

Legislative Session Minutes

December 8, 2025

HR ONBOARDING 6:10 - 6:30 P.M.

2026 Council Members will meet with Human Resources to complete onboarding paperwork during this time. (Here for informational purposes only. Onboarding is not streamed or open).

COMMITTEE MEETINGS

**Committee Meeting Schedule
December 8, 2025**

6:30 - 6:40 p.m.	Executive Committee Meeting on Acceptance of Property	Land Use & Development - Keener
6:40 - 6:45 p.m.	Acceptance of Donated Property (Res. 125)	Land Use & Development - Keener
6:45 - 6:55 p.m.	Founders Grove CRA	Land Use & Development - Keener
6:55 - 7:15 p.m.	Shade Tree Commission	Parks & Recreation - Hager

- Council Committee Schedule 2025-12-08

RESULT: ANNOUNCED

MEETING WILL RECESS UNTIL 7:30 P.M.

CALL TO ORDER

Attendee	Title	Status
Janis Seavolt	At Large	Present
Amber Keener	At Large	Present
Mel Severns	Councilman	Present
James Mahan	First Ward	Present
John Ruckman	Second Ward	Present
LeNan Hager		Present
Bruce Hawkins	President	Present
Tammy Woods	Third Ward	Excused

Seavolt made a motion to excuse Woods. Seconded by Hager. Excused by unanimous voice vote.

INVOCATION

Invocation given by Pastor Rick Graumlich, Proclamation Church, Mount Vernon Police Chaplain

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

All recited in unison.

ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

- City Council - Legislative Session - Nov 24, 2025 7:30 PM

Seavolt made a motion to accept the minutes from Nov. 24. Hager seconded. Accepted by unanimous voice vote.

RESULT:	ACCEPTED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Janis Seavolt, At Large
SECONDER:	LeNan Hager
AYES:	Seavolt, Keener, Severns, Mahan, Ruckman, Hager
EXCUSED:	Woods

RECEIVE PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS

RECEIVE COMMITTEE REPORTS

Committee reports received without comment.

- Executive Session Minutes 2025-11-24

RESULT:	ANNOUNCED
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- Streets and Public Buildings Minutes 2025-11-24A

RESULT:	ANNOUNCED
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- Streets and Public Buildings Minutes 2025-11-24B

RESULT:	ANNOUNCED
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- Utilities Minutes 2025-11-24A

RESULT:	ANNOUNCED
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- Utilities Minutes 2025-11-24B

RESULT:	ANNOUNCED
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LIQUOR CONTROL LICENSE

PROCLAMATION

PERSONS SPEAKING ON MATTERS OF CITY CONCERN

Mr. Mike Hillier addressed council, saying that he has a property next to his home with a duplex. He is charged a minimum water fee for each household. He says this is excessive because the duplex does not use that much water, and would like to be charged only for actual water usage. He took his concerns to the Utilities Commission in March and again at their last meeting, but was told the charges are according to policy. He noted that these are regulations,

not ORC, so can be changed easily. He asked Mr. Salyers what the estimated revenue from the water rate increase would be. Mr. Salyers did not have that exact breakdown of numbers readily available.

RESOLUTIONS FOR THIRD READING

RESOLUTION NO. 2025-118

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE SAFETY-SERVICE DIRECTOR TO ADVERTISE FOR BIDS AND ENTER INTO CONTRACT FOR THE MANSFIELD AVE AND COTTAGE ST SANITARY IMPROVEMENTS PROJECT; AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

Utilities: Ruckman, Hager

Ruckman made a motion to adopt Resolution 2025-118. Hager seconded. Ruckman referenced the committee meeting on 11/24/2025 and the clarity it provided. Adopted by unanimous roll call vote.

RESULT:	ADOPTED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	John Ruckman, Second Ward
SECONDER:	LeNan Hager
AYES:	Seavolt, Keener, Severns, Mahan, Ruckman, Hager
EXCUSED:	Woods

RESOLUTION NO. 2025-122

A RESOLUTION TO MAKE APPROPRIATIONS FOR CURRENT EXPENSES FOR THE CITY OF MOUNT VERNON, STATE OF OHIO, DURING FISCAL YEAR ENDING, DECEMBER 31, 2026.

Finance and Budget: Seavolt, Woods

Seavolt made a motion to adopt Resolution 2025-122. Keener seconded. Auditor Brinkman said that he and the treasurer find the increase to be conservative, 6%, and that increase is lower than other years. An additional \$15,000 grant was received that day, and another piece of legislation will add that to the year's appropriations. Safety-Service Director Salyers said that in the past, the city passed an interim budget and then a supplementary budget a few months later. This creates twice the work. So, including last year, he has put forth a single budget for the year for approval. It lets the city be more proactive and better positioned at the start of the year, especially when going to bid on projects. He also noted that the water fund has an appropriation of about \$6 million dollars.

Adopted by unanimous roll call vote.

RESULT:	ADOPTED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Janis Seavolt, At Large
SECONDER:	Amber Keener, At Large
AYES:	Seavolt, Keener, Severns, Mahan, Ruckman, Hager
EXCUSED:	Woods

RESOLUTIONS FOR SECOND READING

RESOLUTION NO. 2025-125

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE SAFETY SERVICE DIRECTOR TO ACCEPT THE DONATION OF PROPERTY FROM THE KNOX COUNTY

LAND REUTILIZATION CORPORATION; AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

Land Use and Development: Keener, Mahan

Keener made a motion to suspend the rules and take Resolution 2025-125 to its third and final reading. Mahan seconded. Rules suspended by unanimous roll call vote. Keener made a motion to adopt Resolution 2025-125. Mahan seconded. Adopted by unanimous roll call vote.

RESULT:	ADOPTED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Amber Keener, At Large
SECONDER:	James Mahan, First Ward
AYES:	Seavolt, Keener, Severns, Mahan, Ruckman, Hager
EXCUSED:	Woods

RESOLUTIONS FOR FIRST READING

RESOLUTION NO. 2025-129

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE SAFETY-SERVICE DIRECTOR TO DISPOSE OF VEHICLES IN THE POLICE DEPARTMENT NOT NEEDED FOR PUBLIC USE BY THE CITY OF MOUNT VERNON; AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

Finance and Budget: Seavolt, Woods

Seavolt made a motion to suspend the rules and take Resolution 2025-129 to its third and final reading. Keener seconded. Rules suspended by unanimous roll call vote. Seavolt made a motion to adopt Resolution 2025-129. Keener seconded. President Hawkins reminded Council that any legislation which is not passed by the end of the meeting on Dec. 22, 2025 will automatically expire (*sine die*). Police Chief Morgan gave an overview of the vehicles, noting that one was a former detective care that needs to be replaced. Proceeds from vehicle sales are reinvested into the police department. Adopted by unanimous roll call vote.

RESULT:	ADOPTED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Janis Seavolt, At Large
SECONDER:	Amber Keener, At Large
AYES:	Seavolt, Keener, Severns, Mahan, Ruckman, Hager
EXCUSED:	Woods

RESOLUTION NO. 2025-130

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE SAFETY-SERVICE DIRECTOR OF THE CITY OF MOUNT VERNON TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT TO ACQUIRE IN WHOLE OR IN PART TWO PARCELS OF PROPERTY LOCATED WITHIN THE CITY OF MOUNT VERNON; AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

Land Use and Development: Keener, Mahan

Keener made a motion to suspend the rules and take Resolution 2025-130 to its third and final reading. Mahan seconded. Rules suspended by unanimous roll call vote. Keener made a motion to adopt Resolution 2025-130. Mahan seconded. Safety Service Director Salyers noted that this legislation is for two pieces of property that are

part of a private stormwater system. Nearby businesses will be able to utilize the stormwater system, paying for the use and upkeep, and setting aside money for the land's eventual rehabilitation.
Adopted by unanimous roll call vote.

RESULT:	ADOPTED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Amber Keener, At Large
SECONDER:	James Mahan, First Ward
AYES:	Seavolt, Keener, Severns, Mahan, Ruckman, Hager
EXCUSED:	Woods

RESOLUTION NO. 2025-131

A RESOLUTION TO AUTHORIZE AMENDMENTS TO THE CITY OF MOUNT VERNON, KNOX COUNTY, OHIO NATURAL GAS AGGREGATION PLAN OF OPERATION AND GOVERNANCE; AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

Utilities: Ruckman, Hager

Ruckman gave Resolution 2025-131 a second reading, and requested a 15-minute committee meeting on Dec. 22.

RESULT:	SECOND READING	Next: 12/22/2025 7:30 PM
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RESOLUTION NO. 2025-132

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING AND DIRECTING THE SAFETY SERVICE DIRECTOR OF THE CITY OF MOUNT VERNON, OHIO, TO ACQUIRE AXON ENTERPRISE, INC. TASER 10 HANDHELD CONDUCTED ENERGY DEVICES AND RELATED EQUIPMENT AND SERVICES FOR THE MOUNT VERNON POLICE DEPARTMENT, AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

Fire, Police and Civil Defense: Mahan, Seavolt

Mahan made a motion to suspend the rules and take Resolution 2025-132 to its third and final reading. Seavolt seconded. Rules suspended by unanimous roll call vote. Mahan made a motion to adopt Resolution 2025-132. Seavolt seconded. Police Chief Morgan said that current tasers are from 2014 and are at the end of their useful life. Approving the purchase of the taser now is beneficial because the price will increase by 12% on January 1. Adopted by unanimous roll call vote.

RESULT:	ADOPTED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	James Mahan, First Ward
SECONDER:	Janis Seavolt, At Large
AYES:	Seavolt, Keener, Severns, Mahan, Ruckman, Hager
EXCUSED:	Woods

RESOLUTION NO. 2025-133

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING AND DIRECTING THE AUDITOR OF THE CITY OF MOUNT VERNON TO CREATE AN ADDITIONAL EXPENSE LINE PURSUANT TO O.R.C. 5705.09(F), MAKE A SUPPLEMENTAL

APPROPRIATION TO THE NEW LINE; AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

Finance and Budget: Seavolt, Woods

Seavolt made a motion to suspend the rules and take Resolution 2025-133 to its third and final reading. Keener seconded. Rules suspended by unanimous roll call vote. Seavolt made a motion to adopt Resolution 2025-133. Keener seconded. Auditor Brinkman noted that this line and appropriation is for a \$15,000 grant from the Knox County Foundation for Mental Health Recovery. Adopted by unanimous roll call vote.

RESULT:	ADOPTED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Janis Seavolt, At Large
SECONDER:	Amber Keener, At Large
AYES:	Seavolt, Keener, Severns, Mahan, Ruckman, Hager
EXCUSED:	Woods

RESOLUTION NO. 2025-134

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING AND DIRECTING THE AUDITOR OF THE CITY OF MOUNT VERNON TO MAKE SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS AND TRANSFER CERTAIN FUNDS.

Finance and Budget: Seavolt, Woods

Seavolt made a motion to suspend the rules and take Resolution 2025-134 to its third and final reading. Keener seconded. Rules suspended by unanimous roll call vote. Seavolt made a motion to adopt Resolution 2025-134. Keener seconded. Auditor Brinkman noted that the \$108,000 is to straighten out lines having to do with bonds. The increase to wastewater appropriations is a reflection of revenue received for scrapped metal. Adopted by unanimous roll call vote.

RESULT:	ADOPTED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Janis Seavolt, At Large
SECONDER:	Amber Keener, At Large
AYES:	Seavolt, Keener, Severns, Mahan, Ruckman, Hager
EXCUSED:	Woods

ORDINANCES FOR THIRD READING

ORDINANCE NO. 2025-34

AN ORDINANCE ESTABLISHING ANNUAL WASTEWATER RATE ADJUSTMENTS FOR CALENDAR YEARS 2026, 2027, AND 2028.

Utilities: Ruckman, Hager

Ruckman made a motion to adopt Ordinance 2025-34. Hager seconded. Ruckman noted that a considerable amount of study and time has gone into the recommendation for this increase.

Safety-Service Director Salyers said that the standard practice in municipalities is to charge a capacity and usage fee. Compared to other municipalities, Mount Vernon is about middle-of-the-road in its charges. However, the city provided a large amount of water as its minimum to users (about 3,000 gallons/month). He compared Mount Vernon to a variety of other cities, noting that the larger a city is, the less it can charge for water. If the minimum water usage was lowered, it may impact the water plants operations, but a study would need to be conducted to determine that.

Adopted by unanimous roll call vote.

RESULT:	ADOPTED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	John Ruckman, Second Ward
SECONDER:	LeNan Hager
AYES:	Seavolt, Keener, Severns, Mahan, Ruckman, Hager
EXCUSED:	Woods

ORDINANCE NO. 2025-37

AN ORDINANCE APPROVING THE EXECUTION OF A COMMUNITY REINVESTMENT AREA AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE CITY OF MOUNT VERNON AND FOUNDERS GROVE, LLC.

Land Use and Development: Keener, Mahan

Keener made a motion to adopt Ordinance 2025-37. Mahan seconded. Keener noted that the next step is the public hearing on Dec. 22. Adopted by unanimous roll call vote.

RESULT:	ADOPTED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Amber Keener, At Large
SECONDER:	James Mahan, First Ward
AYES:	Seavolt, Keener, Severns, Mahan, Ruckman, Hager
EXCUSED:	Woods

ORDINANCES FOR SECOND READING

ORDINANCES FOR FIRST READING

ORDINANCE NO. 2025-38

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 187 OF THE CODIFIED ORDINANCES OF THE CITY OF MOUNT VERNON, OHIO; AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

Finance and Budget: Seavolt, Woods

Seavolt gave Ordinance 2025-38 its first reading.

RESULT:	FIRST READING	Next: 12/22/2025 7:30 PM
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REMARKS FROM THE ADMINISTRATION

Mayor Starr noted that swearing in for 2026 Council will be on Dec. 22 at 7:15 p.m. Currently, the city is rolling out new onboarding systems for Council. The Shade Tree and Beautification Committee has provided hundreds of hours of volunteer work in the city, which has a rough value of \$80,000. This investment of the community in the community is a great example of a place being "for the people and by the people."

Safety-Service Director Salyers thanked everyone for their work on the budget.

Auditor Brinkman thanked everyone for their work on the budget, and wished Janis Seavolt and Tammy Woods well.

Law Director Broeren praised the street department on their work during the recent winter weather event. He reminded all residents that shoveling sidewalks is a requirement.

REMARKS FROM COUNCIL

Hager thanked SSD Salyers and Mayor Starr for their work on the budget, and thanked Zac Sherman for his work as Clerk of Council.

Severns thanked everyone for their work on the budget.

Keener noted that the budget process has been smooth and clear. Thanked Salyers for walking Council through water numbers, noting that Council and administration will be paying the increases alongside other residents.

Mahan said that he felt that Council was catching up on water rates. But in the future, he would prefer smaller increases, and will push for such.

Seavolt said that this was the easiest budget process in fourteen years, thanking all who were involved. Snow removal was quick and efficient. The Christmas Parade was a nice event. She said it has been a great honor serving alongside everyone.

ADJOURN AT THE CALL OF THE PRESIDENT

Seavolt made a motion to adjourn. Keener seconded. Adjourned by unanimous voice vote at 8:38 p.m.

Bruce E. Hawkins, President of Council

Zachary Sherman, Clerk of Council

CD on file/th