



# CITY OF PORT WENTWORTH

CITY COUNCIL

MAY 26, 2022

Council Meeting Room

Regular Meeting

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**

Council Member Rufus Bright led in prayer and the Pledge of Allegiance.

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

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Gary Norton	Mayor	Present	
Thomas Barbee	Mayor Pro Tem	Present	
Jo Smith	Council Member	Present	
Gabrielle Nelson	Council Member	Present	
Mark Stephens	Council Member	Present	
Rufus Bright	Council Member	Present	
Glenn Jones	Council Member	Present	

**4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

A. Motion

The agenda was approved with the following change(s):

- Take item H under New Business off of the agenda because they withdrew their application.

**RESULT:** APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]  
**MOVER:** Glenn Jones, Council Member  
**SECONDER:** Jo Smith, Council Member  
**AYES:** Barbee, Smith, Nelson, Stephens, Bright, Jones

**5. RECOGNITION OF SPECIAL GUESTS**

**6. PUBLIC COMMENTS - REGISTERED SPEAKERS**

A. John Holland, 3 Galley Ln

Wanted to know what the status was on the Speed Bumps that he asked to be put in the Newport Neighborhood. He also invited the council Members and everyone in attendance to a clean up day that Newport was Hosting on the upcoming Saturday.

B. Willie Johnson, 250 Monteith Rd

Concerned with the placement of his sign ( Promise Land Farm) and wanted to know with Hendley Rd being closed what was going to happen to it.

C. Carrie Smart, 109 Ferguson Rd

Explained that her recycle bins were not being picked up and wanted to know what was going on. There is also a ditch that is behind her home that needs to be tended to and wanted to know who she needed to speak to in order to have someone come out there and take a look. She discussed the issue of the backed up traffic on 30 due to the closure of Hendley Rd.

D. Trevor Ferguson, 6 Laurel Ridge Ct

Explained that the 3 minute time limit for someone to speak during public comments was not enough time and asked if the council could extend the time to 5 minutes instead. He also stated that the Patel's who are opening up a gas station near the neighborhood wanted to host a meeting with the neighborhood to present the gas station, and asked if they could host the meeting in Council Chambers.

E. Georgia W. Benton, 135 Saussy Rd

Discussed the blocking of the ditches and wanted to know when was the council going to have someone clean them.

**7. ELECTIONS & APPOINTMENTS**

Mayor Gary Norton congratulated Dr. Tonia Howard-Hall on winning her election for SCCPSS School Board District 8.

**8. ADOPTION OF MINUTES**

A. Regular Workshop and Council Meeting Minutes - May 10, 2022

1. Motion

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>ADOPTED [UNANIMOUS]</b>
<b>MOVER:</b>	Rufus Bright, Council Member
<b>SECONDER:</b>	Thomas Barbee, Mayor Pro Tem
<b>AYES:</b>	Barbee, Smith, Nelson, Stephens, Bright, Jones

**9. COMMUNICATIONS & PETITIONS**

**10. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

During this Time Council Member Mark Stephens asked Chief of Police Matt Libby if he could explain the amount of time it would take for them to respond to an event such as the tragedy in Texas at the school. As well as what kind of team do we have that can answer those response, where are they based, and what are we doing for prevention.

Chief Libby: We have a Tactical Response Unit and they aren't based in one area being that the team is made up of officers from different teams and units. As far as the response time goes everything is fluid and we overall have a good response time for calls, and calls such as those are considered a priority or hot call. Threats such as this are immediately engaged, "we don't wait", there is a time and place to step back, however, we must immediately take actions. In the past 10 months we have split the city up into zones to ensure there are officers on the street and in every zone. We also have officers walking throughout the schools even if they have a resource officer. We are also making it a point to have officers know the layout of the buildings so that they know where to go in case of emergencies. When it comes to training we have added different simulators with real scenarios. The Police department also does multi discipline training that helps prepare them for many situations including mass casualty. Chief Libby also stated that Chatham County holds monthly meetings with all the Chief's discussing what they can do to be better.

## A. Motion

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]</b>
<b>MOVER:</b>	Mark Stephens, Council Member
<b>SECONDER:</b>	Rufus Bright, Council Member
<b>AYES:</b>	Barbee, Smith, Nelson, Stephens, Bright, Jones

**11. CONSENT AGENDA****12. UNFINISHED BUSINESS****13. NEW BUSINESS**

## A. 2672 : Adoption of Millage Rate 2nd Reading

City Manager Steve Davis explained that this item was discussed during the last meeting and this was the second time that it was brought before council.

Council Member Thomas Barbee wanted to know if all the proper notices were sent out and if all the legal requirements were met, so that they could vote on it, and Mr. Davis said yes.

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]</b>
<b>MOVER:</b>	Mark Stephens, Council Member
<b>SECONDER:</b>	Rufus Bright, Council Member
<b>AYES:</b>	Barbee, Smith, Nelson, Stephens, Bright, Jones

## B. Adoption of FY2023 Budget

City Manager Steve Davis explained that a finance director was hired to help work on the budget. He explained that many meetings and discussions were had between individuals and departments to gather the information needed for the budget. The city is in a good financial position to be able to do some things for the City that are needed and some of the major items that were discussed at the retreat. Some of those items include: a recreation park, North side Public Safety, items, technology lab, etc. All funding for engineering, pre-construction, and utility infrastructure is funded in the budget. One of the main highlights in the budget that he pointed out was that there are going to be 17 new positions. Fire dept is getting 9 new firefighters, 1 new in the police dept., 5 new administrative, and 2 new public works. There will also be no increase in cost of healthcare to the employees (the healthcare cost are growing exponentially and is a significant cost that is being absorbed in the budget). This budget provides a 5% cost of living increase for all the employees. There are funds in the budget for new vehicles for police and fire. The budget also creates a specific finance department and will fall under the administrative budget, and Mr. Davis requested that we make Mr. Kilmartin the Assistant City Manager- finance director. The technology department will be created as well. On July 1 the non-forward facing offices will be moved to the strip center. Mr. Davis also explained the different positions, where they would be, and the place that they fall under by presenting different Org charts. Mr. Davis went through the funds summary to explain the budget and where each funds were going.

Council Member Thomas Barbee: Wanted clarification that the citizens understood that Mr. Kilmartin is already an employee and a new employee wouldn't be hired for the Assistant Manager- Finance, but that the Finance director would just take on a new title. He also wanted to know how many police officers will be at the satellite station. Mr. Davis set that it won't be a home base, it will still be just the northern zone, but there will be places for the officers to take their breaks and lunches, and there will be a counter so that the citizens can pay their fines and tickets (which the technical aspect is still being worked out).

Council Member Jo Smith: Asked if we could use Venmo and CashApp? Mr. Davis said he was unsure and that he could check into and see.

Council Member Mark Stephens: Asked if the SPLOST funds had a restriction on how it could be used? Mr. Davis said yes, its for things such as infrastructure, capital projects, etc.

Council Member Thomas Barbee asked if we could use the SPLOST funds to get a 5 person team together with the proper equipment to specifically go around the city and clean the ditches? Mr. Davis said we could and we are currently paying a company now to do that. Council Member Glenn Jones stated that we must remember that these funds are voted on by the citizens and there is a list of things that they would like to get done, so we need to spend the money to complete projects for the citizens. Council Member Rufus Bright says that there has been years of neglect and he asked the citizens to be patient with them as they try to complete these projects.

Public Hearing:

Georgia Benton: Said she was concerned about the tax dollars being taken at a higher amount to fix something and then sold off for a lower amount(displacement of funds). Mr. Davis explained that the budget doesn't include funds for selling any public properties.

Terry Landing: Wanted to know that with the new road coming in near his company would he be able to make a left and right turn into his property with a semi truck. The developer said that he will be able to make those turns. Mr. Davis said he will have to go across the track, but there will be a double left.

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]</b>
<b>MOVER:</b>	Rufus Bright, Council Member
<b>SECONDER:</b>	Mark Stephens, Council Member
<b>AYES:</b>	Barbee, Smith, Nelson, Stephens, Bright, Jones

C. Intergovernmental Agreement GITC Bldg 4A – Effingham County

Mr. Davis explained that this is an Intergovernmental agreement with Effingham County dealing with the water and sewage lines. The building is in city limits, but the development comes through Effingham County. So, they will collect the water payments and will do the metering so they will receive those fees, but we will still do the inspections and the permitting and we will receive those fees.

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]</b>
<b>MOVER:</b>	Thomas Barbee, Mayor Pro Tem
<b>SECONDER:</b>	Jo Smith, Council Member
<b>AYES:</b>	Barbee, Smith, Nelson, Stephens, Bright, Jones

D. GFAAC, LLC Contract for Acquisition of Grants/Funds

City Attorney Scott Robichaux stated that Council Member Smith stepped away due to their being a conflict of interest on the matter. He then explained what GFAC was and the contract that they were trying to go into with the city.(GFAC is a company that does research and coordinates with city staff to get grants for the City. He also touched on a few legal matters in the contract to make council aware: 1. The termination clause starts as a 4 year and can auto renew and can only be terminated by clause 2. The City can't deny different Funding opportunities on the grounds that it is not sufficiently staffed for, but we can do a RFP but GFAC would get the right of first refusal over that 3. GFAC could opt to not apply for the funds if there full 15% is not accessible.

Council Member Barbee wanted to know if the CRC could do the same thing that they do for cheaper? The City attorney stated that they do have that ability, but he was unsure of their percentage and that the difference for GFAC would be that they would have someone dedicated to the city

Council Member Jones said that a few things that stood out to him: 1. The 4 year contract, if the company was terminated they would still get 15% of any money that we receive, the city doesn't have the right to refuse.

Council Member Nelson said that we were going to have a finance department that was getting 5 new employees, that are going to be able to obtain these funds for us, so it makes no sense to go outside of the city to go find us the money that we need. At least 1 or 2 of the new employee should be able to seek and write grants for the city. She also stated that the contract doesn't seem feasible and it is not cost effective.

Mayor Gary Norton also stated that he doesn't think that family members should be writing grants for the City.

The representative from GFAC responded to some of the questions and comments that were made. She stated that they have lawyers, CPA's, Finance managers, and grant writers. She also said that the concerns that the council had with the contract could easily be worked out and changed.

Mayor Norton asked if Mr. Kilmartin could give his opinion. Mr. Kilmartin said that grant writing is more of an inclusive process and also shared some of his experiences with grant writing. Mrs. Nelson asked if he could change the job requirements for 2 positions that will require them to be qualified to get these funds.

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>DEFEATED [5 TO 0]</b>
<b>MOVER:</b>	Rufus Bright, Council Member
<b>SECONDER:</b>	Gabrielle Nelson, Council Member
<b>AYES:</b>	Barbee, Nelson, Stephens, Bright, Jones
<b>RECUSED:</b>	Smith

- E. Antrim Road Roadway Improvements Pay Request No. 4 in the amount of \$51,310.68 to Sandhill ALS Construction, Inc.

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>APPROVED [5 TO 0]</b>
<b>MOVER:</b>	Thomas Barbee, Mayor Pro Tem
<b>SECONDER:</b>	Rufus Bright, Council Member
<b>AYES:</b>	Barbee, Nelson, Stephens, Bright, Jones
<b>AWAY:</b>	Smith

- F. Site Plan Review Application submitted by Kim Thomas, Dewitt Tilton Group on behalf of Brian Orr for PIN # 7-0906-02-002 (8191 Old Highway 21) for a Specific Development Site Plan to allow a Truck Shop in a P-C-2 (Planned Community Business) Zoning District

A representative from the Dewitt Tilton group came and explained that this would be a detailing shop for carvana trucks it would not be open to the public and they are already operating in Port Wentworth this would just be the permanent home.

The owner of Randall's Beverage said that she was concerned with the pavement of Moore Ave, with all of the trucks coming in and off of that street, and the traffic will affect her business. The engineer stated the pavement was not in the plan and that they thought that Jasper would be paving the road. Council Member Jones stated that the pavement that jasper is going to do is asphalt and not cement ready. He also stated that they should talk with jasper to see if they can collaborate on the road issue.

Jasper Village stated that they wouldn't mind collaborating with the company for the paving of the roads.

Council Member Stephens that there should be a specific plan for disposal of fluids, and for all of the assurances that they come with.

Georgia Benton: wanted to know where the water from the concrete washout going to go, the representative said that everything will be detained on sight.

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>DELAYED [UNANIMOUS]</b>
<b>MOVER:</b>	Glenn Jones, Council Member
<b>SECONDER:</b>	Gabrielle Nelson, Council Member
<b>AYES:</b>	Barbee, Smith, Nelson, Stephens, Bright, Jones

- G. Site Plan Review Application submitted by Allen Engineering Services, LLC., on behalf of Shane Malek, Next Chapter Neighborhoods for PIN # 7-0906-04-064 (Old Highway 21) for a Specific Development Site Plan to allow a Single-Family Home For Rent Development (Jasper Village Phase II) in a M-P-O (Master Plan Overlay) Zoning District

Shane Malek explained that they would like to extend Jasper Village. Council Member Barbee asked if they were going to touch the monument and they said no.

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]</b>
<b>MOVER:</b>	Thomas Barbee, Mayor Pro Tem
<b>SECONDER:</b>	Gabrielle Nelson, Council Member
<b>AYES:</b>	Barbee, Smith, Nelson, Stephens, Bright, Jones

- H. Site Plan Review Application submitted by Felipe Toledo, P.E., Thomas & Hutton of behalf of LRE Crossgate North, LLC., for PIN # 7-0035-01-007 (Northeast corner of Crossgate Rd & Jimmy Deloach Parkway) for a Specific Development Site Plan to allow a warehouse development (NFI Crossgate Industrial Park) in a P-I-1 (Planned Industrial) Zoning District

The application was withdrawn.

- I. Site Plan Review Application submitted by Chad Zittrouer, Kern & Co., LLC., on behalf of CH Realty IV - Sansone, I, LLC., for PIN # 7-0977-01-027 (Hendley Road) for a Specific Development Site Plan to allow a Warehouse / Distribution Center (Legacy Park Building 3) in a P-I-2 (Planned Industrial) Zoning District

Chad Zittrouer, addressed both Item I and J on the agenda being that they were both his, however, two separate votes were held. Mr. Zittrouer discussed the closing of Hendley road. He also stated that prior to the planning and zoning meeting they held a public input meeting in which they received a substantial amount of feedback: 1. Mr. Hicks talked about the berm and buffering, they are going to input a berm and include the landscape 2. Drainage and Hendley rd closure and improvements, which were discussed at the meeting as well. They went to planning and zoning and it was tabled and the recommendation was to have a follow up meeting with the residents. They had one the following morning and received feedback from that meeting as well. He then showed a picture of the buildings and what it would look like and explained how everything has been done according to City standards and regulations. Then Mr. Striler came up and discussed all of the things that were going to be done to make things easier on the citizens that will be directly affected.

Council Member Smith: Stated that not all options for alternate routes in and out were extensively researched, and that she wanted the support that they are giving in writing.

Council Member Jones: Said that the whoever owns the property is going to do what they want with that property because that is what it is zoned for, and the amount of work

that they have put in is more than what any other company has done and they are trying to ease the transition.

Mr. Zittrouer than explained the different options that were taken into consideration and the research that had gone into it.

Council Member Barbee then asked if they were going to let the city hang on to the CO's until the traffic light is put in from the DOT ( and they said yes), he then complimented them on the amount of work that was being done and Mr. Zittrouer said that they will put it in writing what they were offering the citizens.

Mayor Norton asked Chief Moore if someone can be where they are working on the road if they paid the FEMA fees, and Chief Moore said that they could but they do have someone over there during rush hours.

There was a motion to deny made by Council Member Stephens and seconded by Council Member Smith, however, the vote was a tie and therefore Mayor Norton had to vote making the final decision to approve the Site Plan Application. Therefore, a new motion was made by Council Member Jones to approve and it was second by Council Member Barbee.

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>APPROVED [3 TO 3]</b>
<b>MOVER:</b>	Glenn Jones, Council Member
<b>SECONDER:</b>	Rufus Bright, Council Member
<b>AYES:</b>	Barbee, Bright, Jones
<b>NAYS:</b>	Smith, Nelson, Stephens

- J. Site Plan Review Application submitted by Chad Zittrouer, Kern & Co., LLC., on behalf of CH Realty IV - Sansone, I, LLC., for PIN # 7-0977-01-028 (Hendley Road) for a Specific Development Site Plan to allow a Warehouse / Distribution Center (Legacy Park Building 2) in a P-I-2 (Planned Industrial) Zoning District

There was a motion to deny made by Council Member Stephens and seconded by Council Member Smith, however, the vote was a tie and therefore Mayor Norton had to vote making the final decision to approve the Site Plan Application. Therefore, a new motion was made by Council Member Jones to approve and it was second by Council Member Barbee.

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>APPROVED [3 TO 3]</b>
<b>MOVER:</b>	Glenn Jones, Council Member
<b>SECONDER:</b>	Rufus Bright, Council Member
<b>AYES:</b>	Barbee, Bright, Jones
<b>NAYS:</b>	Smith, Nelson, Stephens

#### 14. RESOLUTIONS/ORDINANCES/PROCLAMATIONS

#### 15. EXECUTIVE SESSION

#### 16. ADJOURNMENT

- A. Motion

There being no further business, Council Member Rufus Bright made a motion to adjourn. Seconded by Council Member Gabrielle Nelson. Vote was unanimous

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]</b>
<b>MOVER:</b>	Rufus Bright, Council Member
<b>SECONDER:</b>	Gabrielle Nelson, Council Member
<b>AYES:</b>	Barbee, Smith, Nelson, Stephens, Bright, Jones

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor Gary Norton

The foregoing minutes are true and correct and approved by me on this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2022.

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Zahnay Smoak, Clerk of Council