



## 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. A roll call was conducted with Trustee Dave Togliatti, Trustee Pam Noffsinger, Trustee Ross Bradley, and Trustee CJ Lauterbur present. Absent: Trustee Dan Greggain and Trustee Bill Mincey. Also in attendance were Village Attorney Katie Nagy, Matt Halloran 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. Approval of Minutes

#### Regular Meeting — May 27, 2026

No corrections or comments were offered. The minutes of the May 27, 2026 meeting were approved as presented.

*Motion to approve the minutes of the May 27, 2026 Village Board Meeting was made by Trustee Togliatti and seconded by Trustee Lauterbur. The motion carried with all Trustees voting yes.*

### 4. Approval of Warrant List

Trustee Lauterbur inquired about a line item for KD Landscape, asking whether it related to work underneath the new North Park. Village Administrator Fritz confirmed that was the case. No further questions were raised.

*Motion to approve the Warrant List was made by Trustee Lauterbur and seconded by Trustee Bradley. Motion carried with all Trustees voting yes.*

### 5. Public Comment

The Mayor reviewed the public comment policy, reminding attendees to sign the speaker sheet, limit remarks to three minutes, address the Board collectively rather than individuals, and refrain from applause or disruptive behavior.

Debra Walters, resident of Diamond, urged the Board to proactively establish protective guardrails regarding data centers before any agreements are finalized. Her specific requests included requiring data centers to be zoned as special use rather than placed within TIF districts; mandating that they supply their own water and manage their own discharge without connecting to the village's water systems; holding developers responsible for all costs associated with construction, operation, and eventual removal, potentially through an escrow fund; and allowing developers to secure their own power rather than draw from an already-strained electrical grid. She encouraged each trustee to

conduct independent research, citing numerous national examples of data centers negatively impacting communities, and warned that by the time the public is formally informed, it may be too late to alter course.

Donna Petty, resident of Diamond, addressed two matters. First, she raised procedural objections to the Hauschild annexation application, noting that the application presented to the Planning & Zoning Board on April 20th lacked the required notary signature, which was not obtained until April 27th — five days after the public hearing notice had already been published. She questioned the legality of accepting and posting a notice for an incomplete application, and noted that a paragraph within the materials referenced potential industrial rezoning and proposed rail operations for parcels 3, 4, and 5, contradicting statements that no development was planned. Second, on the data center, she challenged Aligned Data Center's water usage comparisons, arguing that scaling their Northlake campus model — 18.5 acres with 2 buildings — up to Coal City's proposed 300-acre, 11-building hyperscale campus by a factor of 15 while claiming equivalent water consumption was implausible. She also cited documented health concerns associated with diesel generators, noise, and chronic stress in communities near data centers, and called on the Board to honor its own economic development guidelines requiring that review be based on facts, engineering, and public input.

Thom Goetz, resident of Goose Lake, submitted a document referencing Montour County, Pennsylvania's regulatory framework for data centers and called for a moratorium on all proceedings related to the proposed data center. He stated that he represented a group of approximately 1,000 opposed residents — roughly 20 percent of Coal City's population — and expressed concern about noise levels, heat output, stress on the electrical grid, and the condition of the local aquifer. He disclosed that he is a veteran with a traumatic brain injury and expressed that elevated ambient noise levels would directly impact his quality of life. He urged the Board to communicate more openly with the community and schedule a town hall meeting.

Luke Konecny, resident of Diamond, expressed opposition to both the annexation and the data center, and questioned the Board's ability to hold a large corporation like BlackRock accountable. He cited examples of data center projects nationally where promised job figures — such as 200 jobs — materialized as far fewer, and where "closed loop" water commitments were abandoned in favor of cheaper open-loop systems. He asked whether Coal City, as a small town, was equipped to manage a corporate partner of that scale.

Kristin Kurdenok, resident of Coal City, spoke about the ongoing property acquisition negotiations between her family and the data center developer. She stated that 81 percent of her property taxes flow to Coal City and that her family's business is a substantial financial contributor to the village. She referenced a FOIA-obtained email dated May 18th from Colton Brown of Aligned Data Center to the Village Administrator, in which she alleged the developer had briefed the administration on the status of negotiations through back channels, including statements made to state legislators. She alleged the developer misrepresented the offer made to her family, stating that a claim that her family was offered \$1 million was false. She argued this demonstrated the developer was not negotiating in good faith with the community.

Owen Kurdenok, resident of Coal City, echoed his mother's concerns, emphasizing that his family did not seek out the developer — the developer approached them. He objected to the use of public TIF subsidies by a company worth \$40 billion, stating that his family would not absorb financial risk for the benefit of a multi-billion dollar corporation.

Jim Feeney, resident of Diamond, spoke in opposition to the data center and expressed support for local businesses such as Country Club Kennels, where he has been employed since high school. Speaking on behalf of the younger generation, he called for genuine transparency, saying that the community deserved to feel the town was working for them rather than pushing a project through behind closed doors.

Brenda Gerber, resident of Coal City, addressed two topics. On the data center, she corrected an earlier speaker's reference to BlackRock's size, noting its valuation at \$155 billion, and questioned whether a small village could realistically hold such a corporation legally accountable in the event of a failure. She asked the Board to share their own reservations or thoughts on the project to help ease community anxiety. On an unrelated note, she complimented the North Park improvements and requested that swing sets be reinstalled at North Park, noting that children — including those with disabilities — who are unable to use the existing climbing equipment miss having access to swings. She also noted an addition of benches would be a great benefit to parents.

Tina Johnson, resident of Diamond, expressed concerns regarding the proposed data center development, including transparency in the approval process, the use of non-disclosure agreements, and information obtained through FOIA requests. She questioned the community benefits of AI-related infrastructure and raised concerns about resource consumption, potential impacts on residents, schools, property values, and quality of life. She also expressed concerns regarding power reliability, environmental impacts, and the long-term effects of technology development on the community, calling Data Centers military surveillance centers. She encouraged Village officials to provide complete and accurate information to residents.

Donna Petty, resident of Diamond, requested that when the PUD for the data center is eventually submitted and moves through the Planning & Zoning process, the Board ensure the community is given ample time to review it, that information be communicated in plain language through the Coal City Courant and Facebook — not just formal legal notices — and that all reports be made available for public review during normal Village Hall hours.

Following public comment, the Mayor noted for the record that as of June 10, 2026, the Village had not yet received a PUD proposal from Aligned Data Center, though one was expected sometime in June. He directed residents to the Village website for available public information, accessible through Departments → Economic Development → Read More → Data Center Information.

Trustee Lauterbur added that he had never signed an NDA and was free to speak openly. He acknowledged that many of the concerns raised by residents had already been considered by the Board, but reiterated that it would be irresponsible to make definitive public statements about a plan that had not yet been formally submitted. He emphasized that once the PUD is received, there will be extensive public discussion, and that the Board intends to hold the developer accountable to whatever is put in writing.

## **6. Ordinance 26-17 — Hauschild Annexation Agreement**

Village Administrator Matt presented three related ordinances concerning the Hauschild Farms property. He explained that the property — approximately 253 acres comprising of several parcels located on the south side of Reed Road between the Union Pacific railroad tracks and Berta Road — is currently unincorporated. Upon annexation, zoning defaults to residential (RS1); however, the petitioner requested agricultural zoning to allow current agricultural uses to continue. This request was considered across two Planning & Zoning Board public hearings.

The annexation agreement (Ordinance 26-17) incorporates a reimbursement of a portion of the municipal component of the property tax bill. Specifically, approximately 6.7 percent of the total bill attributed to general obligation debt from past storm improvements and tornado recovery is included — a component used in prior annexation agreements, though notably smaller in this instance. The petitioner confirmed at the public hearing that there are no plans to sell the property or convert it to industrial use. The stated purpose of annexation at this time is to allow the property to potentially be included in an amendment to the TIF district.

Village Attorney Nagy noted procedurally that the ordinances should be taken individually and that Ordinance 26-17 requires five affirmative votes.

*Motion to adopt Ordinance Number 26-17, entering into an Annexation Agreement with the Hauschild family regarding the annexation of their property located south of Reed Road, was made by Trustee Lauterbur and seconded by Trustee Bradley. The motion carried with all Trustees, including Mayor Spesia, voting yes.*

### **7. Ordinance 26-18 — Annexation and Incorporation of Property Located South of Reed Between the UP Tracks and Berta**

*Motion to adopt Ordinance Number 26-18, annexing the Hauschild property within the Village of Coal City, was made by Trustee Lauterbur and seconded by Trustee Togliatti. The motion carried with all Trustees voting yes.*

### **8. Ordinance 26-19 — Rezoning of Property from RS1 to Agricultural**

*Motion to adopt Ordinance Number 26-19, rezoning the Hauschild's newly incorporated property to agricultural zoning, was made by Trustee Lauterbur and seconded by Trustee Bradley. The motion carried with all Trustees voting yes.*

### **9. Ordinance 26-20 — IEPA Additional Monies for Water Treatment Expansion Project**

Village Administrator Fritz and Village Engineer Halloran presented **Ordinance 26-20**, corrected from Resolution 26-09, which authorizes an increase in the total low-interest funding amount drawn from the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) for the water treatment expansion project. The increase of \$1,203,848.67 reflects the project's final cost. The Administrator explained that the IEPA had requested the village wait until near project completion before finalizing the authorized borrowing amount so that an accurate figure could be captured. The Village Engineer confirmed the project is coming in under the original bid amount, in part due to the removal of a generator from the project scope. Notably, the IEPA also provided \$1.25 million in principal forgiveness, meaning the net amount owed will be less than originally anticipated despite the increase in authorized borrowing.

*Motion to adopt Ordinance Number 26-20, authorizing an additional \$1,203,848.67 in project funding from the IEPA low-interest loan program to be utilized for final project payments, was made by Trustee Lauterbur and seconded by Trustee Bradley. The motion carried with all Trustees voting yes.*

### **10. IDOT Reimbursement for N. Broadway Engineering Work to Date**

Village Engineer Matt presented the first payment application for the North Broadway design engineering project. He noted that 80 percent of the payment would be reimbursed by IDOT following

disbursement. The project is currently on schedule, with the goal of letting the construction bid in November 2026. Should IDOT review timelines extend the process, a January letting remains a contingency, with construction expected to begin in Spring of the following year regardless.

*Motion to authorize Payment Number 1 for the North Broadway Design Engineering Project in the amount of \$230,049.73 was made by Trustee Bradley and seconded by Trustee Lauterbur. The motion carried with all Trustees voting yes.*

### **11. 250 Authorization/Summary**

Village Administrator Fritz presented an updated summary of expenditures and authorizations related to the Village's 250th Anniversary Celebration, noting the event is nine days away. The summary included a large liability insurance policy previously approved through the warrant list. New items presented for authorization included Beaver Creek rental, Patterson Sound and MC, and Southtown Entertainment (DJ services). The Administrator reported that additional sponsorship activity had been minimal since the last meeting. Matt also highlighted that a map insert had been distributed in all three press editions to increase community awareness of the event, and encouraged residents to purchase hot air balloon ride tickets in advance at a pre-event discounted price. Balloon rides are scheduled between 6:30 and 8:30 PM, bridging the afternoon festivities and the evening drone show and fireworks.

*Motion to authorize the Mayor and/or Village Administrator to enter into agreements for the procurement of \$10,833 in services and items, including Beaver Creek Rental, Patterson Sound and MC, Southtown Entertainment, and additional liability coverage for the day of the celebration, was made by Trustee Lauterbur and seconded by Trustee Bradley. The motion carried with all Trustees voting yes.*

### **12. Report of the Mayor**

The Mayor extended condolences to the family of Elizabeth Lovell, an accounting clerk for the Village of Coal City who passed away on May 28th and had been employed with the Village since 2022. He also extended condolences to the family of James Giordano, a member of the Planning & Zoning Board for approximately eight years, who also recently passed away. The Mayor expressed gratitude for Mr. Giordano's years of service. The Mayor closed by thanking the 250th Anniversary Committee, noting this was the last Board meeting before the celebration event.

### **13. Report of the Trustees**

Trustee Lauterbur echoed the Mayor's thanks to the 250th Anniversary Committee and acknowledged the significant volume of work involved, particularly related to the Abraham Lincoln component of the event. He reported that North Park is officially open and that community feedback has been positive. In response to the public comment from Brenda Gerber regarding swing sets, Trustee Lauterbur explained that the design of North Park was intentionally tailored for older youth, incorporating pickleball, basketball, and a ninja course, with the aim of redirecting older kids from Hope Park, which is designed for younger children. He committed to bringing the swing set request back to the Park Board for discussion.

Trustee Noffsinger reminded attendees that the 250th Celebration kicks off at noon on June 20th and noted that volunteers are still being sought. Interested residents were directed to the Village's Facebook page or to contact the Village directly.

**14. Report of Village Clerk**

The Village Clerk had no substantive report but expressed excitement for the 250th event and noted she would be staffing the beer garden.

**15. Report of Village Attorney**

Village Attorney Nagy had no report.

**16. Report of Village Engineer**

Village Engineer Halloran reported that generator work at the water plant has commenced and grading has begun. He noted a separate matter involving a resident complaint that he had previously spoken with the resident about, and indicated the issue would be addressed soon.

**17. Report of Chief of Police**

The Chief of Police reported on departmental awards presented at a recent department meeting. Officer Kyle Brennan received certificates for Most Criminal Arrests (2025) and Traffic Enforcement. Officer Nathan Stadler and Officer Kyle Brennan jointly received recognition for DUI Enforcement. Officer Casey Roth received the Top Shot Pistol Qualification award — the first time Officer Roth had received that particular award, which had previously been held by Deputy Chief Moran. The Chief also reported that the department held a team-building pickleball outing in Channahon following the department meeting, which he described as a positive exercise in camaraderie. He noted several officers had never played pickleball before and responded enthusiastically. The Chief also noted significant logistical planning underway for security at the 250th Celebration.

**18. Report of Village Administrator**

Village Administrator Fritz announced the hiring of a new administrative intern, Reagan Robson, who is expected to attend the next Board meeting. He also reported on promotional efforts for the 250th Celebration, including a column in the Coal City Courant and a map insert distributed across all three press editions.

**19. Adjourn**

Motion to adjourn at 8:00pm was made by Trustee Togliatti and seconded by Trustee Lauterbur. The motion carried with all Trustees voting yes.

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Kayla Melvin  
Village Clerk