



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, November 24, 2025

7:00 PM

City Hall, Council Chambers

A. CALL TO ORDER:

Gahanna City Council met for Committee of the Whole on Monday, November 24, 2025, in Council Chambers. Vice President of Council Trenton I. Weaver, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. The agenda was published on November 21, 2025. Councilmember Schnetzer was absent. All other members were present for the meeting. There were no additions or corrections to the agenda.

B. ITEMS FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:

[ORD-0053-2025](#)

AN ORDINANCE DETERMINING THE NECESSITY OF AND AUTHORIZING THE ISSUANCE AND SALE OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IMPROVEMENT AND REFUNDING REVENUE BONDS, SERIES 2025 (THE COLUMBUS ACADEMY PROJECT) OF THE CITY OF GAHANNA, OHIO, IN AN AGGREGATE PRINCIPAL AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$15,000,000; AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION AND DELIVERY OF A LOAN AGREEMENT, AN ASSIGNMENT OF LOAN AGREEMENT, A BOND PURCHASE AGREEMENT, A TAX EXEMPTION CERTIFICATE AND AGREEMENT AND OTHER DOCUMENTS IN CONNECTION WITH THE ISSUANCE OF THE BONDS; AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

Jeff Gottke, Director of Economic Development, reported that he brought two items that he described as mostly procedural and not very substantive because they replicated actions the city took in previous years. He introduced the first item as a request for a third partnership with Columbus Academy for conduit revenue bonds. He explained that similar requests occurred in 2015 and 2019, and that the city again received a request that evening. Director Gottke stated that the city had access to tax-exempt revenue bonds for economic development purposes or nonprofit use and that the Ohio Revised Code required municipalities to issue them. He explained that the city served

as the issuer, after which a financial institution purchased and handled the bonds. Columbus Academy, as the borrower, then paid them back. He emphasized that the capitalized statement in the documentation identified the important point, the request involved no commitment of city resources, debt capacity, or guarantees. He clarified that the city only approved the issuance of the bonds before the financial institution purchased them for use by Columbus Academy. He noted that Columbus Academy intended primarily to refinance the existing 2019 bonds and to fund some capital projects. Director Gottke described the request as mostly procedural and required by the Ohio Revised Code, with the city functioning solely as a conduit. He introduced representatives present for questions: Weston Outlaw, Chief Financial Officer (CFO) of Columbus Academy, and Mark Kamer and his colleague from Dinsmore, the bond counsel for the project. Gottke added two procedural notes. He stated that the request included an emergency clause in order to meet the January 1, 2026, closing date for the bond. He explained that the statute required a public hearing, which created the need for emergency passage. He noted that the public hearing could occur at the December 15, 2025, Regular Council Meeting, allowing Second Reading and passage with the emergency clause so the legislation could take effect immediately and allow the project to meet the January 1, 2026, deadline. He acknowledged that this timing differed from the city's usual process. He concluded his remarks and invited questions for himself, Mr. Kamer, or Mr. Outlaw.

Vice President Weaver thanked Director Gottke and the guests and asked Councilmembers if they had any discussion.

President Bowers asked a procedural question. She wondered whether any issue would arise if the city held the required Public Hearing on December 1, 2025, instead of December 15, 2025. Mark Kamer introduced himself and answered her question. He explained that the city had to post notice of the meeting seven days before December 1. While they could have posted the notice earlier, they chose not to presume Council approval before this meeting. He added that *The Dispatch* required two days of lead time for the notice. He stated that they planned to submit the notice on Wednesday of that week for the December 15, 2025, date but could not meet the deadline for a December 1, 2025, hearing.

Vice President Weaver asked Director Gottke to confirm that the request involved no risk to the city. Director Gottke confirmed that the request created no risk, remained off the city's books, required no guarantees, used no city financial resources, and did not count against the city's debt capacity. Vice President Weaver stated that he wanted to make that point very clear. He recommended placing the item on the Regular Agenda. He noted that Council would take a First Reading on December 1, 2025, and second reading on

December 15, 2025.

Councilmember McGregor asked whether Columbus Academy had any exciting plans associated with the project. Weston Outlaw, CFO of Columbus Academy, responded that Columbus Academy was renovating an existing facilities building on campus and converting it into an academic building with maker spaces and the IT (Information and Technology) department. He stated that the request before Council, in addition to refinancing the current bond, would allow the school to create a new facilities building because of the renovation. Councilmember McGregor thanked him and commented that while the project might not seem very exciting, it would be exciting for IT staff.

Recommendation: Introduction/First Reading on Regular Agenda on 12/1/2025; Public Hearing and Second Reading/Adoption as an Emergency on Regular Agenda on 12/15/2025.

[ORD-0054-2025](#)

AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT WITH THE COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT CORPORATION OF GAHANNA FOR A TERM BEGINNING JANUARY 1, 2026, THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2026, TO PROMOTE AND ENCOURAGE ECONOMIC ACTIVITY FOR THE CITY; AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY

Director Gottke introduced the second item, which he described as another non-substantive, procedural matter, the renewal of the City of Gahanna and Community Improvement Corporation (CIC) contract for services. He stated that the renewal reflected the existing agreement exactly as it currently stood, with dates as the only change. He noted that Councilmember Renner mentioned at the previous Council meeting that the CIC would undergo a strategic plan pursuant to a recommendation in the *Our Gahanna Strategic Plan*. He stated that the CIC expected to complete that plan midyear and that no changes to the existing agreement were necessary while that process remained underway. Director Gottke explained that the CIC would remain focused on matters related to the Connect and Benson Capital development in Creekside during the first half of 2026, which created no need to modify the contract at this time. He also noted that the amount the city contributed to the CIC did not appear in the contract because the budget set that amount. He stated that the amount had not changed from last year and that the CIC completed its own budgeting at its October 2025 meeting and made the same request to the city as the previous year. He added that the contract included a January 1, 2026, start date and that he requested whatever procedural mechanism Council considered appropriate to ensure continuity of services, whether by emergency, waiver, or a combination of the two.

President Bowers asked whether the funding requested matched the \$300,000 allocated last year. Director Gottke deferred to Mayor Jadwin. Mayor Jadwin stated that the budget again requested \$300,000 and confirmed that

the contract itself did not specify a dollar amount.

President Bowers noted that she preferred a waiver rather than an emergency. Vice President Weaver stated that he preferred the opposite. City Attorney Tamarasani stated that, because the appropriation was separate from the contract, a resolution would be appropriate and would resolve the procedural issue. President Bowers asked whether that approach fit within the City Attorney's flowchart analysis. Attorney Tamarasani confirmed that it did. Mayor Jadwin stated that she would follow that guidance. President Bowers agreed that a resolution authorizing the contract solved the problem.

Director Gottke asked whether the item would then return as a resolution instead of an ordinance on the December 1, 2025, agenda. Vice President Weaver asked if Councilmembers were comfortable with that plan. Clerk VanMeter asked for clarification, stating that he wanted to confirm that the request was to convert the item to a resolution, eliminating the need for any waiver or emergency. Vice President Weaver confirmed that this reflected City Attorney Tamarasani's guidance. He stated that the item would return as a resolution on December 1, 2025, without objection.

Vice President Weaver then raised a question about Section 3.1 of the contract. He noted that the section stated that the city agreed to pay the CIC eligible expenses related to implementing a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) strategy and that the CIC should receive administrative expenses for those efforts according to the Revised Code. He stated that he had not noticed that provision before.

Mayor Jadwin stated that she had noticed the same thing and described the contract as a historical document that was not updated. She stated that staff could look into the issue, and she noted that Director Bury also reacted to that section.

Vice President Weaver stated that he disliked leaving unnecessary or irrelevant provisions in contracts and that the section stood out to him. Mayor Jadwin asked whether he would like to see a revision. Vice President Weaver stated that he believed a revision would be best. Mayor Jadwin agreed and stated that staff could make the change. She stated that the revised version would return the next week. She then clarified that, because Council planned to use a resolution instead of an ordinance, staff could simply make the change without additional complications.

Vice President Weaver stated that Clerk VanMeter would appreciate receiving the revised documents by Wednesday. Mayor Jadwin agreed. Vice President Weaver requested that the item be placed on the Regular Meeting agenda for December 1, 2025.

Recommendation: Conversion to Resolution; Introduction/Adoption on Regular Agenda on 12/1/2025.

C. ITEMS FROM COUNCIL OFFICE:

[2025-0242](#)

Support of Jessica Hilts' Candidacy as Region V Director IIMC

President Bowers stated that about a month ago, Management Analyst Jessica Hilts requested the opportunity to seek Council's support for her candidacy as the Region 5 Director for the International Institute of Municipal Clerks (IIMC). President Bowers reminded Council that the IIMC certified clerks who achieved their professional standards and that Ms. Hilts earned her Master Municipal Clerk designation through the organization. She stated that Ms. Hilts explained, through the attachments provided, that the selection process was competitive and that the Region 5 position rotated every five years. She noted that Ohio would come up in the rotation for a term that would begin in 2027. She stated that Ms. Hilts requested Council's support for her candidacy. President Bowers explained that Council had before them a letter from Ms. Hilts, an email she sent a month earlier with additional details, and a draft support letter that President Bowers wished to issue on Ms. Hilts's behalf if there were no objections.

Vice President Weaver asked if any colleagues wished to discuss the item.

Councilmember Renner stated that it sounded like a good idea and thanked President Bowers.

Vice President Weaver thanked President Bowers for taking the lead and also thanked Ms. Hilts and the Council Office staff for their daily efforts. He stated that it was nice to see Gahanna possibly represented across the country on an international stage and noted that similar recognition occurred on the administrative side as well.

[2025-0240](#)

Ohio Division of Liquor Control - Notice to Legislative Authority Regarding Objections - Annual Renewal for All Class C and D Permits Expiring February 1, 2026

Clerk VanMeter stated that Council had before it a Division of Liquor Control notice regarding the annual renewal process for Class C and D permits, which would expire on February 1, 2026. He reported that he checked with Chief Spence and that there were no current objections to the permits scheduled for renewal.

Vice President Weaver asked if any colleagues had discussion. He noted that no discussion appeared and stated that there would be no objection to the renewals.

D. ADJOURNMENT:

*With no further business before the Committee of the Whole, the Chair
adjourned the meeting at 7:16 p.m.*

Jeremy A. VanMeter
Clerk of Council

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

Trenton I. Weaver