CITY OF PORT WENTWORTH

CITY COUNCIL

AUGUST 20, 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. ROLL CALL - CLERK OF COUNCIL

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

3. PRAYER AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Councilman Rufus Bright led the prayer and pledge of allegiance.

4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

5. RECOGNITION OF SPECIAL GUESTS & ELECTIONS & APPOINTMENTS

6. COMMUNICATIONS & PETITIONS

A. National Black Business Month Proclamation
B. National Golf Month Proclamation
C. National Senior Citizen Day Proclamation

D. Hurricane Preparedness Month Proclamation
E. Neonatal Intensive Care Awareness Month Proclamation
F. City Manager Update

Recreation Department Director Tiffany Lancaster presented an overview of activities and programs offered by the Recreation Department throughout the City.

Mayor Pro-Tem presented the National Black Business Month Proclamation, the National Golf Month Proclamation, National Senior Citizen Day Proclamation, Hurricane Preparedness Month Proclamation, and Neonatal Intensive Care Awareness Month Proclamation.

National Black Business Month

Asia Hankerson, Vice Chair of the Greater Savannah Black Chamber of Commerce, thanked the City for its support of Black-owned and local businesses and stated that "Black business is everyone's business."

National Golf Month

A representative from First Tee Savannah thanked the City and shared that the organization provides life skills through golf to nearly 27,000 youth across five counties, with programs in 47 schools and 19 golf courses. The organization has also expanded its programming to include adaptive golf.

National Senior Citizen's Day

A representative from PruittHealth Seaside thanked the City for its continued support and shared that the 81-bed, four-star facility is currently full with a waiting list. She also highlighted the facility's rehabilitation services and support of seniors in the Port Wentworth community.

National Preparedness Month

EMS Director Morgan Holloran and the Emergency Manager emphasized the importance of year-round hurricane preparedness, community education, and coordination among City departments and emergency response agencies. Residents were encouraged to take additional steps to prepare for hurricanes and other disasters.

Chatham County EMA Director, Dennis Jones, thanked the City for recognizing Hurricane Preparedness Month and emphasized that preparedness is a year-round priority for coastal Georgia. He highlighted the importance of partnerships among emergency management, firefighters, police, public works, administrative staff, and City leadership to ensure the community, Council, and government are prepared for hurricanes and other disasters. He encouraged residents to take at least one additional step toward preparedness, stating that individual efforts help create a more resilient Port Wentworth and Chatham County.

Neonatal Intensive Care Awareness Month

David Cody, along with Port Wentworth residents Chelsea Barnes and her family, spoke on behalf of the

Sienna Project and Coastal Georgia NICU Warrior Run. He stated that the event honors NICU babies, their families, and the healthcare professionals who care for them. He stated that the first Coastal Georgia NICU Warrior Run will be held September 26, 2026, featuring a 5K, 10K, and family walk.

Assistant Chief Renny Walters recognized Sergeant Rodriguez for five years of service with the City of Port Wentworth. He stated that Sergeant Rodriguez is a ten-year law enforcement veteran and oversees the Police Department's training division, ensuring officers remain current with practices and standards established by the International Association of Chiefs of Police and Georgia Association of Chiefs of Police.

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

09/10/26 - Gymnastics classes start
09/11/26 Line Dancing - Gym - 6:00pm -7:30pm
09/12/26 - 912 Community Day Anchor Park 11:00am -3:00pm
09/12/26 - Trading Card Show - Gym - All Day
09/15/26 - Winter Sports Registration pens - Basketball/ Cheer Team
09/18/26 - Line Dancing - Gym - 6:00pm -7:30pm
09/25/26 - La Fiesta Hispana - VyStar Pavilion -5:30pm-9:00pm
10/02/23 - Line Dancing - Gym - 6:00pm - 7:30pm
10/03/26 - Line Dancing - Gym - 6:00pm - 7:30pm
10/03/26 - First Tee Golf Clinic - (ages 5-12 - NO Equipment Needed) Festival Site 9:30am - 11:30am
10/10/26 - Indian GARBA - VyStar Pavilion - 6:00pm - 11:00pm
10/16/26 - Fall Festival - Festival Site - 5:30pm - 9:00pm
10/27 & 28 - Haunted Experience - Gym - 6:30pm - 9:00pm

City Manager Davis provided an update on Anchor Park, stating that the Ice Cove is approximately 99% complete, with both rinks operational. The pro shop and Frozen Anchor Bar and Grill were scheduled to open September 12. Phase Two construction is also progressing, including the football and soccer fields, concessions, locker rooms, bleachers, and maintenance building. He also discussed potential updates to the data center ordinance and upcoming town hall meetings to gather community input.

CFO Tom Kilmartin presented the City's annual audit and reported the fourth consecutive year of clean audits. He stated that the City received an unmodified opinion with no adjustments required and credited the Finance Department's staff, updated procedures, and timely financial reporting for the results.

Councilwoman ArtLise Alston-Cone thanked the CFO and Finance Department for addressing past financial issues. She emphasized the importance of transparency throughout the budgeting process so Council members have accurate information to share with residents and can remain accountable to the community.

7. PUBLIC COMMENTS - REGISTERED SPEAKERS

A. Amanda Dunnigan
Discussed the following topic:
- Habitat for Humanity

Councilwoman Cone asked for the top four solutions the City could implement immediately to address the current issues and improve the situation moving forward.

City Manager Davis clarified that the variance only applied to the application process and that the zoning was later approved by City Council. He stated that staff reviewed the plans with nearby residents and confirmed that clearing remained within the approved limits. The final plan included expanded buffers, an alley system, and a 50-foot buffer from neighboring homes to address residents' concerns. He acknowledged residents' concerns and highlighted upcoming park improvements, including a playground, dog park, and pavilion.

8. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

A. Regular Council Meeting Minutes- July 16, 2026

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

9. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Mobley Street Cleaning LLC

City Manager Steve Davis explained that contracting street cleaning services was more cost-effective than purchasing and maintaining a street sweeper. The contract will provide monthly sweeping of major roadways, including Highways 21 and 30, Benton Boulevard, South Coastal Highway, and Crossgate Road. He stated that the service will complement ongoing median maintenance, trash collection, and grass cutting along major roadways.

Councilwoman ArtLise Alston-Cone asked whether proper procurement procedures, including the bidding process and selection committee, were followed.

City Manager Davis confirmed that they were.

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

10. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

11. NEW BUSINESS

A.

Resolution to Define Central Business District within Article 3 of City Code of Ordinances

City Manager Steve Davis explained that the item was a resolution for first reading, rather than an ordinance. He stated that the City's code defines a Central Business District but does not identify the specific areas. He stated that the resolution would designate South Coastal Highway, Highways 21 and 30, Anchor Park Boulevard, Meinhard Road, and Effingham Parkway, once opened, as Central Business District corridors.

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

12. EXECUTIVE SESSION

A. Litigation
B. Personnel
C. Real Estate

Councilman Shawn Randerwala made a motion to adjourn to executive session, seconded by Councilman Rufus Bright.

Mayor Pro-Tem Gabrielle Nelson made a motion to reconvene, seconded by Rufus Bright.

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

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

13. ADJOURNMENT

RESULT:	**APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]**
MOVER:	Gabrielle Nelson, Mayor Pro Tem
SECONDER:	ArtLise Alston-Cone, Council Member
AYES:	Gabrielle Nelson, Thomas Barbee, ArtLise Alston-Cone, 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:

_____
Zahnay Smoak, Clerk of Council