

MINUTES OF THE TOWN OF FRANKLIN TOWN COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING
May 1, 2023

THE FRANKLIN TOWN COUNCIL held a regular meeting on Monday, May 1, 2023, 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, Stacy Guffey, Mike Lewis and Rita Salain.

Council Member Mike Lewis made a motion, seconded by Council Member David Culpepper to excuse Council Member Adam Kimsey from the meeting. The motion carried unanimously. Vote 5 – 0.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

3. ADOPTION OF THE MAY 3, 2023 TOWN COUNCIL AGENDA

Council Member Rita Salain made a motion, seconded by Council Member Mike Lewis to adopt the Town Council Agenda for May 1, 2023 as presented. The motion carried unanimously. Vote: 5 – 0.

4. APPROVAL OF THE CONSENT AGENDA FOR MAY 1, 2023

- A.) Approval of Minutes of the April 3, 2023 Town Council regular meeting
- B.) Budget Amendment(s)
- C.) Tax Release(s)
- D.) Approval of Timekeeping Policy
- E.) Approval to hold fireworks on the 4th of July
- F.) Approval of Fire Protection Contract with Macon County

Council Member Mike Lewis made a motion, seconded by Council Member David Culpepper to approve the consent agenda as presented. The motion carried unanimously. Vote 5 – 0.

5. INTRODUCTION

- A.) Officer Brandon Hooper by Police Chief Devin Holland- Sworn in by Mayor Horton on March 30, 2023. He comes to the Franklin Police Department with 18 years of experience in law enforcement.

6. PRESENTATION

- A.) Social Districts - Bernadette Peters, Main Street Economic Development Director, Town of Sylva

Ms. Peters presented information to Council on what the Town of Sylva has done with their Social District. The Social District was created in North Carolina to increase retail sales after the Covid Pandemic. The Town of Sylva did a six-month test period for open containers in Town on weekends only. Downtown retailers had an option to opt-in. If they wanted to participate, they would have a sign in their window. Patrons could purchase a \$10 aluminum cup branded with the required branding from the State. Their outdoor retailer orders and sales the cups. Each of the permit holders make \$2 from the cup purchases.

Council Member Salain asked if a cup had to be empty before they could enter another establishment. Ms. Peters stated the last establishment that serves the individual would give them a sticker. Individuals are allowed to enter retail establishments who are inviting them in, but not other permit holders.

Council Member Lewis asked if the Social District area is contiguous. Ms. Peters stated that yes, their Town is small and easy to block off.

Council Member Salain asked if it was currently 7 days a week. Ms. Peters stated yes. They had the six-month weekend only test period.

Council Member Culpepper asked what they spent on the signs. Ms. Peters said they spent around \$3500.

Mayor Horton asked about municipalities adopting an ordinance prohibiting alcohol on government owned property. Ms. Peters stated it is a State Law to omit alcohol on government owned properties.

Council Member Salain asked if they were considering expanding the time. Ms. Peters stated they are considering expanding the time one hour, but would not go past that since the retailers are not open.

B.) Update - Scott-Griffin Hotel Project - Justin Setser, Town Planner

Town Planner Setser provided an update on the Scott-Griffin Hotel Project. Brian Wishneff & Associates were hired as a consulting firm and Summit Studio was hired as the lead architect firm. Mr. Setser submitted the paperwork to add the building to the North Carolina Historical National Registry. The response back was not favorable because the building has been changed too much. Mary Hanbury of Hanbury Preservation Consulting has been hired to help see if a smaller Historic District can be created downtown.

Town Planner Setser has received verbal commitments from several creditors: WCU Hospitality, No Wrong Door and SCC Culinary Arts Program as being able to assist with employment needs when the hotel opens.

Town Planner Setser displayed the renderings of the proposed future hotel. The plans are for twenty (20) king bed suites, one room with a balcony to Main Street. The lobby would have an elevator, lounge, check-in desk, and laundry room. The top floor would be the restaurant with a kitchen and an outdoor terrace. There will be a fire escape in the back and the possibility of valet parking.

Town Planner Setser noted that investors are still needed to help bridge the funding gap for the project. He played a video that will be shown at the investors' convening seminar.

7. PUBLIC SESSION

No one signed up to speak at Public Session.

8. PUBLIC HEARING

Town Attorney John Henning, Jr. discussed that folks are making outdoor accommodations on public property. This regulation would prevent outdoor camping on public property. The reason for the public hearing is to extend the ordinance out into the ETJ. Macon County Attorney, Eric Ridenour, reached out about this ordinance and the Sherriff would like to advocate for the County to make a similar regulation adoption.

Mayor Jack Horton called the public hearing on the amendment to Chapter 130 - Offenses Against Town Regulations to order at 6:44 p.m.

No one signed up to speak at the Public Hearing.

Mayor Horton closed Public Hearing at 6:45 p.m.

Council Member Culpepper asked if there was a way to have a permit for camping. Town Attorney Henning stated the regulation is only on public property.

Council Member Guffey made a comment about reducing homelessness. He didn't see how it would reduce homelessness because it's not taking care of the cause of homelessness. He also asked if the definition of temporary shelter included vehicles. Town Attorney Henning stated he didn't think it was the intent to include vehicles.

Mayor Horton stated this is a public safety issue and we need to make sure we can protect the public by adopting the ordinance.

Council Member Salain stated we need to do what we can to support housing. We need low-income housing.

Council Member Culpepper commented this is not run off people who have a respectable encampment. This is designed for the very unclean, very unsafe not nice places. This is not to chase off people who are down on their luck or punish people. This is a way to clean up after folks who are unwilling to clean up after themselves.

Council Member David Culpepper made a motion, seconded by Council Member Mike Lewis to adopt the amendment to Chapter 130, Offenses Against Town Regulations by adding section .07 - Camping on Public Property. The motion carried unanimously. Vote: 5 - 0.

9. NEW BUSINESS

A.) Request approval of new three-year uniform contract with Cintas - Ali Stamey, Budget and Fiscal Analyst

Budget and Fiscal Analyst, Ali Stamey stated the Town made a transition to UniFirst at the beginning of this fiscal year, unfortunately the Town did not receive the service as promised. The Town has opted to terminate that contract UniFirst. The Town previously used Cintas for uniform services. Cintas has now been awarded the state contract. The Town would like to enter into a three-year contract for uniforms with Cintas.

Vice Mayor Joe Collins made a motion, seconded by Council Member Rita Salain to approve three-year contract with Cintas for uniforms for the Town of Franklin. The motion carried unanimously. Vote 5 – 0.

- B.) Request approval of new three-year contract with Debt Book for recording/reporting software for GASB compliance - Sarah Bishop, Finance Director

Finance Director Sarah Bishop requested approval of a three- year contract with Debt Book to handle journal entries for recording/reporting of GASB. The cost for the three-year renewal is \$32,000.

Council Member Mike Lewis made a motion, seconded by Council Member Rita Salain to approve a three-year contract with Debt Book for reporting and recording for GASB compliance. The motion carried unanimously. Vote 5 – 0.

- C.) Request approval of amended Capital Project Ordinance for Clyde Street Waterline Improvements - Sarah Bishop, Finance Director

Finance Director Sarah Bishop requested an increase in the Capital Project Ordinance for Clyde Street Waterline Improvements due to the increase in material cost.

Vice Mayor Joe Collins made a motion, seconded by Council Member Mike Lewis to amend capital project ordinance for the Clyde Street waterline improvements as presented. The motion carried unanimously. Vote 5 – 0.

- D.) Request approval for New Street Light at the Corner of Ulco Drive and Wells Grove Road – Justin Setser, Town Planner

The Town received a new street light request from Kim Leister. Town Planner, Justin Setser and Town Manager Amie Owens reviewed the request and feel that there is no adverse impact to neighboring properties and it would benefit this corner as a safety implement.

Council Member Lewis asked if there were any residential structures that would be impacted by the light. Town Planner Setser stated there was one residence across the street, but they signed the application as a neighbor.

Vice Mayor Collins asked what the cost would be. Town Planner Setser said since there was an existing pole with power it would cost the Town about \$9 or \$10 a month.

Vice Mayor Joe Collins made a motion, seconded by Council Member Stacy Guffey to accept the request for a new street light at the corner of Ulco Drive and Wells Grove Road. The motion carried unanimously. Vote 5 – 0.

- E.) Delivery of the proposed FY 2023/2024 Budget and Call for Public Hearing -Amie Owens, Town Manager

Town Manager Amie Owens stated that since this is a re-evaluation year the Town must publish the revenue neutral rate. The revenue neutral tax rate for the upcoming fiscal year would be \$.29 based on the information received from Macon County. The budget rate on the proposed budget is set at \$.33 and the current tax rate is \$.35. The Town is looking at a 95% tax collection rate. The Town does receive sales tax revenue, however as the cost of goods decreases so does the sales tax revenue. There will be a slight decrease in Powell Bill funding from the State. The proposed

budget does include the salary adjustments based on the recommendations from the Compensation and Classification Study by The Archer Company.

Manager Owens noted that the proposed budget is balanced in the general fund without any fund balance appropriation, which is unheard of.

Council Member Guffey asked what would the number look like if the tax rate stayed at \$.35. Manager Owens said she could get numbers for the next budget work session, but she could not present two budgets.

Town Manager Amie Owens requested a call for public hearing to be held on Monday, June 5, 2023 at 6:10 p.m. or as closely thereafter as possible to consider public input for the FY 2023/2024 budget.

The Water/Sewer fund does include the 3% proposed increase that was part of the 2020 adopted CIP. This gives more funding for water/sewer line improvements and improvements at the Water Treatment Plant. As discussed at the budget work session the clear well project at the Water Treatment Plant would be pulled from retained earnings. The cost of the project is \$3.5 million.

The Fire Department Fund: The fire tax last year was increased to \$.07 and this year Macon County is looking at revenue neutral and the rate is \$.0522. The Fire Department is still in need of two fire trucks.

Manager Owens went over the overall expense increases for the Town. Overall, the increase in expenses were \$435,764. There is a request for 2 new positions, one full-time and one part-time. The full-time position would be for the lead and copper requirement in the Public Works Department. The part-time position would be an accounting clerk and would assist with customer service, accounts payable and clerical duties.

Town Manager Amie Owens requested a call for public hearing to be held on Monday, June 5, 2023 at 6:10 p.m. or as closely thereafter as possible to consider public input for the FY 2023/2024 budget.

Council Member David Culpepper made a motion, seconded by Council Member Stacy Guffey to set the public hearing for Monday June 5, 2023 at 6:10 p.m. or as closely thereafter as possible to consider public input for the FY 2023/2024 Budget. The motion carried unanimously. Vote 5 – 0.

10. PROJECT, COMMITTEE, DEPARTMENTAL UPDATES

A.) Departmental Updates- Public Works

- a. Streets - Chris Waldroop, Streets Supervisor gave an update on current projects: skatepark, mowing, outlying sweeping, asphalt cuts, and garden club helping with beautification.
- b. Wastewater/Water Treatment Plant & Public Works, Bill Deal Public Works Director gave an update on current project: water/sewer taps, 811 locates, sewer/water repairs, sewer system cleaning, cross connection installs, and sewer dumps.

11. PROCLAMATIONS- MAYOR JACK HORTON

Mayor Jack Horton read and presented the following thank you letter and proclamations.

- A.) Thank you from American Legion to Public Works Staff
- B.) Public Works Week - May 21-27, 2023
- C.) Firefighters Week-May 1-7, 2023
- D.) Police Week - May 9 - 20, 2023

12. ITEMS FROM COUNCIL

Council Member Guffey: Thank you to all staff, colleagues and Mayor for everything you do. Everyone works well together.

Vice Mayor Joe Collins: Would like to take a look at the Jaycee Park to see if the basketball courts could be more useful for pickleball. It would allow another option for use.

13. CLOSED SESSION

Vice Mayor Joe Collins 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. The motion carried unanimously. Vote: 5-0.

The Town Council entered Closed Session at 7:47 p.m.

The Town Council returned from Closed Session at 8:13 p.m.

14. ANNOUNCEMENTS

- A.) Special Called Meeting of the Town Council for Budget Work Session - Monday, May 15, 2023 at 6:00 p.m.
- B.) Law Enforcement Memorial Program - May 19, 2023 at Noon at the Gazebo
- C.) Next Town Council Meeting is Monday, June 5, 2023
- D.) Town offices will be closed on Monday, May 29, 2023 in observation of the Memorial Day holiday in accordance with the NC State Holiday Schedule

15. ADJOURNMENT

Vice Mayor Joe Collins made a motion, seconded by Council Member Rita Salain to adjourn the meeting at 8:15 p.m. The motion carried unanimously. Vote: 5- 0.

C. Jack Horton, Mayor

Nicole Bradley, Town Clerk