

**MINUTES OF THE TOWN OF FRANKLIN TOWN COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING
August 1, 2022**

THE FRANKLIN TOWN COUNCIL held a regular meeting on Monday, August 1, 2022, at 6:00 p.m. 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 6:00 p.m. with the following members present: Vice Mayor Joe Collins, Council Members David Culpepper via Zoom, Stacy Guffey, Mike Lewis, Adam Kimsey and Rita Salain.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Vice Mayor Joe Collins.

3. EMPLOYEE RECOGNITIONS

- A.) Police Department
 - a. Master Officer III, Kelly Jo Fosler- New Officer
 - b. Patrol Sergeants: Justin Riles & Matthew Bingham
 - c. First Sergeant/Detective Justin Norman
 - d. First Sergeant Randy Dula- Street Poisons Enforcement Eradication Directive in CID
 - e. Captain Matthew Pellicer
- B.) Public Works
 - a. Chris Green- B-Distribution
 - b. Jason Hopkins- Pretreatment 1 Certification
 - c. Jake Slagle- Wastewater 3 Certification
 - d. Chris Waldroop- Collections 1 Certification
- C.) Finance
 - a. Sarah Bishop- Municipal and County Administration

4. PRESENTATIONS

Marty Greeble & Mary Polanski, Project Leaders of the Women’s History Trail (WHT) would like to present the *Sowing the Seeds of the Future* sculpture as a gift to the Town of Franklin. They gave a presentation on the history of the 3 women and their ties to Western North Carolina. The sculpture is being created by Wesley Wofford and will be completed by Summer 2023. The WHT would like the Town to install the piece on Town property near the river. A memorandum of understanding (MOU) will be needed in order for the Town to accept such a gift and to outline the responsibilities of each party. Town Attorney John Henning, Jr. will draft the MOU.

Council Members Rita Salain and Stacy Guffey will represent the Town on a committee to assist with site planning and community engagement.

5. ADOPTION OF THE AUGUST 1, 2022 TOWN COUNCIL AGENDA

Council Member Rita Salain made a motion, seconded by Council Member Stacy Guffey to adopt the Town Council Agenda for August 1, 2022. The motion carried unanimously. Vote: 6 – 0.

6. APPROVAL OF THE CONSENT AGENDA FOR AUGUST 1, 2022

- A.) Approval of July 5, 2022 Town Council regular meeting minutes.
- B.) Budget Amendments- Police Department
- C.) Renewal Contract for John Henning, Jr., Town Attorney
- D.) Resolution to accept \$175,000 From NCDEQ

Council Member Mike Lewis made a motion, seconded by Council Member Adam Kimsey to approve the consent agenda as presented. The motion carried unanimously. Vote 6 – 0.

7. PUBLIC HEARING

Mayor Jack Horton called the public hearing related to rezoning of 138 Sloan Street to order at 6:42 p.m.

Town Planner Justin Setser explained that a request had been received for the rezoning of property located at 138 Sloan Street from Commercial C-2 to Residential R-2. The request was made by land owner James Martin. The Planning Board met on June 20th and unanimously voted to recommend the rezoning.

Connie Stiles, homeowner on Sloan Street, spoke in opposition of the rezoning. She stated she is opposed of the rezoning because if rezoned to R-2 a manufactured home could be placed on the property. She felt that having a manufactured home in the neighborhood would negatively affect her property as well as other neighboring properties.

Evan Harrell with Remax also spoke and stated that nine out of the eleven properties that touch 138 Sloan Street are already zoned R-2 and manufactured homes are already allowed under that zoning designation.

Mayor Horton closed Public Hearing at 6:49 p.m.

Vice Mayor Joe Collins made a motion, seconded by Council Member Adam Kimsey to approve the rezoning of 138 Sloan Street from Commercial C-1 to Residential R-2 as it is consistent with the Land Use plan and that the zoning map for the Town of Franklin be updated to reflect this change. The motion carried unanimously. Vote 6 – 0.

8. PUBLIC SESSION

No one signed up to speak during Public Session.

9. NEW BUSINESS

- A.) Request for Town to take over Street

Town Planner Justin Setser along with Thomas Harris, Heritage Hollow Property Owners Board Member presented a request for street acceptance for Heritage Hollow Drive. The section of the street is from Phillips Street to the former bridge in Heritage Hollow. Mr. Setser and Public Works Director Bill Deal reviewed the street specifications and the road meets the Town's criteria for acceptance. If accepted it will be added to Town's Powell Bill list.

Vice Mayor Collins asked about the future and if there were intentions to rebuild the bridge. Mr. Harris stated the Heritage Hollow board members do not want to put a vehicle bridge back. Mr. Harris stated they are willing to get a survey if this is something the Town is willing to entertain.

Council Member Guffey inquired about installing a pedestrian bridge and Mr. Harris stated the Heritage Hollow Board Members are in favor of a foot bridge to bring more people into the Hollow. Council Member Culpepper would like to see a bridge built if the Town takes over the street. Town Attorney John Henning advised that building a bridge could not be a condition of accepting the street. Vice Mayor Joe Collins said he would like to have a survey completed before we proceed and Attorney John Henning agreed that it would be in the best interest of the Town.

Mayor Horton asked to postpone any action until a survey could be completed.

B.) Street Closure Request

Western Carolina Pharoah's Car Club has requested to close lotla Street, Phillips Street, and Main Street on September 24, 2022 from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. for a Car Show. Town Manager Amie Owens noted that this would be a new event and would be on a weekend opposite Pickin' on the Square.

Council Member Mike Lewis made a motion, seconded by Council Member Stacy Guffey to approve the street closure for September 24 for the car show. The motion carried unanimously. Vote: 6 – 0.

10. OLD BUSINESS

A.) Longevity

Town Attorney John Henning updated Council on the longevity payout. There are still several individuals that have yet to sign the release to receive the payout. Attorney John Henning advised that the appropriation for the full amount of the longevity payout should be presented to the Town Council and that unless a release is signed, the funds should not be released. A budget amendment for the full amount will be brought to the September 6, 2022 meeting for all qualified individuals to receive payout once the Town's release has been signed.

Mayor Horton requested that the budget amendment be brought back to the next regular meeting on September 6 for consideration.

B.) Police Department Salary Discussion

Town Manager Amie Owens updated the Council related to salaries. She noted that her primary recommendation was to do a salary study for all departments to address market salary deficiencies and compression. Due to the nature of the concerns surrounding the Police Department and their critical staffing shortage, that department would be addressed first.

Sarah Bishop, Finance Director, Nicole Bradley, HR Director, Police Chief Bill Harrell sat down with Town Manger Owens to brainstorm and look at ways to remain competitive and not break the bank. Recommendations presented included:

1. Adjust the current salary structure within the FPD to be competitive within the region. This would include the change to the starting salary for a Police Officer to \$40,500. Adjustments to the existing pay scale within the police department to avoid compression and to be equitable throughout the department would cost approximately \$45,000.00.

2. In order to assist with recruitment, it is recommended that individuals who are chosen to be sponsored by the Town of Franklin be hired as full-time non-sworn employees during their time in Basic Law Enforcement Training (BLET). The Trainee salary rate would be \$38,475.00. This has become the practice within the region rather than paying a limited hourly, part-time rate. Upon successful completion of BLET and gaining their sworn officer status, salary would be adjusted to the base rate of \$40,500. This investment would ensure three (3) positions would be filled by February 2023. Leaving only two (2) open positions.
3. Utilize current part-time/reserve officers to assist with shift coverage to prevent full-time officer burnout.
4. Continue to actively recruit officers who may have some experience for the remaining open positions utilizing the adjusted pay scale to fill vacancies sooner rather than later.

Manager Owens noted that there is a possible option for some grant funding through the State and has been in contact with Senator Kevin Corbin to see how to receive the funds.

Mayor Horton commented that he would like to see a fair and equitable study done for all employees and a possible staffing analysis. The estimated cost of a salary study would be around \$25,000. Town Manger Owens will put together an RFP for the Classification and Compensation Study.

Council Member Stacy Guffey made a motion, seconded by Council Member Adam Kimsey to approve the recommendations presented for the adjustments for the Police Department salaries and to move forward with a salary study in the current fiscal year. The motion carried unanimously. Vote: 6 – 0.

11. ITEMS FROM COUNCIL

Vice Mayor Joe Collins, ABC Board Liaison updated the Council on the meeting he attended at the ABC store. He said they are willing to work with and stand with the Town. He also started they were looking for a vehicle to make delivers and they Town might have a vehicle that they could use for those deliveries to local restaurants.

Council Member Stacy Guffey discussed the Whitmire Property/Recreation. The Town will not be able to work with Macon County at this time for recreation needs. The Council needs to make a decision on the recreation of the Whitmire Property. He suggested Town Manager Owens set up a meeting with Council Members to discuss the use of the Whitmire Property.

Mayor Horton would like to set up a joint dinner meeting with Town Council/Macon County/Town of Highlands.

12. CLOSED SESSION

Council Member Adam Kimsey made a motion, seconded by Council Member Rita Salain to enter into Closed Session under NC General Statute § 143-318.11(a)(5) to discuss acquisition of real property by purchase, option, exchange, or lease-greenway adjacent property and ABC Store. The motion carried unanimously. Vote: 6-0.

The Town Council entered Closed Session at 7:40 p.m.

The Town Council returned from Closed Session at 8:09 p.m.

13. COMMENTS

Town Planner, Justin Setser had a conversation with Thomas Watson from Opportunity Appalachia. At that time, he had received four proposals for the hotel project and was expecting another one.

New Code Enforcement Officer, Frank Belanger, starts Monday August 8, 2022.

Next Town Council Meeting will be held Tuesday September 6, 2022 at 6:00 p.m.

Town Offices will be closed for Labor Day on Monday, September 5th.

Town Audit will take place August 8-12 in Town Hall Board Room.

14. ADJOURNMENT

Council Member Mike Lewis made a motion, seconded by Vice Mayor Joe Collins to adjourn the meeting at 8:14 p.m. The motion carried unanimously. Vote: 6 to 0.

C. Jack Horton, Mayor

Reviewed by: Amanda W. Owens, Town Manager
Acting Town Clerk

Prepared by: Nicole Bradley
Human Resources Director