

**MINUTES OF THE CITY COUNCIL
OF THE CITY OF GALVESTON
WORKSHOP - JANUARY 22, 2026**

1/22/2026 - 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, 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, 8B, 8D, 11A, 11E, 11F, 11F, 11G, 11I, 11L, 11V, 11Y, 11Z, 11BB, 11CC, and 12B were clarified by Staff.

3.B Discussion of a Park Board Budget Amendment as it relates to the participation of the Elissa in Sail 250 in New York Harbor (C. Ludanyi/M. Miles - 20 min)

Council received a presentation from Park Board Interim CEO Marty Miles and representatives from the Galveston Historical Foundation regarding a proposed Park Board budget amendment authorizing a revenue guarantee of up to \$750,000 to support the Tall Ship Elissa's participation in the Sail 250 celebration in New York Harbor. Staff clarified the amount is not a direct expenditure but a guarantee to cover costs as needed, with anticipated revenues expected to offset expenses.

Presenters outlined projected revenue sources, including appearance fees, sponsorships, ticketed events, and marketing opportunities, with estimated revenues between \$1 million and \$2 million. The voyage would include multiple port stops, with Elissa participating in the July 4 Sail 250 flotilla.

Council discussed operational logistics, staffing considerations, financial risk, and the importance of public transparency. Members expressed general support for the initiative, noting its historic significance and potential tourism and economic benefits.

City Council took a 10 minute break at 10:55 a.m.

3.C Discussion of a Cost of Living Increase for Civilian Employees and Related Budget Amendment (C. Ludanyi/C. Brown - 20 min)

Council discussed a proposed 2.5% COLA for civilian employees and a related budget amendment. Funding would come from the General Fund, supported by higher-than-expected sales tax revenue, anticipated increases in other revenues, and fund balance if needed. Council debated whether Council appointees should be included, noting no formal policy requiring inclusion and differing recollections from prior years. Members raised concerns about percentage-based raises favoring higher-paid employees and emphasized the need for a citywide market study to ensure competitive and equitable pay. The item was scheduled for a vote later that day.

3.D Discussion of Audit Findings as they relate to the Internal Service Funds (G. Bulgherini - 20 min)

Deferred.

3.E Discussion of Joint Wharves Board/City Council Real Estate Committee Recommendations Regarding the Joint Wharves Board/City Council Mobility/Transportation RFQ (Finklea/B. Brown - 20 min)

Council Members Brown and Finklea reported that, following direction from a prior joint meeting, a draft scope of work for a joint mobility/transportation study was developed with input from Port staff and consultants and provided to the City and Wharves Board purchasing departments to prepare a joint RFQ. The study is intended to address mobility impacts affecting both the Port and the City, including downtown, with parking included only at a limited, high-level review due to funding constraints, and incorporates two additional elements recommended by consultants. The RFQ has not yet been drafted or reviewed and will return to the Real Estate Committee, City Council, and the Wharves Board for input and approval, with emphasis that the study should lead to actionable improvements implemented prior to any future cruise terminal expansion.

3.F Discussion of the Status of Stewart Beach Development and Beach Patrol Headquarters (B. Brown/C. Brown - 15 min)

Staff members Amber Guerrero and Michele Hay provided an update on Stewart Beach development and the Beach Patrol Headquarters. The RFP and updated master plan will be ready for Council review by February 6 and issued February 17, with changes mainly to graphics. Council discussed whether to vote on the RFP before issuance and raised concerns about drainage issues, which should be addressed separately or clearly in the RFP. The 6,000 sq. ft. Beach Patrol Headquarters schematics are being prepared by BRW, with a draft schedule forthcoming, and updates will return to the February Council meeting.

3.G Discussion of Options for Downtown Resident and Employee Parking (Lewis/C. Brown - 20 min)

Items 3G, 3H, and 3I were read and combined into one discussion.

The Council discussed options for downtown resident and employee parking, focusing on making payment easier and reducing the risk of citations for short visits such as lunch or

shopping. Proposed changes include minimum 1–1.5 hour increments with optional 30-minute add-ons, with pay-by-phone handling transaction fees to minimize city administrative burdens. Revenue analysis showed pay-by-phone usage (~309,000 transactions/year) far exceeds citations (~11,000/year), and having users absorb transaction fees avoids revenue loss and frequent ordinance amendments. Enforcement concerns were raised regarding some violators, particularly handicapped drivers, not seeing tickets, and first notices sometimes arriving from collection agencies. Downtown uses license plate readers with paper tickets for certain violations, and ordinance updates are needed to provide alternative processes for handicapped exemptions. Next steps include Council review of updated rates, fee handling, resident/employee parking options, and staff-provided financial analysis, citation process options, and potential amnesty programs for past violations.

3.H Discussion of Downtown Parking Revenue (Robb/C. Brown - 15 min)

3.I Discussion of parking enforcement practices, including citation issuance, notice to violators, and the collection of parking fines, including but not limited to vehicles displaying valid handicapped placards or license plates exempt from parking fees (Robb/C. Brown -15 min)

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

Pete Milburn, Project Manager for Development Services, updated Council on the Comprehensive Plan. The project, initiated in March 2024, has now received GLO funding. Following Council approval and execution of the contract, the team will begin data collection, internal staff and stakeholder meetings, and later public engagement. The steering committee is expected to meet in late February or early March 2026. The Comprehensive Plan and associated zoning updates are planned to be completed within 30 months, with consultant support for deliverables and reporting.

3.K Discussion of topics and rescheduling of the Joint Meeting Dates for the Park Board, Wharves Board and Planning Commission (C. Brown - 10 min)

Discussion was held regarding rescheduling joint meetings for the Park Board, Wharves Board, and Planning Commission. Council discussed holding meetings “as needed” rather than on fixed dates, ensuring at least two per year, and discussed that the Planning Commission does not need formal inclusion in the joint meetings, with communication handled through the ex officio liaison.

3.L Update of the website for the African American Heritage District (Lewis/C. Brown/Dyme Agency - 15 min)

Deferred.

3.M Discussion of Regulations, Ordinances, Resolutions, and Council initiatives of derelict vessels and boating laws in the City of Galveston (Porretto/Rawlins- 15 min)

Council Member Porretto discussed with Council hazards and costs from derelict vessels in Galveston, noting impacts on public safety, property, and the environment. He suggested options including small boat registration fees, state funding, fines, and

partnering with nonprofits to aid removal. Coordination with the General Land Office and Texas Parks and Wildlife was emphasized. Porretto recommended adding the issue to the city's legislative agenda and considering a resolution to address abandoned and unsafe vessels.

Mayor Brown left the meeting at 3:12 p.m. and returned at 3:32 p.m.

- 3.N Discussion of installation times for water and sewer taps, including the potential use of a contractor for pending and future installations (Robb/C. Brown -15 min)

Mayor Pro Tem Robb discussed with Council water and sewer tap installation timelines. Staff noted the median completion is about 60 days and most jobs finish within 10 weeks. Contractors may install water taps, but sewer taps are usually handled by the City due to older infrastructure. Robb emphasized giving applicants honest timelines and confirmed building permits are required before installation. Staff noted that timelines are improving, and the item may return for future policy discussion.

- 3.O Discussion regarding the selection of City board and commission meetings for live-streaming (Robb/C Brown - 10 min)

The Council discussed expanding live-streaming of City board and commission meetings. Currently, City Council, Planning Commission, and IDC meetings are streamed. Interest was expressed in televising the Finance Committee, Zoning Board of Adjustments, and Arts Development Committee. The fiscal impact and number of meetings covered under the existing Swagit contract were noted as pending information. Council may consider additional live-streaming within the limits of the current contract, with further details to be provided at a later date.

- 3.P Discussion of the overall condition of streets across the Island, including multiple sink holes (Robb/C Brown -10 min)

Council and staff discussed deteriorating streets and multiple sinkholes across the Island, noting delays in repairs and funding limitations. Street maintenance is prioritized by traffic and condition, and HOT tax funds cannot be used. Efforts include updating assessments, maintaining repairs with limited crews, and exploring bonds, with an emphasis on public education and transparency.

- 3.Q Discuss the City of Galveston's ordinances applicable to electric scooters and the electric scooter ordinance recently approved by the City of Houston (Legal - 15 min)

Deferred.

- 3.R Discussion of ongoing drainage issues in District 6, including weekend work activities and the prioritization of neighborhoods receiving drainage maintenance (Robb/C. Brown - 10 min)

Mayor Pro Tem Robb discussed drainage issues in District 6, including weekend maintenance and project prioritization. Concerns were raised about work being done in areas without active problems while some neighborhoods remained unaddressed. Staff explained that maintenance is part of the DIP program to prevent future flooding and

improve the community rating system, and clarified project status and scheduling.

4 EXECUTIVE SESSION

4.A Pursuant to Texas Government Code Section 551.074 "Personnel Matters" to deliberate the appointment, employment, evaluation, reassignment, duties, or discipline of:

1. Interim City Attorney (Robb/Rawlins/Porretto)

4.B Section 551.071 - Consultation with Attorney 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. The South Shore Pump Station
2. No. 25-CV-0913; In the 405th Judicial District of Galveston County Texas; City of Galveston and Brian Maxwell v. Park Board of Trustees of the City of Galveston and Jason Hardcastle in his official capacity

The City Council convened into Executive Session at 12:57 p.m. and reconvened into Open Session at 2:40 p.m. No action was taken during Executive Session.

Council Member Lewis left the meeting at 1:55 p.m. and returned at 3:24 p.m.

5 ADJOURNMENT

The workshop was adjourned at 4:04 p.m.



Janelle Williams, City Secretary

Date Approved: February 26, 2026