



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, August 4, 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, August 4, 2025, in Council Chambers. President of Council Merisa K. Bowers called the meeting to order at 7:05 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 August 1, 2025.

Present 7 - Merisa K. Bowers, Jamille Jones, Nancy R. McGregor, Kaylee Padova, Stephen A. Renner, Michael Schnetzer, and Trenton I. Weaver

B. ADDITIONS OR CORRECTIONS TO THE AGENDA:

None.

C. PRESENTATIONS:

Resolution Presentations by Council:

1. Franklin County Fair Queen Recognition
Recipient: Kate Acklin

Vice President Weaver introduced Ms. Kate Acklin, who was recently named the Franklin County Fair Queen of 2025. She has been a 10-year exhibitor and 4-H member at the Fair, as well a four-year member of the Franklin County Farm Bureau. She has been 4-H camp counselor at the county and state level, a member of both the Franklin County Junior Fair and the Ohio State Fair Junior Fair Boards. Weaver described skills that Ms. Acklin has attained during this time, including negotiation, public speaking, caring for livestock, and hunting and cooking. Ms. Acklin cares for an active farm in West Jefferson, providing her with firsthand experience. Weaver described Ms. Acklin's background as extensive in service within the Gahanna and

Central Ohio community, including her work as a volunteer for the Miracle League, March of Dimes, Highpoint Elementary, St. Stephen's House, and G.R.I.N. Ms. Acklin has also been a Run the Race volunteer, mentored at-risk youth, was active in the DeSales Autism Awareness Club, and was a cheerleader, volleyball player, and tennis player. Weaver remarked on Ms. Acklin's ability to participate in a multitude of activities. He invited Ms. Acklin to take a photo with Council, and to share any remarks of her own.

Kate Acklin introduced herself as the 2025 Franklin County Fair Queen. For those unfamiliar with the Franklin County Fair, Ms. Acklin shared there are activities for all ages, beyond those that she is involved in, which include 4H and Farm Bureau. Council President Bowers thanked Ms. Acklin and her family for attending the meeting.

2. Master Municipal Clerk Certification

Recipient: Jessica Hilts, Management Analyst

President Bowers introduced the next resolution, honoring Council Office staff member Jessica Hilts for obtaining the Master Municipal Clerk (MMC) designation through the International Institute of Municipal Clerks (IIMC), which is the highest designation a professional clerk can achieve through the IIMC. Mr. VanMeter added that Ms. Hilts has showed her commitment to the city and profession through continuous educational endeavors and providing excellent public service. He expressed pride in the work that Jessica does every day to support City Council through communications and legislative research. Mr. VanMeter invited Mollie Prasher, Clerk of Council for the City of Reynoldsburg, to share additional remarks on Jessica's achievement.

Mollie Prasher introduced herself as a past president of the Ohio Municipal Clerks Association (OMCA) and the Clerk of Council for the City of Reynoldsburg. She expressed honor to be able to attend the meeting to recognize Jessica Hilts with her MMC Certification. Ms. Prasher explained that The MMC is issued by the IIMC. The IIMC is a professional organization founded in 1947 with over 15,000 members internationally, including the United States, Canada, Europe, Australia, New Zealand, and Africa. The primary goal of IIMC is to actively promote the continuing education and professional development of municipal clerks through educational programs, certifications, publications, networking, annual conferences, and research. Ms. Prasher explained that the Master Municipal Clerk is a designation program designed to enhance the job performance of the clerk in both small and large communities. To earn the MMC designation, a municipal clerk must have earned the certified municipal clerk's level and continue to attend extensive education programs. The designation also requires pertinent experience in a municipality. The program prepares the participant to meet the challenges of the complex role of a municipal clerk by providing quality

education in partnership with 47 institutes of higher learning. The program has been in existence since 1970 and has helped thousands of clerks in various municipalities. Ms. Prasher also remarked on having previously presented Ms. Hilts with her Certified Municipal Clerk (CMC) designation. She described the journey to certification as tedious and expressed that the MMC is a designation very few clerks are able to accomplish. Out of 15,000 international municipal clerk members, Jessica is one of 2,968 members worldwide to obtain this certification. In Ohio, she is only the 49th clerk to hold a current MMC designation. Ms. Prasher stated that Ms. Hilts is dedicated to the City of Gahanna and works very hard to do the best job possible for the city and its residents. Ms. Hilts has also been a dedicated and active board member of the Ohio Municipal Clerks Association. Ms. Hilts and Ms. Prasher joined City Council for a photo.

Ms. Prasher then shifted to recognize Clerk of Council Jeremy VanMeter for recently earning his CMC designation. She stated that out of the 15,000 international clerks, Mr. VanMeter is one of 3,626 members worldwide and 103rd in the State of Ohio to earn the CMC. She described Mr. VanMeter as a dedicated member of the OMCA Board and expressed pride in working with both Ms. Hilts and Mr. VanMeter.

President Bowers thanked Ms. Prasher for recognizing the Council Office team, noting they work tirelessly to provide records, organize legislation, send out communications, among other work. Bowers invited Ms. Hilts to share comments.

Ms. Hilts took a moment to thank the Council for their support, noting the importance of having supportive leaders as Clerks. Ms. Hilts extended her thanks to her family, as well as mentors such as Ms. Prasher.

D. HEARING OF VISITORS:

Connor Woltman-Frollini of Gahanna, OH, spoke on protections for the rights of the LGBTQIA+ community of Gahanna.

Mr. Woltman-Frollini described himself as deeply concerned about the welfare of the LGBTQ+ community in Gahanna. He noted that since the 2024 election, calls to suicide crisis lifelines from LGBTQ+ youth have spiked by over 700%. Additionally, 41% of LGBTQ+ youth have seriously considered suicide, while nearly half of LGBTQ+ youth have reported wanting therapy but not receiving it. He urged community members to take a stand, adding that bullying, stigma, and lack of social and political acceptance are driving the LGBTQ+ community to a brink. Additionally, safe places like Quiet Club Youth Center are losing the vital funding and resources needed to continue doing their work. Recently, the Center had 22 beds for homeless LGBTQ+ youth

cut in half, dropping to 11 beds. Mr. Woltman-Frollini expressed that youth are beginning to be afraid to walk into the very places that are meant to support them. He stated the issue was about humanity rather than politics and highlighted multiple jurisdictions that have passed ordinances that aim to protect the rights of the LGBTQ+ community. He urged Gahanna City Council to follow in their footsteps, noting that Whitehall specifically has banned conversion therapy and considers the City a safe haven for the LGBTQ+ community. He stated that health professionals attempting to help youth are being silenced, while youth are falling through the cracks. He asked Council to help make Gahanna a beacon of hope for the LGBTQ+ community.

Samuel Graff of Gahanna, OH, spoke on the proposed Velocis tax abatement.

Mr. Graff spoke on the Velocis tax abatement, stating that he regularly watches the livestreamed Council meetings and has been following the issue for a couple of months. He recalled hearing another resident speak against the tax abatement, as well as reading a *Dispatch* article on the topic. He attended the meeting to speak in support of the tax abatement for Velocis. As a homeowner and resident of the community, he wants Gahanna to continue to thrive and remain competitive in the surrounding areas. He shared that he moved to Gahanna from out of state seven years ago and has watched the surrounding communities thrive. He believes tax abatements are crucial in bringing businesses like Velocis into the area.

Paul Smith of Dallas, TX, spoke as one of the five Velocis partners.

Mr. Smith stated he was one of five Velocis partners. They represent the equity for the development. He wanted to address Council for two reasons. First, he noted there was confusion or concern about litigation regarding a project in Bee Cave, in the area of Austin, Texas. Second, he planned to speak on sponsorship for the project. Mr. Smith stated his belief there had been confusion or concern about the lawsuit with Bee Cave. Due to litigation, he could not share openly, but he shared with Council that Velocis and Bee Cave were headed to a settlement. He acknowledged some documentation still needed but stated a lot of activity happened over the weekend that was good news for the City of Bee Cave and good news for the project. He described that an existing tenant in Bee Cave plans to expand, increasing jobs from 100 to 550. Mr. Smith stated this tenant was presented to the City of Bee Cave as a resolution, which was embraced by the city, and it was voted on as of last Tuesday, July 29, 2025. He believed they were headed for settlement and that this would be a win-win situation. He believed this news should clear up most concerns about the existing litigation related to the Bee Cave project. Additionally, regarding sponsorship, the primary equity for the

proposed Gahanna development is being provided by Sumitomo Corp of America, which is a \$40 billion company based in New York City, with a parent company in Japan with over \$100 billion in assets. He noted they were excited to be here and part of this project. On the debt side, the lender is Huntington Bank, headquartered locally. Huntington is a \$210 billion bank. Mr. Smith described Huntington Bank as excited to be providing the debt financing for the project. He described the depth of the equity and debt sponsorship as unique. Mr. Smith closed by thanking Council for their efforts in understanding the dynamics behind the project.

Jonathan Postweiler of Hinsdale, IL, spoke on ORD-0030-2025 (Velocis abatement).

Mr. Postweiler described positive anticipated economic impacts to the city if the ORD-0030-2025 was passed by City Council. He stated the city currently receives \$406 of revenue generated from the site, but it would bring in an excess \$40,000 annually to the city when developed. There are currently no jobs or payroll. He noted the requested 12-year 80% abatement is below the most recent approved speculative abasement, and no TIF dollars are sought with this project. Mr. Postweiler stated the economic need for the abatement has been demonstrated, and the financial justification for the 80% abatement has been proven. He noted that corporate build-to-suit owner-users will not target the site due to the site constraints. Mr. Postweiler expressed that the project is the highest and best use for the site, and the economic case has been demonstrated. He described the site as being underutilized for decades with no material interest or serious inquiries regarding the site. He stated the targeted use for the site has been approved by Planning and Zoning, and a grant investment has been approved by JobsOhio. He stated the business' organizational structure mirrors other institutional owners within the community, and active unrelated litigation of past applicants did not disqualify them from receiving more favorable abatement terms. Mr. Postweiler stated the likely tenant profile for the facility is a local or regional company directly benefiting the community. He shared that Gahanna was the top-choice for an undisclosed tenant referenced in the July 21, 2025 meeting. He added that a lease execution hinges upon the tax abatement approval, describing the process as detailed and lengthy, noting a five-month period between application and the vote tonight, which included five separate public meetings. He noted that Council previously expressed concerns about the emergency clause and, as a result, they withdrew that request for emergency. He reviewed that the city attorney expressed concerns about assignment language on July 31, 2025, and as a result, the company modified the language to mirror that of the Scannell project. Mr. Postweiler stated that a vote against the ordinance is a vote to suppress job growth, reject guaranteed revenue for the community, disregard the Planning Department's approvals

for industrial development at the site, overshadow the state's desired financial contribution, forfeit the long-term economic benefits the project offers, and undermines the ability to lease the facility to a tenant KBC is actively negotiating with. Additionally, he said it signals a desire to leave the property vacant. He urged Council to support the project.

Linda Fromm of Upper Arlington, OH, spoke on the KBC development as the VRG Chairman.

Ms. Fromm introduced herself as the widow of Barry Fromm, founder of Value Recovery Group (VRG). She described VRG as woman owned and family operated. She has been a member of the Gahanna community since 2005, when her late husband and VRG partnered with Franklin County and the City of Gahanna to clean up the Bedford Landfill. The project evolved, and roads and properties were developed, which attracted jobs and investments that have added over \$500,000 to the city's real estate tax base. She recalled a period of three years in which the City suspended Independence Day fireworks, and the Fromm's business was able to provide fireworks at the Golf Depot. Today, VRG owns land in Gahanna, pays property tax, and works attract development and jobs to the city. She explained that VRG has worked to have the site developed, with very few prospects, for 16 years. She described the due diligence done by VRG and being encouraged by JobsOhio approval. Ms. Fromm shared that they had spent hundreds of hours meeting with buyers, KBC and Velocis, outside professionals, advisers, and partners and joining many of their internal discussions. Ms. Fromm stated that from her team's experience, KBC's transparency exceeded past buyers, and was confident that their presence in Gahanna would deliver results. She expressed that not approving the ordinance would be a crushing blow to Gahanna's competitiveness and future prospects for growth, believing it would be much harder for VRG to sell Gahanna. She emphasized her pride in the VRG's accomplishments for the city and pledged her team would continue this impact. Ms. Fromm concluded that Council's approval was critical to Gahanna's future, shared her thanks to Council, and looked forward to the remainder of the meeting.

Beau Taggart of Upper Arlington, OH, spoke on ORD-0030-2025 (Velocis abatement).

Mr. Taggart introduced himself to Council as the operator of the KBC Ohio office, along with his partner Joe Kimener. He stated his family has built buildings and owns businesses in Gahanna, highlighting a long history of investment in the city. He has spent his career representing corporate industrial users and has guided local companies and multinational firms alike. He has transacted over \$900 million work of industrial real estate over the

years, and he highlighted some of his recent projects, including Illuminates (Pataskala), Pharmavite (New Albany), and Behr Paints (Hebron). He stated they brought high quality jobs to central Ohio, which required significant state and local incentives. Mr. Taggart added that industrial users are not developers or investors. They do not spend time and capital solving issues concerning zoning, utilities, traffic studies, wetlands, or endure lengthy due diligence processes with the risk of being voted down. They rely on professionals like KBC and Velocis to take on the risk and solve the site's challenges to deliver a turnkey solution. He noted that the projects he highlighted were delivered with all entitlements, infrastructure, and a 15-year 100% tax abatement. Mr. Taggart stated the site has sat vacant for so long because there has been no solution created for today's industrial occupier, and without the availability to provide a solution, including a tax abatement, the site will remain vacant. He stated the project represents the highest and best use for the site, adding that it brings a modern building that aligns with existing zoning, and solves all barriers that a user would face, in order to bring high quality jobs and investment to Gahanna. He ended by reiterating Mr. Postweiler's comment that this project was on a shortlist for a national industrial supply company serving local trades.

Eric Fullam of Gahanna, OH, spoke via video on street repairs.

Mr. Fullam stated he has had continual problems with driveway and street repair at his property. His driveway apron has been redone three times and needs to be done again. He stated others have had similar issues. He shared a post on the Facebook page "Take Back Gahanna" and heard from others that have also dealt with driveway issues. He stated that as a community, Gahanna needs its properties to look better, or at least the same as they did prior to repairs. He did not feel adequate notice was given to property owners regarding driveway apron replacement. Mr. Fullam expressed that half of the apron was replaced, and the entire apron should have been replaced. He also shared his confusion of the policy and who makes decisions on driveway apron replacement. He stated the importance of having high standards for the type of work being done, adding that it took multiple contact attempts to receive a reply from city staff. He closed by expressing the importance of having quality work done for the city's residents.

E. PUBLIC HEARINGS:

[ORD-0031-2025](#) AN ORDINANCE TO LEVY SPECIAL ASSESSMENTS FOR CERTAIN REAL ESTATE WITHIN THE 2022 SIDEWALK MAINTENANCE PROGRAM, TO APPROVE COSTS AND QUANTITIES, AND TO DECLARE AN EMERGENCY

Public Hearing held August 4, 2025.

[ORD-0032-2025](#) AN ORDINANCE TO LEVY SPECIAL ASSESSMENTS FOR CERTAIN REAL ESTATE WITHIN THE 2024 SIDEWALK MAINTENANCE PROGRAM, TO APPROVE COSTS AND QUANTITIES, AND TO DECLARE AN EMERGENCY

Public Hearing held August 4, 2025.

[ORD-0034-2025](#) AN ORDINANCE TO REAUTHORIZE AND AMEND THE CREEKSIDE OUTDOOR REFRESHMENT AREA (CORA) IN ACCORDANCE WITH OHIO REVISED CODE 4301.82

Public Hearing held August 4, 2025.

Clerk VanMeter read into the record the three ordinances to be considered under one public hearing, ORD-0031-2025, ORD-0032-2025, and ORD-0034-2025. President Bowers asked if the administration would like to make any presentation or comment. The administration had no further presentation or comment. President Bowers noted the rules for the public hearing pursuant to Council Rule 9.10 and 9.11.

President Bowers opened the public hearing at 7:44 p.m.

Erica Parker, 304 Haymarket Place, Gahanna, OH.

Ms. Parker attended the meeting to contest the 2022 Sidewalk Maintenance Program. She stated that she did not acquire the property until June of 2024 and was against sharing the cost for the sidewalk program. She was not aware of what part of the sidewalk had maintenance performed on her property. The total cost to be assessed was \$946.22.

Erin Smith, 634 King George Ave, Gahanna, OH, spoke via video.

Ms. Smith spoke on the 2022 Sidewalk Maintenance Program, of which she was a part. She requested that extra assistance be provided for properties on corner lots, which shoulder more of the cost burden than other properties. She expressed that she supports the improvements and wants Gahanna to be handicap accessible. As a possible solution, Erin provided two suggestions to Council. First, a lot-split could occur so that she only paid for the improvements that accomplished the goal of making Gahanna more accessible. Or, additional assistance could be provided to those who have corner lots. She expressed appreciation for the 50% cost share, but noted that her neighbor paid around \$200 while her cost was over \$1,700. Of the 258 parcels involved in the 2022 Sidewalk Maintenance Program, Ms. Smith said her assessment was the third highest cost of improvement. Overall, only

15 parcels were over \$1,000. She noted that about 10% took on the repairs themselves and could not attest to their costs. She closed by acknowledging that Council was “stuck between a rock and a hard place” with this issue, and again hoped for an extra boost in cost-share as a corner lot. She thanked the city for its efforts in making Gahanna more accessible.

Christian Salamon, 911 Ashford Glen Dr, Gahanna, OH.

Mr. Salamon addressed Council regarding sidewalk program concerns. He stated he and his wife moved to Gahanna just weeks ago and had several things to address in their new home, including plumbing. The storm water drain underground was crushed where it met the sidewalk and it was anticipated to be an expensive fix. He hoped for leniency on his portion of the sidewalk program.

Judit Bach, 644 Moss Oak Ave, Gahanna, OH.

Dr. Bach spoke on the Sidewalk Maintenance Program. She stated there was a discrepancy between the original plan and the completed project. She stated two blocks were to be changed, which did not happen. She contacted the city during the winter, and was told the project would continue after winter. However, she received a notification and expressed confusion about the status of the project. She expressed concern that if she would have to perform the work herself without the 50 percent share, it would be much more, when it had originally been included as part of the program.

President Bowers closed the public hearing at 7:53 p.m. and noted that speakers may receive outreach from the administration. She added that the Sidewalk Maintenance assessment ordinances would be voted on during a subsequent Council meeting.

F. CONSENT AGENDA:

1. Minutes - To Approve:

[2025-0149](#)

Council Regular Minutes 7.21.2025

The minutes were approved on the Consent Agenda.

[2025-0150](#)

Committee of the Whole Minutes 7.21.2025

The minutes were approved on the Consent Agenda.

2. Motions:

[MT-0008-2025](#) A MOTION AUTHORIZING THE CITY OF GAHANNA BIDDING FOR THE 2025 STREET REBUILD AND SIDEWALK MAINTENANCE PROGRAM WITH WATERLINE REPLACEMENT (ST-1116)

The Motion was approved on the Consent Agenda.

[MT-0009-2025](#) A MOTION AUTHORIZING THE CITY OF GAHANNA BIDDING FOR THE TAYLOR ROAD WATER MAIN REPLACEMENT PROJECT

The Motion was approved on the Consent Agenda.

End of Consent Agenda

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

Yes: 7 - Bowers, Jones, McGregor, Padova, Renner, Schnetzer and Weaver

G. RESOLUTIONS:

[RES-0032-2025](#) A RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING AND HONORING KATE ACKLIN, 2025 FRANKLIN COUNTY FAIR QUEEN

President Bowers thanked Miss Acklin and her family for attending. She recognized Gahanna residents who had participated in the Franklin County Fair and the Ohio State Fair. She noted that a number of urban farmers, urban beekeepers, and craftspeople lived in Gahanna and submitted projects to the fairs through 4-H or other entryways. She said the fairs provided a way to keep those cultural activities alive and expressed appreciation for the residents' contributions and for the recognition Vice President Weaver had brought forward that evening.

A motion was made by Weaver, seconded by Schnetzer, that the Resolution be Adopted. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 7 - Bowers, Jones, McGregor, Padova, Renner, Schnetzer and Weaver

[RES-0033-2025](#) A RESOLUTION COMMENDING JESSICA HILTS, MANAGEMENT ANALYST, ON THE ACHIEVEMENT OF "MASTER MUNICIPAL CLERK" (MMC) AS AWARDED BY THE INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF MUNICIPAL CLERKS

A motion was made by Weaver, seconded by Schnetzer, that the Resolution be Adopted. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 7 - Bowers, Jones, McGregor, Padova, Renner, Schnetzer and Weaver

H. ORDINANCES FOR INTRODUCTION / FIRST READING:

[ORD-0031-2025](#) AN ORDINANCE TO LEVY SPECIAL ASSESSMENTS FOR CERTAIN

REAL ESTATE WITHIN THE 2022 SIDEWALK MAINTENANCE PROGRAM, TO APPROVE COSTS AND QUANTITIES, AND TO DECLARE AN EMERGENCY

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

[ORD-0032-2025](#)

AN ORDINANCE TO LEVY SPECIAL ASSESSMENTS FOR CERTAIN REAL ESTATE WITHIN THE 2024 SIDEWALK MAINTENANCE PROGRAM, TO APPROVE COSTS AND QUANTITIES, AND TO DECLARE AN EMERGENCY

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

[ORD-0034-2025](#)

AN ORDINANCE TO REAUTHORIZE AND AMEND THE CREEKSIDE OUTDOOR REFRESHMENT AREA (CORA) IN ACCORDANCE WITH OHIO REVISED CODE 4301.82

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

I. ORDINANCES FOR SECOND READING / ADOPTION:

Recommended Amendment - Removal of Emergency Declaration

[ORD-0030-2025](#)

AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR TO ENTER INTO A COMMUNITY REINVESTMENT AREA AGREEMENT WITH VELOCIS GAHANNA JV, LP TO FACILITATE THE CONSTRUCTION OF AN INDUSTRIAL BUILDING ON PARCELS 027-000110-00 AND 025-13634-00 ON TECH CENTER DRIVE, PART OF COMMUNITY REINVESTMENT AREA #3; AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY

The Clerk read the Ordinance by title.

On the question of adoption, Schnetzer moved and Renner seconded.

President Bowers noted the need to amend the ordinance in three ways: 1) amending the second parcel number in the title and body of the ordinance (change to 025-013634-00), 2) removing the emergency declaration, and 3) substitute the EXHIBIT A for attachment labeled "CRA Agreement DRAFT CLEAN, KBC-Velocis. 08.04.2025."

On the question of amendments as articulated by President Bowers, Weaver moved and Schnetzer seconded.

Discussion on the Amendment

Councilmember Schnetzer requested that City Attorney Tamilarasan summarize, in layman's terms, the draft titled "CRA Agreement DRAFT

CLEAN, KBC-Velocis. 08.04-2025,” highlighting key changes and the rationale behind them.

City Attorney Tamilarasan explained that, in addition to correcting typographical errors, the bulk of the changes addressed two areas. First, she revised the section defining job creation and payroll to reference the chart because the previous language created ambiguity about whether the minimum threshold payment applied from year one or only in year seven; she amended the language to reference the chart. Second, she revised the assignability provisions. The original draft allowed assignment as a right without city approval, so she added city oversight of assignability for subsequent transfers or purchasers, with two exceptions: an internal change of company ownership that merely changed the company name, and assignments required by a bank as part of financing. She noted that the city would have the right to approve subsequent transfers except in those two situations. Tamilarasan reported that the administration circulated a form to implement that oversight and that she submitted a draft form modeled on the Scannell deal CRA assignment. She described the draft as a two-page document that outlined assignment obligations and warranties confirming that the obligations had been fulfilled to date and that the new company would assume all responsibilities and benefits of the original agreement. She stated that, given the amount of due diligence in the transaction, she considered protections for subsequent transfers necessary and expected in this case. She concluded by saying that those constituted the bulk of her recommendations to ensure the contract remained legally sound.

A motion was made by Weaver, seconded by Schnetzer, that the Ordinance be Amended. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 7 - Bowers, Jones, McGregor, Padova, Renner, Schnetzer and Weaver

Discussion on the Ordinance as Amended:

Councilmember Schnetzer said he hoped Gahanna residents found assurance in the degree of due diligence performed on the matter. He noted the value of having three independently elected, co-equal branches of government, Council, the Administration, and the independently elected City Attorney's office, each of which had played a major role in reaching the current point. He praised the Administration for conducting extensive due diligence and presenting the economic case, observed that Council had asked pertinent questions, and acknowledged the City Attorney's substantial effort and multiple revisions, including work over the weekend. He stated his confidence that the Council would reach the right decision, given the all-hands-on-deck approach.

Councilmember Padova thanked everyone who had worked on the matter and everyone who had attended the meeting. She said she appreciated the

intention behind the proposal and the desire to support continued development in Gahanna. She stated that she had voted no on a similar abatement three years earlier and that she would vote no again that evening for the same reason: she could not support tax abatements for billion-dollar companies while residents struggled with rising property taxes. She emphasized that her objection concerned the system rather than the companies involved. She acknowledged that abatements represent common economic development practice but questioned whether the practice served as good policy or simply as a norm. She described Velocis as a billion-dollar investment firm that would profit by renting space and employ roughly thirty-seven people at an average annual wage of about \$55,000, and she expressed hope for the project's success if the ordinance passed. Ultimately, she said the Council would offer a tax break to a corporation with vast resources while collecting full taxes from everyday workers, and that disconnect led her to vote no to show her commitment to Gahanna residents.

Councilmember McGregor stated that she did not favor tax abatements but recognized they constituted a tool the city must use. She observed that other communities used the tool and that, if Gahanna declined to use it, the city would lose economic development opportunities to neighboring jurisdictions. She added that abatement programs reduce taxes collected by other entities such as the library and senior services, but she characterized the abatement as a state-approved economic tool commonly used across Ohio and said failing to use it would seem shortsighted.

Vice President Weaver thanked the applicant, the Administration, and Director Gottke for their efforts and for the memo circulated to Council. He reiterated that communities possess various tools to attract and retain businesses and that tax incentives, including abatements, form part of that tool chest. He described the objective of a well-used abatement as attracting a business that would not locate in Gahanna "but for" the incentive, and he said the city undertakes such actions on the belief that the end use will produce a net benefit. He acknowledged he had weighed pros and cons and noted that the parcel had remained vacant and underutilized for some time; he said a spec warehouse did not seem an inappropriate use and that the guaranteed income tax represented a benefit. He expressed concern about the percentage and term of the abatement and about the comparability of historical agreements. He raised accountability concerns regarding subsidiary entities and the lack of clarity about who would ultimately uphold the agreement. He also criticized comments pointing to a lengthy timeline for considering the abatement, observing that Council had had the application since June 9, 2025, still advancing the ordinance to a first reading knowing it was going to go back to Committee of the Whole. He expressed pride in his colleagues for asking questions. He reported that residents had pulled him

aside in public extensively to discuss the abatement application and stated that, while he appreciated ongoing efforts with site development and the proposed guaranteed income tax, he would vote no on the application.

Councilmember Renner said the project had not initially excited him but that he considered it his duty to evaluate proposals on substance rather than first impressions. He noted the parcel had remained undeveloped for thirty years, lay within a designated community reinvestment area, and that the CRA aimed to incentivize private investment, attract job-creating businesses, and strengthen the tax base. He acknowledged the significance of a twelve-year, eighty percent abatement, approximately \$3.72 million over the term, while noting the developer would pay the remaining twenty percent of property taxes. He referenced Director Gottke's memo, which projected a sixty-nine percent return on investment and an expected \$2.57 million value to the city and community. He recalled past periods when the city sought development interest and argued the proposal could reactivate dormant land, attract private investment, and build long-term tax revenue. From a sustainability perspective, he called the project smart land use and praised the site as infill development that reused land with existing infrastructure. He raised concerns that the project might not include strong environmental design standards or robust support for clean transportation and expressed apprehension about adding to regional traffic and emissions, while noting potential future mitigation through vehicle electrification and cleaner freight. He acknowledged that thirty-seven jobs might seem modest but urged viewing the project as part of a larger strategy to restore economic energy in the area. He concluded that, despite imperfections, the proposal represented progress and that, on balance, he believed it made sense for Gahanna; he stated he would vote in favor of the ordinance.

Councilmember Jones thanked everyone who had invested time and effort in the process. She said the parcel had proved difficult to develop and that she had weighed the proposal to determine the best opportunity for the community. She stated she did not believe the proposal served the community's best interest and listed several unresolved concerns that left her uneasy. She said many residents had raised questions that had not yet answered to her satisfaction. She thanked Councilmember Padova for remarks on tax abatements, acknowledged that abatements represented a common practice, and said the proposal felt tone-deaf given the financial strain on many residents. She noted the project had been described as speculative and observed that the Council later received an update indicating the tenant identity, which remained confidential; she said that confidentiality and the lack of openness made it difficult to evaluate benefits and risks. She raised concerns about the agreement's layered structure and said the complexity prompted questions about whether the process obscured

information. She said the prospect of the building being sold in a few years suggested a transactional relationship and stated that residents and she wanted partners, not investors who merely sought profit. She concluded that the agreement felt transactional rather than partnership-oriented and said she would cast a no vote.

Councilmember McGregor said she understood that the tax abatement applied to a business and acknowledged that property taxes presented a heavy burden for many individuals. She said rejecting the proposal would not reduce residents' property taxes and observed that the school district would receive a substantial increase in revenue from the development that would not occur if the Council rejected the project. She said rejecting the project would shift the burden back to residents and argued that encouraging development helped support school levies and other tax needs.

Mayor Jadwin said she appreciated the comments and observed the Council had discussed the project for approximately six to eight weeks since its initial presentation. She said everyone on Council held the community's best interest at heart and that the administration sought opportunities to position the city for long-term economic success. She explained that the city funded many services largely through income tax generated by local businesses and jobs and listed recent examples of services and programs, such as swearing in a new police officer, promoting a dispatcher, a new street sweeping program, and the street and sidewalk cost-sharing mechanism, that depended on such revenue. She said the administration evaluated incentives strategically, described the project as addressing a regional demand for small flex industrial space, and noted that nine spec warehouse projects had emerged in the Columbus region since the council first discussed the proposal on June 9, 2025. She said two Gahanna businesses sought larger space and currently looked in other communities, and she argued the project could offer room for existing businesses to grow. She named several companies that had started in spec warehouse space and later became community partners: ADB Safegate, Benchmark Industrial, the Romanoff Group, and Grimco. She said the project could create diverse job opportunities and that incentives remained a widely used municipal tool until state policy changed. She stated the administration vetted projects and sometimes declined them when the return on investment did not justify incentives. She said Director Gottke had presented a detailed analysis of the project's benefits and reiterated that the school district's property tax revenue would increase from \$406 annually to \$44,000 annually on the land value, representing a 107 percent increase, and that the district would continue to receive that revenue while the abatement would apply to 80 percent of new vertical value. She identified Nate Green of the Montrose Group, Director Gottke, and JobsOhio as economic development experts who had evaluated

and supported the project, and she said she trusted the directors and experts who had guided the administration. She urged Councilmembers to support the project.

President Bowers thanked the Mayor for her remarks and acknowledged the need to create jobs that produce diverse workforces. She thanked attendees who had traveled from Texas and Illinois and specifically thanked Mr. Postweiler and the Fromms for sharing information and for VRG's contributions to Gahanna. She clarified that the vote that evening did not concern zoning nor whether VRG could or should sell to the applicant. She stated the vote concerned an 80 percent abatement for 12 years, which she estimated would total approximately \$3.7 million in tax relief, or roughly \$310,000 annually. She said the project projected to generate approximately 37 jobs at an average salary of about \$55,000 per year and that the site would provide room to house 30 semi-tractor trailers. She described the site location at the top of Tech Center Drive adjacent to the trail that runs between neighborhood communities off Taylor Road into Edison and the businesses that have developed along Tech Center and Science. She reiterated that the Council did not yet know who the tenant would be for the speculative warehouse. President Bowers acknowledged the rationale for speculative development and noted that, as proposed, the project could proceed if the owner paid the assessed property taxes. She said the item before Council instead requested that Council subsidize those taxes and emphasized that the decision to grant an incentive remained wholly discretionary; she added that no applicant, whether a local small business or a large out-of-state investment group, held an entitlement to an abatement. She said Council historically had acted intentionally, thoughtfully, and respectfully when evaluating incentives to ensure the city approved deals that made sense for the community. She listed recent incentive approvals-Columbus Aesthetic and Plastic Surgery, Burns and Scalo, and Ortho One-and said Council had asked similar questions of the KBC Velocis team regarding hiring practices, interest in Gahanna, and the likelihood the business would remain in city limits. She said the Council had not obtained many of those answers for the current proposal because the end user remained unknown. President Bowers thanked Mr. Postweiler for sharing transparency that, she said, indicated the tenant likely would leave after the abatement expired to locate a cheaper, newer facility that also offered an abatement; she said that remark illustrated the transactional nature referenced earlier by Councilmember Jones. She observed that others had described abatements regionally as a "race to the bottom" and stated that the short-term benefit in the present case would accrue to KBC, Velocis, and VRG. She expressed concern that the city might end up with another vacant property at the end of the abatement term, albeit developed. She briefly referenced pending litigation involving the City of Bee Cave, Texas, and noted that the third amended complaint had appeared after

discovery began; she said she had observed comments at the July 21, 2025, meeting that characterized those allegations as baseless and that she had noticed a similar tenor between the parties in that litigation and among participants in the Council discussion. She agreed with Councilmembers Padova, Weaver, and Jones that, although the project might produce some benefit by bringing 37 jobs, she did not see value in a \$3.7 million abatement and therefore could not support the request.

A motion was made by Schnetzer, seconded by Renner, that the Ordinance be Adopted as Amended. The motion failed by the following vote:

Yes: 3 - McGregor, Renner and Schnetzer

No: 4 - Bowers, Jones, Padova and Weaver

J. CORRESPONDENCE AND ACTIONS:

1. Clerk - None.

2. Council

President Bowers noted that the latest bimonthly newsletter was available and indicated that attendees could view a copy linked on the agenda.

Sign up for City Council Newsletter here: <https://www.gahanna.gov/list.aspx>

[2025-0148](#)

Your City Council at Work Newsletter - May-June 2025

K. REPRESENTATIVES:

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

Councilmember Padova reported that the next meeting for CIC will be on August 19, 2025 at 8 a.m.

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

Vice President Weaver reminded members that Clerk VanMeter had circulated invitation to the Summit on Sustainability scheduled for Tuesday, September 30, 2025. He encouraged members to reserve a spot. He also noted he would have more to report at the next regular meeting.

3. Convention & Visitors Bureau (CVB) - Padova

Councilmember Padova thanked everyone who had attended the Spirit Station on Saturday to cheer on the Pelotonia riders. She said the turnout had

been great and praised the partnership with Make Gahanna Yours, noting that riders waved, rang bells, and blew bubbles as they passed. She asked attendees to save the date for Holiday Lights on November 23. She announced that Visit Gahanna was partnering with Experience Columbus to offer a Gahanna-area Experience Columbus Insider (ECI) accreditation course on Tuesday, August 19, 2025, from 1:00 to 5:00 p.m. at the library and said interested persons could contact Visit Gahanna or Experience Columbus.

4. School Board (SB) - Jones

Councilmember Jones noted that GJPS students would return to school in ten days and used the opportunity to review the district's communication channels. She listed the district website, social media, email or phone contact for building staff, talking points for those with students, and a monthly newsletter delivered by email to which anyone could subscribe; she added that parents in the district automatically received the newsletter and offered to provide signup information to anyone who did not receive it. She reported that the district sent two mailers each year to all registered voters in the district, often containing financial information of interest to residents. She also reminded Council that the school board offered regular board meetings, workshops, and informal opportunities such as "coffee and conversation," and she said that all of that information appeared on the district website.

L. OFFICIAL REPORTS:

1. Mayor

Mayor Jadwin extended her congratulations to Cindy Macioce and Jeff Shellhammer for their vision and for bringing the Gahanna Lincoln High School alumni musical performance of *42nd Street* to life. She said the performance, which occurred about ten days earlier, featured exceptional performers, musicians, costumes, and set design and rivaled Broadway touring shows. She expressed hope the performance could become an annual event and thanked those who brought the production to the community. Mayor Jadwin reported that Saturday August 2, 2025, had featured many community events: the Spirit Station from Pelotonia, the 50th anniversary celebration of the Gahanna Municipal Golf Course with a three-day event, the Capital City Corvette car show, Gym Skills' 20th anniversary, Edison Fest's fifth anniversary, and a Columbus Jazz Orchestra presentation at Headley Park presented by the Gahanna Area Arts Council. She thanked the organizations, volunteers, businesses, sponsors, and staff members who contributed to those events. Mayor Jadwin announced National Night Out at Headley Park the following evening, August 5, 2025, from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m. and encouraged community members to attend and engage with

police officers. She noted that community liaison officers Blair Thomas and Ann Jodon had worked to make the event the biggest and best yet and said the event would include a dunk tank with several participants, including Councilmember Weaver, Chief Spence, and herself. She urged attendees to warm up their pitching arms. Mayor Jadwin reminded the community that school would begin the following Thursday and Friday, August 14th and 15th, and urged drivers to slow down and exercise caution in school zones and neighborhoods because pedestrian traffic would increase. She said the city would issue additional communications in partnership with Superintendent Dr. Deagle and her team.

2. City Attorney

City Attorney Tamilarasan reported that the city had participated in litigation with the City of Columbus concerning tobacco regulation and preemption and what she described as challenges to home rule. She said the court of appeals had decided in favor of the municipalities. She added that the city awaited and expected an appeal to the Ohio Supreme Court.

M. COUNCIL COMMENT:

Councilmember McGregor joked that the dunk tank water (for National Night Out) would not be warm. She congratulated Kate Acklin, recalled personal memories involving Acklin and her granddaughter, and thanked the Council for the resolution honoring Acklin.

Councilmember Jones said she had spent much of the previous month away from Gahanna but enjoyed returning for the many lovely events in the city. She thanked the organizations, volunteers, and attendees who supported those events. She also thanked the speakers who participated during public comment and encouraged resident engagement. She congratulated Kate Acklin and commended Connor Woltman-Frollini for speaking at the meeting.

Councilmember Padova congratulated Kate Acklin and said reading the resolution had served as a trip down memory lane given her own 4-H background. She welcomed the recent increase in youth participation at Council meetings and said the engagement gave her hope for the future.

Councilmember Renner echoed appreciation for youth participation and congratulated the young man who spoke and Kate Acklin. He thanked Mr. Weaver for the detailed resolution and recalled his own 4-H experiences. He also congratulated Jessica Hilts and Jeremy VanMeter on earning their certificates and praised their work in the Council Office. He described witnessing an elderly woman crossing at the Stygler and Route 62 intersection on an electric scooter and said he assisted her across the

roadway (see attachment 2025-0152); he highlighted mobility concerns for older residents and the need to address them.

Councilmember Schnetzer thanked everyone who had a hand in hosting and facilitating the many city events that past weekend and recounted attending the Capital City Corvette Club car show with his sons. He reflected on the city's structure of three independently elected, co-equal branches of government and said he valued that accountability to residents.

Vice President Weaver thanked Mr. Schnetzer for his remarks and the community for supporting the alumni musical. He described alumni efforts and intergenerational participation in the production, noted benefits to local foundations, and praised the Gahanna Area Arts Council for the recent Columbus Jazz Orchestra event at Headley Park. He closed with thanks to the community and organizers.

President Bowers thanked Chief Spence and Director Schultz for a recent tour of the municipal complex and expressed enthusiasm for the complex's benefits to staff, Council, residents, and community gatherings. She applauded the new multipurpose room and expanded Senior Center at 825 Tech Center Drive and said the project would serve the community for generations. President Bowers thanked residents who spoke about sidewalk assessments, noted the city's 50 percent cost-share policy and the option to spread remaining costs over five years without interest, and said the administration would continue outreach. She thanked the large number of residents in attendance that evening and said she had followed up with Mr. Woltman-Follini regarding LGBTQ protections the city had enacted, noting that Gahanna voters approved non-discrimination language in the charter by a 70 percent margin in 2001.

[2025-0152](#)

Councilmember Renner Photo - Stygler/Agler/US 62 Intersection

N. EXECUTIVE SESSION:

President Bowers announced one final item on the evening's agenda: a motion to enter executive session and stated that the Council had no further business to come out of that session. She then entertained a motion to enter executive session under Section 5.40(a) of the Council Rules of Procedure to consider the appointment of a public employee or official and asked if there was a motion.

David Hodge of Underhill & Hodge interrupted from the audience and respectfully requested reconsideration of Ordinance 0030-2025. President Bowers responded that the rules did not entertain motions from the floor by residents and that Mr. Hodge had not received recognition to request a motion

that evening. Mr. Hodge asserted that the Council must allow an opportunity to request reconsideration either that evening or at the next meeting, noted that he had reviewed the rules of conduct and found no specific reference to the timing for such a motion, and reiterated his request for a motion. President Bowers told Mr. Hodge he was out of line, that he had not received recognition on the floor, and requested that he take his seat and speak with the administration or Councilmembers after adjournment. Mr. Hodge asked whether the Council would deny his request for reconsideration. President Bowers replied that he was not an appropriate person to make such a motion. Mr. Hodge maintained he was an appropriate person to request a motion for reconsideration. President Bowers again requested that he be seated. Mr. Hodge acknowledged the request and said, "Understood." President Bowers then proceeded with the regular order of business, acknowledged Mr. Weaver's motion for executive session, and called for a second.

A motion was made by Weaver, seconded by Jones, to go into Executive Session under authority of Section 5.40(a) of the Council Rules of Procedure to consider the appointment of a public employee or official.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 7 - Bowers, Jones, McGregor, Padova, Renner, Schnetzer and Weaver

President Bowers announced that Council would meet in Executive Session in the Law Library.

Council rose to report to Executive Session at 9:03 p.m.

Council rose to report from Executive Session at 9:31 p.m. with no further action.

O. ADJOURNMENT:

With no further business before the Council, President Bowers adjourned the meeting at 9:31 p.m.

Jeremy A. VanMeter
Clerk of Council

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

Merisa K. Bowers