

The Council of the City of Vandalia Retreat Meeting Minutes

July 7, 2025

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

OTHERS PRESENT: Kurt Althouse, Angela Swartz, Michael Hammes, Ben Graham, Robert Hussong Jr., Rich Hopkins, Ben Borton, Chad Follick, Rob Cron, Brandon Sucher, Darren Davey, Leann Hanf, Bridgette Leiter, Jake Hayslett, Danny Knife, John Green, David Brusman, Aaron Messenger and John Kopilchack.

Mayor Herbst called the Council Retreat Meeting of the Council of the City of Vandalia to order at 4:00 p.m. and called upon Mr. Althouse to begin the meeting. **Mr. Althouse** welcomed everyone and introduced Mr. Borton who gave an update on the Bikeway Project. There were no questions or comments from Councilmembers. At 4:03 pm, **Mr. Althouse** called upon Mr. Cron, who gave an update on the new Public Works Facility. There was a discussion held regarding cutting items from the design which might be needed in the future, the possibility of State Capital Funding, and the need and location for large debris drop off, which Council advised they would like to keep this service for the residents, but possibly instead at the new facility, keeping it at the current facility. At 4:18 pm, **Mr. Althouse** called upon Chief Follick, who presented a proposal for a Fire Training Facility. There was a general discussion held on the proposed training sites, combining Police Drivers Training with the Fire Facility Training and Council giving direction to have the facility on one of the City owned properties. **Mr. Althouse** advised he would meet with Chief Follick and work on a Master Plan, bringing it to a future Council Meeting. At 4:44 pm, **Mr. Althouse** called upon Mr. Knife and Mr. Green, who gave Council an update on the Tri-Cities Wastewater Facility. There was a general discussion held regarding reducing costs by not renewing the contract with Veolia and hiring staff in-house for Tri-Cities and the Class 4 requirement. At 5:12 pm, **Mr. Althouse** advised everyone there would be a 15-minute break before starting on the next agenda item. At 5:31 pm, **Mr. Althouse** advised Council Mr. Schwieterman would not presenting on the Utility Rates Update as he was ill. **Mr. Althouse, Mr. Cron** and **Mrs. Leiter** collectively gave an update on the Utility Rates. There was a general discussion held with Councilmembers requesting a page in the My Vandalia Magazine dedicated to showing the breakdown of cost for utilities and the new meters. Council advised staff to leave the utility rates as they are, revisiting in 2026, once there is a better understanding of the cost for the Public Works Facility and the Tri-Cities Plant. At 6:03 pm, **Mr. Althouse** advised Council he was going to move to the agenda item for the Developer Presentation next, due to John Kopilchack, the Synergy representative, having a time restriction for another appointment.

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Mr. Kopilchack presented to Council project Synergy has done in other communities. There was a general discussion, with Council agreeing to move forward working with Synergy. At 6:31 pm **Mr. Althouse** called upon Alicia McCracken and Aaron Messenger to discuss the Vandalia Recreation Center and Senior Center Rates. There was a general discussion regarding increasing rates for the Senior Center five dollars for residents and ten dollars for non-residents and increasing the VRC and Pool rates as well. Council directed staff to have the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board discuss and give residents recommendations before it is brought to Council. At 6:55 pm, **Mr. Althouse** called upon Mrs. Hanf to present the updates to the Personnel Policies Manual and the HR updates. **Mrs. Hanf** reviewed with Council sections, 200, 300, 400, 600, 800, 1300 and 1400 of the proposed changes to the Personnel Policies Manual. There was a general discussion with Council agreeing about the proposed changes. **Mrs. Hanf** reviewed and discussed with Council the job description of a potential full-time Human Resources Coordinator that would be starting in January of 2026. At 7:33 pm, **Mr. Althouse** called upon Mr. Cron, who discussed with Council on Residential Development. There was general discussion about Copperfield Section 5, Mulberry Road improvements including the possibility of a sound wall. At 8:00 pm. **Mr. Althouse** informed everyone there would be a five-minute break. At 8:06 pm, **Mr. Althouse** called upon Mr. Davey, who gave Council an update on IT Cyber Security. There were no questions or comments from Councilmembers. At 8:24 pm, Mr. Althouse gave an update on HB 335 and gave an update on the process of the evaluation that Hampton Golf will be conducting at Cassel Hills Golf Course. There were no further questions or comments from Councilmembers.

The Council Retreat meeting was adjourned at 8:31 p.m.

APPROVED:

Richard Herbst, Mayor

ATTEST:

Angela Swartz, Deputy Clerk of Council