

**MINUTES OF THE CITY COUNCIL
OF THE CITY OF GALVESTON
WORKSHOP - SEPTEMBER 18, 2025**

9/18/2025 - City Council Minutes

1 DECLARATION OF A QUORUM AND CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Mayor Brown declared a quorum and called the workshop to order at 9:00 a.m.

2 ROLL CALL

Present: Mayor Craig Brown, Council Member Sharon Lewis, Council Member David Finklea, Council Member Bob Brown, Council Member Alex Porretto, and Council Member Beau Rawlins. Mayor Pro Tem Marie Robb was present for the Executive Session portion of the workshop.

3 DISCUSSION ITEMS

**3.A Presentation and Discussion as it relates to the Blue Zone Community Project
(C Kovacevich et al/C Brown-20 min)**

Craig Kovacevich (UTMB) and representatives from Blue Zones presented an overview of the Blue Zones Community Project, which aims to promote healthier living and aging in Galveston. The team has engaged with local stakeholders and conducted tours of the island to assess community needs. Dan Buettner Jr. explained that the initiative focuses on creating environments where healthy choices are easier, using a community-led approach across people, places, and policy. The team invited continued input as the project moves forward, with a summary of findings to be presented.

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 11E, 11F, 11J, 11K, 11L, 11M, 11O, 11S, 11V, and 11W were clarified by Staff.

3.C Update on the Status of the Comprehensive Plan (B Brown/C Brown - 10 min)

Senior Project Manager Pete Milburn reported delays in the Comprehensive Plan due to funding issues with the General Land Office (GLO). Although a consultant has been selected and the City is considered an ideal candidate, no official award has been made, and there is no timeline from the GLO for next steps. Staff reported on technical problems and ongoing changes to application requirements—now in its seventh version. City staff are frustrated by repeated resubmissions and lack of clear guidance, requesting that submissions be honored by the GLO based on the rules in place at the time of submission.

The City is committed to pursuing the grant for taxpayers' benefit but recognizes they may eventually need to abandon the effort. Council discussed the possibility of escalating the issue to higher authorities like Commissioner Buckingham. An update will be provided at the next council meeting.

- 3.D Discussion of a Resolution Affirming the Importance of Clean Water and Beaches to the City , and calling upon the State of Texas to Enact Policy for the Protection of the City from Preproduction Plastic Pellets (B Brown/C Brown -15 min)

Council Member Brown brought this item forward to introduce a resolution affirming the importance of clean water and beaches to the City of Galveston and calling upon the State of Texas to enact policies to protect the region from pollution caused by preproduction plastic pellets, known as nurdles. Joanie Steinhaus from Turtle Island Restoration Network provided insight into the environmental and health impacts of nurdle pollution. It was noted that Texas hosts over 30 plastic production facilities, with significant nurdle discharge affecting coastal ecosystems, wildlife, seafood safety, and the state's \$31 billion fishing economy. Although previous legislative efforts have failed, stakeholders are now urging the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) to include nurdles in its upcoming surface water quality standards update. The Council will revisit the item as an action item at the next meeting.

- 3.E Discussion of Downtown First Street Program (B Brown/C Brown - 15 min)

The Council discussed the Downtown First Street Program, a Texas Historical Commission initiative designed to assist historic downtowns. Unlike smaller towns, Galveston's downtown is revitalized but facing challenges such as traffic congestion, parking shortages, and competing interests among residents, merchants, workers, and tourists. The program offers technical assistance through quarterly educational sessions with no immediate financial obligation, allowing the city to evaluate its fit before potentially committing to the Main Street Program, which requires a financial commitment and a full-time coordinator. The application deadline is October 31, with the program beginning in January. The initiative aims to foster collaboration among local organizations, including the Galveston Economic Development Partnership and the Galveston Historical Foundation, and to address downtown challenges comprehensively.

- 3.F Update and Discussion of the Status of Decorative Lights for the 33rd Street Community (S Lewis/C Brown - 15min)

Withdrawn.

- 3.G Discussion and clarification of City Charter provisions related to the appointment and compensation of City Council appointees, including the City Manager, City Attorney, City Auditor, and City Secretary, as well as other Charter-authorized positions such as the Assistant City Attorney, Assistant City Auditor, and Assistant City Secretary (Porretto/Rawlins - 20 min)

Interim City Attorney Donna Fairweather discussed with City Council clarifications regarding the City Charter provisions about the appointment and compensation of

Council appointees, specifically positions like City Manager, City Attorney, City Auditor, City Secretary, and their assistants. It was clarified that assistant positions (Assistant City Attorney, Assistant City Auditor, Assistant City Secretary) are also Council appointees but typically come through recommendations from the respective department heads.

Key points included:

*** The Council must appoint these assistants, but the hiring and salary recommendations usually come from the supervising appointed official (e.g., City Attorney for Assistant City Attorneys).**

*** Compensation for these assistant roles historically has followed the City's general compensation plan, which includes market-based salary grades and adjustments.**

*** The Council has the authority to set compensation but generally relies on recommendations from supervisors, respecting the existing pay plan and evaluation processes.**

*** There was consensus that while the Council must approve appointments and salaries, micromanaging individual compensation is discouraged to maintain fairness and efficiency.**

*** The HR Director confirmed that the current process involves supervisor recommendations during budget preparation, aligned with market studies done roughly every five years to keep salaries competitive.**

*** Overall, the approach respects the spirit of the Charter, with Council involvement balanced with departmental expertise and existing compensation systems.**

4 EXECUTIVE SESSION

The City Council convened into Executive Session at 11:00 a.m. and reconvened into Open Session at 1:37 p.m. No action was taken during Executive Session.

4.A Pursuant to Tex. Gov't Code §551.087 and §551.071

- 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.

- ##### **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:**

Opioid settlement participation with the Texas Attorney General's Office.

4.C Pursuant to Texas Government Code Section 551.074, "Personnel Matters" to deliberate the appointment, evaluation, reassignment, or duties of a Public Officer or Employee:

1. Assistant City Secretary Manuela "Nellie" De La Fuente

4.D Pursuant to Texas Gov't Code 551.071 - Consultation with Attorney, 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. 21-CV-00359 Sonya Porretto v. City of Galveston Et Al, in the United States District Court for the Southern District of Texas 21-CV-00359.

Council Member Porretto disclosed a conflict of interest regarding Executive Session Item 4D and therefore did not attend or take part in the Executive Session item.

5 ADJOURNMENT

The workshop was adjourned at 1:37 p.m.



Janelle Williams, City Secretary
Date Approved: October 23, 2025