

**MINUTES OF THE TOWN OF FRANKLIN TOWN COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING
SEPTEMBER 8, 2026**

THE FRANKLIN TOWN COUNCIL held a regular meeting on Tuesday, September 8, 2026, at 6:00 p.m. in the Town Hall Board Room located at 95 East Main Street Franklin, NC.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Stacy Guffey called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. with the following members present – Vice Mayor Mike Lewis and Council Members: Joe Collins, Travis Higdon, Rita Salain, Robbie Tompa, and Jeff Berry.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Vice Mayor Mike Lewis.

3. ADOPTION OF THE SEPTEMBER 8, 2026 TOWN COUNCIL AGENDA

Vice Mayor Mike Lewis made a motion, seconded by Council Member Travis Higdon to approve the Town Council Agenda for September 8, 2026 as presented. The motion carried unanimously. Vote: 6 – 0.

4. APPROVAL OF THE CONSENT AGENDA FOR SEPTEMBER 8, 2026

- A.) Approval of the Minutes
 - 1. August 3, 2026 Regular Meeting Minutes
 - 2. August 4, 2026 Special Called Meeting Minutes
- B.) Budget Amendment
- C.) Tax Release

Vice Mayor Mike Lewis made a motion, seconded by Council Member Robbie Tompa to approve the consent agenda September 8, 2026 meeting, as presented. The motion carried unanimously. Vote: 6 – 0.

5. INTRODUCTION/RECOGNITION

- A.) Cody Harper, Streets Maintenance Worker -introduction by Bill Deal, Public Works Director
- B.) Earl Swartz, Utility Maintenance Worker -introduction by Bill Deal, Public Works Director
- C.) Assistant Police Chief Matt Pellicer -Recognition 25 Years of Service -presented by Nicole Bradley, Human Resources Director
- D.) Firefighter Darian Greene -Recognition 10 Years of Service -presented by Nicole Bradley, Human Resources Director

6. PUBLIC SESSION

No one signed up to speak.

7. ITEMS FROM COUNCIL

- A) Resolution of the Town Council for the Town of Franklin Supporting the One Quarter of a Cent Local Option Sales Tax – Councilwoman Rita Salain

Councilwoman Rita Salain read the resolution into the record.

Council Member Joe Collins made a motion, seconded by Vice Mayor Mike Lewis to approve the Resolution supporting the One Quarter of a Cent Local Sales Tax, as presented. The motion carried unanimously. Vote: 6 – 0.

B.) Recognition of Jim and Kathy Akins – Mayor Stacy J. Guffey

Mayor Guffey recognized Jim and Kathy Akins for their service to the Scottish Tartan Museum and Heritage Center. Mayor Guffey credited their dedication with turning the museum into the successful institution it is today. A Certificate of Appreciation was presented on behalf of the Town Council, recognizing the Akins' contributions to the preservation of culture and their service to the town's citizens and visitors

C.) Proclamation – Constitution Week – September 17 through 23, 2026 – Mayor Stacy J. Guffey

Mayor Guffey read the Town of Franklin's Constitution Week 2026 Proclamation, marking the 239th anniversary of the drafting of the United States Constitution and designating September 17–23, 2026 as Constitution Week, urging citizens to reaffirm the ideals enshrined in the Constitution.

Following the reading, Lynn Deegan of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) offered brief remarks, emphasizing the DAR's longstanding commitment to civic education and the importance of an informed citizenry as the surest guardian of freedom. Ms. Deegan thanked the Council for their service to the community.

D.) Recap of Presentation by Joe Minicozzi, Urban3, LLC – Mayor Stacy J. Guffey

Mayor Guffey indicated that this item would be deferred and rescheduled for a future meeting.

E.) Reminder of Litter Sweep on September 26, 2026 – Councilman Travis Higdon

Councilman Travis Higdon reminded the public and Council of the upcoming Fall Litter Sweep scheduled for Saturday, September 26th from 8:00 AM to 12:00 PM, meeting at Town Hall. He encouraged a strong turnout, noting that supplies and snacks would be provided.

F.) Other items from Town Council Members

Mayor Guffey expressed appreciation to the Public Works and Streets Department for the installation of a speed bump near the Lazy Hiker, clarifying that placement was dictated by the Town's right-of-way boundary, as NCDOT does not permit speed bumps on state roadways. He reported receiving numerous positive responses from community members regarding the safety improvement. Mayor Guffey formally proposed that the Council work toward establishing an annual Labor Day weekend celebration, inclusive of fireworks and potentially a drone show. He cited strong positive feedback from business owners who reported one of their best commercial days in recent memory, favorable crowd dispersal compared to the Recreation Park venue, and the earlier sunset at Labor Day as advantages. He asked for Council support to begin planning for such an annual event.

Mayor Guffey also announced that Assistant Town Manager/Finance Director Sarah Bishop had been admitted to the 2026 Civic Fellows Leading for Results program at the UNC Chapel Hill School of Government; a two-week leadership initiative for which there were 219 applicants and only 50 seats. The program cohort meets September 14th and October 12th, 2026.

Council Member Jeff Berry echoed the Mayor's enthusiasm for making the Labor Day fireworks and drone show an annual event, stating that the location, timing, and novelty of the show were all very well received. Other council members, including Vice Mayor Mike Lewis and Councilman Higdon, also shared positive personal experiences from the event. Vice Mayor Lewis specifically commended the pyrotechnics vendor, Munnerlynn Pyrotechnics, for going above and beyond to make things right, and offered to serve as a personal reference for the company.

Councilwoman Salain announced that the FROG Quarters would be holding its semi-annual Frog Fair on the 19th, encouraging the public to attend in support of the organization.

8. NEW BUSINESS

A.) Request Approval of Updated Purchasing Policy – Assistant Town Manager/Finance Director Sarah Bishop

Assistant Town Manager/Finance Director Sarah Bishop presented the proposed updates to the Town's purchasing policy. She summarized the most significant changes as follows:

- Clarification of department head authority for purchases under \$500.
- Correction of a longstanding error indicating that contracts be filed with the Town Clerk's office; the policy now correctly reflects that contracts are filed in the Finance Office.
- Addition of a tiered process for handling unauthorized purchases over \$500.
- Clarification of procedures for emergency purchases, acknowledging that the standard bidding process cannot always be followed in urgent situations.
- Correction of language around credit card limits, which are set by the Finance Director rather than the Town Manager.
- Addition of certain exclusions to the purchase order requirement, including bulk oil purchases for the fleet department, fully executed contracts, and mandatory payments to state agencies such as the NC DMV and the Department of Environmental Quality.

Discussion centered on the policy's local purchasing provisions. Mayor Guffey inquired whether the language encouraging local buying could be strengthened. Town Attorney John Henning Jr. explained that while informal and formal bidding thresholds (\$30,000 and above) require selection of the lowest responsive bidder regardless of location, there is more flexibility below that threshold.

Assistant Town Manager/ Finance Director Bishop noted the existing policy includes a provision allowing a local vendor preference when a local bidder is within two percent of the lowest bid. Several council members suggested raising that preference threshold, with Councilwoman Salain suggesting five percent and Vice Mayor Lewis concurring that a greater preference would be more impactful.

Assistant Town Manager/ Finance Director Bishop agreed to work with the Town Attorney to draft stronger local preference language and proposed an internal outreach effort to ensure local vendors are aware of the Town's desire to do business with them where legally permissible. Attorney Henning additionally suggested reaching out directly to local vendors to make them aware of this preference.

Vice Mayor Mike Lewis made a motion, seconded by Council Member Robbie Tompa to approve the updates to the Town's Purchasing Policy., as presented. The motion carried unanimously. Vote: 6 – 0.

B.) Request Approval of the addition of approximately 400 feet of Mimosa Drive as town-maintained street- Town Manager Amie Owens

Town Manager Amie Owens presented the request to add approximately 400 feet of Mimosa Drive to the town's-maintained street inventory. She explained that the segment had been constructed to Town specifications with correct right-of-way dimensions and should have been included in the Powell Bill map when the subdivision was finalized in 2023, but was omitted due to the developer never submitting the required form. The two homes on the segment have Mimosa Drive addresses, and residents have reported drainage and pothole issues. The existing extension connects to Dale Drive, which is unpaved and not proposed for town maintenance.

Vice Mayor Lewis inquired about the cost of necessary repairs; Town Manager Owens indicated that only minor work, gravel fill and cold patching, was needed, with no full repaving required.

Council Member Rita Salain made a motion, seconded by Council Member Joe Collins to approve the addition of approximately 400 feet of Mimosa Drive as town-maintained street, as presented. The motion carried unanimously. Vote: 6 – 0.

C.) Request Approval of Resolution Adopting the updated Clay Macon Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan- Fire Chief Justin Setser

Fire Chief Justin Setser presented the updated Clay Macon Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan, which is required to be updated every four to five years in order to maintain eligibility for FEMA funding in the event of a natural disaster. Chief Setser noted that this cycle's plan has nearly doubled in size since the Town first adopted it approximately twelve years ago. Key additions to this version include increased emphasis on hurricane preparedness (particularly in light of Hurricane Helene), wildfire risk, and cyber-attack scenarios. The plan also incorporates expanded language around community resiliency in addition to traditional hazard mitigation. Chief Setser noted that according to plan documentation, every dollar spent on mitigation saves an estimated six dollars in future repair costs. A public survey, open for approximately two months and receiving about 150 responses, informed the update process. The plan will be posted to the Town's website upon adoption.

Vice Mayor Mike Lewis made a motion, seconded by Council Member Travis Higdon to approve the Resolution Adopting the updated Clay Macon Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan, as presented. The motion carried unanimously. Vote: 6 – 0.

D.) Request Adoption of an Ordinance Ordering the Town Code Enforcement Officer to Cause the Dwelling Located Upon Property at 185 Rogers Road to be Vacated, Closed and Demolished – Town Attorney John Henning, Jr.

Town Attorney John Henning Jr. presented the ordinance, explaining that enforcement action had been initiated earlier in the year under the Town's minimum housing code. By March, a determination had been made that the structure at 185 Rogers Road was unfit for habitation

and could not be repaired for less than fifty percent of its value. The owner had received all required notices and had not contested the findings.

Code Enforcement Officer Angela Green provided additional detail, noting that during her initial inspection the structure was found to be in deplorable and unsafe condition, with a shifted and unsecured foundation resulting from a vehicle collision. She described buckets of waste throughout the basement, structural floors at risk of collapse, and a structure assessed at less than \$1,500 in value. Ms. Green confirmed that the property owner attended the minimum housing hearing, acknowledged he was financially unable to bring the property into compliance, and did not contest the proceedings. The property owner does not reside on the site; however, various occupants, including squatters, have been present over the years.

Vice Mayor Lewis emphasized that the action does not constitute a taking of property, the owner retains title, and that demolition would likely improve the property's value and eliminate significant liability and safety hazards for the neighborhood. Mayor Guffey thanked Code Enforcement Officer Green for her diligence, noting he had received considerable concern from neighboring residents.

Council Member Joe Collins made a motion, seconded by Council Jeff Berry to adopt the Ordinance Ordering the Town Code Enforcement Officer to Cause the Dwelling Located Upon Property at 185 Rogers Road to be Vacated, Closed and Demolished, as presented. The motion carried unanimously. Vote: 6 – 0.

9. OLD BUSINESS

A.) Request Approval of Utility Service Refunds Policy – Town Attorney John Henning, Jr.

Town Attorney Henning presented a minor revision to the Utility Service Refunds Policy previously discussed at a prior meeting. Two changes were noted: a correction of terminology in the first paragraph of subsection B, and the addition of a three-year time limit within which a customer must apply for a refund. Town Attorney Henning clarified that refund eligibility is limited to standard residential one-inch service connections, and that the policy is permissive in nature; the Town is not legally obligated to issue refunds but is establishing the circumstances under which it will do so.

Councilwoman Salain inquired how customers would be made aware of the policy; Town Attorney Henning and Vice Mayor Lewis noted that the policy would be accessible on the Town's website and that the responsibility for due diligence ultimately rests with the customer.

Vice Mayor Mike Lewis made a motion, seconded by Council Member Robbie Tompa to approve Utility Service Refunds Policy, as presented. The motion carried unanimously. Vote: 6 – 0.

10. DEPARTMENTAL UPDATES – PUBLIC WORKS

A.) Human Resources-Nicole Bradley, Human Resources Director

Human Resources Director Bradley reported that the Town currently has one vacancy in the Wastewater Treatment Plant, with a job posting issued that day. She announced that a new

Town Planner had been hired and would begin on Friday, with a formal introduction planned for the October Town Council meeting.

HR Director Bradley provided an update on the Town's insurance benefits with NCHIP (North Carolina Health Insurance Pool). She also gave an update on the new managed IT service with WIRED. She reported positive feedback from all department directors, and specifically noted that seven laptops ordered for the Police Department had been configured and deployed. Response times on submitted IT tickets have been described as excellent.

HR Director Bradley indicated she is working on policy revisions and expects to bring those updates to the Council in the near future.

B.) Tax Collections/Events-Sabrina Scruggs, Tax Collector/Events Coordinator

Tax Collector/Events Coordinator Sabrina Scruggs reported that 2,334 tax bills had been mailed, representing a levy of just over \$3,305,000. To date, \$424,827 has already been collected.

Regarding events, Event Coordinator Scruggs provided context around the drone show that followed the Labor Day fireworks. She explained that staff and the Town Manager were not aware the drone show would proceed until very late in the evening; the drones initially failed to launch, and only after the fireworks concluded did the vendor notify staff that the charged drones had to be deployed before transport, due to regulations prohibiting the transport of live batteries across state lines. With no advance notice and no way to communicate a timeframe to the public, no announcement could be made. She noted that the drones were ready within approximately fifteen minutes and that most attendees were able to see the show.

Looking ahead, Event Coordinator Scruggs noted that PumpkinFest marks its 30th anniversary this year, with additional activities, vendors, and food planned. She also noted that work on the Winter Wonderland event is also underway.

C.) Fire Department -Fire Chief Justin Setser

Chief Setser reported that the Fire Department responded to 154 calls for service in August, with 110 of those being medical calls, representing 60–70% of total call volume.

Key updates included:

- Ten new sets of turnout gear are expected to be delivered imminently.
- All volunteer officer positions have been filled following recent organizational changes. New appointments include Assistant Chief Carey Patton (formerly Captain), Captain Michael Gerra, Lieutenant Clay Gibson, and Lieutenant Joe Templeton.
- The ImageTrend software system for reporting, training records, inventory, and hose testing is now fully operational.
- A boat committee has been established to evaluate the feasibility of acquiring a rescue boat for flood response, with the committee examining standard operating guidelines, response protocols, and training requirements before any purchase is made.
- A formal Field Training Officer (FTO) program, developed by Lieutenant Templeton, has been adopted to replace the prior informal preceptor model. The new program establishes a team of trainers, structured timelines, and defined benchmarks for new volunteers, with full implementation set to begin at the start of the new year.

- All department apparatus have been renumbered under a standardized engine/brush/squad/tanker designation system for consistency.
- Six grant applications have been submitted, all with no match requirements, including grants from FEMA, the NC Forest Service, Firehouse Subs, and ChemTrac, covering a range of department needs.

D.) Fleet Department-Alison Stamey, Deputy Finance Director/Fleet and Asset Manager

Deputy Finance Director/Fleet and Asset Manager Alison Stamey provided an update on the newly established Fleet Department, which launched at the start of the current fiscal year. She introduced Tim Lee as the department's mechanic, bringing 25 years of mechanical and preventive maintenance experience to the role. The fleet team consists of Mr. Lee, Reagan Chastain, and Stamey, each managing distinct areas: field maintenance, maintenance tracking and bill pay, and daily service ticketing and vehicle purchasing/sales, respectively.

She noted that to date, six of seven vehicles budgeted for purchase have been acquired. A formal bid for a Public Works dump truck closed September 18th. Upcoming purchases include a Police Department vehicle funded by insurance proceeds and a new ATV funded through a donation.

The department has sold five vehicles through GovDeals (a government online auction platform) for a combined total of \$28,325. A total of 72 maintenance and service actions have been performed, including oil changes, brake jobs, transmission services, alternator replacements, battery replacements, CV axle work, and servicing of small equipment such as lawn mowers and larger equipment including a street sweeper and John Deere tractors.

11. ANNOUNCEMENTS

- A.) Next Town Council Meeting is Monday, October 5, 2026
- B.) Observance of the 25th Anniversary of 9/11 – Friday, September 11 at 8:30 a.m. at the Gazebo Square
- C.) Fall Litter Sweep for the Town of Franklin – Saturday, September 26, 2026 8:00 a.m. until Noon
- D.) Pickin' on the Square- September 26, 2026 -6:00 p.m. on the Gazebo Square

12. CLOSED SESSION

- A.) Enter into Closed Session under NC General Statute§ 143-318. I l(a)(6) Personnel - Annual Evaluation Town Manager

Vice Mayor Mike Lewis made a motion, seconded by Council Member Robbie Tompa to enter into Closed Session under North Carolina General Statute 143-318.11(a)(6) Personnel. The motion carried unanimously. Vote 6-0.

Town Council entered into Closed Session at 7:07 p.m.

Town Council returned to Open Session at 7:50 p.m.

13. ADJOURNMENT

Council Member Rita Salain made a motion, seconded by Council Member Travis Higdon to adjourn the meeting at 7:51 p.m. The motion carried unanimously. Vote: 6-0.

Stacy J. Guffey, Mayor

Nicole Bradley, Town Clerk