

State of Texas

County of Brazoria

City of Freeport

BE IT REMEMBERED, that the City Council of Freeport, Texas met on Monday, April 7, 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:

- Lance Petty, City Manager
- David Olson, Interim City Attorney
- Clarisa Fernandez, City Secretary
- Ashlee Hurst, Finance Director
- Toby Cohen, IT Manager
- Donna Fisher, Human Resource Director
- Crystal Ruiz, Executive Administrative Assistant
- Rudy Ragle, Public Works Director
- Laura Cramer, Special Projects Supervisor
- Patti Foster, Interim Building Official
- Wade Dillon, Museum Director
- Chris Motley, Fire Chief

Visitors:	Nicole Mireles	Kenny HAYes
	Ravi Singhanian	T.E. Koole
	Jo Linda Marshall	Con McCleester
	Gale Froberg	Diane McCleester
	Edith Fischer	Pamela Dancy
	Manning Rollerson	Ruben Renobato

Call to Order:

Call to Order - Jerry Cain, Mayor

Mayor Cain called the meeting to order at 6:00P.M.

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.

Thomas Koole said there is a problem in Freeport, and it is basically on Fourth Street and Pecan, and it is coming from the Elementary School back on Eleventh Street. He said last month or the month before, there was a bad accident. He said he did not see it, but he heard it. He said it was metal on metal, loud. He said last year there was an accident at the same intersection. 2017 again another accident. He said the last two times he remembers there were little kids in that car. He said that intersection are a problem. He said he does not know what needs to be done, but something needs to be done and somebody is going to get seriously hurt in the area. He said in all cases, all the vehicles were towed away, so there were no minor incidents there. He said there is an elementary school near the area and this last one happened when the kids were coming out of school. He said it is bad and something must be done with that intersection because someone is going to get seriously hurt. He said he did not even want to say it. He said he prays it does not go that way, but it is really bad. He said more patrolling, bigger stop signs or something. He said the cars going down Pecan Street he does not know if maybe because there is no stop sign from there all the way to Eighth Street but he can guarantee that the vehicles are not going no 30 miles an hour. He said he was just concerned and would like something done about the intersection. He said bigger stop signs, more patrolling or something, because someone is going to get seriously hurt. He said that was his main concern. He said he talked to a few of the neighbors around and there have been more accidents there at that intersection and it is public record. He said hopefully something can be done there, especially for the kids, even for the adults or anybody. He said he remembered the last two times last month and the year before, and the one in 2017 both vehicles were towed away and that is how bad they were.

Ravi Singhania said he wanted to recognize his vice chair. Mr. Singhania said he is the chairman of the Port of Freeport commission. He said he had some good news. He said their big half-\$1 billion project was just coming along fine, and it should be done by the end of this year on time and hopefully still within the budget. He said he does not know what tariffs are going to do, but still within the budget. He said they are working on a business. He said the latest good news is around May 12th, they should have a dedication of this new 80,000 square foot warehouse the Freeport warehouse has been put together. He said this would be cold storage and will become the transfer station for Del Monte. He said it will overall be employing at the beginning about 80 people some of them are already there in the temporary shops. Mr. Singhania said another good thing is the \$20 million roughly facility, which is not tax-abated and should come straight to taxes. He said they believe they are seeing some of the good impact it is having on the economy, the expansion and growth of the Port. Mr. Singhania thanked the Council for the cooperation that there is between the City of Freeport and the Port.

Sam Reyna resides at 2002 North Avenue G. He said the Houston Chronicles Wednesday's edition and there was another article on Thursday edition same topic over time. He said Hollins and Whitmire for over \$137 million in overtime he set aside \$65 million to cover overtime, and that is at \$137 million more than double. He said waste disposal is 75% over the budget, Fire Department is 94% over the budget and Police Department is 190% over their budget. He said it was presented to the Council members and made them sick to their stomach. He said Freeport has the same dilemma. He said excessive spending on overtime pay was excessive. Mr. Reyna said Houston has a steady safety net and they are using some of their federal funds to pay for the overtime, but soon they will run out of federal funds, and they will be paying overtime from their general funds. He said Freeport does not have that safety net and is paying for the overtime pay out of our general funds and our infrastructure problems citizens are complaining to fixing our streets, alleys, ditches, alleyways, working on our lift stations, replacing pumps, etc. He said they can not address these issues correctly if they use the general funds to pay for overtime. He said overtime pay needs to be eliminated and only use overtime pay only in emergencies. He said it is a hard decision to make because the department is using most of our time as the Police Department and so it is a hard decision to make, but if it is a hard

decision to make, it has to be the right decision. He said hundreds of thousands of dollars are being spent on overtime in Freeport, and the majority of it has been the Police Department, and they are getting a lot of overtime. Mr. Reyna said to the Mayor this issue needs to be corrected.

Gale Froberg said she wanted to come down to Freeport and introduce herself as a candidate for Justice of the Peace Precinct One Place Two. She said the election primaries are not until March of 2026 however, she wanted to come down here and meet as many people as she could because Freeport is located in Precinct One. She said she happens to live in Alvin. She said she is not a Freeport resident but Alvin now has a huge portion of it that is Precinct One, and it extends all the way down to the Matagorda County line. She said she is trying to make as many places as she can and meet as many people as she can. Ms. Froberg said if she comes back again, she may say the same things over again, but she would like to meet as many people as possible. She said a little bit about her she grew up in West Columbia she got there as an infant and her father was actually transferred there. She said her father worked for Phillips 66, and he built a lot of that plants down there in Sweeney, so she moved to West Columbia and lived in Columbia Lakes, and that is where she was raised. She said she was the baby of six and her mother was a stay-at-home mother. She said she went to West Columbia School District until her sophomore year, then she was homeschooled for her last couple of years. She said she graduated from the American School as a homeschool student and found herself later on living in Precinct One, which was about 2003 and has been there ever since. She said she built her forever home there. She said she was going to be there no matter what. She said she is currently employed as a Peace Officer working for a local constable's office and her last five years of her 20-year law enforcement career or 20-plus-year law enforcement career have been in civil law. She said she has learned a lot about the justice system. She said the JP's need to know both sides because they do things like sign criminal warrants and do criminal and she does not know how to say it the best way, but they see people who are being arrested and do the magistrate for them, and they need to know that side and definitely need to know the civil side because they sign writs, they hear civil cases up to \$20,000 they also do eviction cases, they do writ of possessions, things like that. She said she has learned all of those things in the past five years, and she would like to advance her career and better herself and the community by going an extra step and running for this position. She said there are seven people in this position, and she is asking for people to do their vetting of candidates to look at their experience, look at what they have to offer. She said she has 1900 plus hours of training for this she has the law enforcement background, and now she has been focused on this civil. She said she raised her children in Precinct One. She said she is also a G.G. she is not a grandma. She has two little granddaughters that grew up here. She said she thinks it is really important to have people in office that know what they are doing and that are committed to justice and committed to fairness and committed to the county, which she is. She said she is a lifelong resident and will continue to be a lifelong resident. She said she would like to hear what the Council has going on tonight, and she was going to stick around.

Manning Rollerson said it is good to be here in the land of the living. He said he came in opposition of the Council for not doing anything about the explosion with Freeport LNG. He said he feels like his City has let him down because someone could say the people just let it blow up, and they are not nobody because that is what they said that day when it blew it up over here. He said do not turn on the system, because those people are nobody then turn around and look at his governing body that has responsibility for his health, his children's health, and every person in the community. He said the Council has not nothing, not one of the Council and they have their attorney sign that contract. He said do no harm the community was harmed by a 980-foot mad thing fire ball that the CEO says do not turn on the warning system. Mr. Rollerson asked if that is the way they are going to operate the City now not going to turn on the warning systems and just let the people suffer through it. He said he is in opposition of the desalinization plant we do not need any more toxic chemicals in this City if the Council can not do nothing about the explosions in this community. He said billions of dollars have been invested 57 years the City has not grown or shown a return of growth 57 years, and it is not just this governance it is 57 years straight of governance in the City of Freeport. He said, and now they are looking at tariffs that are going to lose jobs. He said he does not care what they are saying

about growth at the Port that is going to lose jobs and the first one is going to feel it is the Ports because 43% tariffs on cars. He said there goes the VW plan they just invested in. Mr. Rollerson asked where the dollars are for that, and where are the returns going to come for that? He said just like any industry in this community, Freeport is dying from a lack of good governance because the Council does not hold people accountable. He said the man that owns Freeport LNG is going to press charges on him because that is attempted manslaughter to every citizen in this City when they knew exactly what the problem was and did not fix it and then did not have the audacity not to warn the community. He said he is pressing charges on him and already called Law Enforcement. He said the County Judge if he does not handle his business, he will press charges on him and will come and press charges on the Mayor. He said this community elected the Council and are responsible according to the Oath that they took. He said the gloves are off because the Council does not care about the citizens in the community. He said at the end of the day, all the fighting and bickering that the Council does there and all the lying and deceiving and fighting to keep them downtown, the Council is running away from it. He said people are investing their money. He said the Council are failing the citizens and are failing to protect them, but the charges are coming.

Pamela Dancy resides at 313 South Front Street. She said at the last meeting it was brought up about the money that was owed to the Police Department, the Police Officers. She said she was just curious because last year, when Cathy was there, things would come up and the Council would just come up with making a budget amendment on this and let's just make it a budget amendment on this and Cathy would find money over here and over there. Ms. Dancy said things were done by making a budget amendment, and she was just curious why no one brought it up, which she really did not like all that, but it had happened before, and she was just wondering how come that was not brought up for the Police Department and why they had to be pushed off well she does not mean pushed off to the side, but they do have to wait for that money that was supposedly set up for them that they did not get so it was just something she was curious about.

Proclamations - Presentations and Updates

Presentations – Presentation

Tourism Friendly Community Designation by the State of Texas- Wade Dillon, Museum Director

Museum Director Wade Dillon introduced Spencer Zamora, who is a research specialist part of the Department of Economic Development and Tourism through the Office of the Governor.

Spencer Zamora began by thanking the Brazosport Chamber and the Main Street of Freeport, as well as Mayor Cain and Councilman Matamoros for their support letters. She emphasized the importance of the travel industry as a collaborative effort and highlighted the community's significant role as a Tourism Friendly Texas certified community. Ms. Zamora explained that the certification process started in early 2024 under Ana Silbas, who was then the head of the Main Street program, and Wade Dillon continued the certification efforts as the Main Street manager, which ultimately led to Freeport's recognition as a Tourism Friendly Texas community. She said the program aims to strengthen local partnerships, educate leaders on tourism's role in economic development, and encourage engagement in state programs such as Heritage Tourism, which offers numerous state resources for development. She further discussed how the program intended to create not just tourism promotion but also hometown pride, achieving greater visibility and recognition. Ms. Zamora shared that tourism has significantly impacted the area with impressive figures: \$444 million was spent on tourism-related activities in Brazoria County in 2023, providing 5,800 jobs, resulting in earnings of about \$157 million. She said that tourism has saved each household in the region an estimated \$308 in taxes. She congratulated the City of Freeport on its success in the certification process, which involved more than 80 communities expressing interest and only 40 achieving the designation. She said the City of Freeport was recognized as the 31st community. She congratulated the City of Freeport and gave special thanks to Museum Director Wade Dillon and Editch

Fischer.

Presentation by the US Army Corps of Engineers to update on the status of the Freeport Project. - Eddie Irigoyen, Project Manager

Eddie Irigoyen is the Project Manager of the US Army Corps of Engineers Galveston District and provided an update on the Sabine Pass to Galveston Bay-Freeport.

Presentation by the Velasco Drainage District.- David Youngblood, Assistant Superintendent

David Youngblood is the Superintendent for the Velasco Drainage District. He provided an update on ongoing improvements by the Velasco Drainage District. He discussed the suspension of the Sabine Pass to Galveston Bay Coastal Storm Risk Management Project.

Mayor Cain asked if the levee system surrounding Freeport is in good shape, great shape, or needs repair? David Youngblood said it is in excellent shape.

Councilman Davis asked what was the area that needed a foot and a half to be raised? David Youngblood said that is currently the North Barge Canal System inside the Dow property area. He said it is usually well protected within the industry, but just with overtime and the heavy traffic, it has kind of sunken a little bit, so they are raising it up.

Councilman Matamoros said David Youngblood had said the levee surrounding Freeport is in excellent shape and asked if there are any portions covering Freeport or surrounding Freeport that are lower that need to be raised? Mr. Youngblood said no and most of the Freeport frontal protection system is 21 feet, and they range from 21 feet down 15 up to the banks of Oyster Creek in the East Bank of Brazos River that is part of the FEMA certification process. Councilman Matamoros said the reason he is asking is that everybody pocketbooks if flood protection is lost. Mr. Youngblood said that is why they are moving forward with FEMA certification, so that does affect everybody flood insurance.

Upcoming Events - Easter Eggstravaganza, Saturday, April 12, 9:00A.M. at Freeport Municipal Park
Riverfest, Saturday, April 26, 10:00A.M.-11:30P.M. at Freeport Municipal Park

City Manager Lance Petty gave an update on upcoming events.

Proclamation of the City of Freeport declaring April 2025 as 'Fair Housing Month'.- Ashlee Hurst, Finance Director

Mayor Cain read the proclamation declaring April 2025 as Fair Housing Month in the City of Freeport.

Proclamation for National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week.- Jennifer Howell, Police Chief

Mayor Cain read the proclamation declaring the week of April 13-19, 2025, as National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week in the City of Freeport.

Proclamation for National Animal Control Officer Appreciation Week.- Jennifer Howell, Police Chief

Mayor Cain read the proclamation declaring the week of April 13-19, 2025, as National Animal Control Officer Appreciation Week in the City of Freeport.

Public Hearings

Public Hearing: Consideration and possible action approving New Gulf Enterprises Subdivision being a Re-Plat of Lots 13-15, Lots 19-20, and the West ½ of Lot 16, Block 34, of The Freeport Townsite, as recorded in Volume 2, Page 95 of The Brazoria County Plat Records, and being all that certain called 0.08 Acre Tract of Land Conveyed by Special Warranty Deed on September 7, 2023 from The City Of Freeport to New Gulf Enterprises, as Recorded in Clerk's File No. 2023-048814 of The Brazoria County Official Records, in The Thomas F. McKinney Labor, Abstract 87 Brazoria County, Texas

Mayor Cain opened the Public Hearing at 6:48P.M.

Interim Building Official Patti Foster said the owner is proposing expansion of the current building to incorporate new restrooms, gas canopy, underground tanks and additional parking. She said the replat was taken in front of the Planning and Zoning Board on 03/25/2025 and was approved. She said the owner and architects have already had a pre-construction meeting with departments regarding the proposed project. She said she recommended approval of the plat.

Mayor Cain closed the Public Hearing at 6:51P.M.

A motion was made by Councilman Matamoros to approve New Gulf Enterprises Subdivision being a Re-Plat of Lots 13-15, Lots 19-20, and the West ½ of Lot 16, Block 34, of The Freeport Townsite, as recorded in Volume 2, Page 95 of The Brazoria County Plat Records, and being all that certain called 0.08 Acre Tract of Land Conveyed by Special Warranty Deed on September 7, 2023 from The City Of Freeport to New Gulf Enterprises, as Recorded in Clerk's File No. 2023-048814 of The Brazoria County Official Records, in The Thomas F. McKinney Labor, Abstract 87 Brazoria County, Texas, seconded by Councilman Davis with discussion that followed.

Councilman Matamoros asked if the address was going to be 131 East Fifth Street? City Manager Lance Petty said yes.

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

Business

Consideration and possible action approving meeting minutes March 17, 2025.

A motion was made by Councilman Matamoros to approve meeting minutes March 17, 2025, seconded by Councilman Rossow with all present and voting "Aye" 4-1. The Council approved the motion. Councilman Pena voted "Nay".

Discussion and possible action regarding a Resolution of Censure against Councilman Jeff Peña for 1) Responding to a demand letter by attorney Clay Thomas in a manner that does not represent the position of the majority of council, and 2) Continual Charter violations involving meeting with and directing of City staff.

A motion was made by Councilman Pena to table this item.

Councilman Davis said he was going to make a motion to move this item to the bottom.

A motion was made by Councilman Pena to move this off the agenda based on the fact that the packet is incomplete there are no supporting documents other than just a memo and what has been required of both himself and Councilman Rossow and Councilman Davis has been that the agenda items have to have a

complete packet of not only just the request but also the memo and the supporting docs and in the packet there are no supporting docs, and so that would violate the ordinance by moving forward on this does the agenda ordinance.

Interim City Attorney David Olson said there is a motion on the floor to essentially table this item. Councilman Pena nodded yes.

A motion was made by Councilman Pena to table this item, seconded by Councilman Davis with discussion that followed.

Councilman Davis said since Councilman Pena said what he said it is true because a couple of their agendas have been tabled because of no documents and stuff, and he did not see none either other than that he was just going to move it down to the bottom, but he meant if they are going to be fair.

Councilman Pena said he made this motion to remove it off the table because he thinks it is a joke, and he thinks it is stupid and that the Council is wasting time and taxpayer money for these personal attacks by Mayor Cain, George, and Olson which will require him to share additional censure information that will expose the Mayor and George, and it is going to embarrass them because they want to throw down this gantlet. Councilman Pena said he was going to share the other information.

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

Councilman Matamoros asked Mayor Cain if the tabled was for? Interim City Attorney David Olson said the tabled would be to the next meeting. Councilman Matamoros asked to the next meeting? Mr. Olson said yes. Councilman Matamoros said because Councilman Pena said to table it total and Councilman Davis stated to table it to the end of the meeting. Councilman Davis said his did not count because Councilman Pena's motion as first. Councilman Davis said he said he was going to table it to the end but Councilman Pena's motion was first so it overruled. Mayor Cain said Councilman Pena's motion was first and that was to table it, and it will go to the next meeting.

Councilman Pena said to Mayor Cain before he put this item on the next agenda to call him because he does not think Mayor Cain is going to want this item on the next agenda. Councilman Pena said he was going to inform Mayor Cain as to why he is asking for it and why it is not in the interest of the City.

Consideration and possible action by City Council approving the sale of property located at Block 70, Lot 4, Velasco Townsite and approving the city attorney to draft a deed and the Mayor to sign and City Secretary to attest to such deed.

Special Projects Supervisor Laura Cramer said Mr. David Ellis had made an offer to purchase the property to purchase a 25-foot-wide parcel located in the 200 Block of South Avenue H being Lot 4 of Block 70 Velasco Townsite. She said a full appraisal was conducted on the property and it was valued at \$5,500. She said the sale of this property was last presented in February a brokers opinion of value set the value of the property at \$1,237 and the Council denied that offer and a full appraisal was ordered.

Interim City Attorney David Olson said Special Projects Supervisor Laura Cramer and himself kind of worked out the deed stuff on the front end, so the Council does not even have to authorize it is already in the packet and that is the appropriate deed and so the motion would be to approve the deed as presented.

A motion was made by Councilman Pena to approve the deed, seconded by Councilman Davis with discussion that followed.

Councilman Matamoros asked if the sale was for \$5,500? Special Projects Supervisor Laura Cramer said

yes.

Interim City Attorney David Olson said to Councilman Pena just to be clear the motion would reflect selling the property with the deed presented at the sale price presented as well and asked if this was correct? Councilman Pena said to let him get into the weeds of that. Mr. Olson said the assumption from staff is the motion to approve the deed was for the purchase price that was presented. Special Projects Supervisor Laura Cramer said that is correct. Councilman Pena said he was reviewing the appraisal one last time.

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

Consideration and possible action approving Resolution No. 2025-2909 for the appointment of a candidate to fill the vacant position on the Charter Review that will expire May 31, 2025.

Nicole Mireles resides at 2002 North Avenue G. She said what she wanted to talk about is this next item that the Council has on there for the Charter Review. She said she just wanted to make a recommendation. She said she knows the Council has probably already made up their mind, but Ruben Renobato is a good friend of hers, and they talk very often about City government and this and that and things that are going on. She said she could tell the Council that he would really be an asset to have him on the board because he does a lot of research, and he calls her and says he wants to run things by her and asks her what she thinks, and they collaborate back and forth. Ms. Mireles said he does his homework, and he does a lot of research and if the Council had any questions, she was going to put him on the spot, but she was sitting outside with him, but she just wanted the Council to consider having him on the board.

Councilman Pena asked Mayor Cain if there were any apps submitted received by the City for this Charter Review position? Mayor Cain asked Councilman Pena if there were any applicants? Councilman Pena said yes. Mayor Cain said to Councilman Pena it was in his packet. Councilman Pena said he did not see it in the packet as well and said he is not sure why the packets are not being uploaded online correctly, but he is looking at the one that is online and this is the one that is the one that is supposed to be served to the public and so if the public yet again, he just wants to make sure that the Council is following the agenda rules.

A motion was made by Councilman Matamoros to approve Ruben Renobato to the Charter Review to fill the remaining term until May 31st, 2025, seconded by Mayor Cain with discussion that followed.

Councilman Pena said he thinks they are out of procedure there yet again on the agenda, missing documentation on there and that is why it needs to be tabled. He said he did not jump at the microphone just to say to table it. He said he would imagine that they are going to try to use some common sense as well as when somebody proclaims that they know all the open meeting rules and all the ordinances they would not want to try to violate the one ordinance that talks about the agenda and those procedures of having all the papers and the documents in there, and so they cannot even make a motion on this because it is illegally posed on the agenda, because online the packet is different than whatever Jerry may have. Councilman Pena said he is not making this up.

City Secretary Clarisa Fernandez said whenever she posts the agendas she does two different packets. She said one packet is sent to the Council with information about the candidates. She said she is not going to put the information about their personal phone numbers, their address and stuff online and so that is why there are two different packets and the one on the Council's tablet that is the one she usually sends with the information.

Councilman Pena said legal clarification on that ordinance is needed then so that going forward that any discrepancy is clarified or redacted if needed to make sure that there is applicants' information so that other residents are aware who is applying and whether there is any room for their involvement, that they can actually apply, because as it seems now, and it looks like nobody has applied. Interim City Attorney David

Olson said there is no legal requirement that you take applications at all, so the Council can all decide what the process looks like for appointing somebody, and he agrees with the City Secretary it is a bad idea to share applicants, it is a public record. Councilman Pena said it is all public record. Mr. Olson said he thinks the intent there was just not to advertise people's personal data and the Council will have to decide what goes in the packets for public consumption. Councilman Pena said that seems so counterintuitive because they are talking about individuals who are trying to volunteer in the public space for their community, for their City, and it is very important that the residents know who all is applying. He said for example somebody applied and there was a sexual predator, a registered sexual predator, and nobody is going to know about it, but maybe somebody over there in the public might say, hey, you know what I watch that list, because that is a personal issue with me and then they bring it up to the Council.

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

Consideration and possible action approving Resolution No. 2025-2910 Amending the City of Freeport Policy Handbook Chapter 8 – Attendance and Leave Policy revising Section 8.02 – Vacation.

Human Resource Director Donna Fisher said she was recommending approval of this resolution to revise the vacation policy to allow employees to rollover up to 160 hours versus the 120 that it is currently capped at, and also to allow department directors to cash in up to 40 hours of vacation within the 30 days prior to their anniversary date. She said the department directors are often not able to take all of their accrued vacation because of things like emergency weather situations, staff shortages, and so by doing this, by allowing more carryovers and allowing directors to cash them in, they would not forfeit as much of their vacation well hopefully they would not forfeit any, but that would help them in being able to use the vacation that they have earned and the last time the City updated the vacation policy was in April 2019. She said as far as financial impact, if each director cashed in 40 hours of vacation all at one time, it would be about \$18,500 so there is not a big impact.

A motion was made by Councilman Matamoros to approve Resolution No. 2025-2910 Amending the City of Freeport Policy Handbook Chapter 8- Attendance and Leave Policy revising Section 8.02-Vacation, seconded by Councilman Rossow.

Mayor Cain said he would like to say, one way to go about taking care of this unused vacation is just reducing it down to 40 hours, problem solved. Human Resource Director Donna Fisher said she thinks some of our employees that have been here 15 years or more might fuss a little about that. Councilman Pena asked Mayor Cain if he was not joking, right? Councilman Pena asked Mayor Cain if it was a joke or if he was being serious? Mayor Cain said it was a joke.

Councilman Davis asked what the rollover was? Human Resource Director Donna Fisher said the roll-over is 120 hours or three weeks this would let them roll over 160 hours or four weeks. Ms. Fisher said there are employees that have 120 hours of roll over and earn 160 hours a year and for some of those it is very difficult to get all that time in if we have an emergency weather situation and there were two last year.

Councilman Davis asked why they have that much? Ms. Fisher said because they have been with the City for more than 15 years, so they are earning 160 a year, and they can carry over up to 120 right now. Councilman Davis asked so why they do not take some time off? Ms. Fisher said because of things like emergency weather situations, staff shortages. She said it is mostly for directors because directors in an emergency situation have to be there. She said most directors can not call in and say they know there is a hurricane, but they are on vacation, so they have trouble sometimes getting that, and this will make it a little easier for them. Councilman Davis said they do that in the County too and can not roll over 160 hours. He said he works for the County and when there are hurricanes they must go in also. Ms. Fisher said the current policy rates 120. Councilman Davis said that is a lot he wished he could rollover 160. Councilman Davis said they make them at the County take-off or you got to leave it. He said 120 is a lot to roll over. Ms. Fisher said it is a lot for a lot of people.

Councilman Pena asked how many employees are affected by this at the director level, and how many directors? Councilman Pena said to Human Resource Director Donna Fisher she said it was \$18,000 it was going to cost the City. Ms. Fisher said she thinks there are nine directors. Councilman Pena asked if all of them are affected by this year? Ms. Fisher said not necessarily that was the maximum estimate if every single one of them were to do that, which is not expected. Councilman Pena said sometimes he sits up there, and he thinks about what Elon Musk say, what would Doge say on this, what would Freeport Office of Government Efficiency do? Councilman Pena said and all kidding aside, he is just thinking, okay, so they did not take 100, they did not take all of their vacation time last year or the year before or the year before that and then they want to give them credit to take it next year well if they fail to take it before, what is to say that they are going to take it this coming year. Councilman Pena asked is it because then they are going to be properly managed and being told hey you have to he means he does not work for the county, but this is kind of insightful that the county does it a certain way and those guys run a bigger budget than the City, they run a larger operation, but the numbers are the same, right? Councilman Pena said in terms of the principle of it all and asked what are people really doing? Councilman Pena asked how employees are acting and not acting? Councilman Pena said and so when they have and asked if this is all the directors by the way? Ms. Fisher said she included all the Directors in this total, but it typically would not affect all Directors and she is not at 120 hours carryover, much less 160 but there are some. Councilman Pena said they were talking about the budget and this would have been nice to know what the budget too, simply because, you know, they are talking about overtimes and budget overruns and cannot in good conscience, you know, just all of a sudden staff wants to just start adding more benefits to this package here, and they have to man the line there and so this is his feedback is that like, you know, they are always talking about fiscal responsibility, and he thought they were supposed to be buckling their belts in 24 or 25 and this does not seem like they are buckling their belts this looks like an irresponsible giveaway, especially since they had not used their vacation before. Councilman Pena said what made him think that they are going to use it next year. He said it is like do not get him wrong he appreciates everybody, he appreciates everybody's service and their hard work but this reminds him, this reminds him of that holiday pay back in 23. Councilman Matamoros said to Mayor Cain this had nothing to do with any of this. Councilman Pena said this is why there is still a bad taste in his mouth because they are getting back on holiday pay. Mayor Cain said to Councilman Pena to get back on track. Councilman Pena said they are getting back on holiday pay that was not unused and then giving it away. Councilman Pena said he would say that they could have it if they stick around for another six months, then they could use it, but giving it to them, and then they leave next month, the City gets screwed. Ms. Fisher said this is based on when their anniversary day falls it is not just to pay out tomorrow, but if they have not used it within 30 days of their anniversary date, then they can cash in up to 40 hours that is it. Ms. Fisher said it is not a oh, I just need some extra cash it is based on anniversary dates. Councilman Pena said the math does not add up.

Councilman Rossow said he used to work and he is retired now and anybody that wants to take away his vacation he has a problem with that. He said anybody wants to take away his vacation. He said whoever it is that works for the City if they did not take vacation, that means they are at work so it sounded to him like a good employee to him. Councilman Rossow said a good employee. He said when he retired, he had max vacation, and he had max comp time because he cared about his job he cared about the county. He said he just cannot see the Council taken away, he can see adding. He said a worker, a person that works, works. He said that is his take on it, and he does not believe in taking away from employees and those guys or girls that are not taking vacation there he would consider a pretty good employee if they are on the job and, so that is his take on that and that is how he feels about it.

Councilman Davis said to Councilman Rossow they are not talking about taking away not on vacation they are not talking about taking away. He said they are talking about adding more. Councilman Davis said to Councilman Rossow he says he works for the county, and he worked right alongside with him. Councilman Davis asked Councilman Rossow could he roll over 160 hours? Councilman Davis said no when you been

that long, he means, and they make you take that off, you can roll over like 120 if you have been so long it is no problem. Councilman Rossow said that is what Ms. Fisher is saying. Councilman Davis said that is where they are now, but they want to move it up to 160 so if you did not take 160 this year, then what are you going to do next year. Councilman Davis said that means either they are making them work too much or they not letting them get time off or that is a good employee but let them take some time off when it is time for Councilman Rossow to get his vacation, he had to take off a week every year they got down to the end of the year everybody was gone a week, two weeks he means it is a time in there now where you got to take a break. Councilman Davis said they are not talking about taking a vacation away from them. Councilman Rossow said no they are talking about adding.

Mayor Cain said they way he sees it, only someone who has worked in the City for over 15 years is even at the 160. Human Resource Director Donna Fisher said that is correct. Mayor Cain said if there was an employee in the City that has been there for 15 plus years and worked every day, he was supposed to, regardless of the reason then he would be able to either roll over 160 hours because he did not use any, he or she or they could roll over 120 and cash in 40. Ms. Fisher said that is correct. Ms. Fisher said the employee that this actually affects the most who has lost probably at least the last three years lost vacation time would be our Fire Chief and Emergency Management Coordinator, Chief Motley.

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

Consideration and possible action approving purchase of a 911 logging recorder.

A motion was made by Mayor Cain to table this agenda item, seconded by Councilman Matamoros with all present and voting "Aye" 4-1. The Council approved the motion. Councilman Pena voted "Nay".

Adjournment

Adjournment – Jerry Cain, Mayor

A motion was made by Mayor Cain to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Councilman Matamoros with all present and voting "Aye" 5-0. Mayor Cain adjourned the meeting at 7:21P.M.


Jerry Cain, Mayor


Clarisa Fernandez, City Secretary