

**MINUTES OF THE TOWN OF FRANKLIN TOWN COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING
September 6, 2022**

THE FRANKLIN TOWN COUNCIL held a regular meeting on Tuesday, September 6, 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, 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. RECOGNITIONS

- A.) Public Works- Public Works Director Bill Deal and Public Works Employees Chris Green and Jeff Alexander were in attendance and recognized for all their hard work over the last few weeks with multiple waterline breaks.
- B.) Two Life Saving Awards were presented by Captain Devin Holland. Jeremy Reed and Alan Cochran pulled Melissa Maner from her burning vehicle and saved her life. Ms. Maner was also present to thank both gentlemen.
- C.) Frank Belanger, new Code Enforcement Officer, was introduced by Town Planner, Justin Setser. Frank began his new role with the Town on August 8.

4. PROMLICATION

- A.) Mayor Jack Horton presented a Proclamation for Constitution Week, which is September 17-23. September 19th is the 235th anniversary of the US Constitution.
- B.) Mayor Jack Horton presented a Proclamation to Chief Bill Harrell & Chief Ben Ormond for Day of Service and Remembrance on September 11th.

5. PRESENTATIONS

- A.) Marianne Martinez, Executive Director of Vecinos, presented a slideshow for this non-profit organization. Vecinos provides health and wellness services for the uninsured, low-income Latinx community. They have purchased a building to renovate for their new Community Health Hub, located off 441 (Old Smoky Mtn Systems building). They have secured funding through Dogwood Health Trust and hope to be operational Spring 2024. Ms. Martinez requested help to gain support thru fundraisers and other activities.
- B.) Russ Harris, Executive Director, Southwestern Commission gave a presentation on the Regional Housing Study that was completed in late 2021. This report highlighted the need for Affordable Housing in Macon County and the surrounding area.

6. ADOPTION OF THE SEPTEMBER 6, 2022 TOWN COUNCIL AGENDA

Council Member Stacy Guffey made a motion, seconded by Council Member Mike Lewis to adopt the Town Council Agenda with the following change: to postpone item 10 C until the October 3 meeting. The motion carried unanimously. Vote: 6 – 0.

7. APPROVAL OF THE CONSENT AGENDA FOR September 6, 2022

- A. Approval of August 1, 2022 Town Council regular meeting minutes.
- B. Budget Amendments- ARPA Funding and general fund appropriations for ADA Transition Plan and Police Body Cameras
- C. Tax Releases
- D. Sewer Line Easement- Boatwright Properties, LLC
- E. Personnel Policy Updates
 - i. Article V, Section 7- Dress Code
 - ii. Article VII, Section 7- Vacation Leave: Maximum Accumulation
 - iii. Article VII, Section 12- Vacation Leave: Transfer to Sick Leave

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

8. PUBLIC SESSION

- A.) Dave Linn thanked the Council for their support for the 80s Flashback weekend. Over \$20,000 was raised for the Shriners Hospital. They have helped out over 115 kids in Macon County.
- B.) George McClure asked the Council to consider adding Pickle Ball courts to the Whitmire Property. He shared that it is becoming more popular and there are only four (4) courts in Macon County and those are shared with hockey and basketball. He would like to see permanent courts and feels that Pickle Ball tournaments would bring in revenues. He is just asking for the space. Macon County has already committed \$150,000 towards the courts.
 - a. Council Member Guffey commented that we need to talk to the County about Pickle Ball Courts.
 - b. Mayor Horton stated it was a possibility and they were working on a plan for the Whitmore Property.
- C.) Beverly Butcher spoke on the Inflation Reduction Act. She is a member of the WNC Citizens Climate Lobby and they work on climate solutions. They are encouraging everyone to do what they can to reduce emissions. She would like the town council to consider adopting a Climate Action Plan and applauded the addition of the electric charging stations in the Town Hall parking lot.

9. NEW BUSINESS

- A.) Request from Franklin Tourism Development Authority for a budget increase
TDA member Josh Drake requested to increase their budget from \$140,000 to \$265,000. Last year the TDA had lower than expected expenditures resulting in an addition to the TDA fund balance. They would like to use the extra funds to revamp their website, and increase outside marketing and advertising.

Vice Mayor Joe Collins made a motion, seconded by Council Member Stacy Guffey to move \$125,000 from TDA fund balance to the TDA operating budget. The motion carried unanimously. Vote: 6 - 0.

B.) Request Speed Limit Change for dead end section of Riverview Heights Street

Town Planner, Justin Setser had a request from citizens who reside on Riverview Heights Street to decrease the speed limit from 25 mph to 15 mph. Six of the 7 homeowners on that section of the street signed the petition for this change. They stated it was a safety issue with speeding.

Vice Mayor Joe Collins suggested speed bumps be placed on the street. Attorney John Henning Jr stated we would need an ordinance to change the speed limit to 15 mph since currently there is not a street in the town limits lower than 20 mph. Mayor Horton suggested the ordinance update and study the potential for adding additional traffic calming implements. Council Member Guffey brought up considering these implements on Main Street and other areas as well.

C.) Street Closure Request

Town Manager Amie Owens presented three (3) street closure requests for upcoming events.

- a. Nikwasi Lane for Trail of Tears National Conference- September 20, 2022
- b. Lotla Street for concert at Gazebo sponsored by the Arts Council of Macon County- October 8, 2022
- c. A Portion of Carolina Mountain Drive fundraiser at Altered Frequencies by Sk828- October 29, 2022

Council Member David Culpepper made a motion, seconded by Council Member Mike Lewis to approve the street closures as presented. The motion carried unanimously. Vote: 6 – 0.

D.) Request approval of disposition of asset

Town Manager, Amie Owens requested approval to surplus the Town's 2009 Ford Escape, formally used by the Police Department, and transfer ownership to the ABC Board for required delivery service. The vehicle has no value to the Town as the depreciation was satisfied.

Council Member Mike Lewis made a motion, seconded by Council Member David Culpepper to surplus the 2009 Ford Escape per policy. The motion carried unanimously. Vote: 6 – 0.

Council Member David Culpepper made a motion, seconded by Council Member Mike Lewis to transfer ownership of the 2009 Ford Escape to the ABC Board at no cost. The motion carried unanimously. Vote: 6 – 0.

10. OLD BUSINESS

A.) Longevity

Finance Director, Sarah Bishop requested approval of the Budget Amendment for the Prorated Longevity Payout. The total budget amendment amount is \$4,796.54. If approved, payments will

be sent out to qualified employees who have requested the funds and who have signed the Town's release.

Council Member David Culpepper made a motion, seconded by Council Member Mike Lewis to approve the Budget Amendment for the Prorated Longevity Payout. The motion carried unanimously. Vote: 6 – 0.

B.) Police Department Salary Discussion

Town Manager Amie Owens and Finance Director Sarah Bishop requested approval of the Budget Amendment for Police Salaries. The budget amendment for salaries is \$46,863.35. If approved the Police Department Salary adjustment would be effective with the September 16, 2022 pay period.

Council Member Rita Salain made a motion, seconded by Vice Mayor Joe Collins to approve the budget amendment for Police Department Salary adjustments as presented. The motion carried unanimously. Vote 6-0.

C.) State Revolving Fund Loan

Town Manager, Amie Owens requested direction related to State Revolving Fund loan increase for the Water Treatment Plant Phase II improvements. Due to a funding short fall between the initial approval for funding for the State Revolving Fund loan (\$8.8 M) and the Preliminary Engineering Review (PER) estimated costs of \$12.4M. Some revisions to the plans have been made and \$2.2 M has been eliminated from the costs, but that still leaves a short fall of approximately \$2.5M including contingency funds. Ms. Owens noted that there are four potential options available:

1. Send a request to the State in an attempt to increase the SRF loan amount by \$2.5M
2. Have engineers make additional modifications to the design in an attempt to further reduce costs
3. Wait and see in the future if there are cost savings due to a decrease in material costs or if bids come in lower than expected
4. Pay the difference at the time of construction utilizing water/sewer retained earnings

Council Member Stacy Guffey made a motion, seconded by Council Member Mike Lewis to authorize Town Manager and Finance Director to request additional funds from the State Revolving loan fund to supplement the funding needed to meet the cost of the Water Treatment Plant Phase II improvements. The motion carried unanimously. Vote: 6 – 0.

11. ITEMS FROM COUNCIL

Council Member Stacy Guffey stated there is a problem with speeding all over Town. He also thanked Scotty Keener for the beautiful flowers on Main Street.

Council Member Mike Lewis thanked Public Works for their handling of the recent water line breaks and the Garden Club for the work at the clock tower and Rankin Square.

Council Member Adam Kimsey thanked Main Streets Merchant Association for the downtown festival, Fall Market Days.

Council Member David Culpepper gave kudos to the Town staff for the repairs to the waterline breaks. He also addressed the speeding and said we needed more pedestrian access.

Vice Mayor Joe Collins was in agreement with all the comments

May Jack Horton stated we had a terrific team of employees and coach in Town Manager Amie Owens.

12. CLOSED SESSION

Council Member Mike Lewis made a motion, seconded by Council Member David Culpepper 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. The motion carried unanimously. Vote: 6-0.

The Town Council entered Closed Session at 8:05 p.m.

The Town Council returned from Closed Session at 8:57 p.m.

A parcel of land that is adjacent to an existing town-owned property has become available and would allow for improved sewer line access. Town Council discussed the necessity to access utilities and potential for future greenway connectivity with this purchase.

Council Member Stacy Guffey made a motion, seconded by Council Member David Culpepper to approve the contract purchase a parcel of land, approximately 14 acres, from Mainspring Conservation Trust for a price of \$22,000 to gain access to Town sewer lines, and authorize Town Manager Amanda Owens to execute the contract contingent upon the approval by the Mainspring Conservation Trust's board. The motion carried by a vote of 5 -0.

Council Member Rita Salain abstained from the discussion and voting as she is a member of the Mainspring Conservation Trust board.

13. ANNOUNCEMENTS

- A.) Next Town Council Meeting will be held Monday October 3, 2022 at 6:00 p.m.
- B.) Never Forget 5K and Lil' Engine That Could Fun Run/Walk- Saturday, September 10, 2022 @ Macon Middle School
- C.) Build a Scarecrow at the Gazebo sponsored by the Street of Franklin Heritage Association- Sunday September 11, 2022

14. ADJOURNMENT

Council Member Rita Salain made a motion, seconded by Council Member David Culpepper to adjourn the meeting at 9:02 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