



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, March 10, 2025

7:00 PM

City Hall, Council Chambers

A. CALL TO ORDER:

Gahanna City Council met for Committee of the Whole on Monday, March 10, 2025, in Council Chambers. President of Council Merisa K. Bowers, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. The agenda was published on March 7, 2025. Councilmember Michael Schnetzer was absent from the meeting. Vice President of Council Trenton I. Weaver arrived at 7:17 p.m. All other members were present for the meeting.

B. ADDITIONS/CORRECTIONS:

President Bowers noted one item to add to the evening's agenda. She referenced an email circulated by the Ohio Municipal League regarding Senate Bill 104. Bowers explained that Senate Bill 104 was recently reintroduced to regulate short-term rentals and restrict municipalities from regulating them. She recommended adding the discussion of Senate Bill 104 to the bottom of *Section B, Discussions*.

C. DISCUSSIONS:

1. Department of Administrative Services Update

[2025-0057](#)

Department of Administrative Services Update to Council 3.10.2025

Miranda Vollmer, Senior Director of Administrative Services, provided an update from the Department of Administrative Services as part of a series of departmental updates scheduled for the year. Vollmer explained that Senior Deputy Director Wybensing and she would present information about the Department of Administrative Services and its ongoing work, while other departments would provide updates at future meetings. Vollmer began by highlighting a slide showing a group photo from the 2024 Citizens Academy, an Open Gov award the department won, and images from safety training and the in-house Commercial Drivers License (CDL) program established by the Department of Administrative Services. She gave an overview of the

department, explaining that it functions as an internal-facing department reporting to her, as the Senior Director of Administrative Services. The Department of Finance, Information Technology, Human Resources, and the Mayor's Court fall under this section. Senior Deputy Director Wybensing directly oversees the risk and safety administrator, an administrative coordinator, and two management analysts who perform various functions for the city.

Vollmer noted that Administrative Services, in coordination with the Mayor's Office, handles community engagement for the city. She referenced the ongoing Strategic and Economic Development Plan, stating that the next public engagement round, known as the "Our Gahanna" Vision Festival, was scheduled for the first week of May. Information about this event will be shared on social media, the city's website, and at the State of the City address. Vollmer also mentioned that the next Council update on the strategic plan was scheduled for April 21, 2025, when staff would present the proposed vision and values and discuss the strategic plan framework.

Vollmer then provided an update on the Citizens Academy program. She reported that 18 people completed the 2024 program, and the 2025 program would begin on March 20, 2025. Based on feedback from last year, the program has expanded to include additional sessions and greater involvement from other branches of government. Week two of the program will feature a deeper discussion on fund accounting, the budget process, and the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) process. Director Bury also developed a public engagement exercise where participants will role-play as councilmembers, managing a limited budget to complete various projects. Vollmer stated that the Citizens Academy will conclude in mid-May and that Councilmembers would receive an invitation to the graduation ceremony.

Risk & Safety

Senior Deputy Director Corey Wybensing provided an update on the city's risk and management process, which falls under the Department of Administrative Services (DAS). He reported that the city moved the annual insurance renewal process from the Department of Public Service to DAS to improve oversight and ensure the city maintained appropriate insurance coverage. Wybensing stated that Director Vollmer, Melissa Jackson, and he held seats on the CORMA Board, giving them greater awareness of the current insurance environment. DAS worked with the CORMA Association and an insurance broker to stay current on appraisals and ensure accurate reporting. Jackson also led efforts to roll out new appraisal software, providing real-time data and analysis to help estimate future insurance costs more accurately compared to other entities in the pool. Wybensing explained that DAS managed claims related to city property damage, such as traffic cabinet or guardrail damage. DAS coordinated with insurance companies to recover costs. He reported that the department recently conducted a security and vulnerability assessment of city facilities with Director Tim Becker to identify and address areas needing improvement. Wybensing stressed that minimizing the city's risk and liability remained a priority. DAS also worked on a crisis communication plan, prompted by

issues that arose in December of 2024. The updated plan aimed to improve the city's ability to communicate accurately and appropriately during crises, minimizing liability. Wybensinger highlighted the department's focus on safety enhancements. Over the past year, DAS added seven new employee safety training programs. For 2025, the department planned to add 40 more training sessions and track employee compliance with training requirements. Wybensinger noted that DAS updated all Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) in the park system and city vehicles, ensuring consistent technology and proper placement. The department required safety training on all newly acquired specialty equipment. For example, when the city purchased a wood chipper, DAS mandated that expert trainers provide on-site instruction to staff. Wybensinger reported that the city's in-house CDL program, initiated as a cost-saving measure, had proven successful. Outsourcing the program would have cost between \$7,500 and \$8,000 per participant. Last year, five employees completed the program, and another five to six employees were expected to begin this year. The program increased control over training quality and better prepared participants for the CDL exam. One graduate had already won the Mayor's Rodeo, demonstrating the program's effectiveness. Wybensinger credited Melissa Jackson with revitalizing the city's Safety Committee. The committee, which included employees from various departments, met quarterly to review statewide and local insurance trends, discuss safety concerns, and recommend training. DAS also expanded cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), first aid, and AED training beyond seasonal staff to all city employees.

Technology

Wybensinger outlined DAS's work on technology projects, including the OpenGov platform, which streamlined building, zoning, and permitting processes and improved property claims management. The department also implemented TrueComp, a labor cost software that facilitated real-time cost analysis during labor negotiations with the Fraternal Order of Police (FOP) and Fraternal Order of Police, Ohio Labor Council (FOP-OLC), improving efficiency and reducing delays. DAS supported the rollout of TeleStaff, a time and attendance system for police and communications technicians, allowing electronic tracking of time off and shift changes. The Workforce Ready system handled time and attendance for unclassified employees, using geofencing to ensure accurate clock-ins for seasonal staff. Wybensinger described Centurisk, the city's new appraisal software, as a tool for managing real-time appraisals. DAS also supported the Munis system for human resources and finance, migrating data to a secure cloud environment to centralize and protect sensitive information. Wybensinger reported that DAS had nearly completed a paperless onboarding system, which would improve efficiency by allowing seasonal employees to submit paperwork electronically rather than visiting City Hall. NeoGov Learn, the city's new learning management system, would allow for personalized training plans, better tracking, and consistent training through recorded video and voiceover presentations.

Professional Development:

Senior Deputy Director Wybensinger reported on professional development activities. Wybensinger stated that the city prioritized professional development as part of its employee retention strategy, ensuring that employees felt supported in their professional growth. The Department of Administrative Services assumed responsibility for tracking and overseeing professional development to ensure accuracy and consistency. The department revised travel and training policies, established clear regulations, and provided training to all staff on proper form completion to minimize errors and delays. Wybensinger noted that government travel often involved complex regulations, and DAS aimed to simplify the process while maintaining oversight. He anticipated that the expansion of the NeoGov Learn platform would create additional professional development opportunities within the city. He explained that offering in-house training programs would reduce costs and increase the reliability of training.

Grant Management

Wybensinger provided an update on grant management. He explained that the city adopted a more centralized approach to improve oversight and accuracy in reporting. He referenced his end-of-year 2024 report, where he provided an overview of the city's grants program. Wybensinger clarified that "grants" referred broadly to various funding sources, including zero-interest loans, technical assistance grants, and tax credits. The city onboarded a new management analyst in August 2024, who recently completed the probationary period. Wybensinger expressed confidence that this addition would help the city gain traction in securing funding. The city currently managed around 20 active projects involving grants, loans, and tax credits. He highlighted the city's work with the Engineering Department to close out the Ohio Public Works Commission (OPWC) grant and loan for the Taylor and Claycraft roundabout project. Wybensinger reported that the city pursued five grants last year but did not receive them. Four of the unsuccessful applications were for water and wastewater infrastructure projects, which were highly competitive. The city also supported the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission's (MORPC) Charging and Fueling Infrastructure (CFI) program, which ultimately did not receive funding. Despite the setbacks, the city finalized six grants last year and planned to pursue new opportunities. He acknowledged uncertainty surrounding some federal funding sources, including Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) tax credits. Since these tax credits were not included as project revenue in the budget, they would reduce overall project costs rather than generate direct income. Wybensinger mentioned that the city was closely monitoring the potential impact on projects, particularly infrastructure and electrification upgrades at the 825 Tech Center. Wybensinger highlighted several active grant projects. The city received a Boat Safety Education Grant, supported by the Parks and Recreation Department and staff member Chelsea Heppert. The grant would allow the city to update educational materials and offset costs for canoe and kayak operations on Big Walnut Creek. The city also secured a technical assistance grant for Geographic Information System (GIS) updates, with Project Manager Catherine Eichel playing a key role in the application process. Finally, Wybensinger reported that the city applied for a body-worn camera grant. After receiving approximately \$100,000 from the

same program last year, the city applied for a \$111,000 reimbursement this year and awaited the final award decision.

Inter-departmental Support

Senior Director Vollmer presented a slide summarizing various interdepartmental support projects managed by the Department of Administrative Services (DAS). She explained that internal support functions played a critical role in enabling the city's outward-facing operations. Vollmer noted that she would not go through each project in detail due to time constraints but highlighted a few key items. She mentioned that Senior Deputy Director Wybensinger and his team had actively worked on the Sustainable 2050 initiative and electric vehicle (EV) programs. Vollmer also reported that she was overseeing health benefits improvement with the Human Resources team to ensure that city employees had the best possible benefits. She added that DAS managed collective bargaining agreements and prioritized employee engagement and well-being. Vollmer invited questions from the Council.

Questions from Council

Councilmember Renner thanked Wybensinger and Vollmer for the thorough review of departmental responsibilities and asked about the management of certificates of liability insurance (COIs). He inquired whether DAS managed COIs for general contracting services and whether COIs were included as part of the procurement process. Senior Deputy Director Wybensinger confirmed that COIs naming the city as an additional insured were included in the procurement packets. However, he clarified that the responsibility for managing COIs rested at the department level, as most projects were bid out by individual departments. DAS ensured compliance with standard procedures and acted as a liaison with the city's insurance company if any variations from standard requirements occurred. Renner asked whether the departments followed a checklist for COI limits as part of the bid process. Wybensinger confirmed that they did and explained that if a project required deviations from the city's standard rules, DAS would work with the insurance company to ensure proper coverage based on the project's specific variables.

Vice President Weaver asked about the city's grant tracking process. He wanted to know if the city had a system for tracking recurring grants, including application timelines, eligibility, and award status. Wybensinger acknowledged that the city was working to improve grant tracking but admitted that the process remained a work in progress. He explained that recurring funding often lacked formal commitment until officially awarded, making it difficult to rely on previous awards. The city monitored potential funding opportunities through the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC) Grant Finder system, which generated daily notifications about available funding. Wybensinger noted that increased competition for federal funding had made the grant environment more challenging. He provided an example involving the Violence Reduction Act and the city's Flock camera system. The grant opportunity was advertised three months earlier but was

only recently opened for applications with a two-week submission window. He stressed the importance of maintaining readiness to respond quickly to such opportunities without overcommitting resources. Weaver expressed appreciation for the city's proactive approach to pursuing external funding and acknowledged the difficulty of relying on uncertain grant funding. He thanked Wybensing and the administration for continuing to seek outside funding to support city projects.

Councilmember Padova asked why the crisis communication plan fell under the Department of Administrative Services rather than the Communications Department. Senior Deputy Director Wybensing explained that DAS was leading the development of the crisis communication plan to ensure that it became an efficient and actionable document rather than one that would be ignored. He stated that the plan involved multiple departments, including Marketing and Communications. DAS worked with Risk Management LLC, the city's vendor, to coordinate and develop the plan. Once finalized, DAS would hand off the plan to the Communications Department for ongoing management and implementation. Mayor Jadwin added that the plan covered both internal and external communications. She explained that in the event of a crisis, such as a tornado, communication would need to flow between city departments, fire and EMS partners, and the public. The plan established a high-level framework for managing those communications, which the Communications and Marketing team would then translate into specific actions and messaging. Padova thanked Wybensing and noted that the connection to risk management clarified the department's involvement.

Councilmember Jones asked whether the crisis communication plan also applied to incident response. Wybensing clarified that the plan focused on managing crises rather than routine incidents. He stated that the goal was to prevent incidents from escalating into crises. He noted that communication often broke down during emergencies, leading to misinformation and confusion. The crisis communication plan aimed to establish a clear strategy for handling high-pressure situations and maintaining consistent messaging.

President Bowers asked whether DAS had seen any reductions in injuries, workers' compensation claims, or other quantifiable improvements as a result of increased risk management activities. Senior Director Vollmer responded that the city did not have a high volume of workers' compensation claims, so identifying a direct correlation between safety initiatives and claims reduction would be difficult. However, she noted that new safety training programs introduced under DAS addressed gaps in previous training efforts. Bowers suggested that tracking quantifiable reductions in loss would help put the department's expanded work into context. Senior Deputy Director Wybensing stated that the city's approach was primarily proactive, focusing on minimizing liability and financial exposure. He noted that the cost of providing training was minimal compared to the potential financial impact of an incident. Bowers asked whether the city had seen any reduction in insurance premiums as a result of these efforts. Wybensing explained that the city participated in an insurance pool, which helped stabilize costs. He reported that the pool supported training initiatives such as distracted driver

training and chainsaw safety training at no cost to the city. Gahanna also hosted chainsaw training for other entities within the pool. Wybensing noted that while these efforts might not reduce overall costs, they helped control cost increases by reducing overall risk. Bowers asked whether the insurance pool had identified other areas of increased risk for municipalities. Wybensing responded that the city maintained ongoing conversations with the pool about potential risks. He noted that the city planned to offer approximately 40 additional training sessions in the coming year, including confined space training, heat exposure protocols, noise safety, chemical handling, and respirator use. He emphasized that some of the training opportunities would not apply to all entities but were tailored to Gahanna's specific operational needs. Bowers thanked Vollmer and Wybensing for the update and the detailed discussion. She then turned the meeting over to Chair Weaver to continue with the agenda.

2. Gahanna Civic Center - 825 Tech Center Drive Update

[2025-0058](#)

Gahanna Civic Center (825 Tech Center Drive) Construction Update
3.10.2025

Kevin Schultz, Senior Director of Operations, provided an update on the 825 Tech Center Drive project. He stated that he would continue to present updates at the first Committee of the Whole meeting each month, until the ribbon-cutting ceremony for the project. Schultz explained that future presentations would include more detailed information as the project progressed. Schultz began by reviewing construction activities that took place in February. He noted that the curtain wall installation on the western facade was completed and that work continued on the second and third floors of the east-west wing. Masonry work on the sally port was underway, and the multipurpose room was fully enclosed and dried in. Roofing over the expansion area of the police department was largely completed. Schultz reported that slab pours had taken place, including in the area that Council President Bowers and Councilmember McGregor recently toured. Framing work started on the first floor, and the holding facility had begun to take shape. He announced that the Request for Proposals (RFP) for furniture procurement and moving logistics was published that day. He anticipated that the furniture package would come before the Council for approval in May or June.

Schultz noted that he had not yet updated the completion timeline because the project manager's monthly report was slightly out of sync with his presentation schedule. However, he confirmed that no weather delays occurred through February 28, 2025. Schultz shared interior photos of the project site, highlighting red dots on the slides that corresponded to the location where each photo was taken. He explained that the multipurpose room at the senior center had not yet received brick or facade but was fully enclosed. He also showed images of the detention area, noting that slab pours were completed on the police department side. Schultz mentioned that material samples, including stone, glass, and brick, were available at the construction site for review. He stated that these samples allowed the team to evaluate how the materials would appear and function on the building.

Regarding the project budget, Schultz reported no changes to the invoiced amounts as of February 28, 2025, but anticipated that the March pay application would reflect some adjustments. He noted an increase in contingency and allowances, which stood at approximately 18% or \$867,000. Schultz explained that the increase was largely due to the addition of rough-ins for electric vehicle (EV) chargers. The rough-ins covered the entire parking island and an additional area at the back of the property. While the city did not plan to electrify the chargers immediately, installing the conduit during construction would avoid the need for future excavation and electrical work. Schultz concluded by stating that the next portion of his presentation would cover updates on the senior center.

Senior Center Construction

Senior Director Schultz provided updates on the Senior Center construction progress. Schultz emphasized the importance of the project objectives, highlighting five key goals for the Senior Center. He explained that the new Senior Center, located in the northern portion of the site, aimed to improve the way senior and community programming was conducted. He reviewed the Senior Center's space program, noting that the new facility included several features that the current Senior Center lacked. While the existing facility had a kitchen, the new Senior Center would include a demonstration kitchen for cooking classes and a separate working kitchen for catering. The current facility had a large great room for programming, but the new Senior Center would add a pre-function area and a lounge, allowing seniors to engage in smaller, more casual gatherings. Schultz highlighted the overall floor plan. He pointed out that the senior lounge, measuring approximately 1,640 square feet, included a smaller adjacent lounge and a library desk. The pre-function area, which could serve as a flexible event space, was located near the entrance. Two large program rooms could be set up in various styles, such as banquet or classroom configurations, and could be divided into smaller spaces. The demonstration kitchen featured a separate catering area to support events. Schultz noted that the art room and kiln room were sized based on senior input, with space to accommodate two kilns instead of one. He also pointed out multiple storage areas, allowing the facility to clear out furniture for exercise classes or other activities. Centrally located restrooms were accessible from both the pre-function area and the senior lounge.

Schultz explained that the staff space would include a reception desk and a supervisor's office, similar to the current facility's setup. He reported that the new Senior Center would increase overall program space by 119% compared to the current facility. While the physical size of the Senior Center would grow by 40%, the improved layout and design would allow the center to host up to six simultaneous events, compared to a maximum of two events at the current location. Schultz referenced a recent senior event, "Sauce and Song," which occupied the entire existing facility. He noted that the new design would allow multiple events to occur simultaneously without crowding or interference. Schultz presented construction photos alongside architectural renderings to illustrate progress. He explained that the red dots

on the slides indicated the location where each photo was taken. He showed the multipurpose room, the art room, the pre-function area, and the demonstration kitchen. He pointed out the temporary barrier used for heating and described how the room will appear once construction is completed.

Questions from Council

Councilmember McGregor asked whether the number of restrooms planned for the Senior Center would be sufficient for the expected number of attendees, noting that the women's restroom seemed inadequate. Senior Director Schultz responded that the fixture count met code requirements. McGregor suggested that the city consider exceeding code requirements, as the number of restrooms still seemed low for the size of the facility.

President Bowers asked if there were additional single-occupancy restrooms beyond the main restroom bank. Schultz confirmed that the design included a single-occupancy restroom, a women's restroom on the left side, and a men's restroom on the right side.

Mayor Jadwin noted that Jefferson Golf and Country Club, which accommodates more people than the Senior Center, had fewer restrooms in the women's room than the planned Senior Center. McGregor asked if Jefferson had more than four fixtures. Jadwin replied that she believed Jefferson's restroom had three fixtures but was not certain.

Councilmember Padova asked for clarification about the construction photo showing the brick wall, confirming that the brick wall was part of the original building and that the new construction extended beyond that point. Schultz confirmed that the brick wall was part of the original building and that the new construction extended beyond it. Padova then asked about marked parking spots near the Senior Center, specifically whether those spots were designated for Senior Center use only. Schultz explained that those spots were marked for limited mobility but were not enforceable, similar to veteran or expecting mother parking spots at grocery stores. He added that the facility would have a members-only rear entrance accessible through a secure badge system for Senior Center members. Seniors could park near the back entrance and access the facility directly, while general visitors will need to enter through the front entrance. Schultz noted that additional limited mobility and handicap spots would be available closer to the building but were not shown on the site plan. Padova asked if the gated staff parking area would accommodate all city staff vehicles. Schultz confirmed that staff could park in the gated lot or in the front lot. Padova inquired whether the city discussed marking the rear lot specifically for Senior Center parking. Schultz stated that the city had not discussed that option. He explained that without a badge to access the back door, the general public would be unlikely to park there since they would need to walk around the entire building to enter. He also mentioned that a monument sign would direct staff, members, and delivery vehicles to the correct entrances. Padova agreed that general visitors would likely park in the front lot and stated that Senior Center members would know to use the back entrance. Schultz confirmed that staff who used the back entrance would park farther away from the limited

mobility spots to keep those spaces available for seniors.

Councilmember Padova asked whether the city evaluated the need for a covered entrance at the Senior Center, noting that this issue was raised by seniors. Schultz reported that the city had previously evaluated the need for a covered entrance but decided against it due to budget and design constraints. However, following feedback from the senior community and a recent request from Mayor Jadwin, the city asked the project's architect to reevaluate the possibility of adding a covered entrance. Schultz stated that any covered structure would need to avoid obstructing emergency vehicle access. He explained that a proposed design would extend the canopy to the curb line, covering the entrance door but not extending far enough to protect the driver's side of a vehicle. Padova asked if seniors or senior living facilities had been consulted about the need for a covered entrance. Schultz confirmed that he presented to senior groups and the Gahanna Active Seniors Advisory Committee multiple times. He noted that the issue was raised frequently and that the city was working with the architect to explore feasible solutions. Padova expressed her hope that the city could accommodate the seniors' request for a covered entrance. She thanked Schultz for the detailed presentation and stated that the Senior Center would be a valuable community asset. Schultz agreed, noting that the new Senior Center would provide a significant improvement in both size and quality compared to the current facility. He emphasized that the design would support multiple simultaneous events and offer a comfortable, high-quality environment for seniors and the broader community. Schultz highlighted that the facility could also host events such as graduation parties, weddings, and banquets, and could accommodate city meetings and other public gatherings.

Councilmember Jones inquired about staffing considerations for the new Senior Center. She recalled previous discussions regarding the need for increased maintenance and cleaning staff and asked if additional staffing would also be necessary given the expanded use of the facility for events such as banquets. Senior Director Schultz acknowledged that the operational model for the new Senior Center would change from the current setup. He explained that currently, renters who use the Senior Center or clubhouse receive a badge, enter the facility independently, and set up their own event spaces. In the new facility, staff would be on-site during rentals, and room setup would be handled by city staff as part of the rental agreement. Schultz added that the Recreation Department was currently evaluating changes to the senior programming model, including the potential for evening programs. He also noted that staffing plans for the entire facility, including custodial services, were still under review. Schultz mentioned that Administrative Services was assessing whether new staff roles should focus solely on janitorial duties or also include responsibilities for room setup and event turnover. He explained that this assessment would guide future staffing recommendations.

Vice President Weaver expressed support for a covered entrance at the Senior Center, aligning with earlier comments from Councilmember Padova. Weaver requested information about potential alternative solutions for the

covered entrance and asked for clarification on the process for funding such a project. He inquired whether funding would come from contingency funds or require a supplemental budget request. Schultz explained that the design and cost of the covered entrance was not fully determined. He stated that the project would likely cost six figures, though the exact amount remained uncertain. Schultz noted that the design would need to complement the overall aesthetic of the building, which would increase costs. He mentioned that elements such as steel footers, lighting, and safety bollards would contribute to the project's expense. Weaver requested that Council be given an opportunity to review potential design options and costs before a final decision was made. Schultz confirmed that he would provide updates as more information became available.

3. Senate Bill 104 - Regarding Local Regulation, Taxing of Short-Term Rental Properties

President Bowers reported that the Ohio Municipal League issued a call to action late the previous week, requesting testimony in opposition to Senate Bill 104. The bill, proposed by a state senator who does not represent the district covering Gahanna, aimed to preempt local regulation of short-term rental properties. Bowers explained that the bill would limit the ability of local governments to develop tailored solutions for housing issues. She stated that Vice President Weaver and she discussed testifying against the bill at the Local Government Committee hearing, scheduled for Wednesday, March 12, 2025, at approximately 2:30 p.m. She also noted that Mayor Jadwin planned to testify in opposition to the bill in collaboration with the Central Ohio Mayors and Managers Association (COMMA). Bowers stated that the testimony would focus on the importance of allowing local governments to create community-specific regulations. She expressed concern about the bill's disparate treatment of short-term rentals compared to the city's existing rental registration framework. She also voiced concerns about the potential impact on housing availability for middle-income and working families, noting that commoditizing housing could reduce the supply of available housing stock. Bowers invited feedback from Councilmembers and encouraged them to email her, Weaver, or Mayor Jadwin with any additional points they wanted included in the testimony.

Vice President Weaver thanked President Bowers and Mayor Jadwin for their advocacy on the issue. He expressed concern about the ongoing challenges faced by local governments and appreciated their efforts to protect local authority.

D. ITEMS FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGINEERING:

[RES-0011-2025](#)

A RESOLUTION DECLARING THE OFFICIAL INTENT AND REASONABLE EXPECTATION OF THE CITY OF GAHANNA ON BEHALF OF THE STATE OF OHIO (THE BORROWER) TO REIMBURSE ITS 3230-OPWC FUND FOR THE CC17AA / CC18AA, TAYLOR STATION ROAD AND CLAYCRAFT ROAD ROUNDABOUT WITH THE PROCEEDS OF TAX-EXEMPT DEBT OF THE STATE OF

OHIO

Tom Komlanc, Director of Engineering, reported that the city was working toward financial closeout of the Taylor Station-Claycraft roundabout project, which was funded through a grant and loan from the Ohio Public Works Commission (OPWC). He stated that the city applied for the funding in 2022, received confirmation of the award in 2023, and completed construction in 2024. Komlanc explained that the loan portion of the funding totaled \$751,000 and carried a 0% interest rate over a 10-year period. He noted that finalizing the loan would secure the funding terms for the project.

Vice President Weaver remarked that securing a 0% interest loan was unusual and expressed appreciation for the favorable terms. Seeing no further questions or discussion, Weaver confirmed that the item would proceed to the consent agenda for the meeting on March 17, 2025.

Recommendation: Introduction/Adoption on Consent Agenda on 3/17/2025.

[ORD-0008-2025](#)

AN ORDINANCE TO REPEAL AND REPLACE THE CITY OF GAHANNA CODIFIED ORDINANCES CHAPTER 903 - SIDEWALK CONSTRUCTION, MAINTENANCE, AND RENEWAL; AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY

Director Komlanc presented a request to repeal and replace Chapter 903 of the city code, which addresses sidewalk maintenance and repair. Komlanc explained that under Ohio Revised Code Chapter 729, adjoining property owners are responsible for sidewalk maintenance, upkeep, and repair. The city previously passed several sidewalk ordinances, most recently in July and August of 2023. Those ordinances modified the criteria for sidewalk maintenance and established a cost-share program to provide financial relief for low-income and fixed-income homeowners, as well as property owners with corner or double-wide lots. Komlanc stated that as the city implemented the updated ordinance, issues arose related to development and redevelopment activity. Specifically, small residential projects like home additions or backyard improvements, such as decks or sheds, were triggering requirements for sidewalk repairs, which was not the intent of the original ordinance. The proposed repeal and replacement aimed to reduce that burden and clarify the sidewalk maintenance requirements.

Vice President Weaver raised a question about Section 903.3(d), which addressed the replacement of driveway aprons and adjacent sidewalk panels. He asked whether the city or the property owner would bear the cost of repairing adjacent sidewalk panels if city-initiated work impacted the apron. Komlanc clarified that if a homeowner replaced a driveway or apron, they would be responsible for ensuring the adjacent sidewalk panels were compliant with ADA and PROWAG (Public Rights of Way Accessibility Guidelines) standards. If city-initiated work, such as a water line repair, affected the apron or adjacent sidewalk panels, the city would cover the cost of those repairs.

President Bowers asked whether a permit would require an evaluation of the sidewalk and apron if a homeowner stopped driveway work at the sidewalk line. Komlanc explained that the public right-of-way typically extends one foot

behind the sidewalk, so work performed on the driveway up to the sidewalk would trigger a permit requirement. If the sidewalk was in disrepair, the homeowner would be responsible for fixing it as part of the permit process. Bowers asked whether this requirement represented a departure from current practice. Komlanc confirmed that it was consistent with the existing code, but the new provision would clarify when sidewalk repairs were required. Senior Director Schultz added that the provision ensured sidewalks were in good working order. He explained that if a homeowner repaired a driveway and the sidewalk panels through the driveway were in poor condition, the city would require the homeowner to fix them at the same time. However, if a homeowner was only making backyard improvements, sidewalk repairs would not be required.

Vice President Weaver sought clarification on whether homeowners would have to fix the entire sidewalk or just the panels within the driveway. Komlanc explained that the city followed Columbus's guidelines, which required the repair of the two adjacent panels, as vehicles tend to put additional stress on those sections.

Councilmember McGregor asked if driveway panels were poured differently from standard sidewalk panels to account for vehicle weight. Komlanc confirmed that driveway panels were thicker to handle the load from vehicles.

Vice President Weaver asked whether the city would assume the cost of repairing driveway aprons and adjacent panels if city-initiated work, such as street maintenance or water line repair, affected them. Komlanc confirmed that if the city performed work that impacted the apron or adjacent sidewalk panels, the city would cover the cost of the repairs.

Councilmember Padova sought clarification on whether homeowners would need to repair all sidewalk panels in front of their property or just the panels within the driveway. Komlanc explained that the requirement would apply only to the two adjacent panels within the driveway unless the entire sidewalk was in disrepair.

President Bowers asked whether the city would notify contractors who regularly work on residential projects about the changes to the ordinance. Schultz stated that the new ordinance would primarily affect property owners making improvements to their homes rather than contractors focused solely on concrete work. He noted that the city would notify applicants of sidewalk repair requirements during the permit review process. Bowers commented that the revised ordinance would likely increase the cost of driveway projects by 20% to 25%, since homeowners would need to budget for adjacent sidewalk repairs. Schultz expressed reservations with the assertion.

Councilmember McGregor asked whether a permit for a backyard improvement like a shed would require a sidewalk inspection. Komlanc clarified that the current code triggered a sidewalk inspection for any improvement, including backyard work. The revised ordinance would remove that requirement, limiting the sidewalk repair trigger to front-of-house

improvements such as driveway replacement or apron repairs. Schultz noted that this change would address complaints from homeowners who had been required to fix sidewalks while making unrelated backyard improvements.

Vice President Weaver noted that the request included an emergency clause and asked about the rationale for that designation. Komlanc explained that the emergency clause was necessary due to pending right-of-way permit applications and the upcoming construction season.

President Bowers asked if any current driveway permits would be affected by the updated ordinance or if the city would continue to apply the existing code until the new ordinance was enacted. Komlanc anticipated that new permits would begin to reflect the updated ordinance once it was enacted.

**Recommendation: Introduction/First Reading on Regular Agenda on 3/17/2025;
Second Reading/Adoption with Emergency on Consent Agenda on 4/7/2025.**

E. ITEMS FROM THE CITY ATTORNEY:

[ORD-0009-2025](#) AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE CODIFIED ORDINANCES OF THE CITY OF GAHANNA CHAPTER 147 - BOARD OF ZONING AND BUILDING APPEALS, CHAPTER 770 - PROPERTY APPEALS BOARD, AND CHAPTER SECTION 1117.09 - APPEALS

City Attorney Tamilarasan presented an ordinance to address inconsistencies in the city code related to appeals processes and filing fees. Tamilarasan explained that the ordinance targeted three different sections of the code, all of which governed procedural aspects of appeals. She stated that the proposed changes aimed to create consistency in the timelines, standards of proof, and expectations for appellants and appellees when cases were referred to the Property Appeals Board and the Board of Zoning and Building Appeals. Tamilarasan noted that the current code contained variations in language and procedure depending on which board handled the case. The proposed ordinance would standardize these processes to align them with current practices and ensure consistency across all sections of the code. She added that the ordinance was being introduced alongside the Chapter 903 changes because the 903 section referenced the appeal process. Tamilarasan indicated that the ordinance would resolve any conflicts between the two sections and improve procedural clarity.

There were no questions from Council.

**Recommendation: Introduction/First Reading on Regular Agenda on 3/17/2025;
Second Reading/Adoption on Consent Agenda on 4/7/2025.**

Returning for further discussion:

[RES-0005-2025](#) A RESOLUTION DETERMINING THE PROJECTED TOTAL POPULATION AND SELECTION OF SUCCESSOR MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES FOR THE GAHANNA NEW COMMUNITY AUTHORITY

City Attorney Tamilarasan presented the item, explaining that the resolution was updated following previous Council feedback about aligning more closely with statutory residency requirements. Council expressed a desire to ensure that board members would consist of residents from the district. After consulting with the New Community Authority (NCA) board counsel and the developer, Tamilarasan reported that concerns were raised about the capacity of residents to manage board responsibilities during the construction phase. Until the board becomes fully operational with a clear understanding of expenses and income, the developer and Council appointments should not be restricted to district residents. Tamilarasan proposed adding a sunset clause to revisit the resolution in approximately 12 to 18 months, allowing Council to reassess the appropriateness of the residency requirement once construction is complete.

Councilmember McGregor asked who would pay the NCA fees - the property owners or the residents. Tamilarasan clarified that property owners would bear the cost. McGregor then questioned why property owners, rather than residents, would serve on the board. Tamilarasan explained that the statute anticipates a gradual transition where board members would be replaced with residents as residency increases in the community. During the initial phase, developer-appointed members with subject matter expertise would guide the process to ensure stability and informed decision-making.

President Bowers supported the sunset clause, agreeing that Council should reevaluate the board's composition once the district's development reaches completion. Bowers noted that while tenants would not directly pay the NCA fee, it would likely be passed down through rent, giving tenants a stake in how those funds are managed. She suggested that a hybrid model involving both tenants and property owners could be appropriate once the project is fully operational.

Vice President Weaver agreed that revisiting the resolution within 12 to 18 months seemed reasonable, deferring to Tamilarasan's judgment. Weaver confirmed that the resolution would be included on the consent agenda for the March 17, 2025, meeting, though it would require a slight amendment to incorporate the sunset clause. Tamilarasan stated that the revised language would be circulated the following day, March 11, 2025.

President Bowers noted that Council would need to reappoint two NCA appointees at the March 17, 2025 meeting since their terms were expiring. She suggested aligning those terms with the interim resolution period of 18 months. Tamilarasan clarified that current appointments were staggered, with initial terms of one or two years to ensure continuity. Moving forward, all appointments would be for two years. Bowers recommended revisiting the resolution within 12 months rather than 18 months to align with the expiration of the current terms. Tamilarasan supported this adjustment, noting that it would allow Council to reassess the board's composition more promptly.

Councilmember Jones asked when residents would begin to occupy the district and become eligible for board membership. Tamilarasan explained that this depended on the progress of construction and committed to

following up with the developer for more information.

Vice President Weaver confirmed that the resolution would remain on the consent agenda unless further clarification was needed. Tamilarasan stated that the updated language would be circulated promptly.

Recommendation: Introduction/Adoption on Consent Agenda on 3/17/2025.

F. ITEMS FROM COUNCILMEMBERS:

Councilmembers Padova and Bowers:

[RES-0008-2025](#) A JOINT RESOLUTION AND PROCLAMATION RECOGNIZING FOOD WASTE ACTION WEEK, MARCH 17-23, 2025, AND ENCOURAGING COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN FOOD WASTE REDUCTION EFFORTS IN THE CITY OF GAHANNA

Councilmember Padova introduced a joint resolution and proclamation recognizing Food Waste Action Week from March 17 through March 23, 2025. The resolution encouraged the community to participate in food waste reduction efforts within the city, including using the compost bins at Friendship Park and taking simple steps to reduce food waste. Padova emphasized the importance of maximizing the nutrients from food to support future growth and invited questions from Council.

Councilmember McGregor shared an example from Belgium, where the city of Antwerp provided free chickens to residents - two or three per family - along with educational materials on chicken care. Residents were required to keep the chickens for at least two years to produce eggs rather than harvesting them. The chickens helped reduce food waste by consuming food scraps, which in turn decreased the amount of waste sent to landfills. The chicken manure also served as effective fertilizer, and the chickens helped control pests by eating bugs. McGregor noted that similar programs were implemented in other Belgian cities, and she found the idea interesting in the context of food waste reduction.

Councilmember Padova acknowledged McGregor's comments but clarified that the resolution did not involve chickens, focusing solely on food waste reduction and composting.

Mayor Jadwin expressed her support for the resolution and thanked Council for the opportunity to participate in the joint proclamation. She announced that Joe Lombardi, Executive Director of SWACO (Solid Waste Authority of Central Ohio), would attend the next meeting to receive the joint proclamation. Jadwin praised SWACO's leadership and partnership in helping the city advance its food waste reduction efforts.

Councilmember McGregor added that she and her family practiced home composting for about 45 years. She described how their compost bin, which stands about five feet tall, fills up with leaves and vegetable matter during the winter and then decomposes significantly by spring. She emphasized

that home composting is an effective way to reduce waste and create beneficial soil nutrients.

Councilmember Renner thanked McGregor for her comments, especially about chickens, noting that he shared her enthusiasm for the topic. He supported home composting and explained that his family also composts at home, using a compost spreader on their lawn. He reported that composting helped maintain a green, healthy lawn without the use of synthetic fertilizers. Renner emphasized the benefits of composting for both gardens and lawns.

Recommendation: Introduction/Adoption on Consent Agenda on 3/17/2025.

Councilmember Renner:

[RES-0009-2025](#)

A JOINT RESOLUTION AND PROCLAMATION RECOGNIZING TROOP 7456 AS THE FIRST GIRLS TROOP OF BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA (BSA) IN THE CITY OF GAHANNA

Councilmember Renner introduced a joint resolution and proclamation recognizing the first girls' troop of the Boy Scouts of America in Gahanna. Renner explained that a constituent from the west side had informed him about the troop's formation. He admitted that he was not aware that the Boy Scouts had begun accepting girls and appreciated the opportunity to learn more about the program. Renner noted that Ike Engel was leading the troop, with the support of another individual. While the troop was not exclusively composed of Gahanna girls, the majority of the members were from Gahanna. Renner announced that Troop 7456 and Ike Engel would attend the next meeting on Monday for formal recognition.

Vice President Weaver praised the timing of the recognition, noting that it aligned well with the city's ongoing Women's History Month celebrations. Weaver thanked Renner for bringing the resolution forward.

Recommendation: Introduction/Adoption on Consent Agenda on 3/17/2025.

[RES-0010-2025](#)

A RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING WORLD WATER DAY MARCH 22, 2025 AND EVERY YEAR THEREAFTER IN THE CITY OF GAHANNA

Councilmember Renner introduced a resolution recognizing World Water Day, an annual United Nations observance focused on the importance of freshwater. Renner explained that the resolution was a natural fit for Gahanna, given the city's deep connection to water. He noted that the name "Gahanna" is a Native American word meaning "three in one," representing the confluence of the Big Walnut, Rocky Fork, and Sycamore Run. Renner highlighted the city's ongoing efforts in stormwater management and conservation, including partnerships with Franklin Soil and Water and the implementation of best management practices. He stressed that climate change is increasing the frequency and intensity of storms, making it critical to infiltrate stormwater above minimum standards to reduce flooding and improve water quality. Renner pointed out that runoff from buildings and streets introduces pollutants like oil and debris into waterways, underscoring

the need for more advanced stormwater management. The resolution aimed to recognize stormwater management as a crucial tool for protecting water quality, reaffirm the city's commitment to sustainable water policies, conservation efforts, and community engagement in water protection initiatives, and encourage residents, businesses, and organizations to participate in activities that promote water conservation and pollution prevention. Renner stated that passing the resolution would make Gahanna the first city in Central Ohio to formally recognize water issues in this way. He noted that both the Ohio Environmental Council and Franklin Soil and Water supported the resolution and expected representatives to attend the next meeting. He emphasized that the resolution would also support the city's ongoing environmental initiatives and create opportunities for new partnerships with local, regional, and state organizations. Renner expressed hope that the resolution would lead to a green infrastructure project, particularly on the west side, to help address flooding issues.

Councilmember McGregor supported the resolution and suggested including an article in the Uniquely Gahanna publication or a city water bill insert to educate residents on the differences between sanitary and storm sewers. McGregor noted that many residents mistakenly believe all sewer water is treated, while storm sewer runoff flows directly into local waterways. She referenced a former mural at Creekside that illustrated this concept. McGregor also highlighted Design Outreach, a Gahanna-based company at Johnstown and Stygler. The company designs water wells for communities in Africa and East Asia. The wells, which cost around \$15,000 each, use a bicycle-powered mechanism to draw groundwater, providing clean water to underserved areas.

Councilmember Renner agreed with McGregor's comments and expressed frustration over residents blowing leaves and grass clippings into storm drains. He emphasized that such behavior contributes to pollution and clogs stormwater systems.

President Bowers thanked Renner for bringing the resolution forward, calling it a significant and timely initiative for Gahanna. She agreed that stormwater management is essential for protecting local water quality and reducing flooding. Bowers supported McGregor's recommendation for a public education campaign on the topic. Bowers also recommended that the city's economic development team incorporate environmental standards into development agreements. She emphasized that developers should align with the city's sustainability goals, encouraging incentives for green infrastructure and stormwater management in future projects.

Vice President Weaver praised Renner's leadership and passion for the issue, thanking him for raising awareness and advancing the resolution.

Recommendation: Introduction/Adoption on Consent Agenda on 3/17/2025.

G. ADJOURNMENT:

With no further business before the Committee of the Whole, Chair Weaver adjourned the meeting at 9:10 p.m.

Jeremy A. VanMeter
Clerk of Council

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

Trenton I. Weaver