

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

Minutes of

Minutes of the Vermilion City Council Swearing in & Organization Meeting

Meeting

GOVERNMENT FORMS & SUPPLIES 844-224-3338 FORM NO. 10148

Held

Friday, January 2, 2026

20

Videos and minutes of council meetings are available to the public to view online at www.cityofvermillionohio.gov under 'Meetings and Ordinances' tab.

Judge Kenneth Lieux administered the Oath of Office to all members of Council as such:

I do solemnly swear that I will support the Constitution of the United States of America and the Constitution of the State of Ohio, and I will faithfully, honestly, and impartially discharge the duties of Councilperson of the City of Vermilion, Ohio to which I have been elected.

Vermilion City Council: Jeff Lucas, Council President; Gary Howell, Council at Large; Greg Drew, Ward Two; Drew Werley, Ward Three; Homer Taft, Ward Four; Alec Bonawit, Ward Five; Melanie Wood, Clerk of Council; Dannin Strittmather, Assistant Clerk of Council

Administration: Mayor Russ Owens

CALL TO ORDER:

Jeff Lucas, President of Council called the Friday, January 2, 2026, Vermilion City Council Organization Meeting to order according to Charter Section 111-3. Organization.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

The members of Council, administrative staff, and audience participants recited the Pledge of Allegiance; a moment of silence followed.

CORRESPONDENCE:

Melanie Wood read two pieces of correspondence which are attached hereto and incorporated herein as the official record of proceedings.

COMMITTEE/BOARDS & COMMISSION ASSIGNMENTS:

Jeff Lucas, President of Council thanked the existing and new councilmen for agreeing to serve and help the city move forward over these next two years. It is not an easy job, but it is certainly rewarding to know they are the conduits for each of their wards, and they will be their eyes, ears, and in some cases the mouths for their neighbors. They will help keep the city moving in the right direction and with that said he has made assignments with them in mind directly. If there are any issues down the road with being able to make the particular date, they can talk about it and work things out. He would like to swap them next January, so everyone has a full experience in the two years of serving on different boards and commissions and committees.

COUNCIL COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS

COMMITTEE:

(Committee Meeting Times/Dates may vary monthly)

Finance *(Meets 2nd Monday)*
Health & Safety *(Meets 2nd Monday)*
Legislative *(Meets 2nd Monday)*
Utilities *(Meets 2nd Monday)*
Streets, Bldgs. & Grounds *(Meets 2nd Monday)*

CHAIRMAN

Drew Werley
Gary Howell
Greg Drew
Alec Bonawit
Homer Taft

VICE-CHAIRMAN

Ward 1
Jeff Lucas
Gary Howell
Drew Werley
Greg Drew

BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS:

REPRESENTATIVE

Historic Design & Review *(Meets 1st Wednesday @ 6:00PM)*
Planning Commission *(Meets 1st Wednesday @ 7:00PM)*
Board of Zoning Appeals *(Meets 4th Tuesday @ 6:00PM)*
Parks & Recreation *(Meets 3rd Tuesday @ 6:00PM)*

Alec Bonawit
Gary Howell
Homer Taft
Greg Drew

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS
Minutes of the Vermilion City Council Swearing in & Organization Meeting

Minutes of

Meeting

GOVERNMENT FORMS & SUPPLIES 844-224-3338 FORM NO. 10148

Friday, January 2, 2026

Held _____ 20 _____

Port Authority (Meets 2nd Thursday @ 6:30PM)
Tree Commission (Meets 2nd Tuesday @ 9:30 AM)
Stormwater Advisory (Meets Quarterly @ 6:00 PM)
Main Street Vermilion

Drew Werley
Alec Bonawit
Homer Taft
Ward 1

SEATING ARRANGEMENT (LEFT TO RIGHT – LOOKING OUT AT AUDIENCE)
Effective January 2, 2026

Drew Werley
Alec Bonawit
Greg Drew
Jeff Lucas
Melanie Wood
Gary Howell
Ward 1
Homer Taft

VERMILION CITY COUNCIL RULES AND REGULATIONS:

Jeff Lucas provided the members of council with the 2024-2025 Council Rules which will be the baseline for the conversation. They received two submissions of some amendments, one with his name at the top and Homer Taft has submitted some for consideration as well.

J. Lucas stated he will be requesting an amendment to Rule 9 "Speaking" and Rule 15B "Rules of Decorum for Council Members". In section 15B, the first paragraph, first bullet item he would like to replace the number 10 with the number 5 respective to the number of minutes that can be spoken at one time. Council members would be allowed to speak for five minutes and then the rest of Council would have an opportunity to speak for five and then if there is new information to speak, they can speak another five minutes and that way everyone gets an opportunity to speak for those five minutes. The most important thing is that this five minutes is congruent with public participation and they also receive five minutes. In complete fairness to the public, they will have the same time should anyone like this.

D. Werley said he sees no point in moving this from ten minutes to five minutes; he doesn't think they have run into any issues in the past where he has seen someone wants to go on a filibuster for ten minutes. He talked about the fairness that the citizens get five minutes to speak, and he would hope his representative gets longer to speak than he would as a random citizen coming to talk about something. He thinks this is like a lot of things they do, much to do about nothing and he does not see a point in going from ten minutes down to five minutes. J. Lucas said the real intent is having equity in the amount of time so another councilperson can speak as well.

J. Lucas MOVED: G. Drew seconded to adopt the amendment to replace the number ten (10) and changing to the number five (5) for minutes to speak in both Rule 9 and 15B. Discussion: G. Drew said in the four years he has been up there, he has not seen anyone speak five minutes, let alone ten so he doesn't think they are taking anything away. Once everyone is afforded their ability to offer input, they can come back and speak another five minutes, so he doesn't think they are taking anything away or silencing anyone. He has no issue with passing it and making the change to his recommendation. H. Taft said he also had some requested changes in that rule, but it is related to another rule so can they talk about those two rules together? Part of his concern is the current rules prohibit any member from speaking more than two times ever on a subject which he totally disagrees with. He does not know he could support this rule if they are limiting people as to how much they can speak. He doesn't believe they can or should limit council members as to what they have to say overall. D. Werley said he thinks he knows what H. Taft is speaking about when it says they can't speak twice and if his memory serves it is that they can't speak on something twice if everyone else hasn't had their opportunity to speak. Councilman Drew said in the time he served that he has never run across it where someone speaks for that long so again, why are they making the change. He gets that they can do this or can change it later, but they are doing something for no purpose and that never happens. There have been plenty of times when he was speaking that he was interrupted by various Council members or the administration and he just dropped it and if he had a chance to he would talk again. They are changing rules for no reason and talking about equity, there is no equity in here, you have ten minutes now and at five minutes, it is still equal amongst the members. He doesn't see a point in doing it, he is not going to make a big deal about it again, it is pointless because it doesn't happen but he feels this is much to do about nothing. H. Taft said the rule he referred to is rule 15B which says no

Friday, January 2, 2026

Held _____ 20 _____

member of council shall be allowed to speak except for the council member's own seat. No member of council shall speak more than twice about the same subject, nor longer than ten minutes at one time without leave. So, it does prohibit more than two speaking turns. He is not as concerned about the five minutes as he is concerned about, they talk on the subject for as long as they want to talk overall and if they have ten rounds on something then they do if it is that important. G. Drew asked if the motion on the floor is just to change the ten minutes and if it also referred to 15B. J. Lucas answered it is for both Rule 9 and 15B. H. Taft said if they are going to do that then he would rather at the same time strike the words "More than twice about the same subject nor" and just make it five minutes after "No member of council shall speak". J. Lucas said he would agree. G. Drew withdrew his second and said he would revert back to make the revisions and they would go down to 5 minutes and add Homer's recommendation.

J. Lucas MOVED; G. Drew seconded to adopt the amendment replacing the number ten (10) and changing it to number five (5) in Rule 9 and Rule 15B and in 15B to remove the section which says, "Shall speak no more than twice". Roll Call Vote 5 YEAS; 1 NAY (Werley). **MOTION CARRIED.**

J. Lucas said next, he would like to amend Rule 7 "Absent Members" by adding the following clarification which has been discussed on many occasions during the previous council term which is to add "Failure to meet the minimum meeting attendance could result in removal Article III, Section V of the Charter of the City of Vermillion Ohio. This is simply just indicating there is a remedy if necessary to ensure the qualifications of a councilman are met.

H. Taft said he has a legal concern here and he raised it with J. Lucas privately about whether they have the right to expel elected members over nonattendance. He would love to talk about changing the Charter on that, but that is not what the Charter says. He wonders if they should have an opinion of the Law Director should they get one before they get to that rule if they could. G. Drew said he agrees with H. Taft on that and it was his concern as well, he doesn't know if the Charter allows them to do that and it is almost like putting another qualification on a council member and he doesn't know if they have the right to do it. He agrees they should refer it to the Law Director. G. Howell said if they are going to do something like that there needs to be some type of provision because if the job interferes or they have another meeting then it should be excusable at that point. He agrees with the sentiment, he doesn't know if they can do that anyway. G. Drew said the Ohio Revised Code says after 10 meetings they are disqualified and he believes so they know they have that. H. Taft said if it is not overruled by the Charter. G. Drew said maybe if they put an attendance requirement in, then they can get a vacation day once a year where a meeting is excused and it wouldn't count towards that, but he wouldn't be opposed to kicking it down the road. J. Lucas said he would be in concurrence with that and they can move it to future discussions when they have a Law Director in place.

H. Taft said he tried as he entered council to think about things they should set as traditions because these are the rules they start with and the things they do in opening, and he would like to clean a couple things up there and there. He doesn't want it to be a reflection on any past council or any person, but he has seen some things he thought they could add. In Rule 1 the first sentence after it says they have regular meetings when stipulated in the Charter, actually only the first meeting is fixed in the Charter, but he would add "But Council may designate changes in the schedule." At the end of the second sentence it says if the meeting date falls on a legal holiday or so forth it could be moved to the following day or otherwise as set by President of Council, but he proposes they insert "By the President of Council or otherwise by Council". In the final sentence, he would add a sentence stating "The meeting should commence at such time as established by a majority of Council.

H. Taft MOVED; D. Werley seconded to adopt the amendment in Rule 1 the first sentence after it says they have regular meetings when stipulated in the Charter, actually only the first meeting is fixed in the Charter, but he would add "But Council may designate changes in the schedule." At the end of the second sentence it says if the meeting date falls on a legal holiday or so forth it could be moved to the following day or otherwise as set by President of Council, but he proposes they insert "By the President of Council or otherwise by Council". In the final sentence, to add a sentence stating "The meeting should commence at such time as established by a majority of Council. Discussion: A. Bonawit asked if there was anything in the Charter that said they had to start the meetings at a certain time. H. Taft answered no, except for the first one. G. Howell asked what time he was proposing the meetings begin. H. Taft answered he personally believed they needed to move it to 6:30 or 7:00 p.m. but that is a separate subject, he just wanted to put in the rules that the Council will determine the time from time to time. G. Drew said he thinks

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS
Minutes of the Vermilion City Council Swearing in & Organization Meeting

Minutes of

Meeting

GOVERNMENT FORMS & SUPPLIES 844-224-3338 FORM NO. 10148

Friday, January 2, 2026

Held _____

20 _____

this is something that should be left up to the Council President to decide, they could end up voting every week to change the time and every month there could be a different start time. This is something he thinks they need a Council President for and it is their responsibility as the elected President. As far as a start time, he can work with him on that for sure, he wouldn't want to go past 6:30 p.m. If that is a dealbreaker, he thinks 7:00 p.m. will be a little too late especially if they are going to have a two-hour meeting. H. Taft asked for a second; D. Werley seconded the initial motion. D. Werley asked if G. Drew's issue is to prevent manic body from changing week to week the times of the meetings and prefers to allow one person to have the ability to be manic and change from week to week to be the devil's advocate. A. Bonawit asked if they can put something in that says the Council can establish a time but to cover it a certain length of time, so they are not changing it continually. J. Lucas asked if there was a desire to make change on a regular basis. H. Taft said Council by majority can change what it does at any time anyway and to Councilman Drew's comment he would associate with Councilman Werley that he would rather have the Council decide, not one person. D. Werley said he didn't think there was a desire to change it from week to week at all. J. Lucas asked Councilman Drew if 6:30 p.m. would be acceptable to him. G. Drew said he would be willing if they remove the clause about Council as a whole or the majority of Council deciding when the start time is and moving it to 6:30 p.m. he would be amenable to support it. As it is written right now, he does not like that. J. Lucas clarified he is requesting removing the majority of Council as a determiner as opposed to President of Council and 6:30 p.m. H. Taft said he would rather see the rule changed, he wants to talk to everyone about the time and he thinks it also has to do with when people sign in to speak on matters especially on the agenda and being able to speak if they suddenly find out they are going to do something on the first reading that wasn't disclosed by the agenda. This is just a general rule that says it is Council that makes the decision, not one person. D. Werley asked if his barter was to move the meeting to 6:30 p.m. to remove everybody making the decision. G. Drew said the majority of Council would be voting on 6:30 p.m. so it would be what they are asking for anyway. G. Howell said there sounds like an obvious split so what happens if they don't get the vote. J. Lucas answered it will fail. Roll Call Vote 3 YEAS; 3 NAYS (Drew, Howell, Lucas). **MOTION FAILED.**

H. Taft MOVED; D. Werley seconded to adopt the amendment in Rule 2, where it says "Exceptions shall be considered by the Council President on a case-by-case basis" this is to late agenda items – that they strike "President" and after the words "urgent and emergency matters" a comma be inserted and the following language be inserted: "but no matter shall be considered that was not so submitted except upon affirmative vote of a majority of Council. Any items submitted for discussion and consideration shall bear when introduced the sponsors), and the identity of the person who drafted same. No item shall be considered if it requires an attachment if the attachment has not been timely submitted with the item until the next meeting except by a waiver of a majority of Council. Discussion: D. Werley said he would recommend separating these personally, he would rather look at these individually. In the first section, they can already do that correct? If something is not on the agenda, and someone asks to bring it to the next meeting, it can be put on the agenda as a majority as it sits right now? He is just asking his opinion because he thinks they can do that now. He is with H. Taft that they shouldn't consider something if they don't have attachments with it, that happens far too often where they will get attachments to something that is on the agenda – the one time it was five hours before the meeting, and he think that is bad form. H. Taft said unfortunately this has happened more times than it ought by far that past councils have received information at the last minute and sometimes not at all. To his knowledge contracts and other exhibits are flat not disclosed even though they are referred to in the ordinance. That bothers him. He does not think they should pop things at the last minute and then try to read contracts on the fly or read complicated financial disclosures on the fly. He supposes there is something to be said for what Mr. Werley says that there are a couple different subjects folded within this, but he does feel as though it is something that the Council should be willing to consider not just the Council President saying to do it anyway. He thinks they all have to feel prepared and ready to act upon something when it is not disclosed and putting it in here also gives all those who are submitting things to them prior notice that they expect this of them. He doesn't know they have to be hard and fast every single time, they can be tolerant when there is need to be and clause shown to be but he does believe they should put down the marker that they expect things in a time where they can fairly consider them. J. Lucas said there are bits of pieces of this he likes such as introducing the sponsor and he sees that in other municipalities and it gives a marker of who introduced it. G. Drew said he is fine with the attachments, he does not like the fact again that they are trying to take away the responsibility of the President of Council and that is why they have a President of Council so he would be willing again to work with them and remove that strike out. It is a little wordy and he is trying to understand what H. Taft wrote. H. Taft said if his second were to agree in trying to get comedy and move forward, he could not strike the President portion and leave the Council President for now not to say they

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS
Minutes of the Vermilion City Council Swearing in & Organization Meeting

Minutes of

Meeting

GOVERNMENT FORMS & SUPPLIES 844-224-3338 FORM NO. 10148

Friday, January 2, 2026

Held _____

20 _____

may not discuss it further someday but he has confidence the current Council President will try to be judicious and just move the rest of it but he would be happy to answer any questions if they have something because he writes long paragraphs. G. Drew said if they left Council President in there and then removed the first sentence "But no matter shall be considered that was not so submitted except upon affirmative vote of a majority of Council" that is where he is hung at. H. Taft said he would accept that with the consent of the second. D. Werley responded that was fine. Roll Call Vote 6 YEAS. **MOTION CARRIED.**

H. Taft said in Rule 3 they talked about how they might change the time of the meeting or they might not, he wanted to open it up to Council discussion rather than trying to get a starting point but there are a couple different ways he sees they can handle this. One is they can set a time for signing up from before a council meeting until just before "New Business" so that people who come during the period of reports but hear something that is on the agenda that they want to speak to could still sign up, that would be one way to do it. The other way would be to move the time of the meeting so everyone can get there at that time and maybe there is a compromise somewhere in the middle. That is part of the concern and then the other concern was that if it allows five (5) minutes or less and he thinks if they are going to allow that whether it is the President or the Council, they should make that determination before they even get to public participation not all of a sudden oops you can't speak as much anymore so that is what this rule is trying to address that "Council may in advance of public participation reduce the allotted time to every speaker. Any Council member may move for the extension of time of any speaker, which shall be granted upon majority vote". He doesn't know how they want to take when public participation can be requested or what they want to do with the second part, and he doesn't want to make a motion until he hears what everyone prefers.

G. Drew said to answer his first point, they left the sign in sheet on the podium until item 15 on the agenda and then he would get up and pull it so if anyone came in all the way up to then they could sign in, and he would be ok with that. Maybe they say everyone gets five minutes to speak and that is it, every citizen gets five minutes to tell Council what they want them to know. A. Bonawit said he doesn't think the public realizes the fact of what he just said that they can still sign in, he didn't know that when he sat out there. They need to say something so it is stated that they can sign in up to a certain point. The other comment about the five minutes and the reduction time or whatever, if they have a very lengthy discussion about something very controversial, and there are thirty people out there who want to talk, 5x30 is 150 minutes. Can they do that or should they be able to cut it back to two minutes or whatever and they can do that as a Council as they see what is going on and he is sure it would only be done occasionally.

Mayor Owens said he had a question regarding the time both on Council and to the public, because he hasn't heard anyone talk about yielding their time to another person whether it is among the public or among Council. If a person wanted to come up and speak and felt that someone else would be better served to take that time under normal circumstances and he is not a Robert's Rules of Order person, but normally you could yield your time but it has not been stated either in the Charter or by the way Council conducts their meetings that there is a yielding of time wording in anything they are doing. Is that on purpose or is it just not considered? G. Howell said that falls within Robert's Rules and they don't have that stipulated, correct? Mayor Owens said if you are speaking at Congress whether in the Senate or the House of Representatives also in the Ohio Congress or Representatives, you have an opportunity to yield that time to another person or another councilman and he has been absolutely no discussion about that, he doesn't know if it is available, or not available. G. Howell said that is what he is trying to convey, he believes under Robert's Rules you can yield your time now, it doesn't have to be stipulated. Mayor Owens said it has never been stated.

G. Drew said when it comes to the public, if you use up your five minutes, what are you yielding? If someone else has something to say, they can sign in and say it. Mayor Owens said it goes to if you couldn't sign in, in other words if someone walks in and they weren't able to sign in, is that person who is speaking and recognizes that the other person just walked in, could they yield their time to the person who didn't sign it? That is where he is going with it. D. Werley said the way he has always done it during the Committee Meetings and Council President Gabriel did as well is invite anyone from the public who has something to say who did not sign up. They don't have to operate under Robert's Rules, they could change things on the fly at every single meeting if they wanted to. His personal stance on it is they give everyone the ability to speak for five minutes, and the state says they don't have to allow public speak which he is obviously completely against that, we should allow them to speak at every single meeting. If they can't say

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS
Minutes of the Vermilion City Council Swearing in & Organization Meeting

Minutes of _____

Meeting _____

GOVERNMENT FORMS & SUPPLIES 844-224-3338 FORM NO. 10148

Friday, January 2, 2026

Held _____

20 _____

everything within their five minutes, recently they have been pretty lenient on letting people go over their time so if they operate under the statement and there are 30 people who each want to speak five minutes he would love it, he would be here for five, six, or seven hours if that many people want to speak. There is no need to yield your time on to anyone else – it doesn't mean the rule is stipulated so you can do whatever you really want to do, but he would like to think they would afford the public the ability to do that unlike what they have seen in the past. J. Lucas said his stance would be the same if someone came in and they were unable to make the sign in that they would afford the time if they wanted to speak, they came here for a reason and to turn them away is probably not good. G. Howell said he would say the same thing that Councilman Werley said if someone wants to come in here and there are 40 of them and they want to talk for five minutes then he guesses they are in for a long meeting. J. Lucas said that is another situation they have not had before.

H. Taft said to Mayor Owens' point, although Congress and the General Assembly work under some special rules rather than Robert's Rules, he doesn't know they need to go there but the proposed language of the rule does say "Any councilmember may move for an extension of time of any speaker which will be granted upon a majority vote" so he thinks there is a way to allow for some kind of special accommodations if it was absolutely necessary. He hates to refresh everyone's nightmares but going back to when there was a certain PUD development, there were more than 30 speakers, there were so many speakers he couldn't even come into this room to listen to the comments or anything. There are going to be times and if there are 50 people here and they know that they are going to have two choices: to have a few public hearings or make some limitations on time or try to keep people disciplined to a certain amount of time in some cases. He just wants it to be before the fact, which is not in this actual proposal, but he wants it to be before the fact if they limit the time. G. Drew said his only concern about the last part in his addition is if someone is speaking and their time is up and now they have to vote as Council to give them additional time, he doesn't know how that is going to flow, he sees it being more of a hassle than having the President extend it a minute or two. He would be comfortable with a blanket five minutes on this. Currently, they have the sign-in sheet out there, however they want to handle that and maybe they put language into it if someone comes into Council while public participation is still open and active then they are still able to participate. He does agree with Alec that he didn't know there was no sign and they didn't really make an announcement. H. Taft said they currently say that they have to state the subject matter that they want to discuss it, and they don't do that so they shouldn't put it in their rules if they don't do it by the way.

H. Taft MOVED: D. Werley seconded in Rule 3 to strike the words in the subject matter for discussion under the sign in and the addition of the sentence current end of that paragraph "Council may in advance of Public Participation reduce the allotted time of every speaker." Discussion: G. Drew asked about the portion which states "Any Council member may move for the extension of time of any speaker, which shall be granted upon majority vote". H. Taft said he was going to make that motion separately. J. Lucas asked for a clarification of the motion. H. Taft said where it speaks of signing in, it says "Participants shall sign their name, address, and the subject matter for discussion. He moved that that part be changed to name and address only. As to the second part of that, it would be at the conclusion of the current rule where it currently says, "Will be determined by the President of Council" it will now say "Council may in advance of Public Participation reduce the allotted time to every speaker". G. Drew asked if he was leaving that sentence in. H. Taft answered that was his intention. G. Drew asked when he says Council, does that refer to all of them, or just the Council President, or who would have the authority, it is kind of generic. H. Taft answered Council, supposing that the President wants to reduce it as Presidents have to two minutes and the other six of them say no, he thinks they should be able to say no it is going to be five. G. Drew said it doesn't say majority, it just says Council. H. Taft answered Council can't act except by four. Mayor Owens said his question is regarding residency to be able to speak, it seems to him, and he has been to a number of council meetings where people who were not residents of the city were able to get up and speak. Is there a qualification for being able to speak at a Vermilion City Council Meeting from the audience, not an invited guest, but from the open to the public audience, is there any criteria that restricts who can speak if they are not a resident of the city and should they because of time consideration, what is it that would allow someone who lives in Huron to come in here and speak for five minutes when they don't pay taxes what is the reason behind that? D. Werley said he goes to meetings all over the state and they should not do that; any lawyer you ask would advise not to do that, he personally wants them to get rid of the signing of the name and address, he thinks that is a Fourth Amendment himself personally. They don't want to start limiting people to show the tax receipts from the property you pay on, next they are only going to allow white landowners to come in here and speak. Mayor Owens said just the address is basically what he is saying. D. Werley said the Mayor is saying if they don't live in 44089 then they don't get to speak and

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS
Minutes of the Vermilion City Council Swearing in & Organization Meeting

Minutes of _____

Meeting _____

GOVERNMENT FORMS & SUPPLIES 844-224-3338 FORM NO. 10148

Friday, January 2, 2026

Held _____

20 _____

he is against that 100%, he will never vote for that. There are people who work here and don't live here and they should have a right to come speak to the people that write all the laws they operate under even though they don't live here and don't hang their hat here, they may work here, they may come to our shops here, this is America they are not going to limit people to speak because they don't have an address within the city. Roll Call Vote 6 YEAS. **MOTION CARRIED.**

H. Taft said this is taking a while so he is going to skip some of them tonight and he asked they would revisit them at another time. In Rule 4, he thinks they should clean it up they don't want to send anything to Gwen Fisher anymore. M. Wood responded yes, that it will be updated. H. Taft said in Rule 8 he had one concern he would like to get out of the way now; he thinks it is easy. The current rule says that the Mayor, Service Director, Law Director, Finance Director, and City Engineer shall be required to attend all regular and special meetings of council unless otherwise excused by the Mayor. He would like to strike "the Mayor and/or" and leave it to just the President of Council. They might want to distinguish by way of commentary between regular and special meetings although he generally doesn't like special meetings.

H. Taft MOVED; G. Drew seconded in Rule 8 to strike "the Mayor and/or" and leave just the Council President. Discussion: A. Bonawit asked why Mr. Taft wanted to strike the Mayor out of this. H. Taft answered because Council may want to require they are there and present company excepted, but the Mayor might not care if the Mayor comes but they might which is the simple reason why. Roll Call Vote 6 YEAS. **MOTION CARRIED.**

H. Taft MOVED; G. Howell seconded to adopt the rules as amended effective until not later than January 15 (amended to January 26th) when they have further opportunity to chat about a few things. Discussion: M. Wood asked if they would like the Council Rules to be added to the next Committee Agenda. H. Taft answered he is setting a deadline of the 15th and if they had to take further action, they can but if they would rather another date like the 26th they can. G. Drew said he was thinking a little longer because they will have a lot to go through. J. Lucas said that should be sufficient because they talked about getting legal eyes on some of the rules. D. Werley questioned that they were sending rules out to get legal eyes on things. J. Lucas answered yes, in Rule 16 there is a comment with respect to "However, no person shall be denied inspection of minutes of any meeting for more than 7 calendar days under any circumstances" and he thinks they need clarity on that one. The other is in the second to last paragraph of 15B "Council may punish or expel" which is another duplication of the previous, so they want to get legal on all three of those. Roll Call Vote 6 YEAS. **MOTION CARRIED.**

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Alec Bonawit MOVED; G. Drew seconded to approve the December 15, 2025, Vermilion City Council meeting minutes. Roll Call Vote 5 YEAS; 1 ABSTAIN (Taft). **MOTION CARRIED.**

NEW BUSINESS:

J. Lucas MOVED; G. Drew seconded to approve the appointment of Mayor Owens to the position of Director of Public Safety and forgo any compensation. Roll Call Vote 6 YEAS. **MOTION CARRIED.**

J. Lucas MOVED; G. Drew seconded to authorize Mayor Owens to sign purchase orders, checks including accounts payable and payroll, wire transfers, contracts, and grant applications along with any and all other financial documents as needed until the Finance Director takes office. Discussion: D. Werley said that sounds like an awfully vague thing to give someone power to do. Not that he would do whatever could be done, but that is a lot of power to give somebody, and he would prefer to put a cap on there. J. Lucas asked what that would look like. D. Werley said that he can't just go out there and sign a contract for \$500,000, some kind of financial cap on there because that is a lot of power to give someone. Nothing against the current Mayor, he wouldn't want to give that to anybody. H. Taft said he is not sure they have a lot of choice; there are matters related to what he just said that might come up in executive session and is that something they should refer to after executive session? J. Lucas answered they can defer it to after executive session.

J. Lucas MOVED; G. Howell seconded to adjourn into executive session to discuss Personnel Matters (Hiring, Firing, Compensation). Discussion: H. Taft asked if that would include the Directors Designate and

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS
Minutes of the Vermilion City Council Swearing in & Organization Meeting

Minutes of

Meeting

GOVERNMENT FORMS & SUPPLIES 844-224-3338 FORM NO. 10148

Friday, January 2, 2026

Held _____ 20 _____

the Clerk of Council and Assistant Clerk of Council. J. Lucas answered yes. Roll Call Vote 6 YEAS. **MOTION CARRIED.**

J. Lucas adjourned into executive session.

J. Lucas called the regular Vermilion City Council Meeting back to order.

J. Lucas MOVED; G. Drew seconded to authorize Mayor Owens to sign purchase orders, checks including accounts payable and payroll, wire transfers, contracts, and grant applications along with any and all other financial documents as needed until the Finance Director takes office. Roll Call Vote 6 YEAS. **MOTION CARRIED.**

H. Taft MOVED; D. Werley seconded to defer all Boards and Commissions appointments be deferred to the agenda on next Monday night. Discussion: G. Drew said his only concern is they have already deferred these from mid-November or early December. He asked Mayor Owens on his thoughts because these are his appointments, does he want them tonight or does he want them deferred. Mayor Owens answered he does not want them deferred. He thinks the fact that Homer would like to have conversations with these people before he votes is a reasonable request, however, that is on Homer. It is not on the people he has decided he would like to appoint to these boards. That process moving forward he is open to discussion to change it and to make it such that there is more access to Council to meet with these folks but that is another discussion. In this particular discussion, he does not think a unilateral vote because a Council member was unable to meet with or interview a volunteer for a Board or Commission in this particular situation, he thinks it is not necessary. Moving forward if they want to change the rules and how they go about it, he is all for it. G. Drew said he agrees with him and today he interviewed Chad, he knew he would be coming tonight and he took it upon himself to reach out to him and set a meeting up with him and have a discussion. H. Taft said respectfully, he is not talking about the Directors, he is talking about the Boards and Commissions he received two letters today nominating these people, a whole bunch of them, so he is not prepared to vote for people he has not had a chance to talk to. Mayor Owens said that it is on him, he wouldn't have argued there was not enough time, he is saying if that is the criteria for him to vote, it is his criteria, not anybody else's. D. Werley said he would like to reiterate that he doesn't think any of this should be on the agenda, this is the Organizational Meeting. To bring up the point they deferred this once already, that was the former Mayor's list of appointees that he wanted them to rule on for a completely bullshit reason of why they needed to do it at that time. Now to say they can't defer it to Monday, clearly nothing is going to happen today is Friday, then Saturday, Sunday and we can talk about this stuff on Monday. Just for the reason he doesn't think they should be having any of these discussions on this, this is an Organizational meeting for City Council. In deferment to Mr. Taft's motion, he was going to make a similar motion except he was going to do all of it, everything from this point on to the end of the meeting he was going to push off to Monday. He sees no point in doing it right now, they can wait until Monday to do it and he doesn't care either way, to be honest it is not a big deal, but he gets where Homer is coming from. J. Lucas said just for clarification, on December 23rd the emails with the letters went out and were placed in the Council's mailboxes. Roll Call Vote 3 YEAS; 3 NAYS (Drew, Howell, Lucas). **MOTION FAILED.**

G. Drew MOVED; J. Lucas seconded to approve the appointment Tara Leslie, Judy Doll, and Dan Pryor to the reappointment of a new term to the Historic Design and Review Board for a 3-year term expiring December 2028. Roll Call Vote 4 YEAS; 2 NAYS (Taft, Werley). **MOTION CARRIED.**

G. Drew MOVED; J. Lucas seconded to approve the appointment Brenden Kelley to the Civil Service Commission for a 6-year term. Discussion: D. Werley asked what the appointment was. J. Lucas answered Brenden Kelley to the Civil Service Commission. H. Taft said he was not on his agenda, he is on the January 5th agenda. M. Wood clarified Brenden Kelley was in the original letter sent to Council members on December 23rd from the Mayor for consideration at tonight's meeting. Roll Call Vote 4 YEAS; 2 NAYS (Taft, Werley). **MOTION CARRIED.**

G. Drew MOVED; G. Howell seconded to approve the appointment of Jim Beatty to the Parks and Recreation Board for a 3-year term expiring December 2028. Roll Call Vote 5 YEAS; 2 NAYS (Taft, Werley). **MOTION CARRIED.**

G. Drew MOVED; G. Howell seconded to approve the appointment of Shari Kuhn to the Parks and Recreation Board for a 3-year term expiring December 2028. D. Werley asked for clarification of the

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS
Minutes of the Vermilion City Council Swearing in & Organization Meeting

Minutes of

Meeting

GOVERNMENT FORMS & SUPPLIES 844-224-3338 FORM NO. 10148

Friday, January 2, 2026

Held _____

20 _____

expiration date for the term. J. Lucas answered December 2028. Roll Call Vote 5 YEAS; 2 NAYS (Taft, Werley). **MOTION CARRIED.**

G. Drew MOVED; G. Howell seconded to approve the appointment of Tina Swinehart to the Parks and Recreation Board for a 1-year term expiring December 2026. Discussion: D. Werley said the other terms for the Parks and Recreation Board are for three years and this is for a reappointment for one year and asked for clarity on that. Mayor Owens said it was his understanding that it has to do with what happened two or three years ago when the reappointment was not properly done. G. Howell said he believes she filled a vacated seat by Bill Malin at the time. Mayor Owens said he thinks she took Kate Repola's place. J. Lucas said Phil Dombrowski took over for Bill Malin. H. Taft said he might shock them all by voting for Ms. Swinehart because he knows her and has talked to her but the Charter says all members to be appointed are appointed in the same year and for 3-year terms and the only exclusion to that is the one appointed by the School Board so the 1-year term concerns him because he believes the Charter says it is a 3-year term starting in 2025 for three years. He does not like the Charter, but that is what it says. J. Lucas asked Mayor Owens if he would be opposed to a 3-year term. Mayor Owens said based on the explanation he received in discussions with Melanie, it was explained to him why it was a 1-year term and if that has changed, he doesn't have a problem with a 3-year term. M. Wood said one year would have corrected what her original reappointment time should have been so it would have been correcting a reappointment error, however the Mayor can choose how he would like to request the appointment. H. Taft asked if they could amend it to appoint her for one year or more as required. Mayor Owens said he is good with that. G. Drew and J. Lucas both said they think there should be an end date. G. Drew said they can say they are giving her one year to amend the previous appointment that was incorrect, so it is memorialized why they are doing a year. H. Taft said if the Charter says one thing and an ordinance says another, the Charter rules. M. Wood said they are done by appointments not by Ordinance. D. Werley said he doesn't know the specificity of the Charter as Councilman Taft brought up, he was just curious any time there is a variance he is curious as to why. It makes total sense. G. Drew said it sounds like the easier thing to do would be to appoint her for a 3-year term. Mayor Owens said he did not have an objection to that.

G. Drew MOVED; G. Howell seconded to approve the appointment of Tina Swinehart to the Parks and Recreation Board for a 3-year term expiring December 2028. Discussion: D. Werley asked if she would be on board for a 3-year term. Mayor Owens said he believed she certainly would be on board with that. Roll Call Vote 6 YEAS. **MOTION CARRIED.**

G. Drew MOVED; J. Lucas seconded to approve the reappointment of Mark Musial to the Parks and Recreation Board for a 3-year term expiring December 2028. Discussion: D. Werley asked to confirm this is a reappointment that ends in 2025. J. Lucas answered yes, 2028. Roll Call Vote 5 YEAS; 1 ABSTAIN (Howell). **MOTION CARRIED.**

G. Drew MOVED; G. Howell seconded to approve the appointment of Rob Kruty to the Planning Commission for a 5-year term expiring December 2030. Discussion: H. Taft said for the record, he is a friend and an advisor and he will be abstaining and noted he goes by the name Robert or Rob. Roll Call Vote 5 YEAS; 1 ABSTAIN (Taft). **MOTION CARRIED.**

G. Howell MOVED; G. Drew seconded to approve the reappointment of Tim Costello to the Tree Commission for a 3-year term expiring December 2028. Roll Call Vote 6 YEAS. **MOTION CARRIED.**

G. Howell MOVED; G. Drew seconded to approve the reappointment of Anne Naugle to the Tree Commission for a 3-year term expiring December 2028. Roll Call Vote 6 YEAS. **MOTION CARRIED.**

G. Howell MOVED; J. Lucas seconded to approve the reappointment of Pete Bahner to the Board of Zoning Appeals for a 3-year term expiring December 2028. Roll Call Vote 5 YEAS; 1 ABSTAIN (Taft). **MOTION CARRIED.**

H. Taft MOVED; G. Drew seconded to approve the appointment of Barb Brady to the Board of Zoning Appeals for a 3-year term expiring December 2028. Roll Call Vote 6 YEAS. **MOTION CARRIED.**

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS
Minutes of the Vermilion City Council Swearing in & Organization Meeting

Minutes of

Meeting

GOVERNMENT FORMS & SUPPLIES 844-224-3338 FORM NO. 10148

Friday, January 2, 2026

Held _____

20 _____

H. Taft said they have one other matter for New Business. They have a vacancy in Ward One and as he knows he objected to the idea that the last administration decided to advertise and set a deadline before this Council or the vacancy occurred.

H. Taft MOVED: A. Bonawit seconded to set a requested response for applications for Ward One for January 12 with a request that they give written expressions of their interest in Ward One and the city and a statement of their resume and a certification they are a registered voter in Ward One continuously for one year and the city for two years and they publish that by social media including any city site, Vermilion, Ohio, Vermilion Daily and so forth that will cooperate with them so they can bring them in. Discussion: H. Taft said they have had two nice applicants, but it has not been thoroughly publicized as much as many of them have tried. M. Wood asked if he would like it publicized in the Photo Journal again. H. Taft answered he would like to do it once if they can get it in. M. Wood said January 8th would be the soonest it could be published. H. Taft said he wouldn't object to that if they could do it, he just wanted to make sure they could. He does want to get it out with some social media if they can. M. Wood asked clarification of the deadline. H. Taft said if they want to back it up a couple days, he wouldn't object it is by way of discussion to folks. G. Drew said there has already been a process in place and applicants were obviously made aware of it and they applied. He would really like to see them interview the applicant on Monday and make a decision so they can have a seventh member up there. He does not think there is a need to extend this out anymore. J. Lucas said there were also two other applicants, one was disqualified due to his residency term and the other pulled out for personal reasons, so they had a total of four. Three of which were received by the deadline, and one was received three hours thereafter. D. Werley asked what the deadline was, as far as he is concerned, he does not know the Charter as well as his esteemed colleague Councilman Taft does, he has read it once or five times. If the Charter states that Council shall appoint in the case of vacancy and they fail to in 30 days, then the Mayor gets to do it and this is the first meeting of this body that has existed to his knowledge. He has not heard any type of discussion about any kind of replacement, and he is not sure when this deadline is to apply that they speak of. M. Wood said it is past practice once the vacancy was announced or they knew there was a vacancy to begin advertising for it, so she went ahead and put the vacancy notice in the Photo Journal like they have with all other vacancies which ran twice according to past practice. This was to give the Council the most amount of time to be able to consider candidates for the full 30 days, which is why the deadline was set when it was. G. Howell said they all filed their paperwork at the exact same time to run for office. If someone was that interested, they would have filed the paperwork. We have given them a second chance, we have the applicant that was able to meet the mandate, he thinks they just move forward, which is his opinion. D. Werley said you said applicant singular, and he (pointed to G. Drew) said applicant singular, so it sounds like you have someone in mind already. G. Howell said there is one person who is qualified. D. Werley said he heard two. G. Howell said one came in late and came in three hours after the deadline posted. D. Werley asked who picked the deadline, that is his issue. G. Howell said it was past practice, what they have done in the past, and it came in three hours after the deadline, and he couldn't tell you who it is. D. Werley said he knows when the deadline is because he read the paper, but he has an issue with it. Somehow it is not the body who gets to choose which is mandated by our Charter this body chooses the replacement, and they have had no say and zero discussion. He is not opposed to putting it out in the world to let more people know about it because not a lot of people read the Photo Journal. G. Howell said everyone knows election day is in November. D. Werley asked what that has to do with the replacement, that has nothing to do with it. G. Howell asked how does it not? They all ran for an office and if there was someone in Ward One who had an interest in it, they would have filed their application like you and I did. So now we are just finding someone is all he is saying. D. Werley said there has been some pretty heavy recruiting out there in the world. A. Bonawit said at this point they need to make an educated decision on this person and if they extend it a few more days to make sure they have all applicants that really are considered because remember we just went through two big holidays. People were out of town, things were going on, and he thinks they need grace here so they have every applicant that really wants to respond. Maybe this person was three hours late and he is the greatest person in the world, he doesn't know who it is but at this point the new council should have a little bit of leeway here so they can get the best candidate they can choose. G. Howell said he wouldn't care to have the leeway and accept the late application, he is still going to hang his hat on the nail that everyone knew the position was going to be open and no one chose to run for it. He doesn't think three more days, five more days, or ten more days is going to bring someone out of the woodwork to say they want to be Ward One Council because they don't have to go through the election process. H. Taft said with the greatest respect he still thinks that it is apples and kumquats. First of all, the past Council President with whom he spoke did not know this was being done. It has not been done this way in the past for the vacancy which did not occur in that term with all due respect. It never happened that

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS
Minutes of the Vermilion City Council Swearing in & Organization Meeting

Minutes of _____

Meeting _____

GOVERNMENT FORMS & SUPPLIES 844-224-3338 FORM NO. 10146

Friday, January 2, 2026

Held _____

20 _____

he knows that a vacancy that occurs in this term gets decided how it be filled in the last term. The Charter of the City and he has the same right as everyone else here, the Charter of this City requires that the vacancy is on January 1 and this Council and only this Council has the right to this decision. Nobody has the right to say if they did not apply by December 31st they can't be considered, and he wants to see that person's application if they were disqualified on that reason. Further, this Council, not somebody – and when someone told him when they went to apply, they were told to go see the former Mayor. The former Mayor was not supposed to be in charge of this process. With all due respect, it was put in the Photo Journal during the holiday period when people weren't paying attention. With great respect to the Photo Journal the entire subscription and entire area, townships and everything is about 1,500 and we have 10,000 folks in this city and 6,000 registered voters in this city and he guarantees almost no one saw it. He knows they have a couple of good applicants and he is happy if they look at all the good applicants that may be who he ends up supporting, he doesn't know but he wants everyone in this city to have a fair opportunity to apply. He is asking for a week or two, he would have asked for less time except he felt it could give them one more ad in the new year in the Photo Journal, so he picked a later time. G. Drew said he has two issues, he is not going to support someone who wasn't paying attention who now wants to all of a sudden wake up and join us. This is something they should have been thinking about and wanting to serve their ward. If you are not going to be paying attention, what good are you going to be up here? The second thing is they have 29 days from today to pick this person or they turn it over to the Mayor and no disrespect Mayor, he doesn't think it is his place to pick someone up here on City Council which he would ask they move on Monday to interview the applicants who applied whether it be one, two, three, or four and obviously some people are not qualified and then they vote to decide. J. Lucas asked for a clarification of the motion. M. Wood asked H. Taft which social media accounts he would like the posting to be on. H. Taft answered the city has one and he suggested there may be others and he doesn't want to exclude anyone but Vermilion, Ohio page. M. Wood said she can't guess, she needs specific sites. G. Drew said he does not think that it is appropriate for the City Council Clerk to go on various Facebook pages to advertise, and he thinks that it is inappropriate to be honest. J. Lucas said he would agree. D. Werley suggested an amendment to the motion that it would be sufficient if the Mayor is willing to post it to the City of Vermilion Facebook page and then anyone who wants to can share it amongst whoever they want to. J. Lucas said what they are doing by putting it on the City of Vermilion Facebook page is just getting it out to the people who actually have access to the City of Vermilion page but now we are excluding anyone who has that but we are talking about the Photo Journal saying they don't have the exposure and that people don't read it which is an opinion. D. Werley said he went looking for it and he couldn't find it. H. Taft said Mr. Jones from Vermilion Daily is here and they can ask him how many followers he has and he mentioned three social media sites and he is open to others, but he mentioned specifically three, the City, Vermilion, Ohio, and Vermilion Daily. He is not asking the clerk to ask for any more, he gave them at least three. M. Wood asked if the Vermilion, Ohio is a public page, or does someone run it? G. Drew said it is a public page, at least with Vermilion Daily the city can enter into an agreement and can be charged just like the Vermilion Photo Journal charges. He does not think it is appropriate that they search up Facebook pages and then have the clerk put it on, what account is she using? Is she going to use her personal Facebook account? He thinks it is inappropriate, and he thinks Councilman Werley had the perfect solution and he knows Mr. Jones will see it and share it and will accomplish what they want to do. H. Taft said he disagrees with why he characterized what he said. M. Wood noted if the deadline was noon on January 12, she would bring hard copies of the applications if they are submitted on the 12th. D. Werley said what they have done in the past with vacancies, they set a date to hold open interviews so they can do that too and they should determine that before it is shared everywhere. G. Drew asked if he recommended them submitting their application or resume ahead of time. D. Werley answered they can turn it in ahead of time and if they want to roll in here wearing half a t-shirt and ripped up jeans with no paperwork, he will take them as well. M. Wood reminded council of the meeting dates for January. G. Drew said if he is going to support the motion, he wants to get it done sooner rather than later. He does not think the Mayor should have the ability to put someone in here. H. Taft said he fully intends for them to fill it themselves, he is working toward that. G. Drew asked what the date will be then, he would support this if they could get all applicants to submit something in the next couple days. H. Taft said it won't even go into the paper until the 8th. D. Werley said they can have open interviews on the 12th and he is also fine with the 26th but he would also rather do it much sooner because he doesn't care who the Mayor is, he doesn't care if it is his dad, he doesn't want to let anyone pick who sits on their Council, that is not how it works at all. A. Bonawit asked what the objection is for them to show up here on the 12th with their resume. G. Drew asked how would you vet them? How would you know if they have lived in the city for two years and their ward for one year or whatever the requirements are, he thinks they should know ahead of time. H. Taft said a quick due diligence is helpful, he is not going to exclude any member of Council from wishing to do whatever they

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS
Minutes of the Vermilion City Council Swearing in & Organization Meeting

Minutes of

Meeting

GOVERNMENT FORMS & SUPPLIES 844-224-3338 FORM NO. 10148

Friday, January 2, 2026

Held _____

20 _____

want to do on this because it is each individual Councilperson's decision but at least they give notice during this year to folks if they are interested for a period of time. If it is past that maybe individually, they don't want to decide they are the one. G. Drew said let's forget the Photo Journal due to the deadline, let's get it out on Monday, January 5th on the City Website and it will hit the media and all applicants must submit their paperwork by 4 p.m. on Friday, January 9th, or change it to 12:00 p.m. on the 9th for Melanie to vet and send to them and they can have a discussion on the 12th. If they push it to the 26th and don't agree. H. Taft said if they push it from 4:00 p.m. instead of 12:00 p.m. he will vote no, if there is no objection from the other Council members for the 9th instead of the 12th he would have no objection for 4:00 on the 9th. M. Wood said they will have to submit to City Hall at 4:00 p.m. because she will have so many meetings next week, she will not be in her office at 4:00 p.m. on the 9th, it will put her into a lot of overtime. G. Drew said he is trying to make it fair to Melanie. D. Werley said that is why they should have open interviews; they don't have to submit anything if they don't want to. G. Drew said this is not a job at McDonald's where they are looking for someone to come in a flip a burger, which is how we are treating this. D. Werley said Gary Howell came into an open interview for the Council President's position. H. Taft said he wants to get through this so if they get them in by 4:00 p.m. on the 9th, Melanie will still have them by Monday morning. M. Wood answered yes, but they will have to submit it electronically or to City Hall because she will not be there in the afternoon on the 9th. G. Drew said Melanie also has to vet them and get the information to them. Unless they are going to pay Melanie overtime to vet these out on Friday evening. H. Taft said in the spirit of comedy, he will accept the 9th at 12:00 p.m. if they all understand if someone walks in late and people want to consider them, they are going to be told they applied and have the right to consider it if they individually wish to. M. Wood said she sent everyone the last one that was after the deadline, and she will absolutely always send everything she receives. G. Drew said he would accept that. D. Werley asked clarity on the motion. M. Wood said the motion has been amended to say they will extend the Ward One posting to January 9th at 12:00 p.m. to be delivered electronically or to City Hall and it will be posted to the City's Facebook page on Monday, January 5th which can be shared by whomever would like to. G. Drew asked if they could get rid of City Hall because he doesn't like them being involved with Council. M. Wood said they typically allow drop off at City Hall and she has a locked mailbox and the only key to it. H. Taft said he was comfortable with that. D. Werley said they signed our certified mail for our lawsuit. G. Drew said he would support that. Roll Call Vote 6 YEAS. **MOTION CARRIED.**

READING OF THE ORDINANCES:

First Reading – Ordinance 2026-1: AN ORDINANCE CONFIRMING THE APPOINTMENT OF ANTHONY VALERIUS TO THE POSITION OF DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC SERVICE OF THE CITY OF VERMILION, OHIO; EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1, 2026; ESTABLISHING COMPENSATION FOR SAID POSITION, AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

G. Drew MOVED; H. Taft seconded to suspend the rules on Ordinance 2026-1. Discussion: D. Werley asked what was the emergency. M. Wood read the emergency from the ordinance which states "The necessity for the emergency is establishing duties and compensation for the Service Director in order to maintain an efficient city operation. Roll Call Vote 6 YEAS. **MOTION CARRIED.**

G. Drew MOVED; A. Bonawit seconded to adopt Ordinance 2026-1 and declaring an emergency. Roll Call Vote 6 YEAS. **MOTION CARRIED.**

First Reading – Ordinance 2026-2: AN ORDINANCE CONFIRMING THE APPOINTMENT OF CHAD ANGNEY TO THE OFFICIAL POSITION OF DIRECTOR OF FINANCE OF THE CITY OF VERMILION, OHIO; EFFECTIVE MARCH 1, 2026; ESTABLISHING COMPENSATION FOR SAID POSITION AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

H. Taft MOVED; J. Lucas seconded to suspend the rules on Ordinance 2026-2. Discussion: A. Bonawit asked why there was an emergency if he was not taking office until March 1st. M. Wood answered she thinks it is to allow him to come in and begin office hours. H. Taft agreed so he can begin to do things in advance. Roll Call Vote 6 YEAS. **MOTION CARRIED.**

Alec Bonawit MOVED; G. Drew seconded to adopt Ordinance 2026-2 and declaring an emergency. Roll Call Vote 6 YEAS. **MOTION CARRIED.**

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS
Minutes of the Vermilion City Council Swearing in & Organization Meeting

Minutes of _____

Meeting _____

GOVERNMENT FORMS & SUPPLIES 844-224-3338 FORM NO. 10148

Friday, January 2, 2026

Held _____

20 _____

First Reading – Ordinance 2026-3: AN ORDINANCE CONFIRMING THE APPOINTMENT OF BRAMHALL ENGINEERING & SURVEYING CO. OV AVON, OHIO TO FILL THE POSITION OF “CITY ENGINEER” OF THE CITY OF VERMILION, OHIO; EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1, 2026; PRESCRIBING THE RATE OF COMPENSATION AND PROVIDING THAT SUCH SERVICES SHALL BE RENDERED IN ACCORDANCE WITH CHAPTER 246 OF THE CODIFIED ORDINANCES OF VERMILION, OHIO AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

G. Drew MOVED; A. Bonawit seconded to suspend the rules on Ordinance 2026-3. Discussion: H. Taft said he had an amending motion however, he withdrew the motion because it should go with Ordinance 2026-4. Roll Call Vote 6 YEAS. **MOTION CARRIED.**

G. Drew MOVED; G. Howell seconded to adopt Ordinance 2026-3 and declaring an emergency. Roll Call Vote 6 YEAS. **MOTION CARRIED.**

First Reading – Ordinance 2026-4: AN ORDINANCE CONFIRMING THE APPOINTMENT OF ANTHONY R. PECORA AS CITY LAW DIRECTOR AND ATTORNEY SCOTT J. ORILLE AS THE CITY ASSISTANT LAW DIRECTOR EFFECTIVE JANUARY 2, 2026; PRESCRIBING THE RATE OF COMPENSATION; PROVIDING THAT SUCH SERVICES SHALL BE RENDERED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CHARTER OF THE CITY OF VERMILION, OHIO AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

H. Taft MOVED; A. Bonawit seconded to strike Section 6, renumber 7 and 8 as 6 and 7 and put section 6 as a separate ordinance for the next meeting. Discussion: G. Drew asked what his issue is with Section 6 being by itself. H. Taft said there was an extensive discussion about exactly where the authority lies to hire for certain services particularly if is initiating litigation, particularly if it involves expenditures and money. He doesn't want to take a lot of time tonight, but that is the issue, and he wants to put it to a place where they can talk about it. G. Drew said they can have that separate but pass everything else, so they have a Law Director. H. Taft answered it is giving them the compensation and all it is just saying they are going to work on this real quickly. A. Pecora said this is for Council to recognize, this is the exact same ordinance that prior Law Directors have in place they didn't add or subtract anything from it. H. Taft said he understands, and he believes they have learned to have a concern about one or two things and they need to talk about it more. A. Pecora said the question would be that the scope of services under the ordinance describes something very specific and then there is non scope of services that would need to be fleshed out. H. Taft said it is a very small part where there is authority to do supplemental services and basic services and who makes which decisions, and they just have to flesh that out. A. Pecora said he understood. S. Orielle stated part of this is going to impact the TIF litigation and their ability to enter an appearance. H. Taft asked before the 5th? S. Orielle said after the 5th because the scheduling deadline and he is not sure if the Judge is going to seek oral arguments on motions for summary judgment, probably not but they aren't sure. H. Taft said he is just asking from Friday to Monday. G. Drew said they are there, why not just hash it out he would like to leave knowing they have a Law Director. H. Taft said he would hate to negotiate things in public with lawyers. D. Werley said they can adjourn into executive session for pending litigation. H. Taft said he can explain where his concern is, the additional services would include litigation, arbitration, and other dispute resolution, contract negotiation with employees with a representative and so forth. It authorizes \$225 an hour but it also says that the Council authorizes the Mayor, and the Director of Law and it cuts the Council off even on initiating litigation or other things and that is where he thinks they may need some amendment. He believes there is plenty of times where the Mayor by themselves has to have the right to direct the Law Director to do something and he is not trying to cut that out but there are certain things where they are defending litigation but where they are initiating litigation and they are initiating litigation that obligates the city to pay money, Council may properly be put in there and should be. A. Pecora said if they would like to have an executive session to specifically talk about the pending litigation which would be right for an executive session, they can have that conversation if they would like. G. Drew said he didn't know how they could because they technically don't have legal counsel at this point. His recommendation would be that they pass this tonight, have legal counsel and if anything, go into executive session on Monday if they need to but if they want changes made to the Ordinance, it can be made down the road. He would like to leave here tonight with a Law Director on the books. God forbid something happen over the weekend and the Mayor needs legal advice. H. Taft said he wants the Law Director approved, that isn't a part of this. A. Pecora said if they would like to address the entire Ordinance on Monday, maybe that would be more appropriate. G. Drew asked if one of their police officers gets in a officer involved shooting in an hour right now and the Mayor needs legal advice, who does he call? They need to have a legal person today which is his position. A. Pecora said if they would like to address

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS
Minutes of the Vermilion City Council Swearing in & Organization Meeting

Minutes of

Meeting

GOVERNMENT FORMS & SUPPLIES 844-224-3338 FORM NO. 10148

Friday, January 2, 2026

Held _____ 20 _____

Section 6 on Monday, they can do that, there may be a clerical error on this document anyway that he didn't like. H. Taft said it is getting late, if they pass this Ordinance then it is an Ordinance that authorizes the Mayor and Law Director to go shove ourselves, he will withdraw this motion and vote for this now with the understanding that they are going to come back and talk about this because it needs to change in his opinion. G. Drew said he was all for that, he just wants to have a Law Director now.

G. Drew MOVED; G. Howell seconded to suspend the rules on Ordinance 2026-4. D. Werley asked what the emergency was. M. Wood read from the Ordinance that it is hereby declared to be an emergency measure necessary for the preservation of the public peace, health, safety, and welfare for the citizens of the City of Vermilion, Ohio. Roll Call Vote 5 YEAS 1 PRESENT (Taft). **MOTION CARRIED.**

G. Drew MOVED; G. Howell seconded to adopt Ordinance 2026-4 and declaring an emergency. Roll Call Vote 5 YEAS; 1 PRESENT (Taft). **MOTION CARRIED.**

ANNOUNCEMENT OF MEETING DATES:

- January 5, 2026 - Vermilion City Council Meeting – 6:00 p.m.
- January 12, 2026 – Vermilion City Council Committee Meeting & Regular Council Meeting – 6:00 p.m.
- January 26, 2026 - Vermilion City Council Meeting – 6:00 p.m.

(All meetings will be held at the Vermilion Municipal Court Complex, 687 Decatur Street, Vermilion, Ohio unless otherwise noted).

ADJOURNMENT:

After no further discussion, J. Lucas adjourned the Vermilion City Council Meeting.

Transcribed by: Melanie Wood, Clerk of Council (January 7, 2026)



City of Vermilion

January 2, 2026
Vermilion City Council
5511 Liberty Avenue
Vermilion, Ohio 44089

Dear Members of Council:

In accordance with the Charter and Codified Ordinances of the City of Vermilion, I am submitting for Council's consideration the following appointments and reappointments to the City's Boards and Commissions.

Our Boards and Commissions play a vital role in advising City Council and the administration, and I appreciate their willingness as volunteers to serve our community. The individuals listed below bring valuable experience, perspective, and dedication to their respective roles.

Civil Service Commission (6 Years will expire December 2031)

- Brenden Kelley - Appointment

Historic Design & Review Board (3 Years will expire December 2028)

- Judy Doll - Reappointment
- Tara Leslie - Reappointment
- Dan Pryor - Reappointment

Parks & Recreation (3 Years will expire December 2028)

- Jim Beatty - Appointment
- Shari Kuhn - Appointment
- Mark Musial - Reappointment
- Tina Swinehart - Reappointment (1 year term will expire December 2026)

Planning Commission (5 Years will expire December 2030)

- Bob Krurty - Appointment

Tree Commission (3 Years will expire December 2028)

- Tim Costello - Reappointment
- Anne Naugle - Reappointment

Board of Zoning Appeals (3 Years will expire December 2028)

- Pete Bahner - Reappointment

Thank you for your continued cooperation and support as we work together in the best interest of the City of Vermilion, Ohio.

Respectfully,

Russell Owens,
Mayor



City of Vermilion

January 2, 2026

Vermilion City Council
5511 Liberty Avenue
Vermilion, Ohio 44089

Dear Members of Council:

Pursuant to Section V-3 of the City Charter, The Director of Public Safety shall be appointed by the Mayor, subject to confirmation by a majority vote of the members of Council, and shall serve at the pleasure of the Mayor; provided, however, that the Mayor may, with the consent of a majority of the members of Council, act as the Director Public Safety.

Therefore, with your approval and consent via a motion, I will elect to serve as Director of Public Safety and will forego any compensation for the position.

Sincerely,

Russell Owens,
Mayor