

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING
OF THE COMMON COUNCIL
VALPARAISO, INDIANA
August 25, 2025**

Minutes are not verbatim. To Hear Full Comments, Please refer to the – Watch City Meetings Section of the City of Valparaiso’s Website (WWW.CI.VALPARAISO.IN.US)

The Common Council of the City of Valparaiso, Indiana, met on Monday, August 25, 2025 at 6:00 p.m. in City Hall. Mayor Costas called the meeting to order. The Pledge of Allegiance was said. Present were Councilmembers Reed, Cotton, Domer, Pupillo, Anderson, Hunt, and Kapitan.

MINUTES

MOTION: Councilmember Cotton moved to adopt August 11, 2025 minutes. Councilmember Kapitan seconded the motion. Upon voice vote the motion passed with a 7-0 vote.

RESOLUTION NO. 8, 2025

**A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF VALPARAISO, INDIANA COMON COUNCIL APPROVING
THE 2ND DISTRIBUTION OF OPIOID SETTLEMENT GRANT FUNDS**

Councilmember Kapitan moved that Resolution No. 8, 2025 be read and considered for adoption. Councilmember Hunt seconded the motion. Clerk-Treasurer Taylor read Resolution No. 8, 2025.

Councilmember Anderson – There were a lot of grant requests this year and the proposals in them were fantastic. There were so many good ideas but a limited amount of funds. The goal in distributions was to give the applicants something that was meaningful to their application.

Councilmember Kapitan – It is exciting to see these great programs. On the other hand, it is eye opening to know that this funding is so needed.

Councilmember Anderson – Proposed awards are:

New Creations Business Advocates	Case Manager/Grant Writer	\$87,000.00
Community Change Center	Reentry Program Coordinator	\$25,632.00
Healing with Human Connection	Bridge to Recovery Hub Director	
	Program Facilitator, Training	
	Materials & Supplies	\$20,000.00
PACT	Part-Time Peer Recovery Coach	\$28,458.00
Hilltop House	Mission Kitchen Social Worker	\$50,000.00
Recycling & Waste/PC Health Dept	Sharps collection & Disposal	
	Medication Disposal Program	\$12,500.00
Valparaiso Police Dept	AEDs for all police vehicles	\$40,000.00
Valparaiso Community Schools	Parental Consent Drug Screening	\$ 5,500.00
Moraine House	House Repairs	\$30,000.00
The Caring Place	Women’s Recovery Program	\$20,000.00

Valparaiso Family YMCA
Strides Against Suicide

Recovery & Wellness
Substance Abuse & Mental
Health Treatment

\$16,530.00
\$11,250.00
\$346,870.00

Councilmember Kapitan – She advised the Council that she and Councilmember Anderson each have a conflict. She works at Recycling & Waste Reduction and Councilmember Anderson is on the Board for the Valparaiso Family YMCA. Attorney Lyp advised if they do individual votes they can each recuse themselves for the vote.

Councilmember Cotton – He would like to see evidence based abatement. He doesn't see that many of these grants address use abatement. There were three applicants that had something to do with youth prevention. They were rejected. He would be inclined to limit grants until we have something that is going to do something with respect to preventing youth from falling into this trap.

Councilmember Kapitan – They talked about that last year. This year they advertised and received 15 applications. She is not sure what he is looking for exists. Last year they had the recipients come back and tell the Council what they had done with the funds. The three that were rejected – one was an artificial intelligence program that assessed prescriptions through medical offices and insurance providers. This was interesting but had no way that we could use it for an entire city. The Betty Ford Foundation is doing similar programing to what a local business is doing. The Family Scholar House is not local.

Councilmember Cotton - He is interested in capping the awards. He is concerned that as the program matures, funds will dwindle and not be available for something that may emerge that is ideal for this particular money.

Councilmember Kapitan – She would not feel right waiting for a magic program that they don't even know if it exists yet. She and Councilmember Anderson talked about maybe taking a break from a grant next year so the funds can build up again. If they decide as a body that they want to help with youth prevention, then they need to make sure that is what is advertised.

Councilmember Anderson - We need to make that very clear and known up front.

Councilmember Cotton – He does not want to lose site of the source of this money.

Councilmember Reed – The Hilltop Mission kitchen has numerous individuals who come for meals that need assistance for a variety of sorts. Hilltop does an incredible job in directing and guiding and providing the support that is needed.

Councilmember Domer – She questioned the amount for one social worker specifically for the Mission Kitchen for Hilltop House. The guidelines established by the State for this grant funding state they are specifically for opioid use disorder. If the opioid use disorder is coupled with mental health issues it is included.

Councilmember Hunt – If that is true it deserves discussion about what criteria was looked at and what had to be met in order for the Council to approve and award the grants. If the funds are only for opioid use disorder, then what Councilmember Cotton is asking for is not allowed.

Councilmember Hunt –A need has been shown and to deny funding for a need that has been shown would be hard to justify for her.

Discussion: What is justified and what is not? Look over the guidelines and look at youth prevention. The amount of funds available and the amount of the grants awarded. Social work is prevention. Hilltop is going to match the grant the Council may give them. This might be considered by others as a way to make the dollars go further. Some of the grants can be flipped into Unrestricted and others into Restricted funds. Moraine House's application talked about counseling services. It is listed as house repairs. They had two applications. Last year they had \$79,000 for case worker and house repairs. Check applications yearly to make sure they are not asking for the same thing year after year. In 2026 Moraine House has an ongoing counseling amount they are going to be using. That was part of last year's award.

Councilmember Domer – She understands the people living at the Community Change Center are residing in Gary. This money is for residents of Valparaiso. Community Change Center operates a food truck in Valparaiso.

Councilmember Anderson – Whether or not these people are Valpo residents, it is still happening here. The food trailer is in Valpo every day. He thinks they have a great program.

Councilmember Hunt – Is it a requirement that they be Valpo residents?

Councilmember Anderson -It is something the Council decided on.

Councilmember Pupillo – When we originally did this there was the assumption that this would be taking care of Valpo residents. Other cities are receiving money so why are we shouldering their burden?

Councilmember Cotton – Other communities received funds and most of them got more than Valparaiso. What we get should help people in Valparaiso. He is not sure AEDs for the Police cars fit this category. They reached out and tried to get consolidation from other communities but to no avail.

Councilmember Pupillo – The Police Department request was cut in half.

Councilmember Kapitan – The AEDs will go in patrol cars. They talked with the Chief and that amount covers enough for all patrol vehicles. This saves lives.

Councilmember Cotton – Was New Creations pared down?

Councilmember Anderson – There are three organizations that Mitch Peters is part of. This is one of them. The other two did not ask for any money because they need all they requested for New Creations. This is less than they asked for last year.

Sam – Community Change Center – She would agree with the Council if they were bringing Gary people to Valpo to work. But they are almost all Valpo residents that are working the truck. Community Change Center has different programming in Lake, Porter, and LaPorte Counties. Gary is where the reentry homes are. Almost all of the programming is happening here. This money is to support the reentry program coordinator. She was hired in January. She is offering case management and reentry services with a focus on recovery to primarily Valpo residents because that is where her office is. They have been working on becoming a Medicaid and recovery works provider for almost two years. They received HFI funds through the Health Department to support her salary through this year. This money will get them through so they can keep her on board.

Councilmember Domer - She understands the need for wraparound services for people in recovery from opioid use disorder. What are you going to do when you don't get Medicaid?

Sam – We are fully contracted and approved. This just happened in the last six to eight weeks.

Clerk-Treasurer Taylor – Do any of the amounts need to be switched from Restricted and Unrestricted? This will not change Exhibit A. Hilltop will be taken out of Unrestricted Funds.

UPON ROLL CALL VOTE Resolution No. 8, 2025 passed by a 7-0 vote.

RESOLUTION NO. 9, 2025

A RESOLUTION OF THE COMMON COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF VALPARAISO, INDIANA, RECOMMENDING ISSUANCE OF A DOWNTOWN ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE PERMIT PURSUANT TO I.C. 7.1-3-20-16(g)

Councilmember Kapitan moved that Resolution No. 9, 2025 be read and considered for adoption. Councilmember Reed seconded the motion. Clerk-Treasurer Taylor read Resolution No. 9, 2025.

Attorney Patrick Lyp gave a brief history of the downtown Alcoholic Beverage Permits and the Written Commitments.

Mayor Costas – In the beginning there were some basic criteria that the Review Committee would apply. Do those criteria remain and what are they?

Attorney Patrick Lyp – For the large part they remain. There were minor tweaks to move away from the fine dining to the more casual dining. Criteria: applicant's experience, looking at the applicant's involvement in the community, looking at the business plan. The Council wants to recommend the license to a restaurant that will enhance all the restaurants downtown.

Councilmember Hunt – Is the criteria in the Code? Is it something the Council is bound by?

Attorney Patrick Lyp – No. The criteria is self-imposed.

Councilmember Hunt – What is the term of the license?

Attorney Patrick Lyp - They are indefinite. The City has no licenses. They recommend to IATC and then based on State requirements they issue it. Every two years the applicant has to go back to the IATC and have their license renewed. If there is a significant or material violation of Commitments, the City has the right to petition immediately for the suspension, withdrawal or the next time they are up for renewal to seek a suspension or withdrawal.

Councilmember Cotton – He would like to know what amount is currently available.

Attorney Patrick Lyp – There are 13 issued and two remaining.

Councilmember Cotton – Uniqueness is important. They don't want 15 pizza places. They want diversity.

Attorney Clay Patton - He has been working for the past six months with Alec Emmons, Tatjana Hess and Stacey Emmons. They offer uniqueness with a German restaurant. And additional uniqueness with the additional component of indoor entertainment with the Golf Lodge.

Alec Emmons – They founded the Golf Lodge in 2023. The German roots go way back.

Tatjana Hess – She and her parents immigrated to Valparaiso in 2008.

Alec Emmons – They both graduated from Chesterton High School. His grandparents started Waterway Pool in Portage. There is no German restaurant in Valparaiso or all of northwest Indiana. There is a market for this. They propose 2,500 sq ft. dedicated to Alpen Haus. The project will be located at 13-15 Washington Street. They are purchasing the building and will be long term investors in the Valpo Community. There are apartments above the proposed restaurant so they will be on location 24/7.

Tatjana Hess- Valpo has turned into a foodie international dining. They want to bring authentic German food to the area.

Alec Emmons – They are going to hire an executive chef.

Tatjana Hess- They hired a Michelin accredited hospitality trainer to train all the staff in the Nevada facility. They will have the same person train the staff here.

Alec Emmons – He showed a video of the golf simulators. They will create 30+ new jobs. They have four Trackman simulators, Dartsee interactive dartboards, full service German restaurant and a premium bar featuring rare bourbons, German beers, wines and craft cocktails. The proposed project will be located where Aftermath is located.

Tatjana Hess – Their current facility is in Carson City, NV. They do not see that as long term. They want to be here with their families.

Mayor Costas – What is your timing?

Alec Emmons – He is currently working with Chester on the build out. They are looking at opening this winter.

Attorney Clay Patton – Aftermath is staying in the building until Popcorn Festival. Then they will have to purchase the building, liquor license at the State level, build out within the building and hiring of the staff.

Councilmember Anderson – He is having trouble envisioning the two sides flowing together.

Tatjana Hess – They are knocking down the wall dividing the two right now. There will be archways connecting the two sides.

Alec Emmons – If you walk in on the left side it will be formal dining. The kitchen will be behind that. The other side will be more dining with the dartboards in front. The bar will be where Aftermath has it. The simulators will be in the back area. It is very cohesive. It is not two separate sides. It is going to be all together.

Councilmember Domer – So if people want to just come for dinner will they hear next door?

Alec Emmons - No because the simulators will be in the back.

Councilmember Anderson – If he wants to bring his family in for German food and he doesn't want anything to do with the rest; he can do that and not be bothered by the other side?

Alec Emmons – Not whatsoever.

Councilmember Cotton – How does this proposed facility compare with the facility in Carson City NV?

Alec Emmons – In Carson City they have about 2,700 sq ft. They have four simulators in both. One is in a VIP room where it can be closed off for parties or meetings. The Valpo facility will be about 5,200 sq ft.

Councilmember Cotton – It is said that it takes five years to determine if a business is solid.

Alec Emmons – They would not be looking to do this in Valparaiso if they were not confident in their numbers.

Attorney Clay Patton – They are making a multimillion dollar investment in real estate a few blocks from here and they are getting ready to write a \$25,000 check for this liquor license if it is approved.

Councilmember Hunt – This checks a lot of boxes. Do you currently live in Valparaiso?

Tatjana Hess – Currently they are going back and forth between the two. They still have a couple of operations to run in Carson City. They have a great management staff running things while they are gone. They just listed their house for sale.

Councilmember Hunt – With such a short timeline, is that possible?

Alec Emmons – They have a Purchase Agreement and a Lease so they are locked in.

Attorney Clay Patton – He met with the banker from Centier last week. They are in the process of putting the loan through. There are apartments on the second floor of the building. They intend to reside in one as soon as they become owners.

Councilmember Hunt – Will the full menu be available during all hours of your operation?

Tatjana – Yes.

Councilmember Reed – She thanked them for their investment in the community. It is a great addition to Valparaiso.

Councilmember Anderson – The Council needs to know that this will remain primarily a restaurant.

Mayor Costas – It is eatertainment. It is a new concept and has been fused together. It appears they are very serious about food focus.

Councilmember Cotton – Is that in the Written Commitments?

Councilmember Hunt – Was his application amended from showing 30% food to 55%?

Alec Emmons – It was. That was based on the old location they were looking at.

Councilmember Cotton – What percentage of the cash flow will be generated from liquor versus food? Is food going to be the emphasis with a higher percentage of what your sales are constituting? Or will it be a higher percentage coming from liquor and recreation?

Alec Emmons – In the application I put 55% food and 25% golf and the remaining 20% would be liquor.

Councilmember Kapitan – Do we check with other holders to see what they are doing in percentage of food versus liquor?

Attorney Patrick Lyp – If there were to be a problem the City could revert back to the Written Commitments to see whether or not historically, they fit those numbers.

Kenard Taylor – ABC Board member – It is a requirement that at least 50% has to be food versus liquor.

Councilmember Kapitan – When should they expect to see the Written Commitments?

Attorney Patrick Lyp – Based on the presentation and application he would suggest the same model used for Avgo. There is a schedule at the end to put in the time to open and things of that nature. He would send a copy to Attorney Patton to make sure they are agreeable to the terms and then forward a copy to the Council for their input. The Council could approve the proposal subject to the signing of the Written Commitments. Those could be available at the next meeting to approve.

Councilmember Kapitan - If the Council approves tonight, they can get moving on the next steps?

Attorney Patrick Lyp – They should have the Written Commitments. That way the owners know what they have to do and everyone is on the same page.

MOTION: Councilmember Kapitan moved to approve Resolution No. 9, 2025 contingent on the signing of the Written Commitments. Councilmember Reed seconded the Motion. Upon roll call vote the motion passed with a 7-0 vote.

RESOLUTION NO. 10, 2025

A RESOLUTION OF THE COMMON COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF VALPARAISO, INDIANA, RECOMMENDING AMENDMENT OF A DOWNTOWN ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE PERMIT PURSUANT TO I.C. 7.1-3-20-16(g)

Councilmember Kapitan moved that Resolution No. 10, 2025 be read and considered for adoption.

Councilmember Reed seconded the motion. Clerk-Treasurer Taylor read Resolution No. 10, 2025.

Chris Pavlou – He has decided to upgrade Radius to a larger space. He is currently in the process of securing the old Chase building at 101 E. Lincolnway. Radius would not need a new license but instead they want to keep their current license and ask the Council to allow them to change the location. This move would create more jobs. He wants to make Radius elevated. He showed pictures of possible design for the new location.

Councilmember Hunt – She asked for clarification on the license. This is a request for transfer of the location so the Holder remains the same.

Attorney Patrick Lyp – Under the Commitments and State law they have to list where they are located.

Councilmember Hunt – So he will continue to hold the license at Radius until he moves?

Chris Pavlou – He is going to stay where he is until he moves.

Councilmember Hunt – Any timeline?

Chris Pavlou -Eight months.

Councilmember Hunt – In the Written Commitments it states All American cuisine with an emphasis on hamburgers. Will that remain?

Chris Pavlou – That is what Radius is. He just wants to add some new options.

Councilmember Cotton – This is pretty perfunctory, isn't it?

Attorney Patrick Lyp – If he changes nothing but the address, he is compliant.

Councilmember Cotton - Will there be signage?

Chris Pavlou – He would like to keep the same sign.

Councilmember Domer – It is exciting to see an existing business owner expand.

Councilmember Anderson – He thanked Chris for all he does. He is the poster child of what this program is supposed to be.

UPON ROLL CALL VOTE Resolution No. 10, 2025 passed by a 7-0 vote.

COUNCIL LIAISON REPORTS

Councilmember Anderson – The utilities have done replacement of eight major manholes on Joliet, Horse Prairie and State Road 2. The technology used provides a multilayer lining system that provides structural reinforcement and chemical resistance with a 50 year design life. DLZ was approved to proceed with design of a public lift station located at the northeast corner of Marsh and US 30. The Valpo Engineering Department has prepared contract documents for storm sewer infrastructure improvements on Lois Drive and Central Ave.

Councilmember Pupillo – VFD added four new firefighters. VPD welcomed a therapy dog named Ellie. This is thanks to an anonymous doner, citizen donors, Vale Park Animal Hospital and Ultimate Canine. School is back in session so slow down around schools and buses and school zones. VPD is gearing up for Popcorn Fest.

Councilmember Domer – At BOW sidewalk package #1 came in under budget so there is extra that will be used for sidewalks. Proposals were opened for the Valpo Rec Center. The pricing will be reviewed later. A review committee will score the qualifications that were opened at BOW. The second floor of Daybreak was approved to open. This will give them 12 additional beds.

Councilmember Kapitan – Student applications are open for the Environmental Advisory Board. The Plan Commission meets next Tuesday. World Cultural Fest was yesterday. It was exciting to celebrate the diverse cultures that are here in our community.

Councilmember Cotton - None of his committees have met since his last report. On the 27th the Community Housing Partners are hosting the third leg of a three-part symposium series.

Councilmember Reed – RDC met and approved two short term lease agreements for use of parking lots during the Popcorn Festival events. The 2026 Neighborhood Grant Improvement guidelines were approved. Since 2019 there have been 139 grants awarded. This past year the grant program saw a more diverse and increased engagement. They reviewed and made recommendations to approve a workforce attainable housing grant application program. This is a working document where modifications may be added as they move forward. The goal is to get the process started to provide financial resources to those looking to build attainable housing in our community. They approved an agreement for signal improvements at the intersection of Lincolnway and Morgan. She attended the neighborhood workshop event held by Maggie Clifton. There were representatives from a variety of neighborhoods to share ideas and build upon ways to engage and strengthen neighborhood communities. Mayor Costas joined and gave a brief summary of the updates made through Replay and future plans for Valpo. Anyone interested in applying for a neighborhood grant is invited to a virtual information session on September 8th at 5:00 pm. The zoom link can be found on the City's website. The Park Department will meet tomorrow.

Councilmember Hunt – The School Board meets tonight and will be presented with an initial recommendation for the 2026 budget. The Council should have received their copies tonight also. The Budget Committee will meet with the VCS Superintendent and CFO for an initial review and discussion.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

TO HEAR CITIZENS' FULL COMMENTS, PLEASE REFER TO THE WATCH CITY MEETINGS SECTION OF THE CITY OF VALPARAISO'S WEBSITE (WWW.CI.VALPARAISO.IN.US)

James Ferguson – 303 Indiana. Youth prevention is important for the opioid situation. He suggested free sports programs for youth. Programs and rehab are not what change a person. Consequences do. His suggestion is take half of the money and put it into kids' free sports and the other half give to the Police Department so that people get consequences. He has realized a lot of the streetlamps are out on Indiana and Lincolnway.

The Next Council Meeting will be September 12, 2025
The meeting was adjourned at 7:57 p.m.

/s/ Holly Taylor, Clerk-Treasurer