

Merisa K. Bowers

GAHANNA CITY COUNCILWOMAN, AT-LARGE
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To: Residents of Gahanna;
Members of Council;
Mayor Jadwin;
City Attorney Ray Mularski
CC: Director of Public Safety Keith Winn;
Chief of Police Jeffrey Spence
Council Clerk April Beggerow
From: Councilmember Merisa Bowers
Re: **Constituent Update - June Report**
Date: 07/06/2020

General Update:

June 2020 was a critically important month, with dozens of demonstrations drawing hundreds of residents to condemn racism and instances of brutality. This dialogue dominated constituent attention, though the important issues around COVID-19, reopening, masks and social distancing, and school policy also continued to be discussed.

I reinstated Constituent Hours on June 15. We met outside of the Gahanna Senior Center, with three members of the public attending in person, and four members attending via Zoom. I will continue to hold Constituent Hours in this manner on July 6 and July 20.

I am utilizing an opt-in constituent contact email system. Interested parties can provide their email addresses here: <https://forms.gle/PMTu8eH5Fy4bN4Si8>

Constituent Issues/Concerns:

#1: Police Reform, Black Lives Matter, Police Safety, Community Policing

Action:

- Released policy statements;
- Attended citizen-led demonstrations;
- met with Mayor, City Attorney, Directors, Chief and Deputy Chief of Police on June 10;
- Phone calls, emails, and conversations with neighbors and constituents;
- held Constituent Hours on June 15, most of discussion regarding police policy, safety;
- held Discussion on 21st Century Policing with central Ohio lawmakers and attorney Raphael Davis-Williams of the ACLU of Ohio

Response:

Will continue to work with colleagues and Chief of Police to discuss opportunities for advancing 6 Pillars of Community Policing. Policy proposals to be discussed with stakeholders.

Over 950 views of virtual Discussion on 21st Century Policing as of this Report; statement regarding Discussion attached.

#2: Access to City Council Meetings/Public Comment

Received feedback from constituents primarily on social media that questioned the continued virtual city council meetings and lack of public comment.

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Action:

Emailed Council President on June 22 requesting restoration of public comment and suggesting feasibility of return to in person meetings; offered to draft legislation. Council President responded that “it would be prudent to continue as we have been” but acknowledged need to allow public comment and conduct public hearings virtually. Emailed to request that this be addressed at July 6 meeting. Emailed Chair of COTW on July 2 to request discussion of this item along with other timely topics; received response from Council President that Council Discussion was included on July 6 COTW Agenda and that the items requested could be discussed then.

Response:

Pending. In the meantime, I have encouraged constituents to contact Council via email and reinstated in person or virtual Constituent Hours to create accessibility.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Merisa K. Bowers

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Gahanna City Councilmember, At Large

07/06/20



A Discussion on 21st Century Policing

Date: June 26, 2020

Thank you to the viewers who joined the discussion on supporting “21st Century Policing” in Central Ohio. The time you gave is indicative of the importance of this conversation.

Trust between law enforcement agencies and the people they protect and serve is essential in a democracy. It is key to the stability of our communities, the integrity of our criminal justice system, and the safe and effective delivery of policing services.

I express gratitude to the panelists: I appreciate the insight and thoughts shared from Raphael Davis-Williams, J.D., the Director of Equity and Inclusion at the ACLU of Ohio. The urgency for reform cannot escape us and we must lean in to these hard conversations and action items. Thank you, and special guest Rev. Joel L. King, Jr., for calling on us to rise to this moment.

Thank you to fellow Central Ohio legislators: Reynoldsburg Council President Angie Jenkins, Hilliard Councilwoman Cynthia Vermillion, Powell Councilwoman Heather Karr, and Gahanna Councilman Stephen Renner for discussing some elements of what our communities are already doing to build on the six pillars of community oriented policing and how we can leverage resources to ensure the safety of our officers, residents, and visitors to all of our communities.

For more reading on these important topics, please see the following links:

<https://measuresforjustice.org/>

Scientific American: [George Floyd's Autopsy and the Structural Gaslighting of America](#)

[Final Report of the President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing](#)

[National League of Cities Resources for Local Elected Officials](#)

[National Association for Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement Building Public Trust Through Law Enforcement Accountability and Transparency](#)

I look forward to continuing this conversation with public servants across Central Ohio and with Gahanna constituents.

The road ahead may not be comfortable, but together we can build policies that serve and protect every member of our community, ensure officer safety, and build authentic trust and respect between law enforcement and the communities they serve.

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