

**MINUTES OF THE CITY COUNCIL
OF THE CITY OF GALVESTON
WORKSHOP - OCTOBER 23, 2025**

10/23/2025 - City Council Minutes

1 DECLARATION OF A QUORUM AND CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Mayor Brown declared a quorum and called the meeting 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 Presentation of a Community Plan to Develop a Juneteenth Museum (D Jones/S Lewis/C Brown - 20 min)

The Galveston Historical Foundation presented a community-driven plan to develop a Juneteenth Museum in Galveston, emphasizing authenticity and recognition of the city as the birthplace of Juneteenth. Executive Director Duane Jones explained that the project is in its early planning phase, focusing on a six-month process to issue proposals for a master plan, which will guide location and design decisions over the next year with strong community involvement. The initiative is privately funded with support from several local foundations and state leaders, including Representative Terri Leo-Wilson, who helped secure funding and officially designated Galveston as the State Capital of Juneteenth. The City Council expressed strong support and appreciation for the effort.

3.B 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 clarified by City Staff: 8E, 10A, 11H, 11Q, 11R, 11S, 11T, 11U, 11V, 11Z, 11DD, 11EE, 11HH, 11JJ, 11MM, 11NN, 11QQ, and 11UU.

City Council took a short break from 11:33 a.m. to 11:45 a.m.

3.C Legislative Update (S. Bakko - 20 min)

Sally Bakko, Director of Policy and Governmental Relations, delivered a legislative update summarizing the 89th Texas Legislature, highlighting key issues affecting Galveston. She tracked 363 bills, with 83 of particular relevance to the city. Major topics included disaster recovery funding changes replacing the Natural Disaster Exception with a limited Disaster Relief Rate, new fiscal and debt reporting mandates, threats of expenditure caps, and property tax restrictions. Positive developments included progress on the Gulf Coast Protection Account for coastal projects and water infrastructure funding through the new

Texas Water Fund. Other areas of focus were housing affordability, short-term rental regulation, public safety mandates from the Uvalde Strong Act, and new requirements for cybersecurity training, code enforcement licensing, and open records compliance. Bakko emphasized ongoing concerns about unfunded mandates and fiscal constraints while noting Galveston's unique challenges as a small city supporting millions of tourists annually.

3.D Update and discuss South Shore Pump Station (Porretto/Rawlins - 15 min)

During discussion of the South Shore Pump Station project, Council Member Porretto expressed concern about the limited public engagement and communication at the recent open house, as well as questions regarding project timelines, easements, and funding. City staff explained that the meeting format followed consultant recommendations, affirmed that CDBG grant funding remains secure with extensions available, and confirmed the project can move forward with existing easements. Council Members emphasized the importance of transparency, accessible public meetings, and consistent updates. Staff agreed to provide monthly written and online progress reports, include the project as a standing agenda item, and share community questions and responses to strengthen public communication and confidence.

3.E Discussion of the Findings of the Park Board Hotel Occupancy Tax Audit (G Bulgherini - 20 min)

City Auditor Glenn Bulgherini discussed with City Council the Park Board's 2022–2024 Hotel Occupancy Tax audit, which found two issues related to lobbying expenditures and controls over employee entertainment costs. Both issues have been corrected, with stricter policies and clearer oversight now in place. Council will consider approval of the audit at today's regular meeting and the City Auditor's three recommendations, emphasizing that any future lobbying must receive prior Council approval and cannot use state HOT funds.

3.F Discussion of the Ad Hoc Short Term Rental Committee and Staff recommendations for updates to STR ordinance and STR policies (B. Brown/C. Brown - 30 min)

City Council received a presentation from the Short-Term Rental Ad Hoc Committee, represented by Claire Reiswerg (Chair) and David Bloom (Vice Chair), and Council Member Bob Brown, the Council ex officio member of the committee. The discussion focused on proposed updates to the City's STR ordinance and policies to improve enforcement, data accuracy, and community engagement following the transfer of STR oversight from the Park Board to the City.

Key Discussion Points:

Data & Registration:

Chair Claire Reiswerg emphasized the need for accurate STR registration and regular updates to local contact information. The committee recommended publishing STR data for public transparency and utilizing the City's vendor platform (Deckard/RentalScape) for consistent reporting.

Enforcement:

The committee acknowledged challenges with unregistered STRs operating on platforms such as Airbnb and VRBO. They recommended stronger coordination with hosting platforms and defined City roles for enforcement. The committee recommended consolidating STR enforcement functions within the City for accountability.

Hotline Operations:

The committee supported a City-managed STR hotline to handle nuisance complaints, ensure rapid response, and log verified violations. Assistant City Attorney Xochitl Vandiver-Gaskin confirmed the hotline's workflow will include one-hour response and two-hour resolution standards, with escalation to City departments or police as necessary.

STR Licensing Board (STRL):

Assistant City Attorney Vandiver-Gaskin outlined the creation of a new Short-Term Rental Licensing Board (STRL), composed of three City staff members designated by the City Manager. The STRL will review repeat violations (three documented offenses) and recommend license revocation to City Council. Vandiver-Gaskin emphasized that STRL will ensure due process, supported by verified evidence such as code enforcement or police reports, to protect both residents and responsible STR operators.

Education & Communication:

The committee proposed continued community outreach through quarterly newsletters, a dedicated STR webpage, and annual public forums to promote compliance and transparency among STR owners and residents.

Parking Regulation:

Special Assistant Development Services Director Teresa Evans presented staff's proposed parking requirements: one parking space per bedroom and up to two on-street spaces allowed. STRs with more than two bedrooms must provide an overflow parking plan. The proposal applies only to single-family STRs and not to multi-family or condominium units. City Council discussed enforcement challenges and agreed that parking issues extend beyond STRs and warrant broader policy review.

Next Steps:

- * City staff will draft a revised STR ordinance incorporating committee and Council feedback.
- * The draft will be presented for Council review in November 2025.
- * The committee recommended reassessing enforcement, data accuracy, and parking impacts after one year of implementation in 2026.

City Council thanked the committee for its extensive volunteer effort and community outreach. The Council supported continued development of a revised STR ordinance focused on accountability, fairness, data-driven enforcement, and transparent communication with residents and STR operators.

3.G Discussion of the creation of a single board to make recommendations to

council on the use of Hotel Occupancy Taxes and Structure as it relates to the current functions, maintenance, and administration of the Arts and Historic Preservation Board and the Cultural Arts Commission (A Lynch, Mehran Jadidi - 20 min)

Assistant City Attorney Mehran Jadidi and Arts Coordinator Antoinette Lynch discussed with City Council a proposal to consolidate the Arts and Historic Preservation Board and the Cultural Arts Commission into a single entity—the Arts Development Commission—to streamline the management of Hotel Occupancy Tax (HOT) funds for arts, culture, and historic preservation. The change aims to improve efficiency, transparency, and coordination, as the current dual-board structure creates confusion, inconsistent oversight, and limited access to reserve funds. The new seven-member board would oversee all related HOT-funded programs under unified rules, while City Council retains spending authority. The Council expressed support for consolidation for clearer governance and accountability.

3.H Discussion of the Status of the Comprehensive Plan (B Brown/C Brown - 15 min)

Senior Project Manager Pete Milburn provided an update on the Comprehensive Plan, noting ongoing delays largely due to funding issues with the Texas General Land Office (GLO). The city originally applied for a \$300,000 grant, but GLO later reduced the amount to \$250,000 after revising its funding criteria based on population size. Staff plans to meet with GLO officials next week to argue that the city's application should be grandfathered under the original terms and to seek full funding of the grant. The FY2025 budget already includes \$250,000 for the plan, allowing progress to continue once final approval is received. Staff committed to promptly updating the council and the public following the meeting.

3.I Discussion of the potential consolidation of dispatch operations (B. Maxwell - 10 min)

City Manager Brian Maxwell reported that City and County officials have discussed the potential consolidation of their emergency dispatch operations, prompted by both agencies adopting a shared Records Management System and facing staffing shortages and dispatcher burnout. While the proposal could improve efficiency, reduce duplication, and enhance work-life balance for dispatchers, council members emphasized the need for detailed analysis, clear communication, and assurance that service quality and response times will not decline. Staff were directed to develop a plan outlining goals, costs, impacts, and performance metrics, with updates to be provided before any formal decision or agreement with the County.

3.J Presentation from Sustainable Equipment Technologies on potential fleet services for efficiency and sustainability measures (Porretto/Rawlins - 15 min)

Item 3J was withdrawn.

4 EXECUTIVE SESSION

City Council convened into Executive Session at 3:56 p.m. and reconvened into Open Session at 4:25 p.m. No action was taken during Executive Session.

4.A Pursuant to Texas Gov't Code §551.087 and §551.071, the Council will conduct an executive session to:

- (1) to discuss or deliberate regarding commercial or financial information that the governmental body has received from a business prospect that the governmental body seeks to have locate, stay, or expand in or near the territory of the governmental body and with which the governmental body is conducting economic development negotiations; or
- (2) to deliberate the offer of a financial or other incentive to a business prospect described by Subdivision (1).

Related to the Project Bounty development in the City of Galveston

Related to the Project Juno development in the City of Galveston

4.B Pursuant To Texas Gov't Code 551.071- Consultation With Attorney, An Executive Session Will Be Conducted To Discuss And Receive Legal Advice Concerning Pending Litigation And/Or A Settlement Offer, Or On A Matter In Which The Duty Of The Attorney To The Governmental Body Under The Texas Disciplinary Rules Of Professional Conduct Of The State Bar Of Texas Clearly Conflicts With This Chapter, Related To The Following:

- 1. Discussion of the status of the new Pelican island Bridge

5 ADJOURNMENT

The workshop was adjourned at 4:25 p.m.



Janelle Williams, City Secretary

Date Approved: November 13, 2025