



City of Gahanna

200 South Hamilton Road
Gahanna, Ohio 43230

Meeting Minutes

City Council

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

Jeremy A. VanMeter, Clerk of Council

Monday, March 17, 2025

7:00 PM

City Hall, Council Chambers

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

Gahanna City Council met in Regular Session on Monday, March 17, 2025, in Council Chambers. President of Council Merisa K. Bowers called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. Vice President of Council Trenton I. Weaver delivered an Invocation and Troop 7456 led members in the Pledge of Allegiance. The agenda was published on March 14, 2025.

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

B. ADDITIONS OR CORRECTIONS TO THE AGENDA:

None.

C. PRESENTATIONS:

1. Joint Resolution/Proclamation Presentations by Council & Mayor

a. Food Waste Action Week March 17-23, 2025 - Presented to SWACO

Councilmember Padova introduced the resolution for Food Waste Action Week, addressing an issue that impacts the environment, economy, and community. She noted that nearly one million pounds of food are discarded daily into the Franklin County Sanitary Landfill, making food the single largest material by weight. Councilmember Padova emphasized that this waste represented not only lost meals but also squandered resources such as water, energy, and soil, while also contributing to harmful greenhouse gas emissions. She highlighted the proactive steps taken by the City of Gahanna, including its partnership with SWACO and GoZero Services to offer a free food waste composting program at Friendship Park. This initiative made it easier for residents to divert organic waste from landfills. Councilmember Padova admitted that prior to serving on Council, she had not been familiar with composting. It was the announcement of the Friendship Park composting site that sparked her interest. Conversations with

Councilmembers Bowers and McGregor, who shared their home composting experiences, ultimately inspired her to begin composting herself. Over the past three years, Councilmember Padova said her approach had evolved significantly, and she had come to appreciate how small changes in personal habits could make a meaningful impact. She also noted that reducing food waste could be achieved in other ways-such as meal planning, sorting food properly, and understanding food expiration labels. She formally announced that the week of March 17-23 would be recognized in Gahanna as Food Waste Action Week. The purpose of the week was to educate, raise awareness, and encourage participation in food waste reduction efforts. She stated that by working together-residents, businesses, and organizations-Gahanna could contribute to the goal of cutting food waste in half by 2030, as outlined in the Central Ohio Food Waste Action Plan. She expressed gratitude to SWACO, the Central Ohio Food Waste Initiative, and other partners for their leadership in sustainability, and encouraged residents to use the resources available at [SaveMoreThanFood.org](https://www.savemorethanfood.org). She concluded by turning the floor over to Mayor Jadwin to introduce SWACO representatives.

Mayor Jadwin thanked Councilmember Padova and welcomed members of SWACO to the meeting. She noted Gahanna's long-standing partnership with the organization, particularly in recycling efforts. She recalled the city's initial grant from SWACO that helped launch the composting program at Friendship Park and, more recently, the installation of new recycling compactors. Mayor Jadwin praised SWACO's support, leadership, and guidance in helping municipalities like Gahanna build and expand their sustainability efforts. She then invited Mr. Joe Lombardi, Executive Director of SWACO (Solid Waste Authority of Central Ohio), to speak.

Mr. Lombardi began by wishing everyone a Happy St. Patrick's Day and acknowledged Director Becker, a fellow alumnus of his high school class. He introduced himself as SWACO's executive director and recognized Assistant Executive Director Scott Perry, who accompanied him. Mr. Lombardi expressed appreciation for the joint resolution celebrating Food Waste Action Week in Gahanna and humbly accepted it on behalf of all the SWACO employees who worked daily to make the region more sustainable. He praised their efforts, noting that while they worked quietly behind the scenes, it was their dedication that enabled him to speak about SWACO's successes publicly. Mr. Lombardi reiterated that over one million pounds of food waste entered the landfill every day, making it the largest single material by percentage. He emphasized that raising awareness and finding solutions to divert this waste for reuse and composting was crucial. He commended Gahanna for prioritizing sustainability and reaffirmed that SWACO stood ready to support communities through grants and programs. He acknowledged the city's involvement in both the food waste drop-off program at Friendship Park and the Save More Than Food campaign, which focused on educating residents, schools, and businesses about food waste reduction. He also mentioned a recent promotional effort at the Creekside District, where he and Mayor Jadwin filmed a segment to promote expanded recycling options-an effort that, he humorously noted, took several takes to complete.

Mr. Lombardi closed by thanking the City of Gahanna for its partnership and ongoing efforts to help make Central Ohio a more sustainable region. He accepted the resolution on behalf of SWACO with gratitude.

b. Recognizing Troop 7456 as First Girls Troop of BSA in Gahanna

Councilmember Renner invited members of Troop 7456 to the front of the dais to present a joint resolution in partnership with Mayor Jadwin. As the troop assembled, he shared that a resident, Ike Engel, had reached out to him and educated him about the modern structure of the Boy Scouts of America. As a traditionalist and former Boy Scout himself, Councilmember Renner admitted he had not previously realized how inclusive and integrated the organization had become. He expressed admiration for Gahanna's own Troop 7456, the city's first all-girls Boy Scout troop, and praised their leadership.

Councilmember Renner then highlighted key elements from the resolution recognizing Troop 7456's formation and accomplishments:

- Troop 7456 was founded in 2019 by a group of sixth-grade girls, setting a precedent for young women to fully participate in scouting.
- The troop has already achieved major milestones, including three Eagle Scouts-the first ever earned by girls in Gahanna.
- Members have consistently engaged in community service, outdoor adventures, and high-adventure camps, demonstrating leadership, resilience, and personal growth.
- The resolution also acknowledged the historic rebranding of Boy Scouts of America to Scouting America, emphasizing inclusivity, a value Troop 7456 has embodied since its inception.
- The troop continues to forge its own legacy, growing without the benefit of decades of alumni support, and proving that community and determination can build lasting foundations.
- Gahanna reaffirmed its commitment to supporting youth leadership, regardless of gender, and encouraged continued mentorship and investment in the troop's future.

Following the reading of the resolution, Councilmember Renner congratulated the Scouts and invited fellow councilmembers and the mayor to join him for photos and the formal presentation. To celebrate the occasion, the troop members received sustainable bookmarks embedded with seeds that could be planted, symbolizing growth and renewal. Councilmember Renner also distributed City of Gahanna flag pins to each Scout as a gesture of honor and recognition.

Council President Bowers took a moment to recognize the parents of the Scouts, thanking them for their dedication and support in helping their daughters succeed. She emphasized the critical role they played in the troop's development and offered her congratulations once again to Troop 7456 and their families.

2. Recreation Update

[2025-0076](#)

Recreation Update Presentation to Council 3.17.2025

Director of Parks and Recreation Stephania Ferrell presented an overview of the Recreation Division, noting that the update focused exclusively on recreation and that a separate Parks update would occur later in the year. She began by sharing the division's vision, as outlined in the Parks Master Plan: to increase recreational programming citywide to encourage lifelong learning and use of parks. The department's goals include strengthening community engagement, promoting health and wellness, and fostering environmental stewardship through inclusive programming for all ages.

Aquatics

Director Ferrell reported that 2023 aquatics participation was impacted by prior-year behavior-related restrictions. In 2024, with eased regulations allowing resident day pass holders to bring guests, the city saw an increase in pool usage while still maintaining a positive and safe guest experience. She shared that swim lessons, once outsourced, are now managed in-house by city staff. Lifeguards receive structured training, which has raised the quality of instruction and increased access to "learn to swim" programs. The department expects continued growth in swim lesson participation in 2025. New adult-focused programming, including water fitness and water walking classes, responded to a need identified in the Parks Master Plan. These offerings saw strong attendance and will return in the upcoming season. The Parks and Recreation Foundation provided financial support to 30 families in 2023, covering both memberships and program fees. Director Ferrell emphasized ongoing efforts to increase awareness of scholarship availability. She noted that seasonal staffing remains a challenge, but the department has prioritized retention, achieving a 59% return rate among seasonal staff this year. Hiring and onboarding efforts continue, supported by the city's HR team and on-site leadership.

Golf

Golf participation has remained strong post-COVID, following a national trend. Although 2024 data initially appeared to reflect a decrease, a closer look showed an increase in rounds played, adjusted for the number of days the course was open. Director Ferrell commended the grounds crew's responsiveness, citing the rapid recovery of the course for the Independence Day celebration, even after it was underwater that morning. The course reopened the next day. Major improvements, including replacement of the aging cart path, were completed in 2024. The department continued to promote introductory golf opportunities, particularly for women. One such program, "Sips and Tips," led by staff members Krista Johnston and Joe Hebdo, received second place in the Ohio Parks and Recreation

Association's Awards of Excellence. In 2025, the city will celebrate 50 years of golf in Gahanna, bringing back popular events like the Chili Cookoff.

Senior Adult Programming

Memberships at the Senior Center continued to grow, supported by a strong culture of customer service and creativity. Director Ferrell credited anticipation for the future senior facility as an additional factor in increased interest. In 2024, the city offered 74 opportunities for free or reduced meals, facilitated by community partners. On average, 28 weekly programs provided consistent social and recreational opportunities. A highlight from 2023 was the Senior Prom, which included free hair and makeup services, formal photos, and dancing. The event received first place in the OPRA Awards of Excellence. The senior team also expanded their role to include adult programming for residents under age 55. Participation increased in 2024, and the city expects continued growth through new offerings in 2025.

Youth and Family Programming

Director Ferrell reported that 2025 youth summer camp registrations had already been completed. Both Camp Friendship and Camp Hannah sold out, with waitlists for multiple weeks. Staffing improvements and better staff-to-camper ratios allowed the department to expand capacity after limitations in 2023. Specialty camps also showed strong participation, and demand continued to grow. A notable success was "Teen Rec Destination," the city's teen camp for ages 14-16. In 2023, it launched with just six campers; in 2024, it sold out with 52 participants, reflecting significant momentum in engaging this often hard-to-reach age group.

Recreation Superintendent Brian Gill-Huston provided clarification on camp participation numbers. He explained that camp participation was counted by the number of weeks enrolled, not individuals. For example, a camper enrolled for all 10 weeks would be counted 10 times. He added that Camp Thrive, a program focused on off-site experiences and community engagement, had expanded from bi-weekly offerings in 2023 to weekly in 2024, and had sold out with waitlists for several weeks. Participation remained limited due to transportation and staffing capacity, but interest in the program was strong.

Director Ferrell continued her presentation by discussing the year-round programming offered through the Youth and Family Division, not limited to summer activities. She explained that the city expands opportunities by utilizing both department-led programs and contractual camps, which are delivered in partnership with third-party providers who offer specialized skills. This model allows the city to offer a broader variety of recreational opportunities without overextending in-house staffing. In 2024, the department increased the number of contractual and department-led programs and expects that growth to continue into 2025, providing even more ways for children and families to engage with the community.

Key Community Partnerships

Director Ferrell emphasized the importance of community partnerships in expanding recreation offerings:

- Peace Lutheran Church provided indoor space for programming, significantly enhancing indoor activity options.
- The Gahanna Library partnered with the department to host popular storytime sessions, led by staff with strong performance and engagement skills. She highlighted the talent of team member Chris Skidmore, whose musical performances have been a major draw for families.

Counselor-in-Training (CIT) Program

To bridge the age gap between campers and counselor-eligible youth, the city introduced a Counselor-in-Training (CIT) program. Open to teens between ages 14-17, the paid program offers leadership development and mentorship under experienced counselors. The CIT program fills quickly each year and supports both camper engagement and seasonal staff retention.

Seasonal Staff Retention & Recognition

The department continued to focus on retention and workplace culture for seasonal employees. Director Ferrell reported a 58% retention rate and anticipated further improvement. She praised the combined efforts of her team, Human Resources, and city leadership in supporting the seasonal hiring process.

Special Events, Staff Expansion, Future Leader Program

Director Ferrell shared that attendance at department-led special events had increased, thanks in part to sponsor support, which kept most events low-cost or free to the community. She also thanked Mayor Jadwin and City Council for their support in expanding staff, which allowed the department to hire a new Recreation Coordinator, Tyler Wilson, in mid-2024. Tyler made an immediate impact and significantly enhanced both programming and customer service capacity. In 2025, the recreation team received its third major award in two years, earning second place for their support of Gahanna's 175th Celebration, underscoring the team's creativity and excellence in programming. Recognizing growth opportunities in community involvement, the department planned to formalize its volunteer program using a new portal and coordinated efforts led by Tyler. This initiative aims to better connect residents with opportunities to contribute to events and programs. With assistance from the city's grant analyst, the department secured an ODNR grant to support educational programming and equipment for the

boating program, helping expand resources for water-based recreation.

Director Ferrell concluded by acknowledging the Future Leader Program, a staff development initiative designed and implemented by Recreation Superintendent Brian Gill-Huston and invited him to present on its purpose and impact.

Mr. Gill-Huston provided an overview of the Future Leaders Program, a voluntary opportunity offered to seasonal staff at the end of the summer. He explained that participants engaged in various professional development sessions, which could be virtual or in-person depending on the year. Topics included résumé writing, interview tips, public service, and education about the Gahanna community and its impact. Year-round staff coordinated and conducted these sessions. In the program's first year, five staff members covered five distinct topics and managed responsibilities such as content creation, scheduling, and leading sessions. Participants were required to attend at least four out of five sessions to complete the program, although staff encouraged full participation. The program expanded in its second year with more in-person engagement and individualized mentorship. Based on interest areas, participants were matched with two year-round staff members for one-on-one mentorship meetings. These mentors included employees outside of direct supervisory roles to offer diverse insights into careers in Parks and Recreation. Mentors included Director Ferrell, Parks team members, senior center staff, and others who shared their career paths and advice. Additional second-year programming included a career panel and an in-person program planning session, typically held during winter break. In this session, Mr. Gill-Huston conducted a 30-minute crash course covering pricing policies, budget worksheets, and planning logistics. Participants then worked in groups to design and present a new program concept. One recent proposal featured a family day at the pool, which inspired follow-up interest from pool staff.

Mr. Gill-Huston highlighted the program's growth, stating that 15 individuals participated in the first year, 19 in the second, and 23 in the third. He emphasized the program's role in providing leadership experience and year-round engagement, helping address the common challenge of reconnecting with seasonal staff between summers.

Questions from Council

Councilmember Padova expressed enthusiasm for the Future Leaders Program and commended the team for its creation. She sought clarification on the age requirements for counselors and Counselors-in-Training (CITs). Director Ferrell explained that individuals could become CITs at age 15, allowing for a seamless transition from camper to counselor. She confirmed that CITs were paid. Councilmember Padova inquired whether the Future Leaders Program had an age restriction. Mr. Gill-Huston responded that it was open to all seasonal staff, with entry-level positions such as CITs, concession staff, and lifeguards beginning at age 15. He noted that the

majority of participants were between 15 and 17 years old. Padova concluded her comments by recognizing the Independence Day celebration and applauding staff for their successful execution of the event.

Councilmember Jones also thanked staff for the presentation. As a parent, she expressed excitement about the CIT opportunity. She asked whether Future Leaders was unpaid. Mr. Gill-Huston clarified that while participation was voluntary, the program was paid. The department logged participant hours for all engagements and included them in the payroll system, allowing returning staff to remain active employees and easing the onboarding process. Jones also asked if mentors came from departments outside of Parks and Recreation. Mr. Gill-Huston explained that while all mentors were within the broader Parks and Recreation umbrella, they came from outside the participants' direct work areas. He shared that they used intake questionnaires to align mentorships with participants' career interests. Councilmember Jones expressed support for the program and commended staff for their work.

Vice President Weaver extended his gratitude to the team for a successful year and voiced confidence in the outlook for 2025. He confirmed that the department was still hiring seasonal staff, which Director Ferrell affirmed. Weaver celebrated the continued growth of the pool program and reflected on his own background in aquatics, affirming the importance of public pools. He asked whether the department had observed a balance of returning and new participants across programs. Director Ferrell explained that while the answer varied by program, senior center and adult programs had seen new faces. For summer camps, demand was high, and some sessions filled before non-resident registration opened. She noted that the department expanded offerings to meet growing demand. Weaver also asked if the upcoming move to 825 Tech Center Drive would affect senior programming. Director Ferrell stated that the department would continue maximizing use of current or alternative spaces to ensure continuity of service during the transition.

President Bowers briefly acknowledged that camp programs served as essential childcare, stressing the importance of continued support and funding. She thanked the department for offering expansive camp services, especially with early drop-off and late pickup options. She then asked about CPR and AED training. Mr. Gill-Huston explained that both he and Aquatics Supervisor Chris Simmons were certified instructor trainers. They offered in-house training for all seasonal staff and were transitioning from basic CPR to CPR for the Professional Rescuer. This advanced training included multiple-rescuer CPR, use of bag valve masks, and oxygen equipment. The aquatic staff was already trained at this level, and the department aimed to expand this training to all event and camp staff by the following year. He noted that they also supported internal staff trainings and provided public CPR courses.

President Bowers concluded the discussion by acknowledging the vast scope of services the Recreation Department provided and expressed

appreciation for the comprehensive update. She stated the Council looked forward to continued dialogue.

Additional Remarks by Troop 7456:

Scoutmaster Jeff Blasi addressed Mayor Jadwin, Councilmember Renner, and the Gahanna City Council to express his gratitude for the resolution recognizing Troop 7456. He introduced himself as the scoutmaster of the troop and accepted the resolution on their behalf, calling it an incredible recognition. He acknowledged the presence of several troop members in attendance and stated they wished to share more about their experiences. Mr. Blasi explained that girls were not always permitted to join the Boy Scouts of America. In 2017, shortly after the organization opened its membership to girls, his daughter and three of her friends, who were nine or ten years old at the time, asked if they could start a troop. With that, they began the process of forming one. He noted that one of the core principles of Scouts is that troops are Scout-led. From the beginning, the sixth-grade girls planned all activities, created agendas, and recruited other girls. Over time, the troop grew to 18 active Scouts and had maintained that number over several years. He expressed how rewarding it had been to learn and grow alongside the Scouts and introduced several members who would speak about their experiences.

Jane Blasi, one of the founding members and Scoutmaster Blasi's daughter, shared that starting the troop was something they were told girls "shouldn't do," but they did it anyway. She said it set a precedent that girls could do what they wanted to pursue and enjoyed helping younger Scouts learn what she and the other founders had to figure out on their own. She described a recent experience at a Klondike winter camping competition, where the troop built a wooden sled, participated in events such as fire building and first aid, and placed third overall.

Mara Sommer, another founding member, shared that she joined in 2019 and had been afraid of heights. Through Scouting, she was able to overcome her fear, especially during a high ropes course in West Virginia that challenged her in unexpected ways. This past summer, she and Jane worked as camp counselors at the same camp the troop had attended each summer since 2021. Mara reflected on how the experience taught her leadership, teamwork, and resilience, and said she had formed lifelong friendships through the program.

Bella Alley, a junior at Gahanna Lincoln High School, stated that she joined the troop in late 8th grade and initially was interested only in the camping aspect. However, she soon realized it offered much more. She credited Scouts with teaching her important life skills, including leadership, first aid, and how to make friends. She expressed gratitude for the opportunity and the recognition from City Council.

Sofiah Engel, a first-class Scout in Troop 7456, shared that she joined the

troop last year because of her love for camping and cooking. While she still enjoyed those activities, she discovered Scouting was also about service, life skills, and community involvement. She expressed pride in her progress toward Eagle Scout and noted the friendships she had made along the way.

Kyra Shaluha, a troop leader, read a statement prepared by fellow leader Heather Ray, who was unable to stay for the meeting. She reflected on the troop's six-year journey and how the girls embodied the 115-year legacy of Scouting in America. The troop had participated in two high adventure trips-Sea Base in Florida and Northern Tier near Canada-as well as snowy campouts and other activities. Three girls from the troop had already earned the rank of Eagle Scout in the summer of 2022 and had since gone on to attend Ohio State University and Ohio University. One worked at the Scout shop, another performed as a stilt walker at community events, and the third played with the Ohio State athletic band, aspiring to join the marching band next fall. Heather's statement noted that her daughter had pursued Eagle Scout after her brother earned the same rank. She expressed pride in seeing both her daughter and other girls now working toward Eagle, with one recent project featuring a winter scene at the Gahanna Public Library and another in planning with the Ronald McDonald House. She emphasized that the girls followed the same requirements as male Scouts, learning skills in camping, cooking, first aid, citizenship, financial and time management, and leading service projects that required them to teach others. Kyra concluded by noting two upcoming events for the troop. First, they were collecting feminine hygiene products for the Period Pantry serving the Franklinton and Hilltop areas, with donation boxes placed at Gahanna Lincoln High School, Middle School West, and the Gahanna Community Congregational Church. Their goal was to double last year's collection. Second, they planned a fundraiser dinner on Saturday, May 17th at 6:00 p.m. at the Gahanna Community Congregational Church. Scouts would prepare a pasta bar dinner, receive awards for their achievements, and host a talent show. The troop expressed deep appreciation to the Council for its continued support and recognition of their accomplishments.

Council President Bowers thanked the troop and apologized for not recognizing them earlier in the meeting. She called it a fitting way to continue celebrating Women's History Month, commending the troop for being true trailblazers and congratulating them on their many achievements.

D. HEARING OF VISITORS:

Riley Dean of 1080 Oregon Avenue, Columbus, OH, spoke on RES-0010-2025.

Ms. Dean thanked City Council for the opportunity to testify in support of the city's resolution recognizing March 22nd as World Water Day. She introduced herself as the Political Affairs Manager at the Ohio Environmental Council (OEC) Action Fund, an organization that advocates for clean water across Ohio, from source to tap. Ms. Dean explained that World Water Day

celebrates water and raises awareness about the 2.2 billion people worldwide who live without access to safe water. She noted that by passing the resolution, Gahanna reaffirmed its commitment to providing clean water for all its residents and demonstrated leadership in sustainability and environmental stewardship. She stated that Ohio faces a \$27 billion price tag to update its failing water infrastructure over the next 20 years. Unfortunately, she added, local governments have been left to bear the financial burden of water upgrades due to reductions in federal investment. This has led to rising water costs for both communities and their residents. She emphasized the importance of federal, state, and local investment in water infrastructure improvements and the replacement of lead service lines to ensure access to safe and affordable drinking water. Ms. Dean shared that the OEC Action Fund advocates for decision-makers at every level of government to take critical steps to protect Ohio's rivers, lakes, and streams. She expressed concern over recent reductions in federal protections for wetlands and state-level rollbacks of stream protections. Additionally, she warned that climate change was leading to more frequent and intense extreme weather events, such as heavy storms and flooding, which in turn threatened water quality by overwhelming stormwater systems, increasing runoff pollution, and placing stress on aging infrastructure. She affirmed the organization's readiness to work with the city to protect the Big Walnut, Rocky Fork, and Sycamore creeks. Ms. Dean concluded by stating that the OEC Action Fund proudly supported the resolution, as World Water Day underscored the importance of sustainable water management and access to clean, affordable water. She praised the city's prioritization of clean water, healthy watersheds, and environmental resilience, and she viewed the resolution as a critical step in ensuring residents' access to safe and reliable water. She closed by thanking the Council once again for the opportunity to provide testimony and offered to answer any questions.

President Bowers thanked Ms. Dean for her testimony and acknowledged both her and her colleague Spencer for attending the meeting and sitting through the other proceedings. She expressed appreciation for Dean's remarks.

Denise Sawyer of 368 Kasons Way, Gahanna, OH, spoke via video on traffic safety issues.

Ms. Sawyer shared traffic safety concerns in Gahanna, specifically referencing two dangerous intersections she had experienced personally. She explained that earlier that morning, while driving her daughter to the high school, she turned right from Morrison Road onto Hamilton Road in the far-right lane. At the same time, a driver in a large F-150 truck turned left out of the Moo Moo Car Wash and crossed all four lanes of traffic, nearly causing a collision. Ms. Sawyer emphasized how close the incident came to being a serious accident and expressed concern for the safety of drivers in that area. She suggested implementing a "no left turn" restriction when exiting the Moo Moo Car Wash, especially given that there is already a traffic light located just behind the business near the hotel. She believed this change would improve

traffic flow and enhance safety for both drivers and pedestrians. In addition, Ms. Sawyer raised another concern about the intersection near Kroger, specifically at the exit. She noted that turning left out of the exit also posed significant safety risks, citing her own involvement in an accident there in November due to the hazardous conditions. She described the intersection as a source of frequent distractions and accidents and urged the city to consider solutions to mitigate these dangers. Ms. Sawyer asked the Council to explore what actions could be taken to address these traffic issues and emphasized the importance of maintaining safety for the community. She concluded by expressing her appreciation for the Council's time and patience and noted that she hoped to attend a future meeting in person.

E. CONSENT AGENDA:

1. Minutes - To Approve:

[2025-0059](#) Council Regular Minutes 3.3.2025

The minutes were approved on the Consent Agenda.

[2025-0060](#) Committee of the Whole Minutes 3.10.2025

The minutes were approved on the Consent Agenda.

2. Resolutions:

[RES-0005-2025](#) A RESOLUTION DETERMINING THE PROJECTED TOTAL POPULATION AND SELECTION OF SUCCESSOR MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES FOR THE GAHANNA NEW COMMUNITY AUTHORITY

The Resolution was adopted on the Consent Agenda.

[RES-0008-2025](#) A JOINT RESOLUTION AND PROCLAMATION RECOGNIZING FOOD WASTE ACTION WEEK, MARCH 17-23, 2025, AND ENCOURAGING COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN FOOD WASTE REDUCTION EFFORTS IN THE CITY OF GAHANNA

The Resolution was adopted on the Consent Agenda.

[RES-0009-2025](#) A JOINT RESOLUTION AND PROCLAMATION RECOGNIZING TROOP 7456 AS THE FIRST GIRLS TROOP OF BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA (BSA) IN THE CITY OF GAHANNA

The Resolution was adopted on the Consent Agenda.

[RES-0010-2025](#) A RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING WORLD WATER DAY MARCH 22, 2025 AND EVERY YEAR THEREAFTER IN THE CITY OF GAHANNA

The Resolution was adopted on the Consent Agenda.

[RES-0011-2025](#)

A RESOLUTION DECLARING THE OFFICIAL INTENT AND REASONABLE EXPECTATION OF THE CITY OF GAHANNA ON BEHALF OF THE STATE OF OHIO (THE BORROWER) TO REIMBURSE ITS 3230-OPWC FUND FOR THE CC17AA / CC18AA, TAYLOR STATION ROAD AND CLAYCRAFT ROAD ROUNDABOUT WITH THE PROCEEDS OF TAX-EXEMPT DEBT OF THE STATE OF OHIO

The Resolution was adopted on the Consent Agenda.

End of Consent Agenda

Councilmember Schnetzer offered comments on Resolution 0011-2025, clarifying that while there was no real discussion or debate on the item, he believed a couple of public service announcements (PSAs) were warranted. He explained that the resolution represented an administrative step necessary for the City to receive financial assistance from the State through the Ohio Public Works Commission's (OPWC) State Capital Improvement Program (SCIP). He noted that the SCIP program would appear on the May 6, 2025, ballot for renewal. Without advocating for any specific voting outcome, he explained that the program, originally implemented in 1987, had been renewed three times and was now up for a fourth renewal. If passed, it would authorize the State to issue \$2.5 billion in tax-exempt municipal bonds over ten years to fund infrastructure projects. Councilmember Schnetzer emphasized that this was a direct example of how the SCIP program impacts residents. He referenced previous local projects that had pursued funding through OPWC, including the Claycraft Water Main Replacement and the Cherry Bottom Road Stabilization Project. He cited OPWC statistics stating the program had financed \$7 billion in capital projects-about 19,000 projects-across all 88 Ohio counties over its nearly 40-year history. He also tied his comments to a recent resolution passed by the Council and the Mayor urging the federal government to preserve the tax-exempt status of municipal bonds, stressing that such mechanisms provide low-cost funding for cities like Gahanna. He noted that if the cost of financing increases, fewer projects can be completed as a result. He concluded by reiterating the relevance of these PSAs in the context of Resolution 0011-2025.

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

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

F. MOTIONS:

[MT-0002-2025](#)

A MOTION TO APPROVE SEASONAL EMPLOYMENT OF NATHAN GRAVES AS COUNCIL OFFICE INTERN THROUGH THE MID-OHIO REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION (MORPC) SUMMER

INTERNSHIP PROGRAM AT A RATE OF \$15.99 PER HOUR

Vice President Weaver highlighted the success of the MORPC Internship Program, noting its strong reputation among participating communities. He acknowledged the valuable contributions of Charlie Schneider, who served as an intern in the previous year, and mentioned that Clerk VanMeter could attest to his positive impact on the Council Office. Vice President Weaver expressed enthusiasm for the year ahead.

President Bowers extended her gratitude to the Department of Administrative Services for their support and coordination of the MORPC Internship Program. She shared her excitement for Mr. Graves's participation in the program this year.

A motion was made by Weaver, seconded by Renner, that the Motion be Approved. The motion carried by the following vote:

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

[MT-0003-2025](#)

A MOTION TO APPOINT ALAN OHMAN TO THE GAHANNA NEW COMMUNITY AUTHORITY INITIAL BOARD OF TRUSTEES, SEAT 2, CITIZEN MEMBER, FOR A TERM OF TWO YEARS

A motion was made by Renner, seconded by Weaver, that the Motion be Approved. The motion carried by the following vote:

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

[MT-0004-2025](#)

A MOTION TO APPOINT ROSS GOLDSMITH TO THE GAHANNA NEW COMMUNITY AUTHORITY INITIAL BOARD OF TRUSTEES, SEAT 3, CITIZEN MEMBER, FOR A TERM OF TWO YEARS

President Bowers thanked Mr. Ohman and Mr. Goldsmith for their willingness to continue to serve on the NCA Board

A motion was made by Jones, seconded by Weaver, that the Motion be Approved. The motion carried by the following vote:

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

[MT-0005-2025](#)

A MOTION TO APPOINT TRAVIS POLK AS A COUNCIL APPOINTEE TO THE CITY OF GAHANNA COMMUNITY GRANTS REVIEW PANEL FOR THE 2025 PROGRAM YEAR

President Bowers thanked Mr. Polk for his willingness to serve the city on the Community Grants Review Panel.

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

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

[MT-0006-2025](#)

A MOTION TO APPOINT NANCY GURWIN AS A COUNCIL APPOINTEE TO THE CITY OF GAHANNA COMMUNITY GRANTS REVIEW PANEL FOR THE 2025 PROGRAM YEAR

President Bowers thanked Ms. Gurwin for her willingness to serve on the Community Grants Review Panel.

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

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

[MT-0007-2025](#)

A MOTION TO APPOINT HOLLY HAINES TO THE PROPERTY APPEALS BOARD, SEAT 1, FOR THE UNEXPIRED TERM ENDING DECEMBER 31, 2025

President Bowers thanked Ms. Haines for her willingness to serve on the Property Appeals Board. She noted that Council will periodically appoint people to various boards and commissions of the city. She directed anyone interested in board or commission service to apply on the city's website at any time. Applicants can select up to five different boards or commissions to apply for. President Bowers expressed her thanks to all the community members who have applied to serve.

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

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

G. ORDINANCES FOR INTRODUCTION / FIRST READING:

[ORD-0008-2025](#)

AN ORDINANCE TO REPEAL AND REPLACE THE CITY OF GAHANNA CODIFIED ORDINANCES CHAPTER 903 - SIDEWALK CONSTRUCTION, MAINTENANCE, AND RENEWAL; AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY

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

[ORD-0009-2025](#)

AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE CODIFIED ORDINANCES OF THE CITY OF GAHANNA CHAPTER 147 - BOARD OF ZONING AND BUILDING APPEALS, CHAPTER 770 - PROPERTY APPEALS BOARD, AND CHAPTER SECTION 1117.09 - APPEALS

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

H. CORRESPONDENCE AND ACTIONS:

1. Clerk - None.

2. Council

a. **Opposition to Senate Bill 104**

President Bowers provided a follow-up report regarding Senate Bill 104, previously discussed at the last committee meeting. She explained that the Ohio Municipal League (OML) had requested its member municipalities to

oppose the bill, which would preempt local regulations of short-term accommodations. President Bowers, Councilmember Padova, Vice President Weaver, and Mayor Jadwin attended the Ohio Senate Local Government Committee hearing the previous week to testify in opposition. She emphasized that the bill would threaten the city's ability to regulate short-term rentals and would either prohibit or severely restrict local control. In her remarks, President Bowers expressed concern about the bill's potential effects on safety, neighborhood stability, and housing affordability. She highlighted the issue of commoditization of housing, explaining that it distorts the fair market and that individuals profiting from housing operate with different priorities than families trying to afford a mortgage. She emphasized the importance of retaining local authority to address these concerns.

Councilmember Padova expressed her appreciation for the opportunity to testify against the bill and spoke specifically about zoning concerns. She noted that allowing businesses to operate within residential neighborhoods without local oversight was problematic. Gahanna's proximity to the airport, she said, made it a prime location for short-term rentals such as Airbnbs and VRBOs. Through her involvement with the Convention and Visitors Bureau, she shared that hotel managers had reported losing reservations to short-term rental platforms, indicating a noticeable increase in such activity and its local impact.

Vice President Weaver submitted written testimony to the committee, which was accepted. His comments focused on the registration fee cap imposed by the proposed legislation, which would limit fees to \$20. He pointed out that Gahanna currently charges a \$150 biennial registration fee for a single-family home or duplex, with a tiered structure that increases with the number of units. He clarified that the purpose of the fee is to offset the costs of code enforcement officers conducting basic safety inspections. Vice President Weaver argued that capping the fee would effectively prevent cities from recouping those costs, thereby undermining their ability to provide essential safety services related to rental housing and short-term rentals. He added that he anticipated another hearing on the bill in the Senate Local Government Committee, and noted that it might also be referred to an additional Senate committee. He mentioned there is also companion legislation in the Ohio House, creating multiple opportunities for community members and local officials to provide input to their state legislators.

Mayor Jadwin shared experience offering testimony at the Ohio Senate hearing, noting that it had been a while since she had done so, and it felt like a return to old times. She stated that her testimony did not focus on specific issues related to short-term rentals but instead addressed the broader, overarching impact of the proposed legislation. She expressed concern that the bill represented yet another attempt to erode home rule authority. The mayor emphasized that local governments, as representatives of their communities, held the constitutional authority in Ohio to create rules and manage their jurisdictions in ways that best served their constituents. She believed that the bill sought to strip that authority away. Without delving into

the specific details of the short-term rental issues-some of which had already been discussed-she expressed appreciation that four representatives from the city were present at the hearing. Mayor Jadwin noted that cities, villages, and townships of various sizes-from Kelleys Island to Sandusky to Hocking Hills-participated in the testimony. Despite their differences, they shared the same concerns. The committee had started the hearing by noting the high number of individuals signed up to testify and asked speakers to limit comments to three minutes, which proved difficult for many due to the depth of their concerns. She observed that the committee members were very receptive to the feedback offered. She highlighted that, out of all the municipalities present, Gahanna was the only city with multiple representatives speaking on behalf of its residents. She viewed this as a strong example of the city's collaborative approach and believed it demonstrated to residents that their leadership was committed to representing Gahanna's interests. She concluded by stating that the community expected strong advocacy not just on this issue but on all matters shaping Gahanna's future. While the outcome of last week's testimony remained uncertain, she had heard mixed reactions from others who spoke with Senate committee members. She remained hopeful but acknowledged that this was not the first time a bill like this had been proposed. She looked forward to continuing to work with colleagues if further advocacy became necessary to protect the interests of Gahanna's residents.

Councilmember Schnetzer thanked fellow members and the mayor who had taken time out of their schedules to attend the hearing and speak on the issue. Although he had not followed the matter as closely, he said his perspective aligned with the mayor's. He agreed the bill seemed to be another example of home rule authority being gradually diminished. Referencing Thomas Jefferson, Schnetzer remarked that "the government closest to the people serves the people best." He believed Gahanna's residents inherently understood that their local representatives-because they lived in the community-were more attuned to local concerns than state or federal officials. He emphasized the accessibility of the council, noting that residents could easily engage by submitting speaker slips or even video testimony. He praised the system of federalism in the United States that allowed for strong local representation and expressed concern that this bill ran contrary to those principles. He concluded by thanking everyone involved for their efforts.

President Bowers also expressed gratitude, stating it had been a privilege to represent the interests of the city and its residents at the opposition hearing. She encouraged residents to follow the legislation closely. In closing, she reminded the public that if they wished to oppose Senate Bill 104 or take a position on it, they could email State Senator Beth Liston, who represents Gahanna, at Liston@ohiosenate.gov. Bowers also noted that residents could contact the Local Government Committee through the Ohio Senate's website.

I. REPRESENTATIVES:

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

Councilmember Renner reported the next CIC meeting would be Tuesday, March 18, 2025 at 8:00 a.m. in the Committee Room.

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

[2025-0062](#)

Councilmember Weaver's MORPC Report to City Council 3.17.2025

Vice President Weaver thanked Ms. Hilts in the Council Office for her assistance in compiling the report. He shared that the commission met the previous Thursday. During the meeting, MORPC presented its annual air quality report and introduced a resolution in support of increased funding for pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure. In the area of regional development and economic growth, One Columbus provided an update on business expansion efforts, specifically highlighting the Anduril project. Vice President Weaver also noted that MORPC received a \$325,000 grant from the Ohio Department of Transportation to develop a Central Ohio Cycling Guide. This guide will include a bike level of stress map and serve as a tourism resource for the region. He encouraged members to review the full report in the meeting agenda for additional details.

3. Convention & Visitors Bureau (CVB) - Padova

Councilmember Padova announced that the Visit Gahanna Annual Meeting would take place the following evening, March 18, 2025, from 5:30 to 7:00 p.m. at La Navona. She shared that tickets were still available and uncertain whether ticket sales would close that evening or the following day but encouraged anyone interested to purchase while they remained available. Councilmember Padova noted that the guest speaker would be Roy Hall Jr., a former Ohio State wide receiver who is now a motivational speaker. She expressed excitement about his message, which would focus on "Team Gahanna" and the theme of being better together. She also mentioned that Brutus Buckeye would make a special guest appearance at the beginning of the event.

4. School Board (SB) - Jones

Councilmember Jones reported that she, Vice President Weaver, and Mr. Wybensinger had the opportunity the previous week to attend a presentation by the school district regarding the proposed changes to state funding. She acknowledged the complexity of the topic but explained in simplified terms that, if the proposal were to pass, it could reduce school funding to 2021 levels-despite inflation, rising student enrollment, and increased operational costs. Councilmember Jones described the presentation as highly informative, providing a clear breakdown of the concerns, the potential impacts, and actionable steps for residents and parents within the district.

She noted that the recording of the presentation was expected to be posted on the school district's YouTube channel sometime that week, although it had not yet appeared at the time of the meeting. She encouraged everyone to watch the video once available and also referenced the district's Facebook page, where additional information and opportunities to take action could be found.

J. OFFICIAL REPORTS:

1. Mayor

Mayor Jadwin shared that the City's IT Department held its first-ever "IT Cyber Café" for city staff the previous week. The event provided staff members with an opportunity to troubleshoot technical issues, ask questions, and receive helpful tech tips. More importantly, it allowed colleagues to engage with each other outside of high-stress work moments typically associated with technology problems. Mayor Jadwin described the event as both interesting and successful. She announced that the IT Department would extend this offering to members of the Senior Center the following Monday, inviting them to bring their devices-such as iPads and phones-to receive assistance with apps and other features. She anticipated that this would be a valuable service for those community members.

Mayor Jadwin also reported her participation in a small group focus discussion regarding the Columbus region's Regional Housing Coalition. She represented Gahanna in a conversation that also included participants from Bexley, Westerville, and Worthington. She described the discussion as enlightening, noting that all the participating cities shared similar challenges as well-established, largely built-out communities. They explored topics such as aging infrastructure, rising housing costs, and limited housing stock, as well as the ways in which these challenges intersect. The conversation also touched on how the shared reliance on utilities from the City of Columbus influenced regional planning. Mayor Jadwin referenced the bill mentioned earlier by Councilmember Schnetzer, emphasizing its potential impact on how communities address these issues. She noted that as built-out cities, there would be a growing need for funding support to manage regional challenges. As a member of MORPC's Executive Committee, she stated that those regional conversations would continue and that more opportunities would arise for communities to participate, particularly as the region experiences rapid growth and an influx of new workers.

Mayor Jadwin reminded everyone that the 2025 Gahanna Citizens Academy would kick off on Thursday evening at 6:00 p.m. at City Hall. She announced that the city would welcome 20 residents to gain a behind-the-scenes understanding of how local government functions. Over the next several weeks, participants would learn not only what work is done by the city but also how it is done-how projects are planned, decisions made, and public funds invested and tracked. She emphasized the importance of residents getting to

meet the people who serve them daily. She noted that staff had enjoyed the program the previous year and were looking forward to engaging with this year's class. Updates would be shared on the city's social media channels throughout the program.

Finally, Mayor Jadwin announced that the State of the City event would take place in 10 days, on the third floor of Franklin Peak at The Menlo by Edison Venues (next to Edison Brewing). The event would run from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. on March 27, 2025, and would offer residents a chance to interact with city leaders and staff, learn about upcoming projects for 2025, and ask questions. Nearly two dozen local and regional partners-including SWACO-would have tables at the event to engage with attendees. Additionally, over a dozen local Gahanna restaurants would offer samples of "uniquely Gahanna" dishes. Although the event was free to attend, she encouraged residents to RSVP via the city website to help with headcount planning. She concluded by expressing excitement to see the community there next week.

2. City Attorney

City Attorney Tamilarasan reported that several items of litigation were pending resolution and anticipated providing more updates soon. However, there were no official updates to share at that time. She expressed her enthusiasm for participating in the upcoming Citizens Academy and looked forward to greeting residents during the State of the City event.

K. COUNCIL COMMENT:

Councilmember Jones provided a brief update, announcing that the next Constituent Hour would take place on April 12, 2025. Although it was more than a month away, she encouraged attendees to mark their calendars early. She expressed excitement about hosting the event at a local small business, the Bibliophile Candle Company. She thanked her fellow councilmembers for the resolutions passed during the meeting and remarked on how much she enjoyed hearing from the Girl Scouts. She stated that the girls deserved all the credit for their contributions, especially during Women's History Month. Councilmember Jones also mentioned a relevant mobile application she had discovered that week called "Too Good to Go." The app allows users to sign up and collect leftover food, such as baked goods, from local businesses before opening hours. She noted that Donna's Donuts frequently appeared on the app, making it a fitting recommendation for those interested in reducing food waste and accessing inexpensive treats like donuts. She found the app useful for her own efforts, emphasizing that she was not an official spokesperson but found the app timely and relevant.

Councilmember Renner acknowledged that he had also come across the "Too Good to Go" app recently and appreciated Councilmember Jones for bringing it up. He expressed his gratitude to Troop 7456 for reaching out and educating the Council about their work, describing them as an amazing group of emerging young leaders. He also thanked members of the Ohio

Environmental Council for attending and speaking at the meeting. Councilmember Renner extended his appreciation to his colleagues for supporting the World Water Day resolution. He emphasized the importance of water in daily life and the collective responsibility to protect and preserve it. He referenced the City of Gahanna's connection to its waterways-Big Walnut, Rocky Fork, and Sycamore Run-as a symbol of its past, present, and future. He noted that the city's logo now reflected this heritage, thanks to the mayor and city team. He stressed that the commitment to clean water should go beyond symbolism, pointing to the need for improved stormwater management and flood mitigation, especially in areas like the west side and Ward 1. He warned that climate change would bring more extreme weather and that current stormwater systems were designed for outdated rainfall patterns. By investing in green infrastructure and sustainable water practices, the city could ensure a resilient future for generations to come.

Councilmember Padova added further comments related to food waste, a topic she addressed earlier in the meeting. She shared her growing interest in composting and how it benefitted gardeners by serving as a natural fertilizer. She pointed out that composting eliminates the need for chemical fertilizers and saves money, as individuals can reuse food scraps such as coffee grounds, apple cores, and banana peels. She noted that planning meals and eating leftovers may require effort but could lead to long-term savings. Councilmember Padova praised the food waste awareness resolution passed during the meeting for addressing sustainability in a practical, accessible way. Additionally, she and Councilmember McGregor had recently attended a meeting with the Gahanna Residents In Need (GRIN) organization to discuss ways to support the community with fresh produce. She encouraged those who grow more food than they can consume to donate their surplus to GRIN to assist neighbors in need.

Vice President Weaver thanked all the guests who attended the meeting and expressed appreciation for everyone's patience. He also extended his gratitude to the resolution recipients present that evening. Although he had not spoken earlier, he took a moment to commend Troop 7456 for their inspiring contributions, calling it a wonderful way to honor Women's History Month. Vice President Weaver thanked Councilmember Jones for her comments regarding the school district's funding presentation. He acknowledged the complexity of school funding, noting that the Ohio Supreme Court had ruled the current system unconstitutional for decades. He praised the recent presentation for effectively simplifying a difficult topic and encouraged others to view the video on the school district's YouTube channel once it became available. He highlighted concerns over the governor's proposed budget, which included cuts to education funding. He noted that the Speaker of the Ohio House had signaled intentions for deeper reductions, which would leave local school districts and taxpayers to cover the shortfall. Vice President Weaver noted he attended a two-day training conference hosted by the Ohio Economic Development Institute. He appreciated the opportunity to hear from Nate Green of the Montrose Group-already contracted by the city-and other presenters, including representatives from Bricker & Eckler. The conference

focused on tools available for local economic development, such as Tax Increment Financing (TIF), Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) funding, and grants from JobsOhio. He shared insights on the challenges communities face in accessing and implementing these tools and discussed the evolving role of Community Reinvestment Areas (CRAs). He thanked the Council Office for enabling his participation and concluded his remarks by wishing everyone a Happy St. Patrick's Day and a happy spring.

President Bowers closed the meeting by thanking all attendees, her colleagues, and staff for their efforts regarding the evening's agenda items. She ended with a final remark concerning the state budget, noting that while there was a proposed \$600 million cut to local school districts, that same amount had been proposed to fund the Browns' Stadium. She encouraged others to reflect on that juxtaposition.

L. ADJOURNMENT:

With no further business before the Council, President Bowers adjourned the meeting at 8:52 p.m.

Jeremy A. VanMeter
Clerk of Council

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

Merisa K. Bowers