



# City of Gahanna

## Meeting Minutes

### City Council - Special

200 South Hamilton Road  
Gahanna, Ohio 43230

*Stephen A. Renner, President*  
*Trenton I. Weaver, Vice President*  
*Karen J. Angelou*  
*Merisa K. Bowers*  
*Nancy R. McGregor*  
*Kaylee Padova*  
*Michael Schnetzer*

*Jeremy A. VanMeter, Clerk of Council*

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Monday, March 20, 2023

6:00 PM

City Hall, Council Chambers

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#### A. CALL TO ORDER: Roll Call

*Gahanna City Council met in Special Session on Monday, March 20, 2023, in Council Chambers. President of Council Stephen A. Renner called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m. The agenda was published on March 17, 2023.*

**Present** 7 - Karen J. Angelou, Merisa K. Bowers, Nancy R. McGregor, Kaylee Padova, Stephen A. Renner, Michael Schnetzer, and Trenton I. Weaver

#### B. WORKSHOP:

##### 1. Discussion on the Council Facilities at 825 Tech Center Drive

[2023-0050](#)

Items for Discussion on Council Facilities at 825 Tech Center Drive

**Kevin Schultz, Senior Director of Operations:** We are going to walk through some of the questions that we talked about last week at Committee. What I have this evening is to go over some of the more specific schematic design as it relates to 825 and the first floor where Council Chambers is located. You have seen this slide before. All I am looking to do here is orient you to the next picture that you are going to see. The two purple dots on that screen are the two entry points. One is the main entry point that the public would be using. The entry point off the back of that secured area is the location in which, if employees chose to park in the back side of the building, they would be accessing. The dotted blue line represents the next picture that you will see. That is basically a blow up of the area of the building that we will be looking at next, the big blue dotted line. As I go to the next slide, what we are going to see on this screen is just a variety of different things that I am going to walk through and then go through the questions that I had asked last week at last Monday's meeting. The two purple dots are now orienting you to the front side of the building. At the top of the screen and off the right side of the screen is the secondary entrance that was shown on the full site plan. Again, the top piece there is where the public would walk into the building and access the building. In the red, all the bright red that you see on the screen, is the controlled public access area along the first floor. The public would have unfettered access to that bright red area. You know the shape of 825. It is in a basically a V-shape. There is more building to the top of the screen that you are not

seeing on this picture. The red corridor along the front of the building is the public access. The pink area is the secondary zone. Badge access is needed in order to access that corridor. That is the staff portion of the building. To the south of there in the washed-out white area on my screen, and if you had this image in front of you, it would be in a faded blue, that is the Police Department. But, in order to access that from the pink area, you would again badge into those doors, creating a third level of access back to those areas. That would also be true for any area that is not in and around that Council area in the public area off of the front of the building. The main lobby is outlined in blue and the next purple dot that you see on the right-hand side of the screen is the main public access window where residents or visitors would come. Residents could pay their utility bill, file a building permit, any business that gets done here on the first floor would be done through those access windows. The reason I am pointing those out, I will identify here in a minute. There is secondary access into the Police Department through the red corridor. The next purple dot is just a secondary access that is not the main access point to the Police Department, but you can get from the administrative side of the building into the Police Department. The public can [access] through that door there. There are also other areas for staff to get into the Police Department along that pink corridor. The yellow area on the left-hand side of the picture is Mayor's Court. The purple dot represents the Mayor's Court pay window. If they needed to talk to a clerk, the clerk is behind the window similar to what they are now. Immediately adjacent to the waiting area for Mayor's Court, so that they can access, because we will still be using Chambers as a dual-purpose city council chambers and courtroom, we are just pointing out that area in part so that you can see the Mayor's Court waiting area, which is immediately next to Council Chambers. There is the court clerk's office and the variety of different clerks that would service those main windows. What you would see down on the lowest portion of that are the PA offices, or prosecuting attorney offices. That is where our prosecuting attorney staff would go meet with defendants or people coming to pay citations. We will talk about how those relate to you in a couple minutes. Now what we see, we have identified Council Chambers in the middle of the picture. Just immediately to the right of that and down a touch, the next purple dot, there is the Caucus Room. As you can see, that is a relatively large-scale 20-to-25-person executive conference room. You can go in and have executive sessions. During the day, we can have larger meetings. If a developer is coming in with a team, we can use this sizable room without having to bring them up into the upper portions of the building. The architect currently has the offices for City Council designed, they are on the right-hand side of Council Chambers. The area that you see outlined in blue that is south of that, inside of the secured perimeter, is what they are currently working on. We should see Council Offices move and shift into that area when we see the next set of designs on Wednesday. We meet with the design team every other Wednesday. We basically sit around and discuss each one of the floors, each one of the sections, and we provide comments. On Thursday afternoon, as staff inside of the building, we go over it in slightly greater detail. I send a relatively detailed email to the architect that says this space is too big, this space is too small, this space is not oriented appropriately, and all those comments at some point in time have gone back. That is the iterative process that Mr. Renner talks about that we are going through as a design team and that we would like to go through with you in this type of setting as the process goes. The ask of the architect was to take those offices that are currently off of the main lobby. First of all, they are disconnected from the rest of the overall design. We want to get them into a cohesive unit like the rest of the facility. The other thing is the brown area on the bottom portion of the drawing next to the yellow cube is the City Attorney's office. What we have asked them to do is create a similar situation to what you have now where those two offices and intern spaces

available for the City Attorney inside of the Council Office. I think it makes sense if it is ok with you that those two uses are together. We can have further conversation about that. That is not one of my formal questions but we can talk about that. The area that is in that big portion where I have the blue dotted outline where I said that they would reorient you into, that currently is the Emergency Operations Center. That room could also double as a large training space, not just for the Police Department but also for City staff. There is a lot of items on the first floor of the Police Department that at this point need to be right-sized and shrunk, which then makes additional areas available for other things and other adjustments to be made, like Council Chambers and Council Offices. It is a giant game of Tetris. It is putting the pieces of the puzzle together. Pieces of a puzzle always go in one place. Tetris pieces can go anywhere where they fit and they are most appropriate to go. That is the game that we are playing. Things adjust very quickly. The other example that I will give, and I said this to Jeremy earlier today, is most of the time, unless I request it specifically, I do not even get digital copies of this because basically it is just digital garbage almost the next day. They go back and start making some of these alterations. Right now, what you are looking at is three weeks old. What I am representing on the screen right now for you is the comments that have already gone back, whether those were comments made by you based on the email from last week and/or comments that we just made because we can look at these things and talk about them intelligently. I am going to leave [the visual] there so it will be up there. Next, we will get through some of the questions. What you see as far as Council Chambers specifically, that is about 120 seats. You notice, and I will point out some of the features of it, but you see on the right-hand side of the picture there is tables. Those are tables that City staff and directors can sit at as a group, as opposed to sitting spread throughout the audience. I do not necessarily know that they would present from that position, but they could if it was appropriate. Right now, from the picture that we are looking at, it looks like it is a little bit too far offset in order for it to actually be a good position to present from but all that will be worked out in the design. We have asked for 10 people to be able to sit around the dais. I had to adjust that number to 11 so that we could have either a second clerk, or a person working the technology, also sitting at the desk. This includes the seven of you, the two gentlemen sitting over here this evening, as well as the Mayor and City Attorney. We will make that adjustment with them. We have seen in some instances, like in the City of Dublin, the technology person actually sits off to the side, which is nice, but when you have staffing constraints, it is hard to be in two positions at once. Jeremy could almost slide over there and hit a couple buttons if he needed to. If Dan was not sitting in that position, if technology was off of the dais and someplace else, he would physically have to get up in order to go interact with that technology. So, I think 11 at the dais is appropriate but we can get down to those minor details as the process goes. As you can see that room is a lot shorter but wider. Some of the constraints that we have in this room is it is basically a square. This is more of a rectangle, which gives us the ability to elongate that dais in order to give you all better sight lines, not just to the audience but also to each other, and promote conversation. What you will also notice is two smaller caucus rooms or conference rooms at the top side of the Council Chambers, which would serve as defendant meeting rooms. If a lawyer was here to meet with his client, they would be able to meet in those areas. Those are also areas that Council could have constituent hours, for example. The other option for constituent hours are also those PA offices down in the south side of the lobby for Mayor's Court. The way this is currently designed, the overflow viewing would be on the Mayor's Court side of Council Chambers. I believe when the adjustments are made, overflow seating and overflow for Planning Commission or City Council will actually be in the primary lobby area in the red. That would, I think, be a goal of the

design architect to get people as soon as they come into the building to have access to Council Chambers, whether it is through the front door or even a side door and feel as if they were part of the meeting through technology and audio. Those are the major design elements. We did not take the shorter dais off of the list, Ms. McGregor. So, that stays as a big check mark. Then, the other thing that we talked about is that pink line that runs horizontally through the picture there, that, and anything north of that, is all new building. That is all double high ceilings similar to the ceiling here. The very bottom of the screen is the existing building. Where that pink corridor starts is also existing building. New construction is to the front side of the building. What you guys are seeing there is Council Chambers and Mayor's Court. I will pause there and look for comments, questions, or concerns as it relates to Chambers proper and then we can move from there.

**Councilmember Schnetzer:** You had mentioned the double high ceilings. Is there a cost difference if that were to be shrunk down? The follow-on question would be, if so, is it really necessary to have double high ceilings? If you ask me because I am no architect, that just seems like a lot of wasted space to eat. It does not seem to have any function.

**Sr. Director Schultz:** I would agree. Presence is not function. I think it is more so that when the public walks into the building, they understand that they are in a facility, and it exudes something that is a little bit different. When you have just a 14-foot ceiling, and actually it is a 12-foot ceiling to the rafter and then a 14-foot ceiling into the deck, or the next floor above it, what ends up happening is you put that ceiling in there and you feel like you are very squatty. Does it need to be a double high ceiling? I do not necessarily know that it needs to be two full stories tall, but it does need to be at least a story and a half. What we have been told by the architect and what the construction manager has told us is that you are really dealing with nominal differences. If it was two floors, you are dealing with a tremendous difference, but it being that it is just simply a double high ceiling, you are really not breaking the budget because you have a double high ceiling in the front of the building.

**Councilmember Schnetzer:** So, not a material cost?

**Sr. Director Schultz:** Not a material cost. As we get deeper into the design and we begin to understand these things, and we need to cut a million dollars from the budget, where will we begin the look? We will begin to look in some of those spaces and understand those things. Maybe it is just a hundred thousand dollars that we need to cut. Ok, if you reduce this by 3.5 half feet, there is your hundred thousand dollars. We will begin to understand those things better but right now it is being programmed at that double high ceiling.

**Councilmember McGregor:** [Referring to the existing Council Chambers] Is this a double high ceiling? I mean, how this looks, it is almost a triple high.

**Sr. Director Schultz:** To the atrium, it is more like triple high, yes. [Councilmember McGregor referenced another point in Chambers] That might be a story-and-a-half. You are looking at about 20 feet to 12 feet per story. The dais will sit on a platform that is one step high. If they were to model the dais, you would be able to see how tall or how short it was. The dais we have seen have all been one step tall, which seems to work very well. I agree with you that sometimes Council looks a little squatty, especially sitting down here. Mr. Weaver, who is a tall gentleman, I see him very well. No offense,

Ms. Padova, but you are a little short. The further away you sit from the counter, the shorter you get. That one step high does seem to make a lot of sense when three steps is awfully high. I think in Dublin where the clerk is at was actually at ground-level and then the step was actually behind the dais or further back. I would think that one step tall is appropriate. We have seen that in everywhere we went where there was either a courtroom and or a dais. As a fact, it does need to be elevated because of the court function that goes on in the room. I do not know if it needs to be elevated for the legislative process that goes on in the room, but I think the State of Ohio has a requirement that the judge sits higher than everybody else. Amanda would be able to talk to that much better than me. [Mayor Jadwin said that is correct]

**Councilmember Bowers:** I think it helps, too, on that point, with people sitting in the back of the room being able to see us if we are up at a slight angle. I think it does matter for the legislative process, too.

**President Renner:** I think having this or something out of our way, and if it is a flat surface or something like that, everybody would be able to see us better. I do have a question. You were talking about overflow a little bit. I just wanted clarity. The room that as you are conceiving it now for Council Chambers is going to still be one room. It is not like a false wall or anything like that, such as a slide wall to get overflow. You are just saying that we are going to have seating at 120 to 130 or whatever, correct? [Sr. Director Schultz said correct] Are you looking for feedback on that specific number?

**Sr. Director Schultz:** Yes, if you guys wanted it to be 100 or you wanted it to be 200. This room here is the capacity of 131 but that includes everybody in the room. The fire marshal says that the capacity of this room is 131. The room is being designed at a total capacity of about 150, with 120 in the audience, 12 staff the 11 of you that sit up at the dais. You are dealing with about 20 more people than are in this room. I know that there are times where this room is too small and many times where this room is too big. I think that, and this could be something that we talked to the architect about, like show us a smaller room with a more formalized overflow capacity in a lobby space that is more "appropriate." I think to Mr. Schnetzer's point is it is not necessarily shrinking the space this way vertically but shrinking the space horizontally. That does matter because as we push this building in from the new side into the existing building, that is where we would end up seeing some of the cost savings as it relates to the construction because we will be building less new space and utilizing more of the existing building. So, that does play into it to a certain degree, yes.

**President Renner:** Right now, I am ok with 150, but I will defer to my colleagues.

**Councilmember Schnetzer:** You said this this room is 120? [Sr. Director Schultz responded 131.]

**Mayor Jadwin:** The one thing that we do not have in this building right now that we will have capacity for, or the ability to at least accommodate in the new facility, is overflow. We have had a couple of situations where lately a number of people have come in to attend various meetings and the question has been raised, can we do overflow in the Committee Room? We just simply do not have the ability to livestream or to even carry over the coverage of that into another room. We will be able to do that with this facility. In that large lobby area, we can accommodate that overflow space as well. [President Renner asked about having a large screen and other audio.] Yes, that will be available.

**Councilmember Bowers:** Has there been any consideration about reorienting the Council Chambers 90 degrees clockwise, and then moving the offices into a different location?

**Sr. Director Schultz:** Moving the offices, yes. I think that if we were to get the offices out of that space, then we have the ability potentially to rotate. The issue with rotating it is, if we were to rotate it 90 degrees so that the dais was towards the back of the yellow portion where Mayor's Court is now, the access to the courtroom from Mayor's Court staff. Now people have to leave the courtroom and walk around the corner in order to get in. There is actually a door. I do not know that you can see this up there, that purple dot that is the Mayor's Court window. Everybody is oriented basically in the middle of Mayor's Court there in that yellow section. If you were to just follow that directly into Council Chambers, there is actually a doorway there. You can go right from the waiting area into Council Chambers. The original design was that Mayor's Court was actually on the opposite side. We felt that the separation between the two functions, the very public function of coming into the building and paying your utility bill versus the public function of coming to court, should have some level of separation. That is when we picked up Mayor's Court and moved it to the other side. You could theoretically, Ms. Bowers, flip it so that your backs were to the lobby but then you come up with a similar issue where overflow is a little bit disjointed from the space. I would want to try and connect the public into the space a little bit better.

**Mayor Jadwin:** I was going to add one of the issues because I remember we did talk about potentially could or should it be flipped to maximize the space. Security was another issue. When you have it set this way, having the ability for Council to exit quickly out of a back door and into that pink hallway that would not be publicly accessible, it is a security feature there.

**Councilmember Bowers:** I understand that. My thinking was that if we were to move the Clerk's office to the opposite side so that they were adjacent to the Mayor's Court and then have Council facing the red lobby. Then, you have the ability to integrate those glass partition walls kind on both angles so that when we do have overflow, there is actual visual presence between Council and citizens.

**Sr. Director Schultz:** Where are you seeing the Council Offices now, north, and south on that drawing next to the lobby, I do not like the location of those. Those need to be someplace else. It does get to the next question, which is that public presence to the front of the building. Currently, every staff person that needs to have access to a front window does it behind glass with the exception of two departments. Right now, in this design, that is the City Attorney and Council, and that is Jeremy's office, Council Clerk and Deputy Clerk, and any Records Commission people. Now, they are more than capable of using that pink corridor to navigate to a public window in order to service a customer but there is no public interface for the Council Office. So, one of my questions was how much of a public presence does the Council Office need and how does the architect accommodate that?

**Councilmember Angelou:** [Referring to Clerk VanMeter] Ask him. He is the person that is going to have to do it.

**Councilmember Bowers:** To that point, I know Jeremy is going to engage in conversations with you on that and has already, I think the number one way that the

public interfaces with the office currently is through records requests. I would think that from a safety perspective, given some history, that having a window access for Council Clerk, whether it is Jeremy or another Clerk, or a records custodian, that they do have that ability to interface through glass.

**Sr. Director Schultz:** Glass specifically for the Council Office? There is other glass.

**Councilmember Bowers:** I think that can be accomplished in multiple different ways. If there is a way for the architect to integrate that with other service, perhaps there is a way to reorient Council Offices so they are aligned on the same interior space that the Mayor's Court staff is. They are sharing that wall along the blue dot line between the green space and the yellow space, instead of separated.

**Sr. Director Schultz:** I get it. We only do Mayor's Court once a week all day, but it does raise the other question of that public interaction and we separated it on purpose. And now, if it is the will of the body and the design makes sense, we kind of end up putting that function back together because now on a Thursday Jeremy can be getting a records request at the window and they are sitting there paying and handling citations and Mayor's Court payments and those things through that window, answering questions, and now they are mixed into that lobby area waiting for Jeremy to come over into that space. We are not dealing with hardened criminals by any stretch of the imagination, and I do not necessarily know that it is an overly big deal, but we have separated both functions.

**Councilmember Bowers:** Could you tell me a little bit more about the thought process behind that because I am not sure I completely follow.

**Sr. Director Schultz:** We did not necessarily want people who are coming to pay their utility bill interacting with people who are necessarily sitting here and waiting for Mayor's Court. It is one of the safety issues in walking through this building. You do not know what types of issues and conversations and things that might be happening in this building and in the court area. They staff a bailiff in here on purpose because it is not all traffic tickets.

**Councilmember Bowers:** If it is such a safety..., I am sorry, this is the hot button for me apparently. These are our neighbors, who most of the time have an expired license or who are going too fast down Cherry Bottom. [Sr. Director Schultz said he completely agreed] If it is that major of a safety concern, then we talk again about abolishing Mayor's Court, which is a popular topic that comes up from time to time. These are our friends and neighbors that maybe had an issue. That, to me, is a surprising kind of attitude. I am surprised.

**Mayor Jadwin:** I am going to clarify a little bit. First of all, a lot of the people who come in for Mayor's Court are not necessarily from Gahanna. There are people who maybe got a speeding ticket or something else through the city as they were coming through the city and are here to address that, some driving without insurance, etc. I think the issue that came up was there being a lot of private conversations that happen when people come in for Mayor's Court. Sometimes they have defense counsel. They are having conversations with a prosecuting attorney that are very personal conversations, and you want to keep them separate from the people who are coming in to pay a water bill or to rent a facility or to review engineering plans. I know that Director Parker, who has been running the court services here for 15 years, had

concern for keeping access separate so that the people who are here to do the business of Mayor's Court have their opportunity to have their space. It was not necessarily combining the two, but it was just to create that environment for them where they can come in and it is a professional environment and they can have the confidentiality that they need to have as they are addressing the issues for which they are attending.

**Councilmember Bowers:** I appreciate that, Mayor. I notice here, and as was addressed, that there are four prosecuting attorneys' offices. I am assuming if they are not all being actively used by a prosecuting attorney, they could be used by defense counsel as well.

**Mayor Jadwin:** It is for both of them. Just small meeting rooms.

**Councilmember Bowers:** Small meeting rooms. So, we have that space, and I think that is important. I would just make sure that, yes, we do need a degree of privacy for those private conversations but I do not see there to be a need to separate. Whether they are a New Albany resident or a Columbus resident that drove through our community and got a ticket, they are neighbors in our region.

**Sr. Director Schultz:** It is an easy flip to take what you are seeing right now on the screen and move that to the backside of Mayor's Court. That is not a difficult thing to do. We would then be looking on the back side of that pink corridor there in order to move into the police, which part of the picture you are not seeing, moving to some of the space on the Police Department side.

**Mayor Jadwin:** Are we talking about Mayor's Court kind of south of Council Chambers or flipping?

**Sr. Director Schultz:** No, we are just talking about taking the Council Offices that are on the right-hand side of the picture now, pick those up and move those to the back side of where Mayor's Court is, and slide everything down. [Mayor Jadwin asked if this was how it was originally there] No, Mayor's Court was completely on the opposite side. I do not remember where Council Offices were in the first revision.

**Councilmember Bowers:** I do not mean to get too far into the weeds. I think the point that I am trying to make and the bigger picture that I am trying to emphasize is I think it makes sense to have Council Chambers facing the public as much as we can. If we are able to turn it out so it faces the lobby so that there is that glass access, people can still feel more involved in the process if we need that overflow space. I think that is great. Generally, though, my point is having greater access for flex space and greater access to use offices that might not be used all the time in alternate ways, which it sounds like you guys are already on track with that.

**Councilmember Schnetzer:** With regard to the orientation of the room, logically I think it does make sense and it would be nice if there was a way that the lobby area that is being identified as overflow could at least view the room. I see the highlighted green section, which includes Council Chambers and is currently labeled Clerk of Council and a couple of offices there. Did you say earlier that this is being proposed to be moved south on that diagram to the blue dashed area? [Sr. Director Schultz said that is correct.] I am just curious, could the dais as it sits now not be rotated but kept in the same orientation, just shifted up and to the right maybe to the 1:30 position on a

clock, and then the Council Offices are behind the dais? I like the flow of that in the sense that a lot of it is connected. That would not necessarily flatten the orientation of the chairs, but it would remove the Council Office portion as it is presented up there and would allow for some sort of glass wall that at least people from the lobby could see in for those two instances a year when we need overflow capacity.

**Sr. Director Schultz:** Correct. I have looked at that pink hallway. Can we bend it around certain features in order to get some adjacency that we do not necessarily have with the hallway? I think that there is opportunity there with what you are talking about to draw some connections.

**Councilmember McGregor:** I was also thinking of switching the dais 90 degrees so that the overflow could use the lobby because there is a big open space there. As far as the Mayor's Court waiting room, I do not know how what the kind of charges they have now, but before, it is a matter of privacy. Not everybody likes to know they are going to court. To me, this was more a consideration for the people going to court that they were out of the public view. I do not know if they still bring prisoners from Franklin County. They used to. Sometimes they would be in handcuffs and come in. I view this as more of a privacy thing for them as opposed to them sitting in the lobby like they do here.

**Sr. Director Schultz:** All that is true. If any prisoner was coming from the holding area up through and into Mayor's Court, they would be brought in through the back side of the building through secure channels to get to get to the courtroom.

**Councilmember McGregor:** The other question I had is, I know this [dais] will be lower but is there some kind of not necessarily bulletproof but some kind of extra [protection] so that if we had to duck, there is a protection below?

**Sr. Director Schultz:** The dais should be made of proper materials that protect you, where you dip down and are protected. The same thing with front counters and such as well.

**Councilmember Bowers:** Getting back to just bigger picture concepts, one of the questions had been talked about here is the caucus room or an executive conference room. I wanted to touch on the history as I remember. I know my colleagues here also have a good, even a better, sense than I did. The dynamics in the Committee Room oftentimes with staff were different than they are from a formal Council Chambers. That is definitely one of the things we are missing, unfortunately. We did this for a very good reason. We came in here and held all meetings because of the technology use and that is great. My hope is that we can get back to a Committee Room size and function that also integrates that technology, and it seems that the Caucus Room may get us close to that, but if there is a way to continue to incorporate that where we can really engage in a meaningful way so that it is not like this, but maybe just across the table, I think that is going to be healthier.

**Sr. Director Schultz:** A couple things as it relates to that. Staff had a very long conversation around sometimes the dynamic was not necessarily appropriate between Council and staff at different points in time. It created a very informal feel, and therefore the conversation went in directions that was challenging and tricky for staff to sit

through and actually engage in. There are examples of dynamics that were not well. We do feel that the formality, while though sometimes different in this room, is actually better for staff to present. If designed similarly, it is very tricky and challenging for the public to come and engage in a meeting. One of the things that we struggle with over at 825 is the high rent space of that first floor. We are struggling right now how to fit Council Chambers into this first floor with the potential of having to add a bigger room in order for the public to come and engage in that is not past that first security perimeter. We did talk about, for example, should we have a separate courtroom? When we boiled it down, and again we are just in schematic phase with those Tetris pieces, it was we do not have the footprint on the first floor there to have a separate court space that is not directly in the Police Department. Space and the design of the space does become a little bit tricky and challenging. I also think that with a shorter dais and a little bit easier ability to have some dialogue and assist in the conversation. The other thing is, just knowing the technology that is in this room, which was about \$125,000 that we put in, we would need that same duplicative technology in a second room. So, this actually is also a cost savings to the overall project.

**Councilmember Bowers:** In theory, if Council were to ever go to a more traditional committee structure rather than our Committee of the Whole structure, I am not sure how we would be able to do that unless we had additional space.

**Sr. Director Schultz:** Theoretically, I know in other places the traditional Council or Committee meetings are not necessarily held at 6:00 or 7:00 p.m. They might be at 3:00 in the afternoon. At that point, the access to the public is a little bit different and those types of dynamics. Without understanding the dynamic of exactly how that committee is going to function, that is why the Caucus Room is about 25 people big. The Committee Room next door does not comfortably seat 20 to 25 people. If you were in there, you would be fairly uncomfortable. Around 12 to 15 directors in that room is challenging at best. In part, that is because of the short ceiling, the lighting in there, and the acoustics are not the best. The Caucus Room is again 20 to 25. It is not small. It is just not that big either. From my perspective, there is less business that gets done at a regular full Council meeting and more business is getting done from a dialogue standpoint at a Committee meeting. The Hearing of Visitors takes place during Council meetings, but the majority of conversation that you have with staff is done at Committee and not necessarily a Council meeting.

**Councilmember Bowers:** My position on this is that there were some cultural issues with former Council, perhaps, or specific members, not an entire body ever. I do not know that I would blame that on the room or the type of environment. I think that we need to continue to work really hard at a collaborative culture. That collaborative culture, whether it is more workshops that can happen around a table versus from a dais, which is important to me.

**Sr. Director Schultz:** I do not disagree. I think I agree that from a workshop perspective, this is very authoritarian. You are looking down at me. I completely agree with that. The rules and procedures dictate that it needs to be in the formal setting. I agree with that component. When we are having workshops and those types of things, it is more of a discussion. When we are sitting here formally talking about contracts and those things, that is where the slightly more formal piece is desirable.

**Councilmember Schnetzer:** If your current proposal includes some tables, obviously this furniture is all going to be new and going to be designed with the use and the

space in mind, could it be set up to where just simply rearranging the floor plan with tables and combining them or whatever to create a de facto Committee setup?

**Sr. Director Schultz:** I say this all the time from the technology standpoint. Technology does not solve problems, people do. If that means we need to move some tables and chairs around to make a more cohesive type of environment for a workshop, then yes, we should use physical labor in order to rearrange the room slightly. We do that in here for a regular sidewalk workshop, for example. We will flip and present from the floor. It is a lot more inviting. I think the intent is to continue to use Council Chambers in that fashion and do what you suggest, where we are just rearranging some furniture to make a more collaborative type of environment for workshops and those types of things.

**Councilmember McGregor:** [To Councilmember Schnetzer] Were you talking about using this room in a different way?

**Councilmember Schnetzer:** Conceptually, yes, but specifically with regard to the setup here as opposed to having a designated Committee Room, which chews up space. As Mr. Schultz mentioned, it duplicates the need for technology. Spend it once, but just reconfigure the floor plan for committees. I do not know how easy those tables are to move. If you got furniture that was meant to be moved around like, I believe next door, that furniture is meant to be moved around and it joins in ways that you can create different layouts.

**Councilmember McGregor:** That what I was just going to bring up. The point was we do not always have to be up here. We could be out there, and we could rearrange the furniture in this room. The technology would be here and so we would not have to duplicate it somewhere else.

**Councilmember Angelou:** I think the problem with the room over there is it is just very narrow. We would have all of the people around and other people would come in and they had no ability to talk. I wanted to talk about that Caucus Room. If I have the one that has got the purple in that, is that the caucus place? [Sr. Director Schultz confirmed that it was.] It is hard to read. Just so long as it is bigger. It has to be bigger than what it has been here. I want to go backwards in time by 30 or 40 years because we used to have various places, like one would be Parks & Rec maybe and another one would be on something else. Each one would have three people from this group. That is how we would work those things. Then, we would come back together and say what we had gotten done. So, we did not have to be at everything. Whether you like that or not, I think this is much better because everybody is here and seeing. [To Councilmember Bowers] I did not understand what you meant about the culture when you spoke.

**Councilmember Bowers:** Mr. Schultz had pointed out that there had been some incidents in the Committee Room that he did not want to get into detail about. I acknowledged that there may had there may have been with prior individual members but it certainly was not representative of the body as a whole.

**Councilmember Angelou:** I was dying to know what that was because I was probably there.

**Vice President Weaver:** I have a quick point of information here. What is in the

Council Chambers southwest of where the Mayor and City Attorney would be sitting? [Sr. Director Schultz responded that it is storage.] Safety for staff is absolutely foremost and right behind that is public access. Whatever we can do, and of course I defer to Clerk VanMeter, to ensure that Council Office is publicly accessible, whether it is through glass or an entryway, I think it is expected and necessary. From a public record standpoint, it is required by law as much as practically possible. I do not have the objection to rotating all of Council Chambers 90 degrees clockwise, if that facilitates that aspect of it, but I would defer to public access and safety being foremost.

**Councilmember Padova:** I just want to clarify that. You are talking about moving the Deputy Clerk of Council and Clerk of Council, all those offices there, to the blue part near the supply that is outlined behind the pink, right? The pink - you need to badge in. [Sr. Director Schultz said that is correct.] So, if we were to do that, then would we be able to have Chambers up against that overflow area and have some sort of glass wall or something to be visible? [Sr. Director Schultz said that is correct.] If the offices were back behind the pink line, would we be able to maybe pop out one of the offices to be next to the Caucus Room and have a window right there out into the lobby area or would that mess with the security of things?

**Sr. Director Schultz:** No, that would not at all. In that lower corner, I think it says "mag" because I think it is the magistrate's office. I am not 100 percent sure, but that technically could be a public vestibule where the clerks would have the ability to interact with the public. I think we have some options. As we have been sitting here and having the conversation, there is even the potential in that Mayor's Court space, like Ms. Bowers was indicating, we can build a second window so that interacts with the red corridor as opposed to the waiting area of Mayor's Court to get a little bit of a different feel for that for those people. I think based on the comment, it is easy for us to go back and have some of those conversations and dialogue with the architect. One of the things I have to remind myself and sometimes some of the committee members is let the designer design and we inform. I think a lot of these comments have been good. We can hand it to them and say what makes the most sense. I got a lot of information as it relates to Mr. Weaver's comment about staff safety and public access. They are spot on and two things that we will make sure are paramount in the in the design itself for Council Office specifically. Rotating Council Chambers and those types of things, we will play with those as the architect gets a little bit deeper into it. I think that Council Chambers has been rotated three times now.

**Councilmember McGregor:** Where are the restrooms?

**Sr. Director Schultz:** You see the purple on the opposite side of the drawing. Those are the staff restrooms and the public restrooms.

**Councilmember Bowers:** I just wanted to say thank you, Mr. Schultz, and especially for bearing with me through the feedback. I appreciate it.

**President Renner:** Mr. Schultz I just wanted to reiterate I think that you have heard a lot of great dialogue. I am not going to go over all those different points that you just summarized but one of the ones that I definitely want to join with in the chorus is about the amenities of being able to actually have a better dialogue with directors. Can we make a facility that could actually hold greater Council and Committee meetings as such? Back in the day when we did have Committee meetings over there, it was better

and did promote that dialogue. It was a more relaxed atmosphere between directors, staff, and councilmembers. I think that is a really good point that Councilwoman Bowers drove home. The other items, I think you have heard enough. My point about the Mayor's Court, we have got to keep it separate but I am interested in having someday the dialogue about do we actually need it because I do not know if that is true.

**Councilmember Angelou:** Are we going to take out the stuff all around here and use part of that at the new place rather than just leaving all these things (the cameras and all that)?

**Sr. Director Schultz:** Absolutely. Some of that will definitely come with us. Whether this exact setup comes with us or not, we are not 100 percent sure.

**C. ADJOURNMENT:**

*With no further business before the Council, President Renner adjourned the meeting at 6:58 p.m.*

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**Jeremy A. VanMeter**  
Clerk of Council

*APPROVED by the City Council - Special, this  
day of 2023.*

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**Stephen A. Renner**