



Meeting minutes - Special Meeting

1. Call Meeting to Order

Mayor David Spesia called the Coal City Village Board Meeting to order on Tuesday, July 28, 2026 at 7:02 PM. A roll call was conducted with Trustee Dave Togliatti, Trustee Dan Greggain, Trustee Pam Noffsinger, Trustee Bill Mincey, and Trustee CJ Lauterbur present. Absent: Trustee Ross Bradley. Also in attendance were Village Attorney Mark Heinle, 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 – July 8, 2026

The Village Clerk noted two corrections to the July 8, 2026 minutes: an error in the public comment section to be addressed prior to submission, and a date reference in the first paragraph that incorrectly read "June 24th" rather than "July." Both corrections were noted for the record.

Motion to approve the July 8, 2026 meeting minutes as corrected was made by Trustee Lauterbur and seconded by Trustee Mincey. The motion carried with all Trustees voting yes.

4. Approval of Warrant List

Mayor Spesia invited questions, corrections, or comments regarding the warrant list. Hearing none, he entertained a motion to approve.

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

5. Public Comment

Mayor Spesia read the public comment rules into the record, noting the three-minute per speaker limit, 30-minute aggregate cap, requirements for civil discourse, and the expectation that speakers state their full name and address for the record. The following residents addressed the Board, with comments focused overwhelmingly on the proposed Aligned Data Center development and the formation of the PUD Review Committee.

Donna Petty, resident of Diamond, submitted a petition with more than 1,600 signatures opposing the project and expressed concerns about transparency in the process, citing alleged errors in project documents and governance. She also questioned the composition of the proposed PUD Review Committee, requested financial disclosures and recusals for members with potential conflicts of interest, and raised concerns regarding a board member's stock holdings and the Mayor's campaign donor relationships.

Don Vilt, resident of Coal City, stated he was primarily present on behalf of the broader community and expressed concern for his grandchildren attending Coal City schools. He referenced a news report about a large California data center's lawsuit over water rights, suggesting similar water demand issues could arise locally.

Wayne Holligan, resident of Coal City expressed frustration that residents' concerns were not being adequately addressed and raised objections to several proposed PUD Review Committee members, citing perceived conflicts of interest or a lack of independence. He also criticized the format of the developer's public information session as insufficient, advocated for a larger town hall meeting with open questions, and called on board members to publicly confirm they had not signed nondisclosure agreements.

Barbara Hammitt expressed concerns about the potential health and environmental impacts of locating data center infrastructure near Coal City schools, citing research on possible risks associated with high-voltage facilities, noise, heat, air quality, and vibrations. She urged the Board to prioritize the health and well-being of students over the project's potential economic benefits.

Kristin Kurdenok, resident of Coal City and a neighboring property owner, expressed concerns about the composition of the proposed PUD Review Committee, arguing that it favored individuals with financial interests in the project while excluding adjacent property owners most directly affected. She urged the Board to deny the requested PUD deviations until the developer adequately addressed impacts on neighboring properties.

Owen Kurdenok, resident of Coal City, questioned the independence of several proposed PUD Review Committee members, alleging conflicts of interest and prior relationships with individuals or entities connected to the project. He requested an independent audit of the committee appointments and asked that his statement be entered into the public record.

Alana Phillips, resident of Coal City, questioned the timing of the proposed PUD Review Committee appointments, expressing concern that the committee composition appeared to be established before the Planning and Zoning Commission had formally acted. She emphasized the importance of transparency and following the proper procedural sequence to maintain public trust.

Traci Curl, resident of Coal City, expressed concern that the proposed PUD Review Committee lacked gender diversity, noting that all fifteen proposed members were men. She also requested that the developer's public information session be scheduled at a more accessible time for working residents and raised concerns about potential impacts of data center noise on honeybee populations and local agriculture.

Lori Cora, resident of Coal City, a neighboring property owner, expressed support for the concerns raised by other speakers regarding the proposed project and its review process. She urged the Board to deny the requested PUD deviations until the developer addressed impacts on adjacent properties and stated that neighboring residents would continue to monitor the process closely.

Tom Crawford, resident of Coal City, called out to the Board that when lawsuits begin to be filed, village taxpayer funds cannot be used to pay the Board's legal defense, calling the situation potentially very expensive.

Don Vilt, resident of Coal City, returned for a second comment, drawing on his background in quality control at a nuclear facility to suggest the Board reconsider the project entirely. He expressed concern about property values declining near a data center, about the town's existing challenges, and stated he

has retained an attorney on retainer in the event his well goes dry or his electric bills increase substantially.

Mary Smith, resident of Diamond, stated she was sickened by the overall situation, expressing concern about the proximity of the facility to schools, potential health effects on children, impacts on property values and local businesses, and the difficulty in obtaining straight answers about whether approvals are effectively a foregone conclusion.

Wayne Holligan, resident of Coal City, encouraged the Board to visit a larger data center complex to better understand the scale of such developments, drawing on his own experience visiting several operating facilities. He stated that large data centers are typically located away from residential communities and suggested the Board consider that in its evaluation of the proposed project.

Following the close of public comment, Mayor Spesia thanked attendees for remaining calm and constructive. He noted that the PUD application was received the previous Friday and that the Village website has been updated accordingly with a milestone tracker. He announced that Aligned will host a public presentation on August 6th at Coal City High School from 7:30 AM to 8:00 PM, and indicated he would request an additional session to be scheduled and communicated to the community.

Regarding the outstanding FOIA request raised by Owen Kurdenok, the Village Clerk confirmed that one request submitted July 14th had been directed to another staff member to be fulfilled on or before this day.

6. Special Event Application for the Homecoming Parade at 2:30pm on October 2, 2026

Fritz presented the special event application submitted by the Coal City High School Student Council for the 2026 CCHS Homecoming Parade, scheduled for Friday, October 2, 2026, beginning at 2:30 PM. The parade route will proceed south to north along Broadway, consistent with prior years, with assembly at the CCHS tennis court parking lot at Broadway and Spring Road at 1:45 PM. The route ends at Broadway and Carbon Street.

Fritz confirmed that Chief of Police Imhof typically coordinates directly with the school regarding logistics, street closures, and public safety. It was noted that once North Broadway reconstruction is complete, future parades may be redirected north to south. Mayor Spesia requested, and the Board agreed, that a special condition be added to the permit requiring the color guard to lead the parade. No formal board vote was required; the Village Administrator issues the permit in consultation with the Chief of Police, and the event does not approach the threshold that would trigger additional service charges.

7. Approval of the PUD Committee Membership

Fritz presented the item, explaining that the PUD Review Committee is a formally codified body required by Village Code for large-scale industrial planned unit developments exceeding ten acres. Its function is to conduct a specialized technical review and deliver a written report to the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA), which in turn holds a public hearing and makes a recommendation to the Village Board as the final decision-maker.

Village Attorney Mark Heinle provided an extended overview of the full review process for the benefit of the public. He explained that the PUD committee functions as a secondary advisory body whose findings are delivered to both the ZBA and the developer. The ZBA will then conduct a public hearing — which may span multiple nights — during which residents, the applicant, and other stakeholders will have the opportunity to present evidence, testimony, and cross-examination. Following that hearing, the ZBA will

deliberate publicly and issue a recommendation with proposed findings of fact for the Village Board. Heinle emphasized that membership in the PUD committee does not foreclose public participation; all PUD committee meetings will be subject to the Illinois Open Meetings Act, will be publicly noticed, and will include an opportunity for public comment.

Regarding the absence of women on the committee, Attorney Heinle clarified that he had recommended removing two women — the ZBA Chairwoman Maria Lewis and Trustee Pam Noffsinger — from the proposed list, not on the basis of gender, but because each is positioned to receive the committee's advisory report in an official capacity, making simultaneous membership on the advisory body inappropriate. He further addressed the Open Meetings Act notice requirement, explaining that the committee membership list was placed on the agenda in advance of the Planning and Zoning vote in order to preserve the legal possibility of board action that evening, as the 48-hour notice requirement would not have been met otherwise.

Attorney Heinle also confirmed that he has already communicated with the developer's general counsel to require a comprehensive disclosure of interests, including all property owners, corporate entities, LLC members, and any shareholder with greater than 5 percent ownership interest in any of the entities involved. He addressed the question of stock holdings, clarifying that under Illinois law, a conflict of interest requiring statutory recusal is triggered only by ownership of 7.5 percent or greater of the outstanding stock of a publicly traded corporation, though individuals may recuse themselves voluntarily if their conscience so dictates. He confirmed that to his knowledge, no board or committee member has ever been approached to sign a nondisclosure agreement, and that no private agreement could override Illinois open records obligations.

The Board voted on each committee member individually. The following appointments were approved:

Motion to approve Mark Heinle (Village Attorney, Ancel Glink) to the PUD Review Committee was made by Trustee Lauterbur and seconded by Trustee Mincey. The motion carried 5-0.

Motion to approve Ed Boik (Planning Review, HR Green) to the PUD Review Committee was made by Trustee Lauterbur and seconded by Trustee Mincey. The motion carried 5-0.

Motion to approve Ryan Hansen (Village Engineer) to the PUD Review Committee was made by Trustee Greggain and seconded by Trustee Togliatti. The motion carried 5-0.

Motion to approve Matt Fritz (Zoning Administrator) to the PUD Review Committee was made by Trustee Lauterbur and seconded by Trustee Togliatti. The motion carried 5-0.

Motion to approve Kyle Watson (Building Official) to the PUD Review Committee was made by Trustee Greggain and seconded by Trustee Lauterbur. The motion carried 5-0.

Motion to approve Darrell Olson (Public Works Director) to the PUD Review Committee was made by Trustee Lauterbur and seconded by Trustee Mincey. The motion carried 5-0.

Motion to approve Mike Imhof (Chief of Police) to the PUD Review Committee was made by Trustee Mincey and seconded by Trustee Lauterbur. The motion carried 5-0.

Motion to approve Walt Mahaffay (Coal City ZBA Representative) to the PUD Review Committee was made by Trustee Lauterbur and seconded by Trustee Mincey. The motion carried 5-0.

Motion to approve Nick Doerfler (CC Fire District) to the PUD Review Committee was made by Trustee Mincey and seconded by Trustee Lauterbur. The motion carried 5-0.

Motion to approve Doug Boresi (Braceville Township) to the PUD Review Committee was made by Trustee Greggain and seconded by Trustee Mincey. The motion carried 5-0.

Motion to approve Bill Stahler (Maine Township Drainage) to the PUD Review Committee was made by Trustee Lauterbur and seconded by Trustee Mincey. The motion carried 5-0.

Motion to approve Bob Koerner (Claypool Drainage) to the PUD Review Committee was made by Trustee Lauterbur and seconded by Trustee Mincey. The motion carried 5-0.

Motion to approve Alec Macdonald (Grundy County) to the PUD Review Committee was made by Trustee Lauterbur and seconded by Trustee Greggain. The motion carried 5-0.

Motion to approve Chris Spencer (CCUSD #1) to the PUD Review Committee was made by Trustee Lauterbur and seconded by Trustee Mincey. The motion carried 5-0.

Motion to approve Gary Grunauer (Coal City Resident) to the PUD Review Committee was made by Trustee Mincey and seconded by Trustee Togliatti. The motion carried 5-0.

Motion to approve Terry Halliday (Coal City Resident) to the PUD Review Committee was made by Trustee Greggain and seconded by Trustee Togliatti. The motion carried 5-0.

Fritz noted that the committee's first meeting is tentatively anticipated around August 18th, pending scheduling coordination among the quorum of members. All meetings will be publicly posted in advance.

8. Authorization for Mayor to enter into an Agreement with Sikich for additional professional services

Fritz presented the item, explaining that Sikich LLC — the Village's existing auditing firm — would be engaged for specialized services to independently evaluate and analyze the economic impact analysis submitted by Aligned as part of the PUD application. The scope of Sikich's work includes quantifying probable tax revenues, identifying non-taxable components, reviewing construction and financial data, analyzing the timing of tax receipts, and delivering findings in a format suitable for board review. Mary O'Connor, a principal at Sikich with expertise in Illinois assessment and valuation, will lead the engagement.

Spesia described this professional services agreement as a critical component of the Village's comprehensive due diligence process, stating the goal is to provide the Board with objective, professionally vetted information before any decisions are made.

Motion to authorize the Mayor to enter into a professional services agreement with Sikich LLC for economic impact evaluation and analysis of the Aligned PUD proposal was made by Trustee Lauterbur and seconded by Trustee Mincey. The motion carried with all Trustees voting yes.

9. Report of the Mayor

Mayor Spesia provided a summary of the overall review framework now in place for the Aligned Data Center PUD proposal. He noted that the formal PUD application for the 300-acre plus-or-minus data center campus was received the prior Friday, and that the Village's review will involve the PUD Review

Committee, village staff, HR Green (planning), Sikich LLC (financial), Chamlin and Associates (engineering), Ancel Glink (village attorneys), and Jacob Klein in the Economic Development Group (TIF attorneys). He stated that additional expertise would be sought if needed. The mayor declined to commit to a review timeline, emphasizing that the process would take as long as necessary to gather complete and accurate information. He encouraged residents to attend the Aligned public presentation on August 6th at Coal City High School and to engage in a respectful, productive manner.

10. Report of the Trustees

Trustee Lauterbur had no report.

Trustee Mincey stated for the record that he has never signed an NDA and has no intention of doing so. He had a list and reported that he personally visited five data center facilities that day — three operating and two under construction — in order to make informed, fact-based observations rather than rely on social media claims. He noted that standing in front of one facility, he could not hear it from one block away, and stated he is focused on gathering legitimate, credentialed evidence. He invited any resident to speak with him directly as well as share any credible research.

Trustee Noffsinger stated for the record that she has never signed an NDA. She expressed confidence in the PUD review process and noted that she understood and concurred with the rationale for her not being appointed to the PUD committee, given that the final approval decision will ultimately rest with the Board of Trustees. She also announced the Back-to-School Bash, scheduled for that Saturday from 11:00 AM to 2:00 PM at Campbell Park, featuring free school supplies, games, hot dogs, and drinks for children in the school district. She further announced that the Fall Fest is scheduled for Saturday, September 19th, and will feature a car show, a band, food trucks, and a laser show.

Trustee Greggain had no report.

Trustee Togliatti had no report.

11. Report of Village Clerk

Village Clerk Kayla Melvin stated for the record that she has never signed an NDA, and noted that she holds no voting power on the board.

12. Report of Village Attorney

Village Attorney Heinle stated that to his knowledge, no member of the Board, any advisory committee, or any staff member has ever been approached or asked to sign an NDA in connection with this project. He reiterated that no private agreement could override the Village's obligations under Illinois open records and open meetings laws.

13. Report of Village Engineer

Village Engineer Matt Halloran reported that a bid opening for street maintenance is scheduled for Thursday at 10:00 AM, with two back-to-back openings. He also provided an update that the generator at the water plant has been fully installed and is operational. Regarding the Valerio Road project, bids came in under budget but have not yet been awarded, as a developer-related matter is temporarily holding the project. The ditch cleaning project is also still being coordinated for completion within the year.

14. Report of Chief of Police

Chief Imhof echoed Trustee Noffsinger's remarks regarding the Back-to-School Bash, noting that the street in front of the police department and over the railroad tracks will be closed for the event, with parking available in the police department lot. He asked attendees with children to use the designated pedestrian crossing between the cones for safety. He noted that the event is now in its third year under its current organizer and has grown significantly from its earlier format at the intermediate school.

15. Report of Village Administrator

Village Administrator Fritz had no further report.

16. Adjourn

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

X 

Kayla Melvin
Village Clerk