

**MINUTES OF THE TOWN OF FRANKLIN TOWN COUNCIL  
REGULAR MEETING  
March 6, 2023**

**THE FRANKLIN TOWN COUNCIL** held a regular meeting on Tuesday, March 6, 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, Adam Kimsey, Mike Lewis and Rita Salain.

**2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

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

**3. ADOPTION OF THE MARCH 6, 2023 TOWN COUNCIL REVISED AGENDA**

*Council Member Rita Salain made a motion, seconded by Council Member Stacy Guffey to adopt the Town Council Revised Agenda for March 6, 2023 as presented. The motion carried unanimously. Vote: 6 – 0.*

**4. APPROVAL OF THE CONSENT AGENDA FOR MARCH 6, 2023**

- A.) Approval of Minutes:
  - February 6, 2023 Town Council regular meeting minutes
  - February 17 and 18, 2023 Town Council Retreat meeting minutes
- B.) Budget Amendments- Water/Sewer Fund
- C.) Franklin Garden Club request for annual donation disbursement
- D.) Street Closure Requests from Streets of Franklin Heritage Association
  - Spring Makers Market (Spring Market Day) -May 27, 2023
  - Hometown Heritage Festival -July 15, 2023
- E.) Street Closure Requests from Mary Guercio- Feeding the Future Event- April 22, 2023

*Council Member Mike Lewis made a motion, seconded by Vice Mayor Joe Collins to approve the consent agenda as presented. The motion carried unanimously. Vote 6 – 0.*

**5. RECOGNITIONS**

- A.) Master Officer Eli Kirkland -15 years of service -presented by Chief Devin Holland
- B.) Swearing in of new Police Officers- Chief Devin Holland
  - Kaitlyn Harper
  - Jonathan Lauffer
- C.) Ali Stamey, Budget and Fiscal Analyst-Certified Local Government Finance Officer -presented by Sarah Bishop Finance Director

**6. NEW BUSINESS**

- A.) Appointment of two members to the Fire Fighters Relief Fund Board as recommended by the Franklin Fire Department

Chief Ben Ormond presented information on the Firefighters Relief Fund established through the NC State Firefighters Association and regulated under the state statute. The statute states the relief fund will be managed by a board of 5 personnel. The current relief fund board consists of retired members. The Fire Department Executive Board would like to refresh the Relief Fund Board. They held a business meeting and had six (6) new nominations. Chief Ormond recommended appointing Brian Leopard and Rick Westerman to the Relief Fund Board as the Town Council appointees.

***Vice Mayor Joe Collins made a motion, seconded by Council Member Adam Kimsey to follow the recommendation of Chief Ormond and appoint Brian Leopard and Rick Westerman to the Fire Fighters' Relief Fund Board. The motion carried unanimously. Vote 6 – 0.***

B.) Request approval of audit contract with Martin Starnes & Associates, CPAs, P.A. for fiscal year ending June 30, 2023

Sarah Bishop, Finance Director, presented the audit services contract from Martin Starnes & Associates, CPAs, P.A. She stated she is very happy with the services we received from them in the past and that there is a good working relationship with the auditors.

***Council Member Rita Salain made a motion, seconded by Council Member Mike Lewis to approve the contract for audit services from Martin Starnes & Associates, CPAs, P.A. and execution of contract. The motion carried unanimously. Vote 6 – 0.***

C.) Request Budget Amendment from General Fund Fund Balance for Contract Services from previous years not included in current budget year

Town Manager Amie Owens explained that the Town received invoices from FY 2020/2021 and FY 2021/2022 from Crabtree General Store and Motor Company Storage. The Town cannot pay expenditures unless an invoice is received. There is no record of these invoices being submitted previously and amounts were not included in the current year budget.

***Council Member David Culpepper made a motion, seconded by Council Member Adam Kimsey to approve the budget amendments as presented. The motion carried unanimously. Vote 6 – 0.***

D.) Resolution of Support for Medicaid Expansion in NC-Councilman Stacy Guffey

Council Member Guffey presented the Resolution of Support for Medicaid Expansion in North Carolina.

Council Member Culpepper commented that insurance does not equal health care. Insurance at its best, helps people get health care and at its worst, is a barrier to helping people get health care. Insurance is valued more than health care. Need to focus on getting people health care and not just insurance.

Council Member Salain said if you do not have access to health insurance your access to health care is more than limited. Insurance is the biggest access to health care.

***Council Member Stacy Guffey made a motion, seconded by Council Member Rita Salain to adopt the Resolution presented. The motion carried unanimously. Vote 6 – 0.***

Mayor Horton announced that Council Member Lewis needed to leave the meeting early.

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

## **7. PROJECT, COMMITTEE, DEPARTMENTAL UPDATES**

### **A.) Departmental Updates**

1. Human Resources- Nicole Bradley, HR Director, gave an update on current project and current job openings.
2. Tax Collections- Sabrina Scruggs, Tax Collector, gave an update on tax revenue collections and upcoming Town events.
3. Fire Department- Chief Ben Ormond, Fire Chief, presented his annual Fire Department report.

## **8. PUBLIC HEARING**

**Mayor Jack Horton called the public hearing related to a text amendment for the Sign Ordinance to order at 6:52 p.m.**

Town Planner Justin Setser stated the proposed text amendment allows for the Town ordinance to reflect items directly from state statute related to political signs and their posting. The Planning Board has reviewed the text amendment and submits their recommended language to the Town Council for consideration.

No one signed up to speak at the Public Hearing.

**Mayor Horton closed Public Hearing at 6:58 p.m.**

***Council Member Stacy Guffey made a motion, seconded by Council Member Rita Salain to adopt the proposed text amendment to the Sign Ordinance. The motion carried unanimously. Vote: 5 - 0.***

## **9. PUBLIC SESSION**

Dinah Mashburn, President of No Wrong Door, spoke on the need for mental health services in our community. She wanted to make sure the community was aware that at one time there was mental health unit at Angel Medical Center.

Dr. Ann Shower, Veterinarian/Owner Animal House Veterinary Clinic located at 991 E. Main Street, spoke in regards to the property adjoining hers. She asked Town Council to take a serious look at that property. She stated for the past ten years it has been neglected. There are people that go in and out of the house. She said it's dangerous for her staff. She would like help from the Town. Photos were provided and are incorporated into these minutes.

Gregg Jones spoke about the old Angel Medical Center facility. He stated that Macon County has lost medical services. He would like to see the old AMC building used as some type of healthcare service. He is asking Council to see what they can do.

Michael Sawell, peer support with No Wrong Door, spoke on drug abuse and mental health services. He is a veteran, recovering addict, and a suicide survivor.

Howard Dowdle, drug and alcohol counselor with No Wrong Door, spoke on the need for treatment/transitional center. He would like to see the old AMC building turned into a treatment center. It takes 2-4 weeks to get a bed in a treatment center. Individuals who are released from hospital or jail go back to using because there is no where for them to go.

Shelia Jenkins, Executive Director of No Wrong Door, stated there are no services for mental health or recovery centers in Macon County. She said that we need to heal our community. She stated people are desperate to get into recovery. The community is missing a key support piece for these individuals to get ready to get a job and keep it. If they don't have this stability piece they go back to using.

Tanner Duvall, No Wrong Door Board Member, spoke on addiction and mental health issues. He is a former addict and had to go out of state to get help. He stated that when people are released from jail they have nowhere to go and the problem needs to be addressed.

Kelsey Elliot, No Wrong Door Drug/Alcohol Support Intern, spoke in her past addictions and incarcerations. She didn't know how to get help and it took her six months to get treatment. She wants people to get back to a happy life and receive services here in Macon County.

Matt Holmes, Physician of Addiction Medicine and No Wrong Door Board Member, explained that he provides care to those addicted to opioids. Individuals need to change people and places for recovery. He would like to see space in the community for this care and he is available for a resource.

Jean Parris, Haywood County resident, spoke on addiction. She works with people who have substance abuse problems. She started a program called Drugs in our Midst to help families.

## **10. ITEMS FROM COUNCIL**

A.) Mayor Jack Horton appointed Councilman Stacy Guffey to a Mental Health and Behavioral Health working group.

Council Member Guffey thanked everyone for their bravery to share their stories at the meeting.

Council Member Culpepper added that he would like to get names of all those who spoke and include Attorney General Josh Stein in this important conversation.

Council Member Salain thanked Council Member Guffey for his commitment to this important matter and stated that "I'm behind you."

Mayor Horton announced that the NC League of Municipalities- City Vision conference would be on April 25-27<sup>th</sup> in Concord, NC and asked any Council Members who wished to attend to let Manager Owens know.

**11. CLOSED SESSION**

*Council Member David Culpepper made a motion, seconded by Council Member Stacy Guffey 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 8:00 p.m.

The Town Council returned from Closed Session at 8:25 p.m.

**13. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- A.) Ribbon Cutting/Dedication of the Fire Substation - Tuesday, March 14 at 2:00 p.m.
- B.) Next Town Council Meeting is Monday April 3, 2023 at 6:00 p.m. in the Town Hall Board Room

**14. ADJOURNMENT**

*Vice Mayor Joe Collins made a motion, seconded by Council Member Stacy Guffey to adjourn the meeting at 8:26 p.m. The motion carried unanimously. Vote: 5- 0.*

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C. Jack Horton, Mayor

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Nicole Bradley, Town Clerk