

**XENIA CITY COUNCIL
SPECIAL SESSION MEETING MINUTES
MAY 9, 2019
6:00 P.M.**

1. CALL TO ORDER: President Engle called the May 9, 2019, Special Session to order at 6:02 p.m. in the City Council Chambers, City Administration Building.

2. ROLL CALL: Vice President Edgar Wallace, Councilman Will Urschel, Councilman Dale Louderback, Councilman Levi Dean (arrived at 6:30 p.m.), Mayor Sarah Mays, and President Michael Engle were present. Councilman Wesley Smith was absent.

3. DISCUSSION: Mr. Merriman thanked Council for the opportunity to share with them a new statewide agency, known as DriveOhio, which is partnering with municipalities to test new technology related to intelligent transportation infrastructure, improvements in public transportation, and autonomous¹ and connected vehicles². He thanked City Planner Brian Forschner for championing this initiative, which could provide some unique opportunities for Xenia that could lead to partnerships and economic development. He invited Mr. Forschner to the podium.

City Planner Brian Forschner said as Mr. Merriman stated, this is a unique opportunity to revolutionize how people and goods are transported. He said newer cars have partially automated features including cruise control, staying in the same lane, collision avoidance, et al; shipping companies use drones and other advanced forms of shipping to deliver goods; the agricultural industry uses drones to map fields and determine where and when they should plant; etc. DriveOhio was created through an executive order by the Ohio Governor and is part of ODOT, and their goal is to make Ohio a leader in transportation technology and leverage Ohio's assets including the aerospace industry and transportation infrastructure strengths. DriveOhio is reaching out to tech firms, including those located in Silicon Valley, in an effort to bring them to Ohio or partner with local firms to create local jobs that will develop and test this technology. DriveOhio has entered into Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) with several municipalities including Cincinnati, Columbus, Cleveland, Akron, and Toledo. They are now reaching out to smaller communities and have entered into MOUs with Dayton and Springboro, and he thought Xenia would be a great fit for this. Xenia has huge growth potential and great logistics, aerospace, and agriculture. Examples include Homerun Trucking, Bob Evans (agricultural-related business), Central State University (CSU) Extension (focusing on development of new technology related to agricultural), Greene County Career Center's (GCCC) aerospace "Take Flight" academy, etc. Xenia also has unique transportation systems including the bike paths, which could provide an opportunity to try out advanced traffic signal technology. He and Development Director Steve Brodsky reached out to DriveOhio, and a few months ago they met with GCCC, CSU Extension, Cedarville University, Greene CATS, and others. A lot of ideas were shared and discussed during that meeting.

¹ **Autonomous Vehicles** are equipped with technology that enables them to safely drive with either limited human assistance or no human assistance.

² **Connected Vehicles** are equipped with technology that allows them to communicate and share data with other vehicles, infrastructure, or smartphones.

Mr. Forschner said entering into the MOU would not cost the City anything; it does not commit them to any projects or expenditures. It simply indicates they will work with DriveOhio, and Xenia would be added to the list of cities that DriveOhio will share with tech firms in the USA and even around the world. This is a great economic development/marketing opportunity to get Xenia's name out there in ways that can attract industries that they have already identified as good fits for Xenia. DriveOhio itself does not provide funding for projects, but it can help to connect municipalities to private or public funding through its relationships and foster more "Town and Gown" partnerships with local universities. These partnerships also include developing concepts for pilot projects that improve workforce mobility, healthcare and education access, and mobility access for underserved, elderly and disabled populations.

Andrew Bremer, Managing Director of Local Affairs, said DriveOhio was created in January 2018 under Governor Kasich to essentially be the State's one-stop shop that organizes and directs investments in smart mobility including advancements from Silicon Valley or southeast Michigan where the auto industry is based. They want to capture that excitement and attract as much as they can to the State of Ohio. He noted Ohio has a lot of assets and is #1 in automobile parts manufacturing and drive train assembly, and his office tries to direct public resources at the state level in cooperation with local partners to help develop and make pilot projects a reality in the State of Ohio. Some successful projects include the following:

- **FlyOhio / SkyVision:** Partnership with the AFRL to invest \$5 million in a detect-and-avoid radar system at the Springfield-Beckley Municipal Airport.
- **The Ohio UAS Center in Springfield:** Provides technical and operational drone solutions and support for industry and government applications.
- **Uber Movement/Cincinnati Mobility Lab:** A collaborative among multiple organizations and Uber to share data, conduct studies, engage employers and activate designers to create an innovative regional transportation plan.
- **Connected Marysville:** Deployment of 1,200 to 1,500 connected vehicles and smart infrastructure to manage signal timing, detect pedestrians and prevent collisions.
- **Smart2:** Youngstown downtown mobility improvements and self-driving shuttle that connects a university, hospital, business district and entertainment district.



Mr. Bremer entertained questions.

Councilman Louderback said Mr. Bremer mentioned that Ohio is a leader in automobile supplies and noted Fuyau Glass was located near Dayton. Mr. Bremer recognized the name of the company. He said one of their focuses at DriveOhio is to develop the technology to keep people safe, move people and goods more efficiently, improve mobility and access to goods and services, and train the workforce. The Managing Director of Workforce Development is very involved in ensuring that this new technology did not displace workers; rather, the technology should make their lives

better and give them fuller employment. He said there is currently a truck driver shortage and the industry is trying to find ways to address that issue. DriveOhio will work with the industry partners to propose solutions that they want. Every conversation includes how to take care of the current work force and also train the future work force for the jobs later on.

Councilman Urschel asked Mr. Bremer if DriveOhio was a component of ODOT. Mr. Bremer said the way the executive order is crafted, DriveOhio is housed under ODOT, they use the resources provided by ODOT, his Executive Director reports directly to Ohio Director of Transportation, but DriveOhio has the ability to directly report to the Governor's Office as well as pull together eight other state agencies that have an interest or are involved in these issues, such as the Department of Insurance, Data and Cyber Security, etc. Councilman Urschel said if they enter into this MOU, they would be offering up Xenia as a potential evaluation or test site. He asked if DriveOhio had some way to evaluate what Xenia assets would be beneficial for particular projects. Mr. Bremer said that was correct.

Mr. Merriman said this MOU opens the door to additional partnerships and as opportunities emerge where Xenia would be a good candidate, additional agreements would be presented that are more specific to those individual projects so all parties understand the scope and responsibilities.

Councilman Urschel said he retired from the Air Force as the Technical Director for Materiel Command, and there is a fairly broad consortium within the context of the military domain within the Dayton area. Obviously, there is a very specific set of applications for that, and military is investing an enormous sum in this same area. He asked if there was any kind of partnership between the State of Ohio and the Department of Defense or WPAFB. Mr. Bremer said he was well aware that DriveOhio was not the only ones working on these initiatives, and many others have much greater resources than the State of Ohio. That said, DriveOhio was organized so that they also house what used to be known as the Ohio/Indiana Unmanned Aerial Systems Group, which led to the FlyOhio / SkyVision project noted above. Councilman Urschel asked if DriveOhio covers land based, air based, and communication infrastructure. Mr. Bremer said yes; they want to insert themselves into the conversation as much as possible. They understand that other states may have greater resources and may have already completed some demonstrations, but Ohio is rapidly catching up.

Vice President Wallace said this is a significant expansion of public/private collaboration and expansion. While he knows what WPAFB does, he asked to what extent DriveOhio is doing to work with WPAFB to enhance what the other entity is doing. He noted WPAFB is the largest employer in Ohio, and if some things can be done to tie all their work together, it would create many opportunities for Xenia. Mr. Bremer said the recent announcement with the Air Force Research Laboratory is the first step to that partnership. He did not know their next steps with the Air Force; however, if Xenia wants the WPAFB and the Air Force to be included in that partnership of wider stakeholders, he would certainly take that under advisement. Mr. Merriman said one of the things identified in the preliminary conversations is they are taking a comprehensive approach and includes ties to the military, agricultural and industrial areas, etc. The initial steps will help get Xenia's foot in the door and be part of the conversation in an attempt to leverage opportunities.

(Councilman Dean arrived.)

President Engle said his greatest interest was the current work force and future work force. Other than agriculture, this area's greatest assets might be the universities and the Greene County Career Center. Mr. Merriman agreed. Councilman Urschel said this was a great opportunity, and he was really excited about it. Mr. Merriman commended Mr. Forschner and Mr. Brodsky and their efforts to continuously look at ways to promote this community and provide opportunities for economic growth as different industries emerge.

4. ADJOURNMENT: Motion by President Engle, seconded by Vice President Wallace, to adjourn the Special Session at 6:36 p.m. No discussion followed. The Roll on this was the following:

Ayes: Wallace, Urschel, Louderback, Dean, Mays, Engle

Nays: None motion carried.

Michelle D. Johnson
City Clerk

Michael D. Engle
President, Xenia City Council