



City of Gahanna

Meeting Minutes

City Council

200 South Hamilton Road
Gahanna, Ohio 43230

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

Jeremy A. VanMeter, Clerk of Council

Monday, May 19, 2025

7:00 PM

City Hall, Council Chambers

A. CALL TO ORDER: Invocation, Pledge of Allegiance, Roll Call

Gahanna City Council met in Regular Session on Monday, May 19, 2025, in Council Chambers. President of Council Merisa K. Bowers called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. Vice President of Council Trenton I. Weaver delivered an Invocation and led members in the Pledge of Allegiance. The agenda was published on May 16, 2025.

Present 6 - Merisa K. Bowers, Jamille Jones, Nancy R. McGregor, Kaylee Padova, Michael Schnetzer, and Trenton I. Weaver

Absent 1 - Stephen A. Renner

B. ADDITIONS OR CORRECTIONS TO THE AGENDA:

None.

C. PRESENTATIONS:

1. Resolution Presentation by Council - CHLOE, Inc.
Connie Nafziger, Founder
Melanie O'Neal, Executive Director

President Bowers presented a resolution recognizing CHLOE Inc. for 25 years of service to young mothers in the community. She honored its founder, Connie Nafziger, for her transformative leadership and lifelong commitment to supporting women ages 13 to 21 through mentorship, education, and parenting resources. President Bowers also welcomed incoming Executive Director Melanie O'Neal and thanked both women for their contributions.

Ms. Nafziger reflected on her time with CHLOE, calling it her dream job despite its challenges. She shared stories of the organization's impact on young mothers, emphasizing the importance of community, mentorship, and self-sufficiency. She announced her retirement and expressed full

confidence in Ms. O'Neal as her successor.

Ms. O'Neal thanked the Council and praised Ms. Nafziger as a role model. She expressed her commitment to continuing CHLOE's mission and outlined goals to address participation barriers, especially transportation, and to expand outreach and volunteer support.

2. Gahanna Energy Plus Community Choice Aggregation Rate Update
Luke Sulfridge, Executive Director, SOPEC
Stephen Harris, Regional Director for Central Ohio, SOPEC

[2025-0116](#)

SOPEC - Gahanna Energy Plus Presentation to City Council
5.19.2025

Mr. Luke Sulfridge, Executive Director of SOPEC, provided an update on the City of Gahanna's electric aggregation program. He began by thanking the City for its transparency and the information made available to residents through the City's website. He offered a brief timeline, noting that Gahanna reactivated its electric aggregation program in summer 2024, with the supply term beginning in December 2024. Mr. Sulfridge reported that, since the start of the supply term, the program had generated approximately \$423,000 in savings for participating customers, which included both residential and small commercial accounts. He emphasized that the program achieved these savings while providing 100% renewable energy. He stated that the program's dual goals-to save money and promote renewable power-had been successfully met. He added that the environmental impact was significant, equating the program's benefits to the preservation of half a million trees, with the hope of reaching the equivalent of one million trees next year. Formal year-end data would be shared once the supply year concluded at the end of the month. He shared current participation metrics, stating that 9,000 accounts were enrolled in the program. An additional 111 customers had proactively opted in, despite previously selecting other power suppliers, which Mr. Sulfridge characterized as a healthy number. He noted that the program was opt-out by default for eligible residents. Mr. Sulfridge also highlighted that the program allows for net metering, and reported that 180 participating accounts, primarily residential, had solar installations. He concluded that this was a strong indicator of Gahanna's engagement with renewable energy and a healthy benchmark for Ohio.

Mr. Sulfridge informed Council of a forthcoming price increase in the electric aggregation program, effective in June. He explained that this increase is driven primarily by a significant rise in capacity charges, which are part of operating costs within the regional power grid managed by PJM (originally serving Pennsylvania, Jersey, and Maryland, but now encompassing 13 states, including all of Ohio). Mr. Sulfridge noted that capacity charges had increased tenfold this year due to high auction prices, affecting all power suppliers, including standard service offers and aggregation programs. He emphasized that these capacity costs are driven by peak demand periods, typically on the hottest summer days between 5:00 and 7:00 p.m., when

overall grid usage is highest. He stated that SOPEC is actively working to deploy more renewable assets and encourage local solar installations to help reduce peak demand and associated capacity charges. Mr. Sulfridge presented a map of the PJM region to contextualize the issue, noting that other grid operators face similar challenges. He explained that for the upcoming supply year, Gahanna's aggregation rate will remain lower than the standard service offer (SSO) from AEP Ohio, despite the increase. The city's aggregation rate will be over two-tenths of a cent lower per kilowatt-hour than the SSO and will continue to provide 100% green energy. He also noted that residents may opt into a non-renewable ("brown") power option within the aggregation program for slightly more savings if they choose. However, the default offering remains green energy, and residents will continue to save compared to the standard market rate without taking any action. Mr. Sulfridge acknowledged the burden that rising rates could pose, especially for vulnerable households, and affirmed SOPEC's commitment to helping communities identify solutions. He announced that residents would receive a postcard with information about the rate change and instructions on how to opt in or out of the program. He added that this information would also be available on the City of Gahanna's aggregation webpage. He concluded by highlighting a federal concern: the national Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) had lost its staffing, raising uncertainty about its availability during a period when many households may need support. Mr. Sulfridge reiterated that while Gahanna's aggregation program will continue to provide savings and renewable energy, the broader market realities present financial and policy challenges for residents.

Questions from Council

Councilmember Schnetzer asked for insight into potential rate relief beyond the next 12 months, referencing factors such as data center growth, power plant retirements, market rule changes, and construction delays. Mr. Sulfridge responded that current projections suggest rates will continue to rise over the next few years, calling it a "new normal." He emphasized that delays in bringing renewable assets online-particularly due to grid operator constraints-were contributing to the issue. He explained that renewable energy sources like solar could help offset future capacity charges by producing power during peak demand times, such as summer afternoons. He also noted policy discussions occurring in other states and at the Ohio Statehouse regarding potential responses to rising costs and regional transmission operator practices.

Councilmember Jones asked for clarification on whether price increases were affecting all energy types and programs. Mr. Sulfridge confirmed that price increases were occurring across the board, including green and brown power, and for both aggregated and non-aggregated customers. He explained that base capacity costs were increasing due to grid-wide peak demand challenges and standby power requirements. He further clarified that green power itself was not driving up costs and, in fact, had become

less expensive due to falling renewable energy certificate (REC) prices.

Councilmember Padova thanked Mr. Sulfridge for the data presented and asked who would receive the informational postcard about the rate increase. Mr. Sulfridge explained that the postcard would be sent to all eligible aggregation participants, which includes households and small commercial accounts that had not opted out, shopped for their own supplier, enrolled in the PIPP program, or joined the PUCO's do-not-aggregate list. He stated that individuals who previously opted out would likely not receive the mailing, out of respect for their decision, but agreed to follow up on whether those residents could be included. Councilmember Padova asked for confirmation that the new aggregation rate would still be lower than AEP Ohio's standard service offer (SSO). Mr. Sulfridge affirmed that the new fixed rate of 9.756 cents per kilowatt-hour would remain below the SSO rate, which is expected to increase in July. He noted that the aggregation rate would be locked in for 12 months, from June through May 2026, and residents could opt in or out at any time without penalty. Councilmember Padova also confirmed that both the aggregation and SSO rates would be included on the informational postcard, helping residents compare and decide whether to participate. Mr. Sulfridge clarified that while the June SSO rate was known, AEP's rates change slightly each quarter, and the July rate would be confirmed and communicated once released.

Stephen Harris, Regional Director for Central Ohio, SOPEC, acknowledged an error in a prior slide that incorrectly included a fixed June 2025-June 2026 SSO rate. He clarified that only the aggregation rate is fixed for one year, while AEP's SSO rate may vary slightly. Mr. Sulfridge added that current and updated SSO rates would be posted on the PUCO "Apples to Apples" website and that SOPEC would update the City's aggregation webpage with relevant rate information for residents. Mr. Harris also noted that each SOPEC community has a dedicated page on the SOPEC website showing their aggregation rate.

Vice President Weaver asked when the informational postcards would be mailed to residents. Mr. Sulfridge confirmed that AEP Energy planned to send them by the end of May. Mr. Harris added that an electronic version would likely be available for Council review by the end of the current week. Vice President Weaver also raised an issue regarding residents who were eligible for aggregation but were not automatically enrolled, possibly due to miscoding or address data errors. Mr. Harris responded that some exclusions were related to incorrect street listings or tariff codes. Mr. Sulfridge added that while such issues occur occasionally due to inaccurate utility data or rate structures, the number of affected residents in this cycle appeared to be very low. He noted that SOPEC works with individual customers to resolve eligibility questions and stated that most program data would improve in future cycles as initial errors are addressed. Weaver commended staff for their responsiveness in resolving a resident's enrollment issue and confirmed there is no wholesale remedy for address or utility data discrepancies. Mr. Sulfridge explained that boundary ambiguity,

especially in urban areas, can complicate data accuracy, but reassured Council that this instance did not appear widespread.

Councilmember McGregor asked for the rate for the “brown” (non-renewable) energy option. Mr. Harris stated that the rate was 9.461 cents per kilowatt-hour. Mr. Sulfridge confirmed that residents wishing to select the brown power option could do so via phone or the website.

President Bowers asked for clarification about the relationship between SOPEC and AEP Energy, as well as how energy is procured. Mr. Sulfridge explained that Gahanna joined SOPEC’s aggregation program last year and synchronized with the broader consortium of member communities for this supply cycle. He noted that SOPEC now includes 41 member communities, with more expected to join. He explained that SOPEC works with AEP Energy to monitor the energy market and identify optimal times to purchase energy. When market conditions are favorable, AEP Energy solicits three bids from energy suppliers. This ensures competitive pricing, and SOPEC selects the lowest bid. He emphasized the advantage of this approach compared to fixed-date procurement models, which may not secure the best pricing. He noted that AEP Energy acts as the broker, purchasing power from the limited pool of active Ohio suppliers-currently estimated at five or fewer-many of which have consolidated in recent years. President Bowers acknowledged the limited supplier pool and suggested that it was an area for the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (PUCO) to monitor. She thanked Mr. Sulfridge and Council colleagues for their questions and discussion. She requested that Mr. Sulfridge send a corrected version of the presentation slide for posting and confirmed with Clerk VanMeter that the update could be submitted to him. Mr. Sulfridge concluded by encouraging residents to consult the City of Gahanna’s website or SOPEC’s website for updated information. He praised Gahanna’s website as a model for transparency and committed to ongoing communication to ensure accurate public information.

D. HEARING OF VISITORS:

Ms. Kathy McCorkle, Gahanna, OH, spoke on previous Council comments.

Ms. McCorkle responded to a previous remark by Councilmember Padova, asserting that she had not avoided contact but instead was protesting at the library. She criticized Councilmembers, including Padova and President Bowers, for failing to engage with her about a proposed natural family resolution. She argued that Council promotes LGBTQ identity groups while ignoring those who support traditional family values. Ms. McCorkle called on Council to introduce and vote on a natural family resolution and accused the administration of discriminatory treatment of residents.

E. CONSENT AGENDA:

1. Minutes - To Approve:

[2025-0106](#)

Council Regular Minutes 5.5.2025

The minutes were approved on the Consent Agenda.

[2025-0107](#)

Committee of the Whole Minutes 5.12.2025

The minutes were approved on the Consent Agenda.

[2025-0108](#)

Finance Committee Minutes 5.12.2025

The minutes were approved on the Consent Agenda.

2. Resolutions:

[RES-0021-2025](#)

A RESOLUTION HONORING CHLOE, INC. AND COMMENDING CONNIE NAFZIGER FOR 25 YEARS OF SERVICE TO YOUNG MOTHERS IN OUR COMMUNITY

The Resolution was adopted on the Consent Agenda.

[RES-0022-2025](#)

A RESOLUTION ADOPTING ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING STATION FEES PURSUANT TO CHAPTER 949 OF THE GAHANNA CODIFIED ORDINANCES

The Resolution was adopted on the Consent Agenda.

3. Ordinances for Second Reading and Adoption:

[ORD-0019-2025](#)

AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR TO ENTER INTO A SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICER (SRO) CONTRACT WITH THE GAHANNA-JEFFERSON PUBLIC SCHOOLS FOR THE 2025-2026 SCHOOL YEAR

The Clerk read the Ordinance by title. The Ordinance was adopted on the Consent Agenda.

End of Consent Agenda

A motion was made by Schnetzer, seconded by Weaver, to Pass the Consent Agenda. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 6 - Bowers, Jones, McGregor, Padova, Schnetzer and Weaver

Absent: 1 - Renner

F. ORDINANCES FOR INTRODUCTION / FIRST READING:

[ORD-0022-2025](#)

AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR TO ENTER INTO A CONTRACT WITH AECOM FOR PROFESSIONAL DESIGN

SERVICES FOR THE WEST GAHANNA SANITARY RELIEF SEWER PROJECT; AUTHORIZING SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS - CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT FUND; AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY

President Bowers introduced the Ordinance and the Clerk read it by title.

[ORD-0023-2025](#)

AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR TO ENTER INTO A CONTRACT WITH T&M ASSOCIATES FOR MAJOR UTILITY OWNER REPRESENTATION AND CONSTRUCTION ADMINISTRATION AND INSPECTION SERVICES; AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY

President Bowers introduced the Ordinance and the Clerk read it by title.

[ORD-0024-2025](#)

AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR TO ENTER INTO A CONTRACT WITH PROFESSIONAL PAVEMENT SERVICES FOR THE 2025 SIDEWALK MAINTENANCE LOOKBACK PROGRAM (ST-1115)

President Bowers introduced the Ordinance and the Clerk read it by title.

G. ORDINANCES FOR INTRODUCTION, WAIVER & EMERGENCY ADOPTION:

[ORD-0025-2025](#)

AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT WITH KING BUSINESS INTERIORS, LLC FOR FURNITURE PROCUREMENT AND INSTALLATION SERVICES FOR THE RENOVATION AND EXPANSION OF 825 TECH CENTER DRIVE; WAIVING SECOND READING AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY

The Clerk read the Ordinance by title.

Councilmember Schnetzer stated that staff had expressed concern about the potential for rising costs due to looming tariffs or related uncertainty. He added that, for the sake of the public treasury, it made sense to advance the matter as quickly as possible.

A motion was made by Schnetzer, seconded by Jones, that the Ordinance be Waived for Second Reading. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 6 - Bowers, Jones, McGregor, Padova, Schnetzer and Weaver

Absent: 1 - Renner

President Bowers added her thanks to Senior Director of Operations Kevin Schultz for a comprehensive presentation on this item at last week's Committee of the Whole.

A motion was made by Schnetzer, seconded by Weaver, that the Ordinance be Adopted as an Emergency. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 6 - Bowers, Jones, McGregor, Padova, Schnetzer and Weaver

Absent: 1 - Renner

H. CORRESPONDENCE AND ACTIONS:

1. Clerk - None.

2. Council

a. Continued Discussion on Draft Pride Month Resolution (RES-0023-2025)

President Bowers opened the discussion on the draft Pride Month Resolution, referencing Resolution No. 0023-2025. She noted that the Committee of the Whole had discussed the item the previous week and, due to the absence of additional items for this week's Committee agenda, the resolution discussion was moved to the current meeting agenda. She addressed a question raised previously regarding the meaning of the "plus" in "LGBTQ+," explaining that it is generally intended to convey inclusion for individuals whose sexual orientation or gender identity falls under the broader LGBTQ umbrella. She stated that this can include intersex, asexual, gender non-conforming, non-binary, two-spirit individuals, and others with nuanced identities. President Bowers cited GLAAD, a nationally recognized nonprofit promoting fair representation of LGBTQ individuals, which identifies both "LGBTQ" and "LGBTQ+" as acceptable terminology. She then turned the discussion over to Mr. Weaver, who introduced the resolution.

Vice President Weaver stated that he was open to substituting "IA" for the "plus" in the acronym and deferred to Councilmember McGregor for her thoughts.

Councilmember McGregor responded that she was comfortable with using "LGBTQ" and preferred it due to the specificity, stating that the additional terms felt excessive and unclear.

Councilmember Jones shared her perspective, emphasizing the importance of consensus and referencing support from LGBTQ-led organizations for both "LGBTQ" and "LGBTQ+" terminology. She cautioned against limiting acknowledgment of individuals in the community to terms others deem acceptable, noting that doing so undermines inclusivity. She reiterated the importance of recognizing LGBTQ individuals in the community and warned against the risk of conditional acceptance.

President Bowers reflected on the significance of evolving language and shared her personal experience of coming out. She recalled the Supreme Court's rulings in *Obergefell v. Hodges* ten years prior and *Bostock v.*

Clayton County five years prior, affirming equal rights and protections for LGBTQ individuals. She emphasized the desire for belonging and the importance of collective learning and protection of rights. President Bowers expressed support for using the “LGBTQ” phrasing moving forward. She concluded by noting that the resolution would be on the agenda for the first Monday in June and confirmed that Mr. Weaver planned to give a presentation at that meeting.

I. REPRESENTATIVES:

1. Community Improvement Corporation (CIC) - Renner, Padova

Councilmember Padova noted the CIC would meet Tuesday, May 20, 2025 at 8:00 AM in the Committee Room.

2. Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC) - Weaver

[2025-0109](#)

Councilmember Weaver's MORPC Report to City Council 5.19.2025

Vice President Weaver reported that the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission met on May 8, 2025, and would meet next on June 12, 2025. He noted that the Regional Policy Roundtable would meet the following day, during which State Senator Bill Demora would provide updates on pending state budget legislation. Vice President Weaver highlighted items from the full report included in the agenda. He noted that one resolution adopted at the May 8 meeting involved the approval of the State Fiscal Year 2026-2029 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), which includes more than \$1.5 billion in roadway improvements and \$2.7 billion in transit enhancements, covering over 360 projects. He announced two upcoming events: the *Transportation Innovation Forum: Smart Moves, Efficient Solutions*, scheduled for Wednesday, June 4, from 12:00 to 4:30 p.m., and *Securing Our Energy Future: Planning for a High Demand Future*, part of a four-part energy forum series, to be held on Thursday, June 5, from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. He noted that registration links for both events were included in the report.

3. Convention & Visitors Bureau (CVB) - Padova

Councilmember Padova announced that the Creekside Blues and Jazz Festival was less than a month away. She encouraged residents to volunteer by visiting creeksidebluesandjazz.com, selecting the “Engage” tab, and signing up for available volunteer opportunities. She noted that there were many different roles and time slots throughout the weekend. Councilmember Padova highlighted the festival as a great way to meet fellow residents, support the community, and become more engaged. She also mentioned a volunteer picnic scheduled for July and encouraged participation.

4. School Board (SB) - Jones

Councilmember Jones noted that four days remained in the current school year and expressed excitement on behalf of teachers, staff, parents, and students. She extended well wishes for a happy summer break to all members of Gahanna-Jefferson Public Schools (GJPS) and congratulated the Class of 2025, who would graduate on Saturday. She shared her pride in the youth of the community and emphasized that their graduation was not only a personal achievement but also a reflection of the broader community's support. She expressed hope that the community had loved, guided, and raised each graduate alongside their families and concluded by celebrating the end of the school year and the milestone of graduation.

J. OFFICIAL REPORTS:

1. Mayor

Mayor Jadwin shared highlights from the past two weeks, focusing on community engagement efforts tied to the second phase of the Gahanna Strategic Plan initiative, *Our Gahanna*. Events included Taco Tuesday and the annual Economic Development Event, which featured keynote speaker Josiah Brown. The Mayor thanked residents, small business owners, and volunteers who participated in multiple Vision Fest events, and she encouraged those who could not attend to complete the city's online survey-extended and available at Gahanna.com-as a way to provide input on the city's future. Mayor Jadwin offered special thanks to the Strategic Planning Committee, city staff, and volunteers-particularly Director Vollmer, Rachel Zarick, Kelsey Bartholomew, and Jen McBroom-for organizing these events. She noted that despite weather challenges, all events were successful.

Mayor Jadwin also acknowledged the volunteers who participated in the second annual Gahanna Bananas vs. Ohio Village Muffins baseball game, celebrating the team's improvement and the community's strong turnout. The Mayor thanked the Gahanna Historical Society, Jason Ruark (grill master), and Ron Smith (event MC), and looked ahead to a rematch next year. Additionally, she recognized the beautification efforts of Make Gahanna Yours, whose volunteers recently planted flowers around Creekside and other parts of the city.

Mayor Jadwin reminded residents that City Hall would be closed on Memorial Day and encouraged attendance at the Veterans Memorial Park ceremony at 1 p.m., organized by the VFW and American Legion. She directed residents to gahannavets.org for the full schedule of events. Lastly, the mayor congratulated the Gahanna Lincoln High School Class of 2025, applauding their achievements-including a recent track and field state title-and encouraged them to return one day as future city residents and leaders.

2. City Attorney

City Attorney Tamilarasan reported that she had been working with the Police Department to review and refine specific sections of the city's traffic code. She clarified that this effort was more limited in scope than the comprehensive annual reviews but noted that related updates would be brought to committee soon. She had no further updates.

K. COUNCIL COMMENT:

Councilmember McGregor thanked volunteers and praised the Gahanna Bananas event, noting an estimated 150-175 attendees. She also congratulated the graduating class of 2025 and shared that her grandson would be among the graduates.

Councilmember Jones highlighted her upcoming constituent hour on June 22 at Friendship Park. She acknowledged Taiwanese American Heritage Week (May 11-18) and Mental Health Awareness Month, promoting a program called the Community Care Collective by Somocom Lab, which trains community members to support mental health challenges. She encouraged those interested to apply before the June 30 deadline.

Councilmember Padova echoed appreciation for the recent economic development event, highlighting speaker Josiah Brown's impact on her understanding of community development. She also attended the Gahanna Bananas game and praised the Citizens Academy graduates, noting the value of community education. She congratulated local graduates and wished everyone a great summer.

Councilmember Schnetzer discussed Ordinance 0022-2025, which would authorize a contract with AECOM for the West Gahanna Sanitary Relief Sewer Project. He supported the project and suggested exploring debt financing options, including through the Ohio Water Development Authority. He concluded by encouraging residents to observe National Poppy Day on May 23 to honor fallen and living veterans.

Vice President Weaver thanked participants of the recent strategic plan community events and praised the community turnout despite the rainy weather. He joined an open house in the Creekway neighborhood with city leadership and developers to discuss a potential project. He extended congratulations to the graduating class and recognized the anticipation for summer break.

President Bowers commended Director Vollmer and Kelsey Bartholomew for their work on the Citizens Academy and voiced support for its continuation. She shared concerns about state legislative proposals, especially a 30% cap on school budget carryovers in House Bill 96, calling it an overreach into local governance. She encouraged vigilance in protecting home rule. She

closed by wishing all a safe Memorial Day weekend, reminded everyone that Council would not meet the following week, and extended early birthday wishes to Councilmember Renner.

[2025-0110](#)

Councilmember Jamille Jones' Constituent Report - April 2025

L. ADJOURNMENT:

With no further business before the Council, President Bowers adjourned the meeting at 8:06 p.m.

Jeremy A. VanMeter
Clerk of Council

*APPROVED by the City Council, this
day of 2025.*

Merisa K. Bowers