

Minutes
Committee of the Whole
December 1, 2025

The Committee of the Whole met on December 1, 2025 at 6:40 p.m. in the Conference Room at the City Building. The meeting was called to order at 6:40 p.m. by Mayor Melissa Monich. Attendance was as follows:

Members Present: Dan Driehaus, Melissa Monich, Bill Morley, Cindy Peebles, April Robles, Jodi Woffington, Chris Woodside

Staff Present: Rusty Herzog-City Manager; Rob Nicolls-Public Works Director; Rachel Leininger-Human Resources Director; Megan Statt Blake-Community Development Director

Guests: Emily Supinger-City Solicitor; Graydon Gist, Wyoming High School Student

Explanation of the City's Cybersecurity Policy (HB96)

Ms. Supinger explained that the December City Council agenda will include a resolution to adopt a cybersecurity program, as required under House Bill 96, the recent state capital budget bill. The law mandates that all political subdivisions in Ohio implement a cybersecurity program—cities and counties by January 1, and villages and townships by July. Because the provisions took effect on September 30, the City of Wyoming has had a short window to develop its plan. The city engaged SecureCyber, a cybersecurity firm specializing in work with local governments and private organizations, to analyze current systems and recommend a program. Working with staff, the consultant helped identify the city's infrastructure risks, outline potential impacts of cyber incidents, define threat-detection mechanisms, establish response and containment procedures, and create training requirements for all employees. Training levels will vary depending on each employee's exposure to city systems. The completed program will be presented to Council in December for adoption.

In response to questions, Ms. Supinger clarified that the state auditor will not evaluate the program in detail, as the legal requirements focus on broad best-practice elements and reporting obligations. She highlighted new rules mandating that any cybersecurity incident be reported within 30 days to the Executive Director of Ohio Homeland Security and the Auditor of State. Additionally, the city may not pay for ransomware without formal Council approval demonstrating a public purpose. She emphasized that these changes are intended to promote transparency. The group also discussed the benefits of using an external cybersecurity consultant, which provides an independent assessment of the city's IT environment and complements ongoing insurance-driven cybersecurity requirements such as multi-factor authentication. Mr. Driehaus noted that cyber liability insurance is becoming increasingly risk-management-driven and referenced a recent six-figure cyber

claim experienced by another public entity as a reminder of the importance of these measures.

The policy will appear on the December agenda and must be approved at that meeting to meet the January 1 deadline. Because it is a resolution rather than an ordinance, it will be placed on the consent agenda unless Council chooses otherwise. Members noted the importance of reviewing the material thoroughly, though some components are still being finalized by the consultant. Staff reported that the consultant completed several assessments earlier that day to determine the appropriate cybersecurity framework and ensure the program's structure addresses all necessary areas. A substantial explanation of the program will be included in the agenda packet. The document is intended to remain a living, evolving program that can be updated as technology, threats, and resources change. In response to a question about implementation timelines, Ms. Supinger said that once adopted, the city will begin following the recommendations, with training and additional measures rolled out progressively rather than all at once. She closed by congratulating the group on their appointments to Council.

COTW Discussion (Meeting Topics and Length of Meetings)

Mayor Monich revisited a discussion from the previous month prompted by Ms. Woffington's inquiry about whether Council should establish a recurring annual rhythm for certain topics—such as commission reviews or broader evaluations of city roles. She began by asking members for their perspectives on logistical considerations, including whether the 6:00 p.m. Monday meeting time continued to work and whether Council preferred setting a standard meeting length of 90 minutes. Members expressed unanimous support for continuing to meet at 6:00 p.m.

On the matter of meeting length, Ms. Woffington noted that although she finds a 90-minute structure generally reasonable, Council sometimes faces complex issues that deserve more time and may be constrained by the effort to fit everything into the set duration. She emphasized that while she appreciates efficiency, she does not want important matters to be shortchanged. Mayor Monich agreed that although meetings sometimes run longer, a standard planning length is important to avoid the lengthy, open-ended meetings held by past councils.

Mr. Herzog asked how Council would like to be informed when an agenda is expected to run long. He noted that agendas are typically distributed the Thursday before a meeting and that he already includes approximate time allocations for each item. Councilmembers supported the idea of listing expected meeting length or timeframes at the top of the agenda. Mr. Woodside added that non-urgent topics could be postponed as needed to make space for time-sensitive items, and he noted there is nothing inherently problematic about longer meetings—even those involving dinner—when required.

The discussion then shifted to recurring topics and commission engagement. Several members voiced interest in creating a predictable cadence for commission updates. Ms. Peebles shared that she often feels underinformed about the work occurring outside committees she serves on and would benefit from more structured opportunities to learn about commission activities before issues reach Council. She emphasized that commission reports at Committee of the Whole meetings would help ensure members are prepared and able to ask informed follow-up questions.

Expanding on the concept, Ms. Woffington explained that her original suggestion involved a more strategic, annual overview of commissions—akin to a SWOT analysis—evaluating whether each commission continues to meet city needs, whether gaps exist, and whether commission membership aligns with strategic objectives. She noted that while monthly commission minutes appear in Council packets, a broader strategic assessment could better support decision-making.

Mr. Driehaus agreed, noting that Council sometimes interviews candidates for commission openings without clear insight into what skills the commission actually needs. Periodic updates outlining strengths, weaknesses, and needs would help Council make more informed appointments. He recalled past instances in which Council had qualified applicants but lacked clarity about commission priorities.

Mr. Herzog suggested distinguishing between (1) a strategic, periodic evaluation of commissions and (2) more frequent operational updates. He proposed scheduling brief quarterly report-outs at Committee of the Whole meetings, delivered either by the council representative or a commission member. He noted that many commissions currently operate with significant autonomy, with staff primarily ensuring they stay within appropriate boundaries. A more structured review process could help clarify expectations and direction.

Several members discussed how these efforts should align with the City's long-term planning documents, including the 10-year Master Plan, which guides decisions about which issues flow through which commissions. Mr. Driehaus noted that strategic visioning and formal planning documents serve as the backbone for determining commission structure and priorities.

Ms. Woffington, drawing on her background in strategic planning, suggested that Council consider setting aside a single three-hour annual meeting dedicated to long-term priorities, commission alignment, and organizational direction. Members expressed interest in the idea. Ms. Peebles added that she had assumed Council representatives served as the accountability link between commissions and Council but acknowledged that expectations vary and that some commissions—such as the Board of Zoning Appeals or Historic Preservation Commission—are structured differently because their work is strictly defined

by code. The Mayor reinforced this distinction between commissions with statutory duties and those with more open-ended mandates.

As part of this broader discussion, Council briefly revisited the example of the former Promote Wyoming Commission. Mr. Driehaus noted that it began as a committee formed to address an emerging need, later became a commission, and was ultimately dissolved when its functions were transitioned to City staff. Ms. Statt Blake added historical context, explaining that Promote Wyoming's success had been heavily dependent on the energy of its members, and when those individuals moved on, the commission lacked momentum. Mayor Monich affirmed the significant contributions it made over the years.

Ms. Robles added that commissions often need clearer financial guidance and cited examples from the Urban Forestry & Beautification Commission and the Environmental Stewardship Commission discussions. She expressed a desire for commissions to have an open channel to propose topics for Council consideration and commended the Urban Forestry & Beautification Commission for its annual presentation summarizing accomplishments—maple syrup demonstration included.

Returning to planning logistics, Ms. Woffington offered to collaborate with staff in developing a draft agenda for an annual planning meeting. Mayor Monich suggested that she present an example agenda at the next Committee of the Whole meeting so Council could refine and eventually codify a formal process. Mr. Morley encouraged collaboration between Ms. Woffington and Mr. Herzog before February so the Council could review a cohesive proposal at that time. Mr. Herzog agreed, noting that the February Committee of the Whole might serve as the venue for the first annual planning session, though a separate special meeting could be scheduled if needed.

Before concluding, Ms. Robles raised a scheduling concern related to the shift of Committee of the Whole meetings from the fourth Monday to the first Monday of each month. She recalled the original intent behind the change—to avoid conflict with school board meetings and allow community members to attend both—but noted that the new timing prevents Ms. Supinger from regularly participating. She asked whether the first Monday remained the preferred meeting time. Mr. Herzog responded that the schedule works for the City but emphasized that Council must remain flexible. If Ms. Supinger's presence is required for certain topics, Council may need to meet on a different night. He added that Ms. Supinger was only able to attend this meeting because she had adjusted her schedule in advance due to the discussion of the discount schedule.

In closing, Mr. Herzog stated that he would begin drafting proposed structures for the annual planning process, consult with Ms. Woffington for feedback, and prepare materials for Council review at or before the February Committee of the Whole meeting.

Annual DEI Report

Mr. Herzog provided background for Mr. Morley, noting that since becoming Acting City Manager several years ago, he has delivered an annual Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) progress report to City Council. He explained that the reporting tradition began after former Mayor Thaddeus Hoffmeister established a Mayor's Task Force on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion to evaluate the City's practices and recommend improvements. In response to a question from Mr. Morley about the timeline, Mr. Herzog stated that the task force was formed in either 2020 or 2021, and Ms. Robles clarified that the work began in 2020 and concluded in 2021 when the task force presented its findings. Mr. Herzog added that because the administration began implementing some recommendations while the task force was still active, the first DEI progress report likely occurred in 2020, with annual updates continuing each year since. He explained that the DEI report is traditionally presented at a Committee of the Whole meeting and then formally received by City Council at its next regular meeting.

Mr. Herzog then delivered this year's report in the form of a PowerPoint presentation. Following the presentation, he reiterated that the DEI progress report will be brought before City Council for formal receipt at the December 15, 2025 meeting.

Finalize Committee Assignments

Mayor Monich opened the discussion on boards and commissions assignments, explaining that each Council member had been asked to rank their preferences from one to seven. She worked to ensure that every member received at least one or two of their top three choices. She noted that each Councilmember must serve on at least one commission, with the exception that Mr. Woodside would serve on two. The Mayor distributed an initial recommendation sheet, highlighted in yellow, reflecting her proposed assignments, which sought to maintain continuity where possible while honoring individual preferences. She added that one unresolved question remained regarding whether Ms. Woffington would serve on Planning Commission—her top choice—or on the Community Improvement Corporation, which she ranked second. She noted this decision may not be finalized immediately. Ms. Woffington responded that she was comfortable with either placement. The Mayor also indicated that she planned to return to the Historic Preservation Commission, having stepped away during a previous appointment but now feeling well-acclimated after a lengthy learning curve.

The Mayor then reviewed Council committee assignments, noting that only two committees meet regularly: Finance and the Joint City/School Committee, both of which convene quarterly. She recommended that Mr. Driehaus remain chair of the Finance Committee, with Ms. Peebles and Mayor Monich continuing as members. For the Joint City/School Committee, she suggested appointing Ms. Robles, Mr. Morley, and Ms. Woffington. She explained that the remaining committees—Law, Public Safety, Streets and

Roads, and Buildings and Equipment—rarely meet, other than when interviewing for boards and commissions, though Public Safety has met occasionally in past years.

In response to a question from Ms. Peebles about the purpose of the Law Committee, the Mayor and Mr. Herzog explained that although it rarely meets, the committee is used as a first point of review for potential legal or ordinance changes, such as evaluating proposals related to issues like golf cart usage on city streets. Mr. Herzog noted that while such reviews are infrequent, the committee serves as the initial vetting body before matters proceed to Council. The Mayor added that the committee had not formally met in approximately four years.

The Mayor then briefly summarized several external appointments and liaison roles. She noted that although Council members receive Hamilton County Municipal League communications, the role primarily involves staying informed. The Volunteer Firefighters Dependents Fund meets annually on the third Monday in December, requiring attendance from the Mayor and Vice Mayor and typically lasting about thirty minutes. She also attends the quarterly First Suburbs Consortium meetings, which offer opportunities to engage with officials from nearby suburban municipalities outside the Cincinnati city limit such as Silverton, Montgomery, and Deer Park.

She confirmed that Council recently voted for Mr. Driehaus to continue as the City's representative to OKI, with Ms. Woffington serving as the alternate. The Ohio Municipal League's next meeting would occur that Saturday in Hamilton County. For the Community Foundation, which meets on the fourth Friday, Mr. Woodside has served as the City's representative and requested to continue. A new assignment for the America 250 initiative was introduced, for which the Mayor asked Ms. Robles to serve. She invited final comments or requested changes, and hearing none, concluded that the assignments appeared satisfactory.

Miscellaneous

Mr. Herzog provided an update on the Recreation Center turf field replacement, explaining that the project consists of multiple components. The turf itself will be purchased through a consortium, which exempts the City from the formal bidding process. However, the fencing portion of the project is expected to exceed the competitive bidding threshold, requiring Council approval to waive the bidding requirement if staff pursue an alternative process. He noted that only two companies—Eads and Mills—are likely to bid due to the limited market, and that preparing formal bid documents would require hiring an architect to produce detailed drawings and specifications, costing an estimated \$50,000 or more. To avoid this expense, staff propose soliciting direct quotes from both companies and selecting the lowest or best-qualified proposal, which would necessitate Council action to waive bidding requirements for this specific project.

He reported that Eads had submitted a preliminary quote and that a quote from Mills was still pending. He emphasized that no vote would occur during this meeting but wanted Council to understand the rationale before legislation is presented.

Councilmembers asked clarifying questions about the process. Mr. Driehaus stated he was comfortable with waiving the bid requirement. Ms. Peebles questioned why architectural work would be necessary if companies could provide quotes based on conceptual information. Mr. Herzog and Mr. Nicolls explained that internal staff can work interactively with companies during an informal quote process by providing sketches and discussing materials, but a formal bid requires detailed architectural specifications, including exact measurements, material gauges, and other precise requirements to ensure "apples-to-apples" bidding. They added that the informal quote process still allows the City to compare materials and request adjustments if one company offers lower-quality components.

Mr. Morley confirmed his understanding that the City would still conduct a competitive process between two vendors, just not through the formal public bidding method. The Mayor reiterated that even with investment in bid documents, only these same two companies would likely respond. Mr. Herzog added that the City routinely bids most projects over the threshold and that this situation differs significantly from scenarios where a single preferred contractor is repeatedly selected without competition. In response to a question from Mr. Morley, he confirmed that the state bidding threshold is currently \$75,000 but it can fluctuate annually. The fencing quote is roughly double the required amount. He explained that legislation seeking a waiver for this one project would be brought forward—possibly at the January Council meeting—and that the turf portion does not require bidding because it is being procured through a state consortium.

Mr. Herzog also informed Council that he would soon be scheduling orientation sessions between Mr. Morley and each department director. Once the schedule is finalized, he will share it with Councilmembers and invited anyone who wishes to attend as a refresher.

Mr. Driehaus briefly noted that during a recent visit to a correctional facility in Marysville, he learned about the facility's fencing infrastructure. The warden emphasized that adding fencing about ten years ago was one of their best operational decisions and recommended its use broadly across various facility types, including juvenile facilities. She also indicated she would be willing to provide follow-up guidance if needed.

Ms. Robles shared that high school students are preparing spotlight features on City volunteers and requested Council's assistance in encouraging commission members to participate. She will send Council a link to the submission form, which asks each participant to upload a photo and provide brief reflections on their work and experience in the

community. She noted that the students plan to complete the project by the end of December.

Adjourn

With no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Debby Martin, Executive Assistant

Melissa Monich, Mayor