



CITY OF PORT WENTWORTH

CITY COUNCIL

JUNE 25, 2026

Council Meeting Room

Regular Session

7:00 PM

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

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Mayor Tracy Saunders 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
Tracy Saunders	Mayor	Present
Gabrielle Nelson	Mayor Pro Tem	Present
ArtLise Alston-Cone	Council Member	Present
Mark Stephens	Council Member	Present
Rufus Bright	Council Member	Present
Shawn Randerwala	Council Member	Present
Thomas Barbee	Council Member	Absent

4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

5. RECOGNITION OF SPECIAL GUESTS and ELECTIONS & APPOINTMENTS

6. COMMUNICATIONS & PETITIONS

7. PUBLIC COMMENTS - REGISTERED SPEAKERS

8. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

9. CONSENT AGENDA

10. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. Adoption of FY 27 Budget- 2nd Reading

- Public Hearing and Action

City Manager Steve Davis stated that the budget maintains the current millage rate with no tax increase. He stated that the proposed budget fully funds City operations, includes funding for 77 projects , provides a cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for employees, and maintains employee medical insurance and other existing benefits.

Councilwoman ArtLise Alston-Cone asked why the HVAC units for the current building were not replaced as part of the recent renovation and addition, and whether the need for replacement was identified only after the project was completed. She also asked about funding for a new HVAC system at the courthouse.

City Manager Davis stated that the new police station, which will include a courtroom, is still approximately two to three years from completion. He states that because the existing courthouse is currently in use for municipal operations and the HVAC system has already failed, replacing the system is necessary to maintain operations until the new facility is completed. He states regarding the HVAC replacements at City Hall, he said the building has multiple HVAC units and the current plan is not to replace all of the units at once.

Councilwoman Cone expressed her concern about the level of detail provided for certain capital spending in the proposed budget. She requested that the budget provides the same level of specificity for all significant purchases, particularly those involving taxpayer funds.

City Manager Davis stated that the funding is intended to purchase equipment for the City's newly established Parks Department, which will be responsible for maintaining the new 165-acre Anchor Park as it opens during the current budget cycle. He explained that the department will require a variety of maintenance equipment, including mowers, blowers, weed eaters, chainsaws, specialized field maintenance equipment, and equipment for maintaining athletic fields and infields. The Parks Department has previously relied on equipment from the Public Works Department to maintain existing parks, but the expansion of park facilities requires the department to have its own dedicated equipment.

Councilwoman Cone asked if the additional details be added to the budget.

City Manager Davis said the budget would have to be amended but can be provided.

Councilwoman Cone asked whether the budgeted amount includes the canopy structure for the basketball court or if the funding only covers the court surface.

City Manager Davis clarified that the project funding is only for basketball court improvements and will be completed similarly to the work previously done at Della Steel Park.

City Manager Davis explained that the Hotel/Motel Tax funds are collected and transferred monthly from the Hotel/Motel Tax Fund to the General Fund. This transfer is the only accounting of Hotel/Motel Tax revenue reflected within the General Fund budget. He stated that once the funds are transferred into the General Fund, they are not separately tracked or segregated because they are considered unrestricted funds and may be used for any eligible General Fund purpose.

Council Member Stephens made a motion to Approve , which was seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Nelson. Vote was unanimous.

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

11. NEW BUSINESS

12. EXECUTIVE SESSION

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

Councilman Mark Stephens made a motion to adjourn to executive session, seconded by Councilman Rufus Bright.

Councilman Mark Stephens made a motion to reconvene, seconded by Mayor Pro-Tem Gabrielle Nelson.

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

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

13. ADJOURNMENT

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

Mayor Tracy Saunder

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

ATTEST:

Zahnay Smoak, Clerk of Council