



City of Gahanna

Meeting Minutes

Committee of the Whole

200 South Hamilton Road
Gahanna, Ohio 43230

Trenton I. Weaver, Chair
Merisa K. Bowers
Jamille Jones
Nancy R. McGregor
Kaylee Padova
Stephen A. Renner
Michael Schnetzer

Jeremy A. VanMeter, Clerk of Council

Monday, August 11, 2025

City Hall, Council Chambers

Immediately following City Council - special meeting at 7:00 PM on August 11, 2025

A. CALL TO ORDER:

Gahanna City Council met for Committee of the Whole on Monday, August 11, 2025, in Council Chambers. Vice President of Council Trenton I. Weaver, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:28 p.m. The agenda was published on August 8, 2025. Councilmember Michael Schnetzer was absent from the meeting. All other members were present. There were no additions or corrections to the agenda.

B. ITEMS FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:

[ORD-0035-2025](#) AN ORDINANCE ACCEPTING, APPROVING, AND RATIFYING THE SUBMITTED RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE CITY OF GAHANNA TAX INCENTIVE REVIEW COUNCIL FOR TAX YEAR 2023

Jeff Gottke, Director of Economic Development, reported on the Tax Incentive Review Council (TIRC) recommendations for tax year 2023. He reminded councilmembers that they had received the minutes from the TIRC meeting held last August and explained that the City Council would decide whether to continue, modify, or cancel the recommendations that TIRC made last August. He clarified that the review operated on a tax-year basis rather than a calendar-year basis, which accounted for the one-year lag. Gottke explained that the TIRC, existed by statute wherever a community reinvestment area (CRA), enterprise zone, or TIF area operated within the state. He described TIRC's role as making recommendations to the City Council about the viability of abatement projects and recommending whether to continue, modify, or cancel any property tax abatements in the city. He added that TIRC also received reports on pre-1994 projects and TIF activity, although TIRC did not make recommendations on those items. He outlined TIRC's composition and observed that the county auditor served as chair. He

said TIRC included two commissioners' representatives, two township representatives (for the two impacted townships, Mifflin and Jefferson), school board representatives, career center representatives, and city representatives, and he noted that he had listed the members' names in the materials. He emphasized that TIRC represented all of the taxing entities within the area rather than favoring any single entity. Gottke stated that Rachel Zarick, Economic Development Coordinator, performed the lion's share of the staff work for the annual reporting process. He said the city had to report the status of abatements each year to the Ohio Department of Development by March 31. He described the staff process: the department began mailing reporting forms at the end of the prior year, set deadlines for returns, and followed up by phone, email, or in person if companies failed to return the forms. He cautioned that failing to return the forms by March 31 could factor into TIRC's recommendations. He also said the CRA Housing Council met in recent years at the end of the year but that he wanted to reverse that schedule next year so the Housing Council would meet before TIRC; he said Ms. Zarick prepared the reports that she would present to TIRC, which was scheduled to meet a week from that day.

Director Gottke summarized the procedural flow: companies submitted reports, staff prepared and submitted the reports to the Department of Development, the Housing Council reviewed projects and made unofficial recommendations, and TIRC then met and made formal recommendations to the City Council shortly after its summer meeting. He concluded with TIRC's findings: TIRC had found all abatements to be complying and had recommended the continuation of all post-1994 abatements in effect. Gottke reported quick compiled data from Ms. Zarick. He said new job creation exceeded the agreement amounts by 22 jobs. He said the retained jobs target of 710 jobs matched the number of jobs actually retained. He reported that retained payroll exceeded the committed amount by \$9.7 million and that new payroll exceeded the committed amount by \$15.7 million. He said those results produced projected income tax collections that exceeded the agreement amounts by approximately \$640,000. He said that, based on these results, TIRC recommended that all abatements continue exactly as they were in place, and he then invited questions.

Councilmember McGregor asked what difference existed between retained payroll and new payroll. Director Gottke explained that companies committed either to retaining jobs or to creating additional jobs. He said, for example, a company that outgrew its space could agree to expand and retain the number of jobs on site or to create more jobs, and he added that the choice depended on what fit best for the company and the project.

President Bowers asked Gottke to repeat his proposal to reverse the order in

which reports came forward to Council. Gottke explained that the CRA Housing Council had met in October or November after the TIRC meeting in previous years and that the Housing Council lacked binding authority, because it only reviewed and accepted reports. He said moving the CRA Housing Council meeting before TIRC would provide an opportunity to practice the presentation to TIRC, allow the CRA Housing Council to ask questions and vet the information, and produce an unofficial recommendation the staff could take to TIRC to show that an external review body supported continuing the abatements.

Councilmember Padova thanked Gottke for the presentation and asked whether Ms. Zarick would appear next week before the TIRC for tax year 2024. Gottke confirmed that Zarick would present for tax year 2024.

Vice President Weaver thanked the director and asked two questions. First, he asked generally about the process for documenting follow-up when TIRC members requested additional information, because the minutes did not show subsequent documentation of that follow-up. Second, he asked specifically about Premier Holdings and whether payroll taxes from home health care aides remitted to the city of Gahanna or to the locations where the aides performed their work. Gottke answered the specific question first. He said staff had queried the company and learned that ninety percent of the positions worked in the city of Gahanna, so ninety percent of the jobs counted as retained by the city. He then referred to a chart, noting that Premier Holdings reported 165 existing jobs, committed 12 new jobs, and created 55 jobs, and he said he believed those figures would fall within the ninety percent range. In response to Weaver's broader question, Gottke said that because TIRC had not conditioned its recommendation on the additional information, staff retained that information and then would report it at the next TIRC meeting; he said Ms. Zarick would deliver the information to TIRC the following Monday.

**Recommendation: Introduction/First Reading on Regular Agenda on 8/18/2025;
Second Reading/Adoption on Consent Agenda on 9/2/2025.**

C. PRESENTATIONS:

Council Office Internship Presentation - Nathan Graves

[2025-0154](#)

Local Government Internship Program Presentation 8.11.2025 & Charter Review Commission Files Project - Nathan Graves, Council Office Intern

Nathan Graves, Council Office Intern, addressed the Council, the City Attorney, and the Mayor and summarized his summer internship. He said the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC) placed him in the local

government internship at the City of Gahanna. He described two major projects he focused on. The primary project that consumed most of his time was preparing a comprehensive overview of the Charter Review Commission (CRC) to support the 2026 review process. He said he analyzed and archived the city's records and digitized 959 files. He also created an operational framework to guide the CRC in 2026 and developed a professional development opportunity document for City Council. Graves listed his core deliverables. He said he organized and digitized the file system, updated the list of charter amendments and resolved several inconsistencies, and produced analyses that included the pass-fail rate of amendments and a breakdown of who had initiated past charter amendments. In this process, he reviewed historical newspaper clippings, resolutions, minutes, and correspondence. Graves said he drafted a formal rules of procedure document with the City Attorney, the first such document in the city's records to his knowledge, and he prepared a procedural guide for the City Attorney and the Clerk of Council. He also created an onboarding packet, timetable templates, and a resource folder for the upcoming CRC to increase efficiency. Graves said the internship gave him a deep understanding of municipal and legislative processes and allowed him to compare procedures in Gahanna with those in the City of Columbus. He said he sat in on internal city planning meetings, became familiar with public records law, and developed professional connections through the city and MORPC. He said he attended the MORPC Transformation & Innovation Forum and participated in intern networking events. Graves thanked city staff, Council Office, and MORPC for its support of the internship program. He then asked whether anyone had questions.

Vice President Weaver thanked Mr. Graves for his service to the city, expressed the Council's gratitude, and asked what Graves planned to do next. Graves said he was entering the second year of his Master of Public Administration program and that he would spend the second year interning in Washington, D.C. for a fellowship with the American Maritime Congress in about a week and a half and that he was preparing to move and pack.

Councilmember McGregor wished Graves good luck in Washington, D.C.

President Bowers commended Graves for his work for the city, including his roles as a camp counselor with Parks and Recreation and in seasonal employment, described him as an incredible asset, and expressed hope that the Council would see him return to Gahanna.

Councilmember Jones echoed those remarks, thanked Graves for his contributions, and said the community supported him.

Mayor Jadwin congratulated Graves, thanked him for his work over the summer, noted that the city had seven interns overall and that the interns had presented the prior week, described the intern class as exceptional, and asked Graves to keep in touch and share stories from Washington, D.C.

D. ITEMS FROM THE SENIOR DIRECTOR OF ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES:

[2025-0158](#)

Our Gahanna - Strategic Plan Update 8.11.2025

Miranda Vollmer, Senior Director of Administrative Services, provided a brief update on the Our Gahanna strategic planning process. She stated that the City had entered Round Three engagement in August 2025 and that she would review the process timeline, Round Three engagement activities, and the adoption schedule. Round Three would allow citizens, Councilmembers, the City Attorney, the Mayor, the steering committee, directors, and staff to review the latest draft of the strategic plan and to test the initiatives the consultants had identified based on Round One and Round Two input. Vollmer reported that the City had mailed postcards to all residents inviting them to the Sweet Celebration on August 26, 2025, and to participate in the online survey. She said the City had also promoted the engagement through the *Uniquely Gahanna* ad, social media, community gateway signs, posters, flyers, the steering committee, and assistance from staff, and she thanked Clerk VanMeter for distributing information to boards and commissions. She offered to provide flyers to Councilmembers for posting. Vollmer described the Round Three engagement opportunities. She said the Sweet Celebration would take place at Creekside on August 26, 2025 from 4:00 to 7:00 p.m., that participants who completed a passport through the engagement boards would receive free sweet treats from local businesses, and that Planning NEXT would host the engagement stations. She said the Our Gahanna Road Show would run August 27 through September 20, 2025, at various community locations, including schools, libraries, the senior center, and the YMCA, and that the public could participate online from August 26 through September 20. She stated that the City would send Council a survey and that Council would have August 26 through September 7, 2025 to respond. She added that a Planning NEXT consultant would contact Clerk VanMeter to schedule calls with Councilmembers who wished to review the draft recommendations. She noted that steering committee members Councilmember Merisa Bowers, Councilmember Michael Schnetzer, and Mayor Jadwin had participated in the last steering committee meeting. Vollmer outlined the adoption schedule. She said engagement would end on September 20, 2025, that the consultants would incorporate feedback into the final draft during September and October, and that the City planned to introduce the plan to Committee of the Whole on October 13, 2025, hold a first reading on October 20, 2025, return for discussion on October 27, 2025, if needed, and conduct a second reading and vote on November 3, 2025.

She closed by asking whether anyone had questions.

President Bowers asked Vollmer to explain the staff work discussed at the last steering committee meeting and how staff participation would show up in the final recommendations. Vollmer replied that all city directors had joined the last steering committee meeting and that she had assigned directors to five groups based on their specialties. She said directors had worked with steering committee members to review draft recommendations that resulted from public engagement, to flesh out meanings, and to provide supporting data. She said Planning NEXT had received that information and had edited the draft recommendations accordingly. She said Council would see draft recommendations at Round Three that Planning NEXT had derived from Rounds One and Two and from steering committee and director review, and she added that Kelsey Bartholomew and Rachel Zarick would host staff sessions in this building and at the parks and service garage. She said Planning NEXT would aggregate Round Three feedback, adjust recommendations as needed, and produce the final document for delivery on October 13, 2025. Bowers asked whether Vollmer could preview what Council should expect in the plan document and whether the plan would include specific criteria that staff could use to gauge progress. Vollmer explained that Planning NEXT had structured the work in two phases: the current phase produced draft recommendations, and the subsequent phase would produce the plan document, including an introduction, instructions on how to use the plan, and cross-references to other City plans. She said that document would explain how the strategic plan would function as a framework and how the City would use it in conjunction with the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), the parks master plan, and the comprehensive transportation and mobility plan, and she reiterated that the plan document would appear on October 13, 2025. Bowers asked whether the strategic plan would give direction on prioritization. Vollmer said she would check on that specifically because the plan would include an implementation piece for staff that described how to implement the plan. Bowers observed that the plan should direct action rather than remain a lofty vision. Vollmer affirmed that the plan would provide guidance and noted that, in the next budget process for 2027, the City would tie each budget item to a strategic priority or objective in the plan. Bowers asked about the status of the economic development strategy. Vollmer said the economic development recommendations would follow the same process and that Director Jeff Gottke had taken responsibility for much of that work. She said Planning NEXT included an economic development adviser, that the team had consulted additional resources, and that staff planned to check in with the Community Improvement Corporation (CIC); she said the economic development recommendations would appear during the public engagement. Bowers asked whether the economic development strategy would integrate

fully into the strategic plan or appear as a subdocument. Vollmer said the City would include it as its own chapter and that the team also would prepare a pull-out chapter for Creekside.

Councilmember Jones asked whether the Sweet Celebration engagement would ask residents to review the draft and respond rather than propose new ideas. Vollmer said the event would focus on reviewing the draft but that staff would accept new ideas if attendees offered them. She said Planning NEXT planned engagement boards similar to prior rounds, that the consultants designed the stations to engage participants rather than display long task lists, and that she expected six to twelve engagement stations. Jones asked how the in-person boards would duplicate through the survey. Vollmer said staff would mirror the board questions in the online survey, that Round Two had used the same approach, and that attendees at the Sweet Celebration would not need to complete the online survey if they completed the in-person engagement.

2025-0159

Staffing Update - Network Analyst Presentation 8.11.2025

Miranda Vollmer, Senior Director of Administrative Services, presented a 2026 staffing request and asked the Council to approve advancing the network analyst position ahead of the 2026 budget cycle. She said the position would sit in the Information Technology Department under the network administrator and noted that the City had hired a systems analyst earlier that summer. Vollmer said she requested the advance hire because the City had many concurrent projects and because House Bill 96 would take effect in September with an implementation date of January 1, 2026. She explained that the bill established a cybersecurity program with six required elements: assess critical systems and risks, understand breach impacts, detect threats early, define incident response procedures, plan for recovery, and train all staff. She said the law required the City to have a plan available for audit and that the City already performed many of the required activities but could enhance its work. Vollmer explained that Director of IT René Carter, and the network administrator, Brandon McCorkle, had developed strategic priorities for the City's network. She described the proposed network analyst's duties, which corresponded to the cybersecurity elements: assist with annual penetration tests, threat monitoring, and role-based access controls; monitor real-time alerts and system baselines; support structured escalation protocols; participate in lifecycle planning, network redundancy, and proactive upgrades; and assist with asset tracking, disaster recovery drills, and alignment with CJIS requirements for police information. She added that the position would cross-train with systems staff and the network administrator, produce standard operating procedure documentation, and reduce the City's dependency on the single existing network FTE. Vollmer said the City could post the position in August if the

Council approved advancing the hire. She outlined the hiring timeline: a ten-day posting period followed by application review; interviews within roughly 30 days; a candidate selection within about 45 days; and the background investigation, conducted by the Division of Police, would take 30 to 60 days. She said the City expected to hire an analyst by late November or early December with an advanced hire, which would allow the analyst to support the January 1, 2026 implementation date and help stand up networks for the City's new facility. Vollmer described the near and mid-term implementation steps. She said the IT team would onboard the network analyst, deploy monitoring dashboards, and begin infrastructure documentation and SOP rollout by the end of 2026. She said the City would expand analytics, automate scanning, and cross-train staff to support redundancy in 2027. Vollmer emphasized that the request required no change to the salary ordinance and requested no supplemental appropriation because savings in the IT salary and benefit lines, resulting from the systems analyst hire and earlier vacancies, would cover the position. She summarized that adding a network analyst would distribute operational load, reduce response times, and help the City maintain operations during absences, turnover, or increased demand. Vollmer said the position would rank as a priority one staffing request and noted that the City continued to finalize the full 2026 staffing list. She concluded by stating the role's vital importance to security and infrastructure and offered to answer questions.

President Bowers asked whether Vollmer felt optimistic that the City would fill the network analyst role within the timeline she had identified. Vollmer replied that staff had used different recruiting strategies, that the systems analyst hire had produced a good candidate pool and that the team had interviewed more candidates than typical, and that the staffing study consultant had conducted market research when it recommended the position. She said the position's placement in the salary ordinance proved competitive with similar government roles. Bowers asked for the classification tier for the position and said Vollmer could follow up by email if she did not have it handy. Vollmer said she would follow up and stated that the position appeared in the ordinance as IT Analyst II; she added that she believed the classification to be C17 and that she would send the confirmation. Vollmer sought feedback from Council. She said she would return in October for the budget workshop and that the staffing request would appear on that agenda, stated that staff would like to advance hiring, and observed that most people were shaking their heads with proceeding. Vice President Weaver confirmed that he was in agreement. Bowers noted that the requirement derived from state law, described it as an unfunded mandate, and said the City had to respond to that mandate.

E. ITEMS FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF PARKS & RECREATION:

ORD-0036-2025

AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR TO AWARD AND ENTER INTO CONTRACT WITH HGC CONSTRUCTION CO. FOR THE RENOVATION AND CONSTRUCTION OF THE PRICE ROAD HOUSE FACILITY; AUTHORIZING SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS; AND WAIVING SECOND READING

Stephania Ferrell, Director of Parks and Recreation, provided an overview of the Price Road project, also referred to as the Exploration Center. She said the City acquired the property off James Road, south of the Gahanna swimming pool, in 2010 because of its adjacency to existing parkland. She reported that the property included an outbuilding used for storage and a residential property. Ferrell said the 2006 Parks Master Plan identified indoor recreation space as a deficiency and that the 2023 Parks Master Plan reaffirmed that need. She explained that the City evaluated the site to determine the feasibility of renovating the residential property into recreational space. She said the building measured 5,500 square feet, that the programmable area measured approximately 2,700 square feet, and that the design included three recreational spaces (the images shown depicted two of the three). The design also featured an outdoor deck and that the site sat directly adjacent to the Big Walnut Trail, Big Walnut Creek, and more than 50 acres of parkland, which provided an opportunity to "bring outdoors indoors." Ferrell said community partners such as churches and schools offered programming but still faced limitations and funding constraints. The Price Road facility would allow the City to provide after-school programming (including STEM, arts and crafts, and learning activities), adult programming for health and wellness, and other community-based programs. She added that the space would offer rentable space for community groups (for example, Boy Scout and Girl Scout troops) and for private events such as baby showers and birthday parties, providing an alternative location to the clubhouse.

Director Ferrell recounted the project history and funding. She said the City completed an evaluation in 2021 and submitted a state capital grant application that the City received in 2022 in the amount of \$100,000 for renovation. She reported that bidders responded in 2023 but that the City received only one bid and that the bid exceeded the engineer's estimate, making that round nonviable. She said the City reevaluated and rescopeed the design throughout 2024 to prepare a better project for bid and to incorporate the parking lot. Ferrell noted the City received five viable bids for the revised project. She said the apparent low bid (the bid contract award) came in under the engineer's estimate. She said prior CIP cycles had appropriated funds and that the project retained contingencies, but a funding gap of \$335,547 remained. She said the administration respectfully requested an ordinance to enter into a contract with HGC Construction for the renovation of the Price Road project and a supplemental appropriation to

fully fund construction. She offered to answer questions.

Councilmember Renner thanked Director Ferrell and said he had awaited the Price Road renovation for nearly the entire time he had served on Council. He noted the home's unique character and charm, encouraged Councilmembers to visit the site before construction began, and requested that staff research the home's history to incorporate that information into future materials. He recalled the Rapid5 initiative and asked Ferrell to describe any synergy between that effort and the Price Road project. Director Ferrell confirmed that the corridor had the City's designation in response to the Rapid5 project. She said the site offered a confluence of natural resources, including the Big Walnut Trail, Big Walnut Creek, and adjacent parkland, and that the location provided an opportunity to present a natural, walkable space near heavily trafficked areas. She said the Rapid5 work had celebrated the corridor's natural elements and that the project's location aligned purposefully with those elements. Renner asked Ferrell to elaborate on environmental and ecological programming, noting the site's riparian setting along the Big Walnut. Ferrell said the Parks and Recreation Department had incorporated programs with the "mad scientists," including recent hands-on events at Gahanna Woods where participants handled salamanders and learned about the ecosystem. She said the programming would emphasize the adjacent property's ecosystems, local plants, and animals, and she reiterated the project's goal of bringing outdoor experiences indoors. Renner expressed his appreciation and excitement for the project.

Vice President Weaver added his excitement and said the project presented a great opportunity for the community. He noted the administration had requested a waiver of second reading and said the item would appear on the regular agenda. President Bowers asked whether the report had indicated that the Council did not require an emergency clause. Ferrell confirmed that the project did not require an emergency clause for construction but that the administration sought a waiver of second reading. Weaver recommended the item be placed on the regular agenda for the August 18, 2025, meeting and stated his general discomfort with waivers while acknowledging that he found the waiver appropriate in this case.

Recommendation: Introduction/First Reading with Waiver of Second Reading and Adoption on Regular Agenda on 8/18/2025.

F. ITEMS FROM THE SENIOR DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS:

[2025-0160](#)

Gahanna Civic Center (825 Tech Center Drive) Construction Update
8.11.2025

Kevin Schultz, Senior Director of Operations, delivered a status update on

the 825 Tech Center Drive project covering June and July. He said he missed the July Committee meeting and offered tours of the site by appointment. Schultz reported rapid progress on the site. He said the construction crews had removed the construction fences and had converted the rear parking lot into the front lot. He said contractors had placed coarse asphalt at the front of the building to provide parking for construction workers while they completed work on the rear lot. He noted that the front parking lot provided a clear sense of circulation, although crews had not yet paved some areas adjacent to the Police Department. He said heavy rains had limited paving activity over the prior days. Schultz said the crews had completed the front curbs and the police egress and that the security fence for the cruiser lot would be a remaining feature. He reported that contractors had installed solar carport footers on both the west side (next to the AEP building) and the east side of the facility and that the teams expected to erect the carport structures in the coming weeks. He said the project had completed the bioswale stormwater facility at the front of the building and had begun site work on the rear parking lot. He added that the crews had advanced pedestrian improvements, including a multi-use trail along the front of the property and enhanced pedestrian movements within the site.

Director Schultz said interior work progressed alongside exterior work. He said contractors had begun casework and bathroom finishes primarily on the third floor and that contractors had installed carpet and luxury vinyl tile mainly on the third floor. He said the construction team had worked from the top of the building toward the bottom; he described the first floor as an active, dustier construction environment than the third floor. Schultz said the building's uninterruptible power supply (UPS) occupied its designated room but had not yet received full electrical connection. He said the UPS would bridge the brief interruption between a power outage and generator startup for critical systems; he said the UPS would support the entire dispatch center and a large portion of the police department's HVAC systems. Schultz reported that the project had reached seventy-three percent completion and had logged thirty-four weather days; he estimated that June and July had accounted for five to seven of those weather days due to rain.

Director Schultz displayed photographs and summarized visible site elements. He contrasted the July 2025 photos with images from earlier in the month and from one year prior to show the site's progression. He identified the multi-use trail under construction, the bioswale, and the parking-lot circulation patterns that would serve police ingress and egress, general public access to the front lot, and staff and senior-center access to the rear lot. He described interior photo details: nearly complete ceramic tile in a third-floor restroom awaiting fixtures, casework and carpet installed in office areas (including the finance department), and a glass wall and doorway

system for private offices with decorative frosting for privacy. He said the project had installed security mounds in the front parking area as passive security features to prevent vehicle access to the structure. He concluded by noting pedestrian-access improvements that extended along the entire rear elevation from the far sallyport to the building's south elevation.

Financial Updates

Director Schultz reported on project invoicing and allowances. He first said the project had invoiced 61 percent. He then corrected the slide, stating that the slide reflected June financials and that, as of June 31, the project had invoiced 31 percent. He said he had received the July pay application that day but had not had time to incorporate it into the materials. He noted that pay applications generally ran about \$3 to \$4 million, and he estimated that the project was probably closer to 65 percent invoiced for the month of July. Schultz reviewed allowance and contingency figures. He said the percentages on the slide were correct but that the dollar figure on the slide was not, and he clarified that the City had not spent \$1 million in allowance. He said the City had obligated 52 percent of the allowance budget and 53 percent of the contingency budget. He reported that staff had approved approximately \$2.5 million to date in allowance and contingency, which he said amounted to about 53 percent. He concluded his remarks and invited questions.

Vice President Weaver thanked Director Schultz for the update, asked whether anyone had questions or discussion, and, seeing none, thanked him for the tour. Weaver said he appreciated the in-chambers update but noted that seeing the project in person showed how quickly it was moving. He commended Schultz, city staff, and the project team, and he acknowledged the many staff members who supported the effort but were not present in the room.

ORD-0033-2025

AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT WITH WINSTED COMPANY, LLC, FOR FURNITURE PROCUREMENT AND INSTALLATION SERVICES RELATED TO THE RENOVATION AND EXPANSION OF 825 TECH CENTER DRIVE; WAIVING SECOND READING AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY

Kevin Schultz, Senior Director of Operations, acknowledged an oversight and presented a cleanup item related to the Furniture, Fixtures, and Equipment (FF&E) budget. He said the City maintained a total FF&E budget of \$2.3 million and that the presentation reconfigured line items for this discussion. He reported that the Capital Improvement Program included Equipment Project EQ-25-02 for 911 dispatcher workstations with an allocation of \$160,000 and that staff proposed to use \$25,000 of the

remaining FF&E budget to complete the contract. He said the total contract for Winsted Company LLC for 911 dispatcher consoles totaled \$185,000, which included a \$12,000 contingency. He stated that the Administration requested authority for the Mayor to sign the contract and then invited questions.

Councilmember McGregor asked whether the equipment at 400 West Johnstown could be reused at the new site. Schultz replied that the consoles at 400 West Johnstown measured smaller than the new consoles, he estimated twelve to fifteen inches narrower, and that the City planned to keep 400 West Johnstown as a backup facility. He said the City had six consoles at 400 West Johnstown and intended to retain three of them there as a backup.

President Bowers asked whether the City faced a threat of cost increases before contract execution. Schultz replied that the price would remain fixed only after the Mayor signed the contract. Bowers observed that the contract execution therefore required emergency approval. Schultz confirmed that the Mayor could not sign the contract until the waiver or referendum period expired.

Vice President Weaver asked whether the Administration needed a waiver request as well. Schultz answered yes. Weaver noted that the Administration requested a waiver and emergency declaration and said the item would appear on the regular agenda on August 18, 2025.

Recommendation: Introduction/First Reading with Waiver of Second Reading and Emergency Adoption on Regular Agenda on 8/18/2025.

2025-0161

Creekside Update - Flood Mitigation and Plaza Improvements
8.11.2025

Mayor Jadwin provided an update on the Creekside Flood Mitigation Project. She said the Council first began discussing the project publicly in 2020, but that work on the issue had started many years earlier. She recalled that on her first day in office, at her first meeting as mayor in January 2020, staff advised her that questions had arisen regarding the floodproofing certificate for the Creekside garage and other areas of the development. Mayor Jadwin said the City engaged an outside engineering and environmental firm to conduct a thorough evaluation and investigation of the Creekside area over a several-month period. She reported that the firm confirmed the need to perform floodproofing work along the embankment that extended from the northern portion of Building A, past Building B, to the southern portion of Building C, adjacent to the alleyway that separated Mr. Griffin's parking lot from Creekside. She said the City had worked with FEMA and that the City currently operated under a FEMA directive to perform the critical and necessary floodproofing work. While assessing the mandatory floodproofing

work, Mayor Jadwin said staff recognized that Creekside required an overall refresh, construction had begun in 2005, and that the flood mitigation work presented an opportunity to address other critical needs at Creekside. Mayor Jadwin recalled that in September of the prior year the City had shared renderings at the Mill Street Market to gauge community interest in potential Creekside improvements and that the community response had been overwhelmingly positive. She said the Our Gahanna strategic planning engagement had reaffirmed the community's desire to see Creekside become more vibrant and healthy. She added that Planning NEXT had visited the City several times and that community priorities included business vitality, connectivity, accessibility with park amenities, and creek activation at Creekside. Mayor Jadwin concluded by saying staff had identified both the flood mitigation work and preliminary concepts for Creekside and then turned the presentation over to Director Schultz to walk the Council through the proposed flood mitigation project and the preliminary design concepts.

Director Schultz introduced the Creekside project presentation and noted he had presented other projects at 825 Tech Center Drive. He identified Directors Komlanc, Ferrell, and Blackford, Mr. Guthrie, and the Mayor among the audience and said many staff had worked on the project before he assumed his current position. Schultz described the project as a collection of related workstreams and said the design team consisted of Fishbeck Engineering and POD Design. He listed the primary components as floodproofing, trail improvements, plaza improvements (upper and lower), streetscape improvements, and roadway work. He noted an error on his slide and corrected the labels for the upper and lower plazas. Schultz explained the design approach and cost tracking. He said the team had framed each component so the City could separate and sequence work as needed rather than obligate the City to a single designer-driven solution. He displayed renderings and described the overall site: Mill Street on the right, the creek on the left, and an altered lagoon that reduced its size to create a more functional lower bowl and a programmable area that would reduce the need to close Mill Street for events. He described proposed amphitheater-style seating, a refurbished pedestrian bridge, and creek-side improvements on the opposite side of the bridge.

Director Schultz emphasized that the project primarily addressed flood mitigation. He described water infiltration and flooding in the Creekside garage during major events and explained that the FEMA floodproofing requirements would require a clay liner and sealing along the bank that extended the length of Buildings A, B, and C and across the central plaza. He said the City would implement creek-bank erosion control to protect bank stability and create a barrier to reduce flood impacts on the garage. He added that a temporary flood wall system would allow Parks staff to protect

the lower bowl and the garage when predictable flood events occur. Schultz described several plaza and accessibility improvements that would coincide with floodproofing. He said the upper-plaza ramp did not meet ADA standards and required updates, and the pedestrian bridge would receive structural changes, including removal of a nonstructural middle column to improve views. He described a redesigned lower waterfall, trail access to the creek, lighting and landscaping upgrades, and improved street furniture. Schultz detailed the trail improvements. He said the design would create a formal staircase from the lower trail area to the upper plaza and an ADA-accessible ramp that would provide direct access from the lower trail to the upper plaza, opening the backside of the plaza to the trail system. He noted the design would remove an existing cantilever and replace it with a retaining-wall system with planting beds and seating.

Director Schultz described the lower plaza improvements. He said the team would significantly reduce the lagoon to create a programmable area greater than 5,000 square feet, add amphitheater seating and two stages, and provide flexible activation for events, winter activities, and performances. He said the design would increase green space and add landscaping, interactive water features (splash-pad style), enhanced lighting, and upgraded plaza utilities for irrigation, electrical, and natural gas. Schultz also described upper-plaza work. He said floodproofing would require removal and reconstruction of the upper plaza surface, including removal and replacement of red pavers, waterproofing the surface, and reinstalling or upgrading the paving materials. He said the City could use the reconstruction opportunity to improve the plaza beyond FEMA requirements because dry floodproofing remained advantageous for extending the garage structure's life even though FEMA did not require it. Schultz discussed activation and program elements between Buildings B and C and said POD would develop additional renderings for a street-market-style activation with shade structures, planting beds that double as seating, and a potential fire feature. Schultz characterized the streetscape as the project's front door and said the design would coordinate plaza and streetscape elements, add vegetation and planting beds, install accessible ramps and reduced-step profiles via a "tabletop" geometry, retain the valet area, and create on-street bistro seating opportunities. He noted that the current cost figures considered only streetscape improvements on the west side of the street and that the team would develop design standards for the east side. Schultz reviewed cost-estimate methodology and contingencies. He said the team had pressed designers for clarity about "all-in" numbers and that the project included an 8 percent escalation allowance. He said construction-manager (CM) services historically run about 12 percent but that the team estimated 18 percent for this project. He affirmed that contingencies and escalation assumptions reflected current industry variability and said staff would

continue to present itemized cost breakdowns and retain the ability to phase the work. Schultz concluded his presentation and invited the Mayor and Council to ask questions or return to additional renderings.

Questions from Council

Councilmember McGregor asked whether reducing the front steps along Mill Street from three to two would still provide flood protection. Director Kevin Schultz replied that the elevation would not change and that the top step would remain at the same height as it is today.

President Bowers thanked Director Schultz, Mayor Jadwin, and staff for the presentation and observed that the plaza had existed for nearly twenty years and the project offered an opportunity to correct earlier omissions. She asked whether the City could obtain an economic-impact analysis and whether staff had a timeline and plan to coordinate construction with events and to assess impacts on businesses during construction. Schultz said Montrose Group was working on the economic-impact analysis. He explained that the City had discussed construction impacts at every meeting and that some areas, the lower bowl and certain creek-bank work, would likely present lower impacts and would be easier to construct. He said the upper plaza, trail improvements, and other logistical areas would pose the greatest construction challenges and would require careful planning to avoid constant disruption to businesses. He added that the City had engaged construction-management services to confirm budgets and develop logistical plans and that staff would remain mindful of and work to mitigate business impacts.

Councilmember Padova said she had seen the renderings at Mill Street Market, praised the design, and asked whether patios such as those for Cantina and Barrel & Boar formed part of the plaza or part of the buildings. Schultz replied that, by agreement and easement, the patio areas fell within the City's responsibility under the Creekside agreement and that the City would reconstruct those patio areas. He noted that some project costs would fall to the property owner, for example, utilities in the garage that service the buildings and require relocation out of the flood zone, and that his cost estimates accounted for a fair and equitable division of those costs. Padova asked whether the redesigned front door area would still accommodate large delivery trucks. Schultz explained that the valet/loading area would remain essentially the same size as it is today and that the design preserved the necessary vehicle access. Padova asked how long the renovation could take. Schultz said project-duration estimates varied. He stated the project would be no less than an 18-month effort and that it could extend to 24-30 months depending on phasing and logistics. He reiterated the value of

preconstruction services from a construction manager to verify budgets and refine logistics. Mayor Jadwin agreed that the City needed to understand the project scope before finalizing construction strategies. She said staff had discussed whether to complete the work all at once or phase it, and she emphasized that the City would engage businesses and stakeholders as staff refined timing and mitigation plans. President Bowers asked whether staff planned a presentation to the Chamber of Commerce. Mayor Jadwin said staff were scheduling community engagement events, would tie outreach to the planned ice-cream social, and would follow up with venue options and focus groups that would include Creekside businesses, the Chamber, Visit Gahanna, and other stakeholders. Schultz added that project staff would maintain a presence at community events to gather feedback and that the team would coordinate engagement alongside the budget process. Padova asked whether the floodproofing estimate included removal and replacement of the red brick surface. Schultz clarified that the floodproofing estimate covered the creek bank and related measures to prevent water from entering the garage. He said the dry-floodproofing work that required removing and reconstructing the upper-plaza brick surface appeared in the upper-plaza budget line (not the creek-bank floodproofing line). He confirmed that the City would reinstall new pavers when it reconstructed the upper plaza and that the cost figures reflected that work.

Councilmember McGregor said she liked that the water wall would be removed because it had cut off the view from Mill Street to the plaza and creek. She compared the proposed amphitheater seating to La Villita in San Antonio and asked whether the City would correct existing flood-protection issues along Mill Street in the meantime, citing a cracked planter in front of Old Bag of Nails. Director Schultz replied that the project stopped at the alley and the end of Building A. Councilmember McGregor acknowledged that response and said the damaged planter should be repaired. Schultz responded that the planter and similar issues rested on private property and that the property owners should address them. McGregor agreed that the owners should repair the planter. Schultz said he had pulled up a perspective image showing the sightline from Mill Street through the plaza to the bridge and creek. He recalled his first visit to Creekside and said the proposed changes would open the view to the bridge and creek beyond. McGregor said the redesign would open the vista as originally intended. Schultz agreed and said the redesign would improve the space's functionality because current conditions sometimes hid events from visitors.

Vice President Weaver asked what the next steps would be. Schultz said staff would create a Creekside project webpage similar to the 825 Tech Center Drive project page to house presentations, livestreams, and other materials. He said staff would schedule public engagement outside the

formal chambers, develop a complete public engagement schedule, and attend events such as Touch a Truck and Mill Street Market to gather feedback. Vice President Weaver thanked Director Schultz, Mayor Jadwin, and the project team for the presentation and the thorough work.

G. ITEMS FROM COUNCILMEMBERS:

Councilmember Bowers:

RES-0034-2025 A JOINT RESOLUTION AND PROCLAMATION DESIGNATING AUGUST 2025 AS SHARE THE ROAD AND DISTRACTED DRIVING AWARENESS MONTH IN THE CITY OF GAHANNA

President Bowers presented a joint resolution and proclamation for August 2025 as Share the Road and Distracted Driving Awareness Month. She stated that Gahanna maintained an active transportation community with a vibrant cyclist community and introduced Patricia Kovacs, who was in the audience, from the Bicycle and Trails Advisory Committee. Bowers said she and Kovacs had compiled statistics on cyclists and pedestrians impacted by vehicle crashes in Gahanna, Franklin County, and the state, and she thanked Mayor Jadwin for verifying and correcting some numbers in the resolution. She noted the recent death of a triathlete in northwest Ohio when a distracted driver crossed the center lane, and she said the triathlete's mentee, Nicole Reece, would speak the following week about Roseann Peiffer's zest for life and the family's hopes to drive awareness about sharing the road. Bowers added that Kovacs asked the Council to highlight a leading cause of crashes: drivers turning right who focus on traffic to the left and fail to see pedestrians or cyclists entering or already in an intersection. She said the City expected cyclists, triathletes, and Peiffer's loved ones to join next week.

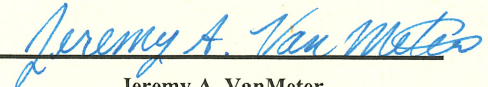
Councilmember McGregor asked whether the Police Department could present information at a later time about which bicycles and devices qualify as roadworthy, noting the variety of e-bikes, different classes, small mopeds, and electric scooters. She described observing a child on an electric scooter riding in a traffic lane while looking at a phone and asked for a handout or website information for parents.

Chief Spence said the Police Department had seen a flood of these devices this year and had taken a deep dive into the code in recent months. He told the Council that the issue had become complicated and that the department had consulted the City Attorney and adjusted its approach. He said electric motorcycles qualify as motorcycles by definition under the code and therefore require a licensed driver to operate, yet he had observed riders as young as 11, 12, and 13. Chief Spence added that he had reviewed a

checklist another agency compiled that categorized different types of bikes and that the department had begun compiling guidance to address the recent flood of complaints.

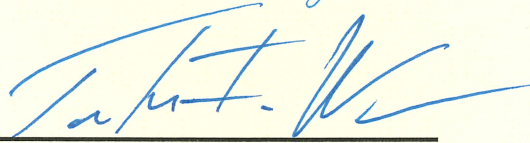
H. **ADJOURNMENT:**

With no further business before the Committee of the Whole, the Chair adjourned the meeting at 9:32 p.m.



Jeremy A. VanMeter
Clerk of Council

APPROVED by the Committee of the Whole, this
18th day of *Aug.* 2025.



Trenton I. Weaver