

**MINUTES OF THE TOWN OF FRANKLIN TOWN COUNCIL
SPECIAL CALLED MEETING
APRIL 19, 2022**

THE FRANKLIN TOWN COUNCIL held a special called meeting on Tuesday, April 19, 2022, at 3:30 pm. in the Town Hall Board Room located at 95 East Main Street Franklin, NC.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Jack Horton called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m. with the following members present: Vice Mayor Joe Collins, Council Members Stacy Guffey, Mike Lewis, Adam Kimsey and Rita Salain.

Council Member David Culpepper arrived at 3:58 p.m.

2. PUBLIC SESSION

Judy Burnett, Director for Macon Medication Assistance Program (MMAP), addressed the Town Council and requested that they consider providing funds for this important program. She explained that over \$96,000 had been provided in assistance since the pandemic began. MMAP does receive some state funds, but not nearly enough to help the number of individuals who need help obtaining their medications.

Mayor Horton thanked Ms. Burnett for her comments.

3. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mayor Horton noted that the second budget work session would need to be rescheduled as the original date of May 17th is the primary election and the Town Council chambers would be used for voting. **The rescheduled date for the special called meeting will be Monday, May 9 at 6:00 p.m.**

Mayor Horton also explained that while attending the Essentials of Municipal Government course, it was highly recommended that municipalities adopt a policy indicating the minimum amount of fund balance to be kept – this could be a set number or a percentage. This will be a policy to be presented at a later date.

4. NEW BUSINESS

A. Request Approval of Resolution to Apply for SRF loan/grant for Water Treatment Plant Phase II

Town Manager Amie Owens explained that the Town has an opportunity to apply for a \$5 Million dollar grant to offset the increased costs for the Water Treatment Plant Phase II improvements. The original assessment was \$8.8 million and after completion of the Preliminary Engineering Report (PER), the cost was \$12.8 million. The Town has already been approved for the \$8.8M. If the total amount of grant funds is not awarded, the Town would need to apply for additional State Revolving Fund Loan dollars and this resolution allows us to do both. The application window closes on May 1, 2022; Withers Ravenel will be completing and submitting the application for the Town.

Vice Mayor Joe Collins made a motion, seconded by Council Member Adam Kimsey to approve the Resolution by the Governing Body of Applicant to apply for additional State Revolving Fund loan and/or grant funds for the Water Treatment Plant Phase II improvements. The motion carried unanimously. Vote: 5-0.

B. FY 2022/2023 Budget Overview

Town Manager Owens presented an overview of the FY 2022/2023 proposed budget to include the following:

- Requested \$0.03 cent tax increase to go to \$0.35 cents per \$100 valuation
- Proposed \$1.55 cent increase in the fire district tax – Macon County Board of County Commissioners would have to approve
- Five (5) new positions – 2 in Water/Sewer and 3 in Fire Department
- Use of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds for sidewalk improvements
- Increases noted in health insurance, workers compensation and property and liability insurance
- Mandatory increases in employer paid retirement
- A contingency in the General Fund of \$20,000

Town Manager Owens added that the budget presented was prior to any cuts being made, it was simply for the Council to see what had been requested and how much would be needed from fund balance in the general fund and water sewer funds to present a balanced budget.

Discussion was held and the Council provided the following direction for the budget. The manager and department directors should look at what items may be cut, factor in the proposed tax increase and use of ARPA funds to offset some of the use of fund balance for projects. Council requested several additions to the budget utilizing ARPA funds including as match for grants and the addition of funds for beautification of roundabouts.

The question was asked if there could be a budget presented with and without the proposed tax increase. As only one budget can be presented, the proposed budget will be presented with the tax increase, but information will be available related to the amount necessary to balance the budget if the tax increase is not favorable. This information will be discussed at the budget work session on May 9, 2022 at 6:00 p.m.

Mayor Horton added that previously there had been joint meetings of Franklin, Highlands and Macon County elected leaders to provide updates related to activities of each and to see where it may be feasible to partner. These meetings have not occurred since the onset of the pandemic and Mayor Horton would like to see them start up again with Franklin hosting one during July/August.

Mayor Horton also reminded Town Council Members that they had mentioned wanting to help do a litter pick up. April 16 – 30 is the NC DOT litter sweep and he suggested possibly doing a pick up one Saturday. Discussion was held and it was determined that potentially doing a litter pick up in the evening, along the Highlands Road would be beneficial. The Town Manager and Mayor will attempt to coordinate.

Council Member Stacy Guffey made a motion, seconded by Council Member David Culpepper to adjourn the meeting at 5:29 p.m. Motion carried. Vote: 6 to 0.

C. Jack Horton, Mayor

Amanda W. Owens, Town Manager
Acting Town Clerk