



Meeting minutes

1. Call Meeting to Order

Mayor David Spesia called the Coal City Village Board Meeting to order on Wednesday, May 27, 2026 at 7:00 PM. Mayor Spesia noted that Agenda Item 6 (Presentation of Officer of the Year Award) would be moved up and heard immediately following the Pledge of Allegiance. A roll call was conducted with Trustee Dave Togliatti, Trustee Dan Greggain, Trustee Pam Noffsinger, Trustee Ross Bradley, Trustee Bill Mincey and Trustee CJ Lauterbur present. Also in attendance were Village Attorney Katie Nagy, Ryan Hansen from Chamlin Engineering, Chief Mike Imhof and Matt Fritz, Village Administrator.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Mayor Spesia.

3. Presentation of Officer of the Year Award

Prior to the regular order of business, Chief of Police Mike Imhof presented the inaugural 2025 Officer of the Year Award, a new peer-nominated recognition he introduced during his first year with the department. Chief Imhof explained that the award is intentionally distinct from existing performance-based honors, instead focusing on intangible qualities such as teamwork, professionalism, leadership, self-motivation, and community relationships. Sixteen department members, including staff, participated in the nomination process. Three officers were nominated, and the recipient was determined by the greatest number of votes received.

Chief Imhof awarded the 2025 Officer of the Year to Officer Brandon Larson, hired May 2, 2022. He highlighted Officer Larson's work across patrol, investigations, and the PROACT unit, as well as his membership on the Grundy County REACT team. The Chief read excerpts from peer nominations, which described Officer Larson as reliable, compassionate, hardworking, community-involved, and a leader and professional in every role he is given.

Officer Larson briefly addressed the board, thanking the department, his family, and the board for their support, particularly during a difficult period following the loss of his home around Easter.

Chief Imhof also introduced Officer Stadler and the department's newly acquired police drone, which was demonstrated before the board. Two officers are currently trained on the unit, with operational deployment planned in time for the June 20th America 250 celebration.

4. Approval of Minutes

Public Hearing — May 13, 2026

Village Clerk Kayla Melvin identified one correction: a parcel size referenced in the minutes should read 80 acres, not 8 acres. The corrected copy was prepared for approval and signature.

Motion to approve the Public Hearing meeting minutes for May 13, 2026, with one correction, was made by Trustee Lauterbur and seconded by Trustee Mincey. Motion carried 5-0-1 Trustee Greggain abstained, having been absent from that meeting.

Regular Meeting — May 13, 2026

Village Clerk Melvin noted one correction: a section of the minutes had inadvertently duplicated the Village Engineer's report where the Chief of Police report should have appeared. A corrected copy was prepared and ready for signature.

Motion to approve the Regular Meeting minutes for May 13, 2026, as corrected, was made by Trustee Mincey and seconded by Trustee Bradley. Motion carried 5-0-1 Trustee Greggain abstained.

5. Approval of Warrant List

Mayor Spesia inquired about a line item from Core & Main for 1-inch water meters, which Village Administrator Matt Fritz confirmed were new water meter installations to be paid from the appropriate fund.

Motion to approve the Warrant List totaling \$79,094.66 was made by Trustee Lauterbur and seconded by Trustee Bradley. The motion carried with all Trustees voting yes.

6. Public Comment

Mayor Spesia read the standard public comment rules. Seven members of the public addressed the board, all focused on the proposed Aligned Data Center project and Agenda Item 13.

Deborah Walters, resident of Diamond, read a prepared statement on behalf of Donna Petty, resident of Diamond, who voiced absolute opposition to Agenda Item 13 and any village expenditure related to a data center. The letter alleged a lack of transparency over nearly two years, argued that the proposed data center site conflicts with the village's own comprehensive plan designating the area for agricultural use, and demanded a 6-month moratorium on all data center development. Donna Petty's statement included for the record. Deborah Walters also

spoke on her own behalf, questioning the absence of a reimbursement agreement with the end user prior to the village authorizing professional services, and requested that the board table the item.

Luke Konecny, resident of Coal City, expressed frustration with what he characterized as the board's silence on the data center issue despite ongoing expenditure of taxpayer funds. He challenged Mayor Spesia's response to the letters, calling it an attack on a frustrated constituent.

Barb Pryor, resident of Coal City, spoke as a resident who lives near the proposed site, expressing concern that the noise and light from a 24/7 data center operation would permanently alter the character of the community. She urged the board not to "ruin it for everybody."

Kristin Kurdenok, resident of Coal City, identified herself as a military widow and spoke of the sacrifices her family has made. She read a segment of a personal letter which drew a parallel between accountability on the battlefield and the board's obligation to its residents. She stated that she and her family had been offered \$20,000 to plant bushes near what she described as a high-priority acquisition target for the developer, and argued they should be made whole enough to fully relocate and rebuild, not merely to landscape. Letter included for the record.

Owen Kurdenok spoke on behalf of his family, noting that on May 20th he personally observed NDS placing traffic counters on Reed Road, and that HR Green — the firm before the board for approval that evening — often contracts NDS for work. He asked the board to reconcile this activity with the claim that no formal plans had been received. Letter included for the record.

Wallace Dick, resident of Coal City urged the board to give residents a fair opportunity if the project moves forward, expressing that the lack of communication felt like a done deal. He called for transparency and noted the historically negative track record of the entities involved.

Wayne Holligan, resident of Coal City, encouraged the board to pause the HR Green authorization, citing ongoing questions about the firm's bidding practices that have surfaced in an audit in another jurisdiction. He also drew on his own professional experience supplying data centers and stated that while he profits from such facilities, he does not want one in his community. He encouraged the board to hold a broader public meeting similar to processes he witnessed during his service on a neighboring planning and zoning board.

Mayor Spesia responded to public comment, stating that the board and trustees act with the highest level of integrity and are not concealing information. He clarified that the village has no involvement in or knowledge of any offers being made to private landowners, as those transactions are between the developer and the property owners. He reiterated that as of the meeting date, the village has not received a formal PUD application, though one is expected in June. He directed residents to a data center information page recently added to the village website, which includes links to Aligned's public meeting materials from February 2026, a link to the developer's website, and a project milestone tracker that the public may follow.

7. Ordinance 26-13 — Granting Variance at 930 E. Short for Placement of Accessory Structure within Interior Side Yard

Village Administrator Fritz presented the request from Matthew Fincher at 930 E. Short Drive, a property with an irregular, wedge-shaped lot at the bend of Short Drive within Meadow Estates. The petitioner requested variances to allow placement of an 8x8 shed with no setback from the north property boundary and a 10x12 gazebo with minimum setback on the south side of the home. The Zoning Board of Appeals unanimously recommended approval. No parties other than the petitioners appeared at the ZBA hearing.

Motion to adopt Ordinance 26-13, granting the variance for the placement of accessory structures within the interior side yards at 930 E. Short Drive, was made by Trustee Greggain and seconded by Trustee Togliatti. Motion carried with all Trustees voting yes.

8. Ordinance 26-14 — Granting Variance for Placement of Fence within Corner Side Yard at 85 W. Willow

Village Administrator Fritz presented the request from Matthew Dimonte at 85 W. Willow, a corner lot where most usable yard space falls within the corner side yard. The petitioner wished to replace an existing 3-foot ornamental fence with a 6-foot PVC fence to safely contain dogs. A condition of the ordinance requires the installation of a stop sign for northbound traffic at the adjacent alley. The Zoning Board of Appeals unanimously recommended approval.

Motion to adopt Ordinance 26-14, granting the variance at 85 W. Willow to allow the construction of a 6-foot PVC fence within the corner side yard, was made by Trustee Lauterbur and seconded by Trustee Bradley. Motion carried with all Trustees voting yes.

9. Ordinance 26-15 — Vacating Portion of the Alleys Located Adjacent to Property along the East Side of 3rd Avenue & 3rd Street

Village Administrator Fritz presented the vacation of two unimproved alleys — one east-west and one north-south — located northeast of the intersection of 3rd Avenue and 3rd Street. No utilities are located within the alleys. Final surveys confirmed both sections are 16.5-foot alleys. Vacation is related to the following agenda item and will provide additional frontage for the proposed subdivision. Upon vacation, each half of the alley area will pass to the adjacent landowners. The item was recommended through the Planning and Zoning process.

Motion to adopt Ordinance 26-15, vacating the alleys adjacent to the south half of PIN 06-35-409-007 and bisecting PIN 06-35-409-008 located east of the intersection of 3rd Avenue and Third Street, was made by Trustee Greggain and seconded by Trustee Mincey. Motion carried with all Trustees voting yes.

10. Ordinance 26-16 — Variance for Subdivision of Current RM2 Property along 3rd Avenue & 3rd Street, Pin #06-35-409-007

Village Administrator Fritz presented the request from Kozy Resters, Inc., acting on behalf of property owner Marcia Togliatto, to subdivide a vacant RM-2 zoned parcel into two single-family detached residential lots. The surrounding neighborhood is predominantly single-family, and the development would be consistent with the character of the area. Each resulting lot will have a depth of 182 feet, and with the benefit of the adjacent alley vacation approved under Ordinance 26-15, frontages will increase from approximately 45'6" to 49'6" per lot. Variances are granted from minimum lot size and the requirement to construct a front-yard sidewalk, as no connecting sidewalk network exists in this immediate neighborhood. The Zoning Board of Appeals unanimously recommended approval. Mayor Spesia noted the need for additional housing stock in the community.

Motion to adopt Ordinance 26-16, granting the variance regarding minimum lot size for RM-2 residences to allow for the construction of two single-family detached homes along the east side of 3rd Avenue, just north of Third Street (345 and 355 N. 3rd Avenue), was made by Trustee Lauterbur and seconded by Trustee Greggain. Motion carried with all Trustees voting yes.

11. Resolution 26-08 — Establishing Surplus Property between the Railroad Tracks on the West Side of 5th Avenue

Village Attorney Katie presented the resolution on behalf of Village Administrator Fritz. The village owns approximately 0.77 acres of irregularly shaped, vacant, and unimproved property in the C-5 Highway Commercial district, located between the Union Pacific and Burlington Northern Santa Fe railroad tracks. The village has no current or anticipated need for the property and wishes to return it to productive private use. Because the property falls within a TIF district, the required process is to first declare it surplus and then issue a Request for Proposals (RFP). The resolution accomplishes both steps. The RFP, included as Exhibit B, will be published for three consecutive weeks with bids due by July 17, 2026, to be opened at the July 22, 2026 board meeting. The village is not required to accept the highest bid but may select the proposal that best serves the village's interest, including proposed redevelopment plans. Staff confirmed the property originated from the former Village of Eileen annexation.

Motion to adopt Resolution 26-08, declaring village-owned parcels as surplus and declaring the issuance of RFPs for the acquisition and redevelopment of the real estate, was made by Trustee Lauterbur and seconded by Trustee Bradley. Motion carried with all Trustees voting yes.

12. Authorization for Mayor to enter into a Purchase Agreement with Gordon Flesch Company for Printer/Scanner for Building Department

Village Administrator Fritz presented the budgeted replacement of the Building Department's aging wide-format printer. The new unit from Gordon Flesch Company will include an integrated scanner, improving plan review workflow. The contract is structured as a 60-month lease at \$218.59 per month (total \$13,115.40), with service provided on an as-needed basis rather than through a preventative maintenance agreement. The board briefly noted this was consistent with the department's prior practice.

Motion to authorize Mayor Spesia to enter into a contract with Gordon Flesch Company for the provision of a wide-format printer for the Building Department, was made by Trustee Bradley and seconded by Trustee Greggain. Motion carried with all Trustees voting yes.

13. Authorization for Mayor to enter into Agreement with HR Green

Village Administrator Fritz presented the request to retain HR Green, a national engineering and plan review firm, to augment village staff in anticipation of a forthcoming PUD application for the proposed data center development. Fritz explained that the village's role is to conduct a lawful and public review process, and that HR Green will assist with investigation, evaluation, public hearings, engineering review, and conditions. The firm's in-house disciplines include planning and zoning, transportation engineering, water resources, electrical and utility infrastructure, civil engineering, fire and life safety coordination, and lighting and photometrics review. Fritz noted that the village regularly obtains professional service reimbursement agreements with end users for complex developments, and that any costs incurred for review of the Aligned data center application would be reimbursed by the end user under such an agreement. Mayor Spesia characterized the action as proactive, standard workforce augmentation similar to other professional service contracts the village maintains.

Motion to authorize the Village to retain HR Green, subject to Village Attorney review and approval, was made by Trustee Lauterbur and seconded by Trustee Mincey. Motion carried with all Trustees voting yes.

14. 250 Authorization/Summary

Village Administrator Fritz presented the latest update and spending authorization for the America 250: A Coal City Salute celebration scheduled for June 20, 2026. Fritz noted that sponsorships continue to grow, with the Village Clerk confirming total sponsorships to date of \$31,750 (updated to \$44,750 per the agenda documents). Three new items were presented for approval this evening: the West Suburban Shriners parade appearance (\$750), a photo booth rental (\$1,300), and awards, prizes, and recognition for the day's competitions and events (\$6,100), for a total authorization request of \$8,150. Fritz noted one additional large expenditure — an umbrella event insurance policy of approximately \$6,000 — will be brought

to the board at the next meeting. He encouraged trustees to use social media to promote the day's contests, including a hot dog eating contest, popsicle eating contest, pie-making contest, and the Coaler Challenge team competition (modeled after The Amazing Race), with a top prize of \$1,000 plus matching charitable donation. Mayor Spesia noted that a requested National Guard flyover was denied, and staff would work on an alternative.

Motion to authorize the Mayor and/or Administrator to enter into agreements for the procurement of \$8,150 of services and items, to include the West Suburban Shriners, photo booth rental, and awards, prizes, and recognition to be provided throughout the day's competitions and events, was made by Trustee Lauterbur and seconded by Trustee Mincey. Motion carried 6-0.

15. Report of the Mayor

Mayor Spesia attended the Memorial Day ceremony hosted by St. Juvin VFW Post 1336 at the intermediate school. He noted that James Hoppy Phillips, the post commander, had extended the invitation, and that as a Marine and as Mayor it was his honor to speak at the memorial. He encouraged greater community participation in future Memorial Day events. Mayor Spesia also noted his attendance at the Grundy County Law Enforcement Memorial in Morris on May 14th.

16. Report of the Trustees

Trustee Lauterbur reported that North Park is nearly complete, sharing a preview image of the new ninja-style playground equipment to be installed there.

Trustee Mincey congratulated Officer Larson. He addressed public concerns about the data center, stating that he personally researches every concern raised at meetings and takes extensive notes. He expressed that there are constraints that prevent the board from discussing details publicly at this stage, but that he looks forward to open dialogue when the time permits. He reiterated his commitment to protecting the town and his neighbors from any development that would cause harm.

Trustee Bradley offered congratulations to Officer Larson.

Trustee Noffsinger congratulated Officer Larson and the entire police department, noting that the department runs a tight ship. He acknowledged that Officer Larson had already earned the award prior to the Easter fire that destroyed his home, and that the presentation was delayed to allow the officer time to get back on his feet.

Trustee Greggain congratulated Officer Larson.

Trustee Togliatti congratulated Officer Larson and praised Chief Imhof for establishing the peer-nominated award program.

17. Report of Village Clerk

Village Clerk Kayla Melvin congratulated Officer Larson and the police department. She reminded the board and public of upcoming local chamber events: a Coffee & Company at

Hexagon Real Estate on May 28th, a one-year anniversary party at Sweet Treats and Tasty Eats on May 30th at 1:00 PM, and Bingo at The Cove also on May 30th at 1:00 PM.

18. Report of Village Attorney

The Village Attorney Katie thanked the board and noted it is always a pleasure to attend the Coal City Village Board meeting.

19. Report of Village Engineer

Village Engineer Ryan reported that the generator for the water treatment plant is scheduled for delivery the following week. Site work, piping, installation, paving, and grading will follow, allowing the project to be closed out. He also noted that additional survey and elevation work required for the Valerio Road extension has been completed, and that the project is expected to go to bid in June, with construction anticipated to begin in July and August.

Mayor Spesia noted a follow-up item: a resident contacted him regarding incomplete yard restoration following the lead service line replacement project. Village Administrator Fritz confirmed the work should have been done and agreed to follow up directly.

20. Report of Chief of Police

Chief Imhof reiterated his thanks to the board for their kind remarks regarding Officer Larson and the department as a whole. He noted that fostering a family culture within the department is a priority because it directly supports officer retention. He also complimented Mayor Spesia on his speech at the Memorial Day ceremony.

21. Report of Village Administrator

Village Administrator Fritz briefly reflected on the Memorial Day event and expressed hope that the grass at the intermediate school memorial site will be fully restored by next year. He again urged trustees and residents to leverage social media to promote participation in the America 250 celebration's contests and competitions, emphasizing that participation numbers are critical to the success of the event.

22. Adjourn

Motion to adjourn at 8:19 PM was made by Trustee Lauterbur and seconded by Trustee Mincey. Motion carried with all Trustees voting yes.

X 

Kayla Mervin
Village Clerk