



City of Gahanna

Meeting Minutes

Committee of the Whole

200 South Hamilton Road
Gahanna, Ohio 43230

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

Jeremy A. VanMeter, Clerk of Council

Monday, February 9, 2026

7:00 PM

City Hall, Council Chambers

A. CALL TO ORDER:

Gahanna City Council met for Committee of the Whole on Monday, February 9, 2026, in Council Chambers. Vice President of Council Jamille Jones, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:06 p.m. The agenda was published on Friday, February 6, 2026. All members were present at the meeting.

Vice President Jones noted that ORD-0002-2026 was removed from the agenda and would be discussed at a later date.

B. ITEMS FROM COUNCIL OFFICE:

ORD-0007-2026 AN ORDINANCE TO ACCEPT THE ANNEXATION OF APPROXIMATELY 7.6 ACRES FROM JEFFERSON TOWNSHIP, FRANKLIN COUNTY, OHIO, TO THE CITY OF GAHANNA; LOCATED AT 4736 AND 4722 JOHNSTOWN ROAD (PARCEL ID NOS. 170-000068 AND 170-000069).

Vice President Jones invited Clerk VanMeter to report on ORD-0007-2026.

Addressing the Gahanna City Council, Clerk VanMeter summarized the current status of the annexation application. On May 5, 2025, the City Council approved ORD-0021-2025, authorizing Mayor Laurie Jadwin to enter a pre-annexation agreement with Jimmie and Darlene Toney, as well as Trivium Development, LLC, for parcels 170-000068 and 170-000069 located at 4736 and 4722 Johnstown Road in Jefferson

Township. The agreement identified potential development for the parcels. On October 23, 2025, petitioners and property owners filed an Expedited Type II annexation petition with Franklin County and provided notice to Clerk VanMeter, as required by law. On November 3, 2025, the Council adopted RES-0052-2025 pursuant to Ohio Revised Code (ORC) Section 709.023(C), identifying the municipal services to be provided to the identified territory, including approximate dates. On December 2, 2025, the Franklin County Board of Commissioners reviewed the petition and approved Resolution No. 0911-25 pursuant to legal requirements. Clerk VanMeter received a certified copy of the resolution from the board of commissioners on December 12, 2025, initiating the required 60-day holding period for the Council to consider approval of the annexation, via ORC 709.04. Clerk VanMeter explained the next step in the process included that night's presentation to the Council, for consideration of approval. Clerk VanMeter summarized that the question before the Council was whether to accept the annexation. He noted that representatives for the petitioners and the developer were present to answer questions.

Chair Jones thanked Clerk VanMeter for his presentation, inviting the applicant to add any information, if desired, or just move on to questions. Petitioners responded they were available for questions. Chair Jones invited discussion from Councilmembers.

President Weaver asked whether approval of the annexation would precede rezoning and final development approvals. President Weaver observed heads nodding in response. The developer's representative, Tim Spencer, confirmed that annexation would occur first, followed by a rezoning application and final development plan, both of which would proceed through the city's normal review and approval processes. President Weaver observed that the current decision was whether to annex the indicated land, evaluating that what was developed on the land could be decided at a later date. Mr. Spencer agreed with President Weaver's evaluation, elaborating that the annexation did not approve a specific development and that any proposed project would be subject to municipal regulations. Mr. Spencer explained that the intent of the developer was to explore a mixed-use development and that outreach occurred with nearby property owners, receiving informal feedback. He stated that the site presents challenges related to drainage, including a pond located on the rear of the property, traffic considerations, and

surrounding infrastructure, all of which would be addressed through future technical review. He reported that no formal zoning or development applications were submitted and that those would occur only if the annexation were accepted. In that case, a mixed-use rezoning application would be pursued. Mr. Spencer acknowledged the challenges of the annexation process. President Weaver thanked Mr. Spencer and his colleagues for the proactive work they put into the application and community outreach. President Weaver noted that he and Councilmember Merisa Bowers participated in the community outreach event. President Weaver noted the sequential procedural nature of the project, which requires a series of approvals, rather than a single decision. President Weaver asked broadly what would occur if the annexation were not approved. Mr. Spencer stated that the petitioners would pursue development options under Jefferson Township jurisdiction and zoning. He explained that annexation was being sought to allow access to City of Gahanna sewer services and to pursue development under the City of Gahanna's zoning and development regulations. He noted the potential to pick up a commercial and residential component in the project. He explained the preference for City of Gahanna services, however, noted two alternative water sources across the street. Mr. Spencer explained the goal of creating the best solution for all parties involved. President Weaver expressed appreciation for the explanation and commented on the advantageous status of the City of Gahanna to have increased influence over the site development, if the land were annexed to Gahanna. President Weaver also noted the question of services was addressed in November of 2025.

Councilmember Schnetzer asked about the timing of potential Tax Increment Financing (TIF) or other incentive discussions. Director of Economic Development Jeff Gottke reviewed that the process would involve three steps, shared at an earlier time, describing the steps as: acceptance of the annexation, zoning designation or rezoning, and approval of a development plan and development agreement. Incentive discussions would be appropriate during the development agreement stage and not finalized beforehand, summarized as step three. Councilmember Schnetzer inquired if that would provide sufficient time for execution, if desired. Director Gottke confirmed, clarifying that discussions would likely occur earlier, with decisions finalized at step three. Mayor Jadwin addressed Director Gottke, inquiring about the sequencing of approvals, the role of development incentives, and the

need for certainty on zoning and development standards prior to construction. Director Gottke referred to the developer for the response, noting that the typical process requires all three steps to be complete before construction, with approvals providing assurances to developers that a project would be financially feasible before investments were made. Tim Spencer stated that incentive tools, as well as administrative and technical requirements, would be evaluated in coordination with city staff, as part of the development review process, after annexation. He offered examples of discussions on building height, water management, traffic patterns, and opportunities for city growth. He explained that technical review would continue on a constant basis. He noted his alarm at a comment received for that night's meeting, regarding the 80 foot right-of-way, which he described as addressed. Mr. Spencer reflected on the developer's team, including a Gahanna resident and experienced business partners. He noted there was homework for their team to do, describing conflicting informal preferences shared with them during early engagement. Mr. Spencer asked if Mayor Jadwin's question was answered. She confirmed.

President Weaver addressed the city administration, asking for clarification on the discretion versus constraints of the Council when considering an annexation compared to other development procedures. City Attorney Priya Tamilarasan responded, stating Council's discretion would be broader, as there are no specific statutory factors in the city code limiting Council on annexation decisions, but additional research could be provided prior to the First Reading, if requested. President Weaver gratefully accepted Attorney Tamilarasan's guidance. He also observed two city directors nodding their heads in agreement.

Councilmember McGregor raised questions regarding potential city control or protection of the riparian corridor and floodplain area on the property, noting this was her desire. Mr. Spencer stated that options such as easements, open space, or other protective measures were discussed informally and would require further evaluation and coordination with residents and city staff as part of future development planning. He shared that the initial discussion received a negative response. He committed to further exploration. He expressed optimism.

Noting no further questions at that time, Chair Jones inquired of the Council their preference in proceeding with the legislation. President

Weaver indicated a preference for inclusion on the Regular Agenda, rather than the Consent Agenda. Chair Jones determined the ordinance would proceed on the Regular Agenda, with First Reading scheduled for February 16, 2026, and consideration of Adoption scheduled for March 2, 2026.

**Recommendation: Introduction/First Reading on Regular Agenda on 2/16/2026;
Second Reading/Adoption on Regular Agenda on 3/2/2026.**

2026-0027

Ohio Division of Liquor Control Notice to Legislative Authority Permit TRFO 10011069-1 FROM PUB IN GAHANNA LLC TO GAHANNA'S PUB, THE PUB IN GAHANNA, 207 W JOHNSTOWN ROAD, GAHANNA, OH 43230

Clerk VanMeter presented a notice from the Ohio Division of Liquor Control regarding a transfer of ownership from Pub in Gahanna LLC to Gahanna's Pub, The Pub in Gahanna, located at 207 West Johnstown Road. Clerk VanMeter reported that he consulted with the Gahanna Division of Police, receiving no objections to the application. He stated that, if Council had no objections, he would notify the Division of Liquor Control that the city did not request a hearing.

Chair Jones asked whether there were any objections or questions from Council. Hearing no objections from the Council, Clerk VanMeter indicated he would return the notice stating that a hearing was not requested. Chair Jones acknowledged and invited Clerk VanMeter to proceed with the next agenda item.

MT-0006-2026

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

Clerk VanMeter presented the motion to approve the seasonal employment of Caris Lantz as a Council Office Intern. He explained that, pursuant to the city charter, Council appoints all Council Office staff, and therefore the request was brought before Council for consideration. Clerk VanMeter reported that interviews were conducted for the position, noting that Council President Trenton Weaver and Human Resources Representative Hope Moore participated in the interview process. He expressed strong support for the candidate and recommended approval of the motion. President Weaver echoed Clerk VanMeter's remarks, stating that he was impressed with Ms. Lantz's qualifications, preparation, and knowledge of the city and ongoing projects. He

expressed confidence that she would be an asset to the Council Office.

Chair Jones inquired about the anticipated start date. Clerk VanMeter responded that Ms. Lantz would likely begin in June. Chair Jones confirmed that the motion would be on the Consent Agenda for February 16, 2026. Hearing no objections, she thanked Clerk VanMeter and proceeded to the next agenda item.

Recommendation: Adoption on Consent Agenda on 2/16/2026.

C. ITEMS FROM THE SENIOR DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS:

2026-0039

Gahanna Civic Center (825 Tech Center Drive) Construction Update
2026-02-09

Senior Director of Operations Kevin Schultz provided an update on the Gahanna Civic Center project at 825 Tech Center Drive, noting that the presentation reflected a move-in update rather than a construction update. He stated that the project is transitioning from construction toward occupancy, with operations anticipated to begin in approximately 60 to 75 days, pending completion of the remaining prerequisites. Senior Director Schultz reported that outstanding items include completion and integration of life safety systems, public safety technology systems, city technology infrastructure, and secure access controls necessary for operation as a public safety facility. He stated that a Certificate of Occupancy from the Building Department remains a requirement prior to occupancy. He noted that construction must be substantially complete, particularly within secured police areas, before public safety personnel can move into the facility. Senior Director Schultz outlined a phased move plan occurring over approximately four to five weeks. The initial phase includes relocation of bulk items and permanent records. Subsequent phases include the movement of staff workspaces, furniture, and operational materials. During the primary transition week, City Hall operations are proposed to be closed to the public on Monday and Tuesday, to allow staff to unpack, complete safety training, and orient themselves to the new workspace. Public-facing operations would resume midweek, with the first public visitors anticipated later that same week. Senior Director Schultz reported that police services will operate with limited overlap between the existing facility, at 460 Rocky Fork Boulevard and 825 Tech Center Drive, to ensure uninterrupted critical services during transition. Senior programming would begin after the primary staff and police move phases are complete. Senior Director

Schultz reviewed proposed adjustments to the public meeting schedule to accommodate the move. He stated that April 6, 2026, would be the final City Council meeting at the current facility, with April 8, 2026, serving as the final Planning Commission meeting at the current building. He proposed that no Council meetings will occur on April 13 or 20, 2026, during the transition. The final public meeting in the current facility is anticipated to be a Parks Board meeting on April 15, 2026. A tentative public Open House date of April 25, 2026, was set. The first public meetings at 825 Tech Center Drive are proposed for April 27, 2026, with the Committee of the Whole meeting scheduled directly after the Regular Council meeting. Senior Director Schultz noted that staff began preparatory steps for the move, including inventory review, disposal of designated materials, and packing coordination. He reported that the project schedule contains contingency time and that he remains comfortable with the projected timeline. Senior Director Schultz also noted that Council would likely have an opportunity later in February to do a site visit.

Councilmember Bowers requested an update regarding streaming and audiovisual technology in the new Council Chambers. Senior Director Schultz stated that installation of streaming servers and related equipment will occur once the information and technology (IT) infrastructure spaces are complete. He reported that the new system will function similarly to the current platform, but with upgraded capacity and improved efficiency. He expressed confidence that technology installation and staff training will be completed prior to the first scheduled public meeting in the new facility. He further confirmed that a conference room adjacent to Council Chambers will include videoconferencing capabilities, integrated microphones, speakers, and display screens, but will not have streaming capabilities.

Councilmember Bowers asked about a future financial update. Senior Director Schultz indicated that a comprehensive financial recap will likely be presented in May 2026, after project closeout activities are completed. He reported that the project remains within budget and within established contingencies and allowances.

Chair Jones asked whether Councilmembers, boards, and commissions would receive a safety orientation, similar to staff. Senior Director Schultz confirmed that safety briefings will be provided and that orientation

materials, potentially including instructional videos, will address emergency procedures and security features specific to Council Chambers and other meeting spaces. Discussion also addressed staff work continuity during the transition period. Senior Director Schultz stated that staff may work remotely or from alternate locations as desks and workspaces are relocated, but service continuity will be maintained. Chair Jones thanked Senior Director Schultz for the update and noted appreciation for the progress reflected in the transition from construction to move-in planning.

D. ITEMS FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:

[ORD-0002-2026](#) AN ORDINANCE ACCEPTING, APPROVING, AND RATIFYING THE SUBMITTED RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE CITY OF GAHANNA TAX INCENTIVE REVIEW COUNCIL FOR TAX YEAR 2024

Recommendation: Held in Committee for further discussion scheduled on 2/23/2026; Postpone Second Reading/Adoption to Date Certain (3/2/2026) on Regular Agenda on 2/16/2026.

E. ITEMS FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE:

[ORD-0005-2026](#) AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS - Central Park TIF Fund, General Fund and Cul-de-sac Maintenance Fund for various purposes

Director of Finance Joann Bury presented ORD-0005-2026, authorizing supplemental appropriations. Director Bury stated that the first supplemental appropriation relates to the Crescent development and provides funding to pay special assessment bond principal and interest due in September 2026. She reported that the first reimbursement request was verified for eligible expenses exceeding \$2 million and that payment to the developer would be processed accordingly. She explained that an additional appropriation within the General Fund addresses a fleet software adjustment that was omitted during final appropriations. Director Bury stated that the ordinance includes use of previously unexpended funds within the Cul-de-sac Maintenance Fund. She explained that these funds, carried forward under prior code, would be applied toward cul-de-sac work identified within the current year street program.

Chair Jones asked whether there were any questions or discussion. Hearing none, she confirmed that the First Reading previously occurred

and that adoption was scheduled for February 16, 2026. Council indicated agreement to place the ordinance on the Consent Agenda for adoption.

Recommendation: Second Reading/Adoption on Consent Agenda on 2/16/2026.

ORD-0006-2026

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE CITY OF GAHANNA CODIFIED ORDINANCE SECTION 133.02 - PURCHASING PROCEDURES

Director of Finance Joann Bury presented ORD-0006-2026, an ordinance amending Gahanna's purchasing procedures. Director Bury stated that the city was notified in 2022 by the Auditor of State's office that the city's procurement policy was not in accordance with federal uniform guidance requirements for receiving federal funds. She explained that the new policy integrates federal procurement thresholds and ORC requirements, including application of lower state thresholds where applicable. Director Bury referenced a staff training flowchart provided as a handout outlining procurement workflow and thresholds.

Director Bury reviewed proposed purchasing categories and thresholds. She stated the petty cash threshold increased from \$50 to \$100, to meet with current times. She reported that the city's Micro-Purchase threshold would remain at \$10,000, instead of the federal threshold of \$15,000 and the Small Purchase threshold would remain at \$250,000, noting that federal thresholds increased to \$350,000; however, staff did not recommend increasing the city's thresholds at this time. She stated that Micro-Purchases emphasize competition through vendor variety, and that Small Purchases require competition, including obtaining quotes from at least two vendors and attaching the quotes to requisitions for review and compliance verification before purchase orders are issued. Director Bury reviewed sealed bid requirements under the ORC, stating that the statutory sealed bid threshold was updated in 2024 from \$50,000 to \$75,000, with an annual 3% increase thereafter. She observed there are limited exceptions. She explained that the Public Service Department typically administers the sealed bid process and that Council authorization is required for Mayor Jadwin to execute contracts resulting from that process. Director Bury explained the competitive proposal process for professional services that are not required to be bid under the ORC, yet exceed the Small Purchase amount. She stated that requests for proposals are advertised and evaluated using a scoring matrix focused on qualifications, with price considered but not necessarily the primary factor. She stated that recommended contracts

from this process are brought to the Council for authorization for Mayor Jadwin to sign.

Director Bury also reviewed circumstances where non-competitive procurement is permissible, explaining that the policy emphasizes competition but allows exceptions under defined criteria. Director Bury described a pre-qualification process incorporated into the ordinance, stating it is used to identify the most qualified professional service providers in specified categories (such as floodplain management, traffic signal coordination, and utility operations). She explained that responses are scored and ranked, and that the pre-qualified list does not award a contract, but is used to streamline future solicitations by identifying the most qualified providers when projects arise. She stated that subsequent contract negotiation and procurement steps occur based on project scope and dollar thresholds.

President Weaver clarified with Director Bury that pre-qualification does not eliminate competition and that a competitive step still occurs for project-specific work. Director Bury confirmed. President Weaver inquired if this process provided increased opportunity to public contracts to those who might not otherwise be availed. Director Bury confirmed. President Weaver asked how narrowly categories are defined and how pre-qualification lists are maintained over time. Director Bury explained the pre-qualification process in greater detail. Senior Director Schultz elaborated on the process, including the scoring matrix. President Weaver thanked staff for the explanations, noting he may have further questions.

Councilmember Bowers followed up with an inquiry about the frequency of reviewing the prequalification process. Director Bury responded it was an annual process. Senior Director Schultz noted it was a slightly different process than something like asset management, with a three-year cycle. Councilmember Bowers confirmed with Director Schultz the ability of the city to reopen or revise the list if circumstances warrant. Councilmember Bowers inquired as to the Council's role in the prequalification process, including knowledge or awareness. Senior Director Shultz noted there is no allocation, so Council has no formal role in establishing the pre-qualification list; however, the Council authorizes Mayor Jadwin to execute contracts, if approved by the City Attorney, when required by the applicable procurement threshold. Councilmember

Bowers suggested it may be best practice to report out that information to the Council on the three-year basis for awareness, for Council oversight and community transparency, bringing content forward in a public meeting for the good of the community. Senior Director Schultz proposed consideration of including such a step in the regular budget process, clarifying that the pre-qualification list is used for specialized professional services and applies regardless of whether a specific project is below or above the Council authorization threshold, with the threshold determining the approval path. Staff are pre-qualifying services, not engineers.

Chair Jones requested clarification on whether the pre-qualified vendors pertained to just the specialized work or the dollar amount. Senior Director Schultz responded it pertained only to specialized work. Chair Jones concluded that even if the contract is below \$250,000, perhaps it is \$80,000 but in the "qualified bucket", the city would still go to the vendors regardless of the project amount. Senior Director Schultz confirmed, providing examples. Senior Director Schultz stated that if the Engineering Department encountered a one-off project and did not identify a firm on the pre-qualified list that met its needs, the City could issue a larger solicitation to a broader audience. He explained that the solicitation would invite firms to propose their qualifications and submit proposals for the specific project. He cited the street scan project, which involved pavement rating, as an example. He explained that pavement rating represented a highly specialized and niche professional service. He clarified that the City did not pre-qualify firms to that level of specificity. Instead, the pre-qualification process covered broader categories of work, such as designing water and sewer lines, designing road networks, ADA ramps, and similar services. He further noted that technology-based work, such as scanning roads for pavement conditions and the previous sidewalk assessment conducted through the Segway process, would fall under a specialized, niche Request for Proposals (RFP) or Request for Qualifications (RFQ) process. He stated that the City would run that process independently from the general qualifications list.

Councilmember Stephen Renner inquired where the three-year term came from. Director Bury responded it was from the ORC.

Councilmember Renner compared the process with county management practices, explaining they do not follow three years, but follow the budget

cycle instead. Councilmember Renner asked what the benefit of following the three-year cycle was, outside of ORC. Senior Director Schultz elaborated on staff's evaluation of the ORC guidelines of three years as the appropriate standard. Councilmember Renner asked if there was a sufficient diversity of vendors. Mayor Jadwin highlighted that staff's process encouraged more diversity in vendors and extended opportunities. Councilmember Renner clarified he was not necessarily averse to the process but wanted to consider the reporting considerations for the process. Senior Director Schultz noted current staffing challenges in the Engineering Department, but agreed staff could identify applicable assurance for Council, looking at data starting in 2024, noting some of the data could be misleading without additional context.

Councilmember Bowers asked if the prequalification term came from the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT). Director Bury stated it came from ORC 153, under the states, directed toward local governments. Councilmember Bowers asked if it was three years, not two years. Senior Director Schultz stated it was under the competitive portion. Director Bury clarified it was under the Small Purchases section. President Weaver questioned if it was ORC 153.65-153.71. Councilmembers agreed to come back to that question.

Councilmember Bowers reflected that in 2022 setting a new threshold of \$250,000 for Council approval, but in certain circumstances, Council still authorizes permission to bid. She asked for clarification of the sealed bid process, describing Council as participating: 1) in the budget process; 2) in the permission to bid; 3) authorizing the mayor to sign contracts. Staff confirmed. Councilmember Bowers prefaced with observation that Council approved a new procurement policy in 2022, elaborating her questions were not related to concerns of the current staff, but rather the role of oversight for a legislative body in general. She desired to level set, evaluating practices of oversight and transparency, comparing alignment with peer community practices, aiming for the benefit of continuity and best practice for Gahanna. Councilmember Bowers shared a concern with the threshold of \$250,000, questioning if it was incongruous with peer communities, as well as state and county. Councilmember Bowers suggested that a \$250,000 threshold was an outlier and invited dialogue on the subject. Comparisons were referenced to processes used in other communities, such as Bexley, which includes review by a Board of

Control, and Upper Arlington's use of periodic reporting to Council.

Chair Jones inquired about where the amount \$250,000 came from. Director Bury responded it was based on the federal acquisitions threshold. Director Bury offered that the federal guidelines had recently increased the Micro and Small Purchase thresholds, noting staff did not increase and incorporate those changes.

Councilmember Renner agreed that following the federal threshold, a \$250,000 threshold was approved in 2022 by City Council, observing the circumstances of coming out of COVID-19, with unprecedented circumstances. He noted the federal government at that time had the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, and later the Inflation Reduction Act. At that time, from that perspective, Councilmember Renner evaluated City Council was on board to get money into communities, following the example of the federal government, to get things moving. He described those acts as gutted, since that time. He evaluated it as a good practice to review thresholds, at this time, to estimate if those practices were correct and what is most appropriate at this time. Councilmember Renner elaborated that procurement thresholds are not only about staff efficiency or oversight, rather they determine how public dollars are spent, with residents seeing it as stewardship, service reliability, performance, trust, and legitimacy. Councilmember Renner questioned if this was the opportune time to tie procurement thresholds to economic development policies. Are Gahanna dollars circulating locally and regionally? Are vendors able to reach the market? Does the procurement system support workforce development or sustainability initiatives? He reflected on these policy questions, then asked if the bigger question is what procurement structure maximizes total benefit and not just internal efficiency. How do we maximize community benefit today?

Mayor Jadwin stated that she sought to align questions about the threshold level with maximizing community benefit. She questioned how lowering the threshold would impact the ability to maximize community benefit and whether the City could instead employ additional reporting mechanisms to show and demonstrate the use of funds. She noted that Council had changed the threshold in 2022 and that it had remained in place for three and a half years. She stated that the City had experienced no operational issues and had received positive audits. She added that

Council had previously discussed the effectiveness of the budget process. She further stated that the budget book listed all professional services and contracts in detail and made that information publicly available. Mayor Jadwin stated that she was trying to reconcile the concept of maximizing community benefit with lowering the threshold. She suggested that Council might consider options similar to those used in Upper Arlington, such as issuing quarterly reports that tell the story of how the City uses funds. She concluded by clarifying that she did not intend to pose a specific question.

Councilmember Renner acknowledged such a discussion in the public would require several iterations, to provide all involved time to process the information. He stated that if the procurement threshold was to remain at \$250,000 he needed sufficient explanation from the administration as to the community benefit, in order for him to convey that to residents. He shared he was intrigued by Bexley's process. He emphasized again the importance of understanding the community benefit and the tie-in to economic development.

Mayor Jadwin posited that such a consideration could be in alignment with Our Gahanna, the city's strategic plan, honoring the community's will. She wondered if a reporting mechanism could be melded into reporting out on goals and objectives in the plan. She explained she was spit balling ideas. She observed possible challenges in comparison with Bexley. She noted opportunities to learn from other municipalities. She added that just because Gahanna might be an outlier, that could mean other communities could look to Gahanna for a better process. She appreciated the conversation and noted there was more to consider.

Senior Director Schultz stated that he wanted to add to the discussion. He said he believed much of the Council's conversation referenced capital projects, as those projects often drew the most attention from constituents. He noted that the City also managed many other contracts and questioned whether Council wanted to review items such as the Microsoft contract, which recurred regularly as part of daily operations. He stated that staff needed clarity on whether Council's concern centered on a specific dollar threshold or on the type of project. He said that this distinction formed an important part of the conversation. He described the capital plan as a strong starting point but explained that it did not cover everything. He referenced maintenance contracts and a copier

lease as examples of smaller operational items that did not reach reporting thresholds. He added that many operational expenditures might or might not meet a threshold that Council considered significant. Senior Director Schultz stated that, for the benefit of both Council and staff, the City needed a clearer definition of the desired reporting mechanism and specific guidance on what Council wanted to review.

Councilmember Renner shared his agreement with most of what Senior Director Schultz stated, yet asserted the importance of stewardship, trust and legitimacy demonstrated to the public, whether involving capital projects or materials. Senior Director Schultz stated that he wanted to clarify a finer point that he believed some might misunderstand when presenting certain expenditure amounts. He used the Microsoft contract as an example and suggested that publishing the total cost could prompt questions about why the City spent so much with a large corporation and whether that corporation should charge less. He explained that such scrutiny could arise even when the City paid the same amount as a similarly sized community in another state. He stated that he sought to determine whether the City could strike a balance in how it presented and contextualized certain expenditures. He added that he agreed with the points raised. Councilmember Renner stated that the discussion touched on a philosophy of governance. He said that the City should never fear any question. He clarified that he believed staff shared that view and did not suggest otherwise, but he explained that he began from that principle. He acknowledged the nuances involved in the discussion and expressed a willingness to understand what staff wanted to present. He stated that he focused on the benefits of understanding how the City spent its funds, including the diversity of vendors. He emphasized the importance of ensuring that small businesses received fair consideration and opportunities, rather than directing contracts solely to large conglomerates.

Councilmember Bowers thanked those involved and stated that she valued the conversation. She said the dialogue had already produced meaningful innovation and discussion, and she expressed appreciation for Councilmember Renner's and Mayor Jadwin's comments. She noted that capital projects typically required bidding under the relevant section of the Ohio Revised Code. She stated that Council could have a meaningful impact by bringing greater transparency to how consultants and designers performed conceptual work and how that process flowed.

She explained that Council addressed those matters through its budgetary and financial processes. Councilmember Bowers clarified that her intent did not involve slowing down the work. She referenced recent guidance from the City Attorney indicating that permission to bid and authorization to enter into contracts should proceed by resolution rather than ordinance. She explained that using a resolution, rather than a two-reading ordinance, would eliminate the second reading and the 30-day waiting period and streamline the process. She concluded by stating that she agreed with Councilmember Renner and supported allowing the conversation to evolve. She encouraged additional consideration of what approach would work best and whether the current threshold served the community in the manner described. She asked whether Council needed to move the item forward immediately or whether it could return to committee, and she expressed a desire to continue the dialogue regarding how the threshold served the community.

Senior Director Schultz added context regarding the impetus for the proposed code change. He explained that the issue centered on the retainage requirements outlined in the Ohio Code, specifically the percentage the City could withhold from vendors on construction contracts. He stated that the state had recently reduced the allowable retainage from 8 percent to 4 percent, effective around September. He said that the City Attorney, the Engineering Department, and he had reviewed the change and concluded that a 4 percent retainage did not adequately protect the City's interests on construction projects. He stated that withholding \$40,000 on a \$1 million project provided insufficient protection. He emphasized that the section of the City's code allowing a 10 percent retainage, structured on a staggered basis, represented a critical safeguard. Senior Director Schultz acknowledged that Council could wait for first and second readings on certain matters, but he cautioned that construction contracts scheduled to come forward could not wait for an extended period. He noted that the City had recently executed two large construction contracts that included only a 4 percent retainage due to the current code deficiency. He asked Council to consider that particular section of the code separately. He suggested that Council could move forward with the unobjectionable components of the originally proposed legislation through first and second readings and adopt them, then return to address the \$250,000 threshold at a subsequent committee meeting if necessary.

Council discussed whether the ordinance should proceed as scheduled or return to Committee for further discussion. Chair Jones confirmed that the ordinance could be brought back to Committee due to available time in the legislative schedule.

Senior Director Miranda Vollmer requested that Councilmembers submit questions or research requests by the end of the week, to allow staff time to prepare responses for the next Committee discussion.

Chair Jones stated that although Council had discussed the matter, she wanted to ensure clarity. She asked what Council wanted Administration to bring back in order to support a productive discussion. She said that if Council could not answer that question immediately, members could submit their requests individually or she could collect them and submit them collectively. She emphasized the need for clarity regarding what Council wanted to review in order to have a meaningful discussion. She then asked whether Council could identify those needs at that time or whether members needed additional time to consider the matter further.

Councilmember Renner requested larger print in future reports, to improve readability. Director Bury indicated that information in the exhibit from 2022 was outdated, sharing she would provide applicable updates to the procurement decision tree. Councilmember Renner stated that, in his role as a County Director, he frequently encountered the statutory thresholds of \$75,000 and now \$79,000. He said he found those thresholds frustrating because the state legislature based the formula on outdated market data that no longer reflected current conditions. He stated that he had communicated to legislators on both sides of the aisle that he would prefer to see the threshold set at \$100,000, which he believed would align more accurately with current market data. Director Bury reminded Council that the referenced threshold applied only to contracts and did not include professional services. Councilmember Renner acknowledged the clarification and thanked her.

Senior Director Schultz asked if there were concerns about the existing redlines or the concern was the existing thresholds. Councilmember Bowers said she had no concerns about the retainage. Mayor Jadwin asked if members were focused on the threshold. Councilmember Bowers suggested that considering other reporting alternatives combined with the higher threshold could be the focus. She concluded

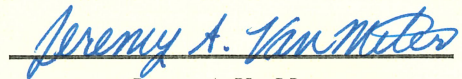
Council was receptive to innovation in this area.

Council discussed compiling questions to avoid duplication, with the direction that questions could be collected by Chair Jones and forwarded collectively to the administration. Chair Jones indicated that the ordinance would be placed on the next agenda for postponement of the Second Reading, with further Committee discussion planned.

Recommendation: Held in Committee for further discussion scheduled on 2/23/2026; Postpone Second Reading/Adoption to Date Certain (3/2/2026) on Regular Agenda on 2/16/2026.

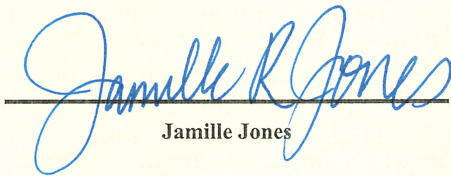
F. ADJOURNMENT:

With no further business before the Committee, the Chair adjourned the meeting at 8:41 p.m.



Jeremy A. VanMeter
Clerk of Council

APPROVED by the Committee of the Whole, this
16th day of *Feb.* 2026.


Jamille Jones