



**CITY OF PORT WENTWORTH**  
**CITY COUNCIL**  
**FEBRUARY 19, 2026**

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**Council Meeting Room**

**Regular Session**

**7:00 PM**

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**7224 GA HIGHWAY 21**  
**PORT WENTWORTH, GA 31407**

**1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER**

Mayor Tracy Saunders called the meeting to order.

**2. ROLL CALL - CLERK OF COUNCIL**

<b>Attendee Name</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Status</b>
Tracy Saunders	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

**3. PRAYER AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Councilman Rufus Bright led the prayer and pledge of allegiance.

**4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Councilman Mark Stephens made a motion to approve the agenda with an addition of Resolution R26-02-02 under New Business, item D and to add 6D, National Care Givers Day, under Proclamations, seconded by Mayor Pro-Tem Nelson.

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

**5. RECOGNITION OF SPECIAL GUESTS & ELECTIONS and APPOINTMENTS**

**A. NLC Leadership Appointments Recognition- Mayor Pro-Tem Gabrielle Nelson**

- **Small Cities Council**
- **Youth, Education, and Families Council**

- **Finance, Administration, and Intergovernmental Relations Federal Advocacy Committee**
- **Race, Equity, and Leadership Council**

### **B. Port Wentworth Police Department-Employee Recognition**

### **C. Port Wentworth Youth Council Proclamation & Recognition**

Mayor Pro-Tem Gabrielle Nelson stated that she was recently reappointed to the Small Cities Council and appointed to three additional councils through the National League of Cities. She explained the importance of advocating for smaller cities and bringing resources back to Port Wentworth. She also shared her service on the Youth, Education, and Families Council, the Finance, Administration, and Intergovernmental Relations and Federal Advocacy Committee, and the Race, Equity, and Leadership Council.

Police Chief Kerry Thomas recognized Amanda King for her leadership and commitment in guiding the city through the state certification process, noting that her willingness to learn, attention to detail, and persistence were key to achieving certification.

Police Chief Thomas acknowledged Scott Robider for his role in revising and maintaining policies necessary for certification.

Police Chief Thomas also recognized Lieutenant McFall for repeatedly stepping up to meet staffing goals, noting that recruitment and retention are among the most challenging issues in law enforcement. He stated that although maintaining full staffing is difficult, the department has reached that benchmark multiple times. He expressed confidence in Lieutenant McFall's ability to lead and manage demands. He also stated Lieutenant McFall's role in conducting background checks not only for the police department, but for other city departments as well.

Mayor Pro-Tem Nelson expressed appreciation for the effort that went into establishing the Port Wentworth Youth council. She described the Youth Council as a labor of love and thanked City Council and Zahnay Smiley, Clerk of Council, for their support and leadership in getting it started. She expressed how excited everyone is for youth members' participation and look forward to mentoring and shaping them into future public leaders.

## **6. COMMUNICATIONS & PETITIONS**

### **A. Black History Month Proclamation**

### **B. American Heart Month Proclamation**

### **C. City Manager Update**

Councilman Rufus Bright read the Black History Month Proclamation.

Mayor Pro-Tem Gabrielle Nelson presented the American Heart Month Proclamation and National Caregivers Day Proclamation.

National Caregivers Day Proclamation

A representative from Pruitt Seaside stated that Pruitt Seaside serves 81 residents with a staff of more than 70 employees, providing short-term and long-term nursing care as well as post-acute rehabilitation in a warm, home-like environment focused on individualized, compassionate care. She added that Seaside's mission aligns with Pruitt Health's commitment to treating patients like family. She noted that Seaside was recognized as the best nursing home in Chatham County in 2025, credited to strong five-star reviews, and emphasized the facility's ongoing goal of increasing community involvement and engagement with residents.

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

- February 21 – 8U District Basketball Championship at 11:00 a.m. (Gym)
- February 24 – Adult Pickleball from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. (Gym; held every Tuesday and Thursday)
- February 25 – Adult Basketball at 6:00 p.m. (Gym; season ends at the end of March)
- February 27 – Line Dancing at 6:00 p.m. (Gym)
- February 28 – Family Fitness Event (Winter Olympics theme) at 10:00 a.m. (Gym)
- March 3 – Spring Sports begin, including volleyball (Gym), baseball (Mobley Park), and soccer (Festival Site)
- March 6 – Indoor Teen Movie Night at 6:00 p.m. (Gym)
- March 13 – Line Dancing at 6:00 p.m. (Gym)
- March 20 – Glowing Green Skate Night from 5:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. (Gym)
- March 21 – Volleyball Clinic at 11:00 a.m. (Gym)
- March 24 – Announcement of the Winter of the Art Contest from 11:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. (Rice Creek)
- March 27 – Line Dancing at 6:00 p.m. (Gym)
- March 30 through April 2 – Spring Break Camp from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. (Gym)

Other City Events Continued:

- February 21- Annual Black History Month Program
- March 2- Planning and Zoning meeting
- March 3- Amphitheater announcement event
- August 7- First concert at amphitheater featuring Billy Currington
- March 6- Food Truck Friday
- March 17- City Hall closed for St. Patrick's Day
- March 19- City Council meeting
- March 20- Food Truck Friday
- March 28- First home game for the Port Wentworth Broncos
- February 25 through 26- Road paving projects begin on Raleigh Road and Skeet Road followed by work at Newport Boulevard entrance and Lakeshore Boulevard entrance

**7. PUBLIC COMMENTS - REGISTERED SPEAKERS**

**8. ADOPTION OF MINUTES**

- A. Regular Council Meeting Minutes - January 15, 2026**
- B. Special Called Meeting Minutes - February 2, 2026**

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

**9. CONSENT AGENDA**

**10. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

- A. Consideration of the 2nd Reading for a Zoning Map Amendment Application, submitted by Timothy Jones, requesting to rezone 2.52 acres from R-1 to C-1, to allow for general office use. PIN # 70978 04001B, located in the 3rd Council District, at 630 Meinhard Road.

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

**11. NEW BUSINESS**

- A. A transfer of property between the City of Port Wentworth, and the Port Wentworth Development Authority (PWDA).

City Manager Steve Davis stated that this item involves transferring approximately 3.3–3.5 acres of city-owned property to the Port Wentworth Development Authority for a proposed sports-related medical facility. He explained that the map provided shows the full park layout, noting the parcel is located in a corner area near State Highway 30, adjacent to the fire station, and is currently unused. He stated that the transfer would support the Development Authority’s ongoing project.

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

- 11.B) Resolution R26-02-02

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

**12. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

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

City Attorney Scott Robichaux stated that Resolution R26-02-02 proposes six-month moratorium on the acceptance or approval of any applications related to correctional detention facilities, penal institutions, or similar uses. He stated that the moratorium proactive, not in response to any pending requests or known proposals. He stated that the purpose is to allow the city time to review and strengthen its zoning ordinance and regulatory framework to ensure such uses align with the City's long-term vision and community standards. He stated that the City Charter provides authority to regulate these facilities, and the moratorium allows staff and Council time to stablish appropriate protections and guidelines.

Councilman Thomas Barbee asked if a copy of the Resolution will be posted on the website?

City Attorney Robichaux stated that a copy of the Resolution will be posted on the website.

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

### 13. ADJOURNMENT

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

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Mayor Gary Norton

The foregoing miinutes are true and correct and approved by me on this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2026.

ATTEST:

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Zahnay Smoak, Clerk of Council