



City of Gahanna

Meeting Minutes

Committee of the Whole

200 South Hamilton Road
Gahanna, Ohio 43230

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

Jeremy A. VanMeter, Clerk of Council

Monday, February 23, 2026

7:00 PM

City Hall, Council Chambers

A. CALL TO ORDER:

Gahanna City Council met for Committee of the Whole on Monday, February 23, 2026, in Council Chambers. Vice President of Council Jamille Jones, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. The agenda was published on February 20, 2026. Councilmember Michael Schnetzer was absent from the meeting. All other members were present. There were no additions or corrections to the agenda.

B. ITEMS FROM THE PLANNING COMMISSION:

RES-0005-2026

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING A WAIVER OF STORMWATER MANAGEMENT WATER QUANTITY CONTROLS PURSUANT TO SECTION 1113.02(e) OF THE CODIFIED ORDINANCES OF THE CITY OF GAHANNA FOR THE ACADEMY PARK IMPROVEMENTS PROJECT (PK-25-08); PARCEL ID 025-004304

Holly Boyer, Senior Utility Engineer, spoke on behalf of the Department of Engineering regarding the Planning Commission waiver request for the Academy Park project. She explained that the project abuts Big Walnut Creek. She referenced City Code 1113.02(e), which allows a detention waiver if a development does not increase runoff volume, does not increase flooding, and does not damage the receiving stream. She added that the code requires any future addition or modification exceeding the original limits to undergo review and reapplication for a waiver, clarifying that the waiver would apply only to this specific project and not to any future projects. Ms. Boyer described the project scope. She stated that Academy Park would remove a building and construct a new facility with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) - compliant

sidewalks, new playgrounds, a concession facility, extended parking, and additional trails and sidewalks. She reported that the team's analysis showed no changes to site hydraulics after installation of the stormwater pond required by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). She explained that the request sought a waiver from Gahanna's additional critical storm requirements, which exceed EPA requirements. She stated that staff had no objection to the waiver because the analysis showed that site hydraulics would remain relatively unchanged. She noted that the site currently had no stormwater controls and that the project would add water quality measures in accordance with the EPA construction general permit. She then invited questions from Council.

Councilmember McGregor asked whether the borrow pit formed during the construction of Coldwell Court, the street just north of Academy Park, still existed. Mayor Jadwin clarified the location of Coldwell Court as the street that backs up to the northern part of the park. Ms. Boyer responded that she was not familiar with the borrow pit and stated that she did not live in Gahanna and was relatively new to the area. She asked whether the design team knew if the borrow pit still existed.

Councilmember McGregor stated that she had additional questions but needed to wait to ask them. She explained that her husband, who served as mayor when the park was built, had questions regarding downstream stormwater impacts and runoff effects. She stated that he planned to contact Stephania Ferrell, Director of Parks and Recreation, to discuss his questions. She indicated that she had no further questions at that time.

Councilmember Renner stated that he had met with Director Ferrell, Ms. Boyer, Catherine Eichel, and the project team. He expressed satisfaction with the project and stated that the hydrology report justified the waiver. He described the issue as primarily related to timing of peak flows, particularly upstream flows, and noted that the report addressed questions regarding soils. He emphasized that the site currently had little to no stormwater control and stated that the proposed design would enhance stormwater management. He explained that the improvements would not only control stormwater but also provide water quality treatment for runoff from asphalt and parking areas, if the system functioned as designed. He stated that Big Walnut Creek qualifies as a warm water habitat and that a 2016 ecosystem study described it as stable. He noted

that it is an Ohio-designated scenic river. He concluded that staff's proposal would protect and improve the creek's habitat.

Councilmember McGregor expressed concern about the less than one percent difference in runoff, stating that one percent could matter if it affected a basement. She also referenced downstream cut bank erosion and expressed concern about causing any additional increase. Ms. Boyer responded that the one percent difference likely fell within the margin of error for a modeling study. Councilmember Renner confirmed that the hydrology report appeared in the legislation. Councilmember McGregor acknowledged that she did not recall seeing it.

Councilmember Renner stated that the report addressed timing issues in detail and suggested it might answer many of her questions. He added that the team addressed his questions satisfactorily. Ms. Boyer added that passing flows through the system before the peak of the storm arrives would help the area's hydrology. Councilmember Renner also noted a substantial increase in the number and type of trees planned for the project. He stated that the project would add species such as bald cypress and willow oak, which promote enhanced infiltration due to their root systems. Councilmember McGregor confirmed that the project would add trees. Councilmember Renner shared a personal example of planting a bald cypress in his backyard to help manage ponding and sheeting water.

Councilmember Bowers thanked the presenters and stated that she would find it helpful to understand the standard requirement, the benefits it provides, and how the requested deviation compares. Ms. Boyer explained that the standard requires calculation of the critical storm and comparison of undeveloped and developed conditions to determine the percent increase in runoff. She stated that the analysis showed an 85 percent increase in runoff without stormwater controls based on a ten-year storm event. She explained that the standard would require detention of the ten-year storm to the one-year pre-developed condition, which necessitated a considerably larger pond than the site could accommodate. Councilmember Bowers asked about the benefits of that requirement. Ms. Boyer stated that it provides flood routing and flood control, but explained that because the site sits adjacent to a fourth-order stream, it makes more sense to pass flows through the watershed rather than detain them.

Councilmember Bowers asked for clarification regarding the 85 percent increase compared to the one percent difference discussed earlier. Ms. Boyer explained that the 85 percent increase reflected conditions without any stormwater controls. After incorporating the required water quality volume pond into the modeling, the analysis showed only a one percent difference, which essentially restored the site to its original hydraulics. Councilmember Bowers summarized that the project would not fully meet the city's additional requirement but would improve upon existing conditions. Ms. Boyer confirmed that statement and added that the project meets all state permit requirements. She stated that the waiver request sought relief from additional flood storage beyond state standards. Councilmember Bowers confirmed that the project would still meet state storage standards. Ms. Boyer affirmed that it would. Councilmember Bowers noted that the retention pond and additional trees could help offset the remaining one percent difference. Ms. Boyer agreed and stated that increased tree infiltration would leave more room in the ground for water. Councilmember Bowers thanked her for the clarification.

Vice President Jones asked if there were additional questions or discussion. She then stated that the resolution would come forward for adoption on March 2, 2026, and asked whether the Council preferred to place it on the Consent or Regular Agenda. Councilmember Bowers recommended placing it on the Regular Agenda due to Councilmember McGregor's outstanding questions.

Recommendation: Introduction/Adoption on Regular Agenda on 3/2/2026.

C. ITEMS FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY:

MT-0010-2026

A MOTION TO CONFIRM THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC SAFETY'S APPOINTMENT OF JEFFERSON FIRE CHIEF BRADFORD SHULL AND MIFFLIN FIRE CHIEF BRIAN DUNLEVY AS MUNICIPAL FIRE SAFETY INSPECTORS PURSUANT TO SECTION 1501.04 OF THE GAHANNA CODIFIED ORDINANCES, TO REMAIN EFFECTIVE UNTIL SUCH TIME AS A SUCCESSOR IS QUALIFIED AND APPOINTED

Director of Public Safety Tim Becker stated that, in accordance with the Gahanna Codified Ordinances, the Director of Public Safety shall appoint a municipal fire safety inspector subject to Council confirmation. He stated that pursuant to subsection 1501.04 of the Gahanna Codified Ordinances, he appointed Chief Bradford Shull of the Jefferson Township

Fire Department and Chief Brian Dunlevy of the Mifflin Township Fire Department as the respective municipal fire safety inspectors. He respectfully requested the Council's confirmation of these appointments by motion, with the appointments to remain in effect until a successor qualifies and receives appointment.

Vice President Jones asked whether the Council had any questions or discussion. Hearing none, she thanked Director Becker and stated that the item would appear on the agenda for March 2, 2026. She asked whether the Council agreed to place the item on the Consent Agenda. The Council indicated agreement.

Recommendation: Introduction/Adoption on Consent Agenda on 3/2/2026.

D. ITEMS FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SERVICE:

[ORD-0008-2026](#) AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND SECTION 921.04 OF THE CODIFIED ORDINANCES OF THE CITY OF GAHANNA TO UPDATE SEWERAGE SYSTEM CAPACITY CHARGES; AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY

Senior Deputy Director Corey Wybensing appeared before the Council on behalf of Director Anverse, Director of Public Service, to present a proposed code change. He explained that the ordinance would amend Section 921.04 of the Gahanna Code to revise sewer system capacity charges. He stated that the current ordinance requires the City of Gahanna to change its code if the City of Columbus changes its sewer capacity charges. He explained that the proposed amendment would modify that requirement. Mr. Wybensing directed Council's attention to the redlined version of the ordinance and noted a one-word change recommended by City Attorney Tamilarasan. He stated that the change would revise the language from requiring the City of Gahanna to change its code when the City of Columbus updates its rates, to requiring the City of Gahanna to review and determine whether a change is appropriate. He explained that the distinction allows discretion rather than mandating an automatic update. He added that staff reviews this section annually when presenting water and sewer rates, typically around October, and that this amendment aligns with that practice. He stated that the City of Columbus implemented this rate change outside of its normal annual update cycle, with an effective date of April 1, 2026 rather than January 1, 2026. He requested approval of the updated rate chart included in the ordinance and asked Council to adopt the legislation as an emergency measure to ensure it takes effect by April 1, 2026. He

explained that the City of Gahanna must collect sufficient revenue to offset the capacity charges that Columbus will assess.

Vice President Jones asked about the impact on residents and whether a simple explanation existed to describe the difference in rates for a typical resident. Mr. Wybensinger explained that the charge applies when a property taps into the system and reflects the water line size. He clarified that the sewer capacity charge offsets that connection and applies to new development or to customers who change or upgrade their line size. Vice President Jones confirmed that the emergency request sought to ensure the ordinance takes effect by April 1, 2026. Mr. Wybensinger confirmed.

Councilmember McGregor asked when the City of Gahanna last increased these rates. Mr. Wybensinger responded that the City of Columbus reported its last rate change occurred in 2006. He stated that the city's current ordinance dated to 2014. He noted that since his tenure began, staff made changes to this section, most recently in 2023, when they added 10-inch, 12-inch, and 16-inch line sizes to maintain compliance with Columbus. He stated that the rates for three-quarter-inch through eight-inch lines remained the same. Councilmember McGregor observed that the increase for larger line sizes appeared significant. Mr. Wybensinger agreed and stated that Columbus shifted more cost responsibility to larger consumers. Councilmember McGregor asked how the change would affect current projects. Mr. Wybensinger stated that he could not speak to the status of specific projects but explained that the new rates would apply to any new builds that had not yet tapped into the system as of April 1, 2026. He stated that any connections completed before April 1, 2026, would fall under the current ordinance.

Vice President Jones asked whether the rate would apply to projects already in process or with permits issued. Mr. Wybensinger explained that staff calculates the fee based on line size and informs the applicant of the amount due. He stated that the rate in effect at the time of that calculation would apply, and the new rate would take effect April 1, 2026. Mayor Jadwin clarified that applicants must pay the required fees before the city issues permits. She stated that if the city already issued a permit, the applicant would have already paid the applicable fees.

Clerk VanMeter asked for clarification regarding the agenda and whether

the request included a waiver or only an emergency designation. Mr. Wybensinger stated that the request sought emergency approval and that Council would not need a waiver if it waived the 30-day waiting period to allow the ordinance to take effect by April 1, 2026.

Vice President Jones clarified the scheduling and stated that Council would place the ordinance on the regular agenda for March 16, 2026, to accommodate the emergency request.

**Recommendation: Introduction/First Reading on Regular Agenda on 3/2/2026;
Second Reading/Adoption on Regular Agenda on 3/16/2026.**

E. ITEMS FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGINEERING:

[RES-0006-2026](#)

A RESOLUTION TO AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR TO PROVIDE CONSENT AND ENTER INTO CONTRACTS WITH THE DIRECTOR OF TRANSPORTATION WHICH IS NECESSARY TO COMPLETE THE REPAIR OF CONCRETE PARAPETS AND REPLACEMENT OF VANDAL PROTECTION FENCE ON NORTH SIDE OF MCCUTCHEON ROAD BRIDGE

Senior Director of Operations Kevin Schultz presented a request from the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT). He explained that ODOT planned to repair the parapet walls on the McCutcheon Bridge over I-270. He described the parapet walls as the abutment that previously had a fence, which ODOT removed. He stated that the bridge itself lies within the City of Columbus, but the eastern approach to the bridge lies within the City of Gahanna. Mr. Schultz stated that ODOT requested that the City of Gahanna pass a resolution of consent authorizing ODOT to perform the repair work and to work within the city's right-of-way. He stated that the administration respectfully requested a resolution of consent authorizing ODOT to complete the work. He added that ODOT had not committed to a specific schedule but expressed hope to complete the project by September or October of 2026.

Vice President Jones asked whether Council had any questions or discussion. Hearing none, she stated that the resolution would appear on the agenda for March 2, 2026, and asked whether Council agreed to place it on the consent agenda. Council indicated agreement.

Recommendation: Introduction/Adoption on Consent Agenda on 3/2/2026.

F. ITEMS FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:

ORD-0002-2026

AN ORDINANCE ACCEPTING, APPROVING, AND RATIFYING THE SUBMITTED RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE CITY OF GAHANNA TAX INCENTIVE REVIEW COUNCIL FOR TAX YEAR 2024

Assistant City Attorney Matt Roth reported that he spoke with City Attorney Tamilarasan earlier on this item. He stated that she heard back from the county prosecutor, who identified no issues with how the Tax Incentive Review Council (TIRC) meeting was conducted. He stated that she advised that the City of Gahanna could proceed with accepting the outcome of the TIRC meeting and keep the abatements in place, consistent with the TIRC's recommendation.

Vice President Jones asked whether Mr. Gottke had anything to add. Director of Economic Development Jeff Gottke responded that he agreed. Mr. Roth noted that the information differed from what he and Mr. Gottke discussed earlier in the day, but he confirmed that he spoke with Ms. Tamilarasan afterward. Mr. Gottke stated that he also spoke with her and had not yet relayed that information. He concluded that they could proceed as planned the following week without altering the legislation and could accept the TIRC's recommendations and continue the abatements as they currently exist.

Director Gottke then outlined procedural improvements to prevent a similar situation in the future. He stated that the city could hold the TIRC meeting locally rather than participating in the larger meeting at the county courthouse, coordinating a mutually agreeable time with county representatives and local members. He stated that staff would also collect and maintain annual appointment verifications for all TIRC members, ideally through resolutions or meeting minutes, to ensure proper appointments. He further stated that the city could appoint mayoral-nominated, council-appointed alternates to serve if needed. He explained that this approach would provide additional safeguards. He concluded by reiterating that the county confirmed that Council could proceed with the legislation as drafted.

Vice President Jones thanked staff and asked if there were questions. Hearing none, she expressed appreciation for the forward-looking recommendations. She confirmed that Council postponed the legislation to a date certain and stated that it would return on March 2, 2026. She asked whether Council preferred to place the item on the Regular

Agenda.

Councilmember Bowers suggested that Council may wish to confirm once more with the City Attorney before proceeding, but indicated that Council was likely fine to move forward.

Vice President Jones stated that, absent objection, Council would place the item on the Regular Agenda to allow for one final confirmation with the City Attorney. Council indicated agreement.

Recommendation: Second Reading/Adoption on Regular Agenda on 3/2/2026.

G. ITEMS FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE:

ORD-0006-2026 AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE CITY OF GAHANNA CODIFIED ORDINANCE SECTION 133.02 - PURCHASING PROCEDURES

Vice President Jones introduced the next agenda item regarding purchasing procedures from the Department of Finance. She noted that Council submitted questions and requested additional information. Vice President Jones asked whether Director Bury would like to begin or proceed directly to the submitted questions.

Prequalification Questions

Director Bury stated that she brought the questions Council submitted along with the administration's responses. She explained that her office emailed the responses but wanted to review the answers during the meeting. Director Bury addressed questions regarding the pre-qualification of vendors. She clarified that the pre-qualification applied strictly to architectural and engineering design services and did not include construction management-type services. She also addressed a mention of prevailing wage and explained that no costs associated with the pre-qualification process existed. Vendors only submitted information demonstrating their qualifications to perform the work. Director Bury responded to a question about whether the city pursued this process due to limited in-house capability as a smaller organization. She stated that the process enhanced the City of Gahanna's services. She explained that the city managed many projects with numerous moving parts and could not complete all work internally. As a result, the city relied on professional contracted services to enhance the services provided to the public.

Director Bury corrected her earlier statement regarding vendor qualifications. She acknowledged that she previously believed the three-year requirement appeared in the City of Gahanna's Codified Ordinances, but it did not. She explained that Section 153.68 of the Ohio Revised Code required the city to maintain its lists of qualified vendors and required vendors to certify annually that they remained qualified. She stated that the city went beyond the requirements of the Ohio Revised Code by requiring a full pre-qualification every three years.

Small Purchase Threshold Considerations

Director Bury then addressed the question of whether \$100,000 should serve as the small purchase threshold. She stated that the administration believed the \$250,000 threshold remained appropriate based on the previous uniform guidance the city used. She expressed hope that Council could provide additional context regarding the proposed \$100,000 threshold during the meeting. Director Bury confirmed that she attached a copy of the 2022 federal procurement guidelines and provided a link to the current guidance. She explained that the document was lengthy, so she highlighted the sections addressing thresholds. She noted that the federal uniform guidance included varying thresholds depending on the type of purchase, such as domestic or foreign purchases. She stated that the city incorporated the main thresholds into its policy.

Director Bury discussed contracts between \$10,000 and \$250,000 that fell outside of operations budget approval and stated that she included that information in an email attachment. She emphasized that all expenditures required authorized appropriations and remained within the operating budget. Director Bury stated that the five largest vendors from 2022 to date appeared in the Council analysis report under the second tab.

Director Bury explained the internal process for identifying professional service vendors and entering into contracts below \$250,000. She stated that the decision tree outlined the process based on proposal amounts. If a proposal totaled \$10,000, staff opened a requisition and completed the process. If the proposal exceeded \$10,000 but remained under

\$250,000, staff followed a small purchase process similar to the process used when seeking Council authorization. Staff obtained quotes and heavily weighed vendor qualifications for professional services. Staff requested qualifications when seeking quotes, and a small group evaluated and scored the submissions to determine which vendor offered the best qualifications and price. Staff weighed qualifications and cost, selected a vendor, and discussed the decision with the Mayor, who signed the contract. If the amount exceeded \$250,000, staff brought the matter to Council to authorize the Mayor to sign the contract.

Director Bury then turned the discussion over to Miranda Vollmer, Senior Director of Administrative Services, to address the reporting process and how the administration planned to move forward.

Reporting and Strategic Plan Implementation

Senior Director Vollmer stated that at the previous meeting, Council discussed various reports that the city could provide, and leadership also discussed those reports in separate meetings. She highlighted Goal Two of *Our Gahanna*, the strategic plan currently under implementation, which focused on serving the community by providing high-quality municipal services that were effective, collaborative, and responsive. She explained that the slide outlined the objectives under the "Enhance Internal Operations" section of that goal. Senior Director Vollmer noted that although the city was not yet 60 days into 2026, implementation of the strategic plan was underway and would continue throughout the year. She stated that the city would work on various reporting mechanisms, including the fourth quarter finance report, which Council would discuss later that day. She explained that staff would explore how to incorporate strategic planning elements and other reporting measures into that report and throughout the budget process. She further stated that, as part of the strategic plan implementation, the city would evaluate how to report different items and that a consultant would meet with Council to discuss preferred reporting formats, desired metrics, and enhancements to future reports. She reiterated that staff were actively working on these efforts as part of the implementation process. She concluded by emphasizing Goal Two's focus on serving the community and enhancing reporting to Council and the community going forward.

Data Analysis

Director Bury explained that the information presented was based on data analysis previously provided and reflected varying thresholds that Council discussed and what those thresholds would authorize. She stated that, using averages from 2022 through 2025, at the \$250,000 threshold approximately 73 percent of professional service costs were authorized, with about 12 contracts coming forward. At the \$150,000 threshold, approximately 79 percent of costs were authorized, with about 11 contracts coming forward. At the \$100,000 threshold, approximately 82 percent of costs were authorized, with about 18 contracts coming forward. At the bid threshold, approximately 85 percent of costs were authorized, with about 29 contracts coming forward. Director Bury added that some of the contracts were continuing contracts with automatic renewals, but staff included them in the total count as authorized contracts. She concluded her remarks and thanked Council.

Vice President Jones asked whether Professional Services included all contracts within that category. Director Bury clarified that the category included only professional services, such as architecture, engineering, software, and maintenance services. She explained that construction-related or capital items fell under Capital Outlay or Capital accounts and did not fall within Professional Services. Vice President Jones confirmed that consultants and engineers fell within Professional Services and acknowledged that other services existed in separate categories.

Councilmember Bowers thanked staff for providing additional information and thanked Director Vollmer for considering different reporting structures. She stated that the discussion was productive and expressed appreciation for the effort invested. She explained that Council distributed a competitive bid threshold worksheet compiled by Management Analyst Jessica Hilts for regional comparison. She noted that, while Director Bury referenced federal procurement guidelines, Council wanted to examine practices at the local and hyper-local levels in Central Ohio. Councilmember Bowers stated that the spreadsheet, which she asked Mr. VanMeter to incorporate into the minutes, included several municipalities. She noted that Gahanna, Columbus, Grove City, and Reynoldsburg operated under a strong mayor-weak council form of

government, and that Whitehall also operated under that structure, although it did not appear on the list. She explained that in Columbus, city council authorized Professional Service contracts exceeding \$50,000. In Grove City, Professional Services estimated to exceed \$100,000 required requests for proposals at least once every four years, similar to Gahanna's pre-qualified vendor process, and included a reporting requirement to their council tied to that cycle. She stated that Reynoldsburg required their council approval for Professional Service contracts exceeding \$25,000 before execution, even if appropriation already occurred. She added that other municipalities with city manager forms of government had varying thresholds, with some maintaining lower limits similar to the city of Powell and others adopting higher limits. Councilmember Bowers stated that the Council also requested an aggregation of data and that she had not initially requested an itemized list of services over \$10,000 but appreciated the Director of Finance providing that information. She reported that from 2022 through 2025, the city opened Professional Service contracts totaling approximately \$14.5 million, all under the \$250,000 contract threshold. She noted that the contracts ranged from \$10,000, above the micro-purchase level, up to \$250,000. She acknowledged that many contracts reflected routine operating expenses, while others represented significant strategic and capital investments that would benefit from public discussion before Council. She stated that the Administration appeared aligned with Council's goal of creating structures that allowed for greater conversation and improved transparency pursuant to the strategic plan.

Director Bury clarified that the list reflected the amounts for which purchase orders were opened, not the actual expenditures. She explained that actual costs varied depending on project scope, contract duration, and other factors. She stated that staff used purchase order amounts because the city opened contracts for their full quoted amounts at the time of award, which provided a clearer basis for analysis. She offered an example involving Information and Technology (IT) services, explaining that the city might open a purchase order for a \$10,000 renewal estimate but ultimately spend less depending on circumstances. She reiterated that the list captured original quoted contract values rather than final expenditures, for ease of analysis. Councilmember Bowers responded that the contract value, rather than the final expenditure, remained more relevant to the discussion because Council action at different thresholds concerned contract authorization amounts. She

stated that the data therefore provided a more accurate reflection and thanked Director Bury for the clarification.

President Weaver thanked staff and asked a follow-up question. He inquired whether the city applied a standard contingency percentage when opening purchase orders, citing an example in which he might open a purchase order for \$70,000 on a \$65,000 quote to account for incidentals and ensure he did not exceed the authorized amount. He asked whether the city typically added a set percentage, such as 10 percent, or whether contingencies varied by contract. Director Bury responded that contingencies varied by contract. She stated that construction projects often included a 10 percent contingency, but larger projects, such as 825 Tech Center Drive, included larger contingencies depending on the project's risks and scope. Senior Director Schultz added that the contingency amount applied toward the \$250,000 threshold. He explained that if a contract totaled \$251,000 due to a contingency, even if the city did not ultimately expend those funds, Council would need to approve it. If the contract totaled \$249,000, it would fall under existing legislation and would not require additional Council approval.

Councilmember Bowers stated that she felt very interested in hearing her colleagues' thoughts on the matter. She noted that the Council had received all of the information late that day and acknowledged that members might need additional time to review it. She said that the Council's actions the following week were not written in stone, nor were the actions taken four years prior. Referring to her year-end Council comments, she described government as an iterative process and explained that when the Council identified different or better ways of doing things, or recognized that certain practices no longer served the needs of the community, it could revise them. She expressed interest in her colleagues' views because she believed this type of discretion and review fell within the body's responsibilities.

Mayor Jadwin thanked Councilmember Bowers for her comments and noted that the matter remained pending. She explained that the original submission of the report to Council included minor redlined revisions to the procurement policy, after which the Council opened a discussion regarding the threshold. She suggested that, for the following week, the Council could approve the initial revisions and continue the conversation

about the threshold later. She stated that this approach would allow the Council to finalize the retainage language, which she identified as the original intent for bringing the item forward. She added that both Council and the administration had received additional summary information that afternoon and that the administration would benefit from time to review it as well. She recommended that the vote the following week focus on the initially proposed redlines while continuing the broader discussion.

Senior Director Schultz directed attention to the screen and noted that it displayed procurement limits from other municipalities, which could be compared to the information Councilmember Bowers and Ms. Hilts compiled. Councilmember Bowers responded that each of those communities appeared in the spreadsheet provided by the Council Office. She explained that she had not mentioned them by name because they operated under a city manager form of government. Senior Director Schultz apologized and stated that he had not yet seen the spreadsheet.

President Weaver thanked Mayor Jadwin and the administration. He stated that when an item appeared on an agenda, he viewed it as an opportunity to consider the matter before the Council rather than conduct a wholesale review. He expressed appreciation for Mayor Jadwin's suggestion to move forward with the original redlines, as that reflected the administration's initial goal, and he welcomed the willingness to continue broader discussions. He stated that he felt comfortable proceeding with the redlines while continuing dialogue. He noted that both the administration and the Council Office provided extensive materials and that he would benefit from additional time to review them. He referenced prior conversations about reporting elements and observed that such reporting appeared to align with the strategic plan discussions. He stated that he had not yet reached a conclusion regarding a specific dollar threshold but remained open to further discussion. He highlighted quarterly reporting by other municipalities and suggested that the Council could schedule such reporting as part of the Finance Committee's quarterly updates, possibly as an attachment, to address concerns. He concluded by expressing appreciation for the research and effort devoted to the matter, the integration with the strategic plan, and the administration's willingness to continue discussions. He reiterated that he supported moving forward with the original redlines so the administration could proceed with its work.

Councilmember Padova thanked everyone who helped compile the information. She echoed President Weaver's comments and stated that she also felt comfortable moving forward with the redlines while continuing the discussion after voting on the administration's original proposal.

Councilmember Renner stated that he previously discussed the matter at length when it first arose. He said that Councilmember Weaver and Councilmember Padova made strong points and suggested that the Council consider moving forward with the redlined version. He emphasized that procurement thresholds did not function solely as an administrative tool but determined how the city stewarded taxpayer dollars. He reiterated that he sought to understand the community value. He stated that he understood the value for staff and reviewed the data. Drawing on his experience as a county director, he said that the current Ohio Revised Code felt restrictive and did not accurately reflect today's market values. He explained that the State used three-year-old inflation data in its calculations, which did not reflect current conditions. He suggested that \$100,000 might prove more appropriate and stated that he did not believe the Revised Code threshold should control, but that the threshold should be higher. He recalled that in 2022, after COVID-19, the city increased the threshold to activate projects and distribute incoming funds to benefit residents. He concluded by reiterating his question regarding the community value.

Councilmember Bowers recalled that prior to the 2022 rule change, the threshold stood at \$50,000 and that the Council made a significant increase to \$250,000.

Director Bury clarified that the \$50,000 threshold did not include professional services and applied only to construction contracts. She explained that the original legislation excluded professional services. Councilmember Bowers thanked Director Bury for the clarification. Director Bury stated that the city created a threshold for professional services in 2022 because no threshold previously existed, and no one knew when to bring those items forward. Councilmember Bowers asked whether professional service items previously came forward sporadically. Director Bury confirmed that they did. Councilmember Bowers asked whether some met the \$50,000 level and others did not. Director Bury

confirmed that as well.

Councilmember Bowers summarized that before the 2022 revision, the city operated under an unclear policy in which some items came before Council at the \$50,000 level while others lacked clarity. She acknowledged her colleagues' concerns about the volume of information provided shortly before the meeting. She asked what moving forward would look like and whether the Council would advance the underlying ordinance with the proposed redlines and then bring the matter back to committee within two weeks or the following week. She stated that she did not want to lose momentum, given the effort invested and the value of the conversation. She also recognized that the administration worked with PlanningNEXT on strategic plan implementation and expressed a desire to maintain focus on the procurement discussion.

Senior Director Vollmer referenced Goal A.16 of the strategic plan, which sought to streamline procurement and financial practices. She stated that the administration could prioritize that goal during implementation and place it in the immediate zero-to-three-year timeline.

Senior Director Schultz stated that he did not believe the administration would understand Planning NEXT's proposed reporting structures within two weeks or even a month. He referenced a spreadsheet with 300 lines that outlined numerous goals and objectives within the strategic plan. He distinguished between discussing a procurement threshold and discussing reporting structures. He stated that the administration needed to assess how quarterly reports functioned, how the city utilized them, and how the city could enhance them without discarding existing processes. He emphasized the need for a deeper understanding of Council's expectations. He cited the Capital Improvement Program as an example and explained that project sheets included planned expenditures for design, construction management, and construction. He noted that those figures served budgeting purposes but did not constitute approvals and did not necessarily remain fixed. He stated that the administration needed to determine how to collect and report various plans and data appropriately, which would require more time.

Councilmember Bowers asked a question regarding the 320-line spreadsheet referenced by Senior Director Schultz and inquired whether it represented an export from the city's accounting software. Director

Bury clarified that the 300-line spreadsheet related to the strategic plan and listed actions within that plan, not accounting data. Councilmember Bowers stated that she misunderstood and believed he referenced a different 300-line spreadsheet. Senior Director Schultz explained that the comprehensive strategic plan would require significant effort from staff. Councilmember Bowers clarified that her question concerned the 300-line document provided to Council that afternoon and asked whether that document represented an export from the accounting software. Director Bury confirmed that it did.

Councilmember Renner agreed with Senior Director Schultz's earlier comments regarding the Capital Improvement Program and stated that they connected to the question of community value and outcomes. He said that whatever threshold the Council ultimately selected would prompt dialogue with Council about the status of projects. He noted that several items on the list provided to Council for this discussion had not previously come before Council and that neither Council nor the public knew their status. He stated that bringing contracts or additional funding requests before Council created an opportunity to revisit and explain projects, even if Council discussed them six months earlier, and that this process benefited the public. He acknowledged that he struggled with the \$250,000 threshold and viewed it as high. He asked how the Council might address that concern and stated that the question might not lend itself to an immediate answer. He suggested that Council could pass the legislation but keep the threshold question active on the agenda moving forward, as he wanted continued discussion on that issue.

Senior Director Schultz responded by asking what problem the Council sought to solve by reducing the threshold from \$250,000 to another figure. He noted that Council had unanimously approved the increase from \$50,000 to \$250,000 a few years earlier. He asked whether the concern centered on alignment with other municipalities or on a perception that the administration did not provide sufficient information. He stated that the administration aimed to operate transparently and referenced recent contract amendments and Capital Improvement Program processes. He asked whether the issue stemmed solely from differences between the city's threshold and those of other municipalities.

Vice President Jones asked for clarification regarding whether professional services fell under the \$50,000 threshold prior to the

proposed redlines. Director Bury explained that in 2022 the administration conducted a comprehensive review of the procurement policy. She stated that auditors advised the City that its policy did not comply with federal uniform guidance requirements. She said the administration incorporated uniform guidance standards to ensure compliance with federal awards and addressed internal issues, including the absence of a clear process for professional services. She explained that the previous policy included a competitive bidding threshold that excluded professional services and provided no consistent avenue for bringing those services before Council. She described the prior process as sporadic and inconsistent, which made it difficult for the administration to determine when Council action was required. She stated that the 2022 overhaul sought to ensure compliance, eliminate uncertainty, and clarify when Council action became necessary. Vice President Jones thanked Director Bury for the clarification and responded to Senior Director Schultz's question regarding the problem to solve. She stated that, for her, the issue involved transparency and visibility, particularly with respect to professional services. She said that Council often did not see spending in that category until budget discussions. She suggested that a consistent reporting process might provide the visibility Council sought and asked whether such reporting could address those concerns.

Councilmember Bowers emphasized that the discussion did not present an either-or choice between reporting and procurement threshold changes. She stated that both could and should receive attention. She said she would welcome a reporting proposal from the administration, developed internally or with consultants. Regarding the procurement threshold, she noted that the administration recommended maintaining the \$250,000 level, while initial research suggested that amount exceeded thresholds in other central Ohio communities. She proposed bringing the procurement threshold discussion back in two weeks after Council had time to review the research. She clarified that doing so would not require a decision within two weeks but would allow Council to continue the conversation without losing momentum. She reiterated that reporting and threshold levels represented separate functions that warranted discussion.

Vice President Jones stated that she did not disagree and reiterated that she responded to the question about the problem to solve. She acknowledged the proposal to revisit the matter in two weeks and asked

what Council wanted to see at that time. She asked whether Council simply needed time to review the materials before continuing the discussion.

Councilmember Bowers stated that she envisioned keeping the matter as a discussion item rather than drafting a new ordinance at that time. She proposed advancing the current ordinance, as originally proposed, to second reading the following week while retaining the topic on the committee agenda for further discussion. She said that after additional Council discussion, the Council could consider advancing a different ordinance later, possibly after the administration had time to recommend reporting processes. She stated that she had no additional requests of the administration at that time and asked her colleagues to review the materials, determine whether they had further questions, and consider what threshold range they believed appropriate, whether that remained at \$250,000 or changed.

Vice President Jones summarized that Council would support passing the original redlines the following week without Councilmember Bowers' recommended changes. She sought confirmation from Council and received agreement. She stated that Council would keep the procurement threshold as a discussion item on committee agendas for further consideration. She noted that the ordinance already received first reading and would proceed to adoption the following week. She asked whether Council preferred to place the item on the Regular Agenda or the Consent Agenda and, after discussion, stated that Council would place it on the Consent Agenda. She thanked the administration and the Council Office for the information provided and expressed appreciation for their willingness to continue the discussion.

Recommendation: Second Reading/Adoption on Consent Agenda on 3/2/2026.

H. ITEMS FROM COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Discussion on Gahanna New Community Authority Appointment Resolution

President Weaver provided an update regarding the New Community Authority appointment for the Crescent. He reminded Council that it previously made several appointments to the newly created community authority and noted that one of those appointments was coming due. He stated that, based on conversations with City Attorney Tamilarasan and

Director Gottke, an underlying resolution governing those appointments required review before Council could make a new appointment. He added that he and Director Gottke planned to bring the resolution before the next committee for consideration. After Council reviewed and resolved the matter, it could proceed with the appointment.

MT-0009-2026

A MOTION TO AMEND VARIOUS SECTIONS OF THE COUNCIL RULES OF PROCEDURE AS PROPOSED BY THE AD HOC COUNCIL RULES COMMITTEE (EXHIBIT A)

Councilmember Bowers thanked Clerk VanMeter for keeping the ad hoc committee on track. She reported that she, Councilmember McGregor, and Councilmember Padova met twice to review Council rules, consider recommended redlines from the City Attorney, and address general cleanup items. She noted that Council had before it two sets of minutes from meetings held on February 2, 2026, and February 12, 2026, and thanked Clerk VanMeter for preparing them. She confirmed with Clerk VanMeter that the committee would recommend adoption of those minutes at the next Regular Meeting, and he affirmed. Councilmember Bowers stated that the committee reviewed the minutes and believed they accurately reflected the discussions. She then reviewed the proposed rule changes. She explained that many of the redlined edits addressed cleanup items and that City Attorney Tamilarasan reviewed them. She noted that the revisions included numerical cleanup to correct inconsistent numbering conventions throughout the rules. She highlighted a substantive edit to Section 3.04 to clarify that, in the absence of the Vice President, the President would chair a Committee of the Whole meeting, as the prior language omitted that clarification. She also described additional cleanup in Section 5 related to meetings, which aligned the rules with the City of Gahanna Charter and current practices. She stated that none of the recommended changes altered current practices. She further explained that revisions related to Executive Sessions aligned the rules with existing practices and confirmed the City Attorney's authority to request Special Meetings and Executive Sessions along with other elected officials. Councilmember Bowers stated that the purple redlined edits, beginning in Section 8, reflected the City Attorney's recommendations to standardize procedures for bringing forward ordinances and resolutions. She noted that these recommendations were promulgated the previous year and recommended for incorporation into the rules. She added that the committee briefly discussed Public Hearing, or Hearing of Visitors, practices. Although members considered

amendments to those practices, they decided to maintain the current rules. She stated that the committee weighed the pros and cons of the current approach and did not find sufficient justification to make changes, but welcomed further discussion if Council wished to consider amendments in the future. She then invited questions and offered Councilmember McGregor and Councilmember Padova the opportunity to add comments. Councilmembers Padova and McGregor stated that they had nothing to add.

President Weaver thanked Councilmember Padova, Councilmember Bowers, and Councilmember McGregor for their efforts in reviewing the rules. He recalled that during the Organizational Meeting he asked them to undertake that work and make a recommendation. He also thanked Clerk VanMeter for taking the minutes and for his diligence in accommodating the additional meetings.

Vice President Jones echoed her appreciation for the committee's work and expressed particular appreciation for the discussion regarding Hearing of Visitors. She requested that Council continue to review the requirement for individuals to publicly share their address. She acknowledged that the issue appeared to be isolated and might not justify a rule change, but asked Council to keep the concern in mind moving forward. Council agreed to place the item on the consent agenda for the following week.

Recommendation: Introduction/Adoption on Consent Agenda on 3/2/2026.

Councilmember Padova:

[RES-0004-2026](#)

A JOINT RESOLUTION AND PROCLAMATION DESIGNATING MARCH 2026 AS "WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH" IN THE CITY OF GAHANNA AND HONORING LAURA M. FISHER, THE FIRST WOMAN ELECTED TO SERVE ON THE VILLAGE OF GAHANNA COUNCIL IN 1921

Councilmember Padova presented a proposed joint resolution proclamation for Women's History Month honoring Laura M. Fisher, the first councilwoman elected to serve on the Village of Gahanna Council in 1921. She stated that Tom Gregory, who presented the previous month, would attend the meeting and provide a shorter presentation of approximately seven to ten minutes. She noted that he gathered photographs and additional information about Laura Fisher. She expressed hope that Mayor Jadwin would join in recognizing the

proclamation and invited any edits or questions from Council.

Vice President Jones asked for questions or discussion and thanked Councilmember Padova for bringing the resolution forward. She stated that she looked forward to the information Mr. Gregory researched and confirmed that Council would place the item on the Consent Agenda for the following week.

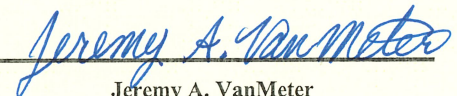
Councilmember Padova added that they invited Laura Fisher's granddaughter-in-law, who still resided in Gahanna, and stated that she believed she would attend.

Vice President Jones confirmed the item would appear on the Consent Agenda the following week.

Recommendation: Introduction/Adoption on Consent Agenda on 3/2/2026.

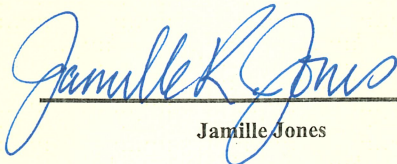
I. ADJOURNMENT:

With no further business before the Committee of the Whole, the Chair adjourned the meeting at 8:16 p.m.



Jeremy A. VanMeter
Clerk of Council

APPROVED by the Committee of the Whole, this
2nd day of *March* 2026.



Jamille Jones