested* 15 years, but that had not yet been approved. Huth also continues to push for a "regular citizen" to be put on the board and complains of lack of communication on the data center. Stevens states the data center has been brought up a minimum of 36 times in council meetings.

Andrew Davis, 1061 Linden Dr., reiterates Block's point about another layer of approval/another step to approving funds. Additionally, Davis asks what VWAEDC is doing to prepare for the influx of workers, specifically if the overpass would be complete in time. Fleming states it will be extremely close.

Andrew Davis, Member of the Airport Authority gave an annual financial overview for council and administration and proceeded to request their annual city support which has increased from $40,000 for 2026 to $50,000 for 2027. Davis states the increase is to help obtain health coverage to support the airport manager and to make the job more attractive for a future candidate.

Ringwald asked Davis if he knows how (if) the data center will in any way affect the needs of the airport. Davis stated that it's hard to say due to confidentiality of not knowing the reason planes are landing. Hurless asked how net income has trended over the last 5 years to which Davis said there is a lot of fluctuation based on fuel sales and is very dependent on weather and runway availability.

Huth proposed city plows help plow the airport when in need; Andrew Davis and Jay Fleming were in agreement that this plan is not sensible and that city streets should remain the priority of the city workers.

Administrative Reports:

Mayor: Markward summarized the process of the budget for the new council members. Markward goes on to explain in past years, the city has done enough to operate with just a little bit extra to do one or two nice things, for example, new pickleball courts. Markward stated that going forward, the city will begin to have extra funds that will need considered for the budget. As the plan continues to develop for the city and the budget, Markward said administration will be suggesting that it be spread out into 5 different categories. Tonight, he mentions the first one called infrastructure which for Van Wert has traditionally included streets, water lines, sanitary services, and buildings the city owns. Going forward, administration is proposing to also include sidewalks within the infrastructure budget which, in the past, has been the responsibility of the property owner. Markward goes on to explain that this would become a multi-year project prioritizing city routes in which students use to get to school bus pickup/drop-off locations.

Safety Service Director: Fleming reported leaf pickup has been scheduled and will he begin the week of November 16 and 30 and continue through December 7 and 14. The Washington Street manhole project have been completed; the Blaine Street Sewer project kicked off last week. Expect Blaine Street to be closed near Bonnewitz for several months as they work north to south. Lastly, the Wall Street siphon is part of that project and pipes have been placed under the creek and they are setting structures tomorrow on both sides.

Additionally, another THM notice will be on the next water bills on November 1 due to exceeding the quarterly running average with a score of 81; the limit is 80. Contracts have been signed and work will commence very soon on the THM project to get numbers down. This project will begin over winter with a spring completion.

Block requested an estimated completion date for Blaine/Wall construction. Fleming stated weather depending, they are projecting April.

Johnson has been contacted by citizens in the Baker Addition; as more children are present in that area, Johnson is requesting Fleming review the speed limit or at minimum, make the speed limit more apparent. Fleming will review.

City Auditor: Blackmore reported three supplemental appropriations including a transfer to unclaimed funds for checks that were not cashed last year for the city tax refund to people who worked in the city, money for audit fees after the cost increased and lastly for unexpected property-tax revenue. She noted that the city's share of those property-tax payments goes back to developers. Additionally, Blackmore presented a Then and Now containing two invoices; one to Ohio Auditor of State for year-to-date state audit fees in the amount of $18,800.90; the second to Ohio Department of Commerce for unclaimed funds due to the state in the amount of $7,900. Every council member should have received tax rates from the law director via email.

Lastly, Blackmore formally presented two annexations that came to her office on August 26, 2026 and from the statutory requirement, she held them in her office for 60 days and opened

them for public inspection. After 60 days, which was October 25, 2026, Blackmore is now formally presenting one annexation for 684 acres owned by D&D Farms, Profit and Sons and multiple others to be considered by council. Blackmore is also formally presenting another annexation for 156 acres on the south end of town, owned by Charles and Barbara Purmort to be considered by council.

Ringwald verifies that council does not need to formally request items to be added into the budget as long as they are already a line item, such as the airport and VWAEDC requests.

Law Director: No report.

Mark Davis, 402 S. Tyler St., wants to know if property owners who have opted in to taking care of their sidewalks in recent years will be reimbursed since the city will be covering it in the future. Markward states that it will still be years before that decision is made due to the priority of sidewalks that are currently hazardous.

Committee Reports:

Finance: Ringwald made a motion to approve the "Then and Now" as presented by the city auditor for $26,700.90. Agler seconded; all concurred.

Ringwald made a motion to prepare, as an emergency, an Ordinance to make supplemental appropriations to fund 105, 502, 601 and 602. Agler seconded; all concurred.

Ringwald made a motion to introduce Ordinance Number: 26-10-064. Hurless seconded; all concurred.

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

Ringwald made a motion to pass on it's first and final reading, Ordinance Number: 26-10-064; AN ORDINANCE TO MAKE SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS TO FUND 105, 502, 601, AND 602 AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY. Agler seconded; all concurred. Ordinance passed.

Economic Development: No report.

Streets and Alleys: Block reported that the tree commission board/ordinance discussion will occur in upcoming meetings.

Properties and Equipment: Agler made a motion to approve the airport increase in the city budget from $40,000 to $50,000. Block seconded; all concurred.

Parks and Recreation: Park restrooms will be winterized over the next few weeks.

Health, Service, and Safety: No report.

Judiciary and Annexation: Hurless points out a few type-os in prepared ordinances and will save some items for New Business.

Questions and Comments from Council and Public:

Mark Davis, 402 S. Tyler, pointed out there is not a speed limit sign in front of the YWCA.

Charles Koch, 106 W. Main St., represents all property owners for the two petitions for annexation and the accompanying zoning petitions that are before council tonight. The annexations were filed during the week of August 24, 2026 and was held for the 60 day statutory period which expired October 25, 2026. The 684 acres is adjacent to the current QTS property that is part of the Jobs Ready site that's been in play for almost 20 years. It's a natural extention of the two I2 zones that were granted back in May. Koch is asking, on behalf of the property owners, to have council consider this as part of the ongoing plan for developing that area. As of last week, a letter of intent has been issued for this property. Koch shares he does not know who the letter of intent is with at this point in time, but explains this interest is a great reason to consider I2 zoning. The other annexation and zoning concerns are on the south end of town for 156 acres. That is immediately south off of Industrial Drive. There is no letter of intent for this land currently, but it is a logical extension of the current use that's been put into play for Industrial Drive. Both annexation petitions have parcels part of pre-annexation agreements with Ridge Township and Pleasant Township passed in 2014 and 2016 setting forth all the agreements of city council, the townships and the county commissioners; these are in play in part of what is being considered tonight. Pre-annexation agreements take into account the use of the streets, consideration of who will take care of them, etc. The ordinances tonight are for the purpose of facilitating the ongoing development of this community and consistent with what's been in play and what's been considered and promoted as a jobs-ready site. On behlaf of all the property owners who are before you tonight, Koch is officially requesting council not only consider annexing the property but also adopting the appropriate I2 zoning as discussed.

Unfinished Business: NONE

New Business: Hurless shares that the annexation and zoning ordinances have been prepared by the law director with emergency language and summarizes the process of three readings versus suspending statutory rules and how that is different from emergency language in the ordinance itself. As the Judiciary and Annexation chair, Hurless shared his preference of utilizing the three reading process rather than suspending statutory rules; he reminds council that any member can move to suspend rules at any time, but his intention is to use all three readings as best practice for the significance of this legislation.

Fleming shared information that will apply to both parcels. He states there is a large amount of engineering coordination that needs to happen quickly and that is why the emergency language is present. The three readings are okay, but water, sanitary, storm water and a hydrology study all need to happen in a timely fashion. The city is involved with the county and ODOT on the exits

on 30 for the north annexation and a similar situation on the south end of town with traffic studies to figure out utility coordination that must happen immediately following the passage of the ordinance.

Hurless made a motion to introduce Ordinance: 26-10-058. Agler seconded; all concurred.

Hurless made a motion to introduce Ordinance: 26-10-059. Agler seconded; all concurred.

Hurless made a motion to introduce Ordinance: 26-10-060. Ringwald seconded; all concurred.

Hurless made a motion to introduce Ordinance: 26-10-061. Johnson seconded; all concurred.

Hurless made a motion to introduce Ordinance: 26-10-062. Block seconded; all concurred.

Hurless made a motion to introduce Ordinance: 26-10-063. Block seconded; all concurred.

Resolutions and Ordinances:

Johnson made a motion to table Ordinance: 26-06-034. Agler seconded; all concurred.

Ringwald made a motion to amend Ordinance: 26-09-051 to update rates recently presented by the city auditor. Agler seconded; all concurred.

Third and Final Reading for Ordinance Number: 26-09-051, as amended; AN ORDINANCE ACCEPTING THE AMOUNTS AND RATES AS DETERMINED BY THE BUDGET COMMISSION AND AUTHORIZING THE NECESSARY TAX LEVIES AND CERTIFYING THEM TO THE COUNTY AUDITOR; AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY. All concurred; Ordinance passed.

Second Reading Advisory for Ordinance Number: 26-10-054. All concurred.

Second Reading Advisory for Ordinance Number: 26-10-056. All concurred.

Second Reading Advisory for Ordinance Number: 26-10-057. All concurred.

First Reading Advisory for Ordinance Number: 26-10-058. All concurred.

First Reading Advisory for Ordinance Number: 26-10-059. All concurred.

First Reading Advisory for Ordinance Number: 26-10-060. All concurred.

First Reading Advisory for Ordinance Number: 26-10-061. All concurred.

First Reading Advisory for Ordinance Number: 26-10-062. All concurred.

First Reading Advisory for Ordinance Number: 26-10-063. All concurred.

Block made a motion to adjourn at 8:43 pm. Johnson seconded; all concurred.

Clerk of Council
Stephanie R. Phillips

President of Council
Thad R. Eikenbary

Approved on: November 9, 2026

Van Wert County Regional Airport Authority

Van Wert Airport
901 Elks Drive
Van Wert, Ohio 45891
(419) 232-4500

Van Wert City Council
515 E. Main St.
Van Wert, Ohio 45891

October 14, 2026

Dear Council Members,

The Van Wert County Regional Airport Authority respectfully requests your consideration of a **$50,000 appropriation in the City's 2027 budget** to support the airport's annual operations.

In recent years, the City has supported the airport at varying funding levels. Most recently, both the City and Van Wert County Commissioners contributed $40,000 toward the airport's 2026 operating budget. For 2027, the Authority is requesting an increase in the City's contribution to $50,000. This request is the result of thoughtful discussion among the Authority's board members and reflects specific operational needs that require additional financial support.

For many years, the Airport Authority has operated in a unique position between the City and the County. As a result, the Authority has been unable to provide its employee with health insurance benefits through either government entity. It has become increasingly important that we address this limitation, both to support our current airport manager and to ensure we can attract and retain qualified leadership in the future. The requested increase would help the Authority establish a more competitive compensation and benefits package, supporting continuity in airport management and the long-term stability of our operations.

Throughout 2026, the airport has continued to make meaningful investments in its infrastructure and operational capabilities. Recent improvements included replacing the Automated Weather Observing System (AWOS) and relocating the airport's outdated windcone. These projects, funded through FAA and ODOT assistance totaling more than $300,000, were essential to maintaining safe and reliable airport operations. While the total amount of grant funding secured is lower than 2025, the projects completed remain critical to the continued functionality of KVNW.

The Authority is expecting delivery in the coming days of additional fuel capacity that will increase our fuel buying power and increase our operational capabilities. These efforts reflect our ongoing commitment to maintaining existing infrastructure while pursuing opportunities to accommodate future growth and better serve the aviation needs of our community.

The Van Wert County Regional Airport continues to be a valuable asset to our region. From serving as a gateway for our corporate and business community to creating opportunities for future pilots, the airport plays an important role in supporting economic development, transportation, and aviation education. The Authority remains committed to identifying opportunities for growth and ensuring KVNW continues to serve the evolving needs of Van Wert County.

We respectfully ask the City Council to consider this $50,000 appropriation as an investment in the airport's continued operations, the retention of qualified management, and the long-term value this asset provides to our community.

Thank you for your time and consideration. The Airport Authority sincerely appreciates the City's continued generosity, partnership, and commitment to the Van Wert County Regional Airport.

Respectfully,

Andrew Davis

President, Van Wert County Regional Airport Authority