

**MINUTES OF THE TOWN OF FRANKLIN TOWN COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING
July 7, 2025**

THE FRANKLIN TOWN COUNCIL held a regular meeting on Monday, July 7, 2025, 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: Council Members: Joe Collins, David Culpepper, Mike Lewis, Rita Salain and Robbie Tompa.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

3. ADOPTION OF THE JUNE 2, 2025 TOWN COUNCIL AGENDA

Council Member Rita Salain made a motion, seconded by Council Member Robbie Tompa to adopt the Town Council Agenda for July 7, 2025 as presented. The motion carried unanimously. Vote: 5 – 0.

Council Member Mike Lewis made a motion, seconded by Council Member Rita Salain to excuse Vice Mayor Stacy Guffey from the July 7, 2025 meeting. The motion carried unanimously. Vote: 5-0.

4. APPROVAL OF THE CONSENT AGENDA JULY 7, 2025

- A.) Approval of the Town Council Minutes May 19, 2025 Special Called Meeting and June 2, 2025 Regular Meeting
- B.) Budget Amendments
- C.) Tax Release
- D.) Personnel Policy Revision - Law Enforcement Officer Separation Allowance (LEOSA)
- ~~E.) Amendment to Chapters 94 and 95 – Prohibiting deposition of certain materials upon or within Town streets and sidewalks~~
- ~~F.) Refer Text Amendments to Planning Board for Review~~
- G.) Reappoint Sabrina Scruggs as Tax Collector

Council Member Rita Salain requested to pull item “F” and Council Member David Culpepper requested to pull item “E” from the Consent Agenda for further discussion.

Council Member David Culpepper made a motion, seconded by Council Member Rita Salain to approve the consent agenda for the June 2, 2025 meeting with the exception of items “E” and “F”. The motion carried unanimously. Vote: 5 – 0.

Council Member Culpepper had a question on the Code of Ordinance Amendment to Chapters 94 & 95. He wanted to know if the violation would be for the landowner in which the material originated would be responsible for clean-up and he asked if it was a code violation or a fineable offense.

Town Attorney John Henning, Jr. stated that the violation would remain civil until way on down the line. There would be an initial warning and there would need to be several citations before a civil fine would incur. Town Manager Owens also stated there would be public education via press releases and social media.

Council Member Mike Lewis made a motion, seconded by Council Member Rita Salain to approve item "E" on the Consent Agenda. The motion carried unanimously. Vote: 5 – 0.

Council Member Rita Salain had questions for Town Planner Justin Setser about the text amendment updates that was being referred to the Planning Board. He said it would be the same as it would for a public hearing, notice will be given no less than 10 days but no more than 25 days prior to the meeting. Instead of a public hearing it will be called request for comment. Town Attorney John Henning, Jr. gave an overview of the reason for the text amendment update.

Council Member Mike Lewis made a motion, seconded by Council Member Rita Salain to approve item "F" on the Consent Agenda. The motion carried unanimously. Vote: 5 – 0.

5. RECOGNITIONS/OATHS OF OFFICE

- A.) Ryder Cortopassi, Meter Reader – introduction by Public Works Director Bill Deal
- B.) Jeff Shuler, Maintenance Worker – Streets – introduction by Public Works Director Bill Deal
- C.) Oaths of Office
 1. Alison Stamey, Deputy Finance Director
 2. Matthew Pellicer, Assistant Police Chief

6. PUBLIC SESSION

No one signed up to speak.

7. CALL FOR PUBLIC HEARING

- A.) Call for Public Hearing on Monday, August 4, 2025 at 6:05 p.m. or as closely thereafter to gain public input related to a conditional rezoning of a 4-acre parcel at 100 Cunningham Road, from Commercial C-3 to Commercial C-3CZ - PIN #6595815426 – Town Planner Justin Setser

Town Planner Setser gave an overview of the Conditional Rezoning request. David Forkner submitted an application for rezoning of 100 Cunningham Road. The reason for the need for Conditional Rezoning is due to the size of the proposed gym; larger than 15,000 sq ft. Town Planner Setser said there is water at the site and sewer is below the site and will need to be extended. A neighborhood meeting was held May 29, 2025 and no one from the public attended. The Planning Board met on June 16, 2025 and recommended the conditional rezoning for approval. The standard conditions were agreed upon with Mr. Forkner.

Council Member David Culpepper made a motion, seconded by Council Member Mike Lewis to set the public hearing for Monday, August 4, 2025 at 6:05 p.m. or as closely thereafter as possible to receive public input related to a conditional rezoning request of a 4-acre parcel located at 100 Cunningham Road. The motion carried unanimously. Vote 5 – 0.

8. OLD BUSINESS

A.) Certification of Sufficiency – Voluntary Annexation Petitions – Town Clerk Nicole Bradley

1. Voluntary Annexation Petition for property located at 3044 Georgia Road – PIN # 6583529447

Town Clerk Nicole Bradley completed the certification of sufficiency for 3044 Georgia Road and said that the next step would be for Town Council to call for a public hearing.

Council Member David Culpepper made a motion, seconded by Council Member Robbie Tompa to set the public hearing for Monday, August 4, 2025 at 6:08 p.m. or as closely thereafter as possible to receive public input related to a proposed annexation of 3044 Georgia Road. The motion carried unanimously. Vote 5 – 0.

2. Voluntary Annexation Petition for property located at 4029 Sylva Road – PIN # 6595769419

Town Attorney John Henning, Jr. requested to hold this item for Closed Session to give Town Council legal advice.

9. NEW BUSINESS

A.) Request Approval of three-year agreement with Eben Concepts (via Wayah Insurance) for broker Services – Town Manager Amie Owens

Town Manager Owens presented the multi-year agreement with Eben Concepts for their broker services on employee health benefits. The cost per employee is \$32/month. Town Attorney John Henning, Jr. added that the contract is contingent upon adjustments he requested.

There was discussion about the value of the service provided for the cost.

Council Member Mike Lewis made a motion, seconded by Council Member Rita Salain to approve the three-year agreement for broker services for health insurance with Eben Concepts and to include the changes to the agreement as requested by the Town Attorney. The motion carried unanimously. Vote: 5 – 0.

B.) Request Approval of Resolution of the Town Council of the Town of Franklin Authorizing the Filing of an Application for Approval of a Financing Agreement – Town Manager Amie Owens

Town Manager Owens stated a Resolution is required, per state statute, order to enter into an installment contract for financing. There were no responses to the Request for Proposal (RFP), so the Town is working with First Tryon Advisors to tweak the RFP and communicate on behalf of the Town with Banks.

Council Member Mike Lewis made a motion, seconded by Council Member Robbie Tompa to approve the Resolution of the Town Council of the Town of Franklin Authorizing the Filing of an Application for Approval of Financing Agreement as presented. The motion carried unanimously. Vote: 5 – 0.

C.) Request Approval of Task Order for Engineering and Architectural Services for Restroom and Limited Site Work on Whitmire Property – Town Manager Amie Owens

Town Manager Owens presented the task order for Dewberry, Town’s on-call engineer firms. They work with the architect firm Creech and Associates; they have done several municipal restrooms and parks. Since this can be done under a task order and Creech and Associates will be the sub-contractor it will be a lot easier to move forward with the project. The cost of the project is \$49,645. The design would start immediately and should be completed in August; then the project could be put out for bid and permitting.

Councilman Culpepper questioned the cost of the design. Town Manager Owens said this was the average cost and noted the cost included engineer connects for water/sewer infrastructure and permitting.

There was additional discussion on the cost of the plans, the legalities and the RFQ process on looking for other architects.

Council Member Rita Salain made a motion, seconded by Council Member Mike Lewis to approve the Task Order by Dewberry for Engineering and Architectural Services for Restroom and Limited Site Work on the Whitmire Property. The motion carried. Vote: 4-1. Councilman Culpepper voted in opposition.

D.) Request Approval of Change Order for Wilkie Street Close Out – Town Manager Amie Owens

Town Manager Owens stated that the Wilkie Street Sewer Project was completed in May 2024. The final payment application was submitted on June 6, 2025 with a change order. The Change Order is for a decrease in the cost of the project of \$65,425. The total cost of the project was \$631,293.75.

Council Member David Culpepper made a motion, seconded by Council Member Mike Lewis to approve the change order and release final payment for the Wilkie Street Sewer Line Replacement Project as presented. The motion carried unanimously. Vote: 5 – 0.

E.) Request Approval of two (2) new stop signs and painted stop bars on Wilkie Street – Town Manager Amie Owens

Town Manager Owens said that speeding on Wilkie Street has been a reported problem. Public Works, Streets and Police have proposed adding two (2) new stop signs and painted stop bars that will help with slowing down the speed of traffic in the residential portion of Wilkie Street. Approval is needed by Town Council because the stop signs alter the existing traffic patterns.

Councilman Culpepper asked why stop signs were considered instead of speed tables. Town Manager Owens said stop signs were cheaper and the street was recently repaved. Councilman Culpepper had concerns of new stop signs being ran. Police Chief Holland said he believed that adding the stop signs and stop bars would minimize the speeding. It will just take some education and warning tickets.

Council Member Mike Lewis made a motion, seconded by Council Member Joe Collins to approve the installation for two (2) new stops signs and painted stop bars on Wilkie Street as presented. The motion carried unanimously. Vote: 5 – 0.

F.) Request Approval of Resolution for Adjustment to Town Council Stipend – Town Manager Amie Owens

Town Manager Owens said that Town Council had not had an increase in their stipend since before 2008. The recommended stipend increase was included in FY 2025-2026 budget. The adjustment will be effective January 1, 2026.

Council Member Mike Lewis made a motion, seconded by Council Member Robbie Tompa to approve the Resolution for Adjustment of Town Council Stipend as presented. The motion carried unanimously. Vote: 5 – 0.

10. DEPARTMENTA REPORTS

- A.) Finance – Sarah Bishop, Finance Director gave updates on wrapping up FY 2024-2025, annual reporting, annual upcoming audit, incoming revenues and the Main Street Program.
- B.) Planning/IT – Justin Setser, Town Planner gave updates on NOAA resiliency grant (Town did not receive the grant), land permits, notice of violations, Bike & Pedestrian Plan, Adopt-a-Street program, and NC House Bill 369 – parking requirements.
- C.) Police Department – Chief Devin Holland gave updates on arrest, tickets, calls, new Facebook campaign, water rescue throw bags, stop sticks and the addition of the Assistant Police Chief.

11. ITEMS FROM COUNCIL

12. ANNOUNCEMENTS

- A.) Next Town Council Regular Meeting is Monday, August 4, 2025
- B.) Pickin' on the Square-Saturday July 12 and Saturday July 26, 2025

13. CLOSED SESSION

- A.) 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.

Council Member Mike Lewis made a motion, seconded by Council Member Robbie Tompa 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 7:05 p.m.

The Town Council returned to open session at 7:24 p.m.

Mayor Horton noted that under the advice of the Town Attorney, it was determined that additional information would be required related to the voluntary annexation petition for property located at 4029 Sylva Road – PIN # 6595769419 and that the property owner would be contacted. The Town Council will address at a later date.

14. ADJOURNMENT

Council Member David Culpepper made a motion, seconded by Council Member Joe Collins to adjourn the meeting at 7:27 p.m. The motion carried unanimously. Vote: 5-0.

C. Jack Horton, Mayor

Nicole Bradley, Town Clerk