

**VAN WERT CITY SCHOOLS
BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING MINUTES
Organizational Meeting, Budget Hearing and Regular Meeting
Wednesday, January 14, 2026 - 5:00 p.m.
First Federal Lecture Hall - Niswonger Performing Arts Center
10700 State Route 118 South, Van Wert, OH 45891**

MINUTES

PUBLIC RECORDS COMMISSION MEETING (Board President Pro-Tem, Board Vice-President, Superintendent and Treasurer) – *The Public Records Commission met prior to the organizational meeting to consider the following:*

- A. *Review the records retention schedule – No action taken*
- B. *Consider the recommendation for the disposal of public records – Approval was granted for the disposal of public records as presented.*

ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING:

- I. Opening – **Time In: 5:00 p.m.**
 - A. Welcome by Board President Pro-Tem Anthony Adams
 - B. Oath of Office administered by Treasurer Troy Bowersock to elected Board members:
 - 1. Anthony Adams
 - 2. Gregory Blackmore
 - 3. Thaison Leaser
- II. Board of Education Section
 - A. Call to order and roll call by President Pro-Tem – **Anthony Adams, Greg Blackmore, Julie Burenga, Debby Compton, Thaison Leaser. Others Present – Scott Truxell, Sam Shriver, Mark Bagley, Troy Bowersock, Bob Priest, Justin Bragg, Chuck Rollins, Haley Michaud, Bob Spath, John Marquez, Angela Marquez.**
 - B. Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America – **Recited by attendees in unison**
 - C. District’s Vision / Mission – **Recited by Anthony Adams**

Our Vision

In partnership with our community, Van Wert City Schools will ensure that all students develop the knowledge, skills, and attributes they need to thrive in post-secondary education, careers and civic life.

Our Mission

Van Wert City Schools will continue to be a source of Cougar Pride while providing each student a quality education through innovative instructional methods and technology.

- D. Election of officers

26.01.001

- 1. Nominations for and election of Board President for the 2026 calendar year

Motion was made by Greg Blackmore and seconded by Julie Burenga to nominate Anthony Adams as Board President. Vote: Anthony Adams, yes; Julie Burenga, yes; Greg Blackmore, yes; Debby Compton, yes; Thaison Leaser, yes. Motion carried 5-0.

26.01.002

2. Nominations for and election of Board Vice-President for the 2026 calendar year
Motion was made by Debby Compton and seconded by Thaison Leaser to nominate Julie Burenga as Board Vice-President. Vote: Anthony Adams, yes; Julie Burenga, yes; Greg Blackmore, yes; Debby Compton, yes; Thaison Leaser, yes. Motion carried 5-0.
3. President's acceptance - **Anthony Adams, President Pro-Tem, assumed the role of Board President and presided over the meeting.**

E. Board President Appointment of Board representatives

1. Representative to the Athletic Council – **Julie Burenga**
2. Representative to the District Safety Team – **Greg Blackmore**
3. Representative to VWASIG (Van Wert Area School Insurance Group) – **Anthony Adams**
4. Representative to the Vantage Board of Education – **Debby Compton**
5. Representatives to VWAPAF (Van Wert Area Performing Arts Foundation) – **Greg Blackmore**
6. OSBA (Ohio School Boards Association) Legislative Liaison / Delegate to the OSBA annual Capital Conference – **Anthony Adams**
7. Alternate Delegate to the OSBA annual Capital Conference – **Julie Burenga**
8. Representative to the Neola Policy Development Committee – **Thaison Leaser**

26.01.003

- F. Establish dates, times, and places for regular meetings during the 2026 calendar year.

Motion was made by Greg Blackmore and seconded by Debby Compton to establish Board Meeting dates, times, and places as follows: Dates - February 26, 2026; 4th Wednesday - March through October; 3rd Wednesday - November and December. Times - 5:00 p.m. Places - First Federal Lecture Hall at the Niswonger Performing Arts Center – February through November; S.F. Goedde Buidling Conference Room – December. Center. Vote: Anthony Adams, yes; Julie Burenga, yes; Greg Blackmore, yes; Debby Compton, yes; Thaison Leaser, yes. Motion carried 5-0.

26.01.004

III. Organizational Meeting Consent Resolutions

Motion was made by Julie Burenga and seconded by Thaison Leaser to approve the Organizational Meeting items "A through S" as presented. Vote: Anthony Adams, yes; Julie Burenga, yes; Greg Blackmore, yes; Debby Compton, yes; Thaison Leaser, yes. Motion carried 5-0.

- A. Approve continued membership in the Ohio School Board Association for the calendar year 2026.
- B. The Treasurer will be authorized to request advance draws on tax settlements when available and as needed during the 2026 calendar year.
- C. The Treasurer will be authorized to invest inactive and/or interim funds during the 2026 calendar year.

- D. Approve STAR Ohio, First Federal Savings & Loan, First Financial Bank, First Financial Bank Wealth Management / Yellow Cardinal Advisory Group, Flagstar Bank, and GreenWay Bank as depositories for public funds of the Van Wert City Schools.
- E. Authorization to be given to the Treasurer to pay all bills within the limits of the appropriations resolution as bills are received and when the merchandise has been received in good condition.
- F. The Treasurer is designated to attend the public records training for the school system in compliance with House Bill 9.
- G. Authorize the Superintendent and Treasurer to make certain expenditures on behalf of the Board of Education for staff including dinners, refreshments, and/or gifts.
- H. The Superintendent will be appointed as purchasing agent for all funds except athletic and food service funds for the 2026 calendar year within appropriations as approved by the Board of Education.
- I. The Superintendent or the Superintendent's designee will be authorized to approve the use of school buses for non-routine trips for the 2026 calendar year and to establish bus routes and pick-up points.
- J. The Superintendent is authorized to approve professional meeting attendance for certified and classified staff for the 2026 calendar year.
- K. The Superintendent and Treasurer are authorized to apply for local, state and federal grant programs/funds for the 2026 calendar year.
- L. The Superintendent will be designated as the approving official to review and approve student activity budgets, including 018 Funds.
- M. Authorize the Superintendent to employ substitutes and temporary personnel as needed.
- N. Authorize the Superintendent to hire staff between Board meetings, pending Board approval at the next meeting.
- O. Authorize the Superintendent to accept resignations between Board meetings as follows:

WHEREAS, the Van Wert City School District Board of Education (the "Board") is empowered by the Ohio Revised Code to accept employee resignations; and

WHEREAS, for the purpose of efficient and good management of the schools, the Board wishes to assign to the Superintendent the power to accept resignations.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF EDUCATION OF THE VAN WERT CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT, as follows:

SECTION I

If an employee of the Board of Education tenders his or her resignation, the Superintendent shall be duly authorized to accept such resignation on the Board's behalf. The acceptance of the resignation shall be final and not subject to the Board's approval or ratification.

SECTION II

IT IS FOUND AND DETERMINED that all formal actions of this Board concerning or related to the adoption of this Resolution were adopted in an open meeting of this Board, and all deliberations of this Board and any of its committees that resulted in such formal actions were adopted in meetings open to the public, in compliance with all applicable requirements of the Ohio Revised Code.

- P. The Superintendent will be designated to approve special education cooperative agreements as necessary.
- Q. The Athletic Director will be appointed purchasing agent for athletic account purchases for the 2026 calendar year within appropriations as approved by the Board of Education.

- R. The Food Service Director will be appointed purchasing agent for food service purchasing for the 2026 calendar year within appropriations as approved by the Board of Education.
- S. The Board of Education approves the fiscal year 2027 tax budget per section 5705.28 of the Ohio Revised Code, as well as tax rates and values, as presented and further that the tax budget be filed with the County Auditor prior to January 20, 2026, as required by law.

IV. Public Participation – Brent Stevens – Van Wert Economic Development Corporation – Mr. Stevens provided an update on economic development matters and on the proposed data enter at the Van Wert Mega Site. He also explained the need to expand the Community Reinvestment Area (CRA) to the Mega Site and to extend the CRA tax abatement period from a maximum of 10 years to a maximum of 15 years.

In order for the board to fulfill its obligation to complete the planned agenda in an effective and efficient fashion, a maximum of thirty (30) minutes of public participation will be permitted at each meeting.

Each person addressing the Board will give his/her name and address. If several people wish to speak, each person will be allotted three (3) minutes until the total time of thirty (30) minutes is used. During the period, no person may speak twice until all who desire to speak have had the opportunity to do so. Persons desiring more time should follow the procedure of the Board to be placed on the regular agenda. The period of public participation may be extended by a vote of the majority of the Board.

26.01.005

V. Set Agenda for Regular January 2026 Meeting

Motion was made by Debby Compton and seconded by Greg Blackmore to accept the January 2026 Regular Meeting agenda as presented. Vote: Anthony Adams, yes; Julie Burenga, yes; Greg Blackmore, yes; Debby Compton, yes; Thaison Leaser, yes. Motion carried 5-0.

VI. Curriculum & Instruction (Educational Impact) Presentation

A. John Marquez, Food Service Director – District Food Service program update and discussion.

VII. Board Member Section / Reports from Board Representatives (discussion only)

- A. Vantage Board - *Reviewed the Organizational Board meeting summary report for the December meeting and provided an update on the Vantage Academy of Medical Careers renovation project.*
- B. VWAPAF - *No report*
- C. VWASIG - *Reviewed information from the January VWASIG Trustees meeting that included a financial update.*
- D. Athletic Council - *Reviewed information from recent Athletic Council meeting and provided an update on new sound system in the High School gymnasium.*
- E. Safety Team - *No report*

VIII. Treasurer's Section

Business and Records - Mr. Bowersock shared with the Board of Education the December financial statements, checks issued, summary of cash balances by fund, and monthly revenue and expenditure summary. Mr. Bowersock also reviewed with the Board of Education an updated Eggerss Stadium project budget and discussed the fiscal year 2027 tax budget estimates.

IX. Assistant Superintendent's Section - *Mr. Priest discussed ongoing buildings and grounds, equipment, and maintenance planning to address the district's future needs and provided an update on the High*

School/Middle School chiller project that is underway. Lastly, Priest informed the Board of Education that the district plans to implement for the 2026-2027 school year BusRight, a bus routing and tracking software program.

- X. Superintendent's Section - Mr. Bagley presented certificates to Van Wert Board of Education members lauding them for their exemplary service as part of School Board Recognition Month. He also shared activities taking place throughout the district with a focus on Cougar Pride, and he provided an update on staffing plans for the 2026-2027 school year. Lastly, Bagley closed his report with a legislative update including ongoing property tax reform discussions.

26.01.006

XI. Regular Meeting Consent Resolutions

Motion was made by Julie Burenga and seconded by Debby Compton to approve the Regular Meeting items "A through M" as presented. Vote: Anthony Adams, yes; Julie Burenga, yes; Greg Blackmore, yes; Debby Compton, yes; Thaison Leaser, yes. Motion carried 5-0.

- A. Accept the resignation, due to retirement, of Gregg Scheidt from his position as Director of Maintenance, effective June 30, 2026, as presented.
- B. Approve Evan Okuly as a Custodial-Maintenance Worker, pending all Board policies pertaining to employment are met, effective January 5, 2026, as presented.
- C. Approve Bob Spath as CEO Program Coordinator / Instructor, pending all Board policies pertaining to employment are met, effective the 2026-2027 contract year as presented.
- D. Approve the "Years of Experience Salary Schedule Placement" Memorandum of Understanding between the Van Wert City School District Board of Education and the Van Wert Federation of Teachers, effective January 14, 2026, as presented.
- E. Approve requests for early completion of graduation requirements for two high school students as presented.
- F. Approve the minutes from the December 17, 2025 regular Board meeting as presented.
- G. Approve the monthly financial report as presented by the Treasurer.
- H. Approve an overnight trip for 26 students and 2 adults for the Advanced Placement (AP) Government class to travel to the Ohio Statehouse on January 22-23, 2026, as presented.
- I. Approve the purchase of one(1) 84 passenger Transit bus from Cardinal Bus Sales via the Southwestern Ohio Educational Purchasing Council bid process for the purchase price, less Bus #1 trade-in, of \$150,244.00 as presented.
- J. Approve a resolution to establish and fund a Capital Projects Fund (070-9023) pursuant to R.C. 5705.13(C) as presented.
- K. Approve the amendments to the fiscal year 2026 Permanent Appropriations totaling \$37,327,646.44 as presented.
- L. Approve the following" then and now certificate." It is hereby certified that both at the time of the making of this order and at the date of the execution of this certificate the amount required to pay this order has been appropriated for the purpose of the order and is in the treasury or in the process of collection to the credit of the fund, free from any previous encumbrance. I recommend that the following invoices \$3,000.00 and over be authorized for payment by the Van Wert City Board of Education:

Vendor - World's Finest Chocolate - 12/5/2025 - \$5,520.00

- M. Accept the following generous donations to the Van Wert City Schools from:
- 1. Evergreen Garden Club - \$100.00 to High School Choir
 - 2. StateWide Ford - \$290.00 to Van Wert Elementary School Wellness
 - 3. First Federal of Van Wert - \$125.00 to Masque & Gavel

4. Bee Gee Realty & Auction Co. - \$100.00 to Masque & Gavel
5. Slusher Jewelry - \$64.00 to Van Wert Elementary School Activity Fund
6. Jeffery-Mohr Dentistry - \$64.00 to Van Wert Elementary School Activity Fund
7. Cooper Farms - \$50.00 to Masque & Gavel
8. Edward Jones - \$100.00 to Masque & Gavel
9. Citizens National Bank - \$100.00 to Tri County ADAMHS
10. The Van Wert County Foundation - \$7,800.00 on behalf of the following grant funds:
 - a. John D. and Nellie S. Ault Memorial Fund - \$3,500.00 to Seconds Count Safety Grant
 - b. John D. and Nellie S. Ault Memorial Fund - \$2,300.00 to The Go Green on Wheels Journey
 - c. John D. and Nellie S. Ault Memorial Fund - \$2,000.00 to Van Wert High School Robotics
11. Edward Jones - Trevor Webster - \$1,834.00 to Eggerss Stadium Project - Legacy Donation
12. Trevor & Whitney Webster - \$10,000.00 to Eggerss Stadium Project - Legacy Donation
13. Denise Blackburn - \$500.00 to Eggerss Stadium Paver Tribute
14. Sharon Baer - \$250.00 to Eggerss Stadium Paver Tribute
15. Lori Fast - \$250.00 to Eggerss Stadium Paver Tribute
16. Rick Bachman - \$1,000.00 to Eggerss Stadium Paver Tribute
17. Richard & Maria Riley - \$1,000.00 to Eggerss Stadium Paver Tribute
18. Tisha Fast Insurance Agency Inc. - \$125.00 to Masque & Gavel
19. Unverferth Family Dentistry Inc. - \$100.00 to Masque & Gavel
20. Van Wert Warehouse LLC - \$125.00 to Masque & Gavel
21. Tisha Fast Insurance Agency Inc./State Farm - \$125.00 to Van Wert Middle School DC Fund
22. Black Mark Mafia LLC - \$200.00 to High School Students of Need Fund
23. Black Mark Mafia LLC - \$200.00 to Elementary School Students of Need Fund
24. United Way of Van Wert County, Inc. - \$1,534.50 to Van Wert School at the Goedde
25. United Way of Van Wert County, Inc. - \$3,750.00 to Family and Children First

XII. This is to inform the Board of Education that the following employee will be advanced on the payscale, due to additional college coursework, effective the second semester of the 2025-2026 academic year:

A. Rachel Cheney - Master's+15 to Master's+30

XIII. Acknowledge notification from the City of Van Wert of a residential CRA application as presented:

A. Heidi Kline / The Landing Place, 413-A & 413-B Race St., Van Wert, OH 45891

26.01.007

XIV. Executive Session

A. Motion to go into Executive Session pursuant to Ohio Revised Code Section 121.22(G)(1) and 121.22(G)(8), for the purpose of discussing the employment of public personnel and for the purpose to consider certain confidential information, including trade secrets, of applicants for certain types of economic development assistance, or negotiations with other political subdivisions concerning such applications.

Motion was made by Greg Blackmore and seconded by Debby Compton to go into executive session at 6:16 p.m. for the purpose of discussing the employment of public personnel and for the purpose to consider certain confidential information, including trade secrets, of applicants for certain types of economic development assistance, or negotiations with other political subdivisions concerning such applications. Vote: Anthony Adams, yes; Julie Burenga, yes; Greg Blackmore, yes; Debby Compton, yes; Thaison Leaser, yes. Motion carried 5-0.

Meeting reconvened at 7:09 p.m.

26.01.008

XV. Adjournment

Motion was made by Greg Blackmore and seconded by Julie Burenga to adjourn the Meeting at 7:10 p.m. Vote: Ayes - 5; Nays – 0

Next Meeting Date

The next scheduled regular Board meeting will be held on Thursday, February 26, 2026 at 5:00 p.m. The meeting will be in the First Federal Lecture Hall at the Niswonger Performing Arts Center.

Board President

Fiscal Officer