CITY OF VAN BUREN
CITY COUNCIL MINUTES
September 14, 2026
Van Buren City Hall – 1401 Main Street

The City Council of the City of Van Buren met in regular session on Tuesday August 11, 2026, at the City Hall. Mayor John Bailiff presided and called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm.

Roll call by the City Clerk, with the following members present: Mayor John Bailiff, Aldernab Heath Grassham, Vince Holt, and Jonathan Hughes.

Others present: City Clerk Cori Pogue, City Supervisor Randall Jenkins.

Visitors present: Ricki Maples, Donald Black, OFRPC: Rachel Coleman, Smith and CO: Justin Roberts, Brian Zook, Winston Reed

OFRPC: Rachel Coleman
Weather Radar and Delta Regional Authority (DRA) Grant:

• Project Funding, Budget Allocation, and Fiscal Constraints: ◦ The total estimated cost for the installation and completion of the weather radar system is approximately $2,000,000.
◦ State appropriations funding remains available as a leftover balance after the primary DRA grant funds are applied to the project.
◦ The city has designated a portion of this remaining state appropriations money to be placed into a separate, dedicated maintenance account. This account will specifically cover long-term maintenance, operational costs, and repairs once the weather radar is fully installed and active.
◦ The state funding mechanism operates on a strict fiscal year timeline, running from July 1st to June 30th.
◦ The entire project must be completed by June of next year, as unspent state appropriation funds are subject to "use-it-or-lose-it" rules and will not be refunded or rolled over to the following fiscal year.
◦ The DRA grant timeline dictates a strict completion window of 12 months from the date of official contract signing.
◦ Once a specific property is selected and agreed upon, the city must initiate the legal Uniform Act process. This process mandates that a formal letter of intent to purchase must be sent to the landowner via certified mail or hand-delivered to City Hall with a signed physical receipt.
◦ The current proposed site is situated in the county, outside of the official city limits. County officials have reviewed the proposal and confirmed that a county location is acceptable and does not require annexation by the city.
◦ The structural plan requires the radar to be built on a 20-foot by 20-foot (20x20) structure situated at the highest elevations near Eastwood to maximize range and effectiveness.
◦ This radar placement is designed to eliminate a critical regional "dead zone," which will effectively leave only a narrow six-mile gap around Dexter.

1. MOTION by Holt, seconded by Grassham, to formally agree to accept a regional development grant from the Delta Regional Authority (DRA) for the purpose of acquiring, constructing, and installing a high-capacity weather radar system.

All in favor, motion passed.

Smith and Co: Justin Roberts

Mr. Roberts gave the council an update on the Paving and Sidewalk Projects.
-Paving Project:
◦ The engineering paving plan sheets are currently estimated to be approximately 90% complete.
◦ Several remaining cleanup items must be addressed before the plans are finalized. These include right-of-way easement work, concrete and asphalt separation under the bridge, and concrete and asphalt separation near the McDonald's restaurant.
◦ Complete project specifications are currently being drafted by the city's designated engineer. These specs will be submitted for final review, administrative approval, and public advertisement within the next month.
◦ Construction is scheduled to begin in the spring of next year. The bidding documents will explicitly notify all participating contractors of this timeline so they can schedule equipment and crews accordingly.
-Sidewalk Project:
◦ The city decided to maintain the original alignment from the McDonald's/ Industrial Drive intersection down to the local school.
◦ The designated path will run along the north side of the road, cross over before the Ozark Borders driveway, notch out the back side of the hill and the pond retention area, and continue along the south side of the road.
◦ Two specific sections of the proposed sidewalk are located within a designated floodplain/floodway, which legally prevents them from receiving or utilizing Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds.
◦ Section 1: This segment is located near Red Station where the concrete box culvert runs directly under the highway, spanning approximately 350 feet. MoDOT (Missouri Department of Transportation) has agreed to take responsibility for and fund this specific section.
◦ Section 2: This segment is located on the east end of College Street past the gym, running approximately 300 to 400 feet from the low-water crossing up to the Elmo/Sycamore/Joyce intersection.
◦ The city is aggressively pursuing a Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) grant to fund these two problematic sections.
◦ TAP grants require an 80/20 matching structure, where the federal government covers 80% and the city covers 20%. The city's 20% match must be funded through straight cash rather than in-kind services.
◦ The engineering requirements for retaining walls or ADA-compliant ramps in these low-lying areas could significantly drive up the total project cost.

2. MOTION by Holt, seconded by Hughes, TO APPROVE THE COUNCIL MINUTES OF August 11, 2026 AS PRESENTED.

All in favor, motion passed.

3. MOTION by Grassham, seconded by Hughes, TO APPROVE THE COUNCIL MINUTES OF August 19, 2026 AS PRESENTED.

All in favor, motion passed.

4. MOTION by Hughes, seconded by Grassham, APPROVE THE BILLS PAYABLE AS FOLLOWS: GENERAL FUND 1-7, POLICE DEPT. 1-6, CAP IMP 1-2, FIRE DEPT. 1-7,, METER DEPOSIT 1-2, AND W/S FUND 1-16 AS PRESENTED.

All in favor, motion passed.

5. MOTION by Holt, seconded by Grassham, TO APPROVE AUGUST 2026 FINANCIAL STATEMENT.

All in favor, motion passed.

6. MOTION by Grassham, seconded by Hughes, TO APPROVE PURCHASING E-CODE AND GETTING THE CITY CODE BOOK ONTO THE CITY WEBSITE.

All in favor, motion passed.

Ricki Maples/Donald Black:

Festival update:
- Upcoming Community Festival Preparations:
  - Main Street will be decorated with straw bales and mums.
  - An informational planning meeting for local business owners and participating organizations will be held at the community center on the 17th.
  - Festival organizers plan to meet with the state highway patrol sergeant and local police chiefs to finalize a comprehensive security plan.
  - Organizers requested electrical upgrades in the park to safely accommodate food vendors who require high-draw 50-amp electrical service.
  - The specific requested installation consists of two 50-amp plugs and one 30-amp plug.
  - Confirmed motorcycle groups include "Bikers for Christ" and the "Risen Riders" from Pocahontas.
  - A praise band from a church in Jackson is scheduled to perform on the main day stage.
  - The festival committee has secured eight golf carts from Creech's Golf Carts to shuttle older and disabled attendees up and down the hill.

City Supervisor Randall Jenkins's Report:
- • Well Property (Gibbs Property) Access Road:
  - Large rocks used to block the access road near the water tower were moved by heavy construction and concrete trucks during recent work.

◦ This has resulted in the public utilizing the utility road as a regular through street, leading to numerous noise and traffic complaints from local residents.
◦ Decision: Re-install the heavy rocks to block the throughway immediately, with long-term plans to install a permanent gate or larger physical barrier.
- • Well Fence and Road Washout Issues:
◦ Heavy trucks driving through the well property have severely compacted and sloped the ground.
◦ During heavy rains, water runoff will wash out the soil directly beneath the well fence because the ground is no longer level.
◦ A bulldozer was used to temporarily level the site, but a substantial load of rock must be hauled in and spread to physically prevent vehicles from driving on the area.
- • Crass Property and Sewer Treatment Plant Access Control:
◦ Dennis completed cleanup work on the Crass property, which has inadvertently made the area easily accessible to unauthorized vehicles.
◦ Members of the public are driving vehicles directly next to the pond located behind the sewer treatment plant.
◦ One side of this entrance can be blocked using existing large rocks.
◦ A gate can be installed near the shop utilizing an existing gate currently stored on site, which only requires setting a new post.
- • Airport Gate and Runway Trespassing:
◦ The current airport gate is hanging on an old, decaying wooden tie and requires immediate replacement.
◦ Dedicated funds are available to replace the gate, and the new installation should utilize a secure electronic keypad lock.
◦ Unauthorized members of the public are currently driving and walking on the active runway and airstrip.
- • Wastewater Project Bidding Timeline:
◦ The wastewater project has officially gone to advertisement for bid, which must run in public media for a minimum of two weeks.
◦ A pre-bid meeting is scheduled for the 22nd.
◦ Bid opening is scheduled for October 13th.
◦ The city discussed purchasing a bulk water station where users can buy water. Unit prices range from $4,000 to $50,000 depending on features.

7. MOTION by Grassham, seconded by Holt, TO ACCEPT BOBBY BARNES RESIGNATION FROM COUNCIL.

All in favor, motion passed.

8. MOTION by Grassham, seconded by Hughes, TO ELECT VINE HOLT AS MAYOR PRO-TEM.

All in favor, motion passed.

8. MOTION by Holt, seconded by Hughes, TO ADJORN MEETING @7:55 P.M

All in favor, motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,

John Bailiff, Mayor

Vince Holt

Jonathan Hughes

Heath Grassham

Cori Pogue, City Clerk