



# CITY OF PORT WENTWORTH

CITY COUNCIL

APRIL 16, 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**

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

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

**6. COMMUNICATIONS & PETITIONS**

- A. Georgia Cities Week Proclamation**
- B. Fair Housing Month Proclamation**
- C. Child Abuse Prevention Month Proclamation**

- D. Autism Awareness Month Proclamation**
- E. Sexual Assault Awareness Month Proclamation**
- F. Financial Literacy Month Proclamation**
- G. City Manager Update**

Mayor Pro-Tem Gabrielle Nelson presented the Georgia Cities Week Proclamation, the Fair Housing Month Proclamation, the Child Abuse Prevention Month Proclamation, the Autism Awareness Month Proclamation, the Sexual Assault Awareness Month Proclamation, and the Financial Literacy Month Proclamation.

#### Child Abuse Prevention Month Proclamation

A Representative of the Coastal Children’s Advocacy Center stated that the organization has served the community for over 35 years, providing forensic interviews and free counseling services to children affected by abuse. She stated that they partner with local agencies, including law enforcement and the Georgia Bureau of Investigation, and are available both during regular hours and for after-hour classes. She stated that the center also provides community education and supports victims of human trafficking.

#### Autism Awareness Month

The President of League of Brawn, Justin West, stated that the organization was founded in 2019 and provides community support through initiatives such as feeding families, hosting awareness events, youth college tours, and toy drives. He stated that their primary mission is mentoring and developing men into positive community leaders through accountability, personal growth, and ongoing outreach programs.

#### Sexual Assault Awareness Month Proclamation

Executive Director of Mary’s Place, Doris Williams, stated that Mary’s Place provides advocacy and support services for survivors of sexual violence, including a 24-hour crisis line, counseling, forensic examinations, court accompaniment, and prevention education throughout the community. She stated that in the past year, the organization served over 500 survivors, conducted approximately 125 forensic exams, and provided prevention education to over 20,000 students in the Chatham County School System. She stated that the organization serves seven counties and is available 24/7.

#### Financial Literacy Month Proclamation

Luella Sanders, a representative of VyStar, thanked the Council for the proclamation and shared information about the organization’s history and community impact. She stated that VyStar was founded 74 years ago to serve military members and their families and now serves more than one million members through 79 branches, including locations in Savannah and Brunswick. She stated that the organization’s commitment to community service, financial education, and charitable giving, noting that in 2025 VyStar contributed \$8.2 million to more than 400 nonprofit organizations and employees volunteered over 45,000 hours across the communities it serves.

Monica Everett, a representative from Primerica, thanked the Council for the proclamation recognizing financial wellness and financial literacy awareness efforts. She stated that the organization’s mission is to provide financial education and help individuals and families become financially protected, debt-free, and financially independent through community seminars and educational outreach.

City Attorney Scott Robichaux provided an update on two ongoing litigation matters. First, regarding the revenue bond case, he stated that the Georgia Court of Appeals ruled in favor of the City, finding that the appellants lacked standing. He stated that the Court dismissed the appeal and denied a motion for reconsideration. He stated that the matter will now be remitted for further procedural steps consistent with the Courts ruling. Second, He stated that the Superior Court has issued an order granting a “Bill of Peace” against the Bentons. He stated that the Court found a documented history of repeated and unsuccessful litigation filings against the City and other entities. He stated that under the order, the Bentons must seek court approval prior to filing any new lawsuits, counterclaims, or related

legal actions in Georgia state courts.

Councilman Thomas Barbee asked if this is public information?

City Attorney Robichaux stated that this is public information.

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

- Pageant held the previous weekend was successful; winners to be recognized at the upcoming gala
- First City gala scheduled for next Wednesday
- Stand Up for America Day scheduled for the following Saturday, to include parade, fireworks, and entertainment featuring Edwin McCain
- "Stars and Stripes" Food Truck Friday event to continue as part of the lead-up to Stand Up for America Day
- Citizens Input Group to resume on May 15
- New partnership with Savannah Steel; inaugural home opener scheduled for May 22, with fundraising proceeds benefiting the Recreation Department
- Anchor Park construction progressing on schedule
- ViStar Pavilion (amphitheater) anticipated to open in early August
- Ice Cove anticipated to open later in August
- Phase II (parking, athletic fields, and stadium) currently underway
- Budget discussions to begin next month in preparation for June approval

**7. PUBLIC COMMENTS - REGISTERED SPEAKERS**

**8. ADOPTION OF MINUTES**

**A. Regular Council Meeting Minutes- March 19, 2026**

**B. Special Called Meeting Minutes- April 03, 2026**

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

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

**9. CONSENT AGENDA**

<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

- A. Right of Way Maintenance Agreement- Port Wentworth Police Department and Georgia Department of Transportation
- B. Ratification of Development Agreement With Landco

**10. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

**11. NEW BUSINESS**

- A. Consideration of the 2nd Reading of a Zoning Map Amendment Application has been submitted by Phillip R. McCorkle as Agent for PWCC Landco Main, LLC, requesting to rezone 18.58 of 33.91 acres from R-1 to I-1, to allow for industrial use. PIN #s 70976 02014, 70975 01013, 70975 01014 , located in the 1st Council District, off Wentworth Parkway.

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

- B. Consideration of the 2nd Reading of a Zoning Map Amendment Application has been submitted by City of Port Wentworth, requesting to rezone 3.317 of 61.82 acres from R-4 to C-1, to allow for a medical center. PIN # 70978 05013, located in the 3rd Council District, on Anchor Park Boulevard.

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]</b>
<b>MOVER:</b>	Mark Stephens, Council Member
<b>SECONDER:</b>	Thomas Barbee, Council Member

**AYES:**

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

- C. Consideration of the 1st Reading of a Zoning Map Amendment Application has been submitted by Whitney L. Williams, requesting to rezone 2.73 acres from R-1 to C-1, to allow for office use. PIN # 70978 04001, located in the 3rd Council District, at 640 Meinhard Road. 1st Reading

City Planner Katie Dunnigan stated that the applicant is proposing this use as a rental office space. She stated that this is the former property of WCE. She stated that the area next to the property was rezoned to C1 for similar use. She stated that this would represent a shift of .029% from R-1 to C-1.

City Manager Steve Davis stated that this is an item that was discussed during a workshop in which there were restrictions in place.

City Manager Davis stated that the C-1 zoning district prohibits cemeteries, contractor facilities, antennas, gas stations, and RV parks within the district. The City would like to include these additional restrictions as part of the proposed requirements.

- D. Resolution Imposing a Moratorium on the Acceptance of Any Permit Application or Plans Regarding Mobile or Manufactured Homes, or Mobile or Manufactured Home Communities in any Zoning District

City Manager Steve Davis stated that the current ordinance restricts mobile homes communities but does not address individual mobile homes within residential zoning districts, creating a gap.

Councilman Thomas Barbee asked if this will prevent any new mobile homes from entering the community.

City Manager Davis stated that it restricts any new mobile home for 6 months.

**RESULT:**

**APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]**

**MOVER:**

Gabrielle Nelson, Mayor Pro Tem

**SECONDER:**

Thomas Barbee, Council Member

**12. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

**A. Litigation**

**B. Personnel**

**C. Real Estate**

**13. ADJOURNMENT**

**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

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Mayor Tracy Saunders

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

ATTEST:

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Zahnay Smoak, Clerk of Council