



# CITY OF PORT WENTWORTH

CITY COUNCIL

NOVEMBER 1, 2022

Council Meeting Room

Special Called Meeting

5:00 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	Remote	
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.

**RESULT:** APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]  
**MOVER:** Thomas Barbee, Mayor Pro Tem  
**SECONDER:** Rufus Bright, Council Member  
**AYES:** Barbee, Smith, Nelson, Stephens, Bright, Jones

**5. NEW BUSINESS**

A. Redistricting Presentation-Georgia Joint Reapportionment Office

City Manager Steve Davis explained that redistricting happens every ten years generally following the census, and unlike the state and county that are done legislatively the municipalities have home rule to change their maps as long as they don't change the form of government, amount of districts or representatives on council. Per GMA guidelines if you are over a ten percent deviation than it is encouraged that you redistrict, however, it is not mandatory. We have experienced extreme growth creating a large disparity between districts by population with a deviation of eighty- nine percent.

The Executive Director from the Georgia Joint Reapportionment Office Mrs. Gina Wright attended via zoom to explain and present the proposed/potential redistricting maps to council. Councilwoman Smith asked if this would affect the at large seats and Mrs. Wright said no. Mrs. Wright explained the population and deviation differences in reference to the current districts map. She explained that you would like to see the deviation percentages closer to zero, small deviation numbers, and population numbers that are very similar. She also stated that flexibility in the numbers is needed because you may

want a specific boundary line. Sometimes cities may also have census blocks which are building blocks that make up the map and sometimes they aren't just city blocks but they can also be defined by geographical features by the census bureau. She also explained that you cannot divide census blocks because we don't know how they should be split.

Councilman Barbee asked if by choosing any of the maps presented would that mean that the individuals would have to change their polling station where they vote and she said no the county makes those decisions. He also stated that out of the six maps that were shown council liked map three.

Councilman Jones stated that in map three his district would be the only one that split neighborhoods up, and he asked if they could take another look to see if there was a way that neighborhoods wouldn't have to be split up. Mrs. Wright stated that she believed that happened in a number of areas and sometimes that may be the only way because to bring the numbers closer together to get closer deviations, but they can be looked at. Mrs. Wright explained that district four had the lowest deviation on the current map but on map three they had to find population so that they would be balanced with the rest of the districts. She also explained that the districts have to be continuous. With this particular map the deviations and populations are similar.

Councilwoman Smith pointed out that map 2 puts two incumbents against each other and map three looks great. Mrs. Wright stated that she was correct about map 2.

Mr. Davis asked if there was anyway that they could move any of the people downtown from district two to district four without losing the deviation range, and she said you could move them but it would give broader deviations. Councilman Jones stated that it seems as if district two and four swapped some areas and was wondering if those areas could be moved, and Mrs. Wright stated that the area he wanted to move would cut his continuity, but if he wanted they could speak together with Mr. Davis to figure out what can be done.

Councilman Bright asked if we chose map three would that give us a balance in each district of the people that could vote, and Mrs. Wright said yes.

Councilwoman Nelson asked when would this go in to affect after this is voted on, and Mrs. Wright said that it would depend on how it's written and she thinks that it would go into affect next year if there we have an election next year, or immediately. Mr. Davis stated that this is an ordinance and so they would have to have two readings, Councilwoman Nelson said so it could be as early as January.

Councilwoman Nelson made a motion to adjourn and it was second by Councilman Stephens. The vote was unanimous.

## 6. ADJOURNMENT

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Mayor Gary Norton

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

ATTEST:

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Zahnay Smoak, Clerk of Council