

The Council of the City of Vandalia Meeting Minutes

May 5, 2025

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor Herbst, Vice Mayor Mike Blakesly, Councilmember Amber Aivalotis-Weaver, Councilmember Candice Farst, Councilmember Corey M. Follick and Councilmember Dave Lewis.

COUNCIL MEMBERS ABSENT: Councilmember Cindy Doogan.

OTHERS PRESENT: Jerry McDonald, Kurt Althouse, Rob Cron, Angela Swartz, Darren Davey, Ben Borton, Steve Clark, Leann Hanf, Brandon Sucher, Jake Hayslett, Kristen Carnes, Dan Heath, Brandon Sucher, Joe Kassis, Logan & Jim Martin, Jeni & Liam Sucher, Nathan Matthieu, Chuck Smith, Ben Walker, Cooper Kohlrieser, Patricia Charez, Michael Mayhill, Brandon Dosch, Susan Sucker, Kenni Walker, Karen & Owen Leber, Louis Wright, Richard Jaynes, Linda Davis, Barbara Spurgeon, Julie Trick, and Chase Solberg.

Mayor Herbst called the council meeting of the Council of the City of Vandalia to order at 7:00 p.m. **Mayor Herbst** called for a moment of reflection followed by the Pledge of Allegiance led by Logan Martin, Senior Patrol Leader, and members of Boy Scout Troop 307 from St. John's Lutheran Church.

Approval of Previous Minutes:

The Council Study Session Minutes from March 3, 2025, and the Council Meeting Minutes from March 3, 2025, were approved as presented.

Communications, Petitions and Awards:

Proclamation – Bicycle Month – May 2025

Mayor Herbst presented a Proclamation to Chuck Smith, who is a member of the Vandalia Bicycle Committee for Bicycle Month. **Mr. Smith** thanked Council and Staff, noting the Bike Path going through the Taylorsville Metro Park should be completed soon.

Proclamation – National Police Week – May 11-17, 2025

Mayor Herbst presented a Proclamation to members of the Division of Police for National Police Week.

Proclamation - Public Works Week – May 18-24, 2025

Mayor Herbst presented a Proclamation to members of the Division of Public Works for Public Works Week.

The Council of the City of Vandalia Meeting Minutes

May 5, 2025

Introduction: Public Safety Specialist Chase Solberg

Mr. Althouse introduced Public Safety Specialist Chase Solberg who began her employment on February 5, 2025.

Introduction & Oath of Office: Police Chief Brandon Sucher

Mr. Althouse introduced and administered the Oath of Office to Police Chief Brandon Sucher. **Chief Sucher** addressed Council and the audience, thanking many people.

Mayor Herbst addressed the audience advising anyone who did not wish to stay for the remainder of the meeting, this would be the time to step out. **Mayor Herbst** invited everyone to attend the reception in the lobby for Police Chief Sucher and new City Manager Mr. Althouse, where light refreshments and cake were being served, noting Councilmembers would join the reception after the Council meeting is adjourned.

Public Hearing: None

Comments from Interested Citizens:

Mayor Herbst called for comments from interested citizens advising as they come to the podium, please clearly state their name and address for the record. **Mayor Herbst** asked those who speak to please follow the etiquette of communicating with respect to others, to please stay on topic with their statements, while addressing Council. **Mayor Herbst** reminded the audience, this is not the forum for arguments and asked in an effort to give all citizens an opportunity to express their thoughts and concerns, to keep their comments as brief as possible. **Richard Jaynes**, 697 Waldsmith Way, addressed Council inquiring if there were plans to put up a sound barrier at the back of properties by the highway since the woods around his and his neighbors' homes were torn down for construction, noting every neighborhood in the 70/75 corridor has a sound barrier wall. **Mr. Jaynes** asked if there was something City Council could do to help this residential area. There was a brief discussion regarding the unique situation with a small section residential area in between two industrial areas who desire the highway frontage. **Mr. Althouse** advised the sound barrier walls were determined by the Ohio Department of Transportation and advised Mr. Jaynes to give Mr. Cron his contact information and he would follow up with him.

Linda Davis, 701 Waldsmith Way, addressed Council regarding a sound barrier wall noting she built her home 20 years ago and was promised a sound barrier wall by the builder, which never happened.

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

Information Items:

The Council of the City of Vandalia Meeting Minutes

May 5, 2025

Mr. Althouse shared the City of Vandalia is offering Vandalia Residents free large debris drop off from 8 am – 2 pm at the Public Works Garage. Proof of residency is required.

Mr. Althouse shared the 2025 Community Garage Sale will be May 15-18. Registration is available on the City's website for City of Vandalia and Butler Township residents. Be sure to register your sale for inclusion in an area wide interactive map of all registered garage sales. **Mr. Althouse** shared the City is once again offering a free Shred Day to Vandalia residents on Friday, May 16, from 9:00 a.m. to Noon in the Municipal Building parking lot. City Staff will be there to assist citizens in unloading their vehicles. Avoid identity theft and safely dispose of sensitive documents. **Mr. Althouse** shared the City is hosting a Ribbon Cutting Ceremony for the Vandalia Art Park Amphitheater and Summer Kickoff Event on Thursday, May 22, 2025, from 6:00-8:00 pm. This event is open to the public.

Action Item:

Mr. Althouse advised Council enclosed in their Council packets was the application of Tara Landis, who is requesting an appointment to the Vandalia Arts Council. There were no questions or comments from Council. It was moved by Councilmember Lewis, second by Vice Mayor Blakesly to approve the appointment of Tara Landis to the Vandalia Arts Council. Motion passed 6-0.

Old Business: None

Resolutions:

25-R-26 A Resolution Awarding The Bid For Sanitary Sewer Slip Lining, Requested By Development And Engineering Services, To Insight Pipe Contracting, LLC At The Lowest And Best Bid Price Of \$206,981. **Mr. McDonald** read Resolution 25-R-26 by title. **Mr. Althouse** advised Council bids for the 2025 Sanitary Sewer Slip Lining project were opened on April 16, 2025. Three contractors submitted bids ranging from \$ 206,981.00 to \$229,121.00, below the project estimate of \$220,000. As you may recall, this project received a \$50,000 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) from the Montgomery County Community & Economic Development department. Director Borton recommends awarding the contract to Insight Pipe Contracting, as the lowest and best bidder. There were no comments from Council. It was moved by Councilmember Farst, second by Councilmember Lewis to approve Resolution 25-R-26, motion passed 6-0.

25-R-27 A Resolution Awarding The Bid For Resurfacing Of Various Streets, Requested By Development And Engineering Services, To Barrett Paving Materials At The Lowest And Best Bid Price Of \$1,191,277.21. **Mr. McDonald** read Resolution 25-R-27 by title. **Mr. Althouse** advised Council bids for the 2025 Street Resurfacing Project were opened on April 11, 2025. Two contractors submitted bids ranging from

The Council of the City of Vandalia Meeting Minutes

May 5, 2025

\$1,191,277.21 to \$1,199,830.14, below the project estimate of \$1,390,000. As you may recall, we received a \$1,330,000 Congressionally Directed Spending grant from Rep. Mike Turner, allocated through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Director Borton recommends awarding the contract to Barrett Paving Materials as the lowest and best bidder and authorizing up to the full grant amount to add additional streets that don't require concrete work. **Councilmember Follick** praised Staff for their work on getting the money redirected and used for this project, which allows the City to have more streets paved without spending local tax dollars. There were no further comments from Council. It was moved by Councilmember Follick, second by Vice Mayor Blakesly to approve Resolution 25-R-27, motion passed 6-0.

25-R-28 A Resolution Authorizing The City Manager To Enter Into An Contract With Geograph Industries, Inc. For Wayfinding Signage At The Vandalia Sports Complex. **Mr. McDonald** read Resolution 25-R-28 by title. **Mr. Althouse** advised Council the Sports Complex Wayfinding Signage project is a critical part of the City's brand implementation and directly contributes to the Vibrant and Opportunity Citywide Policy Goals by creating a warm and welcoming environment in which to live, work, and play as well as be known regionally as a top-tier suburb through top-tier City services. This project is a continuation of the City Facilities Signage project completed in 2024 by Geograph Industries, Inc. Funding for the project will be through the 2025 capital improvement plan. **Mr. Althouse** advised Council the Parks and Recreation Department recommends waiving of the formal bid process and awarding the Sports Complex Wayfinding Signage project to Geograph Industries, Inc. As part of the project, Geograph will provide a turnkey scope of work to include design, fabrication and installation of wayfinding signage at the Sports Complex that will match the design and look of the newly installed park signs.

Mr. Althouse advised Geograph Industries prepared drawings and specifications for the current wayfinding signage project and submitted a proposal that included a project scope that encompasses project management, on-site supervision, and all sitework at a cost of \$72,794. The price per sign remains the same as the previous project bid proposal price. The design includes 20 wayfinding signs, a new Lichtenfels-Prestwick Field sign, and a new lightbox face for the Bruce Sucher Recreation Center sign. Many of the current wayfinding signs in the complex are over 30 years old and do not have a cohesive design and appearance. There were no comments or questions from Council. It was moved by Vice Mayor Blakesly, second by Councilmember Farst to approve Resolution 25-R-28, motion passed 6-0.

The Council of the City of Vandalia Meeting Minutes

May 5, 2025

25-R-29 A Resolution Designating Additional Financial Institutions As Depositories For Active, Interim And Inactive Funds Of The City Of Vandalia For The Period Designated In Resolution 22-R-12, And Authorizing Depository Agreements With Said Institutions. **Mr. McDonald** read Resolution 25-R-29 by title. **Mr. Althouse** advised Council Resolution 22-R-12 states that the financial institution depository agreements for active interim and/or inactive funds of the City of Vandalia expire on August 23, 2026. In accordance with Section 135.12 of the Ohio Revised Code, Council shall designate public depositories for the deposit of municipal funds not to exceed \$40,000,000 during the period of designation. Finance will provide a presentation and subsequent proposal to Council to transfer investment custodial services from PNC Bank to US Bank, and due to US Bank not currently listed in Resolution 22-R-12 as an authorized depository for the City, it is necessary to amend Resolution 22-R-12 to include the financial institution. There were no comments or questions from Council. It was moved by Councilmember Follick, second by Councilmember Lewis to approve Resolution 25-R-29, motion passed 6-0.

25-R-30 A Resolution Authorizing The City Manager To Enter Into A Contract With US Bank For Investment Custodial Services. **Mr. McDonald** read Resolution 25-R-30 by title. **Mr. Althouse** advised Council financial institutions are custodians and are therefore legally responsible for any items in safekeeping. Safekeeping is storing assets or items of value in a safe area, such as with a custodian or financial institution. PNC Bank currently provides banking services, including custodial services, by safeguarding the City's assets. Unfortunately, there have been several issues with receiving information from PNC Bank regarding the assets (investments) and experiencing significant increases in monthly fees. The City has worked with US Bank for several years now as they have been the primary financial institution that has received and processed the wire transfers for the debt (note) issuances and have assisted the underwriter in closing on the sale of the notes with the DTC (Depository Trust Company). The monthly fee for US Bank services is 78% less than the amount the City is currently remitting to PNC Bank. We continue to experience great success each year with US Bank and would like to explore additional opportunities such as custodial services. There were no comments or questions from Council. It was moved by Councilmember Farst, second by Councilmember Aivalotis-Weaver to approve Resolution 25-R-30, motion passed 6-0.

Ordinances – First Reading:

25-09 An Ordinance Naming The Vandalia Art Park Amphitheater In Honor Of Bill Jergens. **Mr. McDonald** read Ordinance 25-09 by title. **Mr. Althouse** advised Council at the April 7th Study Session, Mayor Herbst appointed an Adhoc Committee,

The Council of the City of Vandalia Meeting Minutes

May 5, 2025

the Vandalia Arts Council, to review the suggested renaming of the new Amphitheater in the Art Park in honor of Bill Jergens, founder of R. B. Jergens Contractors. On April 10th, the Adhoc Committee met for this purpose. Included in your packets is the Adhoc Committee/Vandalia Arts Council meeting minutes of April 10, 2025, with their recommendation to Council, and a request letter from the Vandalia Rotary. At the May 5th Council Meeting, formal action will be taken in the form of an Ordinance with a first reading and a second reading, and final adoption, at the May 19th Council meeting. **Councilmember Farst** explained Bill Jergens' involvement in the Art Park, with the clearing of the land, supplying the labor for Phases One and Two of the Art Park Amphitheater, taking a personal interest in the Art Park and in the City of Vandalia. There were no further comments or questions from Council. Councilmember Farst noted that in the Vandalia Arts Council minutes, the members recommended rather than putting large lettering on the amphitheater, to install a plaque telling the story of Bill Jergens involvement with the Art Park and the Art Park Amphitheater. It was moved by Councilmember Farst, second by Vice Mayor Blakesly to approve Ordinance 25-09, motion passed 6-0.

25-10 An Ordinance Expressing The City's Intent To Negotiate Jointly With Other Cities In The Region On A One Price Schedule Under Which Electric Light Services Shall Be Furnished To The Residents Of The City For The Purpose Of Street Lighting. **Mr. McDonald** read Ordinance 25-10 by title. **Mr. Althouse** advised Council the City's street light contract with Miami Valley Lighting and DPL Energy Resources, Inc. (nka "AES Ohio") expires on December 31, 2025. The current contract is a 10-year contract that took effect on January 1, 2016. MVCC in the past has taken the lead in negotiating the street light contract for its member cities and affiliate members. The estimated cost of professional services associated with this set of negotiations is \$60,000. MVCC will cover one-third of those costs and any additional fees, and the participating jurisdictions will pay the remaining costs based upon population. The City of Vandalia estimated participation cost is \$1,195. It is recommended that a regional coalition be established and negotiate the upcoming streetlight contract. This regional coalition would allow for a uniform approach to the upcoming contract negotiations, provide leverage in negotiating reasonable rates and provisions for streetlight services and ensure consistent contract provisions for cities across the region. **Mr. Althouse** recommended the City participate in the regional coalition to negotiate the upcoming streetlight contract. This approach will provide the resources and regional representation needed to negotiate a reasonable and competitive contract. There were no comments or questions from Council. It was moved by Councilmember Follick, second by Vice Mayor Blakesly to approve Ordinance 25-10, motion passed 6-0.

The Council of the City of Vandalia Meeting Minutes

May 5, 2025

Ordinances – Second Reading:

25-07 An Ordinance Amending The Text Of The Vandalia Zoning Code Regarding The Standards Of The Interstate And Limited-Access Highway Sign Overlay District. **Mr. McDonald** read Ordinance 25-07 by title. **Mr. Althouse** advised Council on March 3rd, 2025, Council discussed options for permitting digital billboards along Airport Access Road on a limited basis. Based on that discussion, Staff has prepared a set of amendments to the Interstate and Limited-Access Highway Sign Overlay District. If approved, the overlay would be amended to permit billboards along Airport Access Road. On March 25th, 2025, the Planning Commission voted 4-0 to recommend approval of the proposed amendments. There were no comments or questions during the public hearing. There were no comments or questions from Council. It was moved by Councilmember Follick, second by Councilmember Farst to approve Ordinance 25-07, motion passed 6-0.

Ordinances – Emergency Reading:

25-08 An Ordinance To Revise Appropriations For Current Expenses And Other Expenditures Of The City Of Vandalia, Montgomery County, Ohio During The Calendar Year Ending December 31, 2025, And Amending Ordinance 24-24 And Declaring An Emergency. **Mr. McDonald** read Ordinance 25-08 by title. **Mr. Althouse** advised Council of the request for approval of the following supplemental appropriation Ordinance for the following reasons:

General Fund:

Finance

- \$22,376 – increase appropriations to cover the costs related to the purchase of new digital budget software. The requested amount will include a pro-rated subscription fee for the remainder of 2025, and the annual costs due in 2026 will be included in the 2026 Budget.

Fire

- \$1,200 – increase appropriations to cover the cost of EMS equipment and supplies purchased with the Ohio EMS Equipment Grant received from the Department of Public Safety.
- \$2,400 – increase appropriations to cover the costs of additional education and training in the Fire Division with a grant received from the State of Ohio.

Non-departmental

The Council of the City of Vandalia Meeting Minutes

May 5, 2025

- \$20,360.80 – increase appropriations to move funds from the General Fund to the newly established 911 Service System Fund (Fund 234). The funds received from the State are a portion of the 911 fees collected based on a new State funding model. The expenses are restricted and included in Resolution 24-R-47.

Police – Operations

- \$10,195 – increase appropriations to account for unexpected expenses related to the promotional process being offered for the positions of Captain and Sergeant. The costs were not included in the 2025 Budget as a personnel transition occurred after the approval of the 2025 Budget.

Police – Crime Prevention

- \$1,000 – increase appropriations to account for a grant received from the Pizzi Family Fund of the Delaware County Foundation. The funds are earmarked for the newly branded PILOT program, intended to foster youth outreach and recruiting.

Law Enforcement Fund:

- \$21,650 – increase appropriations to cover expenses from the Law Enforcement Fund (Fund 225) related to a new drone program such as equipment, software, training and an FAA license necessary to implement the program. The funding source for Fund 225 is forfeited funds received from successful investigations and prosecutions as a part of the Miami Valley Bulk Smuggling Task Force.

Golf Fund:

Course Maintenance

- \$30,000 – increase appropriations to cover expenses related to the electric service replacement at the golf course irrigation system pump house (interior and exterior).

There were no comments or questions during the public hearing. There were no comments or questions from Council. It was moved by Vice Mayor Blakesly, second by Councilmember Lewis to approve Ordinance 25-08, motion passed 6-0.

Reports from Boards and Commissions:

Variance: BZA 25-0004 Rear Deck Setback – 1200 Wilhelmina Drive

Mr. Althouse advised Council the Applicant, Kaitlyn Dosch, has submitted an application requesting a variance to have a deck encroach into the minimum rear yard setback for the residential property at 1200 Wilhelmina Drive. The purpose of this request is to allow a deck that would encroach an additional 13 feet into the rear yard setback, causing the overall setback (with the existing home) to be 5 feet from the

The Council of the City of Vandalia Meeting Minutes

May 5, 2025

property line. The Board of Zoning Appeals voted 4-0 to recommend approval of the proposed variance. There were no comments or questions from Council. It was moved by Councilmember Lewis, second by Councilmember Aivalotis-Weaver to approve the Variance for a rear deck setback at 1200 Wilhelmina Drive, motion passed 6-0.

Mayor Herbst called for comments or questions on the Records Commission Meeting Minutes of October 28, 2024 and Board of Zoning Appeals Minutes of April 9, 2025.

There were none.

Council Comments

Mr. Althouse shared his confidence in Chief Sucher's ability to lead the Vandalia Division of Police and welcomed the new Public Safety Specialist Chase Solberg.

Councilmember Follick congratulated Chief Sucher and Chase Solberg. Councilmember Follick shared that Police week is for recognizing the officers who made the ultimate sacrifice being killed in the line of duty. **Councilmember Follick** noted in 2024, there were two State of Ohio Officers killed in the line of duty, Officer Jacob Durban of the Euclid Police Department and Officer Jameson Ritter of the Cleveland Police Division. **Councilmember Follick** noted in the City's history, one Vandalia Officer has been killed in the line of duty, which is Lieutenant James Bohanan who was killed December 30th of 1969. **Councilmember Follick** shared that this past weekend, Deputy Larry Henderson, with the Hamilton County Sheriff's Office was killed in retaliation for no other reason than he was wearing a police uniform and a badge, sending thoughts to Deputy Henderson's family and his colleagues. **Councilmember Follick** asked residents in Vandalia to support law enforcement with the Light Ohio Blue campaign, which starts on May 7th and runs through May 17th, with blue ribbons or blue porch lights.

Councilmember Farst thanked Councilmember Follick for providing the information and sharing. **Councilmember Farst** congratulated Brandon Sucher as the City's new Police Chief and Kurt Althouse as the City's new City Manager, which are great things to look forward to. **Councilmember Farst** made a motion to excuse Councilmember Doogan from the meetings tonight. All members present voted yes. Motion passed 6-0.

Councilmember Aivalotis-Weaver shared she attended the Montgomery County Law Enforcement Memorial last Friday, which was very moving, noting she was unaware there was an officer in Bulter Township that was killed, and she got to hear from the Officer's family. **Councilmember Aivalotis-Weaver** noted the Vandalia Police Department was very active at the ceremony with the honor guard and chaplain, thanking City Manager

The Council of the City of Vandalia Meeting Minutes

May 5, 2025

Althouse for his role and work over the years with his involvement in the Memorial. **Councilmember Aivalotis-Weaver** advised she was contacted by citizens on various matters and thanked Mr. Althouse for his time and patience taking her calls. **Councilmember Aivalotis-Weaver** advised there was a child hit by a car after running into the street and wanted to remind everyone of street safety. **Councilmember Aivalotis-Weaver** inquired if there was a date selected for the next Neighborhood Beautification. Staff advised June 7, 2025, was the date selected and there would be more information forthcoming.

Vice Mayor Blakesly congratulated Chief Sucher, noting that he remembers him in younger years and to see where he has aspired to now; he knows his father would be proud. **Vice Mayor Blakesly** noted while the Mayor was out of town, he had the privilege of swearing in Mr. Althouse as the new City Manager, presenting a proclamation on Arbor Day and presenting a proclamation on National Day of Prayer.

Mayor Herbst congratulated Chief Sucher on his appointment, noting Council is looking forward to working with him. **Mayor Herbst** shared Council is pleased to remove the Interim from Mr. Althouse's title, welcoming him as the Vandalia City Manager and looking forward to the great things ahead. **Mayor Herbst** thanked Vice Mayor Blakesly for filling in for him.

The Regular meeting was adjourned at 7:52 p.m.

APPROVED:

Richard Herbst, Mayor

ATTEST:

Angela Swartz, Deputy Clerk of Council