

City Council
Regular Meeting
March 2, 2026
6:30 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

The Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag was given by all that were present.

CALL TO ORDER:

Mayor Knebel called the regularly scheduled meeting of the Vandalia City Council to order at 6:30 pm.

ROLL CALL:

Aldermen Stunkel, Bowen, Brosman, Hubler, and Hobler were present. Barker, Lester and Lewey were absent.

CONSENT AGENDA:

Motion was made by Stunkel and seconded by Hobler to approve the following items on the Consent Agenda: City Council minutes dated February 17, 2026; Work Session (TIF Education) meeting minutes dated February 17, 2026; regular bills; special bills as follows: Andy's Auto Body in the amount of \$3,561.45 for maintenance; Land of Lincoln Credit Union in the amount of \$7,615.00 for street sweeper; ADS Electric Corporation in the amount of \$4,213.75 for maintenance to traffic lights; Land of Lincoln Credit Union in the amount of \$10,285.00 for fire truck; Milano and Grunloh in the amount of \$26,010.00 for engineering fees for Industrial Park; Milano and Grunloh in the amount of \$3,945.00 for engineering fees for City Hall water main replacement; Haier Plumbing and Heating in the amount of \$107,482.68 for City Hall watermain replacement; Korte and Luitjohan Contractors in the amount of \$473,457.58 for watermain replacement; Milano and Grunloh in the amount of \$24,592.13

for engineering fees; All Service Contracting in the amount of \$1,353,750.00 for the new water plant; Grunloh Building, Inc., in the amount of \$907,928.10 for new water plant; Kamex, Inc., in the amount of \$742,819.83 for raw water main and pressure reducing station; Milano and Grunloh in the amount of \$7,491.25 for engineering fees; Brenntag Mid-South, Inc., in the amount of \$8,918.00 for supplies; Hawkins, Inc., in the amount of \$1,830.50 for supplies; Ameren Illinois in the amount of \$3,387.44 for electric bill for water plant; Homefield Energy in the amount of \$3,136.06 for electric bill for water plant; USA Blue Book, Inc., in the amount of \$1,973.00 for supplies; Economic Development Commission Meeting minutes dated February 18, 2026; Lake Committee meeting minutes dated February 17, 2026; Resolution 2026-3-2-A: A Resolution Approving an Updated Phase A Preventative Maintenance Contract Between the City of Vandalia, Illinois, and Vandevanter Engineering (annual); Resolution 2026-3-2-B: A Resolution Approving a Revised Phase B Preventative Maintenance Contract Between the City of Vandalia, Illinois and Vandevanter Engineering (annual); Resolution 2026-3-2-C: A Resolution Authorizing Road Closure for the 2026 Vandalia Lions Club Halloween Parade (Thursday, October 29, 2026); Resolution 2026-3-2-D: A Resolution Authorizing Road Closure for the 2026 Third Annual Vandalia, Illinois, Car Cruise (Saturday, August 15, 2026); Resolution 2026-3-2-E: A Resolution Authorizing Road Closure for the May Vandalia Pickers Market (Saturday, May 9, 2026); Resolution 2026-3-2-D: A Resolution

Authorizing Road Closure for the June Vandalia Pickers Market (Saturday, June 13, 2026);
Resolution 2026-3-2-F: A Resolution Authorizing Road Closure for the July Vandalia Pickers Market (Saturday, July 11, 2026);
Resolution 2026-3-2-G: A Resolution Authorizing Road Closure for the August Vandalia Pickers Market (Saturday, August 8, 2026);
Resolution 2026-3-2-H: A Resolution Authorizing Road Closure to the September Vandalia Pickers Market (Saturday, September 12, 2026);
Resolution 2026-3-2-I: A Resolution Authorizing Road Closure to the October Vandalia Pickers Market (Saturday, October 10, 2026);
Ordinance 2026-3-2-J: An Ordinance Approving the Adoption by Vote Certification for CMS Rock Salt Survey.

Roll call: Brosman, yea; Hobler, yea; Hubler, yea; Bowen, yea; Stunkel, yea. Barker, Lester and Lewey were absent. Motion carried.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND CONCERNS:

None.

ENGINEER'S REPORT:

Beckman will be at the next Council meeting.

APPROVE OR REJECT TRANSFER OF LAKE LOT #65 FROM PHIL SCHILDKNECHT, LEBANON, ILLINOIS, TO LUKE SCHUMACHER, ORLAND PARK, ILLINOIS:

Motion was made by Stunkel and seconded by Hobler to approve transfer of Lake lot #65 from Phil Schildknecht, Lebanon, Illinois, to Luke Schumacher, Orland Park, Illinois. Motion carried.

RESOLUTION 2026-3-2-L: A RESOLUTION APPROVING CONSULTING SERVICES BETWEEN THE CITY OF VANDALIA, ILLINOIS AND SMALL TOWN SOLUTIONS:

Alex Benishek, owner of Small Town Solutions, reviewed the services provided by his company, noting that the proposed work is highly focused on addressing housing needs. He stated that housing shortages

represent one of the largest challenges nationwide. Within the community, approximately 32% of the housing stock was built prior to 1939, representing the largest segment of local housing inventory. He stated there are an estimated 310 vacant homes. He noted that these conditions are common among similar communities and present significant opportunities for improvement.

Benishek explained that his proposal outlines a four-month process beginning with facilitation of the MAPPING program conducted by the Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs (IIRA). The MAPPING program is a five-year strategic planning process designed to engage community members in identifying priorities. The process includes a three-week community engagement period during which residents may provide input to determine the community's top six goals. He stated communities that have completed the MAPPING process have experienced meaningful positive outcomes through increased community engagement and strategic planning. The result would be a community-driven planning document to guide future decision-making. Ideally, the Civic Advancement Group would also play a key role in implementation efforts.

Benishek also discussed services provided through the Illinois Housing Development Authority (IHDA), which offers a no-cost housing assessment program. This includes a comprehensive housing market analysis and a GIS-based walking survey in which trained volunteers evaluate the condition of every home in the community. The data collected helps identify areas

in need of investment and supports future grant applications. The process would also include a community survey facilitated by Small Town Solutions, as well as stakeholder meetings involving IHDA experts. The final outcome would be a dedicated housing planning document to assist the City in guiding planning and zoning decisions.

Additionally, Benishek would provide training to City staff on the fast-track demolition process, an eight-step procedure designed to address blighted properties more efficiently. The fast-track process includes an initial 30-day notice of intent to demolish, title search, posting notice on the property, notifying property owners by certified mail, publishing in the newspaper within 30 days, and recording notice with the County followed by a 120-day period for demolition of the structure and then a subsequent 180-day period to record a lien with the County. He stated this process allows municipalities to take control of severely blighted properties more effectively.

Benishek also discussed the Central Illinois Land Bank Authority as an additional tool for addressing properties that do not qualify for fast-track demolition, such as those with frequently changing ownership. After two years of unpaid property taxes, properties transition into delinquent status during the third year, allowing the City to initiate a sale in error and transfer ownership to the local land bank or

the City. He indicated that he would assist the City with this process.

Connor noted that the City currently follows the traditional demolition framework established by State statute, which includes issuing a 15-day notice, identifying all potential owners, and serving notice when possible. He explained that this process can be lengthy. The anticipated benefit of the proposed identification and filtering process would be to reduce the number of properties requiring legal demolition proceedings, allowing City resources to be used more efficiently.

Knebel said the City is in the process of going through a strategic plan where we are pulling community members together. He asked if there was a way to fast-track this process to incorporate those meetings in the same type of setting. Benishek said he would coordinate with those other agencies; specifically, IDHA and IIRA to try to align those efforts with the City's strategic visioning process.

Knebel stated there have been initial discussions about the concept of a TIF that proceeds could be used for residential. He asked if this helps in the process of identifying those areas of town that are in the most need. Benishek said this process could support actual TIF findings for the TIF plan. This process could be used to zero in on areas that would be most likely for a TIF to be created.

Motion was made by Brosman and seconded by Bowen to approve Resolution 2026-3-2-L: A Resolution

Approving Consulting Services
Between the City of Vandalia,
Illinois and Small Town Solutions.

Roll call: Stunkel, nay; Hubler,
yea; Hobler, yea; Bowen, yea;
Brosman, yea. Barker, Lester and
Lewey were absent. Motion carried 4-
1.

SET DATE FOR TRICK OR
TREAT:

Motion was made by Brosman and
seconded by Bowen to set Saturday,
October 31, 2026 as the date for
Trick or Treat. Motion carried.

RESOLUTION 2026-3-2-M: A
RESOLUTION FOR
MAINTENANCE UNDER THE
ILLINOIS HIGHWAY CODE -
ANNUAL MFT:

Motion was made by Bowen and
seconded by Hobler to approve
Resolution 2026-3-2-M: A Resolution
for Maintenance Under the Illinois
Highway Code - Annual MFT.

Roll call: Bowen, yea; Stunkel, yea;
Hubler, yea; Hobler, yea; Brosman,
yea. Barker, Lester and Lewey were
absent. Motion carried.

ORDINANCE 2026-3-2-N: AN
ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING
SALE OF PERSONAL PROPERTY
AT PUBLIC AUCTION:

Pasley stated that there are 12
items listed. This is mostly larger
equipment and old vehicles. This is
being done through JJ Kane Auction
Services. She said she will prepare
an Ordinance for additional surplus
property such as office furniture,
display cases, etc., for approval.

Motion was made by Hobler and
seconded by Brosman to approve
Ordinance 2026-3-2-N: An Ordinance
Authorizing Sale of Personal
Property at Public Auction.

Roll call: Hobler, yea; Brosman,
yea; Stunkel, yea; Bowen, yea;
Hubler, yea. Barker, Lester and
Lewey were absent. Motion carried.

ORDINANCE 2026-3-2-O: AN
ORDINANCE AMENDING TITLE

Pasley said this Ordinance adds the
fee of \$40.00 for the new full-

11 LAKE ORDINANCE AT
SECTION 11.18.020 CAMPING
FEEES AT SUBPARAGRAPH
11.18.020(b) OVERNIGHT
AND WEEKLY PERMITS:

service camping hookups at the Lake campgrounds. All other camping fees remain the same.

Motion was made by Stunkel and seconded by Hobler to approve Ordinance 2026-3-2-0: An Ordinance Amending Title 11 Lake Ordinance at Section 11.18.020 Camping Fees at Subparagraph 11.18.020(b) Overnight and Weekly Permits.

Roll call: Hobler, yea; Hubler, yea; Brosman, yea; Bowen, yea; Stunkel, yea. Barker, Lester and Lewey were absent.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Knebel said the comprehensive plan is ongoing. Paslay is reaching out to ClearWave regarding the telecommunications box on the corner of Sunset and Fillmore. Knebel stated Congresswoman Mary Miller announced grant opportunities. The City's request of that grant is for watermain replacement on Randolph Street. Lee Beckman is preparing the application. The grant application deadline is March 6. He said it is an 80/20 matching grant.

Motion was made by Hobler and seconded by Brosman to approve Resolution 2026-3-2-0: A Resolution to the Commitment of Funds to Apply for the Community Project Funding for the 15th Congressional District.

Roll call: Hubler, yea; Hobler, yea; Stunkel, yea; Bowen, yea; Brosman, yea. Barker, Lester and Lewey were absent. Motion carried.

Paslay will email the Lake siltation study done by the University of Illinois to all of the Aldermen. Knebel reached out to Lee Beckman regarding a stormwater management

study. Beckman suggested certain areas be pinpointed because a comprehensive study would be labor intensive and costly. He offered to put together a proposal to specifically highlight certain areas. Brosman said he did not feel the need at this point to spend a lot of money to hire a consultant but he will continue researching this. Bowen said he thinks Lee could make suggestions on how to better manage some of the stormwater issues the City has. He asked when was the last time we cleaned out ditches. He stated there are ditches full of dirt that keep water from running where it needs to go. This will be discussed with Lee. Knebel said he has reached out to Mr. Donato's staff to reset the relationship and have discussions regarding solar farm fencing and the additional solar farm being built with warehouse buildings also being built. He hopes to have a meeting within the next 2 weeks. Huhn reported she is looking at a new accounting system and utility billing software with a decision to be made prior to next Council meeting. Paslay will advertise the Building Official position this week with the deadline to apply March 27. She is working on spec sheets for the hail damage/storm repair for the City buildings. Paslay has started an RFP for beach house concessions but will be discussing with Connor after the meeting. Connor is working on the revised Lake Lot list procedure and will have an Ordinance ready at the next Council meeting for approval. He is also working on revising the Ordinance for COVID-era alcohol plans.

MAYOR'S REPORT:

Nothing to report.

CITY ATTORNEY'S REPORT:

Connor reported he will be meeting with Paslay afterwards to go over items that needs his attention.

CITY CLERK'S REPORT:

Huhn reported Statement of Economic Interest Forms need to be completed and turned in by April 28, 2026. She also reported that there are 40 North side Lessees and 11 subdivision Lessees who did not pay their annual renewal fees before the March 2, 2026 deadline. Reminder letters with the late fee added will be mailed out later this week.

CITY ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT:

Paslay reported the house on Edwards Street has been demolished. The house on North Seventh Street and at the corner of Randolph and Cole Street are set to be demolished pending weather. She said it has come to her attention that there are several outstanding bills for out of town fire calls. She will be sending out reminder letters to those individuals over the next two weeks. Strategic plan meetings are beginning in March and April. The geothermal grant that was discussed in January was submitted on February 12. The railroad grant was submitted last week. She also worked with Terracon on a Brownfield grant that was submitted at the end of January. She said IDOT notified her that Vandalia had been selected for the Community Travel Plan project. IDOT has hired a consulting group that will come to Vandalia. This is at no cost to the City. The City is on the list for late summer/early Fall kickoff. Paslay will follow up with Aptegy on Tuesday regarding status of the City's new website and mobile app.

SAFETY CODE OFFICIAL:

Report will be provided in next Council packet.

STANDING COMMITTEE
REPORTS:

Brosman stated that hopefully estimates will be presented at the next Council meeting regarding the Main Street lift station. The concrete is deteriorating already and there is water infiltration. It will possibly need a major overhaul. Paslay stated the FY27 budget process will begin over the next two weeks. Ray stated that police officer interviews are set for Thursday night. He said hopefully he will be ready to make an offer next week. Paslay stated she and Sam Kerr met with people from Eastern Illinois who map out cemeteries. This group has mapped out the Mother of Dolors cemetery and would be able to map out the City's cemetery. She will have a Resolution ready at the next Council meeting for approval. Stunkel reported there are 11 Lake lot number signs that have not been erected, as required by Ordinance. Connor said this is a requirement of the Ordinance and they could theoretically be ticketed. Hubler said plans are underway for the Grand Levee, which will be a 2-day event. Historical Society will be hosting the ham and bean supper on Friday night of that weekend. Daulbaugh reviewed the February Economic Development and Tourism report. She said she has been working with Mick Howrey with Small Business Development Center at Eastern Illinois University. The City will be hosting a Start Your Business in IL presentation on May 1 at City Hall. She will be locating potential entrepreneurs who would be interested in attending the workshop. She said the City of Vandalia was highlighted as a

community partner with America 250 Illinois. She will be accepting nominations for 2025 Small Business Awards. Bowen stated there was a Personnel meeting earlier at which time the contracts for FOP and Laborers were reviewed. Ray and Paslay will meet with local representatives in the next few weeks.

ADJOURNMENT:

Motion was made by Hubler and seconded by Hobler to adjourn the meeting at 7:47 p.m.

Caula Hubler

City Clerk