

**Town of Vernon
Vernon Gym
Regular Meeting (6:30 PM)
March 12, 2026**

Regular Meeting: The Town of Vernon Council meeting at the Vernon Gym, 29 Washington Street, Vernon, Indiana 47282, was called to order by Mayor Brad Bender at 6:30 PM.

Town Officials and employees present:

- I. Call to Order Pledge and roll call, Amber - absent, Marshal - vacant**
- II. Approval of minutes**

Mayor Bender asked if there were any comments or corrections to the February, 2026 Council minutes and recommended approval, minutes were read out loud as all had not been able to view them.

Jeff made a motion to approve the 2025 minutes with the reclamation changed to reconstruction, John seconded.

2 Yes votes, 0 No votes

- III. Petitions or comments by the members of the public present: No one present, comments were made that this was the first time ever for this to happen.**

- IV. Reports from Committees and Officers**

A. Brad Bender - Mayor Presented the new Sewer rate ordinance for signatures. Talked about an AIM meeting he attended about the new funding for counties. The gym continues to be busy and Brad asked for a sign-up sheet to get more volunteers to take a night at the open gym.

B. John Post - Council Ward 1 Tarp house has not been on show cause hearings. John talked to the building inspector who had talked to him in December and gave him until the end of March to complete the tasks and work to bring it into good standing. The house at 119 Pike Street, John does not like the idea of splitting the lot in two and having a separate living quarters. The mayor had met with him and told him if he wanted it divided, he would have to go to BZA and wanted the town to pay for some of the costs, which was promptly refused. Rezoning would have to go through the Area Plan. Hendershot suggested asking the city if the capacity fees are still the same.

C. Jeff Walker - Council Ward 2 Active - Transportation Committee has someone to ask the City and Town for letters of support and also Madison RR. Spring Tonic is coming up and he asked the VVFD if they are having a spaghetti dinner the night before and they have agreed to this. Wyatt Madden will be doing some volunteer work to get his hours counted for a scout project. Historical Society will be hosting Voices and Votes at Travis Shepherd's building and want to do 3 events before it opens.

D. Amber Fields – Council Ward 3 - absent

E. Mary Jo Bender – Clerk Treasurer - Nothing to report.

F. Brad Kage - Attorney - Nothing to report.

G. Britt Burgmeier – Marshal - resigned October 2025

I. Steven Pennycuff - Fire Chief - Asked about trying to get access to the link to apply for a Jennings County Community Foundation grant. They can't get the link to open; will try another route. May 16, 2026 is first craft show, May 30, 2026 is a golf tournament fundraiser and is taking sponsors and looking for teams at \$200 per team. Thanked the Town for help with getting the generator set and was very appreciative of the help.

J. Ron Hendershot - Biehle replaced floats on Commons lift stations and hopefully will keep the system working. SCADA has said we need different log-ins to access this so Ron will look into this, he is wondering if the fee has been paid since he is not able to access it.

V. Unfinished Business

- a. Next Level Trails grant - Paperwork accepted and in the final stages of closeout.
- b. OCRA Sewer Project, Final Change order accepted, 10436.54, used not made in America valves and saved 6K+ and a few months. Jeff motioned to accept the final change order. John seconded. All in favor. \$58,141.62 is pay app #4, Jeff motioned to accept Pay App #4 and John seconded. All in favor. Pay app #5 is retainage in the amount of \$42,754.93. Jeff motioned to accept this final pay app for retainage and John seconded. All in favor.
- c. SS4A grant in the amount of 125,000 but the town wanted to keep match money around \$12,500. They suggested keeping in budget by accepting in kind donations to reach the match money that is needed to receive the full amount. Jeff made a motion to accept based on the parameters laid out for the in-kind contributions. John seconded. All in favor.
- d. Park Board 5-year plan - Jeff attended the meeting and reported that Wayne is moving forward with the plan in time for submission. They will have another meeting to finalize before submitting.
- e. Gym restrooms - plans went to the State today.

VI. New Business

- a. Warming kitchen- Jeff has been in contact with Subaru grant and will be submitting by March 31, 2026 as that is the deadline. All of what we are asking for is under their guidelines. Grant would be for \$15,000 and our in-kind contribution would be from demolition and sponsors. Jeff is very hopeful that this will come to fruition.
- b. Oddfellows building - Historic Landmarks wants JCHS to partner with 6 other museums to pursue a grant that would allow them to purchase and start renovations on said building. Feasibility study will address use. Hoping for the best for this collaboration.
- c. First and Last is promoting food trucks on Tuesdays at their location. The first one will be March 14th.
- d. Ribbon Cutting for the Cook and Go kitchen
- e. Spring Cleaning April 11, 2026...will order a dumpster for this event.
- f. Sassafras Festival 4/24/26, Mayor asks for Pike Street between Brown and Ripley closed for this event, John made a motion to close the street for the event, Jeff seconded. All in favor.
- g. Vernon Health Fest and VVFD craft fair are both on May 16, 2026. It's going to be a big event.

VII. Claims

- a. Jeff made a motion to approve the claims, John seconded the motion.

2 Yes votes, 0 No votes

VIII. Miscellaneous Business

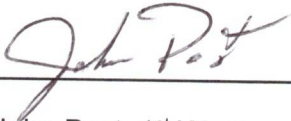
- a. Marshall's truck - town needs to make a decision, Brad Kage said it would need to be sold at a public auction or by sealed bids and take the most responsible bids. It would need to be stripped down if sold to anyone other than another police type entity. Brad recommended tabling until a full council is available for a vote. John questions getting rid of the truck and then having to supply another marshal with a vehicle. The mayor wants to make the marshal ceremonial but is that even a possibility? Budget constraints may dictate what will happen. John motioned to table this until the next meeting. Jeff seconded, all in favor.
- b. Mower - the possibility of selling the truck to buy the mower was suggested, will get quotes from another one or two businesses to compare prices.
- c. Interns - Trish Speer is looking into Earn Indiana money to pay for summer help. If not going on to higher education, they may not qualify for the program

- IX. Adjournment** - John motioned to adjourn @7:47 pm, Jeff seconded.

2 Yes votes, 0 No votes

- a. **Next Regular Meeting:** The next Regular Vernon Town Council Meeting will be Thursday, April 9, 2026, at the Vernon Gym, 29 Washington Street, Vernon, Indiana 47282. The Regular meeting will begin at 6:30 PM.

Vernon Town Council



John Post, 1st Ward

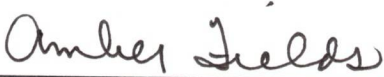


Bradley Bender, Mayor

Jeff Walker, 2nd Ward



Attest: Mary Jo Bender, Clerk



Amber Fields, 3rd Ward