



**VCU Board of Directors**

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**Assistant Secretary**

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Public Works & Utilities**

*Steve Poulos*

**Deputy City Services  
Director**

*Matt Zurbriggen*

**VCU Chief Financial Officer**

*Carla Platipodis*

**VCU Operations &  
Maintenance Director**

*Shihua Chen*

**VCU Field Services Director**

*Nate McGinley*

**Engineering Director**

*Max Rehlander*

**Assistant VCU  
Collections/Distribution  
Manager**

*Mike Steege*

**WRD Superintendent**

*Paul Scott*

**VCS Public Works Manager**

*Katie Travis*

**VCS Executive  
Administrator**

*Jackie Algozine*

**GIS Coordinator &  
Database Administrator**

*Emily Reyna*

**VALPARAISO CITY UTILITIES  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
MINUTES**

**January 27, 2026**

The Valparaiso City Utilities Board Meeting was called to order by President John Walsh at 5:00 pm on January 27, 2026, with the following attendees: Vice President Kari Bennett, Secretary Rod Gayda, Treasurer Tom Gooding, Assistant Secretary Jeff Lamb and VCU Attorney Mike Langer via phone. Additional participants were Executive Director of Public Works & Utilities Steve Poulos, Deputy City Services Director Matt Zurbriggen, CFO Carla Platipodis, Maintenance Director Shihua Chen, VCU Field Services Director Nate McGinley, Engineering Director Max Rehlander, VCS Executive Administrator Jackie Algozine, City Council Member Peter Anderson and James Anton, Shepard Insurance.

➤ **Approval of Minutes from January 13, 2026, Board Meeting**

- Rod Gayda motioned to approve the January 13, 2026, Board Minutes, seconded by Tom Gooding. The remaining members approved the motion.

➤ **Approval of Claims**

- Jeff Lamb motioned to approve the claims, seconded by Tom Gooding. The remaining members approved the motion.

➤ **2026 Approval of Insurance Renewal**

- Jim Anton presented the 2026 Insurance Renewal for approval. Rod Gayda motioned to approve renewal of the 2026 Insurance policy for Valparaiso City Services, seconded by Jeff Lamb. The remaining members approved the motion.

➤ **2026 Approval of Public Official Bond**

- Carla Platipodis presented the \$15,000 coverage for the Executive Director of Utilities and Public Works and \$75,000 for the Valparaiso Utilities Board Members for a total bond coverage of \$90,000. Kari Bennett motioned to approve the \$15,000 coverage for the Executive Director of Utilities and Public Works and \$75,000 for the Valparaiso Utilities Board Members for a total bond coverage of \$90,000. Rod Gayda seconded the motion, and the remaining members approved the motion.

➤ **2026 Approval of 2026 Blanket Bond**

- Carla Platipodis requested approval of the 2026 Blanket Bond Policy which provides commercial crime coverage for employees at a cost of \$399.00 per year which is also included in the total premium cost of \$250,459.23. Tom Gooding made a motion to approve the 2026 Blanket Bond Policy which provides commercial crime coverage for employees at a cost of \$399.00 per year which is also included in the total premium cost of \$250,459.23. Jeff Lamb seconded the motion, and the motion was approved by the remaining members.

➤ **4<sup>th</sup> Quarter Sewer Adjustments**

- Carla Platipodis presented approval for the 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter Sewer Adjustments. A motion was made by Jeff Lamb to approve the 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter Sewer Adjustments. Tom Gooding seconded the motion, and the motion was approved by the remaining members.

➤ **Piping Replacement for Heritage Valley Lift Station**

- Shihua Chen presented a request for the Heritage Valley lift station which is located on Thornapple Way. There is a hole in the base elbow pipe and other issues with the aging piping system that require replacement of the entire system. Below are three quotes. The recommendation is to award Metz Sewer, Plumbing and Pumping the project with the lowest bid of \$52,680. Funding is available in WRD’s 2026 CIP budget. A motion was made by Rod Gayda to approve the recommendation to award the work to Metz Sewer, Plumbing and Pumping in the amount of \$52,680. Tom Gooding seconded the motion, and the motion was approved by the remaining members.

<b>Contractor</b>	<b>Lump Sum Cost (\$)</b>
Metz Sewer, Plumbing & Pumping	52,680.00
HG Underground Utilities, LLC	54,943.33
GAI	63,000.00

➤ **Request LARE Grant Application Approval- Beauty Creek Watershed**

- Max Rehlander presented a request for approval for the LARE grant application to DNR to assist in funding a Watershed Study of Beauty Creek. The City received a LARE Grant in 2017 for a study of this watershed area. The study identified critical areas and recommended treatments for improvement. Engineering Dept staff recommend approval of the grant application for \$60,000 for a Watershed Study of Beauty Creek. Kari Bennett made a motion to approve the Engineering Department’s recommendation for the grant application for \$60,000 for a Watershed Study of Beauty Creek. Rod Gayda seconded the motion, and the remaining members approved the motion.

➤ **Westwind Subdivision Phase 2B–Contractor Water Agreement**

- Nate McGinley presented a request for approval for the Westwind Subdivision Phase 2B contract for the Valparaiso City Utilities Water Department and the contractor, Reichelt Plumbing. Reichelt Plumbing agrees to complete the installation of 1,425 LFT of 8” ductile iron, hydrant assemblies, gate valves, 41 water services, and fittings in accordance with VCU Water Department specifications and plans for the amount of \$201,075.00 to be completed within 365 calendar days from the start of the project or unless the period for completion is extended by the VCU Water Department. Jeff Lamb made a motion to accept the Westwind Subdivision Phase 2B contract for the Valparaiso City Utilities Water Department and the contractor, Reichelt Plumbing in the amount of \$201,075.00, Kari Bennett seconded the motion, and the motion was approved by the remaining members.

➤ **Westwind Subdivision Phase 2B – Developer Water Agreement**

- Nate McGinley presented a request for approval for the Westwind Subdivision Phase 2B agreement for the Valparaiso City Utilities Water Department and the developer Olthof Homes. Olthof Homes is requesting their contractor, Reichelt Plumbing install certain water mains in accordance with VCU Water Department specifications and plans for the amount of \$221,182.50, which includes engineering, project administration, inspection, water mains with all necessary fittings as well as subject to additional terms that have been stated in the agreement. The estimated completion date is February 2027. Kari Bennett made a motion to accept the Westwind Subdivision Phase 2B agreement for the Valparaiso City Utilities Water Department and the developer, Olthof Homes in the amount of \$221,182.50, Rod Gayda seconded the motion, and the motion was approved by the remaining members.

➤ **Meridian Road Force Main Relocation Division A – Award Recommendation**

- Nate McGinley presented a need to replace structure LI-004 due to its deteriorating condition. The construction limits of the upgraded structure will be in conflict with the existing VCU 10” Damon Run force main which necessitates relocation of the existing utility. The location of the project is on Meridian Road just north of Wollaston Road. The project also requires relocation of a private force main owned by the Whispering Sands Mobile Home Community. Valparaiso City Utilities along with Porter County executed a joint MOU and bid project with two separate divisions of work in order to choose one contractor to perform the work at the same time. VCU’s portion of the project was bid as “Division A”:

Public Bids were opened on 12/9/25 with the following results:

- H&G Underground Utilities \$208,501.53
- LGS Plumbing, Inc. \$236,900.00

VCU budgeted \$150,000 in the Damon Run capital budget for the force main relocation per the DLZ opinion of probable cost for the project. The request is to award the project to H&G Underground Utilities for the amount of 208,501.53 with the understanding that a subsequent reduction change order will be executed to reduce the project cost by \$39,994.75. VCU is required to relocate our facilities because we are within Porter County right-of-way with our infrastructure without a designated utility easement. Kari Bennett motioned to conditionally award the project to H&G Underground Utilities for the amount of 208,501.53, pending approval by the Porter County Board of Commissioners approving Porter County Division B of the project and also with the understanding that a subsequent reduction via change order will be executed to reduce the project cost. Rod Gayda seconded the motion, and the remaining members approved the motion.

➤ **Meridian Road Force Main Relocation Division A – Contract Approval**

Nate McGinley presented a request for approval for the Meridian Road Force Main Relocation Division A – contract approval for the Valparaiso City Utilities and the contractor, H&G Underground Utilities. H&G Underground Utilities agrees to complete the Meridian Road force Main Project Division A by March 26, 2026, for the amount of \$208,501.53. Kari Bennett motioned to conditionally award the project to H&G Underground Utilities for the amount of 208,501.53, pending approval by the Porter County Board of Commissioners approving Porter County Division B of the project (VCU’s portion of the project was bid as Division A). Rod Gayda seconded the motion, and the remaining members approved the motion.

➤ **Park Wells – Design Request - This item has been tabled until further notice**

**Staff Reports:**

- Matt Zurbruggen presented a PowerPoint presentation on the Sturdy Road Forcemain.

**Next Board Meeting:**

**February 10, 2026**

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President

Secretary