

**MINUTES OF THE CITY COUNCIL
OF THE CITY OF GALVESTON
WORKSHOP - JUNE 26, 2025**

6/26/2025 - City Council Minutes

1 DECLARATION OF A QUORUM AND CALL MEETING TO ORDER

With a quorum present, the workshop was called to order at 9:00 a.m.

2 ROLL CALL

Present: Mayor Craig Brown, Mayor Pro Tem Marie Robb, Council Member Sharon Lewis, Council Member David Finklea, Council Member Bob Brown, Council Member Alex Porretto, and Council Member Beau Rawlins.

3 DISCUSSION ITEMS

3.A Clarification Of Consent And Regular City Council Agenda Items - This Is An Opportunity For City Council To Ask Questions Of Staff On Consent And Regular Agenda Items (1 Hour)

Items 8A, 8C, 10D, 11B, 11F, 11R, 11N, 11U, 11V, 12A, 12B were clarified by Staff.

3.B Pelican Island Bridge Update (D Buckley/D Glywasky - 10 min)

Deputy City Manager Dan Buckley provided an update on the Pelican Island Bridge. He reported that the final agreement with the Port of Galveston is on today's agenda for approval and on the Port Director's desk waiting for his signature, the agreement with Texas A&M is on today's agenda for approval, the agreement with Galveston County is complete, and the agreement with the Port of Houston is still being worked by City Staff. Mayor Pro Tem Robb reported on funding efforts through H-GAC.

3.C Update and Discussion Regarding Negotiations with GISD for the Proposed Conveyance to the City of the Property Commonly Known As Rosenberg School (Legal - 20 min)

Assistant City Attorney Trevor Fanning provided an update on the conveyance of the Rosenberg School property. The City of Galveston and GISD are finalizing a deal to transfer the Rosenberg School property to the City for use as a park. GISD will receive \ \$2.2 million from third-party donors before conveying the property. The City requires the site to be clean and environmentally cleared, including demolition and soil testing, before accepting it. Donor J.P. Bryan will fund demolition but not any remediation if contamination is found. The City has no financial responsibility for cleanup—GISD and donors must cover all costs. July 1 is the funding deadline, but property transfer depends

on environmental clearance.

3.D Presentation And Discussion of Long Range Financial Forecast (C. Ludanyi - 10 min))

Finance Director Csilla Ludanyi reported on the Long Range Financial Forecast for FY 2026-2030 for General Fund revenues and expenditures, property tax, long-term parking revenue and cruise passenger fees, public safety costs, enterprise funds, the debt service fund, and hotel occupancy tax. The city's long-range financial forecast shows modest revenue growth with flat property tax projections and a potential \$60 million bond increasing debt service starting in 2027. Public safety dominates spending, driven by high tourist demand, while tourism-related revenues help but don't fully offset costs. Enterprise funds like water, sewer, and drainage face upcoming deficits despite recent rate adjustments. Budget gaps are widening, requiring careful prioritization and possible cuts. Overall, the forecast highlights the need for cautious financial planning amid uncertain economic and market conditions.

3.E Discussion of the Transfer of the Collection of Hotel Occupancy Tax to the City (D Buckley - 20 min)

Discussed as part of Item 3D. The collection of hotel occupancy tax is transferring back to the City with some discussion on how administrative fees will be handled.

3.F Update and Discussion of the Status and Details of the African American Heritage District (S Lewis/C Brown - 10 min)

Pulled.

3.G Update and Discussion of MasterPlan/Developer for Stewart Beach Park (B Brown/C Brown/ D Anderson - 15 min)

City Architect Dudley Anderson provided an update on the Stewart Beach Park Master Plan, noting delays in finalizing the BRW contract, which is now expected in July. A Houston-based developer has been identified, and public input will be gathered through two meetings. The updated plan will build on the 5-year-old Rogers Master Plan and explore new design options, including improvements to drainage and relocating the Beach Patrol facility. A major point of debate was the potential removal or relocation of on-sand parking, with some Council Members warning this could hurt accessibility and beach activity, while others supported a more natural, scenic environment. An updated timeline and further details are expected at the next meeting.

3.H Discussion of a replacement for Fire Station #2 (D. Anderson - 20 min)

Fire Chief Mike Varela and City Architect Dudley Anderson discussed with City Council the urgent need to replace the outdated Fire Station #2 due to space limitations, modern equipment incompatibility, and increasing service demands from growth in the area. The proposed solution is to rebuild a larger, two-story facility on the current site, incorporating an adjacent alley for added space. The estimated \$7.5 million project would be funded through a general obligation bond requiring voter approval in November. Council aims to finalize ballot language by August, emphasizing the critical nature of the upgrade and strong firefighter support for the proposal.

- 3.I Discussion of Charter Amendments, including an update on a bond to mill and overlay the roads (C Brown/B Brown/Robb - 15 min)

The Council discussed potential charter amendments and an update on a proposed bond for milling and overlaying roads. There was consensus that placing charter amendments on the November ballot might be inappropriate. However, several members supported placing the road bond on the November ballot due to expected high voter turnout. Concerns were raised about voter fatigue and the five-year wait period if the bond fails.

- 3.J Discussion and Update of Activities of the Short Term Rental Committee and Recommendations on Parking Regulations (B Brown/C Brown - 30)

Council Member Brown, Committee Chair Claire Reiswerg, and Vice Chair David Bloom discussed with City Council three resolutions passed by the Short Term Rental Committee.

Short-Term recommendations:

- **Enforcement:** use STR registration funds to increase weekend parking enforcement, focusing on complaints due to limited resources.
- **Education:** improve public awareness through printed and digital materials about STR rules and respectful behavior.

Long-Term recommendations:

- **Begin revising the STR ordinance with Legal and Planning staff, aiming for a draft by August and a final proposal by October.**

The STR Committee is actively working on parking concerns and has proposed immediate actions while developing a comprehensive ordinance update. They stressed urgency, especially during peak tourist season, and the need for Council and staff collaboration. Council members echoed concerns about enforcement gaps and urged progress to avoid further burden on residents.

- 3.K Ex-Officio Update for Arts and Historic Preservation Advisory Board (AHPB) and Update from Staff on AHP Overage Funds (Porretto/Finklea - 15 min)

Council Member Porretto reported the issue of nine Arts and Historic grant applications missing final budgets, which could jeopardize about half a million dollars in allocations if strict ordinance rules are followed. To address this, the board may allow these organizations to submit their budgets at the next meeting. Additionally, there is a significant surplus fund—about \$2.9 million—accumulated from reserves and unspent allocations, with City Council holding authority over its use. The Council briefly discussed the need to clarify and potentially revise ordinances governing these funds and the board's structure, considering recommendations such as increasing contributions to the Cultural Arts Commission and possibly merging arts-related entities for streamlined governance.

- 3.L Discussion of Drainage Issues on Recently Finished Street Projects and an

update on current and upcoming projects identified in the Drainage Master Plan (Porretto/Finklea/Robb - 15 min)

The Council discussed ongoing drainage challenges, particularly flooding on 45th Street caused by undersized pipes and limited outflow. Planned inspections, pump station upgrades near Avenue P, and pipe upsizing projects aim to improve water flow and reduce flooding. Construction barriers and some road projects have worsened drainage in certain areas. Funding remains limited for the broader \$540 million Drainage Master Plan, so priorities are phased and grant-dependent. Overall, efforts center on identifying problem areas, repairing infrastructure, and enhancing pump capacity to address persistent flooding issues.

3.M Current status and total number of manhole supercovers installed to date (Robb/Porretto)

Mayor Pro Tem Robb reported on issues of raw sewage coming out of manholes during recent rain storms. Interim Executive Director Tyson Arnold and Manager Ava Cares reported that the City has installed multiple manhole supercovers to prevent raw sewage overflows during heavy rains and reduce infiltration issues. After fully using the first batch, a second shipment has arrived, targeting problem areas identified through flow and smoke testing, especially low-lying neighborhoods like Marina and Stewart Road. Installation is carefully planned due to ventilation requirements and the need to avoid shifting issues downstream. Due to increased demand and longer lead times, the City is preordering and warehousing supercovers to stay ahead.

3.N Discussion and Update on South Shore Pump Station (Porretto/Rawlins/Finklea - 15 min)

Director Robert Winiecke reported that the South Shore Pump Station project is currently acquiring easements, with one fully executed and others nearing completion. Utility relocations are underway, but major construction hasn't started yet. A public meeting is planned for late July, with construction expected to last 24–30 months. About 80% of work should be done within the first 18 months, though extensions may be needed. No cost overruns have been reported, and communication with the Council will increase to monthly updates. The large storm drain requires full street closures, and careful coordination of water and sewer line relocations is necessary.

3.O Discussion of Alternate Dates for City Council Meetings in September 2025 (C Brown - 15 min)

The City Council discussed changing September 2025 meeting dates because a member will be out of town for the September 18 tax rate vote, which needs a supermajority vote. They are considering moving the budget vote to August 28 and keeping the tax rate vote on September 18, with a backup meeting on September 25 if needed. Changing dates requires council approval in July.

3.P Discussion of limited standards regarding passenger auto sales (LDRs Section 2.351) for dealer stock (Robb/Rawlins - 10 min)

Executive Director Tim Tietjens reported that the current 10x24 ft space requirement for dealer stock is inconsistent and unnecessary compared to standard parking rules. City

Staff will initiate an item to amend this section of the LDRs by taking it to Planning Commission for approval, and then to City Council.

3.Q Discussion of "Only Footprints" Littering Initiative (Porretto/Rawlins - 15 min)

Council Member Porretto reported that his "Only Footprints" initiative aims to keep Galveston beaches clean by encouraging visitors to only leave footprints behind.

Discussion topics.

- **The initiative aims to reduce litter on Galveston beaches by encouraging visitors to leave only their footprints behind.**
- **Enforcement will be key, involving multiple agencies such as City Marshals, Galveston Police Department, and the Sheriff's Department working together in an adaptive way, especially during busy times like weekends and holidays.**
- **Identification and evidence collection (like identifying litter items and the person littering) are necessary for enforcement and issuing fines.**
- **The City Marshal's office is committed to increasing their presence on the beach to improve enforcement and overall quality of life.**
- **The initiative is viewed positively by local businesses and residents, with a focus on community pride and respect for shared spaces.**
- **Marketing and public awareness are critical; suggestions include a dedicated budget (e.g., \$100,000 over two years) and partnerships with Visit Galveston and other community groups.**
- **Past successful campaigns like "Don't Mess With Texas" were mentioned as inspiration, including potential community-driven reporting (e.g., social media platforms to report littering).**
- **Keeping the beach clean and limiting trash receptacles on the beach itself was highlighted as effective.**
- **The goal is to build a lasting culture of cleanliness and respect for the beaches through enforcement, education, and community involvement.**

Overall, it's a multifaceted approach combining enforcement, community cooperation, and marketing to maintain clean beaches and promote Galveston pride.

3.R Discussion of Recruitment Initiatives for Law Enforcement (Porretto/Rawlins - 15 min)

The City Council discussed challenges in recruiting for law enforcement, especially the Marshal's Office, which mainly hires retired officers. City Manager Brian Maxwell suggested a new idea to use the Marshal's Office as a training entry point for the Police Department to build a ready pool of officers. With nationwide staffing shortages, they want to improve recruitment through better marketing, possibly hiring a dedicated recruiter despite budget issues. Priorities include filling tough shifts like nights and weekends and thinking creatively to attract candidates, aiming for full staffing and a stronger recruitment pipeline.

3.S Discussion on the Extension of Lasker Pool Services (Porretto/Rawlins - 15 min)

Council Member Porretto brought forward extending Lasker Pool's season, possibly year-round, but the City faces financial challenges like heating and staffing costs. Executive Director Barbara Sanderson reported that only two full-time employees currently manage the pool, and volunteers aren't feasible due to insurance. The estimated budget is about \$500,000, and could involve community fundraising through Better Parks to help cover expenses. Maintenance needs and heating costs are key concerns. Staff will bring back some detailed cost estimates for the City Council to consider.

3.T Discussion of FY26 Budget Regarding Savings & Efficiency Solutions (Porretto/Rawlins - 30 mins)

1. Expand City Finance Committee meetings to 2 a month during budget season
2. Council Resolution for 5% efficiencies for each Department and Enterprise Fund
3. Identify duplicate services between City, Park Board, and Wharves Board
4. \$250,000 earmarked for an efficiency consultant for FY26
5. Citizen & Employee recommendation program for efficiencies

The FY26 budget discussion focused on maximizing taxpayer value through several efficiency measures: increasing City Finance Committee meetings to twice monthly during budget season, setting a 5% efficiency target for each department and enterprise fund, identifying duplicate services between the City Park Board and Wharves Board, allocating \$250,000 for an efficiency consultant, and creating a citizen and employee recommendation program. Emphasis was placed on early, transparent budget reviews, maintaining service levels while cutting costs, and encouraging staff and public input. The challenge remains balancing efficiency goals with critical services like public safety, which comprises over 60% of the budget, making cuts difficult but necessary to address projected fiscal gaps.

4 ADJOURNMENT

The workshop was adjourned at 4:37 p.m.



Janelle Williams, City Secretary

Date Approved: July 24, 2025

