



# City of Gahanna

## Meeting Minutes

### Committee of the Whole

200 South Hamilton Road  
Gahanna, Ohio 43230

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

*Jeremy A. VanMeter, Clerk of Council*

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Monday, June 9, 2025

7:00 PM

City Hall, Council Chambers

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**A. CALL TO ORDER:**

*Gahanna City Council met for Committee of the Whole on Monday, June 9, 2025, in Council Chambers. Vice President of Council Trenton I. Weaver, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. The agenda was published on June 6, 2025. All members were present for the meeting. There were no additions or corrections to the agenda.*

**B. PRESENTATIONS:**

**Our Gahanna Strategic Plan Update:  
Sarah C. Bongiorno and Bailey Morlan (Planning NEXT)**

[2025-0122](#)

Our Gahanna - Strategic Plan Update to Council 6.9.2025

Sarah Bongiorno of Planning NEXT provided an update on the *Our Gahanna* Strategic Plan. She reported that the team recently completed the second round of community engagement at the end of May and were processing input and feedback as they continued to develop the plan's recommendations. Ms. Bongiorno reviewed the process timeline, noting that they were currently in the stage of developing economic development strategy goals and drafting the plan's recommendations. She emphasized that this was an exciting phase as the various elements of the plan were beginning to come together. She also previewed that a third round of community engagement was approaching and would be discussed later in her presentation.

During the second round of engagement, the team connected with over 450 participants through exit questionnaires completed at various community events. In addition to these events, they collected demographic data through a "tell us about yourself" survey and received over 250 responses to an online survey. The engagement events included a Taco Tuesday family night, a small business morning coffee networking event, a young professional happy hour, participation at the city's Economic Development Annual Meeting, a

meeting with high school students through the Key Club, and a senior citizen lunch at the senior center. Ms. Bongiorno displayed photos of the events and described the engagement format, which included pop-up style stations that allowed participants to engage at their own pace. She summarized the demographic representation from round two. Each area of the city was well represented geographically. Age representation was strong across most groups, though slightly lower among individuals aged 15 to 24. The participation rate for residents aged 25 to 34 had significantly improved from the first round. While participation from the Black/African American community and Hispanic/Latino residents remained slightly lower than desired, the team closed the gap since the first round and planned to continue focused outreach efforts for the third round.

Ms. Bongiorno then reviewed the major themes and results gathered at the various engagement stations:

- **Elevating Unique Places:** Feedback for Creekside included interest in business vitality, connectivity, accessibility, community events, additional housing and mixed-use development, as well as parking infrastructure and maintenance. For public spaces, participants supported connectivity through trails and sidewalks, flexible multi-use spaces, green space conservation, and safety improvements. Neighborhood feedback highlighted strong neighborhood pride with requests for increased walkability, lighting, community engagement, and traffic calming measures.
- **Fostering Economic Development:** When asked to select top development priorities, participants most frequently chose retail and restaurant opportunities, mixed-use development, and manufacturing/skilled trade jobs.
- **Serving Our Community:** Participants offered input on a variety of services and improvements, including expanded community facilities and recreational opportunities (such as senior activities, new park amenities, an outdoor amphitheater, and a Creekside playground), increased cultural festivals, and enhanced public services (such as leaf collection, street sweeping, streetlight replacement, snow removal, composting, recycling, and transportation options for senior citizens). Connectivity, walkability, and traffic calming remained consistent themes, along with continued interest in government transparency and responsiveness. Economic development feedback included additional restaurant and retail options, support for small and minority-owned businesses, mixed-use zoning, business retention efforts, and balancing development with conservation and green space preservation. Housing affordability for young professionals and seniors also emerged as a priority to ensure residents of all ages can live in Gahanna.
- **Celebrating Our Identity:** Participants favored placemaking concepts such as creek activation, diverse park amenities, and public plazas with seating and street activation features.

Ms. Bongiorno outlined next steps. The team was drafting plan recommendations based on the input received, technical analysis, and staff feedback. A joint Steering Committee and Directors meeting would occur the following week to review the first draft of recommendations and provide additional comments. Preparations are underway for the third round of engagement, which would include an open house on August 26, 2025, and a "road show" where informational display boards would be placed at various community locations to allow extended public viewing. The materials would also be made available online. Ms. Bongiorno encouraged Council members and the public to participate in this final round to review and comment on the plan's content. She concluded her presentation and invited any questions.

#### *Questions & Comments from Council*

Councilmember Padova expressed her appreciation for the update and stated that she enjoyed reviewing the results gathered thus far. She had a few questions regarding the "Celebrating Our Identity" results. Councilmember Padova recalled that the board displayed several options, possibly nine or twelve, and noted that some of them could potentially be grouped together. She requested to review the pictures again to see the total selection counts. Ms. Bongiorno confirmed that this could be done.

Councilmember Padova further inquired about the process for incorporating big ideas submitted by participants into the plan. She asked how unique or innovative suggestions would be filtered and presented in the plan. Ms. Bongiorno explained that much of the input was themed. However, for that specific question, they sought standout ideas, even if only one person submitted them. She mentioned that all the ideas were databased. Currently, they were collaborating with Director Vollmer to determine the appropriate level of detail for the plan. Some ideas might be included as examples or sidebars within the plan, accompanied by descriptive paragraphs explaining the recommendations. Ms. Bongiorno also proposed the option of compiling the more detailed or specific ideas into an appendix, which could serve as a reference for department directors and Councilmembers as they worked on the plan. She noted that this approach was used before and would ensure that all input remained accessible. Councilmember Padova agreed and expressed that such an appendix would be excellent. She shared that occasionally, residents mentioned participating in surveys but never seeing the results. Having access to the ideas would allow the Council to identify any low-hanging fruit or easily actionable items.

Councilmember Jones addressed the upcoming third round of engagement scheduled for August. She asked how the team planned to close demographic participation gaps and increase engagement among underrepresented groups. Ms. Bongiorno responded that they planned to bring the issue to the steering committee at its next meeting to brainstorm strategies. She emphasized the importance of being intentional with outreach efforts. She described the roadshow as an opportunity to meet residents where they already gathered, such as at the Young Men's Christian

Association (YMCA), library, senior center, small businesses, and other frequented locations. While the team made efforts to address gaps in the second round, they aimed to continue refining their approach with the committee's input. She noted that the online tool was also effective, with 300 to 400 participants in the first round and about 250 in the second. However, to address specific demographics, the team intended to conduct further work with the steering committee.

President Bowers briefly added a related suggestion, referring to the "Serving Our Community" themes. She asked if an appendix could be created to provide additional context for the terms included in that section. She believed such context would help the Council better understand the reasoning behind the words and ideas presented. Ms. Bongiorno agreed and explained that the presentation was significantly condensed for the meeting. She stated that the team asked questions to prompt diverse responses across categories such as services, physical improvements, big ideas, issues, and open-ended comments. However, respondents sometimes interpreted the questions differently, resulting in answers that did not always fit neatly into one category. The team collapsed all responses into a single database but maintained the raw data. Ms. Bongiorno confirmed that they could create an appendix containing this data to allow the Council to review and better understand the input.

**C. ITEMS FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:**

[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

Jeff Gottke, Director of Economic Development, addressed the Council to present the proposed Community Reinvestment Area (CRA) abatement agreement. To prepare for the presentation, he: reviewed similar CRA agreements, analyzed market demand data, studied peer city abatement agreements, watched the Council's Economic Development 101 program, reviewed recent Council meetings that discussed abatement agreements, held private one-on-one meetings with some Councilmembers, and engaged in multiple conversations with the applicant. He stated that he felt confident that the proposal was well-researched and reasoned. Mr. Gottke identified three primary takeaways. First, the application passed the "but for" test, which he planned to explain in detail. Second, the proposal guaranteed a minimum number of jobs and payroll for the city, which was not included in previous agreements, to his knowledge. Third, he emphasized that the project would benefit the city, the property, and the schools. He reminded the Council not to let the pursuit of a perfect deal prevent acceptance of a good one.

Vice President Weaver requested that Mr. Gottke first provide a high-level

overview of the proposal.

Mr. Gottke explained that the project involved 10 acres of undeveloped land located at the northwest intersection of Science Drive and Tech Center Drive, adjacent to the Burns and Scalo site where trees were recently cleared. The land had remained vacant and for sale since 2008. The proposed project entailed 141,000 square feet of flexible industrial space, divisible into three warehouse or light industrial units for lease. It was a speculative development, with each tenant occupying between 30,000 to 70,000 square feet. The developer planned to fully lease the space by 2027, following a one-year construction timeline. Mr. Gottke then detailed the projected impact of the project. The total investment would reach approximately \$20 million, including land purchase and construction costs. The project guaranteed a minimum of 37 jobs, generating an estimated \$466,770 in city income tax, with an average salary on site of just under \$56,000. Total workforce income would reach \$17.5 million, while regional gross domestic product (GDP) contribution would amount to \$18.5 million. Economic output across the 43230 zip code was projected at \$28.9 million, with \$4.5 million generated in state, federal, and local tax revenue. The schools would receive nearly \$1.3 million through income tax sharing, unabated tax value, and increased base tax. Mr. Gottke added that the project would not result in any new students. He recommended a 12-year abatement at 80%, noting that the company had not requested nor been offered any other city-administered incentives. The CRA was classified as Area 3, which allowed for negotiated abatements. He explained that the developer cited high construction and land development costs, including topography and drainage issues, as reasons the project would not be financially feasible without the abatement. Without the abatement, rental rates would exceed market rates, making the project unviable. The abatement would help subsidize rents to market levels.

Director Gottke stated that the proposed abatement aligned with similar speculative developments in both the city and neighboring communities. After analyzing five comparable projects based on jobs, payroll, abatement rate, location, and project impact, he determined that this proposal fell in the middle. He highlighted the unique inclusion of guaranteed income tax collections, explaining that the developer would guarantee the projected income tax even if tenants did not meet the expected amounts, ensuring consistent revenue for the city and schools over the life of the agreement. He reiterated that the flexible industrial space was in high demand across the Columbus region, particularly in Gahanna due to its location. The parcel was available for sale for an extended period, and a company was now willing to take on its development. He also noted the inclusion of an emergency clause in the legislation, as the developer needed to close on the property sale by July 14, 2025, and the seller would not grant an extension. He concluded by summarizing that the project guaranteed income tax collections, offered a highly desirable use that would lease quickly, and passed the "but for" test.

President Bowers thanked Mr. Gottke for his overview and clarification regarding the guaranteed income tax collections. She referred to a 2019 CRA

agreement for a previous speculative project, which also projected a similar number of jobs. That project failed to meet its job targets, resulting in a reduction of its abatement. She requested additional clarification on how the job performance number for the current proposal was determined, particularly without identified end users. Director Gottke explained that the developer, who was guaranteeing the job numbers, led the discussion. Industry standards for jobs per square foot guided the projection, and even at the minimum of 37 jobs across 141,000 square feet, the figure remained within an acceptable range.

President Bowers confirmed that the developer would guarantee income tax collections for at least that minimum number of jobs, which Mr. Gottke affirmed. President Bowers then compared the proposed abatement to the nearby Burns and Scalo project, which guaranteed 52 jobs within 72 months and received a 70% abatement over 12 years. She asked for the justification for recommending 80% for the current project. Director Gottke responded that, during discussions with the developer, he inquired how much abatement would be necessary to make the project financially feasible. The developer provided a figure, and Director Gottke used his financial model to calculate the required abatement. The agreed-upon 80% abatement was slightly less than what the developer initially indicated but still acceptable to the developer. The approach involved working backward from the project's financial needs rather than arbitrarily assigning a percentage.

President Bowers shifted the discussion to the use of the parcels and asked whether the developer committed to refrain from requesting TIF (Tax Increment Financing) dollars for infrastructure or site improvements, noting that the parcels were located within the Central Park TIF district. Director Gottke stated that the developer had not requested TIF funds at that point. President Bowers asked whether the developer would commit to not requesting TIF dollars. Mr. Gottke suggested that the developer could be asked directly but noted that, based on past practice, the Council had not approved such requests when made after the fact. He added that the absence of a current request could serve as a marker that no TIF support was being sought or anticipated. President Bowers acknowledged that this clarified the situation and created a record that no request for TIF funds was made or expected. Mr. Gottke confirmed this understanding.

President Bowers continued the discussion by referencing the land use plan. She acknowledged that the plan served as a guide rather than a mandate for the use of individual parcels. She noted that the parcels under discussion fell within the South Gateway Focus Area and had been identified for industrial research and innovation uses, including industrial research, development, laboratory design, and technology uses. She asked whether the project would align with the innovation district and whether there could be any guarantee of such alignment. Director Gottke deferred the question to the applicant's representatives, stating that one of the leasing agents was present and could speak to the anticipated uses and demand for the site. President Bowers confirmed that there were currently no identified users for the property. Mr.

Gottke confirmed this. She then inquired whether a local property manager was involved who could assist the out-of-state applicant with understanding regional trends. Mr. Gottke affirmed that such a person was involved and clarified that the applicant was a joint venture between a local and an out-of-state company.

Director Gottke then introduced David Hodge of Underhill and Hodge, and Beau Taggart from KBC, who represented the applicant. Mr. Hodge introduced himself, noting that while he previously appeared before Council in the past, it was several years since his last appearance. He stated that he was standing in for his law partner, Aaron Underhill, and was briefed on the project. He addressed President Bowers' earlier questions. Mr. Hodge confirmed that the project was a speculative development but emphasized that the developer agreed to backstop the minimum job and payroll guarantees in the CRA agreement. In reference to the prior CRA agreement mentioned by President Bowers, he stated that he could not comment on that project as he was unfamiliar with its size or scope and could not determine whether it was comparable to the current proposal. Regarding TIF funding, Mr. Hodge stated that Mr. Gottke provided an accurate response. He confirmed that there were no discussions or requests for TIF dollars during negotiations. Addressing the land use plan, Mr. Hodge stated that to his knowledge, the applicant had no current zoning or rezoning applications pending with the Planning Commission. He indicated that the intended uses were permitted under the property's existing zoning classification. Mr. Hodge then deferred to Mr. Taggart to speak about market trends and potential tenants. Mr. Taggart introduced himself as representing KBC. He clarified that although KBC was a national company based in Chicago, he managed their newly opened Ohio office. He previously worked for Cushman and was responsible for leasing the property. He clarified that while he was not the developer, his success was tied directly to the ability to secure tenants for the property.

President Bowers asked for clarification on the roles of KBC and Velocis in the project. Mr. Taggart explained that Velocis served as the managing capital partner, while KBC was the developer. Velocis and KBC formed a new entity, Velocis Gahanna JV, LP, to purchase the property and execute the development. Mr. Taggart confirmed that this entity would also guarantee the income tax payments. Mr. Taggart then described the market trends that informed their decision to pursue this project. He explained that Gahanna offered a unique and strategic location due to its proximity to both New Albany and the larger Columbus market, as well as excellent freeway access and a strong labor pool, including high-end labor. He contrasted Columbus's industrial market with those in cities like Cincinnati and Indianapolis, noting Columbus's more diverse mix of tenants, which included advanced manufacturing, biotech, retailers, distributors, and third-party logistics (3PLs). He highlighted Gahanna's potential to attract advanced manufacturing firms, supply companies such as Burns and Scalo next door, local headquarters like ADB across the street, and biotech firms such as Amgen, which recently leased 52,000 square feet on Claycraft as overflow space from its New

Albany facility. Mr. Taggart stated that the Columbus industrial market had recently seen 52 out of 60 deals close under 150,000 square feet, which aligned perfectly with the size of the proposed development. He added that they already received early interest from potential users through preliminary marketing efforts. Mr. Taggart concluded by expressing confidence in the project's viability and leasing prospects.

Councilmember Jones addressed the applicant to ask about the tenant rental model. She inquired whether the building would accommodate one business occupying the entire space or be divided among multiple businesses. Mr. Taggart explained that the building was designed to accommodate up to three users. It could house a single tenant occupying 141,000 square feet, similar to ADB across the street, or be divided among smaller users, such as two tenants with 70,000 square feet each or three smaller tenants.

Councilmember Jones continued by asking about the lease terms and how the developer would ensure the building remained at full occupancy and job capacity. She expressed concern about scenarios where a tenant might commit to creating 37 jobs but ultimately employ only a few people. She questioned whether rental agreements could include provisions to prevent this and ensure compliance. Mr. Hodge addressed her question, stating that the CRA agreement would be attached as a mandatory exhibit to the lease agreements. The leases would include mandatory reporting obligations to the City of Gahanna and the Tax Incentive Review Council (TIRC). If tenants failed to meet the obligations stated in the agreement, Gahanna and the TIRC would have the ability to unwind the CRA.

Councilmember Padova thanked the applicants for attending and answering questions. She referenced the spreadsheet provided to Council and asked for clarification about the line item for "community impact programs" showing \$500. Mr. Gottke explained that the \$500 reflected the past practice of requiring businesses receiving CRA abatements to join the Gahanna Area Chamber of Commerce. The amount represented the cost of chamber membership. Councilmember Padova continued by expressing her concerns about CRA agreements in general. She explained that she wanted to see businesses investing in the Gahanna community. She noted that without knowing the future tenants, it was difficult to evaluate how involved the businesses would be in the community or the long-term stability of the jobs created. She stated that while she recognized the value of the initial investment, she remained concerned about the lack of identified end users and the uncertainty surrounding the ultimate community impact. Mr. Hodge acknowledged the challenge and agreed that speculative projects often created a "chicken and egg" scenario. He explained that potential users frequently considered multiple communities, such as Obetz, Canal Winchester, New Albany, and others, when evaluating sites. The availability of abatements played a significant role in their decision-making. Mr. Hodge emphasized that while it would be ideal to present identified tenants, that was not possible at this stage. Instead, the developer conducted a thorough market analysis and identified baseline job and payroll figures to ensure minimum commitments. He expressed hope that more jobs would ultimately



be created and that those jobs would benefit Gahanna residents and the surrounding region. Councilmember Padova thanked Mr. Hodge for his response, stating that both her question and his answer were somewhat circuitous, but she appreciated his efforts to address her concerns. She also thanked the applicants for providing additional clarity and Director Gottke for his work and the detailed financial spreadsheet provided to Council.

Councilmember Schnetzer addressed Director Gottke, noting that most of his questions were likely for Mr. Gottke, but welcomed input from the applicants as well. He began by acknowledging and appreciating Director Gottke's efforts to evaluate the necessity of the incentive, particularly in asking how the abatement would be used. He stated that Mr. Gottke's explanation made sense, noting that the abatement would help achieve market-rate rents rather than simply increasing profits for the developer. Councilmember Schnetzer then raised a qualitative question concerning the suitability of the project for the parcel. He observed that the site was located between Burns and Scalo and ADB Safegate, both significant developments for the city that served at least as regional, if not national, headquarters. He asked for the Economic Development Department's view on whether this project represented the best use of the land or if there was potential for a higher-impact or higher-valued use in the near future, given the region's growth. Mr. Gottke described the situation as a "bird in the hand" scenario. He emphasized that the land was for sale for a long time, was not well-suited for development, and that a company was now proposing a project for which there was clear market demand. He stated that while speculative development with flexible space did not rule out the possibility of landing a headquarters tenant in the future, the proposed use made sense for the site. He confirmed that, in his professional opinion, the project was a good fit.

Councilmember Schnetzer thanked Mr. Gottke, noting that some of his questions were partly rhetorical for the record. He then moved on to quantitative questions related to the CRA Abatement Return on Investment calculator/spreadsheet provided. Since it was the first time many Councilmembers had seen the tool in its current format, he asked for clarification to better understand the calculations. He began by asking about the "unabated tax load" of \$387,570, which appeared consistent throughout the 12 years. Mr. Gottke clarified that this figure represented the tax value on the improved property after the project was complete, not the pre-development value. Councilmember Schnetzer then confirmed that the "abated value" of \$310,000 reflected the 80% abatement applied to the \$387,570 tax amount. Mr. Gottke affirmed this, stating that both figures represented tax dollars, not the overall property value. Councilmember Schnetzer emphasized that the property taxes abated represented tax savings for the developer and did not involve any direct cash outflow from the city. Mr. Gottke confirmed this. Councilmember Schnetzer next inquired about the "after-sale base tax" amount of \$64,459, asking for clarification on its meaning. Mr. Gottke explained that following the sale, the land's base value would be recalculated as a vacant parcel. This base amount of \$64,459 would continue to be paid annually throughout the term of the abatement.

Councilmember Schnetzer asked whether the breakdown of the \$64,459 showed the allocation between the schools and the city. Mr. Gottke replied that the spreadsheet did not show that breakdown but explained that the schools would receive 58.5% of that amount, which equaled approximately \$37,000. The city's portion was about 3% of that total. Councilmember Schnetzer further confirmed that under the city's income tax sharing agreement with the school district, income tax collections would be split equally between the city and the schools. He then asked whether the TIF payments of \$32,199 would continue to accrue to the city. Mr. Gottke confirmed that they would. Councilmember Schnetzer concluded by confirming that when adding all of those revenue streams together, the total community benefit amounted to approximately \$2.5 million. Mr. Gottke confirmed that calculation was correct.

President Bowers offered a clarification. She noted that during previous discussions on the Burns and Scalo project, Council had similarly been told that those parcels were difficult to develop. She emphasized that the area in question, including the 825 Tech Center project, the new Civic Center, Burns and Scalo, ADB, Edison, and The Menlo, and The Peak, were a highly active and desirable part of Gahanna. While she acknowledged Director Gottke's "bird in the hand" analogy, she wanted to reinforce that Gahanna remained an attractive location for companies due to its workforce and accessibility. She then shifted to questions about the Return on Investment (ROI) chart. She confirmed with Director Gottke that if the project proceeded without any abatement, the total tax load would be \$387,570 annually. Mr. Gottke confirmed this. President Bowers calculated that, absent an abatement, the school district would receive approximately \$226,728 annually, based on their 58.5% share of property taxes. Mr. Gottke confirmed her calculations. She then reviewed the projected revenue under the proposed abatement, confirming that, at its peak, the schools would receive approximately \$108,071 annually. This figure included \$45,000 from the partially unabated property taxes, \$25,000 from income tax sharing, and approximately \$37,000 from the base land tax. Mr. Gottke confirmed these amounts and acknowledged that the base tax portion was not broken out on the spreadsheet but would be included in future reports.

Vice President Weaver clarified that all the figures being discussed assumed that the property would be developed and the abatement granted. If the property were not developed, it would remain taxed at its current base value. Director Gottke agreed with this explanation.

President Bowers reviewed the spreadsheet further to ensure full understanding of the tax amounts involved. She confirmed that the full tax load with no abatement would be \$387,570, that \$310,000 would be abated annually over 12 years, and that the school district's foregone revenue from the abatement would total approximately \$181,259 annually. Director Gottke affirmed these calculations. President Bowers continued to express concerns about the proposal. She stated that she saw no basis for invoking an emergency clause to expedite the ordinance's passage. She also noted that

the city previously negotiated a 70% abatement with Burns and Scalo for a larger number of guaranteed jobs with comparable or higher wages. Based on these comparisons, she could not support the current proposal as presented. Furthermore, she voiced concerns about the enforceability of the guaranteed income tax payments, given that the responsible entity was newly formed for the project. Mr. Taggart responded that the tenant leases would contain provisions requiring tenants to pay additional sums if they failed to meet the required job numbers, thereby backing up the income tax guarantee.

President Bowers asked whether Velocis Gahanna JV, LP or Velocis Gahanna JV, LLC would be responsible for initiating legal action against tenants who failed to meet these requirements. Mr. Taggart was unable to answer definitively, but stated that he would consult with the developer. Director Gottke clarified that the city's agreement was directly with Velocis. The city would not involve itself in how Velocis enforced its leases; Velocis would remain responsible for ensuring that the guaranteed income tax payments were made. President Bowers maintained her concern, emphasizing that the agreement placed obligations on a newly created entity, which could present challenges in terms of collectability. Mr. Hodge acknowledged her concerns, noting that President Bowers was raising valid legal issues. He stated that the developer intended to invest significant capital in the project and would own a valuable real estate asset post-development. He indicated that the ownership structure could be addressed to ensure that the entity responsible under the CRA agreement was the same as the property owner. President Bowers acknowledged that this matter could be discussed further with legal counsel. Mr. Hodge reiterated that the applicant was eager to move forward, as numerous contract extensions already occurred and time was running short. He emphasized that the property was on the market for 17 years and that the proposal represented what the market would support. He praised Council for thoroughly evaluating the proposal, noting that everyone was working to ensure Gahanna received the best possible deal. Mr. Hodge concluded by expressing his broader support for CRA programs. He argued that abatements helped create opportunities that ultimately benefited the community. He stated that while the initial 12-year abatement would generate no school children, it would eventually result in full tax revenue for the school district once the abatement expired. He emphasized that the proposal would benefit public health, safety, welfare, and education in the long run.

Councilmember Schnetzer stated that throughout the discussion, it had become clear that many of the figures presented in the spreadsheet reflected the total benefit to the broader community, which included overlapping jurisdictions such as the schools, county, and township. He emphasized that, as a city councilmember, his primary focus was on the city's direct benefit. He requested an addendum to the spreadsheet that would isolate the benefit to the city itself, along with a recalculated return on investment (ROI) percentage. He noted that this additional information would significantly influence his decision. While he was not yet comfortable advancing the proposal, he was open to further discussion once the information became

available.

Councilmember Padova sought clarification from Mr. Hodge regarding the developer's role. She noted that Mr. Hodge repeatedly stated that "they want to be here," but emphasized that the developer would not actually operate any business on-site. Mr. Hodge confirmed that the property owner would not be the end user or operator but would build the facility to lease to one or more tenants.

Vice President Weaver stated that he typically evaluated projects by considering whether they represented the highest and best use of the parcel. He acknowledged Director Gottke's earlier statement about balancing ideal outcomes with practical opportunities. While he appreciated the information presented, he remained concerned about the discrepancy between the abatement terms granted to Burns and Scalo and those proposed here. He stated that he was not yet prepared to support the proposal but appreciated the time and effort that went into preparing the presentation. He also confirmed that, to date, the city had not received other inquiries regarding development of this parcel.

Councilmember McGregor asked Director Gottke why the property was not developed sooner and what limitations made the parcel less desirable. Mr. Gottke explained that, for much of the past 17 years, the property was marketed for office use, which generated no interest. More recently, industrial users expressed interest. He identified significant site challenges, including topography, extensive grading and tree clearing requirements, the presence of a utility line limiting buildable space, and stormwater drainage issues, all of which increased development costs. Councilmember McGregor also asked about the nearby path leading to Taylor Road. Mr. Taggart clarified that the existing path would remain in place.

Vice President Weaver addressed the procedural next steps. He proposed that the legislation proceed to a first reading at the next Council meeting on June 16, 2025, followed by a return to committee on June 23, 2025, for further discussion. He acknowledged the timing constraints expressed by the applicant and clarified that while some Councilmembers requested additional information, such requests would not hold up the process. Councilmember Schnetzer agreed, confirming that the additional financial information he requested was for his personal evaluation and not a condition for advancing the legislation.

Director Gottke explained that if Council delayed action beyond the proposed timeline, the emergency clause would still be required to meet the contractual deadline for the land sale. Mr. Hodge concurred.

President Bowers confirmed that the proposed site plan was scheduled for review by the Planning Commission that week. She noted that the site plan included parking that would abut the existing city easement where the path was located, but the path itself would not be affected.

Councilmember Jones asked whether Council would need the updated financial information prior to the first reading or if it could be provided later. Vice President Weaver clarified that no changes to the legislation were being proposed at this time and that the requested information would serve to guide Councilmembers' individual decisions prior to the final vote.

Hearing no objections, Vice President Weaver concluded that Council would proceed with the proposed schedule. Mr. Hodge thanked Council for their time and acknowledged Vice President Weaver's procedural solution, which allowed the proposal to remain on its anticipated timeline while giving Council the opportunity to continue evaluating the request. He expressed appreciation for the opportunity to present the proposal.

**Recommendation: Introduction/First Reading on Regular Agenda on 6/16/2025; Return to Committee of the Whole for Further Discussion 6/23/2025; Second Reading/Adoption on Regular Agenda on 7/7/2025.**

**D. ITEMS FROM THE SENIOR DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS:**

**Gahanna Civic Center - 825 Tech Center Drive Update**

[2025-0123](#)

Gahanna Civic Center (825 Tech Center Drive) Construction Update 6.9.2025

Kevin Schultz, Senior Director of Operations, provided the monthly update on the Gahanna Civic Center project. He informed the Council that significant progress had continued at 825 Tech Center Drive. He invited Council members to schedule appointments for site tours, mentioning that staff remained available every Tuesday and could make additional accommodations as necessary.

*Exterior & Interior Progress*

For the May update, Schultz reported that site grading and final site preparations were well underway. However, recent torrential downpours impacted some of the curb work and gravel installation at the front of the building. Despite the weather challenges, a significant amount of concrete was already installed. The bioswale was also installed at the front of the property. Schultz anticipated that all curbs would be in place by the middle of the following week, with the initial asphalt course scheduled for installation by the end of June. He noted that the front of the property was beginning to take shape, visually. He reported that rooftop units were installed, allowing for air movement and conditioning on the second and third floors. This air circulation supported painting and other interior finishing work by controlling humidity levels. Elford would be moving their construction trailer off-site later in the week and would begin operating out of the building. This transition would allow work to begin on the back parking lot, including conduit installation for electric vehicle chargers and preparation for the asphalt overlay. This work would also

accommodate the finalization of the generator, which was installed but not yet connected.

Interior work continued to progress. Fire suppression systems were completed, tested, and inspected. Ceiling grids and heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) diffusers were being installed on the second floor. All lighting and lighting controls were installed and were operational on the third floor, with similar work progressing on the second floor. Framing on the first floor was nearly complete, positioning the entire facility for drywall and finish work to commence. Schultz noted that the project was 73% complete, based on time. Through the month of May 2025, the project experienced 27 weather days, with additional weather-related delays occurring due to recent rain. He then referenced several photos. A photo from June 4, 2024, showed the progress over the past 367 days. A recent drone photo, taken by GIS staff member Joe Collin, highlighted the presence of a curb layer actively following gravel outlines at the site. Mr. Schultz stated that the exterior of the site was beginning to come to life and that the parking lot and front entrance would soon resemble their final appearance. He also showed photos of the bioswale installation, describing the process and materials used, and explained that further discussions on sustainability features would take place in upcoming updates. A final photo depicted the drive lane leading to City Hall, the Police Department, and the Senior Center, where visitors would be dropped off. Mr. Schultz remarked on the building's aesthetic appeal, acknowledging his personal bias but stating that the building was striking and represented how the City of Gahanna wanted to present itself. He also expressed appreciation for Ms. Bowers' earlier comments about the project serving as a catalyst for development in the area.

#### *May Financial Updates*

Reviewing the financials, Director Schultz stated that 56% of the total \$59.6 million construction contract was invoiced, totaling just under \$33.5 million. Of the \$4.8 million in allowances and contingencies, approximately 43% of the allowance funds and about 47% of the contingency funds were spent, totaling about 46% of the \$4.8 million. He concluded that the project remained financially healthy and continued to trend positively within the overall budget. Schultz then offered to take questions on the current construction progress and May financials before proceeding to discuss the public spaces within the building.

#### *Questions from Council*

President Bowers thanked Director Schultz and expressed her enthusiasm for the project's progress, stating that it had gone as well as it possibly could. President Bowers requested that Mr. Schultz provide, via email, a more detailed breakdown of the expenditures to date and anticipated future expenditures, organized by area. She recalled a chart previously provided by Elford that identified vendors and expenditures and suggested that a similar format might be helpful. She clarified that her request was part of the

Council's due diligence and not due to any concerns or suspicions. Schultz confirmed that he understood the request and explained that he would organize the data by discipline, such as electrical, plumbing, HVAC, and the other 30 or so trades involved in the project. He noted that while the report would be lengthy, it would sum up to the total figures already presented.

Councilmember Schnetzer asked a clarifying question regarding the budgeted allowances and contingencies table. He inquired if the \$1.844 million figure was derived by taking 43% of \$1.054 million and 47% of another amount. Schultz explained that the \$1.844 million was calculated by taking 46.39% of the total \$4.776 million shown on the third line of the chart.

Councilmember Padova offered a comment, noting that she intended to share it during the previous update. She remarked on the impressive daily work taking place on the construction site, highlighting the multiple trades and workers simultaneously performing their specialized tasks. She commended everyone involved in the project for their dedication and expressed her appreciation to Director Schultz and his team for keeping the Council informed and for extending invitations to visit the site. She stated her intention to take advantage of the tour opportunity soon. Schultz responded by expressing his gratitude for the comments. He emphasized that many individuals contributed to the project's success, including city staff, Elford, MSA, Terracon, local vendors conducting special inspections, and the city's building department inspectors, who conducted daily inspections to ensure a quality project.

#### *Project Objectives & Public Spaces Review*

Director Schultz continued his presentation by offering a brief overview of the project objectives. He emphasized that the design aimed to create an inviting and approachable space with a clear civic presence, while maintaining a community- and service-focused atmosphere. He explained that these objectives directly related to the public spaces inside the facility, which he would highlight. He described the images displayed on the screen, noting that they did not fully capture the scale and feel of the interior space as designed. The rendering in the upper left corner showed the main lobby as visitors would experience it upon entering the building. The customer service desk was oriented toward the main doors, with City Council Chambers clearly visible immediately to the right, rather than further down a hallway. Mayor's Court would also be easily accessible from this area. Schultz briefly reviewed the layout of the City Council Chambers. He referenced a rendering and a current construction photo, noting that the photo did not fully convey the space's configuration. Using markers on the diagram, he pointed out the main entrance, the center of the dais, and other reference points. He explained that the dais would sit approximately 20 inches lower than the current dais, offering a different feel for both Councilmembers and presenters. He also noted that the back entrance allowed access from the holding area to Mayor's Court, and that a built-in internal handicap ramp was incorporated into the dais design for accessibility.

Director Schultz then introduced a video flythrough of the facility. He explained that the video would begin at the front entrance, proceed through the main lobby, into City Council Chambers, pass the Mayor's Court waiting area, continue through the Police Department's secure lobby, travel down a corridor to the Senior Center, and eventually return to the main lobby. As the video played, Schultz continued to narrate, pointing out design features such as the customer service windows and the interior corridors. He highlighted how the design incorporated natural light and landscaping views, drawing attention to how visitors' eyes would be drawn to the outdoor landscaping visible through interior windows, creating a connection between the indoor and outdoor spaces. He credited MSA for the building's design and Elford for bringing the vision to life. Schultz concluded his prepared remarks and invited additional questions from Councilmembers.

#### *Additional Questions and Comments*

Councilmember Padova thanked Director Schultz for mentioning the landscaping and raised a question regarding the incorporation of herbs into the design. She inquired whether herbs would be included, acknowledging that it might not be to the extent of the Geroux Herb Garden at the current location, and asked how such elements might be incorporated. Schultz responded that he was not entirely certain of the specific planting plan details. He explained that Parks and Recreation staff reviewed the landscaping plan and provided feedback to the landscape architects, requesting changes to several plant and tree selections. Some of the originally proposed species were either not preferred or potentially invasive. As a result, adjustments were made to ensure the landscaping would feature native and lower-maintenance plantings. While he could not confirm whether herbs would be included, he assured the Council that the area in front of the building would have a park-like setting for visitors conducting business or attending other functions.

Mayor Jadwin added that herbs were incorporated into the building's internal design and graphics, including elements such as the frosting on conference room windows. She explained that efforts were being made to reflect the city's heritage and history through these design features. Additionally, she mentioned that a historical timeline recognizing the city's past would be included within the building to honor Gahanna's special designation and historical significance. Schultz concluded by stating that a special presentation on the graphics package would be scheduled closer to the fall, allowing Councilmembers to review the proposed designs for features such as window frosting and other interior graphics.

#### **E. ITEMS FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF PARKS & RECREATION:**

[ORD-0027-2025](#) AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR TO ENTER INTO AN ACCESS EASEMENT AGREEMENT WITH CENTERPOINT CHURCH FOR THE USE OF PARKING LOT LOCATED AT 670 MCCUTCHEON



ROAD; AND AUTHORIZING A SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATION FROM THE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT FUND (3250)

Stephania Ferrell, Director of Parks & Recreation, presented a proposal concerning Sunpoint Park. She explained that the park served a wide variety of users and activities, often generating high parking demand. Due to its proximity and convenience, the private parking lot owned by Centerpoint Church was frequently used for overflow parking. Director Ferrell stated that the administration, in coordination with Centerpoint Church, respectfully requested an ordinance authorizing Mayor Jadwin to enter into an access agreement with Centerpoint Church. She further requested a supplemental appropriation of \$150,000 for the first payment of the 20-year agreement. She clarified that Centerpoint Church would remain responsible for maintaining the parking lot.

Councilmember Padova asked whether there was any prior agreement with Centerpoint Church regarding parking. Director Ferrell explained that since the park's opening in 2019, the parking challenge existed, but no formal agreement was in place. This proposal represented the first formal resolution of that long-standing issue. Councilmember Padova inquired further, asking whether the issue stemmed from complaints about parking or simply from the need to clarify responsibility. Director Ferrell confirmed that Centerpoint Church was not upset about the parking but, as a private property owner, retained responsibility for maintenance. She added that the church was willing to accommodate park users as long as their own use of the lot was not disrupted. Councilmember Padova questioned the cost of the agreement, noting the initial \$150,000 payment followed by a second payment for a total of \$300,000 over 20 years. Director Ferrell confirmed that the agreement amounted to \$15,000 annually for 20 years. She explained that the fee reflected the maintenance costs and the significant level of access being granted, which allowed use of the lot every day except Sunday mornings and religious holidays. Councilmember Padova asked whether athletic fields at Sunpoint Park contributed to the high parking demand. Director Ferrell confirmed that athletic fields were located adjacent to the church lot, and multiple amenities often operated simultaneously, increasing the need for parking. She noted that, for convenience, visitors frequently used the church lot for access to the fields.

Councilmember Jones asked whether the city had any control over maintenance expectations under the agreement. Director Ferrell responded that the access agreement outlined specific maintenance standards, including restriping the lot every two years, snow removal, and debris clearing.

Councilmember McGregor acknowledged that while the payment amount seemed high, it was a large lot. She asked for an estimate of the cost to fully repave the lot. Director Ferrell estimated that a full-depth replacement would cost over \$300,000 for a one-time repaving. Councilmember McGregor noted that the city did not always utilize the full lot but had done so on occasion for

large events, such as National Night Out. Director Ferrell confirmed that the city coordinated with the church for such events and used the entire lot at times. Councilmember McGregor expressed that the price seemed fair for the length of the agreement.

President Bowers agreed, emphasizing that Centerpoint Church had proven to be a valuable partner not only to Parks and Recreation but also to arts and community groups. She stated that the agreement reflected shared responsibility and respect for the church's property.

Vice President Weaver commented that this arrangement appeared preferable to the city undertaking full maintenance responsibility itself.

Councilmember McGregor added that Sunpoint Park existed because Centerpoint Church originally planned to build apartments on the site but ultimately sold the land to the City of Gahanna after discussions with Mayor Tom Kneeland. She inquired whether similar discussions occurred with the church near Stonybrook regarding the trailhead parking lot. Director Ferrell explained that the City of Gahanna engaged in ongoing conversations with that church, but multiple pastoral transitions led to differing perspectives on how that property should be used. She stated that discussions would continue as appropriate if the trailhead option remained viable.

**Recommendation: Introduction/First Reading on Regular Agenda on 6/16/2025; Second Reading/Adoption on Consent Agenda on 7/7/2025.**

[ORD-0028-2025](#)

AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS FOR GRANT FUNDING AWARDED BY THE OHIO DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES (ODNR) AND TO AUTHORIZE THE TRANSFER OF MATCHING FUNDS FOR THE BOAT SAFETY GRANT PROGRAM

Director of Parks and Recreation Stephania Ferrell informed Council that the administration received grant funding from the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Division of Parks and Watercraft. She explained that the grant was a reimbursement grant and required matching funds. The total amount of the grant was \$18,931. Director Ferrell stated that, for recordkeeping and compliance purposes, the agreement required the creation of a separate and dedicated account titled the "Boat Safety Grant Operating Equipment Fund." This account was established to meet the compliance requirements. She reported that the administration was respectfully requesting an ordinance for a supplemental appropriation in the full amount of \$18,931. The matching funds for the grant were previously appropriated. However, the administration also requested an additional appropriation of \$4,733, representing the match funds, to be transferred from the Recreation Materials and Supplies account to the Recreation Transfer Out account. Finally, Director Ferrell requested authorization for the Finance Director to transfer those funds into the dedicated Boat Safety Grant Operating Equipment Fund in order to remain in compliance with the grant agreement. There were no questions or comments.

**Recommendation: Introduction/First Reading on Regular Agenda on 6/16/2025;  
Second Reading/Adoption on Consent Agenda on 7/7/2025.**

[ORD-0029-2025](#)

AN ORDINANCE TO AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR TO ENTER INTO A PROFESSIONAL SERVICES AGREEMENT WITH KLEINFELDER ENGINEERING, LLC FOR DESIGN AND ENGINEERING SERVICES FOR THE WOODSIDE GREEN AND HANNAH PARK POND IMPROVEMENTS PROJECTS

Director of Parks and Recreation Stephanie Ferrell presented the administration's request to proceed with improvements at Woodside Green Ponds and Hannah Park Ponds. She reported that a request for proposal (RFP) process had been initiated to secure professional services for these projects. Following the RFP process, Kleinfelder Engineering was selected to lead the project. Director Ferrell requested that Council authorize Mayor Jadwin to enter into a professional services agreement with Kleinfelder Engineering. She noted that funds for the project were already appropriated as part of the 2025 Capital Improvement Plan (CIP).

Councilmember McGregor referenced the scope of services, which mentioned a previous plan by Kimley-Horn, and asked whether the city had paid for that earlier study. Director Ferrell confirmed that the city funded the Kimley-Horn study, but explained that it was only an exploratory review. While helpful for initial planning, the Kimley-Horn report did not provide the level of detail necessary to proceed to construction or bidding, which the new contract with Kleinfelder would address.

President Bowers asked how the administration determined that Hannah Park required pond maintenance, as she did not recall prior discussions specific to that park. Director Ferrell explained that Hannah Park contained a functioning stormwater pond, and completing improvements sooner would provide long-term cost and functional benefits. She emphasized that addressing these needs early would help maintain the ponds' intended purpose.

Vice President Weaver noted that the scope included aesthetic improvements and asked Director Ferrell to summarize those elements for the record. Director Ferrell stated that, at Woodside Green, which was frequently used for fishing, the administration would explore feasibility options such as piers for safer fishing access, particularly for youth, and slip ramps for boating. She noted that Hannah Park ponds were regularly used for activities such as kayaking instruction for summer camps and middle school adventure programs, and improvements would focus on enhancing safety and accessibility for programming purposes.

Councilmember McGregor recalled prior discussions about the need to dredge Hannah Park ponds due to silt accumulation. Director Ferrell confirmed that this project would address that issue, with the upcoming phase determining the necessary dredging depth.

Councilmember Renner inquired about public awareness efforts for the project, noting the absence of public outreach components in the proposal. Director Ferrell explained that public education and communication would be a key part of the project. She stated that while dredging and related work might not be visually appealing, it was necessary and would be carefully explained to park users. Public communication would include a variety of methods, such as videos, direct letters to nearby residents, updates on the city website, and social media announcements, coordinated by the city's marketing and communications team.

Councilmember Renner asked about the expected timeline for the work. Director Ferrell responded that the permitting and environmental review processes would require significant time. She stated that activity at Hannah Park was not anticipated until 2027, while work at Woodside Green could potentially begin earlier. However, due to the proximity of Woodside Green to a floodway, extensive permitting would also be required, making exact timelines uncertain at this stage. Councilmember Renner further asked whether the work might occur during peak park usage periods. Director Ferrell acknowledged that was a possibility but assured Council that the department was also considering other ongoing improvements at nearby parks, such as Academy Park, to minimize concurrent disruptions to multiple sites.

Councilmember McGregor asked about the disposal process for dredged materials, noting that drying out the material could take considerable time. Director Ferrell explained that multiple options would be evaluated depending on the material's composition. Options included dewatering on-site, transporting to a landfill, or other disposal methods, which would be determined as part of the project's scope once the material was fully assessed.

**Recommendation: Introduction/First Reading on Regular Agenda on 6/16/2025; Second Reading/Adoption on Consent Agenda on 7/7/2025.**

[RES-0028-2025](#)

**A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING APPLICATION FOR ALTERNATIVE FUNDING FROM THE OHIO URBAN FORESTRY GRANT PROGRAM ADMINISTERED BY THE OHIO DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES DIVISION OF FORESTRY**

Director of Parks and Recreation Stephania Ferrell presented a request for Council authorization to apply for grant funding through the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) Division of Forestry. She explained that the grant application required formal authorization from the city's governing body to proceed. The administration respectfully requested a resolution granting the authority to submit the application.

Councilmember McGregor asked for clarification on the specific location referenced in the grant materials, which mentioned Interstate 270. Director Ferrell explained that the targeted project area was identified in a map included as part of the grant cycle materials. She stated that only the Royal

Manor area of Gahanna qualified for funding under the grant's eligibility criteria, and the proposed project would focus on that location.

Vice President Weaver expressed his appreciation to Director Ferrell and the administration for their continued efforts to pursue external funding sources.

**Recommendation: Introduction/Adoption on Consent Agenda on 6/16/2025.**

**F. ITEMS FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE:**

[ORD-0026-2025](#) AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2025 - Various Funds for Retirement Expense Purposes and Real Estate Settlement Fees

Director of Finance Joann Bury requested supplemental appropriations as part of the city's normal budget monitoring process. She explained that several accounts required additional funding to cover expenses through the remainder of the year. The primary need stemmed from severance payouts. She reported that the city experienced three retirements so far in the year and anticipated three more by year-end. The initial retirements largely depleted the available balances in those severance accounts. Additionally, Director Bury noted that adjustments were needed for auditor and treasurer fees related to first-half income tax collections. While the department estimated these fees based on percentages and historical trends, the actual collections came in slightly higher than expected. She stated that these types of mid-year adjustments were typical once the first settlement amounts were received.

**Recommendation: Introduction/First Reading on Regular Agenda on 6/16/2025; Second Reading/Adoption on Consent Agenda on 7/7/2025.**

[RES-0026-2025](#) A RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE TAX BUDGET OF THE CITY OF GAHANNA, OHIO, FOR THE FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING JANUARY 1, 2026

Director of Finance Joann Bury presented the 2026 annual tax budget and requested a resolution authorizing its submission. She explained that state law required the budget to be filed with the county budget commission by July 20, 2025. The purpose of the tax budget was to enable the budget commission to confirm that the city needed all of the property tax revenues currently being levied and to certify those amounts. She emphasized that the tax budget was not an appropriation request. The process would culminate in October 2025, when the county budget commission would set the tax rates and amounts, which would then return to Council for approval by resolution.

**Recommendation: Introduction/Adoption on Consent Agenda on 6/16/2025.**

**G. ITEMS FROM THE CITY ATTORNEY:**

[RES-0029-2025](#) A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE GAHANNA CITY ATTORNEY TO JOIN AN AMICUS BRIEF IN SUPPORT OF THE CITY OF CINCINNATI IN A CASE PENDING BEFORE THE OHIO SUPREME COURT

## CONCERNING TAXPAYER STANDING

City Attorney Tamilarasan presented a memo outlining a legal matter currently under review by the Ohio Supreme Court involving taxpayer litigation and standing requirements. She explained that the litigation originated from Cincinnati, where a taxpayer filed a lawsuit without alleging any specific public harm or private injury. Traditionally, in such taxpayer suits, the courts require that plaintiffs demonstrate some form of harm, either to themselves or to the public, as a basis for legal standing. City Attorney Tamilarasan clarified that taxpayer litigation allows individuals to file suit if they believe a municipality is misapplying funds or acting outside its legal bounds and the city's law director or solicitor fails to initiate corrective legal action. The longstanding legal precedent required an articulable harm to proceed with such suits. In the Cincinnati case, the plaintiff filed litigation purely on disagreement with the city's decision, without identifying a harmed public interest or personal injury. She emphasized that this issue did not affect citizens' rights to challenge municipal actions through referendums or other mechanisms, but was specific to taxpayer lawsuits, which, while infrequent, carry significant legal precedent. Should the Ohio Supreme Court overturn the appellate court decision, it could erode the standing requirement and potentially lead to an increase in similar lawsuits, regardless of whether any harm is demonstrated.

President Bowers expressed appreciation for the explanation and noted that she previously shared some discomfort about the city potentially joining the lawsuit. She asked for clarification on Ohio Revised Code (ORC) Section 733.59, which City Attorney Tamilarasan referenced in her memo, seeking to better understand the origins of the taxpayer right to file such suits.

City Attorney Tamilarasan confirmed that ORC 733.59 governs taxpayer suits, granting taxpayers the right to bring suit in their own name on behalf of a municipal corporation if the law director or solicitor fails to act. This statute empowers the solicitor to file injunctions or other legal actions to restrain wrongful municipal acts, and if the solicitor declines, a taxpayer may initiate legal action to protect the public interest. She added that Gahanna's city charter mirrors this statutory provision. She further explained that while the courts have long recognized the right to taxpayer litigation, they have consistently required plaintiffs to demonstrate standing by articulating a public right that is being infringed. In the Cincinnati case, both private injury and public harm were absent, leading the appeals court to find no standing.

President Bowers asked whether the city's legal position would advocate that plaintiffs must articulate a specific public right, rather than demonstrating individualized harm. City Attorney Tamilarasan confirmed this, stating that their position would be that a plaintiff must identify a public right being advanced in order to proceed with taxpayer litigation. The city would not argue that personal injury was required, only that a public right must be implicated. President Bowers thanked City Attorney Tamilarasan for the clarification, stating that the explanation resolved her concerns.

**Recommendation: Introduction/Adoption on Regular Agenda on 6/16/2025.**

**H. ITEMS FROM COUNCILMEMBERS:****Councilmember Schnetzer:**

[RES-0024-2025](#) A JOINT RESOLUTION AND PROCLAMATION HONORING AND RECOGNIZING KYLEE TIBBS, GAHANNA LINCOLN HIGH SCHOOL'S FIRST-EVER OHSA STATE WRESTLING CHAMPION

Councilmember Schnetzer introduced Resolution 0024-2025, which recognized Ms. KyLee Tibbs, a student-athlete at Gahanna Lincoln High School. He noted that Ms. Tibbs earned the distinction of becoming the school's first-ever state wrestling champion, across both boys' and girls' divisions. Councilmember Schnetzer also mentioned that she was an impressive student academically. He explained that the resolution language was intended to serve as a proclamation, and that the resolution was reviewed by the administration. Councilmember Schnetzer stated that, due to Miss Tibbs' international travel schedule, the goal was to present the resolution as early as Monday, June 16, 2025. He apologized to his colleagues for the short timeline and invited any necessary amendments or edits to the resolution.

Vice President Weaver extended his congratulations to Miss Tibbs, remarking on her impressive accomplishments both athletically and academically.

**Recommendation: Introduction/Adoption on Consent Agenda on 6/16/2025.**

**Councilmember Jones:**

[RES-0025-2025](#) A JOINT RESOLUTION AND PROCLAMATION HONORING JUNETEENTH & THE INAUGURAL JUNETEENTH CELEBRATION IN THE CITY OF GAHANNA

Councilmember Jones presented a joint resolution and proclamation honoring Juneteenth, as well as recognizing the upcoming Juneteenth celebration. She noted that the celebration would take place on the upcoming Saturday, June 14, 2025, prior to the Creekside Blues and Jazz Festival. Councilmember Jones explained that the resolution language followed the format used in previous years for Juneteenth, with the addition of a *whereas* clause acknowledging the celebration and honoring the committee that worked since the fall to plan the event. She stated that the resolution was scheduled for presentation next week, and that the committee members were invited to attend the meeting.

**Recommendation: Introduction/Adoption on Consent Agenda on 6/16/2025.**

**Councilmember Bowers:**



[RES-0027-2025](#)**A JOINT RESOLUTION AND PROCLAMATION HONORING DR. PAUL KAUFMAN, MD, FOR HIS CONTRIBUTIONS TO UROLOGIC CARE AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

President Bowers introduced a joint resolution and proclamation recognizing Dr. Paul Kaufman and his work through the Central Ohio Urology Group. She explained that the Central Ohio Urology Group played a significant role as an anchor in the development of the Tech Center Drive corridor, particularly in attracting state-of-the-art medical facilities to the Buckles Tract area. Dr. Kaufman was instrumental in bringing together small urology practices to form what became the lasting entity of the Central Ohio Urology Group. President Bowers noted that Dr. Kaufman faced significant health conditions, and that his colleagues were eager to recognize his contributions to their practice, the region, and the field of urology. She then invited Mayor Jadwin to add any further remarks.

Mayor Jadwin affirmed President Bowers' comments, emphasizing that Dr. Kaufman's colleagues were very excited to honor him. She expressed her enthusiasm that the city would recognize him through this joint presentation, which would both honor Dr. Kaufman and acknowledge the role of Central Ohio Urology Group as the first medical office building at Crescent at Central Park.

President Bowers stated that, if adopted, the resolution would be presented offsite at 5:15 p.m. on Wednesday, June 18, 2025. She reminded Council that a save-the-date notice had already been sent and encouraged everyone to mark their calendars. She added that a building plaque dedication would take place at the same time. Mayor Jadwin confirmed that the sign was already installed and that a ceremony would be held around the plaque as part of the event.

**Recommendation: Introduction/Adoption on Consent Agenda on 6/16/2025.**

**Discussion: Additional Anticipated Resolutions**

President Bowers reminded Council that she previously circulated a note inviting members to submit resolutions they would like to bring forward or partnerships they were interested in pursuing. She explained that the previous resolution planning calendar, which covered the first half of the year, had now expired. Staff were requesting input from Council members to help guide their workload and provide appropriate support. President Bowers encouraged members to notify staff as soon as possible if they had resolutions they wished to advance or introduce. She shared that, in addition to the Kaufman resolution scheduled for July 2025, she planned to introduce a resolution in recognition of Disability Pride Month, commemorating the 35th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act. She intended to bring this forward later in the month. President Bowers also highlighted another potential resolution recognizing Killian Sullivan, a Gahanna student recently named the American Birding Association's 2025 Young Birder of the Year. She noted that Killian



identified nearly 300 bird species and taught workshops at the Grange Audubon Insurance Center. She expressed interest in recognizing him as part of World Animal Month and Habitat Day on October 6, 2025.

Councilmember McGregor offered a clarification, noting that Killian's lifetime list may actually be closer to 680 species worldwide, as his birding experiences included international travel. She explained that the 300 species likely reflected his count for the current year, and that his goal was to become the youngest person to reach 700 species. President Bowers acknowledged the correction with humor, thanking Councilmember McGregor and stating that the resolution would reflect the correct information.

Mayor Jadwin expressed interest in jointly sponsoring the resolution honoring Killian Sullivan. She remarked that the children in Gahanna's community continued to be amazing and deserved recognition. President Bowers agreed and added that the recognition tied well into the city's ongoing initiatives focused on protecting old-growth trees, preserving habitats, and maintaining the city's over 800 acres of parkland. She emphasized the importance of educating the community on how to attract migratory birds and celebrating the city's natural resources.

**I. ADJOURNMENT:**

*With no further business before the Committee of the Whole, the Chair adjourned the meeting at 9:21 p.m.*

*APPROVED by the Committee of the Whole, this  
day of 2025.*

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Trenton I. Weaver

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Jeremy A. VanMeter  
Clerk of Council