



CITY OF PORT WENTWORTH
CITY COUNCIL
AUGUST 21, 2025

Council Meeting Room

Regular Session

7:00 PM

7224 GA HIGHWAY 21
PORT WENTWORTH, GA 31407

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Mayor Gary Norton Called the Meeting to order.

2. PRAYER AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Councilman Rufus Bright Led the Prayer and 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:	Gabrielle Nelson, Mayor Pro Tem
SECONDER:	Mark Stephens, 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

A. Georgia Benton
Discussed the following topic(s):
- Council Procedures

7. ELECTIONS & APPOINTMENTS

City Manager Steve Davis stated that Councilwoman ArtLise Alston-Cone was appointed to the Chatham County Gang Prevention Commission. He stated that Mayor Pro-Tem Gabrielle Nelson was reappointed to the GMA Federal Policy and Legislative Policy Committees. He stated the Councilman Rufus Bright was sworn in as the first Port Wentworth representative on the Chatham Area Transit Board. In addition, Councilman Mark Stephens was appointed to the Advisory Council for the Savannah Music Commission.

8. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

A. Regular Council Meeting Minutes - July 29, 2025

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

9. COMMUNICATIONS & PETITIONS

- A. FBILEEDA Award
- B. Recognition of Officer of the Quarter
- C. City Manager Update
- D. Black Business Month Proclamation
- E. National Wellness Month Proclamation

Police Chief Kerry Thomas recognized Assistant Chiefs Lee Sherrod and Renny Walters for completing the FBI LEEDA Trilogy Award which is a three-part leadership program focused on supervisory, command, and executive-level leadership. He noted their commitment to advancing leadership, knowledge, and service delivery in the department and stated that they will also be recognized at the upcoming FBI-LEEDA conference in Florida.

City Manager Steve Davis asked if Chief Thomas could state the divisions that they manage.

Police Chief Thomas stated that Assistant Chief Walters oversee the Training Division, Office of Professional Standards, and Recruitment Division, including complaint investigations and HR support. He stated that Assistant Chief Sherrod oversees the Patrol Division, Special Operations, Traffic, and TRU, serving as operational manager for those units.

City Manager Davis stated that the Professional Standards was formerly the internal Affairs Division established under Chief Thomas.

Police Chief Thomas introduced the new Officer of the Quarter Program, recognizing officers who go above and beyond by a vote from their peers. For the first two quarters, he recognized Sergeant Conley and Officer Caldwell for their hard work and dedication to community safety.

Mayor Gary Norton expressed his appreciation for Officer Caldwell, recalling his family's ties to the community and commending his service.

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

- FGood Truck Friday: August 29th
- Back to School PJ Party at the gym: August 29
- Superhero Training Family Fitness Obstacle Course- August 30
- Lithium Ion Battery Safety Presentation
- Goodwill Donation Drop-Off Day: August 28th
- City Hall closed for Labor Day: September 1st
- Planning and Zoning Meeting: September 2nd
- Fall Sports Pep Rally at the gym: September 6th
- Miss America Legacy Crown Livestream
- Citizens Advisory Group Meeting: September 19th
- City Council Meeting: September 22nd
- La Fiesta Hispanic Festival: September 26th
- Youth Council applications are now open and available on the city website and social media

Mayor Pro-Tem Nelson read the Black Business Month Proclamation and the National Wellness Month Proclamation.

A. Black Business Month Proclamation

A member of the Greater Savannah Black Chamber of Commerce thanked the city and expressed appreciation for the opportunity to serve Port Wentworth.

10. COMMITTEE REPORTS

Councilman Rufus Bright thanked the staff for all of the hard work that they do.

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

11. CONSENT AGENDA

City manager Steve Davis stated that the item was the annual renewal of debris removal and debris monitoring contracts required by FEMA for reimbursement following hurricanes or storm-related damage.

RESULT:	APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Thomas Barbee, Council Member
SECONDER:	Mark Stephens, Council Member

AYES: Gabrielle Nelson, Thomas Barbee, ArtLise Alston-Cone, Mark Stephens, Rufus Bright, Shawn Randerwala

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

- A. Annual Renewal of Emergency Debris Removal and Management Services
- B. Annual Renewal of Disaster Debris Monitoring and Related Services

12. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- A. Consideration of the Second Reading for a Zoning Map Amendment Application submitted by Phillip McCorkle as Agent for SPH 21, LLC, requesting to rezone 23.02 acres from R-1 to R-4, to allow the expansion of a residential townhome development. PIN # 700976 02038, located in the 1st Council District, off Highway 30.
City Manager Steve Davis stated that this is the 68 units at Arbor View, located on a landlocked property behind the development.

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

13. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Phillip McCorkle, as Agent for SPH 21, LLC, requests the approval of a Concept Site Plan "Arbor View PH 2". PIN# 70976 02038 located off Highway 30 in the 1st Council District. Zoned R-1, proposed zoning R-4.

City Manager Steve Davis stated that this is the Concept plan for previous project that was done.

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

B. Engineering Services for the expansion of the Wastewater Treatment Plant

City Manager Steve Davis stated the wastewater treatment plant is a critical long-term investment. He stated that after consulting with several firms, Turnip Seed Engineering who previously handled smoke testing and downtown rehab, proposed incorporating new technology and equipment at the existing plant to double its capacity.

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

C. Right of Way Maintenance

City Manager Steve Davis stated that the inmate crews are not allowed to maintain the medians along Highways 21 and 30 near Benton Boulevard. He stated that following the beautification study, the city solicited bids and received one for \$120,000. He stated that the contract covers grass cutting for medians and ditches twice monthly during the growing season and once monthly otherwise plus monthly trash pickup. He stated that the area includes Highway 21 from Effingham County line to Garden City, Highway 30 from 21 to Benton, and all of Benton Boulevard.

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

- D. Update to the FY 2026 Fee Schedule- 1st Reading
 - Public Hearing

City Manager Steve Davis explained that the 2026 fee schedule update only adjusts ERU costs for developers and does not affect water or utility fees for homeowners. He stated that the update also consolidates the number of zones from five to three.

14. RESOLUTIONS/ORDINANCES/PROCLAMATIONS

- A. Resolution Establishing a Port Wentworth Youth Council

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

15. EXECUTIVE SESSION

- A. Litigation
- B. Personnel
- C. Real Estate

Mayor Pro-Tem Gabrielle Nelson made a motion to adjourn to executive session, seconded by Councilman Rufus Bright.

Mayor Pro-Tem Nelson made a motion to reconvene, seconded by Councilwoman ArtLise Alston-Cone.

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

RESULT:	APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]
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MOVER: Gabrielle Nelson, Mayor Pro Tem
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: Rufus Bright, 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