



City of Gahanna

Meeting Minutes

City Council

200 South Hamilton Road
Gahanna, Ohio 43230

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

Jeremy A. VanMeter, Clerk of Council

Monday, May 5, 2025

7:00 PM

City Hall, Council Chambers

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

Gahanna City Council met in Regular Session on Monday, May 5, 2025, 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 May 2, 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:

1. Joint Resolution/Proclamation - ALS Month
ALS Association Ohio Chapter
Tamera Carter, United States of America Miss Ohio 2025

Councilmember Schnetzer announced that the month of May is recognized as ALS Awareness Month. He noted that the Council had the opportunity to partner with the ALS Association Ohio Chapter and Ms. Tamera Carter, the United States of America Miss Ohio 2025, for this observance. He described the initiative as a joint resolution and proclamation in partnership with the Mayor, aimed at raising awareness for ALS. Councilmember Schnetzer expressed appreciation to Ms. Carter and the ALS Association of Ohio for their participation in the evening's presentation. He then invited colleagues to join him at the front of the dais for a formal presentation and photo, before turning the floor over to Ms. Carter for remarks.

Ms. Carter thanked the Council and the Mayor for the honor, introducing herself as a Gahanna resident, ALS Association advocate, student, and USA

Miss Ohio 2025. She emphasized that her most important title is that of a caregiver, sharing that she has been caring for her father, who has been battling ALS for several years. She described this role as her most challenging, but one she would willingly undertake again in any lifetime. Ms. Carter highlighted that ALS is a disease that progressively weakens the nervous system, robbing individuals of their ability to walk, talk, and eat independently. She noted that there is currently no cure for ALS, which affects approximately one in 300 people. However, she expressed hope that the proclamation passed that evening represented a commitment to continue the fight against the disease, bringing the community one step closer to a cure. She concluded by thanking the Gahanna City Council and Mayor for their support in raising awareness for ALS.

2. Human Resources (HR) & Information Technology (IT) Updates

[2025-0098](#)

Human Resources and Information Technology Departmental Updates 5.5.2025

Ben Nolan, Human Resources Manager, provided an overview of the Human Resources Department's current operations, completed initiatives, and upcoming priorities for 2025. He began by outlining the department's structure, which includes a human resources representative, two human resources administrators, the human resources manager, and oversight by the Senior Director of Administrative Services, who also serves as the Human Resources Director. The department currently supports 210 full-time employees and 17 part-time employees, with approximately 30% of these employees also residing in Gahanna.

Mr. Nolan reported that, as of 2025, the department has managed 10 new hires and eight promotions. One of the primary challenges for the HR team, along with the Recreation Department, is staffing pools, camps, events, paddle boats, and the golf course with seasonal employees. The department is currently engaged in hiring 269 seasonal employees for the summer.

2025 Hiring Plan

Nolan outlined the 2025 hiring plan, noting that several positions included in the 2025 budget have been filled, while others remain in progress. Positions listed under the "in progress" category are funded for one year and are currently being recruited.

Civil Service Process Updates

Nolan highlighted recent updates to the civil service hiring process aimed at increasing efficiency. Each fourth quarter, the department solicits applications and conducts multiple testing sessions in November. This process generates eligible lists for positions such as parks maintenance workers, service maintenance workers, and customer service specialists, which are then used throughout the following calendar year for new positions and unexpected turnover.

Professional Development Efforts

Nolan discussed the department's two primary approaches to professional development: external partnerships and internal training. External training includes programs like the Emerging Leaders Program, developed with PRADCO, and the Management Development Program, which focuses on stretch assignments for professional growth. Internal training is managed through the city's learning management system, including in-person, in-service sessions designed to address specific workplace knowledge, skills, and abilities.

Completed Initiatives

Nolan detailed several completed HR initiatives:

- **Wellness Programming:** The HR team has updated its wellness programming, including the Resiliency Reboot program, which requires officers and communication technicians to attend two mental health check-ins per year as part of the current collective bargaining agreements. Additionally, a Wellness Week in May has been established to align with Mental Health Awareness Month, featuring daily events for all employees.
- **Onboarding Process Improvements:** The department has integrated a digital onboarding module into its HRIS, reducing paper use and increasing processing efficiency for new hire documents. The digital rehire process for returning seasonal employees has also been enhanced, further reducing administrative burden and foot traffic within the HR department.
- **Short-Term Disability Benefit:** A new short-term disability benefit was introduced for unclassified FOP and OLC members, providing financial support for employees needing extended time off without depleting their leave banks.
- **Ancillary Benefits Migration:** The HR team transitioned all employees to a new ancillary benefits provider, MetLife, for dental, vision, life, and other benefits, creating a single point of contact for most employee benefits.

Ongoing and Current Initiatives

Nolan also outlined ongoing and future HR initiatives, including:

- **FUN Committee:** An employee-led committee tasked with planning engagement activities throughout the year. This group has established standard operating procedures and elected a leadership board to guide ongoing efforts.
- **Onboarding Academy:** The department is developing an Onboarding Academy for new hires, intended to foster internal networking, cross-departmental understanding, and role alignment within the broader city operation.
- **Employee Recognition Program:** Based on feedback from the Emerging Leaders Program, the HR team is working to update the employee recognition and awards program to reflect a more employee-led approach.

- **Collective Bargaining Agreement:** Later in the year, the city and the United Steelworkers Union will begin negotiations on a successor agreement to the current collective bargaining agreement.
- **Employee Engagement:** The HR team plans to continue enhancing the employee experience using data from recent employee engagement surveys.

Nolan concluded his presentation by inviting questions and thanking Council for the opportunity to share the HR team's ongoing work.

Councilmember Jones inquired about the timing of the employee engagement survey, asking whether it is conducted annually and when it typically takes place. Mr. Nolan responded, explaining that the survey is currently a one-time initiative, conducted in partnership with PRADCO. He noted that the survey is followed by a remeasurement in the following year.

President Bowers thanked Mr. Nolan, expressing appreciation for the work he and his team are doing.

Information Technology Department Update

René Carter, Director of Information Technology, provided an overview of the Information Technology (IT) Department's recent achievements, ongoing projects, and future priorities. She began by introducing her team, which reports to Senior Director of Administrative Services Miranda Vollmer. The IT department consists of two support specialists, a network administrator, a systems administrator, a GIS administrator, and an asset administrator. This year, the department plans to expand by adding a systems analyst who will report directly to the systems administrator.

Core IT Services

Carter emphasized the foundational role of the IT department in maintaining critical city operations. The team supports a wide range of services, including network infrastructure and cybersecurity, help desk support, GIS and asset management, and data backup and recovery. Beyond routine support, the department manages employee onboarding and offboarding, oversees technology life cycles, and provides technical guidance and training to all city departments.

Major Citywide Projects

1. **EPSIS 911 Dispatch System Implementation:** Carter highlighted the implementation of the Eastern Public Safety Information System (EPSIS), a unified 911 dispatch network formed in partnership with the police departments of Whitehall, Grandview Heights, Reynoldsburg, and Bexley. The IT department is leading the network design and system implementation for this project, which is scheduled to go live in late September. The new system is expected to significantly enhance communication, coordination, and efficiency across all participating jurisdictions.
2. **Municipal Complex Development:** The IT team is also deeply

involved in the development of the new municipal complex. This project includes designing and securing network infrastructure, implementing building access systems and security cameras, replacing core servers and storage systems, and establishing a new 911 communication center. The department is responsible for both mastering the new technology and providing hands-on training to ensure city staff are fully prepared to use these tools effectively from day one.

Technical Support and Equipment Management

To illustrate the breadth of its daily responsibilities, Carter reported that the IT department has resolved 559 support tickets so far this year, including 187 from the Police Department and 101 from Parks and Recreation. The team actively manages a wide range of city hardware, including 42 desktop computers, 5 dispatch workstations, 156 laptops, 22 cruiser tablets, 16 Windows tablets, 53 iPads, 85 servers, and 46 cell phones.

Cybersecurity Initiatives

Carter emphasized that cybersecurity remains a top priority for the department. Key initiatives include:

- **CISA Cyber Hygiene Scanning:** Regular vulnerability scans of network servers to proactively identify and address security risks.
- **Single Sign-On (SSO) Expansion:** Addition of eight new applications over the past year, simplifying access for employees and enhancing centralized authentication.
- **Infrastructure Security Upgrades:** Firmware and software updates to utility systems to improve overall system integrity and resilience.
- **Cybersecurity Awareness Training:** Mandatory annual training for all staff with Gahanna.gov email addresses, reinforcing best practices and vigilance against evolving cyber threats.
- **Network Detection and Response (NDR) System:** Planned for 2025, this AI-driven system will continuously monitor network activity for anomalies and potential security threats.
- **Cloud-Based Email Security:** Expanded protection against phishing and malware through enhanced filtering, threat detection, and policy enforcement.
- **Vulnerability Management Platform:** Strategic improvements to identify, assess, and prioritize security vulnerabilities.

Carter noted that two of these cybersecurity initiatives are included in a grant application currently under review with Cyber Ohio, with a decision expected in June.

Ongoing System Enhancements

The IT department is also managing a series of ongoing projects aimed at improving operational efficiency, including:

- Routine hardware refreshes and Windows upgrades.
- Advanced Active Directory monitoring for improved user access security.

- Microsoft Office upgrades to ensure staff have the latest productivity tools.
- Professional penetration testing to proactively identify system vulnerabilities.

Staff Engagement and Support

Carter highlighted the department's commitment to direct staff support through initiatives like the IT Cyber Café. This hands-on event brought together 30 attendees from 12 different departments, providing real-time support and collaborative problem solving. The event addressed 35 technical issues across 10 major categories, strengthening interdepartmental relationships and enhancing overall technology competency. Carter concluded her presentation by expressing pride in the progress the IT team has made and a commitment to continued improvement. She then invited questions from the Council.

Councilmember McGregor expressed support for the EPSIS program, noting her appreciation for the police department's collaboration in sharing equipment and resources with other departments. She referenced the long history of the initiative, remarking that while the fire department adopted a similar approach earlier, it was encouraging to see the police department moving forward. Director Carter confirmed that the EPSIS program is progressing well, with the system on track for implementation in late September. She credited Chief Spence for his leadership, highlighting his instrumental role in advancing the project. Councilmember McGregor thanked both Director Carter and Chief Spence for their efforts.

President Bowers inquired whether the upcoming penetration test would be the first for the city. Director Carter responded that it would not be the first, noting that a penetration test had been conducted in 2017. However, she emphasized that the upcoming test would be significantly more comprehensive, given the rapid technological advancements since the previous assessment. President Bowers concluded by congratulating Director Carter, commending the significant progress made by the IT department in recent years, and offering best wishes for continued success.

D. HEARING OF VISITORS:

Kathy McCorkle, Gahanna, OH, spoke on the Public Service Month Resolution.

Ms. McCorkle addressed the Council, expressing disappointment that the City of Gahanna had not recognized or honored what she referred to as "natural family" supporters in the same manner as other identity groups. She noted that the Council had passed a resolution honoring public servants that evening and had previously recognized groups including Black history, first responders, veterans, Native Americans, the LGBTQ community, and others. Ms. McCorkle stated that when she requested a resolution or proclamation to celebrate "Gahanna's natural families," her request was denied. She

characterized this response as a refusal to honor natural family residents, asserting that these residents were being excluded from the city's equity and inclusion efforts. Ms. McCorkle concluded her remarks by urging the Mayor and City Council to reconsider their stance, invoking the city's non-discrimination policy and calling for equal recognition of natural family supporters.

E. CONSENT AGENDA:

1. Minutes - To Approve:

[2025-0095](#) Council Regular Minutes 4.21.2025

The minutes were approved on the Consent Agenda.

[2025-0096](#) Committee of the Whole Minutes 4.28.2025

The minutes were approved on the Consent Agenda.

2. Resolutions:

[RES-0019-2025](#) A JOINT RESOLUTION AND PROCLAMATION DESIGNATING MAY 2025, AS "AMYOTROPHIC LATERAL SCLEROSIS (ALS) AWARENESS MONTH" IN THE CITY OF GAHANNA

The Resolution was adopted on the Consent Agenda.

[RES-0020-2025](#) A RESOLUTION DESIGNATING MAY 2025 AS "HONORING PUBLIC SERVICE MONTH" IN THE CITY OF GAHANNA

The Resolution was adopted on the Consent Agenda.

3. Ordinances for Second Reading and Emergency Adoption:

[ORD-0018-2025](#) AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT WITH FISHBECK FOR UTILITY ENGINEERING SERVICES; AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY

The Clerk read the Ordinance by title. The Ordinance was adopted on the Consent Agenda with an emergency declaration.

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

F. ORDINANCES FOR INTRODUCTION / FIRST READING:

[ORD-0019-2025](#) AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR TO ENTER INTO A SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICER (SRO) CONTRACT WITH THE GAHANNA-JEFFERSON PUBLIC SCHOOLS FOR THE 2025-2026 SCHOOL YEAR

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

G. ORDINANCES FOR INTRODUCTION, WAIVER & ADOPTION:

[ORD-0021-2025](#) AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR TO ENTER INTO A PRE-ANNEXATION AGREEMENT WITH JIMMIE TONEY, DARLENE TONEY, AND TRIVIUM DEVELOPMENT, LLC FOR PARCELS 170-000068-00 AND 170-000069-00; AND WAIVING SECOND READING

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

Councilmember Renner offered additional public comments regarding a pre-annexation agreement under consideration by the City. He acknowledged that his colleague, Councilmember Weaver, had provided a thorough explanation of the agreement on Facebook and encouraged the public to review that information. Renner described the pre-annexation agreement as a positive move for the developer, landowner, and the city, emphasizing that such agreements are part of the constitutional rights of landowners and developers to explore potential opportunities. He noted that the agreement preserves the current zoning status of the land, which remains under the jurisdiction of Jefferson Township, and that any proposed changes will still need to go through the city's established legal processes. Renner concluded by reiterating his support for the agreement and encouraging the public to review the terms for a clearer understanding of how the city plans to engage with potential development projects.

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

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

Vice President Weaver thanked Councilmember Renner for his supportive remarks regarding the pre-annexation agreement. Weaver expanded on the analogy he had previously used as a member of the Community Improvement Corporation (CIC), describing the agreement as an initial step to determine whether the parties involved - the city, the property owners, and the developer - are interested in moving forward together. Weaver noted that the agreement allows the parties to explore whether city services can be extended to the parcel in question, emphasizing that this is an affirmative step toward evaluating potential collaboration. He expressed appreciation for the developer, Trivium, and the property owners for their proactive approach in

engaging with neighboring property owners, noting that positive conversations had already taken place.

President Bowers echoed the comments of both Renner and Weaver, emphasizing that the pre-annexation agreement represents the beginning of a multi-step process. She assured the public that there would be ample opportunities for community engagement and feedback as the process moves forward. Bowers also thanked residents who had already reached out to share their perspectives, underscoring the importance of ongoing dialogue.

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

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

H. ORDINANCES FOR INTRODUCTION, WAIVER & EMERGENCY ADOPTION:

[ORD-0020-2025](#) AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT WITH MOTOROLA SOLUTIONS INCORPORATED FOR THE PURPOSES OF ESSENTIAL UPGRADES OF COMMUNICATIONS CENTER RADIO SYSTEM INFRASTRUCTURE; AUTHORIZING A SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATION FROM THE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT FUND; WAIVING SECOND READING AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY

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

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

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

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

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

I. CORRESPONDENCE AND ACTIONS:

1. Clerk

[2025-0099](#) AEP Ohio Notice Regarding Application to Public Utilities Commission of Ohio for Distribution Rates Adjustment - Received 5.5.2025

Mr. VanMeter informed the Council that he had emailed both Council members and the City Administration, including the City Attorney, regarding a notice from AEP Ohio. The notice concerns AEP Ohio's application to the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (PUCO) for a rate adjustment on the distribution side.

2. Council

[2025-0100](#)

Proposed Letter of Support for School Funding - Councilmember Jones

President Bowers informed the Council that Superintendent Tracey Deagle of the Gahanna-Jefferson School District had recently reached out to Councilmembers and Mayor Jadwin, encouraging them to review the proposed state budget's impact on fair school funding. Bowers then invited Councilmember Jones to provide additional context on a proposed letter of support for the district.

Councilmember Jones explained that the proposed letter, addressed to Senator Liston, Representative Brown Piccolantonio, and members of the Ohio Education and Finance Committees, was drafted in response to new language in the state budget that would limit school district carryover balances to 30%, or approximately 90 days of operating expenses. She noted that this provision could result in a \$15 million funding loss for the Gahanna-Jefferson School District in the 2025-2026 school year. Jones emphasized that this measure restricts how locally elected school boards manage voter-approved funds, potentially leading to more frequent levy requests and increased tax burdens for local voters. She welcomed feedback on the draft letter and encouraged colleagues to consider signing on in support.

President Bowers asked Councilmember Jones how she preferred to solicit feedback, either during the meeting or through follow-up communications. Jones indicated that she was open to both immediate discussion and later input via email.

Councilmember Schnetzer raised concerns about the appropriateness of the City of Gahanna taking an official position on a matter outside its direct jurisdiction, noting that the Council is the funding authority for the city, not the school district. He referenced previous debates about the boundaries of government speech and expressed reservations about adopting an official city stance on the issue. However, he offered to discuss the potential unintended consequences of the legislation with school board members or district officials privately.

President Bowers responded that her support for the letter was based on the significant local control implications of the proposed cash balance cap, which she viewed as an overreach into the financial autonomy of a sovereign public body. She noted that responsible financial planning often requires maintaining reserves for long-term projects and potential funding gaps, making the proposed cap particularly concerning.

Councilmember Jones added that the legislation's potential to trigger more frequent levy requests directly impacts local taxpayers, reinforcing the relevance of the issue for Gahanna City Councilmembers as elected representatives.

Councilmember Renner expressed partial alignment with Schnetzer's concerns but ultimately supported the letter, emphasizing the interconnected nature of city and school finances. He noted that the vitality of the city is closely tied to the strength of its school system, which benefits from stable funding.

Councilmember McGregor sought clarification on the financial impact of the proposed legislation, specifically whether the \$15 million referenced in the letter reflected the district's current carryover balance. Jones confirmed that the amount was likely based on the portion of the district's reserves exceeding the proposed 30% cap but offered to follow up for a definitive answer.

Councilmember Schnetzer reiterated his reservations, emphasizing the distinction between expressing individual opinions and adopting an official city position. He noted that while the letter outlines specific funding recommendations, Councilmembers lack direct insight into the district's financial planning, potentially complicating the decision to take an official stance.

After further discussion, President Bowers suggested bringing the letter back to committee for additional review and feedback, allowing Councilmembers more time to consider the potential implications. Councilmember Jones agreed, indicating she would seek additional clarification from the school district before the next committee meeting. She acknowledged the complexity of the issue, noting that as both an elected official and a district parent, her perspective on the matter is informed by multiple roles.

President Bowers closed the discussion by thanking Councilmember Jones for raising the issue and encouraging the Council to continue evaluating the proposed letter as the state budget process progresses. She also took the opportunity to remind the public about the upcoming primary election, noting that local ballots include a Mifflin Township fire levy and a statewide issue for infrastructure funding.

J. REPRESENTATIVES:

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

Councilmember Renner provided a summary of his report, noting that he had omitted some details in a previous meeting. He highlighted that the Mayor had announced upcoming community engagement meetings for the city's strategic plan, scheduled for May 5th, 6th, and 7th. Renner indicated that additional information on the strategic planning process would be forthcoming. Renner also reported that CIC had entered executive session at 8:31 p.m. under the real estate exception of Section 121.22 of the Ohio Revised Code, adjourning from the session at 8:43 p.m.

Councilmember Padova added that Director Blackford had noted a significant number of business inquiries this year, reflecting growing interest from businesses looking to establish a presence in Gahanna. She expressed encouragement about the level of interest in the city's business environment.

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

[2025-0097](#)

Councilmember Weaver's MORPC Report to City Council 5.5.2025

Vice President Weaver expressed his appreciation to the Council Office for their assistance in preparing his report. He highlighted several upcoming meetings and workshops of interest to Councilmembers:

- Full Commission Meeting: Scheduled for Thursday, May 8, 2025.
- Securing Our Energy Future Workshop: An informational session on the landscape of energy planning, to be held at the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC) on May 15, 2025. An RSVP link is included in the report.
- Strategic Training for Effective Planning and Zoning (STEPS) Workshop: Scheduled for Tuesday, May 20, 2025, with RSVP details also provided in the report.
- MORPC Economic Development Academy: MORPC is creating its first Economic Development Academy and has requested input from member communities. Additional details and a survey link are included in the report.
- Money Mondays Series: The May 12, 2025 Session on air quality and funding, featuring Brandi Whetstone from MORPC and May 19, 2025 Session on the Community Facilities Direct Loan and Grant Program, featuring Charles Dietz from the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Weaver encouraged his colleagues to review the report for further details and take advantage of these professional development and networking opportunities.

3. Convention & Visitors Bureau (CVB) - Padova

Councilmember Padova provided an update on recent and upcoming community events. She noted that the Gahanna Herb Day Festival took place the previous Saturday, despite rainy weather. Padova reported that some unsold plants remain available for purchase at the Gahanna Herb Center during regular business hours, providing an opportunity for those who may have missed the event to still acquire herbs. Padova also reminded the Council that this week is Herb'n Restaurant Week, with six local restaurants participating. She encouraged colleagues and residents to check the Visit Gahanna website or social media for a list of participating establishments. Additionally, Padova highlighted the upcoming Creekside Blues and Jazz Festival (CBJF) in June, encouraging volunteers to sign up through Visit Gahanna's website.

President Bowers inquired whether there would be a coordinated volunteer block for Council or city employees at the festival. Padova responded that, while she had not heard of a specific Council block, city employees have typically participated in the past. Mayor Jadwin clarified that a coordinated volunteer block may not be available this year. Some entry procedures have changed, and other organizations may be taking on those roles. Padova agreed to follow up and provide additional information if a group volunteer opportunity becomes available.

4. School Board (SB) - Jones

Councilmember Jones reminded the Council and community that this week is Teacher Appreciation Week. She encouraged residents to show their support for local educators, suggesting small gestures like dropping off snacks, buying a coffee, or making donations through PTO links available on school Facebook pages. Jones expressed her gratitude to teachers for their hard work and dedication, acknowledging them as unsung heroes in the community.

K. OFFICIAL REPORTS:

1. Mayor

Mayor Jadwin announced that the City of Gahanna kicked off Mental Health Awareness Month with its first-ever Mind and Wellness Fair at City Hall. The event, held the previous Thursday, featured 20 local organizations and service providers offering resources related to mental well-being and substance abuse. Jadwin credited Community Liaison Officers Blair Thomas and Ann Jodon for their work in organizing the event, emphasizing the importance of these roles in connecting residents to critical resources. She also noted that a full list of participating providers is available on the city's website for those who could not attend.

Jadwin congratulated American Legion Post 797 for a successful Walk in Our Boots 5K held the prior Saturday, despite rainy weather. The event drew 200 participants, including Gahanna police officers and Mifflin Township firefighters, many of whom completed the 5K in full uniform. Funds raised from the event will support 100 veterans transitioning into housing, providing essential household items. The post continues to accept donations and is hosting an online auction through Saturday, with more information available on their website.

As Vice Chair of the Sustainability Advisory Committee for MORPC, Jadwin reminded the Council that this week is Air Quality Awareness Week. She mentioned that the city is collaborating with MORPC to place air monitors in Gahanna to provide residents with real-time air quality data.

Jadwin highlighted the upcoming Gahanna Vision Fest, part of the city's

ongoing strategic planning process. Events include Tuesday, May 6, 2025, Vision Fest at Hannah Park, 5:00 - 7:00 p.m. and Wednesday, May 7, 2025, Small Business Networking Coffee, 7:30 - 9:00 a.m., Gahanna Library, Senior Lunch, 11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m., Senior Center, and Young Professionals Happy Hour, 4:00 - 6:00 p.m., Edison Brewing. Jadwin encouraged residents to participate in these events or complete the online survey available at rgana.com if they cannot attend in person.

Jadwin then introduced Jeff Gottke as the city's new Director of Economic Development, who began his role the previous Monday. Gottke joins the city after serving as the President of the Knox County Area Development Foundation, where he led economic development efforts in the region. Director Gottke thanked the Mayor for the opportunity and expressed his enthusiasm for joining the Gahanna team. He noted that his background as a former city council member gives him an appreciation for the challenges faced by elected officials. Gottke expressed his intention to meet with each Councilmember in the coming weeks to discuss their priorities and share his vision for continuing Gahanna's economic growth. He concluded by thanking the Council for their service and offering his contact information for follow-up conversations.

2. City Attorney

City Attorney Tamilarasan provided an update on recent legislative changes affecting the city's appeals procedures. She noted that earlier this year, the Council passed legislation updating the appeals processes for various boards and commissions. In response to these updates, Tamilarasan is conducting a comprehensive review of the rules and procedures for each board and commission to ensure consistency with the new legislation and the city code. She reported that the first of these reviews, for the Property Appeals Board, took place at the board's most recent meeting. Tamilarasan indicated that she would be collaborating with Mr. VanMeter as part of this ongoing review process and thanked the Council for their attention.

L. COUNCIL COMMENT:

Councilmember Jones welcomed Director Jeff Gottke to the city, expressing her enthusiasm for his arrival and looking forward to collaborating. She also offered her appreciation for the recent Mind and Wellness Fair, noting the impressive range of service providers present and commending Jessica Curry for her contributions as a mental health clinician within the community.

Councilmember Renner shared that he recently toured the new Franklin County Crisis Care Center operated by ADAMH. He praised the center's forward-focused approach to care, highlighting its triage center and comprehensive mental health services. Renner encouraged city officials to visit the facility and consider its potential benefits for local first responders. He noted that a community open house will be held on May 15th from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. at 465 Harmon Avenue. Renner also informed the Council that he

would be traveling to Sleeping Bear Dunes in Michigan with his family on May 19th and would be unreachable during that time.

Councilmember Padova provided an update on several recent community events at Friendship Park including the “Arty Party,” hosted by local high school students, featuring crafts and activities for children, the Bat Hotel ribbon cutting, celebrating the installation of bat houses in local parks, an initiative to support local wildlife, and the Storybook Trail ribbon cutting, marking the launch of a new interactive trail for families. Padova also attended a COSI ice cream making event with the Parks and Recreation Department, noting the dedication of staff who patiently guided children through the hands-on activity despite rainy weather. Padova concluded by welcoming Director Gottke and expressed her interest in collaborating with him on the Community Improvement Corporation (CIC).

Councilmember Schnetzer offered reflections on ALS Awareness Month, drawing a connection to baseball legend Lou Gehrig, after whom ALS is sometimes named. He recounted Gehrig’s remarkable career with the New York Yankees, including his record 2,130 consecutive games, seven All-Star appearances, and two MVP awards. Schnetzer also highlighted Gehrig’s iconic “Luckiest Man” farewell speech, encouraging colleagues to view it as a powerful example of resilience and gratitude. Schnetzer then shifted to a local focus, sharing his experience at the inaugural Gahanna Football Coaches Clinic. He praised varsity head coach Bruce Ward for emphasizing the importance of building a positive team culture and supporting player mental health. Schnetzer noted that the program’s recent success, including 27 Gahanna players moving on to play college football in the past three years, reflects the strength of the program’s culture. He concluded by encouraging families with children in grades 3 through 6 to consider registering for Gahanna Youth Football at gahannayouthfootball.com.

Vice President Weaver reflected on the many recent community events, including the Storybook Trail ribbon cutting, Mind and Wellness Fair, Herb Day, and Walk in Our Boots 5K. He expressed gratitude to the volunteers, sponsors, and organizers, including Post 797, Visit Gahanna, Parks and Recreation, the city administration, and the Gahanna Lincoln High School community art program, for making these events possible despite the persistent rain. Weaver also welcomed Director Jeff Gottke to the city, noting that it was a pleasure speaking with him briefly before the meeting. Weaver, himself a former speech and debate enthusiast, welcomed the opportunity to work with Gottke. Weaver concluded by reminding everyone that Election Day is tomorrow, encouraging residents to exercise their right to vote and to show appreciation for poll workers.

President Bowers echoed the appreciation expressed by her colleagues for the Mind and Wellness Fair, commending Community Liaison Officers Jodon and Thomas for their efforts in organizing the event. She also extended congratulations to American Legion Post 797 for the successful Walk in Our Boots 5K and thanked the Mayor for recognizing the importance of the event

in supporting veterans. Bowers took a moment to acknowledge the contributions of public servants, recognizing that the evening's agenda included a resolution honoring Public Service Month. She emphasized the unique challenges and dedication required to serve in public roles, noting that those in public service are rarely off duty and must remain committed to a greater cause. Bowers thanked Weaver for introducing the resolution and expressed her appreciation for the many public servants who live and work in the Gahanna community.

M. ADJOURNMENT:

With no further business before the Council, President Bowers adjourned the meeting at 8:18 p.m.

Jeremy A. VanMeter
Clerk of Council

APPROVED by the City Council, this
day of 2025.

Merisa K. Bowers