



City of Gahanna

Meeting Minutes

Finance Committee

200 South Hamilton Road
Gahanna, Ohio 43230

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

Jeremy A. VanMeter, Clerk of Council

Monday, July 31, 2023

City Hall, Council Chambers

Immediately following the regular Committee of the Whole meeting on July 31, 2023

A. CALL TO ORDER:

Councilmember Michael Schnetzer, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:46 p.m. The agenda was published on July 28, 2023. Vice President Weaver was absent from the meeting. All other members were present. There were no additions or corrections to the agenda.

B. ITEMS FROM THE SENIOR DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS:

[ORD-0060-2023](#) AN ORDINANCE ADOPTING THE CITY OF GAHANNA 2023-2027 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Introduction

Kevin Schultz, Senior Director of Operations, conducted a review of the 2023 to 2027 Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) during the meeting. He explained that the CIP is a planning and management tool used by local governments to identify, prioritize, budget, and execute capital improvements over a specific timeframe. The CIP includes projects, equipment, and major investments, which are then prioritized and ranked based on various factors. The plan also allocates financial resources to fund these projects and outlines timetables and justifications for completing them. The CIP is presented to the City Council and the public for review and feedback. Mr. Schultz highlighted the benefits of the CIP, such as systematically evaluating competing demands for resources based on long-term goals and objectives, linking strategic plans with financial resources, informing both operating and capital budgets, and making effective use of limited financial resources. He emphasized that the CIP also identifies various funding opportunities and keeps the public informed about the city's priorities and projects. The previous Committee of the Whole meeting was used to illustrate the processes involved in the Capital Improvement Plan, particularly how certain projects directly impact or are impacted by the CIP. Mr. Schultz stressed the importance of informing and updating the public about the CIP at various meetings throughout the

process. The CIP helps align strategic plans with available financial resources, ensuring that projects are prioritized, funded, and executed effectively to meet the city's long-term goals and objectives.

Capital Planning Process - Project Identification

Director Schultz provided an overview of the various plans that inform the CIP. He explained that the CIP is not simply created out of thin air, but rather, it is based on information from different plans, public participation processes, and discussions. He mentioned that the Parks Master Plan, as discussed by Director Stephania Ferrell, identifies numerous capital projects that inform the CIP. Similarly, facility studies, such as the one for the 825 Tech Center Drive project, involve public meetings, information sessions, and hearings to gather input and inform the CIP. Schultz emphasized that all the plans presented, including the Capital Needs Assessment, ADA Transition Plan, Land Use and Thoroughfare Plan, and Go Forward Gahanna Plan, have public participation processes that contribute to the CIP. The CIP itself also involves its own public participation process to bring the plan to life. He underlined the fact that the CIP is a dynamic working document that evolves over time, responding to changes and new developments.

Funding Capital Projects - Issue 12 & Other Sources

Director Schultz explained how capital projects are funded in the city. He mentioned that in November 2019, voters passed Issue 12, which dedicated a significant amount of financial resources to implement capital investments in the city (later in the meeting it is corrected that voters passed Issue 12 in May 2019). This funding source has become the most comprehensive way to address the city's deferred maintenance and implement new projects outlined in the CIP. Schultz clarified that while Issue 12 funding is crucial, it is not the only way the city funds capital improvements. He referenced Mr. Hamons' earlier discussion about tax incentives and tax increment financing (TIF) incentives. TIF funds, in particular, are used to finance various infrastructure improvements in specific areas, such as the Crescent area, which helps address deferred maintenance and supports new projects like traffic signal installation. The presentation also highlighted other mechanisms used to fund capital projects, including grants, local funds, special assessments, and user fees found on water and utility bills. However, Issue 12 funding remains the most comprehensive financial resource to tackle the city's various needs identified within the CIP.

Capital Planning Process - Project Incorporation

Director Schultz provided a comprehensive overview of the capital planning process and how projects are incorporated into the CIP. He explained that when a new project emerges, a project worksheet and justification are developed, and the senior directors, such as Director Vollmer or himself, review and potentially revise the projects. The CIP advisory committee then receives and reviews these project sheets and decides to move them on to the council for incorporation into the CIP. Schultz acknowledged that his

numbering in the presentation was backward but continued to explain the process. He highlighted the importance of regular updates and quarterly reports to the council and the CIP advisory committee, which help track the implementation of the CIP and identify any new projects or adjustments needed. These updates ensure that the CIP remains a dynamic and responsive plan over time. Additionally, Schultz emphasized the distinction between the CIP, which organizes projects over multiple years, and the annual capital budget. The annual budget is presented during the regular budget cycle, typically in October or November, and includes the projects and funding allocated for the subsequent year. Both the CIP and the annual budget provide opportunities for the public and the council to discuss and address specific projects. Lastly, Schultz drew attention to the procurement and legislative process, which involves seeking council's permission for projects that reach specific procurement thresholds. He emphasized that there are multiple points throughout the process where the council and the public can engage and address items within the Capital Improvement Plan, ensuring transparency and accountability in the implementation of projects in the city.

Project Summary - Capital Investments 2023 - 2027

Director Schultz provided updated financial information for the CIP for the years 2023 to 2027. He acknowledged that the slide's sequence might be a bit out of order and provided context for the financial figures and investment allocations presented in the CIP. He mentioned that the financial numbers in the CIP had been updated, and the total investment amount was now approximately \$195 million, which was slightly higher than the initial draft's figure of \$185 million. The pie chart displayed the financial impact of the identified projects in each category over the current five years. Schultz highlighted the category "City facilities," which showed an investment of \$87 million. He clarified that this amount was not a one-time expense but rather represented the cost of bonded projects that would be repaid over a period of 30 years. The majority of the \$87 million was allocated to projects like 825 Tech Center Drive, the parks and service maintenance facility, and several other outlined projects.

CIP Changes from Original Draft

Director Schultz provided an overview of the changes made to the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) since it was initially presented in April. He mentioned that they had thoroughly reviewed and updated the financial figures throughout the document to correct any errors and ensure accurate calculations. They matched resources with projects, specifically in section 10 of the document, where they identified the funds allocated for each project. Schultz noted that they had removed the street tree program from the CIP, moving it to the operating side of the Parks and Recreation budget, considering it as an operational rather than a capital item for accounting reasons. Additionally, they added a water distribution study for Zone 2, the industrial district area, to understand the impact of increasing capacity for water supply in that region. The study was funded by allocating some encumbered funds from the water fund. They also included a brine making machine for snow and ice removal in

the equipment section to improve the pre-treatment process. Another project they added was for the security wall at Hunters Ridge Park, proposing to replace the existing brick wall with a metal fence. Schultz mentioned the updates made to the aquatics assessment/facility plan, consolidating the equipment section, and reorganizing the fleet replacement plan for better efficiency. They renamed the skate park removal project to the action sports park project to reflect its broader scope. He acknowledged that he missed updating one project, the ADA project in City facilities, but mentioned it would be corrected before sharing the slides with the minutes. He noted that in the fourth quarter, they would recommend removing this project from the CIP and instead identifying specific ADA-related projects as needed, such as replacing sidewalks at specific park facilities.

CIP Adoption Timeline

Director Schultz outlined the next steps for the adoption timeline of the CIP. He began by mentioning that they published a draft of the document in June after presenting a planned overview before Council in April. They had multiple discussions about the plan, including at least three meetings with the Finance Committee, a town hall presentation and discussion in Chambers on June 21st, a presentation at Chief's Civic Association meeting, and a well-attended session at the Senior Center on July 18th. Schultz then provided the upcoming schedule for the CIP adoption process beyond tonight's introduction of the CIP during the Finance Committee meeting. The following week, there will be a first reading with a public hearing, allowing residents to provide their input on the document. On August 14th, if necessary, administration will return to the committee for further discussions with council. Finally, the second reading, along with a second public hearing, is tentatively scheduled for August 21st, leading to the potential adoption of the plan.

Questions from the Finance Committee

Chairman Schnetzer requested more information on two aspects of the CIP. He asked for further details about the Advisory Committee and its role in the project incorporation process.

Director Schultz stated that the CIP Advisory Committee is composed of key stakeholders, including the mayor, representatives from City Council (President Renner and Chairman Schnetzer), the Senior Director of Administrative Services, and himself as the Senior Director of Operations. This committee serves as a platform where directors present their projects for consideration and prioritization. The committee has the authority to accept or reject projects and may request additional information or clarifications from the directors. After reviewing the projects thoroughly, the committee makes recommendations to the City Council for incorporation into the CIP and allocation of funds. Additionally, projects that are approved may require supplemental appropriations, and the committee helps assess the funding mechanisms for such projects. The committee meets on a quarterly basis to provide updates on the progress of ongoing projects and to make any necessary adjustments, such as moving projects to different years in the CIP. Schultz emphasized the importance of formalizing this process to ensure

comprehensive planning and coordination.

Regarding the annual capital budget, Chairman Schnetzer asked for specifics on how City Council provides feedback during the budget process. Schultz clarified that the budget is introduced in the fourth quarter, with quarterly reports leading up to that point. If Council members have project suggestions or feedback during the Finance Committee discussions, those projects can be incorporated into the CIP process. Projects that are added to the CIP for future years, such as 2025, will be included in the budget presentation and discussion. Ultimately, the annual capital budget and operating budget are presented together during budget time, usually between October and December, and City Council ratifies the budgets during that period.

Councilmember Bowers sought clarification on the role of the Advisory Committee and the quarterly status reports. She stated that, until now, her understanding was that the Advisory Committee informed the current status, while the quarterly status reports would be presented to the full City Council during committee meetings.

Director Schultz confirmed Councilmember Bowers' understanding and explained that the quarterly status reports would indeed be presented to council. However, the committee would also have a prior understanding of what the report would entail. He further clarified that the plan is for the Advisory Committee to present the status reports in the same manner that Director Bury presents the regular quarterly financial updates to City Council.

Councilmember Bowers then asked about the process if City Council provides feedback during the quarterly meetings that could potentially shape or shift the staff's presented projects. She inquired whether the report would be amended accordingly.

Director Schultz acknowledged it as a good question and admitted that the committee had not entirely thought through that specific aspect. However, he assured Councilmember Bowers that they do take Council's feedback into account. If there are emerging issues or new project suggestions during the quarterly meetings, they make sure to address and incorporate them into the process. Schultz gave an example of a past situation where a resident reported an urgent issue with a bridge, and it was promptly addressed outside the CIP process. He emphasized that regular communication with the City Council allows them to address projects appropriately and incorporate necessary changes into the CIP process.

Councilmember Bowers expressed her concern about ensuring continuity and project prioritization over time, especially for legacy projects that have been discussed in previous plans but have not yet been incorporated into the current CIP document. She emphasized the importance of having a healthy two-way dialogue and a process that ensures these projects continue to be identified and prioritized through staff changes and election cycles.

Director Schultz acknowledged that there may be instances where some

projects have not been included in the CIP document yet but clarified that they are actively working on addressing them. He cited examples such as the Rocky Fork sidewalk project, which was brought to their attention and promptly incorporated into the plan. He also mentioned the McKenna Creek drainage concerns and explained that some projects require further assessment and dialogue with residents before being added to the document.

Councilmember Bowers clarified that her intention was not to criticize but to ensure that a mechanism is in place to include those recommendations that have been discussed in previous plans. She wanted to understand how to ensure that these projects are not forgotten and are appropriately prioritized for inclusion in the CIP document. Schultz assured her that they are actively working on developing internal processes to manage and inventory projects and to avoid overlooking any important recommendations. He stressed that there is no large backlog of unaddressed projects and that they are committed to addressing these concerns promptly.

Mayor Jadwin asked if Bowers could provide an example of some of the legacy projects that she believed had been identified that were not in the CIP yet.

Councilmember Bowers responded that her issue is continuity, ensuring that Council has a document that will be clear about what projects are in what status, what projects are priorities, and then as staff and elected officials change, that everyone understands reevaluation of the CIP occurs and projects may not be pursued but at least there would be a document where it has been incorporated.

Mayor Jadwin asked Bowers what about the CIP led her to believe that this was not what that is that she had described.

Councilmember Bowers said she would like to understand more clearly what the process is for inclusion of those types of projects. She said she was still confused on the advisory committee's role versus the quarterly report to council. The question that she posed was what if there is feedback that comes from council how does that get incorporated into this document.

Mayor Jadwin said she thought that was the purpose of the quarterly reports. They not only give all of council an update on the status of projects and where they are and moving forward, but they are an opportunity to get feedback on what has come up, what now needs to be added, what is finished, what can come out, and then get feedback from all of Council in terms what it wants to see included. Jadwin said she thought Council needed to have a conversation as well on that point. With seven members on Council, if one person says they want to see X project, does it automatically go into the CIP or does that need a majority of council to say yes? She asked if it was seven different ideas coming forward as to what needs to be in the CIP. Jadwin reiterated that the point of the quarterly reports is to get feedback from Council, just as the administration has over the last six weeks of conversation around the draft of the CIP. She also mentioned that some concepts from the parks

master plan may require further development before becoming actual projects in the CIP.

Councilmember Bowers expressed her concerns about certain projects that have been part of City Hall conversations for years but have not been included in the CIP document. She sought clarification on the process for including such projects and ensuring continuity over time, especially when there are concepts that require assessments or studies before implementation.

Mayor Jadwin acknowledged the ongoing exchange of ideas and discussions that have taken place over the last six weeks.

Chairman Schnetzer suggested the possibility of using the quarterly reports as a roadmap for addressing intermediary projects or ideas that may require further study or evaluation before being fully incorporated into the CIP. He proposed the idea of creating a table in the quarterly reports to list such projects and indicate their current status, whether they are being studied, exploring grant funding, or not recommended by staff, thus providing feedback and transparency on their progress.

Director Schultz asked if Council wanted to formalize the level of communication to address Councilmember Bowers' concerns. He mentioned that they could provide detailed email responses when projects are raised by council members, explaining why certain projects are not included in the CIP. He also emphasized that as the CIP document matures, certain processes would improve. Schultz highlighted section 2.4 of the document, which deals with project expirations. He assured that if a project's funding is being removed, it would go through the committee and be reported to the council on a quarterly basis. He further explained that the CIP is not the only way they address capital expenditures, as projects are regularly brought before the council, even though they might not be synthesized into a single report. Schultz acknowledged that as the makeup of the council changes, the reporting process may evolve to better reflect the needs and desires of the current council members. He assured that the city's operations team is committed to providing all necessary information for well-informed decision-making by the council.

Mayor Jadwin addressed some misunderstandings in the community about the CIP. The CIP adoption does not authorize immediate public expenditure for all the listed projects. Instead, the CIP serves as a roadmap, prioritizing projects and proposing a sequence for addressing them. The actual authorization for expenditure comes through the capital budget process.

President Renner acknowledged the points made by Councilman Schnetzer and Councilwoman Bowers regarding the need for a mechanism to track concepts and ideas that are not yet part of the CIP. He liked the idea of an intermediary table where such projects could be documented for better continuity and discussion.

Director Schultz expressed support for the idea of an intermediary table but

clarified that it should not be part of the CIP document. He emphasized that the CIP is not intended to be a wish list but a formalized plan of identified projects. Mayor Jadwin agreed with the concept of an intermediary tracking list as a precursor for going into the CIP.

Director Schultz addressed the process of requesting equipment replacements and how it will be handled in the CIP. He mentioned that Mr. Wybensinger is implementing a process where equipment requests will be documented and reviewed for consolidation or replacement. The inventory sheet of equipment requests will go through various levels of review before being presented to the CIP advisory committee for funding consideration.

President Renner thanked Schultz and further emphasized that the discussion is focused on the tracking of nebulous concepts and ideas that arise during discussions with residents and directors. He clarified that the equipment assets and replacements are not part of this particular discussion and are typically addressed during budget time.

Chairman Schnetzer discussed concerns about tracking and revisiting projects that are discussed in the advisory committee but may not have enough details to be included in the CIP at that moment. He mentioned examples like fencing or screening between fields and infield raising to address drainage issues. He expressed the need to ensure that these projects are not forgotten and are revisited if they are still being explored or studied.

Director Schultz suggested that meeting minutes could be a potential solution to keep track of the discussions and progress of projects in the CIP advisory committee. By documenting the discussions and decisions made during these meetings, they can have a clear record of the projects being considered and their status.

Councilmember Angelou, in response to Director Schultz's idea, wondered whether the decisions would come to council at all.

Chairman Schnetzer said he disagreed with this idea. Minutes were more in prose format. Director Schultz responded he did not mean minutes like council minutes, but rather more of a summary, something comparable to what would be done for the CIC meetings.

President Renner cautioned against delving too deeply into designing a specific format for tracking projects at this moment. However, he acknowledged that Schultz seemed to grasp the conceptual idea of what they were seeking, which is to ensure that projects discussed in the advisory committee are not forgotten and can be revisited as needed. Chairman Schnetzer acknowledged the interest from Council members in having some form of tracking.

Councilmember Angelou expressed her belief that the Council should be part of the decision-making process, particularly when it comes to financial

matters since they handle budgeting. However, she emphasized the importance of trust in the city's staff and their ability to make informed decisions. She praised the city's staff as dedicated individuals who are working diligently to achieve the best outcomes for the community. Councilmember Angelou urged her colleagues to trust the expertise and judgment of the staff, acknowledging that mistakes can happen, but they should have confidence in the people working for the city. She suggested that the Council should be more involved in the process of selecting projects and be part of the decision-making process.

Councilmember Padova suggested the possibility of having an easy-to-read chart that provides an overview of the CIP projects by priority. She referred to the chart on page 15 of the printout, which outlines the projects by phase and section, and proposed a similar chart that focuses specifically on the imperative projects. Councilmember Padova expressed her interest in having a visual representation of the imperative projects and their progress for better tracking and understanding.

In response to Councilmember Angelou's comments on trust and the staff's capabilities, President Renner reiterated the Council's trust in the staff and their confidence in City Hall's ability to perform their duties effectively. He emphasized that their discussions were about ensuring continuity and keeping track of projects from concept to implementation, rather than any lack of trust in the staff.

Councilmember Padova suggested that providing clear definitions of terms such as "project" and "concept" would be helpful for better understanding and communication. She noted that sometimes these terms are used casually, leading to confusion about their meanings. By having defined terms, all members would be on the same page and have a common understanding of the terminology used in discussions and reports, which could improve clarity and communication within the council.

Mayor Jadwin expressed her thanks for Council's feedback. She believed she understood what Council was seeking and that her administration would work on what that looks like. She believed that both the roles of the council president and the finance chair on the CIP advisory committee would be an important part of providing that feedback to Councilmember Bowers' point around how to guarantee when things are discussed that they end up somewhere tracked. She thinks this will be part of the conversation of the CIP advisory committee. Jadwin appreciated Councilmember Angelou's comments about trust. She emphasized that the CIP process is a collective effort involving all stakeholders, including council members, the CIP advisory committee, and the community. The mayor highlighted the dynamic nature of the document and reiterated the commitment to work together and continue the conversation to ensure that all concerns and input are considered, and the CIP evolves in a way that best serves the city's needs.

Councilmember McGregor pointed out an issue related to the timeline mentioned in Schultz's slides. Issue 12 was passed in May of 2019, but the

slides mentioned November. Councilmember McGregor recalled that the collection actually started in July.

Chairman Schnetzer proposed switching the discussion to the process of the upcoming meetings. He mentioned that the CIP is currently scheduled to go before Council for the first reading on August 7th, followed by another finance committee meeting on August 14th. He opened the floor for Council members to share their thoughts on how the meeting on August 14th should be conducted.

Councilmember Bowers suggested that the meeting on August 14th could be an opportunity to address any issues that arise during the public hearing or through resident feedback in the interim period.

Recommendation: Introduction/First Reading Regular Agenda on 8/7/2023 (with Public Hearing); Further Discussion in Committee of the Whole Scheduled for 8/14/2023; Second Reading/Adoption on Regular Agenda on 8/21/2023 (with Public Hearing).

C. ADJOURNMENT:

With no further business before the Finance Committee, the Chair adjourned the meeting at 8:49 p.m.

Jeremy A. VanMeter
Clerk of Council

*APPROVED by the Finance Committee, this
day of 2023.*

Michael Schnetzer