



City of Gahanna

Meeting Minutes

City Council

200 South Hamilton Road
Gahanna, Ohio 43230

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

Jeremy A. VanMeter, Clerk of Council

Monday, February 3, 2025

7:00 PM

City Hall, Council Chambers

A. CALL TO ORDER: Invocation, Pledge of Allegiance, Roll Call

Gahanna City Council met in Regular Session on Monday, February 3, 2025, in Council Chambers. President of Council Merisa K. Bowers called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. Vice President of Council Trenton I. Weaver delivered an Invocation and led members in the Pledge of Allegiance. The agenda was published on January 31, 2025.

Present 6 - Merisa K. Bowers, Jamille Jones, Nancy R. McGregor, Kaylee Padova, Stephen A. Renner, and Trenton I. Weaver

Absent 1 - Michael Schnetzer

B. ADDITIONS OR CORRECTIONS TO THE AGENDA:

None.

C. PRESENTATIONS:

1. Joint Resolution/Proclamation Presentation by Council & Mayor Black History Month - Presented to Jewel Woods

Councilmember Jones acknowledged that February is Black History Month and took the opportunity to present a joint resolution and proclamation to Jewel Woods, the founder and clinical director of Male Behavioral Health and the Center for Boys. Councilmember Jones addressed the relevance of this recognition during Black History Month, noting that while mental health affects men and boys of all races, it has a significant impact within the Black community. She emphasized her passion for mental health awareness and advocacy, expressing appreciation for Mr. Woods' work in this field. Following her remarks, Councilmember Jones invited Mr. Woods forward for a photo and turned the microphone over to him for comments. She also extended her gratitude to Mr. Woods for his contributions to mental health and his dedication to serving men, particularly within the Black community. Council colleagues and Mayor Jadwin were invited to join for the presentation.

Mr. Jewel Woods began by expressing his gratitude to Councilmember Jones for the honor of being recognized and for the invitation to participate in the event. Mr. Woods introduced himself, noting that in addition to his work at Male Behavioral Health, he teaches graduate-level social work at the University of Michigan and writes for *Psychology Today*. He stated that he shared this background not to challenge anyone's allegiance to local universities, but rather to establish himself as a professional in the behavioral health field and to emphasize his deep commitment to addressing the mental and behavioral health needs of men and boys. Mr. Woods then proceeded to answer three questions posed by Councilmember Jones.

In response to the first question regarding what inspired Woods to focus on men's mental health and create Male Behavioral Health, he explained that society is either ignorant or indifferent to the struggles faced by men and boys. He cited statistics from Franklin County, where males account for 71% of overdose deaths, 79% of suicides, 79% of homicides, and 74% of motor vehicle fatalities. He emphasized that despite these staggering numbers, very little specialized knowledge, training, or resources exist to address the unique mental health challenges faced by men and boys. This gap in care, awareness, and intervention, he stated, is what drove his work to develop targeted, effective, and ethical support systems.

Regarding the second question about common misconceptions surrounding men's mental health, Mr. Woods stated that one of the most pervasive myths is the belief that men and boys exhibit behavioral problems rather than experiencing true mental health challenges. He explained that this misconception creates a damaging cycle in which men and boys are more likely to be punished for their struggles rather than supported in addressing them. Rather than recognizing emotional distress, anxiety, or depression—often manifested as aggression, withdrawal, or risk-taking behavior—society tends to respond with disciplinary action instead of therapeutic intervention. He noted that this not only reinforces stigma but also prevents many from seeking or receiving the care they need.

In response to the final question about what message he would share with men and boys who are hesitant to seek help, Mr. Woods urged them not to believe the false narrative that talking about feelings, struggles, or challenges is a sign of weakness. He emphasized that this belief is a harmful lie designed to keep them silent and suffering in isolation. He asserted that strength is not about suppressing pain, but about having the courage to face it. To be the best versions of themselves—for their own well-being and for the people who rely on them—men and boys must develop self-awareness, emotional intelligence, and the ability to seek support when needed. He stressed that taking care of one's mental health is not a weakness but a source of power.

Mr. Woods then connected these themes to Black History Month, particularly in the year 2025 and the years to come. He identified three key themes: silence, suffering, and strength. On the theme of silence, he compared the stigma that discourages men and boys from discussing their mental health to the broader societal efforts to minimize the importance of Black History

Month. He stated that Black History Month is not simply a matter of diversity, equity, and inclusion, just as men's mental health is not just about behavioral issues. Rather, he argued that understanding Black history is essential to understanding the nation's democratic experiment. Regarding suffering, he explained that just as silence leads to suffering for men and boys, ignoring history leads to collective trauma. He stressed the importance of acknowledging the profound suffering that marginalized communities, particularly Black and brown communities, continue to experience amid increasing inequality, the disintegration of social systems, and a growing existential crisis of meaning and purpose. He noted that neglecting mental health leads to self-destruction, just as ignoring systemic injustice leads to social disintegration. Finally, on the theme of strength, Mr. Woods emphasized that just as men and boys find strength in community and seeking support, societal strength in 2025 and beyond will require finding allies, building coalitions, and engaging in good-faith conversations. He noted that Black history has always underscored the importance of alliances among individuals of different racial, cultural, and economic backgrounds. He stressed that now, more than ever, allies are needed-Black, white, Latino, Asian, and anyone of goodwill-who are willing to engage in real conversations and bridge differences. Mr. Woods stated that the reasons for prioritizing men's mental health are the same reasons why Black history must be recognized; ignoring either leads to despair, desperation, and decline. He expressed his commitment to partnering with anyone dedicated to ensuring a brighter future for individuals, families, and the country. He then thanked the Council for the opportunity to speak.

Following Mr. Woods' remarks, Councilmember Jones expressed her gratitude, stating that he had perfectly connected his work to Black History Month. She noted that his words captured the intent behind his invitation to receive the honor and thanked him for his contribution.

President Bowers also extended appreciation to Mr. Woods, acknowledging his presence, calls to action, and reflections. She expressed gratitude on behalf of the Council, stating that it was a pleasure to have him speak.

Mr. Woods concluded by sharing a personal connection to the community, stating that both of his children were products of the Gahanna-Jefferson Public Schools. He mentioned that his oldest daughter had recently graduated from Vanderbilt University in December and that his 14-year-old, now attending Bishop Hartley, was a recent graduate of Gahanna Middle School South. He emphasized his deep commitment to the community and noted that he was currently working with students at Gahanna Middle School South. He thanked the Council for the opportunity to share his work and reflections.

D. HEARING OF VISITORS:

None.

E. CONSENT AGENDA:

1. Minutes - To Approve:[2025-0020](#)

Council Special Minutes 1.21.2025

The minutes were approved on the Consent Agenda.[2025-0021](#)

Council Regular Minutes 1.21.2025

The minutes were approved on the Consent Agenda.[2025-0022](#)

Committee of the Whole Minutes 1.27.2025

The minutes were approved on the Consent Agenda.**2. Resolutions:**[RES-0003-2025](#)

A JOINT RESOLUTION AND PROCLAMATION RECOGNIZING FEBRUARY 2025 AS "BLACK HISTORY MONTH" AND HONORING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF BLACK AMERICANS IN THE CITY OF GAHANNA

The Resolution was adopted on the Consent Agenda.**End of Consent Agenda**

A motion was made by Renner, seconded by Weaver, to Pass the Consent Agenda. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 6 - Bowers, Jones, McGregor, Padova, Renner and Weaver

Absent: 1 - Schnetzer

F. CORRESPONDENCE AND ACTIONS:**1. Clerk**[CC-0001-2025](#)

To recommend approval to Council, a change to Part Eleven - Zoning Code, Section 1117.10(e)(1)(A) - Required Improvements of the Codified Ordinances of the City of Gahanna.

Mr. VanMeter presented two items under the Council Clerk's report. The first item was a recommendation from the Planning Commission for Council's approval of a change to Part 11 of the Zoning Code, Section 1171.01(e)(1)(A), regarding required improvements in the codified ordinances of the City of Gahanna. Pursuant to the City Charter, he had issued a 30-day public notice for what would be known as Ordinance 0001-2025, setting a hearing date for March 3, 2025, prior to a vote on its adoption. He noted that a brief presentation on this item was anticipated during the Committee of the Whole

meeting on February 10, 2025.

[2025-0023](#)

Ohio Division of Liquor Control Notice to Legislative Authority Permit NEW 11200470005 BRUM AND WHEEL ENTERPRISES LLC 230 GRANVILLE ST, GAHANNA, OH

Mr. VanMeter's second item was a notice from the Ohio Division of Liquor Control concerning Brum and Wheel Enterprises LLC, operating at 230 Granville Street, Gahanna. Mr. VanMeter stated that the Gahanna Division of Police had no objections to the liquor permit request. If there were no objections from Council, he would sign and return the notice indicating that no hearing was requested.

President Bowers asked if there were any comments or questions regarding the item. She confirmed her understanding that the address in question, 230 Granville Street, was the location of Third Base Pint House. Chief Spence affirmed that this was correct. There were no objections from Council.

2. Council

[2025-0028](#)

Correspondence from State Senator Beth Liston, District 16, to Council President Merisa Bowers 1.21.2025

President Bowers informed the Council that an email had been received from State Senator Beth Liston, introducing herself as the new State Senator for Ohio's 16th District, which includes Gahanna. Senator Liston provided her email address and office number to be shared with constituents or for Council members to contact her if needed. President Bowers stated that she had asked Mr. VanMeter to include the email as part of the minutes to serve as a reference for Senator Liston's contact information and introduction.

Mayor Jadwin requested that the email also be forwarded to her so she could reach out to Senator Liston. President Bowers agreed to do so.

G. REPRESENTATIVES:

1. Community Improvement Corporation (CIC) - Renner, Padova

Councilmember Padova reported that the Community Improvement Corporation (CIC) met on January 28, 2025, for its first meeting of the year. During the meeting, elections for officers were held. Betty Collins was elected President, George Mrus was elected Vice President and Secretary, and Jeff Kessler was elected Vice President and Treasurer. She noted that the next CIC meeting was scheduled for February 18, 2025, in the Committee Room.

2. Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC) - Weaver

Vice President Weaver noted that more information would be coming in the next couple weeks.

3. Convention & Visitors Bureau (CVB) - Padova

Councilmember Padova announced that the Creekside Charity Chocolate Walk, benefiting organizations through Give to Gahanna, would take place on Saturday, February 15, 2025, from 2:00 to 5:00 PM. She noted that there were fewer than 100 tickets remaining and that more than a dozen businesses were participating. Tickets could be purchased at VisitGahanna.com or through the event's Facebook page. She also announced that Visit Gahanna's Annual Meeting would be held on Tuesday, March 18, 2025, at 5:30 PM. Unlike previous years, the event would take place in the evening instead of during lunch and would include dinner. The keynote speaker would be Roy Hall Jr., former Ohio State University wide receiver, NFL player, and Gahanna Lincoln football coach. He would speak on the power of teamwork in the community. Tickets for the annual meeting were not yet available but were expected to go on sale the following week. Councilmember Padova encouraged those interested to visit VisitGahanna.com for ticket information and noted that the event would take place at La Navona. She looked forward to seeing attendees at both events.

4. School Board (SB) - Jones

Councilmember Jones reported that she, along with several Council colleagues, the Mayor, and administrative staff, had the opportunity to attend the State of the Schools event last week. She noted that a variety of topics were covered, with presentations given directly by those actively working within the district, which she greatly appreciated. The event addressed key areas including student success, educator empowerment, consistency, accessibility, communication, and the financial stability of the district. She mentioned that a recording of the event should be available on the district's YouTube page and was expected to be shared by the following day. She encouraged those interested to watch the recording.

H. OFFICIAL REPORTS:

1. Mayor

Mayor Jadwin began by thanking Councilmember Bowers for organizing the city events over the past weekend. She highlighted the event on Saturday, which featured a safety talk and an informative presentation by the Gahanna Division of Police, as well as the events on Sunday, which included a community walk and activities at The Herb Center. She noted that these events embodied themes of strength and empowerment within the community. She stated that the events reaffirmed her belief that Gahanna is a safe place to live, work, and play and emphasized the dedication of the city's officers who work daily to protect and serve its citizens. She also stressed the importance of individual awareness, noting that whether on a trail, at an event in downtown Columbus, or visiting a new city, individuals should always be attentive, prepared, and informed about how to respond in different situations.

Mayor Jadwin also discussed some of the city's ongoing programs. She mentioned that on Saturday, February 8, 2025, Lieutenant Kissel would be offering a self-defense class from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. at the Gahanna Senior Center. She noted that those who had participated in the past spoke highly of the program. The class is free, open to men and women aged 18 and up, and available for registration through the city's website. She announced that on Saturday, March 8, 2025, Lieutenant Kell would be leading a training class on civilian response to active shooter events (CRASE). She confirmed with Chief Spence that this was the correct title. She explained that the training would offer strategies and guidance on what to do in such a situation but noted that it covers much more than active shooter scenarios. The training also addresses other safety concerns, such as vehicles being used as weapons at large events. She encouraged residents to attend, as being trained and informed about emergency responses is crucial. This event is also free and open to adults aged 18 and up, with registration available on Gahanna.gov under programs and events.

Mayor Jadwin then announced that the city had officially welcomed Jessica Curry to the team as the new mental health liaison from Syntero. She noted that the Council had approved funding for this role two years ago in the budget and expressed excitement about having Curry on board. She had met with Curry earlier in the day to discuss the vision for the role, ongoing mental health initiatives, and ways to expand opportunities and community connections. She acknowledged the relevance of Mr. Woods' work in mental health and expressed enthusiasm for potential collaborations between him and Curry.

On behalf of Senior Director Vollmer, who was attending a statewide conference, Mayor Jadwin thanked everyone who had participated in the city's Table Talk conversations. She reported that turnout had been strong and that two more opportunities remained for community members to join the discussions. The next session was scheduled for the following day, February 4, 2025, from 4:00 to 5:00 p.m., and the final session would be held on Thursday, February 13, 2025, from 6:00 to 7:00 p.m. Both sessions would take place at the Gahanna Golf Course Clubhouse. She encouraged residents to register on Gahanna.gov.

She then highlighted an upcoming event hosted by Gahanna-Jefferson Public Schools titled "From Classroom to Career." This event, scheduled for Tuesday, February 11, 2025, from 7:00 to 8:00 p.m. at Gahanna Middle School West, would provide an opportunity for middle and high school students and their families to learn about regional economic trends, emerging career opportunities, and the alignment of curriculum with future workforce needs. The event would be presented in partnership with One Columbus, the Gahanna Area Chamber of Commerce, and the Educational Service Center of Central Ohio. She noted that more information could be found on the school district's website.

Finally, Mayor Jadwin announced the city's first-ever Procurement Fair, hosted in partnership with Ohio MBE and the Gahanna Area Chamber of

Commerce. The event would take place on Thursday, February 27, 2025, from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at The Peak at Edison. The fair aims to provide opportunities for minority-owned businesses, women-owned businesses, and small businesses to connect with purchasing organizations, promote their services, and learn about bidding and contracting opportunities. Rhonda Watson Barber from Ohio MBE would lead a workshop on the benefits of minority business enterprise (MBE) certification, while Kemba Financial Credit Union would sponsor and present a session on financial resources for small businesses. She encouraged those interested to find event and registration details at Gahanna.gov.

2. City Attorney

City Attorney Tamilarasan provided an update from her office, stating that they were working on the first round of the annual review of the General Offenses Code. She noted that this process involved reviewing the most recent bills passed by the Statehouse and assessing their impact on the city's code and ordinances. She informed the Council that this review would be presented in an upcoming committee meeting.

I. COUNCIL COMMENT:

Councilmember Jones expressed gratitude and appreciation to Council President Bowers for her leadership in organizing the Walk for Women event over the weekend. She also thanked Officer Thomas, Visit Gahanna, and everyone else who contributed to making the event possible. She acknowledged all participants for showing up and standing in solidarity, describing it as a cold but beautiful moment of unity and advocacy. She extended further appreciation to Mr. Woods for attending the meeting and for his work in the community, particularly in helping to kick off Black History Month. Councilmember Jones reflected on the significance of Black History Month, emphasizing that it carries an even greater urgency this year. She noted that across the nation, there have been efforts to erase diversity, equity, and inclusion-values that she described as fundamental to a just and fair society. She cautioned against the dangers of dismissing the progress that has helped open doors for many and dismantle systemic barriers, stating that progress is not radical but necessary. She urged the community to take action by supporting Black-owned businesses, attending educational events, advocating for inclusive policies, and resisting attempts to silence history and progress. She stressed that Black history, or any history, should not be rewritten, ignored, or devalued. Councilmember Jones concluded by expressing her hope that the community remains committed to upholding the values of diversity, equity, and inclusion-not only in words but through action, and not just in February but every day.

Councilmember Padova thanked Mr. Woods for attending the meeting and for his important work in the community, both in Gahanna and throughout Central Ohio. She echoed Councilmember Jones's remarks, emphasizing the importance of recognizing the history of the country, acknowledging the progress that has been made, and continuing to build upon it. She also expressed appreciation for the effort put into the joint resolution and

proclamation. She further extended her gratitude to President Bowers for organizing the weekend's events, noting that the Women's Walk was a powerful moment of community and solidarity. She appreciated seeing so many people coming together in support of one another and concluded her remarks by thanking everyone involved in making the events possible.

Councilmember Renner also thanked Mr. Woods for attending and expressed that he had learned more about Mr. Woods' organization and the work he does. Councilmember Renner stated that he always values opportunities to learn more. He also acknowledged Councilmember Jones's remarks, calling them appropriate and meaningful. He referenced a Zen proverb, "Let go or be dragged," and shared that he had been dealing with personal family matters over the past week, which prevented him from attending the weekend's events. However, he expressed appreciation that such an important activity took place and thanked Council President Bowers for her efforts in organizing it.

Vice President Weaver thanked Mr. Woods for his presence and for the service he provides to the community. Vice President Weaver specifically appreciated the way Mr. Woods connected his work with Black History Month and emphasized the importance of continuing that work every day. He also thanked Councilmember Jones for her presentation and for organizing the joint proclamation and resolution. Vice President Weaver further commended President Bowers for organizing the Women's Walk, calling it a powerful and moving event. He shared that his wife had been unable to attend due to illness but expressed that she found the event to be an important opportunity for women to reclaim space and not live in fear. He extended his appreciation to the Gahanna Division of Police, Visit Gahanna, all event attendees, and the city administration for their support in making the event a success.

President Bowers highlighted the *Diaspora* performance that took place over the weekend, performed by Gahanna Lincoln High School's African-American Studies students under the direction of Johnel Amerson, Keisha Whitfield, and Dr. Donja Thomas. She described the performance as an incredibly moving experience and expressed her gratitude for having the opportunity to attend. She then reflected on the contrast and connection between the Walk for Women event, which focused on highlighting the need for women's safety, and Mr. Woods's comments regarding the unique struggles faced by men and boys in the community. She noted that these issues are not separate but deeply intertwined. President Bowers extended her appreciation to the Gahanna Division of Police, particularly Community Liaison Officer Blair Thomas, and Visit Gahanna for their partnership in making the weekend's events successful. She observed that while the Walk for Women was geared toward women, one recurring theme in the feedback she received-particularly from women and mothers of daughters who run or use trails-was the importance of engaging boys in these conversations as well. She emphasized that boys also need to understand how they can support community safety and how the community, in turn, must support them. She stressed that a collective responsibility exists for each other's well-being and that it is possible to acknowledge both the victimization of women and the unique struggles and stigma faced by men. She expressed gratitude for the

discussions that took place during the meeting, as they provided an opportunity for deeper reflection on these interconnected issues. She looked forward to providing a more comprehensive report on the Walk for Women weekend in the future, noting that it was a powerful experience and that the event yielded phenomenal photos and meaningful outcomes. President Bowers also announced that she had attached her constituent report for December and January to the minutes. She had requested Mr. VanMeter to include the report in the official record and had circulated it to Councilmembers, the Mayor, and the City Attorney. She noted that the report distilled the key events from the past two months into bullet points and included a few photos to provide insight into the work of a councilmember.

[2025-0024](#)

Councilmember Merisa K. Bowers' Constituent Report - December 2024-January 2025

J. ADJOURNMENT:

With no further business before the Council, President Bowers adjourned the meeting at 7:35 p.m.

Jeremy A. VanMeter
Clerk of Council

*APPROVED by the City Council, this
day of 2025.*

Merisa K. Bowers