

COUNCIL MINUTES

March 2, 2026

The Archbold Village Council met in regular session on Monday, March 2nd, 2026, at 5:30 p.m. in the Ruibley Park Pavilion with the following members present: Gary Dominique, Mike Evans, Kevin Eicher, Aaron Babcock, and Karla Ball. Chad Kern was absent. Mayor Brad Grime opened the meeting and presided thereat.

There being no corrections to the minutes of the February 16, 2026 Council meeting, Kevin Eicher moved to approve, seconded by Karla Ball.

Roll: Yeas: Babcock, Ball, Dominique, Evans, Eicher

Nays: None. **Motion carried.**

Following a review of the list of bills and payroll totaling \$400, 166.69, Mike Evans moved to approve, seconded by Aaron Babcock.

Roll: Yeas: Eicher, Babcock, Ball, Evans,

Abstain: Dominique

Nays: None. **Motion carried.**

Mayor Grime then presented the following item of legislation:

RESOLUTION 2026-10: AUTHORIZING THE VILLAGE ADMINISTRATOR AND FINANCE DIRECTOR TO ADVERTISE FOR BIDS FOR THE NORTH SIDE SANITARY SEWER INTERCEPTOR, CONTRACT 2-2026 AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

After brief explanation by Village Administrator Aaron Alt, Aaron Babcock moved to suspend the rule that requires a resolution of general nature to be read on three separate days. Mike Evans seconded the motion.

Roll: Yeas: Ball, Dominique, Evans, Eicher, Babcock

Nays: None. Motion carried.

Gary Dominique moved to pass Resolution 2026-10, seconded by Karla Ball.

Roll: Yeas: Evans, Eicher, Babcock, Ball, Dominique

Nays: None. **Resolution 2026-10 passed.**

Council then reviewed and discussed the following Committee, Board & Department Report:

- Park Committee Minutes 02.23.2026

Mayor & Council Comments included Village Administrator Aaron Alt recapping the Ordinance Committee Meeting from the March 2nd, 2026, meeting. The Village has a preliminary design for the roundabout at County Road 24 and State Route 2 intersection. More updates will be provided at the next meeting. The Village received an inquiry about ADA accessible crosswalk beacons for the downtown area and school crossings. There are grants available to purchase the devices. The Village would then pay for the installation. At the next meeting, a resolution will be presented for the authorization to advertise bids for the continued Miscellaneous Street Resurfacing project for areas near the S. Defiance Street and Lafayette intersection. The Village is pursuing a grant for congressional funds to

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continue the sanitary sewer lining project for the northeast part of Archbold near Murbach Street and also the neighborhoods near West Mechanic and West Streets. Ohio Gas is preparing for a 2027 construction project to relocate a high-pressure main that runs through the field behind Archbold Evangelical Church. According to prior agreements, Ohio Gas will pay for the relocation, and the Village will help facilitate easement acquisitions.

There were no items of correspondence to review.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: Village Administrator Aaron Alt addressed moratorium concerns and then opened the mic to the public. The Ordinance and Resolution Committee has recommended that Alt move forward with proposing draft legislation for a moratorium. A primary public concern is the length of the moratorium.

Todd Kindinger, a resident of Archbold, read a statement shared at the last German Township meeting:

"I am speaking on behalf of Citizens for Responsible Development who have retained the services of Mr. Richard Klein of Community Environmental Defense Services to assist in the researching and to provide us with recommendations regarding the environmental, health, and societal impacts of a data center at the site discussed at the last council meeting. Mr. Klein has been helping people with land development-related concerns for over 40 years. He is currently helping the citizens of Wilmington, Ohio, as well as Indian and Illinois, with data center projects and has helped hundreds of communities correctly develop their land so that the population and the environment are protected from harm. He was employed by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources for 18 years and served as the director of Save our Streams for 10 years. He founded CEDS in 1987. In 1990, the American Planning Association published Richard's first book *Everyone Wins!: A Citizen's Guide to Development*. He has many other publications and many years of experience regarding safe land development and equitable solutions.

Mr. Klein sent a recommendation report for our situation based on the facts we were able to supply at this time. We believe these recommendations gave the Village of Archbold a strong basis for a moratorium not only for data centers but any advanced manufacturing, light industrial, heavy industrial, or hot and cold storage at the land of issue. This is not exclusionary to data centers. The report was attached to an email that they received on February 19th, for your reference, where you will find that there is much to be accomplished and studied to ensure the safety of our community regarding the development of this land. It is important to note that this report was not written to exclude data centers or any development in the Village of Archbold as that would be exclusionary zoning, which is not our intent. It is written as a guidance regarding the measures needed to be taken via studies and zoning ordinances to protect the environment, health, and character of the community. We believe this report serves as a legitimate basis for this moratorium. Additionally, House Bill 646 was introduced on January 14th, 2026, to reflect the growing concerns of the rapid growth of data centers in Ohio. The bill requests a commission to be established in Ohio to study the environmental and health effects of data centers and the impact on farmland and local economies, national security and reports of foreign propaganda targeting data centers. We believe it would be beneficial to have the

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results of this commission before making any permanent decisions about the land use in a rural area.

Furthermore, we recently uncovered the fact that Regional Growth Partnership Northwest Ohio, or RGP, is marketing our region as a leading location for data centers. 'Northwest Ohio offers a lot of advantages for people looking to locate a data center. Good land, good energy and good people. It's wide-open farmland to build these big data center campuses. Northwest Ohio is one, if not the top market, we are looking at. Northwest Ohio is one, if not the top market we are looking at, primarily because of its inherent assets, natural resources, and infrastructure.' RGP is also working with JobsOhio in this endeavor. JobsOhio is a name that Iron Ridge representatives mentioned at the Trustee meeting on February 16th.

If, at a future date, a party files a lawsuit against Archbold Village Council regarding moratorium, the results of this CEDS report, pending House Bill 646, as well as the fact that Northwest Ohio is being marketed as a prime location for a data center by RGP will serve as concrete evidence for passing this moratorium. We are in favor of this moratorium to accomplish the goals of the CEDS report and give the township a pause to catch up with new technology that may be proposed and prepare its zoning accordingly. Therefore, we are in support of the Archbold Village Council to pass a resolution for a moratorium for advanced manufacturing, heavy industrial, light industrial, hot and cold storage for any land currently zoned for agriculture in the Village of Archbold."

Kindinger closed with emphasizing that C4RD does not wish to prohibit the growth of any existing or future business. Their goal is to create transparency and knowledge for any future development of land currently zoned for agriculture within the Village.

Sarah Cromly elaborated on Kindinger's shared statement. Their group is not asking for a 36-month moratorium. They believe a 12-month moratorium is sufficient time to avoid potential lawsuits while also giving the Village reasonable time to change ordinances, revamp zoning and complete the necessary studies. If said studies and changes are not ready by the end of the 12 months, then they do ask that an extension to the moratorium be made. She also repeated that they are only seeking a moratorium for land that is zoned for farmland, not land already zoned for industrial or manufacturing. They are for business and jobs, but desire to preserve farmland.

Councilman Aaron Babcock responded that Council understands that their group is not trying to prohibit industry or growth. He stated that Council hears their concerns and are working to find the best option for moving forward.

John Trudel asked for clarification about the first German Township meeting. He asked "If they [Iron Ridge] were denying involvement with a data center, then why did they request a water service survey?" He then commended the Council, Trustees, and residents who were being proactive about this issue.

Jason Whitehead lives with his wife and 2 kids in Archbold near the park and is a combat infantry veteran and Purple Heart recipient. Despite his nerves, PTSD and back pain issues, he felt compelled to speak because he cares and wants to set an example for his children. He clearly stated that he is against a data center. He shared concerns from his personal research. He found that northwest Ohio is being actively marketed online by RGP

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as a prime location for data centers, quoting from their website that the power, water, land, and natural gas resources make it a golden opportunity.

Whitehead's second concern regarded the water supply. Ohio EPA has recently drafted and published proposed permit NPDES Permit No. OHD000001 which would allow every data center currently existing in the state of Ohio, which presently numbers over 200, and new ones to discharge untreated wastewater directly into Ohio rivers and streams. The drafted language states that the lowering of water quality is necessary to accommodate important social and economic developments in the state. The permit would be effective for 5 years with the option for renewal. The discharge water could come from cooling systems, cooling tower blowdown, boiler blowdown, air compressor condensation, stormwater associated with industrial activities such as generators, fuel and chemical storage, outdoor equipment storage, and material loading and unloading areas.

Whitehead's third concern was the proposed impact on the job market. He quoted numbers from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and RPG websites. In the short-term during construction, it takes around 1,688 people to build a large center. Long-term after construction job numbers, even for the largest of facilities, only range from 100-150 permanent positions. He concluded that when you look at this information, the health, environment, and lives of the local community does not appear to be the driving concern of those pushing for data centers.

Greg Beck opened that he is not for data centers but had some questions from the last meeting. He referred to a statement from Mr. Trudel about meeting with a friend who said they spoke with a Councilmember who said a data center was a done deal. Beck asked Mr. Trudel to confirm who the Councilmember was that Trudel's friend spoke with. Trudel declined to answer so as not to ruin a friendship.

Beck defended Councilman Gary Dominique and his right to sign a nondisclosure agreement as a contractor. Beck is a retired plumber and while during his time in the industry, they did not have signed NDAs, it was a common understanding that you didn't speak about future or prospective projects. He does not think that it is right to exclude Dominique from any zoning discussions just because he is a businessman. Beck then mentioned that many people assume Councilman Dominique isn't or cannot be unbiased in this matter, but Beck was more concerned about Councilman Chad Kern. He said that Kern's name is connected to many Facebook posts against data centers.

Kern's wife, Teresa, clarified that she is the one posting, not Chad. She said that Kern left his name on their joint profile for family purposes but isn't on Facebook or posting.

Councilman Gary Dominique shared that after hearing the community's complaints and seeing the negative impact it had on the community he lives in and serves, he has been discharged from the NDA with Iron Ridge as of February 25, 2026. Anyone who wants to see the mutual termination document is welcome to ask him.

Councilman Aaron Babcock reminded everyone that the purpose of these meeting is not to throw stones. He reiterated to the public that Council hears the people and are for them. Babcock supports Councilman Dominique and believes many on Council feel the same. He shared that NDAs are common practice for contractors and that Dominique did do the right thing by excluding himself from the relevant votes.

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Abby Pennington shared definitions of commonly used phrases in data centers discussions. Data centers store information, or data. The two main operations are hot and cold storage. She stated that hot storage is for research data that is at high speed, information that is needed and retrieved right away. Cold storage is for less important information which can sit in a sort of limbo. A less common option is warm storage which falls somewhere between hot and cold. Data must be stored somewhere and depending on its use and function is stored in either hot, cold, or warm storage.

Sarah Cromly returned to question Councilman Dominique to ensure that ethic codes and Ohio laws are being observed. She asked him to confirm that he had a conflict of interest because of his business, stating that he is a subcontractor for Boyers Construction for most of his deals. Dominique shared that the Boyers projects are bid projects and confirmed that he has done work for and does work with Boyers. Cromly then asserted that Dominique has a conflict of interest here because of his financial stake in business with Luke Boyers and therefore he cannot vote or participate in discussions relating to the matter. She concluded with a warning that he should tread lightly so that ethic codes and laws are not violated. Mayor Brad Grime then reassured that Council is aware of the situation and is reliable in holding its members accountable. They will adhere to the law.

Brian Miller asked Council to clarify the three-reading process for passing legislation. His question was does the moratorium have to be in its final draft before the three readings or is it more of a work in progress?

Village Administrator Aaron Alt responded that Council would not vote to establish a moratorium that has not been written or pass legislation and then change the words after. First, a resolution or ordinance is presented to Council. They have until the vote to approve and pass to rework the legislation until they are confident of it in every aspect. This can mean changing broader language details or minute differences in word choice or grammatical structure. The three readings provide Council time to make those changes which are often as simple as "shall" verses "should." The press often asks for legislation in advance of the meetings and that wording might change slightly, but what Council votes on during the meeting becomes the final draft. Once Council is confident that a legislation is solid, then they can vote to pass or not. If this occurs at a first or second reading, then they can vote to suspend the three readings rule and vote to pass the legislation before the third reading. Otherwise, they will rework the legislation until they vote on it after the third reading.

Miller asked for clarification on the differences between the Village's process and German Township's process. There has been some confusion and misinformation regarding what was passed at the last German Township meeting. German Township Trustee Jay Pursel set the record straight. Last week, the Trustees passed a motion to get the verbiage for a moratorium resolution. In this, their process is very similar to what the Village is doing. No resolutions or moratoriums have been passed, but both legislative bodies now have the authorization to research and draft such legislation.

Village Administrator Alt then addressed the public about future meeting locations. The Township usually meets in the Township Hall and Garage and Village Council in Council Chambers. There is a longstanding reservation of the Pavilion on Monday nights that these meetings are currently displacing. Alt asked residents, Trustees, and Council to

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consider the goal and location of future meetings. A solution is needed that respects the reservation of the group that has been meeting at the Pavilion for years, meets public needs, and utilizes Village resources well. Mayor Grime said that they will keep residents updated for the locations of future meetings.

Jason Beck thanked Council for their support. He said that this has turned everyone's worlds upside-down but wanted to take the time to acknowledge Council for all their work.

Jane Trudel asked if the Township and Village are working together on their separate moratoriums so that the language is consistent. Mayor Grime answered that the drafts will be different, but that the Village and Township are in steady communication.

Abby Pennington asked who the legal counsel for the Village is. The Directors of Law are Mark Hagans & Robert Bohmer of Rupp, Hagans & Bohmer LLP. Village Administrator Alt addressed concerns because their firm was approached to draft a land option agreement. There is not a conflict of interest regarding them as the Village solicitors. Pennington's concern was more about the scale of the data center issue. The Village has reached out to attorneys in Columbus for a proposal to review the zoning code. Their cost for review, meetings, and input would be \$25,000. The Village is also speaking with a consultant they have previously worked with on the zoning code. He is not an attorney and his hourly rates reflect such, but he does have knowledge of the situation.

Alt then explained the process of Archbold's zoning. First, a draft is created and then reviewed by legal. The draft then goes before Planning Commission who review all relevant information which in this case is essentially the whole of Chapter 152 of Archbold's Code of Ordinances. Once Planning Commission is satisfied, they recommend it and the legislation is presented before Council. Since there are so many chances for review and refinement for zoning, it will most likely be voted on by emergency. Cromly asked if the public will be able to read the zoning drafts. Alt responded that there will be public comment. It is a public hearing when a draft goes before Planning Commission and continues to be a public hearing when the ordinance goes before Council.

Mayor Grime closed with a commitment to continued transparency as this process moves along. He thanked the public for their concern and research and urged them to continue their good work. He and Council are taking what they share to heart.

There being no further business to discuss, Kevin Eicher moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Aaron Babcock. All agreed; meeting adjourned.

Council President

Mayor

Clerk