



# CITY OF PORT WENTWORTH

CITY COUNCIL

MARCH 9, 2023

Council Meeting Room

Regular Meeting

7:00 PM

7224 GA HIGHWAY 21  
PORT WENTWORTH, GA 31407

**1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER**

Mayor Pro-Tem Barbee called the meeting to Order

**2. PRAYER AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Council Member Rufus Bright Led the Prayer and Pledge of Allegiance.

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

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Gary Norton	Mayor	Absent	
Thomas Barbee	Mayor Pro Tem	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.

**RESULT:** APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]  
**MOVER:** Mark Stephens, Council Member  
**SECONDER:** Rufus Bright, Council Member  
**AYES:** Barbee, Nelson, Stephens, Bright, Jones

**5. RECOGNITION OF SPECIAL GUESTS**

A. Port Wentworth Police Command

City Manager Steve Davis introduced the new Chief of Police Kerry Thomas and assistant Chiefs of Police Rennie M. Walters Sr. and Bradwick Lee Sherrod .

B. Port Wentworth Fire Department- "C" Shift

City Manager Steve Davis recognized the firefighters on "C" Shift who responded to a call that resulted in saving a woman's life.

The individuals who were recognized include:

Sergeant TJ Bartholomay  
Firefighter Randy Edmondson  
Firefighter Parker Lane

**6. PUBLIC COMMENTS - REGISTERED SPEAKERS**

## A. Maurice Rahn

Maurice Rahn spoke on the following topic:

- Elected Official Pay

## B. LaRay Benton

LaRay Benton spoke on the following topics:

- City Election
- Property
- Water Fees for a Resident

**7. ELECTIONS & APPOINTMENTS****8. ADOPTION OF MINUTES**

## A. Regular Council Meeting Minutes - February 23, 2023

1.

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

**9. COMMUNICATIONS & PETITIONS**

## A. St. Patricks Day Update

City Manager Steve Davis explained that the buses will run for St. Patrick Day in two different areas:

1. City Hall
2. Publix at Rice Hope

He also explained that the ride will cost \$5 round trip.

**10. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Councilman Bright made a motion to approve the committee reports and it was second by Councilman Stephens. Approved Unanimously.

**11. CONSENT AGENDA****12. UNFINISHED BUSINESS****13. NEW BUSINESS****14. RESOLUTIONS/ORDINANCES/PROCLAMATIONS**

## A. Mount Moriah- Pastor Proclamation

Councilman Mark Stephens read the entire Proclamation ( Please see below) and stated that he would give the proclamation to Pastor James K. Roberts Jr.

Councilman Mark Stephens made a motion to approve and recognize the proclamation and it was second by Councilwoman Gabrielle Nelson. Approved Unanimously.

## Pastor James K. Roberts Jr. of Mt. Moriah Baptist Church 30<sup>th</sup> Year Anniversary

**WHEREAS**, Mr. Horace H. Hall

**WHEREAS**, the members of the Church are opening up its doors to welcome friends from near and far to celebrate this joyous occasion with them.

**WHEREAS**, Pastor James K. Roberts Jr. came to Mount Moriah in 1991 to assist the previous pastor Mr. Henry Williams and worked diligently with the church to help fulfill all the church obligations.

**WHEREAS**, Pastor James K. Roberts Jr. was installed to be the full time Pastor in 1993.

**WHEREAS**, since becoming pastor James K. Roberts Jr. has put a few things in place.

**WHEREAS**, Pastor James K. Roberts Jr. had the sanctuary and social hall remodeled, started an annual program for Pastor Williams wife in his honor, started the church's first food give away, took the church on outings to Holy Land and the WW Mann Retreat Center in Brooklet, Ga, installed the first Mothers Ministry, adopted the a church logo, and started Mt. Moriah Day to celebrate togetherness.

**WHEREAS**, Pastor James K. Roberts Jr. preaches the word of God without wavering because he is so concerned about the person's soul.

**WHEREAS**, Pastor James K. Roberts Jr. has always been a caring and giving pastor who reached out to everyone no matter who they are. Visited the sick in their homes, hospitals, and nursing homes.

**WHEREAS**, Pastor James K. Roberts Jr. real passion and love for God radiates from his heart to strangers, friends, and foes.

**NOW THEREFORE**, The Mayor and City Council, hereby honor and recognize the 30th Anniversary of Pastor James K. Roberts Jr. from Mt. Moriah Baptist Church in the City of Port Wentworth and wish him many more years to come.

**B. Elected Officials Compensation – 2nd Reading**

Councilman Jones wanted to know how the number was calculated, and how can the mayor make the same as the council?

City Manager Davis explained that he did the research and couldn't find a city where they made the same amount and recommended that the mayor have an increase of \$200 more than council. He also stated that the number was calculated by utilizing DCA and

the numbers presented was the median number between the high and the low number that was found. Mr. Davis also explained that the increase that was done previously was done by local legislation back in 2014. City Manager Davis stated that this would also not begin until 2024, which would be a 10 year time frame.

Councilman Jones stated that he would like to do it on a sliding scale because your elected for council to serve and not for the money. He also stated that he spoke to other City Council's and none of them are increasing.

Councilwoman Nelson stated that the census showed that the approximate growth of the city went from 3,000 to 13,000, and the way that she thought that the numbers came about was through the information given by the Census stating that the population has tripled so that is why the compensation amount was tripling. She also stated that some of the comments that have been made by the citizens is that we do not engage or participate, but there are many of us who do. She also explained that she has made many sacrifices to make sure that she is addressing the citizens concerns in a prompt and respectful manner. She also explained that compensation is important at any level and we want to attract competent candidates. Councilwoman Nelson also stated that she had spoken to some state reps who said that this change could be made due to home rule and that the change was within reason. She also said that she wanted to reemphasize the growth of the city and explained that prior to the redistricting she had the largest district, and with the Hyundai plant getting ready to come those numbers will increase. Council woman Nelson also explained that at any regular job after several years of not receiving a pay increase a raise would be adequate. She also stated that she also agrees that the Mayor should be compensated at a higher rate than the rest of council.

Councilman Bright stated that we work extra hard all the time and sometimes the public may not see what the Council is doing, but that doesn't mean that they aren't doing anything.

Councilman Bright made a motion to make an amendment to his motion that the mayor receives \$200 more than the rest of council, giving Council \$1200 and the Mayor \$1400 and it was second by Councilman Mark Stephens. Council Members Nelson, Stephens, Bright, and Barbee voted Yes, and Councilman Jones votes No. The motion was approved.

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>APPROVED [4 TO 1]</b>
<b>MOVER:</b>	Rufus Bright, Council Member
<b>SECONDER:</b>	Mark Stephens, Council Member
<b>AYES:</b>	Barbee, Nelson, Stephens, Bright
<b>NAYS:</b>	Jones

## 15. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Councilman Bright made a motion to adjourn to executive session and it was second by Councilman Stephens. Approved Unanimously.

Councilman Bright made a motion to resume regular session. Approved Unanimously.

### A. Personnel

Councilman Jones made a motion to approve Chief Thomas's Contract and it was second by Councilman Stephens. Approved Unanimously.

## 16. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Councilman Bright made a motion to adjourn. Seconded by Councilman Stephens. Vote was Approved Unanimously.

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

The foregoing minutes are true and correct and approved by me on this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2023.

ATTEST:

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