



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, February 5, 2024

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, February 5, 2024, in Council Chambers. President of Council Merisa K. Bowers called the meeting to order at 7:00 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 February 2, 2024.

Present 6 - Merisa K. Bowers, Jamille Jones, Nancy R. McGregor, Kaylee Padova, Stephen A. Renner, and Trenton I. Weaver

Absent 1 - Michael Schnetzer

B. ADDITIONS OR CORRECTIONS TO THE AGENDA:

None.

C. HEARING OF VISITORS:

Resolution Presentation by Council - Recognizing Black History Month

President Bowers thanked everyone in attendance for helping to celebrate Black History Month. She then recognized Councilmember Jones for the introduction of the Resolution.

Councilmember Jones expressed her excitement and gratitude for the presence of special guests to present a resolution for Black History Month. She began by reading key elements of the resolution to provide context for the selection of the special guests. Dr. Donja Thomas, an educator and activist, was highlighted for her role as the first black English teacher at Gahanna Lincoln High School and her contribution to the study of black history and literature. Jones emphasized the significance of Black History Month, citing the theme for 2024 established by the Association for the Study of African-American Life and History, which focused on "African Americans and the Arts." The resolution acknowledged the prominent influence of African-Americans in various cultural expressions, including visual and

performing arts, literature, fashion, folklore, language, film, music, architecture, and culinary arts. Furthermore, Jones highlighted the annual black cultural program, "Diaspora, Voices of an Ever Changing America," led by Dr. Thomas and Johnel Amerson, with support from Tia Holliman, Kia Germany, Rachel Manley, and Keisha Whitfield. This program aimed to debunk myths and challenge thinking, showcasing the contributions and achievements of Gahanna Lincoln students over the past 10 years. Jones then invited Dr. Donja Thomas, Johnel Amerson, Keisha Whitfield, and Gahanna Lincoln High School students to receive the resolution and participate in a photo session with the Council. She concluded her remarks by expressing thanks and mentioned that the guests would share their remarks following the photo.

Dr. Donja Thomas, Educator, Gahanna Lincoln High School:

Dr. Thomas expressed her gratitude for the opportunity to be present and participate in a historic moment for the Gahanna Jefferson School District, recognizing the importance of Black History Month and the significant contributions of black people and culture to the foundation of America and the city. Dr. Thomas shared that for over a decade, she has been actively involved in creating classroom curriculums that center on critical conscious literacies rooted in the black experience to advance black studies in K through 12 schooling. She highlighted the creation of "African-American Voice" during the 2009-2010 school year, addressing the lack of black representation in the GLHS English curriculum and the absence of black cultural knowledge among students. She expressed her concern about the silence of black people in American school curriculums, questioning how one can study history, literature, science, race, language, economics, and the arts without intentionally focusing on the contributions of black people. Dr. Thomas informed the council about the development of a new course called Afro Heritage Literature, set to be available for students during the 24-25 school year, with African-American Voice becoming an 11th-grade course offering, and Afro Heritage Literature an additional 12th-grade course dedicated to centering the international black global experience through literary studies. In addition to her role as a classroom teacher, Dr. Thomas proudly mentioned her involvement as one of the three creative directors of the black cultural program "Diaspora." Inspired by the efforts of students in her African-American Voice class, this annual event has grown to attract audiences averaging around 650 people. Dr. Thomas emphasized the importance of providing students with learning spaces that encourage critical thinking, cultural consciousness, social justice, equity-focused learning, teaching, and service. She stressed the significance of empowering young people to question and seek truth independently, especially in a society driven by powerful political forces. Dr. Thomas described her teaching philosophy, emphasizing that she provides learning environments where students make meaning for themselves and develop a complex understanding of the world. She highlighted the yearly redesign of her courses to keep content fresh and progressive, tailored towards social relevance, historical application, student interest, and learning goals. Expressing her deep connection with her students, Dr. Thomas reiterated her commitment to providing tools for independent thinking rather than dictating what to think. She declared her love

for her students and expressed belief in their potential to bring about positive change in the world. Dr. Thomas concluded her remarks by thanking the council for allowing her to speak and share her passion for black history and education.

Dallas Printup, student, Gahanna Lincoln High School:

Ms. Printup took the floor to express appreciation and admiration for her teacher, Dr. Donja Thomas. She began by praising Dr. Thomas as a fantastic teacher who not only cares about her students but also creates distinctive relationships with each of them. Ms. Printup shared that conversations with Dr. Thomas left her feeling inspired and educated, highlighting Dr. Thomas's ability to remember and follow up on previous discussions. She emphasized Dr. Thomas's efforts to make every student feel loved and cared for, citing a daily routine where she and her friend Sophia would talk to Dr. Thomas before their math class for a positive boost. She also acknowledged the significance of having Dr. Thomas as a black, female teacher, providing positive representation that was particularly meaningful in a school like Gahanna. Ms. Printup, who is currently enrolled in Dr. Thomas's English 11 class, expressed her anticipation for taking Afro Heritage next year, a course created by Dr. Thomas to continue educating students and accommodate those who wanted to take AA Voice during their senior year. Ms. Printup highlighted the unique aspects of Dr. Thomas's classroom, including daily meditation sessions that helped center the students. She described the classroom environment as motivating, providing a refreshing break and fostering a love for the curriculum. Unable to find the right words to describe the experience, Ms. Printup concluded by stating that Dr. Thomas is "the kind of teacher you tell your kids about."

Max Piccolantonio, student, Gahanna Lincoln High School:

Mr. Piccolantonio, a senior at Gahanna Lincoln High School, shared his positive experiences in Dr. Donja Thomas's class, specifically in African-American Voice. He began by expressing his gratitude for the opportunity to learn about black history and experiences, analyze literature and media by black creators, and extensively write about the topics explored in the class. As a senior, he emphasized that he had never encountered such depth and richness in any other class, except for AA History, another black-centered class at GLHS. One of Piccolantonio's favorite experiences from African-American Voice was a field trip to an art exhibit downtown titled "This is a black neighborhood." The exhibit featured various sounds from the artists' neighborhood captured on recordings and played through speakers. Max described how this unique field trip allowed the class to engage with the subject in an unconventional way, making it easier to digest and enjoyable. He noted that it was his first field trip since middle school, and the experience enhanced the learning process beyond what a normal class could offer. Mr. Piccolantonio attributed these unique and independent teaching methods to Dr. Thomas's unmatched and dedicated commitment to ensuring her students get the most out of their education. He expressed extreme gratitude for having the opportunity to take African-American Voice and credited the class, especially Dr. Thomas, for providing him with knowledge and

understanding of complex ideas and histories that he wouldn't have obtained otherwise.

Santino Williams, II, student, Gahanna Lincoln High School:

Mr. Williams shared his heartfelt thoughts and appreciation for his teacher, Dr. Donja Thomas. He began by reflecting on the impact of individuals who have influenced him as he envisions his future, acknowledging his parents and Dr. Thomas as key figures. He expressed a deep belief that Dr. Thomas has inspired and empowered him to grow as a black man in Gahanna, particularly noting the profound influence she has had on his aspirations to become a mechanical engineer. Mr. Williams highlighted Dr. Thomas's teachings, emphasizing the valuable lesson that black history and culture cannot be confined to just one month. He spoke passionately about the enduring impact of this realization, stating that it has strengthened his resolve to excel in every field and pursue his goals with pride. Expressing regret that he couldn't have taken Dr. Thomas's class earlier, Mr. Williams recounted his recent participation in Diaspora, where he sang, danced, and delivered a motivational speech. He shared the camaraderie and bonding moments with Dr. Thomas during lunch and before performances, noting the significance of having fun while pursuing one's passions. He conveyed Dr. Thomas's lesson that power is knowledge, emphasizing how her class has ignited his hunger for delving deeper into black history. Mr. Williams expressed a deep appreciation for the love and connection Dr. Thomas has fostered, describing her as the first teacher who has cared for him in such a profound way. Reflecting on the rehearsals and auditions leading up to Diaspora, Mr. Williams praised the dedication and hard work Dr. Thomas invested in the production. He encouraged others to witness the play, which presented diverse perspectives, including the experience of being a black nerd in an all-white classroom. In conclusion, Mr. Williams declared Dr. Thomas as the best teacher he has ever had, not just for what she teaches but for the genuine and impactful connections she forges with her students.

Olivia Lewis, student, Gahanna Lincoln High School:

Ms. Lewis shared her unique perspective and deep appreciation for Dr. Donja Thomas. She began by noting that her experience is different, as both her parents are educators. She highlighted the special connection she has with Dr. Thomas and expressed her gratitude for the impact the teacher has had on her. She recounted the first day of senior year when Dr. Thomas welcomed her with a warm "Good morning, sunshine!" Ms. Lewis acknowledged that she had heard about Dr. Thomas through various sources, including friends, social media, and the show "Diaspora," which she would elaborate on later. Ms. Lewis described Dr. Thomas as having an aura that sets her apart, being bright, sensitive, intelligent, strong, and compassionate. She praised Dr. Thomas as an outstanding educator who introduced students to black historical events and literature not covered in the traditional public school system. Ms. Lewis emphasized the unique curriculum Dr. Thomas created, delving into impactful and sometimes painful events that the new generation needs to know. Beyond being an educator, Ms. Lewis highlighted Dr. Thomas's roles as a writer, speaker, and creator of

the show "Diaspora." She expressed pity for those who hadn't experienced the show, explaining that after attending her first "Diaspora," she was moved by Dr. Thomas's passionate speech, sparking a desire to know her better. Ms. Lewis recounted her participation in "Diaspora, Voices of an Ever Changing America," where she witnessed Dr. Thomas's dedication to putting together a show that provided insights into various cultures and backgrounds. She emphasized the show's impact on dispelling misconceptions about the black community. The student shared her personal struggles, including medical conditions and the loss of loved ones, and praised Dr. Thomas for understanding and supporting her. She highlighted the teacher's daily reminders of the light within her and expressed gratitude for the healing impact of Dr. Thomas's listening and belief in her imperfections. Ms. Lewis spoke of her growing inspiration and the hope to embody the beautiful qualities she sees in Dr. Thomas. She concluded by stating that anyone who has crossed paths with Dr. Thomas is truly blessed, emphasizing the teacher's genuine nature and describing her as a goddess with high power, a blessing on Earth, and an individual highly deserving of recognition. Ms. Lewis concluded with a heartfelt thank you.

Councilmember Jones thanked all the students, Dr. Thomas, Keisha Whitfield, and Johnel Amerson for their attendance tonight. She remarked that the City had a wonderful way to celebrate and honor Black History Month through tonight's presentation.

President Bowers reflected on how tonight's Resolution recipients exemplified excellence and the best of the City's schools. She also acknowledged the presence of school board members, Superintendent Dr. Deagle, in bearing witness to the incredibly powerful display of gratitude and inspiration from the speakers.

Resolution Presentation by Council - Recognizing Mr. T's Pizza

President Bowers began by recognizing the celebration of a small business, the hard work and dedication that goes into running a small business, and the importance of uplifting that. She yielded to Councilmember Renner for remarks and presentation of the Resolution recognizing Mr. T's Pizza and the Armstrong Family.

Councilmember Renner expressed his appreciation and recognition of the Armstrong family for their significant contributions to Gahanna's food economy through Mr. T's Pizza. He acknowledged the recent closure of Mr. T's Pizza on Saturday, February 3rd, and emphasized the importance of taking a moment to recognize the legacy of Mr. T's Pizza in the community. He announced the introduction of a resolution, and proceeded to read it aloud. The resolution detailed the history of Mr. T's Pizza, highlighting its origins in the 1970s as the creation of Tom Snyder near Gahanna at Agler and Stelzer Road. The document noted the contributions of Jeffrey Armstrong and his father Jim Armstrong to the business, their expansion of Mr. T's Pizza, and its reopening in 2018, bringing together families and residents from both Gahanna and Mifflin townships. Councilmember Renner outlined Mr. T's Pizza's role in fostering a vibrant food economy through its dedication to

quality service and community engagement. The pizza shop was recognized as a strong community partner, actively supporting local school fundraisers and charitable initiatives, including toys for underprivileged children in Gahanna and Mifflin Township. Expressing the sentiment that Mr. T's Pizza would be greatly missed in the social fabric of the small city, Councilmember Renner conveyed the council's anticipation of the day when Mr. T's Pizza would reopen its doors and contribute once again to the vibrant food economy of Gahanna. The resolution, presented by Councilmember Renner, officially recognized February 5th, 2024, as Mr. T's Pizza day for the City of Gahanna. The resolution expressed the council's gratitude to the Armstrong family for their years of hard work and wished them well in their future endeavors.

Jeffrey Armstrong, proprietor, Mr. T's Pizza:

Mr. Armstrong expressed his gratitude and reflections on the journey of Mr. T's Pizza. He began by acknowledging the pivotal role of his parents, stating that none of the success would have been possible without them. Mr. Armstrong specifically mentioned his mother's dedicated service to the city of Gahanna for over 30 years, expressing appreciation for her contributions. He also noted that his father played a significant role in instilling values in him, teaching him how to treat people and the importance of giving back to the community. Reflecting on the history of Mr. T's Pizza, Mr. Armstrong shared that it took him some time to gather himself after the closure in 2002, but he eventually found the strength to continue the legacy in line with his father's wishes. He expressed profound thanks to his parents for the foundation they provided. Mr. Armstrong extended his appreciation to his family, acknowledging his wife and children for their unwavering support throughout the challenges and successes. He recognized that they had been through a lot, emphasizing the importance of their role in the Mr. T's Pizza journey. Expressing gratitude to the City and the community, Mr. Armstrong acknowledged the support they received over the years. He humbly mentioned that while Mr. T's Pizza had done very little to give back, they remained committed to being present in the community and continuing to contribute as a family. In conclusion, Mr. Armstrong struggled to find words but simply expressed his thanks to everyone.

President Bowers thanked the Armstrong family for their hard work and contributions to the city. She wished them all the best in their next chapter.

Members of the Public

President Bowers acknowledged having received one speaker slip but asked for confirmation through the Clerk as to whether the speaker was still in Chambers or had left. Clerk VanMeter confirmed the speaker was no longer in attendance.

D. PRESENTATIONS:

[2024-0028](#)

Power a Clean Future Ohio - Aggregation Presentation

Councilmember Renner noted that Council had previously heard from

NOPEC and SOPEC on the topic of energy aggregation. He had invited Joe Flarida, who he had met through a Gahanna resident, to speak on this topic as well. Mr. Flarida represented an independent party that could assist the City in navigating the path forward with energy aggregation.

Mr. Flarida expressed gratitude for the invitation to be present. He commended Council for what he described as one of the more inspiring starts to a city council meeting that he had witnessed. Mr. Flarida introduced himself as the Executive Director of Power a Clean Future Ohio, a nonprofit organization working with local governments in the state to promote clean energy, sustainability, and climate change mitigation. He conveyed his intention to provide insights into how cities could set and achieve clean energy goals in collaboration with Power a Clean Future Ohio and other local governments. He outlined the topics he intended to cover during his presentation, including the role of his organization, the concept of Community Choice Aggregation (CCA) as a tool for local governments, and the process for joining Power a Clean Future Ohio as a member community. Mr. Flarida expressed his willingness to address questions during the presentation or at its conclusion. He then proceeded to share more details about the organization and its initiatives, aiming to empower local governments in their efforts towards a cleaner and more sustainable future.

Mr. Flarida highlighted the mission of Power a Clean Future Ohio, which launched in February 2020, aiming to collaborate with local governments to reduce emissions and grow the clean energy economy in Ohio. He emphasized the organization's commitment to providing support to local governments in terms of capacity, technical expertise, funding opportunities, policy priorities, and identifying suitable partners. He clarified that participation in Power a Clean Future Ohio is entirely free for local governments, thanks to support from philanthropic partners. However, he mentioned that passing a resolution in city council is the one necessary step for a community to become a member of Power a Clean Future Ohio. This resolution allows communities to access technical experts and support networks offered by the organization.

Mr. Flarida provided an overview of Power Clean Future Ohio's goals and initiatives during the city council meeting. He highlighted several key objectives, emphasizing the organization's commitment to helping local governments reduce costs, embrace clean energy technology, and assist vulnerable community members in lowering their utility bills and transportation burdens. He emphasized the importance of growing the clean energy economy in Ohio and positioning it as a source of job opportunities. He underscored the organization's dedication to addressing environmental justice concerns and reducing emissions in both the short and long term, with a focus on equitable and measurable outcomes. Mr. Flarida outlined the steps for local governments to engage with Power Clean Future Ohio, starting with passing a resolution. He explained that the organization could collaborate with designated leads, such as city staff members or elected officials, to identify grant opportunities, navigate policy questions, and establish partnerships. Regular progress reports and collaboration sessions with local governments were highlighted to ensure goals were achieved on the desired timeline.

Providing insights into the organization's track record, Mr. Flarida mentioned that Power Clean Future Ohio currently collaborates with 48 local governments across the state. He encouraged council members to reach out to these communities, ranging from large cities to small villages, to inquire about their experiences and the diverse types of work undertaken in collaboration with Power Clean Future Ohio over the past four years.

Mr. Flarida delved into the various tools and support offered by Power Clean Future Ohio (PCFO) to local governments aiming to achieve their environmental goals. He emphasized the significance of having a comprehensive plan, not only for goal achievement but also for maximizing the opportunities provided by federal grants and tax incentives. Highlighting some tools available through PCFO, Mr. Flarida mentioned a fleet analysis for evaluating the suitability of vehicles for electrification, energy efficiency programs to enhance operational efficiency, and measures to decrease the energy burden on residents. He discussed the importance of addressing high energy burdens, defined as spending more than 6% of daily income on energy expenses. He also touched on Community Choice Aggregation, solar code updates, and shared examples of PCFO's collaboration with other cities. These examples included a tree canopy assessment in Canton, the establishment of the 1% for the environment budget amendment in Toledo, and a greenhouse gas inventory in Dayton. The latter uncovered that 14% of the city's emissions originated from municipal operations, emphasizing the direct control municipalities have over such emissions and the need for targeted actions. Mr. Flarida stressed the importance of optimizing existing initiatives, fostering environmental justice, and considering comprehensive community-wide approaches. He illustrated PCFO's commitment to helping local governments identify and address environmental challenges and opportunities.

Mr. Flarida shifted the discussion towards Community Choice Aggregation (CCA), offering a brief overview to ensure clarity on the subject. He emphasized that PCFO doesn't serve as an aggregator or broker but is dedicated to educating and advising local governments on emission reduction and climate goal achievement. Describing aggregation as a form of collective bargaining, Mr. Flarida highlighted Ohio's unique position, as it is among the few states with access to this deregulated market tool. He clarified that while aggregation can secure better terms for residential electricity, large businesses are not included. PCFO sees aggregation as the most impactful tool for emission reduction in the near term. Addressing what aggregation is and isn't, Mr. Flarida stressed that it's not a guaranteed savings mechanism and doesn't guarantee reliability during blackouts. He made it clear that aggregation is not a tax on residents, and it is not mandatory for cities that possess the aggregation authority. He outlined the key requirements for implementing aggregation, including the need for a majority vote, forming a plan of operations, and conducting public hearings to address concerns. Mr. Flarida explained the opt-out process, where automatic notices are sent to enrolled residents, giving them the choice to opt out. He also mentioned that PCFO can assist local governments in navigating the complexities of aggregation and optimizing programs to benefit the community.

Mr. Florida provided a historical overview, noting that Gahanna City Council passed an ordinance in August 2000, leading to a ballot initiative where Gahanna voters supported the aggregation authority with approximately 70% in favor. He proceeded to explain the mechanics of electricity supply, detailing the separation of distribution and generation due to the deregulated market. AEP Ohio owns the distribution lines, while entities like AEP Energy handle electricity generation. Without aggregation, consumers typically stick with their utility's standard service. However, aggregation allows a local government to group consumers, giving them the ability to make choices in the energy supply market. Mr. Florida highlighted the advantages of aggregation, such as the ability to purchase electricity at the right time for the best price, ensuring the type of energy aligns with community preferences. This localized approach contrasts with larger utility systems that cater to millions of consumers.

Mr. Florida concluded his presentation by addressing the impact of energy prices on residents. He highlighted the significance of price differences, explaining that a jump from 7 to 10 cents per kilowatt-hour could result in an additional \$30 per household per month. He discussed the current market conditions, emphasizing the volatility caused by factors such as supply chain issues, the war in Ukraine, inflation, and state regulatory choices. He provided a snapshot of prices in the central Ohio region for communities with aggregation programs, showcasing rates around 7 cents per kilowatt-hour. Columbus, with an additional incentive for local renewable energy generation, was at 7.99 cents per kilowatt-hour. Mr. Florida compared these rates to Ohio's current price to compare, which stood at 11.32 cents per kilowatt-hour. Mr. Florida then presented key questions for consideration, encouraging the council to think about the city's goals with Community Choice Aggregation, the preferred process for implementation, the level of education and engagement needed, and any additional goals aligned with climate, sustainability, or clean energy. He concluded by offering his contact information and expressing eagerness to collaborate with Gahanna on various policy topics, including aggregation.

President Bowers expressed her gratitude to Director Florida for his insightful presentation on aggregation, acknowledging that it was the third presentation on the topic in approximately the last six months. She clarified that while Mr. Florida's presentation wasn't exclusively limited to aggregation, it was a crucial and relevant subject. President Bowers emphasized the significance of the information shared and thanked Mr. Florida for representing Power a Clean Future Ohio and providing valuable insights. Before opening the floor to questions, President Bowers turned the discussion back to Councilmember Renner, asking if he had any thoughts or summaries to share regarding the presentation.

Councilmember Renner expressed his appreciation for the presentation and mentioned that he is currently working on a resolution to join PCFO. He anticipated bringing the resolution to a Committee of the Whole for a thorough discussion, emphasizing the importance of the topic, especially given his current focus on energy and policy in his education program. Councilmember Renner acknowledged that the subject of aggregation has made some

colleagues nervous, particularly concerning the opt-in/opt-out process. He directed a question to Mr. Flarida, seeking clarification on whether there are limits or conditions related to the opt-in/opt-out process. Councilmember Renner inquired about the possibility of setting terms in the contract with an aggregator to allow residents to rejoin the program after opting out.

In response to Councilmember Renner's question, Mr. Flarida explained that local governments have the authority to influence the terms of the opt-in/opt-out process. He emphasized that during negotiations or when drafting requests for proposals, local governments can specify their preferences, including conditions under which residents can opt back into the program. While certain conditions may apply, Mr. Flarida assured that working with an aggregator willing to accommodate such preferences is possible.

President Bowers expressed gratitude to Councilmember Renner for inviting Mr. Flarida to provide information about the resources offered. She thanked Mr. Flarida for the presentation and acknowledged the importance of the topic. President Bowers indicated that they are looking forward to engaging more extensively in the discussion with the administration, including the mayor and city attorney, to ensure collaboration and progress on the matter. She concluded by thanking everyone for their time.

E. CONSENT AGENDA:

1. Minutes - To Approve:

[2024-0025](#)

CN Minutes 1.16.2024

The minutes were approved on the Consent Agenda.

[2024-0026](#)

COTW Minutes 1.22.2024

The minutes were approved on the Consent Agenda.

[2024-0027](#)

FIN Minutes 1.22.2024

The minutes were approved on the Consent Agenda.

2. Motions:

[MT-0004-2024](#)

A MOTION TO APPROVE SEASONAL EMPLOYMENT OF CHARLIE SCHNEIDER AS COUNCIL OFFICE INTERN THROUGH THE MID-OHIO REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION (MORPC) SUMMER INTERNSHIP PROGRAM AT A RATE OF \$15.99 PER HOUR

3. Resolutions:

[RES-0002-2024](#) A RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING FEBRUARY 2024 AS BLACK HISTORY MONTH AND HONORING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF AFRICAN AMERICANS IN THE CITY OF GAHANNA

[RES-0004-2024](#) A RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING MR. T's PIZZA LEGACY ON GAHANNA'S FOOD ECONOMY

4. Ordinances for Second Reading and Adoption:

[ORD-0001-2024](#) AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR AND DIRECTOR OF ENGINEERING TO ENTER INTO CONTRACT WITH D AND SIX SONS PAINTING, LLC, FOR THE WATER TOWER REHABILITATION PROJECT

[ORD-0002-2024](#) AN ORDINANCE TO ACCEPT A GENERAL WARRANTY DEED FROM 307-309 W JOHNSTOWN ROAD LLC FOR 0.197 +/- ACRES OF RIGHT-OF-WAY DEDICATION ALONG A PARCEL LOCATED AT 307-319 W JOHNSTOWN ROAD

End of Consent Agenda

A motion was made by Renner, seconded by Padova, to adopt the items under the Consent Agenda as published. The motion carried by the following vote:

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

Absent: 1 - Schnetzer

F. ORDINANCES FOR INTRODUCTION / FIRST READING:

[ORD-0004-2024](#) AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS - Water Meter Fees

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

[ORD-0005-2024](#) AN ORDINANCE PROVIDING FOR THE ISSUANCE AND SALE OF BONDS IN THE MAXIMUM PRINCIPAL AMOUNT OF \$68,000,000, IN ONE OR MORE SERIES, FOR THE PURPOSE OF PAYING THE COSTS OF ACQUIRING, CONSTRUCTING, RENOVATING AND IMPROVING MUNICIPAL FACILITIES, INCLUDING CONSTRUCTING, RENOVATING AND IMPROVING ADDITIONAL PUBLIC SAFETY FACILITIES FOR POLICE DEPARTMENT OPERATIONS, FURNISHING AND EQUIPPING THE SAME, IMPROVING THE SITES THEREOF, ACQUIRING LAND AND INTERESTS IN LAND IN CONNECTION THEREWITH, WATER, SANITARY SEWER AND STORM WATER IMPROVEMENTS, AND OTHER IMPROVEMENTS, RELOCATION, OR ADDITIONS TO UTILITY INFRASTRUCTURE, TOGETHER WITH ALL

NECESSARY AND RELATED APPURTENANCES THERETO; AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY

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

[ORD-0006-2024](#) AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS - Capital Improvement Fund and General Fund for 825 Tech Center Drive Project

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

G. CORRESPONDENCE AND ACTIONS:

1. Clerk

[2024-0024](#) Ohio Division of Liquor Control Notice to Legislative Authority Permit NEW 2393331 EAGLE ACADEMY OF COLUMBUS INC DBA CAMPUS AND CO - COLUMBUS; 460 HAVENS CNR RD, GAHANNA, OH 43230

Clerk VanMeter highlighted the Ohio Division of Liquor Control's notice to the legislative authority for a new permit for Eagle Academy of Columbus Inc, doing business as Campus and Co - Columbus, located at 460 Havens Corners Road, Gahanna. He informed the council that he had reached out to the Division of Police, and Chief Spence indicated there were no objections from the division as to the new permit but that he understood there may be questions from Council.

President Bowers acknowledged that there were questions regarding this item, especially concerning its proximity to the high school. She expressed the importance of ensuring that the school is aware of the permit request and mentioned a desire to understand the proposed model. President Bowers noted that, based on information from Mr. VanMeter, they had until later in February to request a hearing on this item. She suggested bringing this matter to Committee of the Whole for a discussion next week and then back to the regular agenda for a motion on the 19th.

[CC-0001-2024](#) To recommend approval to Council for the repeal and replacement of Part Eleven - Planning and Zoning Code of the Codified Ordinances of the City of Gahanna.

Clerk VanMeter presented the next item, which originated from the Planning Commission. The item recommended approval to Council for the repeal and replacement of Part 11 (Planning and Zoning code) of the codified ordinances of the City of Gahanna. He mentioned that a presentation from Director Blackford would accompany this item during the upcoming Committee of the Whole scheduled for the next week. Additionally, Clerk VanMeter informed the Council that the Council Office had posted public hearing notices for the two hearings required by the City Charter. The first public hearing was scheduled for Monday, March 4th, and the second public hearing for Monday, March 18th, both at 7:00 p.m. in Council Chambers.

2. Council - None.**H. REPRESENTATIVES:****1. Community Improvement Corporation (CIC) - Renner, Weaver**

Vice President Weaver reported on the CIC's recent activities. The CIC held its organizational meeting on January 17th, selecting Betty Collins as president, George Mrus as vice president, Jeff Kessler as treasurer, Jody Carter as the chair of the real estate committee, Jeff Kessler for the finance committee, and Kelly Fox for the governance committee. Regular meetings are scheduled for the 3rd Tuesday of each month from 8 to 9 am, with special invitations extended to all council members, especially in the June and December meetings. Financially, the CIC ended the year with just under \$144,000 in cash and received a clean audit from the state auditor. Vice President Weaver mentioned two items not reflected in the budget: a hopeful grant for property demolitions from the COCIC and council-approved funding for the CIC. Development updates included ongoing discussions with several companies looking to expand their businesses in the community and progress on a nearly 291,000 square foot spec building on Eastgate, valued at \$26 million. In terms of governance, Opal Brant's nomination to join the board was approved.

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

Vice President Weaver provided updates on MORPC activities. The first commission meeting was scheduled for the upcoming Thursday, featuring a lunch and conversation with the CEO of the Columbus Regional Airport Authority. Vice President Weaver expressed anticipation for the event and mentioned plans to provide a more comprehensive update in the future. Additionally, on February 27th, an event focusing on the partnership between local government and public school districts was planned. Vice President Weaver announced that she would be honored to have Superintendent Dr. Tracy Deagle as her guest for that meeting, emphasizing the importance of collaboration between different entities for community development.

3. Convention & Visitors Bureau (CVB) - Padova

Councilmember Padova provided updates on upcoming events in the community. The Creekside Charity Chocolate Walk was announced to take place on Sunday, February 18th, from 2:00 to 5:00 in the Creekside District. Proceeds from the event would benefit organizations associated with Give to Gahanna. Councilmember Padova mentioned that tickets were limited and available on the Visit Gahanna website, under events and on Facebook. Over 10 locations were participating in the charity chocolate walk. Additionally, Councilmember Padova encouraged marking calendars for Visit Gahanna's annual meeting on Wednesday, March 20th, from 11:30 to 1:00. More details and speakers for the event would be announced later. The Committee and

Visit Gahanna staff were actively planning the 25th Annual Creekside Blues and Jazz Festival. Councilmember Padova highlighted that sponsorships were available, and vendor applications were being accepted. The headliners for the festival would be announced soon, and there were expectations of new and significant acts for the 25th-anniversary celebration.

4. School Board (SB) - Jones

Councilmember Jones informed the council about the recent appointment of Megan Dimmerling to the school board. Ms. Dimmerling, a resident of the district for nine years and an intervention specialist at Dublin Scioto High School, was welcomed to the board. Councilmember Jones expressed anticipation for the official meeting with Ms. Dimmerling and underscored the importance of continued collaboration between the school board and the city. Councilmember Jones provided a brief recap of the State of the Schools address that occurred the previous week, highlighting the resource expo showcasing various tools, experiences, and curriculum offered by the district. Dr. Deagle emphasized the district's commitment to inspiring leaders and building futures, emphasizing collaboration for achieving success. Councilmember Jones mentioned that the State of the Schools address would be available on the district's YouTube channel. Additionally, Councilmember Jones reminded everyone about the upcoming Gahanna Gala on February 24th, serving as a fundraiser for the Gahanna Jefferson Education Foundation. While there were still tickets available, Councilmember Jones mentioned that they were limited. The theme for the event was the roaring '20s, and Councilmember Jones encouraged attendees to dress up and enjoy the evening.

I. OFFICIAL REPORTS:

1. Mayor

Mayor Jadwin provided an update on various city initiatives and events during the council meeting. She began by mentioning the Active Transportation Plan, funded by a grant from the Ohio Department of Transportation. The plan focuses on enhancing the city's walkability, bikeability, and overall accessibility. The mayor informed the council that MORPC would incorporate the plan's results into regional planning to ensure alignment with other jurisdictions in the region. She urged residents to participate in a survey seeking input on their travel habits, available on the city's Facebook page and website until February 25th. Mayor Jadwin acknowledged the outstanding achievement of Julie Predieri, the City's Forestry Supervisor, who was named one of the 2024 "30 under 30" by the National Recreation and Parks Association. She commended Predieri's contributions to the city, particularly her work on the street program and the development of the level one Arboretum at Creekside. The Mayor shared her recent participation in the Gahanna area Chamber of Commerce's annual meeting, where she discussed the city's business growth and future trends. She highlighted Mark Patton's keynote presentation, emphasizing regional trends and collaborative efforts with agencies like the Columbus Partnership. Mayor Jadwin invited

everyone to the next Gahanna 175 meeting on February 6th at 6:00 p.m. at City Hall, discussing the city's upcoming 175th-anniversary celebration. She also mentioned the "Night of Gahanna Storytelling" event on Saturday, March 8th, featuring short films created by Gahanna resident and documentary filmmaker Tim Courlas.

2. City Attorney

City Attorney Tamilarasan provided an update on legal matters to the council during the meeting. She reported on a previous litigation involving Speedway Towing that had been stagnant since August 2022. The City Attorney informed the Council that a decision had been rendered today in favor of the City. The summary judgment motion was granted, leading to the dismissal of all pending litigation related to Speedway Towing. She expressed satisfaction with the resolution of the case, indicating that the litigation was now concluded. In addition, City Attorney Tamilarasan shared an initiative she implemented in Mayor's Court. A community service program was introduced, allowing individuals to engage in community service as an alternative resolution for their legal matters in Mayor's Court. She mentioned that she had partnered with local nonprofits for this program and welcomed suggestions for additional partnerships in the community.

J. COUNCIL COMMENT:

Councilmember Jones began by expressing gratitude to Dr. Thomas, Johnel Amerson, Keisha Whitfield, and the students, Olivia Lewis, Max Piccolantonio, Sontino Williams, and Dallas Printup, for their inspirational contributions at the meeting. She thanked them for kicking off Black History Month in a meaningful way. Next, Councilmember Jones mentioned that her first constituent report is available and has been shared as part of the meeting minutes for reference. She concluded comments by announcing her upcoming event, "Community Connects," which provides an opportunity for conversations with residents. The event is scheduled for February 13th at 6:00 PM in the conference room in the lobby of City Hall. Councilmember Jones invited residents to attend and share their questions, concerns, and ideas.

Councilmember McGregor began her comments by expressing gratitude to the students for sharing their appreciation for their teacher. She acknowledged the heartfelt sentiments and recognized the impact of the teacher on her students. She then informed the council about a coyote workshop taking place at Peace Lutheran on Saturday from 3:00 to 5:00 PM. Dr. Stanley Gehrt, an expert in coyote studies, would lead the workshop. McGregor shared a personal experience with coyotes near her home. She highlighted the importance of understanding coyote behavior, especially since they are present in Gahanna. The workshop required a \$5 donation. On a more somber note, Councilmember McGregor shared a passage from Psalm 23, reflecting on the peaceful words and expressing condolences for her friend, Susie, who had recently passed away. Councilmember McGregor concluded her comments by offering condolences and expressing her wishes for Susie's peaceful rest.

Councilmember Renner began by extending his condolences to Councilmember McGregor for the loss of her friend, expressing sympathy during a difficult time. He then joined others in acknowledging the impactful speech by Dr. Thomas and the choir of students organized by Councilmember Jones. Councilmember Renner expressed gratitude for bringing such inspirational voices to the council meeting. Councilmember Renner took a moment to recognize the Armstrong family, offering congratulations to them. He reflected on the significance of Mr. T's Pizza Shop, stating that it is more than just a pizza place; it's an integral part of the community fabric. He shared personal memories of visiting the shop with his wife back in 1993 and how it became a memorable part of their lives. In the final part of his comments, Councilmember Renner thanked his colleagues for their support in recognizing Mr. T's Pizza Shop. He also expressed gratitude for the presentation by Joe Flarida of the PCFO, emphasizing the importance of being aware of disruptive technologies in the marketplace, particularly in the energy sector. Councilmember Renner concluded his remarks by hinting at future discussions on this matter.

Councilmember Padova expressed gratitude to Councilmember Renner for organizing the presentation by Mr. Flarida, expressing her interest in learning more about aggregation and its potential benefits for the city. She conveyed excitement about the prospect of bringing savings to the community through aggregation. Councilmember Padova also extended her appreciation to Councilmember Jones for bringing Dr. Thomas and the students who spoke at the meeting. She commended Dr. Thomas for her dedication and expressed admiration for her humility, noting that while Dr. Thomas hoped her students would change the world, she herself was actively contributing to that change. Councilmember Padova concluded by thanking Dr. Thomas for her presence at the meeting and for her impactful contributions.

Vice President Weaver began by offering condolences to Councilmember McGregor for the loss of her friend, acknowledging the significance of close friendships that can be akin to chosen family. He expressed gratitude to Mr. Flarida for his informative presentation, commending Councilmember Renner for organizing the session. Vice President Weaver also thanked Councilmembers Jones and Renner for leading resolutions during the meeting. Congratulations were extended to Mr. T's Pizza and the Armstrong family, with Vice President Weaver emphasizing the crucial role of small businesses in fostering a strong community. He recognized the dedication and hard work that goes into running a small business and appreciated the Armstrong family's contributions to the community. Vice President Weaver was deeply moved by the presentations from Dr. Thomas and her students. He shared his personal connection to education through his wife, a Gahanna teacher, and expressed admiration for the impact Dr. Thomas had on her students. Reflecting on the progress made over the years, Vice President Weaver emphasized the ongoing need for conversations, education, and collective effort to address the challenges that remain.

[2024-0029](#)

Councilmember Jamille Jones' Constituent Report - January 2024

K. ADJOURNMENT:

With no further business before the Council, President Bowers adjourned the meeting at 8:25 p.m.

Jeremy A. VanMeter
Clerk of Council

*APPROVED by the City Council, this
day of 2024.*

Merisa K. Bowers