

Meeting Minutes

Ad Hoc Rules Committee, Gahanna City Council Wednesday, February 4, 2026 — 9:30 AM City Hall, Law Library

A. Roll Call

Councilmembers Merisa Bowers, Nancy McGregor, and Kaylee Padova attended the meeting. All members were present by 9:33 a.m. Clerk Jeremy VanMeter also attended, along with City Attorney Priya Tamilarasan, who arrived later in the meeting.

The committee briefly discussed public notice, the preparation of minutes, and the importance of openness for the meeting. Members noted that it was necessary to follow Open Meetings Act procedures, since the committee intended to produce a recommendation for the full City Council to consider.

B. Discussion

The committee reviewed the City Council Rules of Procedure, which the Council last amended on March 18, 2024.

City Attorney Tamilarasan's Redline for Sections 8.12, 8.13, and 8.14

Clerk VanMeter provided background on the City Attorney's redline amendments for proposed renumbered Sections 8.12, 8.13, and 8.14 in the City Attorney's absence, noting that some of the items were already in practice. Councilmember Bowers stated that the proposed language aligned with existing guidance about when to use a resolution versus an ordinance. She explained that Section 8.14 would streamline procedures because authorizations already reflected in the budget or capital improvement process could proceed by resolution, which would avoid a second reading or a 30-day enactment delay.

City Attorney Priya Tamilarasan joined the meeting at 9:51 a.m. Bowers noted that Sections 8.13 and 8.14 appeared self-explanatory and requested additional discussion of Section 8.12. Tamilarasan explained that some Councilmembers preferred ordinances to begin at committee, although exceptions sometimes occurred, such as when meetings were canceled due to weather. She suggested that the language could reflect a general expectation that ordinances go to committee (Committee of the Whole) unless certain circumstances applied.

Councilmember McGregor stated that items generally went to committee first. Bowers observed that ordinances sometimes, including recently, received a first reading before going to committee between readings. Tamilarasan noted that, with Council President approval, ordinances could bypass committee. She identified committee-first review as a best practice while acknowledging the need for exceptions.

Bowers emphasized the importance of preserving flexibility while still establishing a preference for committee consideration. Tamilarasan suggested adding language that allowed exceptions as determined by the Council President. Councilmember Padova stated that she saw no reason not to allow the Council President discretion, particularly when meeting agendas became crowded. Bowers confirmed with Tamilarasan the goal for the proposed language was improving procedural clarity.

Members also discussed ceremonial resolutions, which sometimes remained in draft form during committee review. Bowers suggested distinguishing ceremonial resolutions from others. Tamilarasan also clarified amendment procedures, noting that changes from committee to first reading did not require a formal motion to amend, but changes after first reading required a formal amendment.

Members evaluated whether Council could address items during first reading. Members expressed consensus that items should remain in committee for discussion.

Other Rule Revisions

Bowers raised Section 5.10 concerning organizational meetings and stated that the rules did not need to specify a set time. She proposed revised language stating that Council would hold an organizational meeting at the beginning of each calendar year as prescribed by the Charter to elect officers and make other designations under Section 3.20. She also proposed language stating that the first regular meeting of the year could immediately follow the organizational meeting and that Council would set the organizational meeting time at the last regular meeting of the preceding year. Padova noted that placing the organizational meeting time on the agenda would provide advance notice. Bowers suggested that Council could vote on the organizational meeting time at the last regular meeting of the preceding year or announce it under correspondence and actions.

Bowers also discussed Section 5.20(A), which referred to an informal review of the agenda at 6:45 p.m. Members discussed whether this practice remained necessary, and it was recommended the language be stricken the subsection because Council no longer held those informal reviews.

Bowers asked the committee for consideration of integrating language about summer recess into the rules, such as in Section 5.35, to indicate that consolidating meetings during summer months remained acceptable for future councils.

Bowers also raised concerns about Section 5.41 regarding executive session procedures. Padova noted that the language seemed to require Council to vote at a prior meeting in order to hold an executive session at the next meeting. Bowers explained that current practice involved a Councilmember, the City Attorney, or Administration identifying the need for executive session and stating the reason, after which the Council President placed the motion on the agenda. Clerk VanMeter agreed to assist in looking at combining some of the language of 5.41 into 5.40 for consideration at the next meeting.

Bowers discussed Section 5.51 concerning meeting locations and noted that joint Community Improvement Corporation (CIC) and Council meetings could create complications. The committee discussed how those meetings had been noticed, and Clerk VanMeter reviewed the language from the last notice issued. VanMeter stated that the issue in rules likely stemmed from Charter language requiring regular and special meetings to occur in Council chambers. Members noted that this topic might warrant a recommendation for Charter Review because future councils might want flexibility for joint meetings or alternative locations. They acknowledged that amending the rule would likely require Charter changes.

Bowers also asked for feedback on the possibility of extending the terms of the Council President and Vice President to two years to support onboarding and HR roles for the positions. Padova stated that she preferred to maintain one-year terms, but had not previously considered Council Office responsibilities. VanMeter noted that changing term length would also require a Charter amendment.

C. Meeting Outcomes and Next Steps

City Attorney Tamarasan stated that she would revise the language she discussed. Clerk VanMeter said he would prepare another redline draft, and Bowers offered assistance.

D. Adjournment

The committee adjourned at 11:10 a.m.

The next meeting was scheduled for Thursday, February 12, 2026, at 1:00 p.m. The committee anticipated presenting a report and recommendations at the Committee of the Whole meeting on Monday, February 23, 2026.

Jeremy A. Van Meter

Jeremy VanMeter, Clerk of Council

Accepted by City Council this 2nd day of March, 2026

Nancy R. McHugh

Merisa K Powers

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