



**APPROVED**

**URBANA CITY COUNCIL  
REGULAR SESSION MEETING  
TUESDAY, MARCH 3, 2026**

President Paul called the City of Urbana Regular Session Meeting to order at 6:06 pm at the Champaign County Community Center.

**City Staff attending:** Director of Law Mark Feinstein, Director of Administration Spencer Mitchell, Mayor Bill Bean, Director of Finance Matt Wellbaum, Fire Chief Dean Ortlieb, Interim Police Chief Josh Jacobs, and Superintendent of Public Works Chad Hall

**President Called Roll:** Ms. Jumper, present; Mr. Scott, present; Mr. Davis, present; Ms. Truelove, present; Mr. Thackery, present; Mrs. Collier, present; and Mrs. Bean, present.

Mr. Scott moved to walk-in Resolution 2727-26 and place it on the agenda before Citizen Comments. Ms. Jumper seconded. Voice vote on walking-in Resolution 2727-26: all ayes, nays none.

**Minutes**

Mr. Thackery moved to put the minutes of February 17, 2026 on the floor for discussion and possible approval. Ms. Truelove seconded.

Council did not have any comments/questions regarding the minutes.

Voice vote on approval of the minutes: all ayes; nays none.

**Communications:**

1. Champaign Countywide Public Safety Communications System 2025 Report (See Attached)
2. Champaign County Municipal Court 2025 Annual Report (See Attached)
3. City of Urbana Shade Tree Commission Meeting Minutes from November 2025 (See Attached)
4. City of Urbana's Response to Allegations of Lack of Transparency to Council (See Attached)

Council did not remove any communications from the consent agenda.

**Administrative Reports – Board of Control:**

1. The Board of Control recommends Council authorize a purchase order to Integrity Ford of Bellefontaine in the amount of \$89,381.36 for the purchase of two (2) 2026 Ford Utility Police vehicles for the Police Division. Also needed in this transaction is purchase order to P&R Communications in the amount of \$49,736 for the outfitting of both cruisers. The combined expenses total \$139,117.36. The expenses will be charged to the Police & Fire Levy Capital Improvement Fund and are included in the 2026 Budget. (See attached). **VOTE: 3-0**

Mrs. Bean moved to put this request on the floor for discussion and possible approval. Mr. Thackery seconded.

Mr. Wellbaum stated the City budgeted \$150,000 for cruisers, with this request coming in under budget.

Mr. Thackery asked if these cruisers were to replace other cruisers. Mr. Wellbaum confirmed they would, with the City's intention to sell the old ones on GovDeals, due to a better resale value.

Mrs. Bean asked why other businesses didn't submit bids. Interim Chief Jacobs stated SVG does not deal with fleet and Statewide declined due to the wording of the bid.

Roll call on approval: Mr. Scott, yes; Mr. Davis, yes; Mr. Thackery, yes; Ms. Truelove, yes; Mrs. Collier, yes; Mrs. Bean, yes; and Ms. Jumper, yes.

BOC #1 passes 7-0.

### **Data Center Presentation from Thor Equities/Highland Real Estate**

Raj Vohra from Thor Equities stated he wanted to take the time to let the City know more about project. He stated that Thor designs a wide array of projects. He stated that Highland, a Columbus area developer is assisting in the project.

Mr. Vohra stated the proposed project would be next to Rittal. He added that Thor was already examining the West Side of Columbus and working with AEP power to look at places that wouldn't require upgrades.

He stated he believed that this could be developed with minimal impact to the community.

Chris O'Grady introduced himself from Cyrus One, which is a data center owner based in Dallas Texas with sixty data centers globally. He stated there are currently locations in Cincinnati & Lebanon, and his company has invested over one billion dollars in the State.

Mr. O'Grady also estimated that this project would raise three million dollars annually to Urbana in taxes.

Mr. O'Grady stated that the water consumption would utilize closed loop technologies, with a daily usage similar to twelve residences. He also claimed that noise levels would be regulated by acoustic areas and setbacks, which would meet and exceed local regulations.

Mr. O'Grady stated in terms of power, the company would pay directly for all grid infrastructure updates. He also stated that in terms of air quality, the backup generators are only used fifteen to twenty hours a year roughly.

He indicated that constructions would create hundreds of jobs that prioritized local. He also indicated the project would create permanent jobs too. He said the facilities are built for longevity, with original centers still working.

Mr. Vohra indicated that the project would be hosting community events.

Ms. Truelove asked what would happen if the moratorium is approved. Mr. Vohra stated that the project has followed all steps and protocols by the community to date, and he was hoping there

would be no need for a moratorium. Ms. Truelove asked further if there was, what direction would they take, as her concerns didn't make her very comfortable. She further asked if the project has bothered to look at all the concerns, including the concerns of Cedar Bog.

Mr. O'Grady stated that they were here to meet with community so they can address the issues directly. Mr. Vohra stated that a general concern seems to be water use, with the direction the project is going would be for more eco-conscious technologies.

Ms. Jumper asked why they were here now, as opposed to holding meetings sooner if they were concerned.

Mr. Vohra stated that there was a public process for the zoning with no community concern at that time.

Mr. Thackery asked at what time they decided to move here.

Mr. Vohra stated that the property was bought in 2025 with general ideas. He added that after broader evaluations, around the end of year was when they start thinking of real potential.

Mr. Thackery stated that the constituents think it has been over a year.

Mr. Vohra stated that Highland got involved a couple of years ago. He added that towards the end of 2025, Thor got a high level of confidence of location. At that time, they then worked on customers and probably within the last month, the plan became more solidified

Mr. Vohra also asked Council to give them time to work with community, as they would love the chance to continue engagement.

**Resolution 2727-26:** A resolution imposing a temporary moratorium on the establishment or conversion of other structures or buildings into a data center, including the development and construction of any building, structure, use or change of use, that would allow data centers, and for a period of twelve (12) months from the effective date of this resolution, in order to allow the City administration and City Council time to investigate the findings of the State of Ohio legislature's evaluation of impact that a data center would have on local community, ie; water, electric, environment, critical infrastructure and future community planning, to investigate the impact of a data center on city resources and property values and to better understand any noise or pollution generated thereby, and the impact on safety, the power grid, and water usage, and to further review applicable federal codes, Ohio statutes, codes and regulations along with the City's codified ordinances relative to such activity, and declaring an emergency. (One reading required).

Mr. Thackery moved to place this resolution on the floor for discussion and possible passage. Ms. Jumper seconded.

Mr. Feinstein stated this resolution would impose a twelve-month moratorium on data centers while the City would evaluate the impact on the local community. He stated the resolution could go back on the agenda if the Law Director declared it an emergency, which he had.

Ms. Jumper stated that Council was elected to make thoughtful decisions for our community, as the community has placed its trust in them. She added voting in favor of the moratorium reflects their duty to the community.

Ms. Truelove stated she asked what direction the data center people would take if the resolution was passed, and they avoided answering. She stated that bugged her.

Roll call on passage: Mr. Davis, yes; Mr. Thackery, yes; Ms. Truelove, yes; Mrs. Collier, yes; Mrs. Bean, no; Ms. Jumper, yes; and Mr. Scott, yes.

Resolution passes 6-1.

**Citizen Comments:**

Brad Winner – 670 E. Ward St.

Mr. Winner stated that on April 22, 2025, there were a flurry of ordinances that included allowing computing infrastructure. He stated that it wasn't presented as data center and he begs to differ that Council new what they were voting on. He added that those ordinances were framed as from time-to-time the legislation needed housekeeping. Mr. Winner stated that Council was guilty of trusting that City. He added that the City is facing a federal lawsuit for picking and choosing zoning rights. He closed by saying Council needed to study this project.

Bryce Carafa – 104 Lafayette

Mr. Carafa stated that Highland is key piece of the two largest development projects in City history. He stated that the housing project has been going on for the past five years without any progress. Mr. Carafa stated that Highland was being rewarded for their five years with a data center package. He also stated that buying advocacy in eyes of Christ is highly unethical.

Nick Gwartz – 137 E. Church St.

He explained that his son is learning about mods via Minecraft. Mr. Gwartz stated that when he first came with concerns, they fell upon deaf ears. He added that the La Grange moratorium requires surveys and testing.

Erin Patton – 944 S. Main St.

Ms. Patton stated Mayor Bean completely insulted the City. She told Council she was very sorry they lied to you.

She stated that at a meeting on February 24<sup>th</sup>, Mayor Bean stated he didn't know until April 2025, and the community didn't know until January 2026.

She claimed that there is one person who has a lot of influence to appoint a lot of people.

Ms. Patton commented that if you bring a deal to Mayor Bean, who stated no one shows up to these meetings, these are the standard business practices.

Ms. Patton stated that when the land was purchased, the buyer used multiple LLCs. She stressed the importance of knowing who you're dealing with.

Summer Woodburn - 780 Campground Rd

Ms. Woodburn stated she moved to the area with family and the land has been incorporated to the community.

She stated she got wind in data center different way, and immediately began to dig in transcripts.

Ms. Woodburn stated she saw the concern from citizens regarding CRAs. She pointed to a comment from Mr. Thackery in November 2025, where he said he doesn't believe that a project could get this far and then Council can turn it down.

She also doesn't understand how the ordinances could have been passed as an emergency. With the passing of the moratorium, her plea has changed to getting independent experts to determine how a data center will affect the community.

Judy Page – Cedar Bog

Ms. Page thanked everyone for their support of Cedar Bog. She stated she is the President of Cedar Bog Association, with the goal of preserving Cedar Bog in its natural state.

She stated Cedar Bog has been designated a National Natural landmark, and had over 8,000 visitors from 42 states last year.

She stated that a nature preserve depends on quality and quantity of aquifer, and Cedar Bog's is the most vulnerable in the State of Ohio. She added that there are no redos and once it's gone, it's gone.

Ms. Page stated the research is still coming in, and the City can't afford to have a data center happen now. She closed by saying thank you for the moratorium and there was going to be a big party at the Bog.

Nathan Johnson – Ohio Environmental Council Action Fund

He thanked Council for passing moratorium.

He explained HB 646, which would provide for a statewide study commission to look at impacts of data center.

Mr. Johnson added that the State can't afford to lose Cedar Bog, as it was the first state designated nature preserve in Ohio. He added that there is more botanical biodiversity than any place in Ohio.

Jim McCormac – Botanist

He described his book, Wild Ohio, and stated Cedar Bog is highly prominent. He stated Cedar Bog was much larger many years ago, which led to it being the first State nature preserve, all of which was done to prevent destruction.

Mr. McCormac stated that of the Peatlands, 98% have been destroyed. He stated that there are rare plants and wildlife, with Cedar Bog being synonymous with Urbana. He closed by saying it was everyone's obligation to protect Cedar Bog.

Marilyn Welker – Cedar Bog

She appreciates the water we have. She stated we live in a community privy to the most productive sand and gravel aquifer in the Country. Ms. Welker presented a map that shows the thirteen counties of Greater Miami Sole Source Aquifer and stated we must protect the water.

Ms. Welker stated she was so proud of everyone who has done research. She stated that AI is technology on steroids. She also claimed they are the middle people to the high-tech companies. She closed by saying there is more regulation if you sell a sandwich than a data center.

Sharlon Conrad – 134 River Rd.

Ms. Conrad thanked Council for the yes votes and noted the developers had already left.

She introduced herself as the assistant director of Vancrest and spoke on their behalf.

Ms. Conrad stated the Ohio Department of Health regulates the inside, but questioned who was there to regulate the outside.

Amy Knueven – 4076 Urbana Moorefield Rd.

Ms. Knueven stated the response of community has been overwhelming. She stated that a petition started that started 10 days ago has received 7979 signatures. She stated that the project is being rushed into our best hometown and thanked Council for the moratorium.

Leslie Hoylman – 301 Scioto St.

Ms. Hoylman thanked Council for the yes vote and for moving the location into a facility better suited. She stated that eighteen municipalities are enacting or considering data center moratorium. She suggested maybe reaching out Council to Council.

Ms. Hoylman also stated there was a draft of the new Ohio EPA permit which allows data centers more leniency in water quality discharges. She wanted to know what the plans are for wastewater discharge. She also wanted Council to make meetings available to all with accessibilities and requested a change of venue.

Robert Woodburn – 780 Campground Rd

Mr. Woodburn stated he has been concerned with the process all along. He added that a company in Springfield claims to have already been hired for steel for the data center.

Madison Woodburn – 780 Campground Rd

Ms. Woodburn stated her family lived here for generations. She added that once she moved here, it only took a matter of months to appreciate living here. She stated that it is important to not only care for people, but also for environment. She expressed her concerned about a data center on the environment.

John Woodburn – 671 Campground Rd

He stated he was born in the hospital down the road in 1934. He wished to give a point of view that other people might reach someday. Mr. Woodburn talked about growing up in Urbana. He thanked everyone that came and stated the moratorium makes sense.

Landry Stallcup – 4258 Urbana Moorefield

Ms. Stallcup stated she is thirteen years old. She stated that Urbana is where she grew up and outside groups don't understand what this town meets to us.

Justin Rutan – 720 Concord Street

Mr. Rutan stated four years ago, he was getting ready to graduate and leave Urbana. He stated he is still here because of his family and community. He added that he has bought rental properties and invested here. Mr. Rutan that there may be rotten apples but the people here care.

He also stated he is grateful he is not in Mayor Bean's position. He stated that local governance can be complex, but this is why citizens elect representatives. He added that the City risks losing citizens if the project progresses.

Mr. Rutan stated that if the project is truly in our best interests, it will withstand the heightened scrutiny. He wants the City to prove that staying here was the right decision.

Terry Rittenhouse – 1906 N. Ludlow

He thanked Council and the Urbana Daily Citizen. He stated that twenty years ago, wind turbines came, which provides him with the voice of experience. He said it is the same situation when the wind turbines came. Mr. Rittenhouse said they think we're poor and think we can't fight. He

also added that they want to get the project in before there even is any state legislation. Mr. Rittenhouse said that Council is good people. He added that those companies have buildings full of lawyers and it takes money to fight. He also called them out on their claims of utilities.

James Cropper - 527 Railroad St.

Mr. Cropper stated this is a beautiful area for us to utilize. He added that it takes sixteen years for the lady slipper to bloom. He stated that people come here to see that flower to bloom. Mr. Cropper also apologized to what was said to Ms. Jumper two weeks ago. He stated elected officials are supposed to work for us.

Andi Grow – 120 Hitt St.

Ms. Grow stated that Cyrus One is not Cyrus One. She said it was owned by KKR from India, with the largest shareholders being Vanguard and Black Rock. She added that they built one in Aurora Illinois, and the residents now have a 30 to 40% increase in electric bill. She also claimed the noise from generators are said to sound like helicopters landing on rooftops.

Ms. Grow did not appreciate forever chemicals being next to a school, and once it is built, it is too late.

Steven Case – 128 Berwick Dr.

Mr. Case stated that the internet not possible without data centers. He added that he is not anti-data centers, but that this project causes concern.

He stated there were three areas for concern. The first is reliability, when companies who push the project too fast. He stated there is resemblance to the Dot Com bubbles. He expressed his concern that Urbana may end up holding the bill.

Mr. Case's second concern is accountability. He believes that larger amounts of electricity always mean an increased usage of resources. He wanted to know what mechanisms were in place to hold the project accountable. He added that a fine is an operating cost to these companies.

He stated his third concern is transparency. He added the way project has been acted on has not given the public confidence. He used Jerome Township as an example, which has made data centers as a conditional zoning use.

Mr. Case stated passing a moratorium is a good first step, but he asked for an increase in transparency.

Monica Thomas – 4111 W US 36

Ms. Thomas stated she has lived in the community for 53 years. She wants to make sure what we leave behind for grandchildren and great-grandchildren is a safe place to live. She added that people are making decisions that don't calculate environmental costs.

Ms. Thomas stated that data centers in the north could potentially affect us eventually. She indicated the need to stop them all in Ohio. She also didn't believe constituents are getting true transparency. She expressed concerned about an abatement, as she believes tax breaks don't benefit us.

Logan Pelfrey – 126 W. Market St.

He stated he has lived in Urbana for the last twenty years. He thanked Council members for the ability for the community to address their concerns. He informed Council he graduated with a

bachelor's degree in environmental biology. He expressed concern with a data center and Cedar Bog and mentioned how a data center would affect local species.

Al Evans – 868 Amherst Drive.

Mr. Evans stated he was on Council for twelve years. He indicated he faced tough decisions, but none like this one. He mentioned he was happy he was not sitting up there.

Mr. Evans stated he came to talk to Council to ask why they passed all the prior legislation. He informed everyone that he was educated by hearing all the prior speakers. He understood how hard it was for Mrs. Bean to sit there and he sympathized with her. He also apologizes to Ms. Jumper.

Mr. Evans stated he would like to tell everyone to not be like the federal government, where they automatically hate people they disagree with. He said he wanted to quote Rodney King to close by saying “can't we all get along”.

Connie Flanly – 92 Heritage Drive

Ms. Flanly stated she the Olde Towne Neighborhood felt like they were ignored and overlooked. She thanked Council for the moratorium and stated the water situation will be critical.

Ms. Flanly added that Olde Towne would like to be better informed and better respected. She also expressed concerns about light pollution.

She stated that she installed hundreds of miles of data wire in her technological jobs prior and the scale of this project is frightening.

Kathleen Seeley – 7928 Mound Street

She stated her father was a professor at UU. She indicated she came back to the area and lives near Orient. Ms. Seeley stated that she has seen them go through the process where they lost the trust of the community. She would like to see the City increase transparency requirements for this type of zoning.

Cheryl Erwin – 1521 Co. Rd. 10, Bellefontaine

Ms. Erwin stated that the population of Urbana is 11,115 according to the 2020 census. She added that people come from all over the world to see Cedar Bog.

She also gets questions all the time from visitors about other Urbana sites.

She provided anecdotes about photography and visitors.

Max Jenks – Talbot Avenue

Mr. Jenks stated he was here last time about data centers, but the flock cameras already here.

He indicated that UPD is going to sign another agreement for two years. He claimed he has filed seven requests for public records that have been denied.

Mr. Jenks reports that he was told there were no records, but Flock says there is an audit log. Mr. Jenks showed evidence of UPD using the Flock system.

He claimed the cameras aren't for stolen cars, but rather linked in with data centers. He doesn't want these in his town.

## **ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS**

**Third Reading:** None

**Second Reading:** None

**First Reading:**

**Ordinance 4552-26:** An ordinance to revise the Codified Ordinances by adopting current replacement pages. (One reading required)

Ms. Truelove moved to put this ordinance on the floor for discussion and possible passage. Mrs. Bean seconded.

Mr. Feinstein stated this was an annual housekeeping matter. He stated that Walter Drane publishes our local ordinances and this was legislation that adopted the changes from the State code to match our City code.

Council did not have any comments/questions.

Roll call on passage: Ms. Truelove, yes; Mr. Thackery, yes; Mrs. Collier, yes; Mrs. Bean, yes; Ms. Jumper, yes; Mr. Scott, no; and Mr. Davis, yes.

Ordinance passes 6-1.

**Resolution 2416-26:** A resolution to approve the appointment of Spencer Mitchell as substitute for Mayor Bill Bean at the upcoming Champaign Health District Advisory Council Meeting, and declaring an emergency. (One reading required)

Mr. Thackery moved to put this resolution on the floor for discussion and possible passage. Mrs. Collier seconded.

Mr. Mitchell stated the Mayor serves on the committee. He added that due to a scheduling issue, Mayor Bean would not be able to attend. Mr. Mitchell stated he would be willing to serve in that role, as the committee requires a voting presence from the City.

Mayor Bean stated he has done this for a number of years. He added that he was asked nine months ago to give a talk to veterans in Troy, which ended up being for the same day.

Council did not have any comments/questions.

Roll call on passage: Mr. Thackery, yes; Mrs. Collier, yes; Mrs. Bean, yes; Ms. Jumper, yes; Mr. Scott, yes; and Mr. Davis, yes; and Ms. Truelove, yes.

Resolution passes 7-0.

**Department Liaison Reports:**

Mrs. Bean stated that TIRC would be meeting Thursday, March 5th at 9:00 am.

Mrs. Collier stated that Safety Committee would meet March 19<sup>th</sup> at 1:00 pm in the training room.

**Miscellaneous Business:**

Mrs. Bean apologized to the city that the City annual review did not get talked about last meeting.

Ms. Truelove stated she had a lot of e-mails that came. She wished she could have responded to each and every one. She also appreciated hearing how Cedar Bog could have been influenced by a data center.

Mr. Scott stated he has been friends with Mayor Bean for decades. He added that he may be on different sides of some issues, but they continue to be friends. He also thanked everyone for coming.

Ms. Jumper thanked the community for continued support, stating that it is important that everyone be heard.

Mayor Bean asked how many people knew Ms. Clara May Frederick. He stated that she was Queen of the bog, would lead walks through the bog with boots on and no boardwalk. He stated he cares about the bog as he grew up down there.

Council Clerk Steffan explained the Council Video archive system. He also informed everyone that he would not be present at the next meeting.

President Paul stated he has this room already reserved for March 17<sup>th</sup>. He also thanked everyone for coming out.

Ms. Jumper moved to adjourn. Ms. Truelove seconded. Voice vote on approval: all ayes, nays none.

**ADJOURNED AT 9:05 p.m.**

**NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING**

March 17, 2026 at 6:00 p.m.



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Council Clerk



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Council President