



CITY OF PORT WENTWORTH
CITY COUNCIL
JULY 14, 2025

Council Meeting Room

Regular Session

7:00 PM

7224 GA HIGHWAY 21
PORT WENTWORTH, GA 31407

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Mayor Pro-Tem Gabrielle Nelson called the meeting to order.

2. PRAYER AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Councilman Rufus Bright Led the Prayer and Mayor Pro-Tem Gabrielle Nelson led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. ROLL CALL - CLERK OF COUNCIL

Attendee Name	Title	Status
Gary Norton	Mayor	Present
Gabrielle Nelson	Mayor Pro Tem	Present
Thomas Barbee	Council Member	Present
ArtLise Alston-Cone	Council Member	Present
Mark Stephens	Council Member	Present
Rufus Bright	Council Member	Present
Shawn Randerwala	Council Member	Present

4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

RESULT:	APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Mark Stephens, Council Member
SECONDER:	ArtLise Alston-Cone, Council Member
AYES:	Gabrielle Nelson, Thomas Barbee, ArtLise Alston-Cone, Mark Stephens, Rufus Bright, Shawn Randerwala

5. RECOGNITION OF SPECIAL GUESTS

6. PUBLIC COMMENTS - REGISTERED SPEAKERS

7. ELECTIONS & APPOINTMENTS

8. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

9. COMMUNICATIONS & PETITIONS

City Manager Steve Davis shared several upcoming community events and announcements:

- Democratic runoff election for Public Service Commission (PSC)
- Councilwoman Cones Advisory Group Meeting
- Back to school Recreation Day at Rice Creek School
- Teen Night Silent Disco at the gym: July 25th
- Food Truck Friday at City Hall: July 25th
- City Council Meeting: July 29th
- Planning and Zoning Meeting: August 4th
- City Council Meeting: August 21st

10. COMMITTEE REPORTS

11. CONSENT AGENDA

12. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

13. NEW BUSINESS

A. SPLOST Intergovernmental Agreement

City Manager Steve Davis states that all municipalities in the county come together every six years to enter into an agreement for SPLOST, which is an extension of an existing one percent sales tax used to fund capital projects. He states that the city held multiple meetings to review the project list, which has not changed. He states that the city was able to work the number up to seven hundred million dollars, matching the education SPLOST that went out earlier in the year. He states that this will be done in a two-level system, with level one funding two hundred million dollars for priority projects and twelve million dollars for widening Benton Boulevard. He states for SPLOST seven, the city received eight point four million dollars and in SPLOST eight, the city negotiated up to thirty-two point sixty-five million dollars which is a substantial increase from before and above the city's pro-rata share. He states that the city got a disbursement clause, so the county will disburse the SPLOST funds within ten days of receiving them from the state. He states that the agreement runs through October 2032, with fifty-nine percent for transportation and infrastructure, twenty-seven percent for public safety, and fifteen percent for parks.

RESULT:	APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Mark Stephens, Council Member
SECONDER:	Rufus Bright, Council Member
AYES:	Gabrielle Nelson, Thomas Barbee, ArtLise Alston-Cone, Mark Stephens, Rufus Bright, Shawn Randerwala

B. Chatham County Gang Prevention and Intervention Commission Grant Award and Agreement

City Manager Steve Davis states this is a march towards getting more grant money. He states that this grant comes from the Criminal Justice Council of Georgia, and the legislature created the Chatham County Gang Prevention and Intervention Commission, which needs this funding to get

started. He states that the funding will help provide programs for youth to prevent them from joining gangs and to intervene when needed, especially in light of recent incidents in the community. He states that it is imperative to address gang issues in Port Wentworth, Chatham County, and the surrounding region. He states that the grant is for two hundred and fifty thousand dollars, and the city will administer it to the commission, receive the funds, and manage quarterly reporting to the Criminal Justice Council. He states that payments to the commission will be quarterly, not monthly or weekly.

Councilwoman Cone asked questions regarding statistics, programs, initiatives with Port Wentworth Police Department funding sources.

City Manager Steve Davis stated that he did not have exact statistics, but that Port Wentworth Police Department is part of the current regional task force and that the grant was from the state geared towards intervention, not enforcement. He states that no City funds will be used for this measure.

Councilman Mark Stephens states that what the city is doing is proactive. He states that this is a good thing and expressed his support.

City Manager Steve Davis states that being a part of the process will hopefully give the city more insight and be a benefit to the police department, helping to identify and address gang activity, whether it starts in Port Wentworth or rolls over from another city.

Councilwoman Cone expresses her support for pro activity. She states that government agencies tend to invest in what is comfortable rather than what data shows is best for the community. She emphasized the importance of investing in what works best for Port Wentworth.

City Manager Steve Davis states that this would be a great opportunity to connect with Representative Carl Gilliard, who will be leading the commission.

RESULT:	APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Shawn Randerwala, Council Member
SECONDER:	Thomas Barbee, Council Member
AYES:	Gabrielle Nelson, Thomas Barbee, ArtLise Alston-Cone, Mark Stephens, Rufus Bright, Shawn Randerwala

14. RESOLUTIONS/ORDINANCES/PROCLAMATIONS

15. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Councilman Mark Stephens made a motion to adjourn to executive session. Second by Councilwoman Cone. Approved Unanimous.

Councilman Mark Stephens made a motion to reconvene, second by Councilwoman ArtLise Alston-Cone. Approved Unanimous.

Councilman Rufus Bright made a motion to approve the change order of three point six million dollars for the park, second Councilman Mark Stephens.

Councilman Rufus Bright made a motion to approve the purchase of the land or any of the properties in Anchor Park up to and including the spending amount of the city manager as a price point, second by Councilman Mark Stephens. Approved Unanimous.

RESULT:	APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Mark Stephens, Council Member
SECONDER:	ArtLise Alston-Cone, Council Member
AYES:	Gabrielle Nelson, Thomas Barbee, ArtLise Alston-Cone, Mark Stephens, Rufus Bright, Shawn Randerwala

16. ADJOURNMENT

RESULT:	APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	ArtLise Alston-Cone, Council Member
SECONDER:	Thomas Barbee, Council Member
AYES:	Gabrielle Nelson, Thomas Barbee, ArtLise Alston-Cone, Mark Stephens, Rufus Bright, Shawn Randerwala

Mayor Gary Norton

The foregoing minutes are true and correct and approved by me on this _____
day of _____, 2025.

ATTEST:

Zahnay Smoak, Clerk of Council