



## **Business Advocacy Council**

**Westerville Area Chamber Office 99 Commerce Park Dr. 43082  
Minutes - Tuesday, August 6, 2024, 3:33-4:55 PM**

Attendees: Laura Hartman, Rita Bassiet, Graham Guthrie, Gene Hollins, Brandon Lawson, Janis Mitchell, Michael McGreevy, Firas Alnemer, Bill Bishop, Dennis Blair, Patrick Harris, Dina Shultz  
Staff member: Janet Tressler-Davis

### **Welcome- Introductions, Janet introduced Laura Hartman as the new chair Members of teams**

- Ohio Chamber Update – Bill Bishop
  - Upcoming event 2024 Tax Conference
  - Ohio Chamber Board (OCB) is attending the National Association of State Chambers in August
  - There will be a Research Gala in November celebrating Ohio Innovations
  - New OCB members include:
    - AndHealth
    - Hard Rock Casinos
    - JumpStart
    - Walgreens
    - Abercrombie
  - Minimum wage hike failed to make the ballot due to a lack of signatures
    - It is believed the effect it would've had on tips had a strong impact
  - General Assembly passed the Organized Crime Bill
  - DeWine signed [Senate Bill 144](#) affecting Pharmacies
- Healthcare - Andy H. - NA
- Taxation/Worker's Comp. – Brandon - NA
- Workforce: WorkWISE - Janet/Gene
  - Planning another externship
  - Westerville City is updating contacts under Workforce
    - BAC members are asked to check it out and see if it appears to be working and if they're able to locate things they're looking for easily
- Update on Ohio Chamber Small Business – Janet
  - Laura Hartman and Janice Mitchell will be attending the Sept. meeting
  - Others are welcome if they're interested
- Strategic Planning Committee – Mark – NA
- Westerville City Schools Finance Committee – Graham – NA

### **Westerville City Schools Presentation on Ballot Issue – Superintendent Angie Hamberg, and Treasurer Nicole Marshall**

- Presentation given – Strategic Plan Shared [here](#) and explained
- What's on the Ballot for 11.5.2024
  - Combined 1.66 mill Bond and 4.9 mill Operating
  - One vote for both bond and operating funds
  - Very similar to 2019
  - Bond portion is no new millage - will keep constant what is in place



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- Operating 4.9 mills + New Bonds 1.66 mills – Old Bonds 1.66 mills = 4.9 mills
- Net Cost approximately \$171.50 (\$172 on ballot) annually per \$100k of property valuation
- Needs for operating dollars
  - Federal funding has decreased or expired (Covid \$)
  - State Funding - reappraisals make the community look wealthier so the state shifts costs down to residents
  - Inflation remains high
  - Revenue is dropping while expenses are increasing
  - Getting 4 million less next year
  - HB920 Reduction Factors
  - Increased needs for students
  - On a ranked list compared to the rest of the State - central Ohio's success hurts us
  - For every dollar Westerville residents pay to the State the schools get back 27 cents
- Maintain current operations
  - Generate 20.8 million in operating revenue beginning 2025 to maintain operations in the future
  - Esser Funds are expiring
  - State funding decreasing
  - State of Ohio considers education a shared responsibility
  - Continues to shift costs to local taxpayers
  - Still using 2-year-old cost set number on what it costs to educate a child
- Increased Needs for Students
  - Special education enrollment grows
  - ESL enrollment grows
  - Economically disadvantaged - large increase since Covid
- 56% increase in construction costs since the Facility Master Plan was written
  - Updating spaces built in the 1960s

### **Larry Jenkins – Levy Manager spoke**

- Does not take for granted that they're asking for additional taxes
- Understand the appraisals have been a lot
- Levy allows Schools to stay competitive with teacher salaries and other local districts
- Larry asked for support and endorsement from the Chamber

### **School Representatives and Larry Departed to allow the BAC to discuss and vote (4:42)**

- Discussion among the committee was that the funds are needed, but should we endorse them? It needed to be viewed through the critical lens of how this affects local businesses.
  - Points that were made:
    - Supporting public schools is an investment in local businesses - the presentation showed that they have been good stewards of the funds they have and many things are out of their control (State funding and inflation).
    - Business purpose - it ties to the workforce - the importance of the school district to business health and property values – Without a successful school district Westerville can't be that
    - If we don't keep up we'll fall behind even faster



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- Central Ohio is an oasis of growth compared to the rest of Ohio – this puts more stress on facilities
- If we want big headquarters (like DHL) we have to have good schools to bring that.
- The workforce is showing more mental health struggles, so the schools need the support as well to help it be addressed before students hit the workforce
- A suggestion was made that BAC recommends the Chamber Board support the School ballot issue
  - Vote called for:
    - Unanimous all in favor
  - Laura will create a [brief presentation](#) to share with Chamber Board on Thursday 8/8/24
    - The board will then vote

**Adjourn:** 4:55 PM

**Upcoming meetings:** Sept. 3, Oct. 1, Nov. 5 at 3:30 PM

- September meeting will address the Library Ballot Issue
- Meetings: The Business Advocacy Council meets on the first Tuesday of every month