



City of Gahanna

Meeting Minutes

Finance Committee

200 South Hamilton Road
Gahanna, Ohio 43230

Michael Schnetzer, Chair
Karen Angelou
Merisa Bowers
Brian Larick
Jamie Leeseberg
Nancy McGregor
Stephen Renner

Krystal Gonchar, MPA, Clerk of Council

Monday, December 6, 2021

Council Chambers

*** Immediately Following Regular Council Meeting**

A. CALL TO ORDER.

Chair Michael Schnetzer called the meeting to order at 8:41 p.m.

B. DISCUSSIONS:

[ORD-0072-2021](#) TO MAKE APPROPRIATIONS FOR CURRENT EXPENSES AND OTHER EXPENDITURES OF THE CITY OF GAHANNA, OHIO DURING THE FISCAL YEAR 2022.

Schnetzer stated that Council discussed options for moving forward with the budget process; asked if any Council Members have any items that they wanted to address.

Bowers stated that she had no significant concerns; interested in collaboration between Council and Marketing & Communications to support Council office staff; with adding staff in the Mayor's Office to support communications, how do they intend to work with Council and support the seven members. Communications Manager Carrin Wester said she is passionate about getting out messages for Council just like she is for the rest of the city; works with Council Clerk and Council President on what content they want to get out.

Angelou said she noticed in the newspaper, there's very little information about Gahanna; there is more information about New Albany; what is the problem with that. Wester said they are consolidating areas of reporting; they are cutting costs wherever they can; working closely with the Dispatch Editor and This Week News editor to get city content published; have sent several articles recently.

Schnetzer said there is some concern with increased revenue; this is the time to discuss those concerns and give the administration clear direction; asked if anyone sees the need for reductions. Leeseberg said in years past we have asked for a dollar amount to be cut and provided suggestions; not happy with deficit spending. Bowers said there is \$1.2M in unreserved balance. Leeseberg said he wants to see \$2M cut from the general fund.

McGregor said when Director of HR was appointed to Director of Administrative Services, they wouldn't hire HR staff; now there is an ask for another HR Director. Vollmer said it would be to promote existing staff to a manager; functions have grown tremendously; her role would be backfilled with an administrator; from a risk and safety perspective we are not doing programs that we should be; no comprehensive safety training; no risk mitigation in place; civil service items that HR has been doing on behalf of the civil service commission has increased and taken up a lot of staff time; by having an HR manager direct day to day operations, Director of Administrative Services would still conduct investigations and assist other departments; have assisted Finance with the budget this year, helping with capital program, facilities assessment, and strategic planning; is vital to have a professional development program.

McGregor is not in favor of spending more than we are taking in; this is only the second year of getting money from the income tax increase; we told the voters that this would last for the next 20 years but in year two we are spending more. Bury said they are not using new reserves; the unreserved balance is similar to having a bank account and after paying all your bills, there is money left over. McGregor said we don't know what's happening in the future and does not want to spend even if we are in our rights to do that. Bury said the 75% was dedicated to capital; no reason to hold on to money without a purpose.

Renner stated that he trusts Bury, and if you reference pg. 40, over the long-term we are projected, for our balances, to go up in a positive direction. Bury showed a graphic that had the mandatory reserve, excess of reserve, and the total general fund balance: \$6.7M, \$10.2M, \$16.9M respectively. Reserves are \$10.2M, estimated to use \$1.2M, and remaining excess of \$9M. Larick said at the end of 2022 it's a reduction of \$2M; in 2018, asked to lead a committee that evaluated capital assets in the city; that became the driver of legislation that became Issue 12; that committee evaluated capital and identified a need for additional revenue; issue 12 carved out special funds; two months ago we saw capital needs for 4 buildings for the cost of roughly \$100M; on our first normal year we are proposing to spend part of the unreserved; concerned about the

spacing of expenditures; having a cash positive budget is important; not just looking to 2022, but future years; would expect to see a cut of \$2M +/- and reduce capital spending; would accept those coming forward as supplementals.

Angelou asked if there are policies that we don't have and need to, or ones that need to be tweaked; have not looked at those policies in a number of years. Bury stated that we just amended general fund balance policy this year; working on procurement policy; working on capital improvement plan; working on strategic planning refresh; also facilities assessment plan. Angelou asked when Council gets involved in strategic planning. Vollmer said she spoke with the consultant today; they discussed a timeline; will bring forward to Council. Jadwin stated that Council will get involved but working on getting each department's plan forward before bringing to Council.

Schnitzer asked if there were any other concerns. Bowers stated that the city has been understaffed for a long time and we have lost good people to other jobs; we need to have a good foundation with HR policies in place as suggested by Vollmer; this is preserving assets in human capital; we are still projected to be ahead by \$2M more at the end of 2022 from what we had in 2020. Schnitzer asked if there was a compromise here to be had; stated that these numbers are estimates. Bowers asked if Bury could reevaluate the estimates for revenue. Bury confirmed. Angelou asked that inflation also be considered in the revised estimates. Leeseberg stated that he wishes to see a reduction in professional services and contracts; we are paying for studies and then things don't get built. Jadwin stated they needed more staff to complete all of these projects.

Schnitzer stated that what he is hearing from a majority of Council is to come back to next week's Finance Committee meeting with revised projections to the general fund showing some of the biggest progress that's being made on the economic development front, but also, for the expenditures to reflect a zero use of fund balance. Bury confirmed that would be possible.

McGregor stated that this is a marathon and not a sprint; we can pace ourselves and not complete all the projects at once; not everything has to be done right away.

C. ADJOURNMENT.

Meeting adjourned at 9:43 p.m.