



**City of Gahanna**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**Parks & Recreation Board**

200 South Hamilton Road  
Gahanna, Ohio 43230

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Wednesday, March 11, 2020

7:00 PM

Finance Conference Room

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**\*\*REVISED\***

**A. CALL MEETING TO ORDER**

**B. SWEARING IN OF BOARD MEMBER(S)**

Ray Mularski, City Attorney administered the Oath of Office to Scott Lofton.

Mularski left after the swearing in.

**C. ROLL CALL**

**Present:** 6 - Eric Miller, Jan Ross, Donna Simmons, Chrissy Kaminski, Scott Lofton and Ken Shepherd

**Absent:** 1 - Brian Wright

Brian Wright was appointed to the Board on 1/2/2020 by City Council. Wright has not been sworn onto the Board and was not in attendance at this meeting.

Staff in attendance: Stephanie Bernard-Ferrell, Director, Ray Mularski, City Attorney, Brian Gill, Recreation Superintendent and Ellen Ore, Administrative Assistant.

**D. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Ross stated the minutes state Brian Wright is absent when in fact he has not been sworn onto the Board yet. Ross feels that Lofton was in attendance as a representative of the School Board and should be listed with staff in attendance and not under Hearing of Visitors. Miller agrees. Ferrell shared that Assistant Attorney Matt Roth was of the opinion that Brian Wright should be listed as absent since he was appointed to the Board in January. There is some conflicting thoughts on it, City Attorney Ray Mularski is working with Matt and will let us know the decision soon.

Mularski stepped back into the meeting and stated that it is the opinion of the Legal Department that if a member has not been sworn in they are not considered absent; however if they have missed four meetings it can be a cause for removal. The absence should be reported to the appointing authority.

Shepherd asked if the minutes need to reflect that Wright has been appointed and not sworn in yet and not attended.

**Motion was made by Ross, seconded by Kaminski, to approve the minutes from February 12, 2020 with discussed amendments. The motion carried by the following vote:**

**Yes:** 6 - Miller, Ross, Simmons, Kaminski, Lofton and Shepherd

**Absent:** 1 - Wright

2020-078

PR BD mins 2-12-2020 REVISED

**E. ADDITIONS OR CORRECTIONS TO THE AGENDA**

NONE

**F. HEARING OF VISITORS**

NONE

**G. OLD BUSINESS**

**i. January 8, 2020 Board Minutes update**

Ferrell stated that the minutes from January 8, 2020 need corrected to reflect that Kaminski was absent at the meeting. Ross asked where the final copy of the Policies and Procedures were in the minutes. Ross said both the draft minutes and the final minutes need added to the agenda once approved. Ferrell stated the final copy of recommendations and any amendments to the minutes need added to the minutes. Ferrell stated she has a final copy of the Policies and Procedures for the Chair and Vice Chair to sign. A copy was given to all Board members and will be included in the minutes for this meeting.

**ii. Gahanna ASAC Term Limits**

Miller stated that he attended the last GASAC meeting and asked the Committee why they have term limits in their Bylaws. There are no other Boards, Mayor or Council that have term limits, their bylaws should be consistent with others. Miller asked GASAC to think about it and discuss

amongst their board. Ferrell shared that the Committee tabled the discussion until they had more time to think about it. They will discuss at the March meeting.

Shepherd asked if anyone on the Committee knew any past history on the term limits. Miller stated they did not, that the language has always been there.

## **H. NEW BUSINESS**

### **i. Senior Center Annual Update**

Gill shared the 2019 Senior Center Review and the 2020 forecast. Document attached.

Shepherd asked if there been any studies to see the percentage of our seniors are members vs surrounding communities. Do we have an idea if people are liking the programming and getting involved? Gill shared that he believed we have not looked at the population on that, but have looked at the resident vs non-resident memberships. Ferrell stated that it would be good data to know and as far as she knows it hasn't been looked at. Staff always want to amend and update programming to encourage participation. Staff look at programs that are doing well and re-evaluate the programs and events that are not getting the participation that we would like to see. Shepherd asked if staff discusses what programs are coming up and what programs the current members and new members want to see happen? Gill stated that last year a survey was sent to the membership. Staff used that feedback when planning programs. Ross asked if anything has changed since the Seniors are an at risk population for the Corona Virus and the Primary Elections taking place at the Center ? Gill shared that there was an Emergency Response Team meeting earlier in the day; it was decided to close the Center on Tuesday for programming and Wednesday staff will sanitize and clean the entire center and reopen on Thursday. Staff is also working on a contingency plan for the Center and all programming. Miller is concerned about the decrease in membership. Gill feels that the decrease in membership is due to all the changes over the past year. Due to being so understaffed at the time we had to put additional programming and marketing on hold. Miller said membership cost was increased for 2019, could that be the reason for the decrease? Gill said there were so many changes in the last year it is hard to pinpoint the exact reason. Ross stated that we have increased the expenses because we think that is why revenue has dropped, but if we don't see an increase we will have to take another look at expenses. Miller asked how do we keep people from leaving? Ross asked if we follow up with people who do not renew? Ferrell said we do not. Gill stated that we know will have additional memberships

purchased once all the snow birds return. Gill shared that once evening programming is started we are sure memberships will pick up for those that work during the day. Ross asked if we reach out the 55+ condo communities in the area. Gill said we have been working off of the last census information and with this being a census year we will have current data to work from.

## ii. Chapter 151

Ferrell stated that she took forward Chapter 151 and Chapter 153 forward to Council on March 9, 2020. In pink are the changes requested regarding changing the attendance requirements of this Board from three meetings to four. These changes were voted on by this Board in March of 2018 and were never taken forward to Council. There were comments at the January 2020 Board meeting that they had not been taken forward to Council. They needed to be taken as a Council action in order to be adopted. At the Council meeting there was discussion in regards to the why and the City Attorney saw some things that could be updated; 151 and 153 contradict themselves as far as if this Board is a rolling calendar year or a set calendar year in regard to attendance. We have been operating as a January to December which is referenced in 153, 151 references rolling calendar year. The Chapters need cleaned up to reflect the same language. The yellow are the changes that were discussed at the Council meeting.

Chapters 151 and 153 requested changes are attached.

153.02 There was much discussion on the minimum number of meetings to be held per year. Miller asked what Council is thinking. Ferrell said there was not an unanimous decision. Kamaniski asked if one was cancelled and rescheduled within 48 hours it would count.

Simmons stated she was in attendance at the meeting and stated there was some push back on the recommendation to change the attendance requirements from three to four meetings. It got a little tense from City Council. Shepherd stated that one Council member thought there was a reason behind it. Simmons said their comments were that the Board only meets once a month. Planning Commission meets twice a month at a minimum, Council meets four times a month at a minimum. This Board meets the least amount of times. Ross stated that she did not know the others met more times a month than this Board and the only reason this Board recommended the change was that the previous director said it was being changed to be in line with the rest of the Boards/Commissions. Simmons said that Ferrell needs to be able to explain what this Board wants to Council. She said Ferrell received quite a bit of push back. Ferrell said the discussion in January and February

about bringing the change to Council were not reflected in the minutes and caused some questions of why. Ferrell shared from her recollection that members were attending a majority of the meetings and there is not a concern about participation. We have loyal and active Board Members; it just came down to those situations where everyone has jobs, vacations, things happen. We don't want to penalize someone for those type of circumstances. There are other options available if someone is not an active member or is not participating in a manner that we think is appropriate. Council requested Ferrell make the edits to the consistency of Calendar year on both documents and to have the City Attorney review any other language, which he did and bring it back to them. Based on the discussion and recommendation of this Board it will go back to the City Attorney for review before taking back to Council on March 23, 2020.

Ross asked if anyone else thought that the MAYBE is not needed, Miller agreed. Ferrell said it was a suggestion from the City Attorney and it is up for discussion.

Ferrell stated that in 151.03(c) that for clarification Appointing Authority needs added.

151.03 (c) The Director shall, within two days of a meeting, report to the office of the APPOINTING AUTHORITY (Mayor, Council, or School Board) the name of any member who has been absent...

Lofton stated in regards to meeting at least twelve times per year. If the number is lower it will create some leeway. Ferrell needs a formal recommendation from the Board to take to Council.

Recommendation to Council:

151.03(c) The Director shall, within two days of a meeting, report to the office of the APPOINTING AUTHORITY (Mayor, Council, or School Board) the name of any member who has been absent from FOUR (4) regular meetings in ANY CALENDAR YEAR.

153.01(B) Any member of the Parks and Recreation Board that has been absent from FOUR (4) regular meetings during any calendar year, whether excused or not, MAY BE removed from office, may be reappointed at the will of any appointing authority.

153.02 Meetings must be held a minimum of TEN (10) times per year and must be open to the public.

Discussion:

Ross stated that she is concerned that not being there to read the tone; does it make this Board look bad by changing the attendance from three to four. She believes that they have the wrong perception of this Board. Simmons stated she typed up the dialog from the one Council member, she will give a copy to the Board. She thinks that the Board did not fair well in front of Council. There was one member that was more outspoken, however there were other members who made comments.

Ferrell believes that the biggest issue was that it wasn't understood that the changes were voted on in 2018. Council did not receive the minutes from 2018 until after the Council meeting. So it appeared that it had been decided after a Board member had been absent from two meetings. Also the minutes from January and February did not reflect the comments on the previous recommendation. It needed to be understood that the Board made the recommendation in 2018 and it just had not been recommended to Council to be adopted.

Ross stated for the record that a very good Board member that is no longer on the Board and a new member who has been appointed has not showed up yet. Simmons and Shepherd stated that some of Council are disappointed that one board member was taken off and someone else was put on; they think that this Board is making the changes to accommodate the new Board member.

Ferrell explained Council now knows that this was decided on in 2018. This Board needs to decide what is appropriate to move forward.

Miller stated that there is a first and second motion and discussion was held.

**A motion was made by Lofton, seconded by Shepherd, to recommend to Council changes to Chapters 151 and 153 with changes discussed. The motion carried with the following vote:**

**Yes: 0**

**No: 6 - Miller, Ross, Simmons, Kaminski, Lofton and Shepherd**

**Absent: 1 - Wright**

**Discussion:**

Shepherd said that if you miss more than three meetings you have to be re-appointed. Ross stated that is correct.

Ross made the following recommendation to Council:

## Recommendation to Council:

151.03(c) The Director shall, within two days of a meeting, report to the office of the APPOINTING AUTHORITY (Mayor, Council, or School Board) the name of any member who has been absent from THREE (3) regular meetings in ANY CALENDAR YEAR.

153.01(B) Any member of the Parks and Recreation Board that has been absent from THREE (3) regular meetings during any calendar year, whether excused or not, MAY BE removed from office, may be reappointed at the will of any appointing authority.

153.02 Meetings must be held a minimum of TEN (10) times per year and must be open to the public.

Motion was made by Ross, seconded by Simmons, to recommend to Council changes to Chapters 151 and 153 with changes discussed. The motion carried with the following vote:

Yes: 6 - Miller, Ross, Simmons, Kaminski, Lofton and Shepherd

Absent: 1 - Wright

2020-039 CHAPTER 151-DRAFT 2020 Presented 3-11-2020

**iii. Chapter 153**

2020-038 CHAPTER 153-DRAFT 2020 Presented 3-11-2020

**I. CORRESPONDENCE AND ACTIONS**

NONE

**J. DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

2020-047 Directors Report 3-11-2020

**K. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**i. Bicycle & Trail Advisory Committee (BTAC)**

Miller and Ross both attended the last meeting. Miller was impressed with the group, they are organized and passionate about what they are doing and surprised some of the people have been on the committee for 20 years. Ross shared that a lot of the meeting was a presentation on the mountain bike trail. Miller said the committee has a safety concern on Cherrybottom Rd and Route 62 in regards to the lighting. You can not

see people crossing. Ferrell shared the concern with Grant Crawford, Director of Public Service & Engineering. A rapid flashing beacon can not be installed there due to it being a signaled intersection. Crawford and the police department are evaluating how to resolve the issue. Miller shared that the committee plans to start meeting prior to Parks Board meetings and plan on attending these meetings.

## **ii. Gahanna Active Senior Advisory Committee**

Miller and Simmons both attended the meeting. Miller said that they discussed term limits and their current committee members whose terms expire all want to be re-appointed.

2020-040                      Spotlight 3.2020

2020-048                      GASAC Mins 2-26-2020

## **iii. Natural Resources Advisory Committee**

NONE

## **L. POLL MEMBERS FOR COMMENT**

Miller requested Ferrell speak about a presentation that was given to Council called POEM. Ferrell shared that a resident shared her experience with POEM Perinatal Outreach & Encouragement for Moms. While she was experiencing prenatal depression, she took her child to the public parks several times to play. She asks city Council and the administration to consider placing POEM posters and literature in the park restrooms and billboards for both men and women. There is a meeting scheduled with the Director of POEM, the Mayor and Ferrell.

Simmons said that some of the Board members were not at the meeting when Chapter 151 and 153 were before Council. She was at the meeting and was offended and insulted by Mrs. Bowers' comments and Simmons has a brief response and would like it included in this meeting's minutes. Simmons feels her comments were unfair and deserve a response.

Simmons stated "Mrs. Bowers' comments implying that this Board is unethical and dishonest in any fashion is not what this Board is about. Simmons said she has been on the Board a short amount of time but the intentions of the Board are for the betterment and success of the Parks & Recreation Department and that this Board does not get involved in the appointment of our Board members. Implying that we had any



involvement with the appointment of a Council appointment is unfair and this Board has not been treated fairly."

Ross stated she is glad to hear Simmons comments. She is frustrated by the whole conversation. Ross is also insulted. This type of confrontation has not happened before. Simmons said the confrontation was not necessary the documentation was there. She said Ferrell did a great job presenting the changes, the Mayor distributed the minutes from the March 14, 2018 meeting. So at that time all of Council knew what had transpired, and that it was an unanimous vote.

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Simmons statement and Council meeting minutes she provided:

The implications that our actions are unethical and dishonest is both hurtful and insulting. As Mrs. Bowers could see the vote was unanimous on March 14, 2018. She had this document, given to all of council by Mayor Jadwin, prior to making her comments so they were totally unnecessary. Although I have been on the Board for a short time our goal as a Board is the betterment of and the success of the Parks and Recs Department. We do not get involved in the appointment of our Board members. Implying that we had any involvement with the appointment of a Council appointment is unfair.

Council meeting, 3/9/2020, in response to request from Director of Parks & Recreation

\*Minutes were passed out to council members from 3/14/2018 parks and recreation board meeting prior to this exchange.

Bowers: "So I just want to bring something up, if I could at this point, I appreciate this and thank you very much to the Mayor for presenting this. Um I think that I would have, I think that the elephant in the room is that we have a appointed new member to this board who has not yet taken an oath of office and who has not yet attended two meetings, correct?"

Stephania: That's correct

Bowers: "Ok and so the way it looked to me and the way I think that it looked potentially to other people is that this was legislation being proposed to fix a specific problem, for one specific person. And that's uncomfortable, and that's not good government. Ok, so I appreciate that we have this now and think this is something that I would have liked to have seen attached to the agenda for today so that we could have understood that this is where this came from... But in light of hard feelings

in the community, about a board member being replaced, and kind of where we are with a board member that still has not taken an oath yet, it makes it uncomfortable. whether or not - I want to support what this board has requested from us, I do, obviously if they believe that's the right thing then you know, we will consider it as a body, I just want to make sure that we are being honest, I mean, we are obviously being streamed here, I want to be clear about what we are doing and why we are doing it. Ok?"

#### **i. Gahanna Parks & Recreation Foundation**

Ross shared that Parks & Recreation Staff made a presentation of a funding proposal. Staff did an excellent job. The department requested \$38,300, the Foundation approved \$25,300. The only thing not funded was camp enrichment and marketing. Additional information was requested. Many events and programming was approved for funding.

#### **ii. School District Update**

Lofton shared that the school continues to work on the Facility Master Plan for a high school solution. There should be a conclusion in the next couple of weeks. They have also started Strategic Planning process, talking to students and stakeholders about what learning looks like in Gahanna and Jefferson Township. Ground was broken for the new Lincoln Elementary.

#### **iii. Veteran's Advisory Committee**

NONE

### **M. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business of the Board the meeting adjourned at 8:59pm.



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Pam Ripley  
Office Coordinator

APPROVED by the Parks & Recreation Board, this  
13<sup>th</sup> day of MAY 2020.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Eric Miller", is written over a horizontal line.

Eric Miller