

SARDINIA COUNCIL MEETING

August 10, 2026 7:00 P.M.

Prayer: Gary Troutman

Pledge: Mayor Dustin Puckett

Roll Call: Gary Troutman, Anna Turner, Peggy Vance, Dean Vaughn, Nick Taylor

Also in Attendance: Tony Baker, Solicitor, Michelle Taylor, Fiscal Officer, Venita Milburn, Interim Administrator

Meeting began at 7:00 p.m.

MEETING MINUTES

Council reviewed minutes from July 2026. *Motion to approve minutes made by Dean Vaughn, second by Gary Troutman. Roll call all yes.*

Attachments: Meeting minutes of July 2026

FINANCIALS

Council reviewed financials for July 2026. There were no questions at this time about the financials
Motion to approve July financials made by Dean Vaughn, second by Gary Troutman.

Attachments: Financials for July 2026, Temporary budget 2027

Ms. Milburn addressed the council and Mr. Paul Riley stating that Mr. Riley had made accusations of criminal activity regarding the check that was given to the Board of Elections of Mr. McRoberts account. Mr. McRoberts had paid his utility bill with check number 152, at which time he tore off check 153 also. A phone call was placed to Mr. McRoberts that the additional check was in the office which he said he would pick up. Mr. McRoberts had not picked up the check after a week when his residency was beginning to come into question. A photo of check 153 was taken because it verified Mr. McRoberts address outside the Village, all banking information was redacted then put in Mr. McRoberts file. Mr. McRoberts was called again when he did not pick up the check, a message was left at that time. Mr. McRoberts called back while Ms. Vance was in the office, the call was put on speaker, Mr. McRoberts said he was stupid for tearing off two checks and would be up to get the check. At no time was any banking information shared with anyone. When the council meeting in June went into executive session the copy of the check was given to the solicitor, Anthony Baker. At no time was there any criminal activity. Ms. Milburn asked for an apology from Mr. Riley, which he gave her and accepted by Ms. Milburn.

Mr. Vaughn addressed cancel that there was concern that banking information was being given out and was not safe in the Village office. Mr. Vaughn asked Ms. Milburn if she had given the checking information to Mr. Danny Silvas, which Ms. Milburn adamantly said absolutely not. Mr. Vaughn also brought up the incident with Chief Perry and Ms. Milburn

having a conversation outside of the Village office which Mr. Baker stated had been turned over to the investigator, Ms. Bailey. Ms. Milburn did say that Mr. Baker had told her it was okay for Chief Perry to be there at that time. Mr. Vaughn also brought up the missing key for the LESO equipment upstairs, which Ms. Milburn explained she was not in the office during that LESO visit and that Ms. Mason could not find the key at the time. Ms. Milburn stated after that she had found the key and the LESO had the equipment verified and there was no issue. Mayor Puckett stated at the next LESO visit with Chief Perry he was there and there were no problems found with the equipment in the room.

Mr. Vaughn then asked for Ms. Milburn's termination or resignation. Ms. Milburn responded that she was not resigning. *Motion was made by Dean Vaughn to terminate Ms. Milburn, second by Nick Taylor. Roll call Dean Vaughn -yes, Nick Taylor – yes, Gary Troutman – no, Peggy Vance-no, Anna Turner – no. Ms. Milburn stays.*

ADMINISTRATOR

Rumpke contract expires on August 31st so a decision needs to be made. Mayor Puckett had reached out to the Republic trash service and another but had not received a call back. Council needed to decide which option they thought would be the best for the Village. There are three options to choose from. Option 1 would raise the price for non-seniors up \$0.80 and seniors \$0.83; Option 2 would give each customer a 95-gallon trash cart would raise the cost for non-seniors \$1.26 and seniors \$1.25. If a customer is paying for a trash cart currently that charge goes away and would be included in the utility payment. If the Village continues the contract with Rumpke the cart stays with the contract. Ms. Milburn did state that there is no upcharge for Rumpke services; the Village charges residents exactly what Rumpke charges the Village. There was some discussion from the audience about the price increase for seniors and the accountability for the trash carts. Mayor Puckett noted that the cart would need to stay with the property as the carts are numbered. Ms. Milburn did inform council and audience that if the cart was broken a call just needed to be placed to the office, then the office would notify Rumpke that the cart needed to be replaced. Increase for residents will be for non-seniors \$1.26 and seniors \$1.25.

Motion made by Anna Turner to accept Option 2 with trash cart, second by Dean Vaughn. Roll call all yes except Peggy Vance – no. Rumpke addendum signed by Mayor Puckett for the new contract.

EJFED Fire department will be having their annual car show on Saturday, August 15 from 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Chief Kirker had completed the event form for the road closures from the four way stop to College Avenue and Winchester Street to the Founders Way. This is their usual road closures for the annual car show. Council agreed to the road closures.

Motion made to agree to road closures for car show made by Dean Vaughn, second by Nick Taylor. Roll Call all yes.

Ogden Lane update – equipment was rented to grind up the road to help with some of the potholes on Ogden. This was done today. As long as the rain holds off new gravel will be put down tomorrow. Mayor Puckett did mention that Ogden Lane is in the 5-year street plan.

There are two properties that are requesting that sewer charges be voided. One is on King Road which the property has new property owners are asking for void of current charges which are \$1033.34. The other is at Crestview Mobile Home Park, Lot #39 which is owned by a mortgage company. They have previously paid \$541.00 with the current charge \$135. *Motion to void the charges on both properties made by Dean Vaughn, second by Nick Taylor. Roll call all yes.*

Mr. Bruce Stinson had asked to be placed on the agenda this month. He brought up the water and sewer hook ups that had been mentioned in previous meetings had ended. He did state that the first time the guys were out they put in the meter bases in but not the meters so there was an open excavation. They then came to hook up the sewer where Mr.

Stinson had brought pictures of the job being done. He explained that when there is a trench being dug that there needs to be a way to get out at four feet and if the trench is five feet, then there needs to be a trench box. The Village does have a trench box. Mr. Stinson offered Mayor Puckett to do training for the city works for free. He stated he was an OSHA training instructor and project manager instructor for 22 years. The training would be over a two-day period or longer. There would be a certification given for the first ten hours. Mr. Stinson said that he would also continue training for new employees if necessary.

Motion made to accept the training for the city workers by Dean Vaughn, second by Gary Troutman. Roll call – Dean Vaughn – yes, Gary Troutman – yes, Nick Taylor – yes, Anna Turner – no, Peggy Vance – no

Mr. Stinson also mentioned that he had filled out an application for the Administrator position along with a contract for a safety and operations consultant position at \$2500 per month. The contract position would be to get oversight to the city workers.

Mr. Stinson then submitted a request for reimbursement for lost rental income for 311 days with the cost of \$18,000. Ms. Milburn stated that it was her understanding that a special meter had to be ordered for Mr. Stinson's job. Mr. Stinson stated he did not want to hear any nonsense. Mr. Stinson submitted three options for repayment, one of which was to cut him a check for the full amount. Another was to cut a partial check then not charge him for water and sewer until the amount was paid or not charge him water and sewer until the amount is paid in full. Mr. Taylor stated that he had rental property that he could not always guarantee to find a tenant quickly. This will be tabled until next council meeting and take under advisement.

Mr. Stinson then brought up the debris on his property at the cemetery line. This debris was to be cleaned up. It had been said previously that Bonar's was to come out to clean this up for the Village. Mr. Stinson requested that the Village pay his company to clean it up and to pay him for the job. Mayor Puckett reached out to Bonar's during this conversation where it was confirmed that Bonar's could get out there on Friday and it would be \$4000.

Motion was made to have Mr. Stinson remove the debris for \$4000, second by Nick Taylor. Roll call all yes except for Anna Turner who abstained.

Anthony Baker, solicitor, asked for an executive session for Ohio Revised Code 121.22(G)1 for the appointment, employment, dismissal, discipline, promotion, demotion, or compensation of a public employee or official.

Motion made to go into executive session made by Gary Troutman, second by Peggy Vance. Roll call all yes.

Executive session begins at 7:49 p.m.

Motion to come out of executive session made by Gary Troutman, second by Dean Vaughn. Roll call all yes.

Executive session ends at 8:47 p.m.

No official action taken out of executive session today.

Anthony Baker, Solicitor

Mr. Baker informed council of the status of councilman McRoberts seat and the findings of the Board of Elections. Mr. McRoberts is entitled to have a hearing and introduce any evidence that he would have to council. As a matter of law per Mr. Baker, Mr. McRoberts has forfeited his seat. If the finding from the hearing is that he is not an elector of the

Village or if Mr. McRoberts resigns his seat before the next meeting, the seat could be filled at that time. Mr. Vaughn asked, "Even if there is a hearing Mr. McRoberts is still out?" Mr. Baker responded, "Functionally, yes." This hearing will be held at the beginning of the next regular council meeting on September 14, 2026, at 7:00 p.m. No resumes for the open seat should be submitted before the process that is due.

Mr. Baker updated the council on the Police Investigation that is still ongoing but close to conclusion. There may have to be a special meeting called in the very near future. Mr. Baker continued to say that there has been a lawsuit filed by Dakotah Brown and Zach Smith against the Village of Sardinia, Ashlie Webster as mayor, the Village of Russellville, the mayor of Russellville, and Chief Perry for Sardinia and Russellville. This will be turned over the insurance as that is our duty to do so when something like this comes up. Mr. Baker will keep council updated on this.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Mayor Puckett would like to start a committee regarding obtaining cameras for live streaming the council meetings. This would include the video and storage of these meetings which must be kept forever. Mayor Puckett did discuss this with Mr. Mays today. Decision was made to either call the committee the Public Communications Committee or the Transparency Committee. Option was made for Transparency Committee. This would have the mayor and two council members. Dean Vaughn and Nick Taylor agreed to be on the committee with a meeting set for Wednesday, August 19th, at 7:00 p.m. Gary Troutman did say he did not necessarily want to be on the committee but would have questions.

AUDIENCE

Ms. Billie Gibbons - Started with saying she had asked the mayor two months ago to come to her house to watch some videos that she had from cameras at her home regarding things that had been stolen out of her flower garden. Then Ms. Gibbons said she had spoken to Gordon Ellis. The ditch that runs alongside her property on Mae Street the Village has stopped mowing this. Ms. Gibbons said she had been buying weed killer for many years to put on the ditch. She reached out to District 9 and was told this is a storm drain that carries water from Tri-County Hwy. Also, if this does not run through her property, she is not responsible. She is not going to buy any more weed killer. Mae Street looks awful since no one is taking care of their property. She stated she is terminally ill, but she keeps her property looking nice. The Village quit mowing the easement that she has been taking care of since she moved in over 31 years. When she mows it then Mr. Belcher mows it after her. This easement must stay open to get back to the power lines.

Ms. Gibbons wanted to give council a heads-up to know how serious she is. She continued by saying she has gone to Cincinnati to see three different attorneys where she received information that read, "If a municipality's actions or inactions place its citizens in danger of harm or death, they can trigger legal liability under doctrines such as State Created Danger Doctrine and they also lead to criminal or civil penalties depending on the circumstances. The State Created Danger Doctrine in U.S. Law holds the state actors, including municipal employees, liable under the 14th Amendment due process clause if their affirmative conduct creates or significantly increases a risk of harm that an individual would not have faced otherwise. Criminal and civil liabilities: If the municipalities conduct is willful, reckless or mostly negligent, it could give rise to criminal charges such as reckless endangerment, manslaughter, or assault depending on intent or outcome. Civil liability: Under S1983 for constitutional violations or under state court law for negligence, wrongful death or breach of statutory duties.

Ms. Gibbons continued saying that it was your (council) responsibility to take care of the citizens. She said this was about Mae Street that is only 12 foot wide. For 29 years Snap on Tool has been the largest truck and made the right turn. Her cameras record everything, people not stopping at the stop sign. She believes a small child is going to get hit.

It has been a one-way street for 29 years. She has no money so she can't afford a head on collision or to buy a new car. She stated every resident on Mae Street their life is in danger. She states everyone on Mae Street whose life is in danger will be filing one large claim.

She did say she had contacted the FBI about the video of the policeman. She asked Paul Riley to burn some more DVDs for her. She stated that the FBI will be in touch with her because they want her DVD. Ms. Gibbons did state during her time that if Lt. Ingle comes back that the harassment from the Belchers would start again.

Ms. Gibbons was told her time was up, which she replied it was her constitutional right to speak as long as liked. Ms. Milburn stated that there was a 3–5-minute limit.

There was discussion among council about the reason Mae Street was changed to two-way. Mr. Troutman said he remembered that there were three readings for the ordinance. Mr. Baker said the ordinance would have to be revoked but he would look at this and bring it to the next meeting. Ms. Vance did state the business owners had previously come to the administration about this change to a two way to keep trucks from going into Ms. Gibbons ditch.

Mr. Baker did say the Belcher's should be given the opportunity to come and address council regarding the change that is being requested. Mr. Vaughn did say it was best to revisit the Mae Street issue. Mr. Riley suggested that the street be made one way in the other direction. Ms. Turner said that there would be trouble for the trucks to turn into Belchers the other way.

Julia Clark – Asked for the garden club, if the property on Winchester was available yet. She was told that the property is still in litigation by Mr. Baker. Ms. Clark asked if she knew when it was going to be finished. He said that the property's attorney had come with an offer which was not satisfactory, but the Village has to recover what was spent in cleaning up the property. Mr. Baker said it is still in negotiations, and he understands that the garden club wants that property.

Ms. Clark wanted to know about her personal request for information that had not been received. Ms. Milburn informed Ms. Clark that she had just got access to the body cams which the old ones have to be requested for recovery of older body cams and had been working with the attorney to find body cams they were asking for. Ms. Milburn also said that she had been unable to locate the file from the previous zoning officer. Ms. Milburn will look further into this but did say the fence issue was a civil action.

Ms. Clark did ask about the hiring of an administrator. Mr. Vaughn brought up the action of getting a BPA instead of an administrator. Much discussion was held about what Villages have BPAs. Mr. Baker said he would research this idea of BPA vs administrator. Mr. Baker said we could call a special meeting to discuss.

Beth Dotson – Ms. Dotson asked if there was a possibility of putting together a community for income tax like we used to have or a point of contact at the Village office. She had spoken to a past Fiscal Officer who was unfamiliar with RITA tax questions, but she did call RITA to get answers to questions, Ms. Dotson also called RITA herself without getting answers. Around COVID we quit estimating taxes and there should have been an ordinance at time, but RITA is saying there is no ordinance. Currently, there are penalties for not paying estimated taxes. Ms. Dotson posed the question about why only certain people have to pay taxes while others do not. Mr. Taylor stated he did not know of anyone that did not pay taxes, but Ms. Dotson replied she knows quite a few people who have never paid RITA taxes and asked her why she pays.

Ms. Dotson brought up the previous committees had two council members and one person that was not on council that was on the committees. Ms. Dotson says that there is a different set of rules with RITA. She wondered why there were

penalties if you pay your taxes every year which are paid on time, why do you have to pay estimated taxes a year ahead. Not everyone is going to stay in the Village for the next year but then if you don't pay it you get the penalty and interest charge. Mr. Vaughn knew that they had previously there was an income tax committee and did not realize there was not one now. Ms. Dotson stated she had already paid this year's taxes; did not know why she was being informed she had to pay next year's taxes when she did not know how much was going to be made but with that there is accruing interest and penalties. So, Ms. Dotson asked if there could be a point of contact at the Village or a committee that answers questions regarding the RITA taxes so when there is a problem. The fiscal officer should be the point of contact for the Village. Ms. Dotson asked what the RITA taxes were used for. Mr. Baker stated that the money goes into the general fund. Mr. Troutman did say that he had never seen any contracts with RITA since he had been on council. This began a loud discussion between council, the audience and Ms. Dotson that could not be understood because of everyone talking over each other. Mayor Puckett did say that this would be looked into for further discussion. Mr. Baker then said that Michelle, fiscal officer, would be the point of contact until a committee could be named to discuss RITA taxes.

Roberta North – declined to speak.

ROUNDTABLE

Ms. Milburn did have one item regarding the sidewalk project. She had received information by email along with drawings showing the sidewalk project that were shared in each council member's packets. There does need to be information received for a flood plan which since there is not a committee for that she will have to reach out to the Brown County engineers office to get that information. Ms. Milburn said that this project has been stalled for some time but is now moving forward.

Mr. Vaughn did ask about the crosswalk by Fuel Mart at Sardinia-Mowbrystown Road. He asked if this could be moved closer to the corner so people crossing could see approaching vehicles. He asked if it could be moved closer to the car wash as he sees this crosswalk is used quite a bit. Ms. Waters did speak from the audience that this is harder to navigate with a stroller or someone that has mobility issues as it ends at a fire hydrant and a light pole. Moving the crosswalk would give pedestrians a better chance of seeing cars coming around the curve.

Ms. Vance brought up yard sale dates that were set previously but she has noticed that there have been several residences that have kept their yard sale items out past the weekends. She asked what the protocol for handling this. Mayor Puckett said if he could get those addresses that he would address this with the residents in question.

Motion made to adjourn the meeting made by Nick Taylor, second by Dean Vaughn. Roll call all yes.

**NEXT MEETING SEPTEMBER 14, 2026, AT 7:00 P.M.
MEETING ADJOURNED AT 9:23 P.M.**

Sept 14, 2026

Date Approved



Mayor



President of Council