

COUNCIL MINUTES

March 16, 2026

The Archbold Village Council met in regular session on Monday, March 2nd, 2026, at 5:30 p.m. in Council Chambers with the following members present: Gary Dominique, Mike Evans, Kevin Eicher, Aaron Babcock, Chad Kern and Karla Ball. Mayor Brad Grime opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance followed by a moment of silent prayer and presided thereat.

There being no corrections to the minutes of the February March 2, 2026 Council meeting, Kevin Eicher moved to approve, seconded by Mike Evans.

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

Abstain: Kern

Nays: None. **Motion carried.**

Following a review of the list of bills and payroll totaling \$505,380.69, Karla Ball moved to approve, seconded by Chad Kern.

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

Nays: None. **Motion carried.**

David Charville, PE Tetra Tech, then presented a brief review and update on the County Road 24 & State Route 2 RoundAbout project along with Village Engineer Dexter Krueger. The preliminary design was completed and is currently under review. There is not an adequate drainage outlet nearby, so a new storm sewer around Township Road 24 and Westfield Drive with an outlet to the creek has been added to the design. The sidewalks on Westfield will be extended to the RoundAbout crossing over to Dollar General. To address agricultural equipment concerns, the project will have outside truck aprons for larger vehicles. The next steps are to create the right of way designs and work on the final design from August 2026 through July 2027. Construction is set to start May 2028. The estimated cost is 3.6 million with Archbold responsible for \$720,000. \$400,000 is the extension of water and sewer and then 10% of the construction cost. The addition of water, sewer, and sidewalks to the project will help save the Village time and money in the future.

Mayor Grime asked what the closure timeline would be. There will be access to the local businesses, but the intersection will be closed for 45-60 days.

Councilman Gary Dominique asked for clarification on the extension of water and wastewater. Engineer Krueger shared that water and sanitary are already north of the intersection, but the extension will go west and south to the limits of the project.

Councilman Kevin Eicher asked about pedestrian crosswalk and safety signs. Charville stated that a single-lane RoundAbout typically just have signs.

Councilwoman Karla Ball asked about the entrances to Marathon. Charville said that there will be one entrance from County Road 24 and one from State Route 2. Discussions with local businesses will be had, so for now Stage 1 design is still being reviewed with adjustments to be made as needed.

Village Administrator Aaron Alt recapped the discussions regarding data centers and speculative land grabs. The Ordinance and Resolution Committee met two weeks ago with the recommendation to Council to proceed with a moratorium. A few days later, an inquiry was emailed asking Council to consider passing additional legislation to prohibit

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annexing land currently under contract options for purchase. This information was passed to Legal for consultation. After review, Village Law Director Robert Bohmer presented Council with legal opinion regarding moratoriums and annexation.

He summarized that the Village already has procedures in place for the annexation and rezoning of property. A moratorium is an option, but from a legal perspective, it doesn't mean much, especially when there is nothing official before the Village. Moratoriums are more of a statement of the current Council's opinion, but they aren't permanent and can be easily repealed. The current questions being asked by the public aren't wrong questions. From a legal perspective, however, they are being asked at the wrong time. If a petition to annex or rezone does come before the Village, then they have a set timeline to consider and notify the filing property owner and county if and what services such as water, sewer, and roadways will be provided by the Village. It is within their right to accept or deny.

Councilman Chad Kern asked Bohmer's opinion of why 7 of the 19 Townships within Wood County that have passed moratoriums with no active pursuit of building a data center. Bohmer restated that he does not think it is legally necessary but rather done to appease the pressure from the public. Kern then asked for clarification that moratoriums can be specific to a group of projects that the Village does not want to come in. Bohmer said it isn't wise to limit such a wide scope of property owners, better to approach projects case by case. Just because a property owner files a petition, does not mean Council has to accept it. Each project should have the right to prove its merits before Council who will then judge if it is in the best interest of Archbold.

Councilman Mike Evans shared that Dale Arnold from the Farm Bureau holds a similar opinion. Until official action is brought before Council, tabling the discussion is all that is needed. A moratorium could open the door for lawsuits over a speculative project.

Mayor Grime asked for clarification about previously discussed public concern about the state overriding an annexation. The state override action is typically for a public project, not a private project which is what a data center would be. The Village has the right to offer or refuse public services in the case of annexation. Bohmer confirmed. Historically, the Village has not been interested in projects that do not also include public services.

Councilman Kevin Eicher asked how short the window was for action on a petition. Bohmer responded that Council has 20 days from the filing of the petition to react.

Mayor Grime reiterated that Village Administration and Council are against a data center. As things stand, the Village is protected and within their rights to prevent a data center should one try to come.

Village Administrator Alt asked the Township Trustees if they were pursuing a moratorium. The Trustees responded that they are not, having received similar guidance.

Councilman Eicher reemphasized that Village Council and Township Trustees are working together on this issue to ensure the best decisions be made.

Mayor Grime then presented the following items of legislation:

RESOLUTION 2026-11: A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE VILLAGE ADMINISTRATOR AND FINANCE DIRECTOR TO ADVERTISE FOR BID FOR MISCELLANEOUS STREET RESURFACING, CONTRACT 3-2026 AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

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After an explanation by Village Engineer Dexter Krueger and brief Council discussion, Aaron Babcock moved to suspend the rule that requires a resolution of general nature to be read on three separate days. Gary Dominique seconded the motion.

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

Nays: None. Motion carried.

Karla Ball moved to pass Resolution 2026-11, seconded by Chad Kern.

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

Nays: None. **Resolution 2026-11 passed.**

RESOLUTION 2026-12: A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE VILLAGE ADMINISTRATOR TO AUTHORIZE EASEMENT AGREEMENTS WITH OHIO GAS COMPANY AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

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

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

Nays: None. Motion carried.

Aaron Babcock moved to pass Resolution 2026-12, seconded by Mike Evans.

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

Nays: None. **Resolution 2026-12 passed.**

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

- March 2nd, 2026, Ordinance & Resolution Committee Minutes
- February 2026 Income Tax Report
- February 2026 Police Report
- February 2026 Fire & EMS Report
- February 2026 Fleet Report

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

Sarah Cromly shared her legal research regarding concerns about special state annexation. She stated that ORC 709.024 allows a petitioner to go to the state for annexation for the purpose of a significant economic development project and is not limited to public or state projects. It could be a private investment if the project is in excess of \$10 million and the annual payroll of the project exceeds \$1 million. She urged Council to work with German Township and use their zoning language.

A member of the public followed up with a question for Council of what has been done regarding zoning. Village Administrator Alt responded that they are consulting with the group who helped create the Archbold Comprehensive Plan to establish new zoning districts to better protect the Village. Once a draft is completed for the new districts, it will go before Planning Commission, but they are still reviewing and discussing with the consultants. Alt also stated that the Township has not shared their zoning code with the Village, but even if they had, the two zoning codes are not directly compatible.

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A question was asked about why the Village is basing their zoning drafts from the 2021 Comprehensive Plan when it does not mention industrial development. Alt clarified that they aren't using the Comprehensive Plan to rewrite zoning. The Village is merely using the same firm that helped create the Comprehensive Plan to draft the zoning changes.

Marty Mayor asked Council what the timeline was for zoning changes. The consulting firm was going to take the month of March to review and work on it. Councilwoman Karla Ball stated that Council does not want to rush and put a band-aid on an issue this large. They will take the time needed to properly review and rework the zoning. The Comprehensive Plan was a tremendous joint effort between Council, businesses, and residents of Archbold to plan for the Village's future with the information available at the time. The only reason the Plan was mentioned is to note that the same firm that helped create it is now being consulted on revamping the zoning code.

Cromly asked if the new zoning would allow data centers. Alt responded that it will most likely be conditional use in the new zoning district. The new district aims to reflect the current concerns and discussions and within a legal format to create buffers and protections that make it extremely difficult. There is no land within the Village limits where this new zoning district would be currently applicable, but if a project requests annexation in the future, the Village will already have the proper codes and protection in place.

Jason addressed Council asking if the tabling of the data center is still in effect. The tabling still stands. Councilwoman Ball stated that the reason why there is nothing to address is because nothing has been brought before Council. Councilman Evans reemphasized how this isn't an overnight solution. Council is diligently working to navigate the situation in the right and legal way. Councilman Kern asked if they could get an update from the consulting firm on the zoning progress.

Village Administrator Alt briefly explained the process of zoning amendments. An amendment must go before the Planning Commission. If Planning Commission approves, then they can give a recommendation to Council to adopt. Once before Council, it may be passed by emergency. Alt then asked the German Township Trustees present to explain their process for zoning and clarify if it was currently in effect. The Trustees responded that the new zoning is not in full effect as of today. They first needed to create the wording. They are comfortable enough with the wording to proceed at the next meeting with the process of making a resolution. If passed, they have 5 days to notify the County. The land in question is currently zoned agriculture, so there would be a different process to approve or reject rezoning as well as other backstops.

Cromly asked why Council couldn't pass legislation that states "any property owner who is under option contract to sell and gets annexed in by the state should not be allowed to ask for rezoning from agriculture" to protect farmland. She stated that it isn't just about not wanting a data center, but more about protecting farmland.

Planning & Zoning Inspector Grant Schaffner responded that if the state forced an annexation, it would still be up to the Village to choose the zoning district. The Village cannot be prohibitive in nature to a specific use which is why the consultant is reviewing the zoning code and will recommend how to be as restrictive as legally possible.

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Councilwoman Ball asked Cromly if the Village could legally be so exclusionary. Cromly responded that as a licensed attorney in Michigan not Ohio she is only giving her opinion and legal suggestions, not legal counsel. She believes it would be worth the risk to protect farmland.

Councilman Aaron Babcock asked if she was asking Council to exclude any type of manufacturing. Cromly clarified that she isn't against other types of manufacturing.

Councilman Kern asked if anyone in Ohio has used the exclusionary language idea. Cromly said that we would probably be the first. The current trend is moratoriums, but data centers are targeting small rural towns that do not have the capacity to fight them.

Village Administrator Alt got clarification that Cromly isn't merely concerned about Dunlap and Boyers dropping the project. Even if they dropped their contracts and abandoned the project, she is worried that a different party, not even local or connected to the area, could easily pick up where they left off.

A member of the public asked if there are actual cases where the state has forced an annexation. The information is not readily available, especially for data centers, and so it is unclear if there are any projects that have utilized ORC 709.024.

A different member of the public asked for clarification on the zoning update timeline. Councilman Kern asked for an update at this meeting and so they will follow up with the consulting firm.

Mayor and Council comments included Councilwoman Karla Ball expressing how great the community is, both within Village limits and our surrounding neighbors. She also expressed how disheartening the past few weeks have been to watch this beloved community be so hateful towards one another. No one is against the public. No one wants a data center. They are working with the Trustees and reviewing the zoning. They also appreciate the information being shared, but it is a lot of information to consider. They have to be thorough so that they don't miss anything and redo it in 6 months to a year's time. Being thorough takes time, and so they appreciate the public's support, understanding, and patience as they work to protect this great community.

Councilman Chad Kern asked if the state could actually annex property into the Village with how the land option contracts were written. He is against preventing individual landowners from petitioning Archbold for annexation, but believes the matter is worth further looking into to know how to better protect the Village.

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