State of Texas

County of Brazoria

City of Freeport
BE IT REMEMBERED, that the City Council of Freeport, Texas met on Tuesday, September 2, 2025 at 6:00 PM at the Freeport Council Chamber located at 430 North Brazosport Blvd. , Freeport Texas for the purpose of considering the following agenda items:

City Council:	Mayor Jerry Cain Councilman Jeff Pena Councilman Jarvis Davis Councilman George Matamoros Councilman Winston Rossow	
Staff:	Dan Pennington, Interim City Manager Chris Duncan, Interim City Attorney Clarisa Fernandez, City Secretary Ashlee Hurst, Finance Director Toby Cohen, IT Director Donna Fisher, Human Resource Director Jennifer Howell, Police Chief Rudy Ragle, Public Works Director Chris Motley, Fire Chief Maria Lopez, Main Street Coordinator Laura Cramer, GIS/Property Manager	
Visitors:	Melanie Oldham Linda Marshall Manning Rollerson	Kenneth Hayes Ralph Frazier Ron Bachman

Call to Order:

Call to Order - Jerry Cain, Mayor

Mayor Cain called the regular scheduled meeting of the Freeport City Council to order at 6:03P.M. on September 2, 2025, declaring a quorum was present.

Invocation - Councilman

Councilman Rossow led the Invocation.

Pledges - Pledge of Allegiance to the United States; Pledge of Allegiance to the State of Texas.

Councilman Rossow led the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States and the Pledge of Allegiance to the State of Texas.

Audience Participation – Anyone who has registered to speak prior to the meeting being called to order and desires to address the City Council will be heard at this time, or during the discussion of an item listed on the agenda. These forms are located by the City Secretary. After completing the form, give it to the City Secretary. She will give it to the Mayor. The Mayor will call on you when that item is presented, once a motion has been made by Council then public participation will not be allowed. You will have four (4) minutes to make your comments regardless of the number of agenda items to be addressed.

Ralph Frazier expressed appreciation for the opportunity to serve on the Beautification Parks and Recreation Board and stated it is an honor to contribute to the future of Freeport. He acknowledged that Councilman Pena will be addressing the process for board nominations and expressed full support for the discussion, stating he believes change is necessary. He said there are passionate individuals in the community who want to see Freeport thrive and emphasized the importance of ensuring they have the chance to bring their skills and dedication to the table. He stated that working together can create a process that better reflects the voices of residents and positions the City for growth and success. He noted that if Freeport wants growth, it must open its doors wider. He said that currently, talented and committed people who care deeply about Freeport's future are being overlooked. He stated that the City needs a process that brings in fresh ideas, new perspectives, and voices ready to work toward the success of Freeport. He concluded by thanking the Council for their time and their commitment to the community.

Kenneth Hayes resides at 414 Mystery Harbor. He brought to the Council's attention that 1495 is scheduled to be widened by TxDOT. He stated that a City water line ties into 1495 and will need to be relocated, estimating the cost to be between two and three million dollars. He noted that it is unclear whether this information has been communicated to the current Council, but said that Veolia and other Council members were previously aware. He emphasized that this is an issue the Council needs to discuss.

Manning Rollerson resides at 118 West 6th Street. He stated his objection to any water rate hikes, emphasizing that residents did not cause the City's budget shortfall and did not allow misappropriation of funds. He said prior Council members allowed misuse of City assets and funds, and that placing the burden on taxpayers is wrong. He noted that residents opposed water rate increases in 2022, yet the increases occurred, and the City still faces budget shortfalls. He questioned the handling of City finances over the past five years, asking when funds lost through non-disclosure agreements and severance packages would be recouped. He expressed frustration that citizens, including those on fixed incomes or receiving disability or veteran benefits, are expected to cover these costs. He compared the situation in Freeport to other cities south of Angleton, stating that previous administrations misappropriated funds and then turned to taxpayers to cover shortfalls. He noted that residents pay their own bills without assistance and questioned why they should bear the cost of the City's mismanagement. He also raised concerns about housing, addressing the issue to the Councilman for Ward A. He stated there is no acceptable deal for land paid for by previous generations, criticized the mismanagement of new communities, and noted that commercial zoning has failed to produce growth for 57 years. He emphasized that the City's industries have not provided the expected growth and called for change, reflecting on his 41 years raising children in Freeport.

Consent Agenda:

Action regarding Minutes, August 18, 2025-Clarisa Fernandez, City Secretary

A motion was made by Councilman Matamoros to approve the Minutes, August 18, 2025, as presented, seconded by Councilman Rossow with all present and voting "Aye" 5-0. The Council unanimously approved the motion.

Action approving the Employee Holiday Calendar for Fiscal Year 2025-2026-Donna Fisher, Human Resource Director

Councilman Pena requested moving this item out of the Consent Agenda.

Human Resource Director Donna Fisher stated that the number of holidays remains the same as in previous years. She explained that a few of the dates had to change because Thanksgiving does not fall on the same day every year. She noted that there were no additions or subtractions to the holiday calendar.

A motion was made by Councilman Matamoros to approve the Employee Holiday Calendar as presented, seconded by Councilman Davis with discussion that followed.

Councilman Pena said he was curious about how the City's holiday calendar compares to the county calendar. Human Resource Director Donna Fisher noted that it had been a few years since the last review and that the last time a holiday was added, she checked the comparison. She stated that currently the county has 13 holidays and the City has 14 and a half, noting that it is very close. Councilman Pena expressed interest in reviewing the calendar for a couple of reasons, including ensuring City facilities such as the recreation center and museum are accessible on holidays that fall on Mondays. He suggested that departments could remain open, so residents could use these facilities while on holiday. Ms. Fisher noted that department directors could address the use of comp time for these situations. She mentioned that the golf course cannot be completely closed on Mondays, except for Christmas, and explained how employees make up the time when working on holidays. Councilman Pena emphasized that the City provides services such as the museum and recreation center for the community, and residents could benefit from access on days off. He requested that this consideration be included as the budget for the next fiscal year is finalized.

Mayor Cain called the motion to a vote with all present and voting "Aye" 5-0. The Council unanimously approved the motion.

Proclamations - Presentations and Updates

Proclamation for National Hispanic Heritage Month-Dan Pennington, Interim City Manager

Interim City Manager Dan Pennington read the Proclamation proclaiming September 15-October 15 as Hispanic Heritage Month.

Upcoming Events -KidFest,Downtown Freeport, September 6th, 3:00P.M.-7:00P.M.
Coffee with a Cop, Starbucks and McDonalds, October 1st, 8:00A.M.-10:00A.M.
National Night Out with Freeport Police, Fire and EMS, Freeport Municipal Park, October 7th, 6:00P.M.-8:00P.M.
Fright Night 2025, Freeport Municipal Park, October 23rd, 6:00P.M.-9:00P.M.

Interim City Manager Dan Pennington gave updates on upcoming events.

Public Hearings

Public Hearing on the FY2025-2026 Annual Budget.

Mayor Cain opened the Public Hearing at 6:22P.M.

Manning Rollerson stated that he does not believe it is fair for residents to bear the burden of the City's budget shortfalls. He said that while the City must operate off the tax dollars of its citizens, there are serious issues with past administrations. He expressed objection to raising the water rate, noting increases of $4 or $7 would disproportionately affect residents of Freeport, many of whom are below the federal poverty level. He emphasized that his primary concern with the budget is that the financial burden repeatedly falls on the residents.

Melanie Oldham resides at 531 West Brazos. She expressed appreciation to the City Council, specifically Mr. Pennington and Ms. Ashlee, for taking more time this year to give the public additional opportunities to speak. She noted that she spoke informally with several Council members to share her perspective after discussing the budget with other residents. She acknowledged the difficult decisions the Council must make and expressed gratitude to Ms. Ashlee for being willing to speak with residents and explain matters, as well as to Mr. Pennington for his leadership.

Ralph Frazier stated his opposition to raising the water rate in Freeport, noting that families and seniors are already stretched thin with the high cost of living. He emphasized that water is an essential necessity, not a luxury, and that raising the rate would place an unfair burden on residents, particularly those living on fixed incomes. He urged the Council to find an alternative solution in the budget rather than passing the cost to citizens. He concluded by stating that Freeport must be a City that protects its residents, not one that makes it harder for them to live in the community.

Councilman Pena inquired about the water rate increase, asking if the Council's prior vote at the last meeting finalized the matter or if it was still open for consideration. Finance Director Ashlee Hurst confirmed that the vote had passed, and the new rate would go into effect October 1, reflected on water bills. Councilman Pena then asked whether the Council could hold another public hearing or workshop before the scheduled budget adoption on September 15, noting that the timing immediately after the holiday made preparation difficult. He suggested an additional meeting would allow for more discussion on budget items. Interim City Manager Dan Pennington responded that state law and the City Charter require 15 days' notice before final adoption of the tax rate. Ms. Hurst said since the tax rate had already been proposed at the previous meeting, the vote had to be held on September 15 and holding another hearing would push the date beyond the charter deadline. Mr. Pennington noted that the City has already held multiple public hearings, more than most agencies typically conduct. Councilman Pena then asked how final budget changes could be made, seeking clarification on whether only minor adjustments would be allowed at the September 15 meeting. He expressed concern about larger items, particularly the proposed $1.7 million fire engine purchase, and urged the Council to consider delaying it until other funding options such as industrial partnerships or sponsorships could be explored. Councilman Pena asked whether there was a threshold or limit on what could be changed in the budget between the current meeting and final adoption. Mr. Pennington said there was no limit, though the final version would likely be close to what had already been presented, with some adjustments possible if other funding sources were identified. He explained that a budget with cuts already included would be presented to Council, and any further changes could be made the night of the final vote. Councilman Pena then asked about additional revenue options, specifically whether proposals such as raising golf rates or instituting a beach entrance fee would be provided for Council to fairly assess their budget impact. Mr. Pennington said he was not sure what the beach plan is but that golf rates would be presented at the next meeting, and that the budget discussion would be the final item on the agenda. Councilman Pena expressed concern about the potential length of the meeting and hoped the agenda would not be too heavy.

Councilman Rossow clarified that water rates had to be raised because of increased costs from BWA and Veolia. He thanked Finance Director Ashlee Hursts for preparing four options, with the Council selecting the lowest rate increase for residents. Councilman Rossow emphasized that they, too, pay water bills and that raising rates was necessary to keep the City financially stable. Ms. Hurst also reiterated to the public that phone lines and office doors remain open, and is willing to discuss concerns with any resident. She stated that she has spoken several times with Ms. Oldham and Ms. Dancy, and emphasized that if any citizen feels she is being unfair or does not understand what is being discussed, she is willing to sit down and explain.

Manning Rollerson said there is a solution to the problem, and it is to put the burden on the industries, noting that the Texas Supreme Court has ruled that industries receive 89% of the water during a drought. He argued that if industries are guaranteed priority access to water, then they should pay for it rather than taxpayers. He stressed that senior citizens depend on every dollar they receive and should not bear the additional burden. He stated that the industry has benefited for decades and that it is time for them to pay their fair share instead of residents. Councilman Pena asked if it was true that industry is mandated to receive 89% of the water during an emergency. Interim City Manager Dan Pennington stated he had never heard that. Mayor Cain said he was unsure which law was being referenced. Mr. Rollerson responded that while he could not cite the specific law, the United States Supreme Court had also ruled that Dow Chemical must have all the water during a drought. He said Corpus Christi is experiencing the same problem, as industries are guaranteed by both the State of Texas and the U.S. Supreme Court to have as much water as they want. He explained that this is why the Brazosport Water Authority has taken the position it has, since industries are guaranteed this water. Mr. Rollerson was asked by a Councilman Pena why he was not present at the last meeting and was informed his attendance would be required moving forward. Mr. Rollerson agreed and stated he would email the law he had referenced to the full Council so that everyone would be informed.

Councilman Matamoros spoke regarding the City's water and sewer service provider, Veolia. He referenced a special meeting where representatives from the company attended and noted that by going back with them, the City was starting in a deficit of $964,000. He confirmed with Ms. Hurst that those were preliminary numbers. He stated that the majority of Council voted for that contract, but he and the Mayor were against it because of the large deficit. He explained there had been options to bring the service in-house, which would have reduced costs and possibly avoided raising rates as much, perhaps raising rates only for others within the billing system and not on residents. He said that was a huge reason why rates had to be raised, but emphasized there was still time since the City had not yet signed a contract with Veolia. He suggested that cutting costs in half or more by bringing it in-house was still possible, and encouraged residents to speak to their Council person if they had concerns. He shared that when discussing rate increases, he asked his wife about their monthly water usage since their bill is on autopay. He discovered they were only one thousand gallons away from being considered a super user and said, "Holy cow, I'm going to be hit with that 15%." He expressed his frustration, saying he did not want to pay more if he did not have to. Councilman Matamoros then turned to the supplemental budget requests, specifically regarding the Police and Code Departments. He pointed out a one-time amount of $475,000 for five vehicle replacements, listed as three patrol, one admin, one CID, and one animal control. He asked whether it was five vehicles or six. Interim City Manager Dan Pennington replied five, but clarified that tentatively three were approved. Police Chief Jennifer Howell explained that originally six were requested, but on the spreadsheet it appeared as five, and later was reduced to three per. Councilman Matamoros asked if the $350,000 proposed was for three or five vehicles. Chief Howell stated it was estimated for three, since no formal quotes had been obtained yet. Councilman Matamoros said he had noticed a 3/4-ton pickup truck sitting unused in the back lot and asked about its purpose. Chief Howell explained it had been Captain Gillchriest's truck, later considered for transfer to Public Works. Chief Howell added that it was mainly used for pulling trailers, had low mileage, and was not typically utilized as it should be, describing it more like a work truck. Councilman Matamoros suggested the truck could possibly be used for animal control instead of purchasing another vehicle. He stressed the importance of finding savings since the City faced upcoming large costs for ambulances and fire trucks. He noted that between the one-time amount and the proposed vehicle purchases, $125,000 was a large expense, and he wanted to look at ways to redirect $200,000 to $250,000 toward funding a new ambulance or fire truck. Councilman Matamoros asked if three vehicles could be utilized and allocated among patrol, admin, or other departments as a compromise. Chief Howell said yes.

Gina Adams said she had a meeting with TECQ regarding TERP grants, explaining that the grants provide funding for vehicle replacements. She said that in October, a light-duty grant would be available, first-come, first-served, and that they would partner with TECQ in 2026 for other grants. She emphasized that such grants could save the City money and offered to send the information and links to all the Council members.

Councilman Davis stated that the City needs a grant writer to help locate and secure available grants. He explained that he voted not to support the City's plan to take over the water department because there was no plan presented to Council until the last two or three months, and he had no confidence in it. He said if other Council members or the Mayor were aware of a plan, it should have been shared so that everyone could be on the same page. He emphasized that the City should not jump into a multi-million-dollar contract as important as the water system without a solid plan. Councilman Davis pointed out that the plan had holes, and there was no confidence level to move forward. He noted that beginning in September, the City would have had to purchase equipment, tools, and large trucks, all of which cost money, which would have impacted the budget. While he stated that staff could have made it work, he believed the plan was presented too late and was not well-prepared. He compared the situation to preparing for the trash contract, saying the City should be making a plan now so that it is ready when the contract comes up again. He stressed that was why he did not vote for the water department plan, as it was not thought out and would put the citizens at risk. He referenced the water crisis in Flint, Michigan, asking if that was what people wanted to happen in Freeport. Councilman Davis said that Council and staff are now communicating and being transparent by working together on the budget. He noted that in the past, the Council was not informed about things such as the water plant, which he described as unheard of. For those reasons, he reiterated that he did not support the plan to take over the water department.

Councilman Pena began by acknowledging that the City is still in the early stages of the budget cycle. He recognized the efforts of Mr. Pennington, Ms. Ashlee, Mr. Duncan, and all department heads in preparing budget numbers and engaging with residents to gather feedback, as well as reviewing departmental wish lists. He emphasized that the Council has not yet fully examined the budget and described the current methodology for adopting budgets as broken and in need of reform. Councilman Pena suggested a new approach in which each department's top priorities, such as the Parks Department's top five items, would be clearly listed. Councilmembers could then vote "yes" or "no" on each line item, or select among options for specific purchases, such as vehicles for police or fire departments. He compared the process to selecting items from a menu and argued that it would provide clarity, prevent guesswork, and help avoid unnecessary expenditures. He raised specific concerns about the Fire Department, noting that the City has two stations and potentially redundant vehicles. Councilman Pena questioned the sustainability of maintaining a full-time fire and EMS staff when no other City in the county does, and stated that residents he has spoken with do not support the inflated costs. He encouraged exploring hybrid staffing models, consolidating stations, and evaluating other cost-saving measures. Councilman Pena expressed frustration that staff and Councilmembers remain unclear on priorities. He observed that some decisions have been made based on instinct or historical data, rather than forward-looking planning, and stressed the need for a structured worksheet to document Council input. He proposed using a digital spreadsheet with "yes" or "no" columns for each item, including running totals to show budget impacts, which would allow staff to compile Council preferences without violating open-meetings law. He also highlighted other areas where clarity is needed, including evaluating revenue opportunities such as the golf course and beach operations, and incorporating resident feedback into budgeting decisions. Councilman Pena emphasized that the goal is to maximize the reinvestment of City dollars, make both easy and difficult cuts where necessary, and ensure that all decisions are transparent and clearly communicated to staff and the public. Councilman Pena discussed the golf course and expressed concern about the pricing and the way programming is handled for weekend golfers and members, stating it is not right. He asked whether Golf Course Director Brian Dybala was present to provide details on the proposal and the numbers. He explained that the Council needs detailed instructions to make informed decisions, otherwise they are essentially voting blind, similar to past administrations where City Hall presented budgets with discrepancies, losses, and misleading information. He described his frustration with previous situations, including a moment when he considered resigning to enforce budget cuts. He emphasized that even the CEO and CFO admit they are currently flying blind regarding the budget. Councilman Pena requested that staff prepare a worksheet to provide clarity before the next meeting so that the Council can review the compiled numbers, keep the worksheets for public record, and ensure decisions are made by consensus. Finance Director Ashlee Hurst proposed a digital option for submitting feedback.

Interim City Attorney Chris Duncan discussed the process of reviewing department requests using an à la carte menu that was sent out. He explained that each department presented their requests, and Council members were asked to select their preferred options without discussing them with each other. He emphasized that Council members could not compare notes, call other members, or engage in horse-trading, as doing so would constitute deliberation. He noted that deliberation must occur publicly during a posted meeting and stated that following these rules does not constitute a legal violation, as long as input is one-way and members do not communicate with each other. He recommended that staff, including Ms. Ashlee and Mr. Pennington, established clear parameters for the process, including the number of selections allowed and how options would be organized. He noted that previous documents had requested prioritization and that a spreadsheet could be used to avoid mistakes or miscommunications when tallying responses. He proposed that council members submit their selections, and at the next council meeting, the results could be reviewed and tallied without requiring debate. He explained that the spreadsheet could include highlighted items and additional columns as needed, allowing the Council to make decisions transparently and efficiently. He emphasized that this approach would prevent confusion, ensure clarity, and allow the Council to avoid any procedural missteps. Interim City Manager Dan Pennington explained that Council members could submit their selections using a spreadsheet, either digitally or by handout, without discussing or comparing notes with one another. He noted that prior documents had requested prioritization and that using a spreadsheet with highlighted items and columns would allow members to provide input efficiently and transparently. He suggested that each Council member submit their selections in advance, which could then be compiled and reviewed during the next council meeting. He emphasized that this process would prevent errors and miscommunications while allowing members to see the overall results. Councilman Pena recommended to send out the list with those highlighted ones for a yes or no response and include a running total at the bottom, especially if done electronically. He suggested that the spreadsheet be quasi-interactive so members could see the running totals and the impact of their selections in real time. He explained that submitting selections in advance would allow each Council member to act independently, preventing collaboration that could skew results, and noted that the number of variables would make identical outcomes unlikely. He described the process for compiling the submissions and reviewing them line by line during the next meeting, allowing members to confirm or change their votes. He emphasized that this approach would let Council members provide input comfortably from home without the pressure of political optics and would simplify decision-making to an up-or-down vote. Mr. Duncan added that the checklist could be formatted for clarity, and Council members could make motions and vote during the meeting if desired. He stressed that no discussion or comparison of notes should occur before the meeting to comply with deliberation rules.

Interim City Manager Dan Pennington questioned whether the proposed process required a motion or second, noting that the only item on the agenda was a public hearing on the budget. He indicated that a motion may not be necessary and that he, Ms. Ashlee, and the Chief could determine the proper approach. Councilman Pena suggested using an interactive spreadsheet in Excel to submit Council members' selections, allowing enough time for compilation before the next meeting.

Councilman Davis expressed support for the process, praising the approach and the work being done, noting that this type of input had not been done in a while. He emphasized that it allowed all Council members to have a voice and provided the opportunity to agree to disagree while maintaining unity.

Councilman Rossow agreed with the proposed method, stating that it would allow Council members to present their decisions to the public while keeping the public informed. He noted the importance of conducting the process legally and through staff coordination rather than independently.

Councilman Matamoros indicated that he had already submitted his input and did not need the spreadsheet.

Mayor Cain expressed appreciation to Finance Director Ashlee Hurst for her work on the budget cycle, recognizing her ability to handle last-minute challenges with a positive attitude and professionalism.

Mayor Cain closed the Public Hearing at 7:13P.M.

Business

Consideration and possible action approving the proposed 2025 Annual Street Lighting Plan.

GIS/Property Manager Laura Cramer presented the proposed 2025 street lighting plan to the Council. She explained that a map of the proposed light locations had been provided to Council members between the two meetings for review and edits, and that any requested changes had been incorporated. She asked for the Council's approval of the plan.

A motion was made by Councilman Matamoros to approve the 2025 Annual Street Lighting Plan as presented, seconded by Councilman Rossow with discussion that followed.

Councilman Pena discussed the streetlight map with GIS/Property Manager Laura Cramer, referencing an earlier conversation regarding the lights on Broad Street between Pine and East Park. He noted that three lights from previous years, specifically 2022, had not yet been installed. He also raised the light planned for Cherry Street between First and Second Street, suggesting it be moved to Second Street in front of City Hall. Ms. Cramer confirmed the earlier discussion and provided clarification on the five lights to the right on Second Street between Cherry and Pine, noting that three of the five were operational while two were not, and that CenterPoint would address them similarly to the Broad Street lights. Ms. Cramer confirmed that she had reported the previously uninstalled lights and requested they be installed promptly. Councilman Pena and Ms. Cramer discussed the placement and status of streetlights along Broad Street and Second Street. Councilman Pena confirmed that the light originally planned for Broad Street between Oak and Cherry would be relocated to Second Street to improve lighting along the main corridor. Ms. Cramer noted that the area west of City Hall toward Oak consists entirely of concrete parking lots and drives, which may require slight offsetting of the light placement. Councilman Pena and Ms. Cramer reviewed the lights in front of City Hall, noting that three classical lights exist but are not powered. They agreed that two operational lights from CenterPoint would provide sufficient illumination. Councilman Pena confirmed the removal of the Broad Street light and its relocation to Second Street, resulting in three lights on Second Street and one remaining on Broad Street.

Councilman Pena discussed the streetlight allocation for the upcoming year. He acknowledged that while it was too late to make changes for the current year, adjustments could be made for next year. He recommended a rule of thumb for evenly distributing streetlights among the wards, noting there are approximately 43 lights per CenterPoint allocation per year. He suggested that each ward receive roughly 25% of the total to ensure a fair distribution and minimize contention. GIS/Property Manager Laura Cramer referenced a table in the agenda memo showing the number of lights per mile per ward as a guide for equitable distribution. Councilman Pena expressed concern about previously reported numbers for 2021 and 2022, stating that he had never allocated more than eight to ten lights per year and could not verify some historical figures. He emphasized that a consistent 25% distribution across all wards would simplify the process and ensure fairness. Councilman Pena confirmed that all previously reported light outages in his ward had been addressed, according to CenterPoint.

Councilman Davis noted that the previous two years had each resulted in only 14% of lights being allocated, totaling 28 lights. Councilman Pena emphasized that the allocation should be 25% across the board and that it should not result in the lowest number of lights again next year.

Councilman Rossow said he received a message from the City Manager saying all of his requested lights are up.

Councilman Matamoros amended his motion to approve the 2025 Street Lightning Plan with the pending changes presented by Councilman Pena, seconded by Councilman Pena with all present and voting "Aye" 5-0. The Council unanimously approved the motion.

Consideration and possible action approving Resolution No. 2025- 2947 authorizing a revision to the City of Freeport Policy Handbook Chapter 9 – Employee Wages and Benefits Section 9.03 A Wellness Requirement.

Human Resource Director Donna Fisher presented the item regarding the City's employee wellness requirement. She reminded the Council that at the previous meeting they had requested the penalty for employees failing to complete their annual wellness exam be increased from $25 per paycheck to $50 per paycheck, effective for the 2026–2027 fiscal year.

A motion was made by Councilman Matamoros to approve the revision to Resolution No. 2025-2947, seconded by Councilman Rossow with discussion that followed.

Human Resource Director Donna Fisher explained that the change would address Council's direction and clarified that, as previously approved, employees who do not complete the exam during the 2025–2026 fiscal year would be assessed $25 per paycheck beginning October 1, 2025. Ms. Fisher stated that the $50 per paycheck penalty would not take effect until the following year, beginning October 1, 2026. She noted that approximately 21 employees, or 17 percent of staff, had not complied with the requirement in the prior year and were expecting the $25 charge as approved.

Councilman Pena expressed concern that there was no way to impact the amount for the coming year, and Human Resource Donna Fisher confirmed it could not be changed from $25 to $50 on October 1, 2025, because the Council had already voted on the $25 rate. She added that approximately 21 employees, representing about 17 percent of the workforce, had not complied with the requirement and were expecting the $25 charge. She noted that to alter it at this point would not align with the expectation created by Council's earlier vote.

Mayor Cain stated for the record that his employer has a similar program in place, where employees are charged $20 or $25 per month if they do not complete their wellness requirement. He said he felt $50 was a lot and expressed his support for the $25 level.

Councilman Davis remarked that at his workplace the penalty amounts to $300 annually. Mayor Cain responded that if he were in the same situation, he would ensure he was working 40-hour weeks with Fridays and 14 holidays, though Councilman Davis countered that the pay did not add up, but the cost was still $300.

Councilman Winston added that some employees simply do not want others to know their business, which is why they opt not to participate. Councilman Davis reiterated that $300 is a lot of money, but emphasized the program's value in encouraging healthy practices and controlling insurance costs. He said the requirement is preventative, designed to catch potential issues early, and shared that it helped him personally by prompting him to go to the doctor.

Councilman Pena sought clarification on whether insurance premiums for Councilmembers would be affected, and Human Resource Director Donna Fisher confirmed that the City's insurance does not cover the Council. Councilman Pena then suggested that in the future Council might consider adding coverage for elected officials.

Mayor Cain called the motion to a vote with all present and voting "Aye" 4-1. The Council approved the motion. Mayor Cain voted "Nay".

<u>Consideration and possible action approving Resolution No. 2025-2948 to appoint Chief Jennifer Howell as Public Information Officer.</u>

Human Resources Director Donna Fisher informed the Council that during the last legislative session, House Bill 33 was passed requiring governmental bodies, including municipalities, to appoint a Public Information Officer responsible for receiving, processing, and coordinating responses to the public regarding active shooter incidents or other emergencies occurring in primary and secondary schools. She stated that Chief Howell was the most qualified of the City's employees to serve in this capacity.

A motion was made by Councilman Pena to approve Resolution No. 2025-2948 to appoint Chief Jennifer Howell as Public Information Officer, seconded by Councilman Davis, with discussion that followed.

Councilman Pena asked what announcements and methodologies would be employed under this designation and what training or ideas Chief Howell would implement specific to Freeport, beyond what is outlined in the statute. Human Resource Director Donna Fisher explained that House Bill 33 sets forth specific statutory requirements for training, and that Chief Howell has already received a significant amount of the required instruction, with additional training to be provided as guidelines are finalized. Councilman Pena inquired about contingency planning should Chief Howell be unavailable, and Ms. Fisher stated that in such a case, the Chief would appoint a Lieutenant to act in her place. Councilman Pena also asked whether there were any budgetary considerations, to which Ms. Fisher responded that there would not be, as the responsibilities fall within the normal scope of existing positions. She added that while the bill went into effect immediately, some of the detailed training guidelines would not be released until December. Councilman Pena further asked about the scope of responsibility and whether the resolution would apply to other emergencies within the City. Ms. Fisher clarified that the law applies strictly to emergencies in primary and secondary schools, specifically active shooter incidents, and does not extend to other types of emergencies at municipal facilities.

Mayor Cain called the motion to a vote with all present and voting "Aye" 5-0. The Council unanimously approved the motion.

Consideration and possible action approving Resolution No. 2025-2949 deeming property surplus and donating to local police department.

Police Chief Jennifer Howell addressed Council regarding surplus Zebra mobile printers. She explained that these printers are specialized devices used in patrol vehicles, connected to ticket writers for citation printing. The printers had not been used in some time and had been stored in boxes since the department had moved to a different system. Chief Howell stated that another department, the City of Iowa Colony, still utilizes this style of printer and the proposal was to donate the equipment for their use.

A motion was made by Councilman Davis to approve Resolution No. 2025-2949 deeming property surplus and donating to local police department, seconded by Councilman Rossow with discussion that followed.

Councilman Pena inquired as to which agency would receive the equipment and the estimated value. Police Chief Jennifer Howell replied that the receiving agency was Iowa Colony, and explained that due to the printers' age—over 15 years old—they were no longer serviceable, had no repair support, and carried no real market value. Councilman Pena asked if Freeport could claim any portion of future ticket revenue generated with the devices, to which Chief Howell replied she could ask.

Councilman Matamoros expressed concern regarding potential data storage, noting the printers contained random access memory that may have held personal or ticketing information. Police Chief Jennifer Howell agreed to have IT staff review and wipe the devices, with both Mr. David and Mr. Toby verifying to ensure thoroughness. Councilman Matamoros emphasized that, in his professional experience, such devices are difficult to completely clear of sensitive data and suggested that donation might not be advisable. Chief Howell clarified that the printers would not go to public auction but rather to another law enforcement agency, meaning any residual information would remain within the criminal justice system.

Councilman Pena noted this distinction, asking if the data would already be accessible through systems such as the Texas Department of Public Safety, and Police Chief Jennifer Howell confirmed that relevant information is shared across agencies through the Criminal Justice Information System. Interim City Manager Dan Pennington added that the Council's concern should extend to what might occur if Iowa Colony later disposed of the printers at auction. He recommended ensuring two verifications of data wiping before releasing the equipment.

Councilman Davis withdrew his motion.

Councilman Rossow withdrew his second.

A motion was made by Councilman Pena to table this item, seconded by Councilman Rossow with all present and voting "Aye" 5-0. The Council approved the motion to table this item.

DISCUSS AND TAKE POSSIBLE ACTION TO REQUIRE ALL CITY BOARDS TO ALLOW FOUR (4) MINUTES FOR PUBLIC COMMENTS, CONSISTENT WITH CITY COUNCIL'S RECENT AGENDA RESOLUTION CHANGES AND ACTIONS

Councilman Pena stated that the resolution was brought forward to him in terms of resident feedback. He said residents really liked what the Council did for them regarding Council meetings and suggested applying the same for all the boards, as long as it complies with the Charter. He emphasized that the intent was simply to make sure the City operates uniformly throughout.

A motion was made by Councilman Pena to approve, seconded by Councilman Davis with discussion that followed. (Clarification was provided later in the meeting regarding what was being approved.)

Councilman Matamoros stated this matter had been brought up because of EDC, which changed its citizens' comments to two minutes. He asked Councilman Pena if that was correct. Councilman Pena then said he did not believe the resolution was applicable to the EDC, explaining that it was just for city boards, and that the EDC was independent and could operate however it saw fit unless legal corrected him. Councilman Pena said that if the motion could affect the EDC so the City operated as a whole with four minutes, he did not see why any resident serving on the EDC board would want to minimize the input of their neighbors. He asked if the language included the EDC. Interim City Manager Dan Pennington said he did not recall if it was included, but believed it could apply. Mr. Pennington said the only question raised was whether the charter limited some boards, such as Planning and Zoning, to setting their own procedures. Interim City Attorney Chris Duncan agreed, noting Planning and Zoning was mentioned in the charter, which gave them control over their own procedures, and asked if four minutes for citizens' comments counted as a procedure under the charter or just rules for voting. He said the proposed ordinance was limited to not violating the charter. He explained that as things stood, Planning and Zoning's procedures were not in conflict with the ordinance, and that if a conflict came up, it could be addressed then. The City charter was the prevailing law, so nothing could be done that violated it. Councilman Pena said if the ordinance was in accordance with the charter, he wanted to ensure the City was operating uniformly across all boards. He said if that included the EDC, so be it, and if Planning and Zoning had an exception, so be it. He said changes could always be made through the Charter Review Board, but as the City's highest order of representation, the Council needed to make sure business was conducted uniformly. Since the Mayor had already approved four minutes, he believed all boards should abide by that. He stated he supported the motion to approve. Mr. Duncan clarified that the EDC is an independent nonprofit and that Council's authority was limited to appointing and removing members, approving the budget, and approving projects. Other than that, the EDC governed itself, and Council did not have the authority to dictate the length of its citizens' comments. Councilman Pena stated that in response to Councilman Matamoras's question, he did not believe the resolution was intended to contemplate or influence the EDC's decisions. He explained that the resolution was definitely directed toward City boards, and he hoped that board members and residents our next-door neighbors understood the importance of transparency and allowing residents to participate in the same way the rest of the City operates. He added that the boards should not operate as an island of their own making, noting that the Council appoints and removes members of the EDC. Councilman Pena clarified that he was not seeking to remove anyone but only wanted to ensure that all boards were operating uniformly.

Councilman Matamoros noted that the reason for his earlier question was because Section Two of the resolution referenced council-appointed boards, which initially raised the question of whether it included the EDC. That point, he said, had now been clarified. Councilman Matamoros said that as liaison to both the Planning and Zoning Commission and the Board of Adjustments, he could confirm that neither board had limited residents' speaking time and that both were already operating under the four-minute rule. He emphasized that fact for the record. He concluded by stating that if the resolution was going to move forward, it should go one step further. He noted that members of the boards were volunteers and should not be subjected to being berated by lunatics who come forward simply to attack them. He added that while Council members are elected to face such scrutiny, volunteers should not be mistreated in that way.

Councilman Davis said he wanted to apologize and would not call the citizens lunatics. He clarified that while residents must remain respectful and avoid inappropriate language, everyone has the right to be heard. This principle applies to all boards in the City of Freeport, reflecting the City's commitment to transparency. He noted that time limits should not start trends that reduce citizen participation and expressed agreement with looking into the matter further.

Interim City Manager Dan Pennington added that, to his understanding, the Council approves the EDC bylaws. Any procedural changes desired by the Council could be implemented through these bylaws, making them mandatory for the EDC. While this differs from the boards affected by the current item, it could be confirmed later.

Mayor Cain explained his position on the matter, expressing caution about uniformity versus trusting appointed board members to run meetings professionally. He emphasized the importance of maintaining professional standards while allowing boards to observe how the Council conducts business. Mayor Cain asked for legal clarification regarding the resolution included in the packet versus the one laid before the Council at the meeting. Mayor Cain noted disagreement with Section Five, if the City Council allows members of the public to speak during different times under the agenda, the member of the public may apportion their four minutes among the different agenda items, as long as their total speaking time does not exceed the four minutes. Mayor Cain referenced a prior Resolution No. 2023-2820 from October 16, 2023, which stated any resident of Freeport may can comment for up to four minutes during the public comment section or at the beginning of a specific agenda item at each regular City Council meeting. If they comply with these rules, a resident may only comment once during a City Council meeting. Mayor Cain sought clarification on which resolution was being considered.

Interim City Attorney Chris Duncan clarified that if the Council voted for the resolution that is in front of the Council printed out, it would change the rules previously passed by the City Council. Under the prior resolution, each person could only speak once per meeting and could not split their time among agenda items. He explained that the decision to approve the new resolution was up to the Council and noted that, for Section Five, a motion could be made to remove it while retaining the rule the person can only talk once during a Council meeting.

Councilman Pena said back in July when changed they were intended to improve transparency by allowing four minutes of public comment up front. He explained that the feedback received after that change included questions about whether citizens could speak on multiple agenda items, and the resolution before the Council sought to address that concern. Councilman Pena emphasized that adopting the resolution does not affect the Council's ability to manage meetings, including addressing disorderly conduct or cutting off comments that are not constructive. He highlighted that meaningful contributions from residents should be heard and that the resolution aims to facilitate orderly public participation. Councilman Pena noted that without this approach, each agenda request would require identifying every citizen to be called individually, complicating the process and removing the four-minute limitation. He concluded that maintaining a simple system was preferable, ensuring both transparency and efficiency in public participation.

Councilman Matamoros asked which resolution the Council would be voting on, questioning whether it was the one included in the packet or the version presented that evening. Mayor Cain noted that Section Five had been added to the version laid out on the counter. Councilman Matamoros expressed concern about transparency, stating that seeing a modified document at the meeting, rather than the one reviewed in the packet, created confusion and lacked transparency. Mayor Cain explained that citizens have multiple opportunities to speak, either during public comment or before deliberation on a specific agenda item. He emphasized that this process is intended to be straightforward and transparent, allowing residents to voice their opinions without causing disruption to the meeting. He observed that unregulated public input during deliberations could create disruptive meetings.

Interim City Attorney Chris Duncan clarified that citizens do not participate in the Council's deliberations. He further explained that once a motion and a second are made, the Council begins deliberation, and additional citizen comments are not permitted at that stage. He distinguished between regular agenda items and public hearings, noting that public hearings allow more interaction, whereas regular meetings require citizens to make statements without back-and-forth discussion. He emphasized that the Council's deliberations are public, and residents can observe the reasoning and discussion behind decisions. Ultimately, the Council retains discretion over how to structure public comment, whether to allow one comment per meeting, comments at the beginning of each agenda item, or multiple short comments, while ensuring proper legal procedure is followed. He stressed that once deliberation begins, the process is limited to Council discussion, and citizens' input is concluded.

Councilman Davis emphasized citizens' rights, noting that sometimes residents do not use their full four minutes at the beginning of a meeting, leaving unused time they should be allowed to apply later in the meeting. He explained that a resident might speak on one agenda item initially, then wish to use remaining time on a later item, and argued that this is fair as long as citizens remain respectful and follow the meeting order.

Mayor Cain highlighted the importance of running the meeting professionally and noted that the set rules prevent disruptions caused by residents raising hands and speaking without following protocol.

Councilman Pena stated that over the past year, he had observed a lot of subjective application of the rules, noting that when crowds were rowdy, some residents were allowed to speak outside of proper procedures, and reminders about signing in were inconsistent. He explained that the new process clarifies the rules: residents must sign up at the beginning of the meeting and are then granted their four minutes. He noted that if a resident wants to speak on a specific agenda item not initially listed, they may request it while speaking, and the Council will allow it at the beginning of the meeting. This ensures that all information is shared, and Council members and residents have a full understanding of the matters at hand. Mayor Cain said that while he encourages all residents to speak and participate, it must be done in a proper and orderly manner. Councilman explained that Section Five concerns only the apportioning of the remaining time, emphasizing that no one is allowed more than four minutes. He clarified that everyone receives four minutes and must sign up at the beginning of the meeting. If a resident does not sign up initially, they do not receive additional time, and any remaining time they have is the only extra they are allowed.

Interim City Manager Dan Pennington addressed a question regarding why an additional resolution was laid out at the meeting. He noted that the draft that was originally worked on had been submitted and posted, but subsequent work continued on another draft, possibly due to Section Five. He explained that the agenda posting requirements were met, and while additional material is not typically provided after posting, in this case, a copy was made available on the table for the public to see. He said that the draft was provided to ensure transparency and that all work on the item following the initial posting was made accessible to the public.

Mayor Cain called the motion to a vote with all present and voting "Aye" 3-2. The Council approved the motion. Mayor Cain voted "Nay". Councilman Matamoros voted "Nay".

DISCUSS AND TAKE POSSIBLE ACTION TO ESTABLISH RULES FOR BOARD MEMBER NOMINATIONS BY COUNCIL AND CITY BOARD MEMBERS

Councilman Pena introduced a resolution to establish a standard procedure for nominations to City boards, explaining the item arose from resident feedback during the May board appointments.

A motion was made by Councilman Pena to approve this resolution to establish the rules for board member nominations by the City Council for the City board members for both the Council and City board members, seconded by Councilman Davis with discussion that followed. (Clarification was provided later in the meeting regarding what was being approved.)

Councilman Pena stated that even as far back as May, residents expressed frustration that they had applied to participate, taken the time to complete applications, and attended meetings to understand the process, yet were not given the opportunity to speak for themselves or be considered. He noted that previous appointments had sometimes been unilateral, placing five other residents on boards who, in some cases, had never attended the relevant board or Council meetings, and in other cases, had attended but ultimately resigned or were removed. He emphasized that the goal is to give every resident the opportunity to express why they want to serve on a board, allowing both the Council and the public to hear them. This process demonstrates that the Council is selecting engaged residents who genuinely want to be involved. He expressed concern about nominating residents who are not present at the meetings, comparing it to running for Mayor but taking the day off when sworn in, and described it as inconsistent. He said that the purpose of the process is to ensure each applicant has a chance to speak and be part of the City's growth and change.

Councilman Davis expressed concern regarding the current agenda item, noting that it involved a charter change. He stated that the current method of selecting board members is unfair to Council members. He explained that no other process they have seen requires calling out five board members at one time and making a single motion. He described the situation as feeling rushed and competitive, comparing it to "little kids tag", and emphasized that Council members should be able to make motions and vote fairly. He highlighted the difficulty of voting for a group of five nominees when they may only agree with some of them. He explained that if some nominees are ones they do not support or are unsure about, it places them in a bind, forcing them to vote for individuals they may not agree with. He underscored that while the majority rules, it is unfair to vote for five people at once and called for a change in the voting method to ensure fairness for each Council member. Councilman Davis also stressed that residents interested in serving on a board should be required to show up for the meeting, comparing it to a court date where attendance is mandatory. He emphasized that attendance demonstrates loyalty and provides an opportunity for nominees to introduce themselves, explain why they want to serve, and what they will bring to the board. He concluded that the Council should not vote for five people at one time, as it is not fair to Council members.

Councilman Matamoros stated that the ordinance on the desk contains incorrect numbering, which needs to be fixed or corrected before taking a vote. Mayor Cain asked if the discussion was regarding the addition of number five? Councilman Matamoros said there are two fours and that the numbering is not correct. Mayor Cain also expressed concern with number five that was added, explaining that it states no person may be selected, appointed, or voted on unless present in person. Mayor Cain shared that they have heartburn with that provision because there are valid reasons someone may not be able to attend the meeting. He provided examples, such as a Councilman being undecided between two candidates or someone working shift work and unable to attend the meeting, emphasizing that it should not be held against them. Councilman Pena clarified that the purpose of the ordinance is to provide professionalism and courtesy in conducting Council business, ensuring that all board members are considered fairly. He noted that often those who do not show up for the vote also do not attend the board meetings, and stressed that showing up demonstrates professional courtesy to the Council and fairness to the public. He explained that the ordinance encourages residents to show up on the day they are being selected so the Council can adequately and fairly consider them. He reiterated that if someone does not have time to attend the meeting, it may reflect on their availability to serve on the board. He acknowledged differing opinions on number five but emphasized its importance for fairness and professionalism. Councilman stated that the ordinance reflects feedback from residents who applied previously and were not selected. He specifically mentioned residents who had expressed concern about being removed from boards and wanting to return. He emphasized that those who are present and committed demonstrate dedication and should be recognized for their attendance and participation. He said the volunteers who consistently attend meetings and contribute, expressing respect for their commitment. He thanked the volunteers for their attendance and participation.

Mayor Cain called the motion to a vote with all present and voting "Aye" 3-2. The Council approved the motion. Mayor Cain voted "Nay". Councilman Matamoros voted "Nay".

Interim City Manager Dan Pennington asked Mayor Cain about the two agenda items. He asked if the two items being passed were the ones laid on the desk. Councilman Pena said yes.

<u>Consideration of engaging qualified real estate representation to improve housing development outcomes.</u>

Councilman Pena displayed a map of the City showing all properties owned by the City in orange. He pointed out the bird sanctuary at the bottom of the map and identified other city-owned locations. He noted that the map did not include EDC properties under their jurisdiction. He emphasized the need to promote residential development and listed city-owned properties for sale. He referenced past listings, comparing a Dollar General property given by the EDC for $150,000 with a privately listed warehouse sold for $1.9 million, noting the difference in value and professional listing practices. He highlighted improvements made to the warehouse, including removal of dilapidated structures and installation of new fencing. He stressed the importance of listing City properties professionally to attract buyers and achieve fair market value. He noted that no one would be aware of the city-owned properties unless they happened to drive through Freeport and see them on various streets. He emphasized that the properties need to be professionally listed to attract buyers. He explained that the purpose is to get the properties moving, start building houses, and achieve fair market value. Mayor Cain stated that he had no concerns with that approach.

Councilman Pena offered to make a motion, but it was clarified that this was not a motion item and was simply an instruction to City Hall staff.

Councilman Davis stated that everyone on the Council agrees on the need for rooftops and emphasized that all members have expressed a desire to increase housing. He noted that Interim City Manager Dan Pennington may not be fully aware of ongoing discussions regarding large properties and development efforts. He referenced a recent news article about a realtor and real estate company in Angleton working on nearby properties, discussing the housing market, home sales, and how homes are still selling within 30 to 90 days, even in surrounding areas Iowa Colony, Angleton, Lake Jackson and Freeport. He stressed that the City owns property that could be marketed to encourage development and suggested exploring ways to promote these properties, while noting more information on costs and logistics is needed.

Councilman Rossow confirmed his support for rooftops, noting he has advocated for it throughout his tenure. He mentioned that advertising would require funding and questioned why the City has not actively tried to sell vacant properties.

Mayor Cain agreed that rooftops are important, pointing out that every new house built in Freeport over the past five years has sold. He emphasized the need to coordinate property marketing with infrastructure development.

Interim City Manager Dan Pennington added that representatives have been engaged regarding the Skinner property, and although a contract was reinstated last November, its solidity is uncertain. Developers are ready, and the plan is to bring their representatives to Council for discussion before involving the developers directly. Mayor Cain acknowledged the investment of time, if not money, by developers and stressed the importance of pursuing only win-win situations for the City. He concluded that while rooftops are desired, the City will not sacrifice other interests to achieve them.

Work Session

Councilman Pena Ward A announcements and comments.

Councilman Pena thanked everyone still in attendance and recognized representatives from the Facts, Ms. Green, Ms. Oldham, Mr. & Mrs. Pearson, and Mr. Bachman, along with speakers Mr. Frazier, Mr. Hayes, Ms. Adams (Hispanic Chamber), and Mr. Rollerson. He noted the City's proclamation of Hispanic Heritage Month and expressed hope for a cultural event in Freeport, saying he expects to place an item on the Sept. 15 or October. He thanked City Hall staff for diligent budget work and thanked Mr. Pennington and Ms. Hurst. He relayed resident concerns about drainage at Magnolia & 12th, including manholes showing flooding. Interim City Manager Dan Pennington said Veolia would be getting there with a jet-truck. Councilman Pena reiterated he routinely forwards resident requests by email and appreciates Public Works' responsiveness and thanked Mr. Pennington and Mr. Ragle. Councilman Pena raised a question regarding the operating hours of the recreation center, noting that recently the hours had been shortened. He inquired whether the rec center is expected to be open eight hours a day or just four, and questioned what the historical standard has been, as well as how neighboring municipalities manage their facilities. He expressed concern that the reduction in hours could be due to staffing issues, facility problems, or a seasonal dip in usage, and sought clarification from City Hall. Interim City Manager Dan Pennington responded, stating that there are no current staffing or facility issues and that the schedule adjustment is an annual practice when school resumes. Councilman Rossow said the opening time was changed from 7:30 a.m. to 8:00 a.m., which has affected some regular users who now go elsewhere. Public Works Director Rudy Ragle said during the winter when school is back in session the recreation center operates from 3:00 to 7:00 p.m. to accommodate school schedules. Special openings for seniors on certain days of the week continue. He said staff typically begin at 8:00 a.m., but there is flexibility to adjust schedules to better meet user needs. Councilman Pena emphasized that seniors, many of whom are early risers. Mr. Ragle agreed to explore schedule modifications.

Councilman Davis Ward B announcements and comments.

Councilman Davis thanked attendees for staying late and noted the meeting concluded around 9:00 p.m., adding optimism that, after one remaining budget meeting, Council sessions will stay on schedule. He reported overgrown grass and right-of-way mowing complaints. Public Works Director Rudy Ragle said the specific locations Councilman Davis sent were addressed today, the contractor has been pressed to catch up, and two items will be clarified directly with Councilman Davis. Councilman Davis observed someone mowing on his way in and asked that residents not have to pay for City right-of-way work. Mr. Ragle indicated it was likely the City's contractor. Councilman Rossow asked about two zero-turn mowing operators he used to see on Gulf Blvd and Velasco Boulevards. Mr. Ragle explained those were contractors and that vendor changed last year. Councilman Davis closed by thanking residents and staff, praising the ongoing, more transparent budget process and improving Council teamwork, and commending Interim City Manager Dan Pennington, Interim City Attorney Chris Duncan, and Ms. Ashlee for their support and responsiveness to public records requests. He reiterated his commitment to transparency and invited residents to contact him directly with concerns.

Councilman Matamoros Ward C announcements and comments.

Councilman Matamoros, liaison to Planning & Zoning, gave a brief update from the last P&Z meeting. He reported that several plats were approved. The primary item was a request to rezone the Urban Renewal property from Residential to Industrial; the P&Z Board unanimously denied the request, noting it is one of the City's last large tracts for housing and was sold with the intent of residential development, which he characterized as a positive outcome for the City. He further stated that several board members told him they received a call from a Council member urging approval on the basis that Council had already agreed to the change; he expressed concern about any attempt to influence or intimidate the board. He said that a Main Street Board member has been contacting businesses while representing the board and allegedly threatening/berating owners during meetings; he said this has been done multiple times and this must stop and, if it continues, the member should be removed.

Councilman Rossow Ward D announcements and comments.

Councilman Rossow thanked everyone still in attendance and recognized staff efforts. He noted recent streetlight repairs and asked residents to report any remaining outages by providing the six-digit number on the pole to City Hall. He encouraged the public to "see something, say something" regarding trash and other issues. Councilman Rossow highlighted senior activities, sharing that a recent chartered bus trip to an Astros game was well received, and announced an upcoming September 8 trip that includes a steamboat ride and a meal at Dido's for residents aged 55+ at no cost. He added that seniors meet monthly at Riverplace for food, games, and bingo, and invited interested residents to participate.

Mayor Jerry Cain announcements and comments.

Mayor Cain thanked everyone for showing up and sticking through a long meeting, noting it was not as long as some recent ones but felt just as productive, and thanked those watching from home. Councilman Pena recognized also resident Ms. Marshall. Mayor Cain said he enjoyed attending an Astros game with Councilman Rossow and had a great time watching a great game. He thanked McDonald's and City crews for cutting back a bush that was blocking the exit, reminded everyone about Kid Fest downtown on September 6 and said there would be plenty more talk about Fright Night later.

City Manager announcements and comments.

Interim City Manager Dan Pennington noted residents can report streetlight outages on the City website or by calling City Hall; he also thanked Chief Howell and Ms. Ashlee for reviving the mailed Freeport Newsletter with rotating department content, which has already received positive feedback. He read an email received from a resident thanking City staff for the newsletter. He said for staff safety, City Hall added doors to separate public and work areas after a few incidents. Public Works Rudy Ragle confirmed mosquito spraying begins tonight and will continue on multiple nights, weather permitting; the GPS-controlled truck adjusts flow by speed and shuts off when stopped.

Executive Session

Executive Session regarding a.) Texas Government Code, Section 551.074: (Personnel Matters): to deliberate the appointment, employment, evaluation, reassignment, duties, discipline, or dismissal of a public officer or employee or to hear a complaint or charge against an officer or employee; Legal Services.

The Regular Session closed at 9:17P.M. and the Council entered into the Executive Session.

Reconvene into Open Session:

Take any action resulting from Executive Session.

The Executive Session ended at 9:43P.M. and the Council went back into Regular Session.

There was no action from the Executive Session.

Adjournment

Adjournment – Jerry Cain, Mayor

A motion was made by Councilman Pena to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Councilman Rossow with all present and voting "Aye" 5-0. Mayor Cain adjourned the meeting 9:43P.M.

Jerry Cain

Jerry Cain, Mayor

CFR

Clarisa Fernandez, City Secretary