MINUTES OF THE TOWN OF FRANKLIN TOWN COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING
DECEMBER 1, 2025

THE FRANKLIN TOWN COUNCIL held a regular meeting on Monday, December 1, 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: Joe Collins, David Culpepper, Rita Salain, Robbie Tompa, Mike Lewis, and Stacy Guffey.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Vice Mayor Stacy Guffey.

3. ADOPTION OF THE DECEMBER 1, 2025 TOWN COUNCIL AGENDA
Vice Mayor Guffey requested an amendment to the agenda to allow council members to make comments after the swearing-in ceremony while their friends and family were present.

Council Member Mike Lewis made a motion, seconded by Council Member Rita Salain to adopt the Town Council Agenda for December 1, 2025 as presented. The motion carried unanimously. Vote: 6 – 0.

4. APPROVAL OF THE CONSENT AGENDA FOR DECEMBER 1, 2025
A.) Approval of November 3, 2025 Town Council Minutes
B.) Budget Amendments
C.) Amendment to Capital Project Ordinance – Sunnyside Park

Council Member Rita Salain made a motion, seconded by Vice Mayor Stacy Guffey to approve the consent agenda for December 1, 2025 as presented. The motion carried unanimously. Vote: 6 – 0.

5. THANK YOU TO OUTGOING MAYOR JACK HORTON AND COUNCIL MEMBER DAVID CULPEPPER
Vice Mayor Guffey presented a plaque to Mayor Horton in recognition of his leadership and vision that guided the Town of Franklin through challenges and successes. The plaque honored his dedicated service on Town Council from December 2, 2019, to December 1, 2025, and included his motto "Public service in the public interest."

Mayor Horton expressed his gratitude and shared his perspective on what makes a successful council member. He emphasized that successful council members do their homework, know their community's strengths and weaknesses, have both short and long-term goals, treat colleagues and the public with respect, understand their roles and responsibilities, and are willing to listen and discuss issues and solutions. He acknowledged the town's excellent staff from the manager to department heads and all employees, crediting them for providing excellent service to the citizens.

Vice Mayor Guffey also presented a plaque to Council Member David Culpepper, recognizing his service from December 1, 2017, to December 1, 2025. Vice Mayor Guffey noted that Councilman Culpepper had

been instrumental in projects like the expansion of the greenway and the playground, and that he would continue to serve on the Recreation Board.

Council Member Culpepper briefly thanked everyone, reiterating his philosophy that the Town should focus on making Franklin a good place to live, work, and play.

6. OATH OF OFFICE FOR MAYOR AND TOWN COUNCIL MEMBERS- CLERK OF COURT- SHAWNA LAMB

A.) Stacy Guffey, Mayor
B.) Rita Salain, Council Member
C.) Jeff Berry, Council Member
D.) Travis Higdon, Council Member

Clerk of Court Shawna Lamb administered the Oath of Office for all recently elected members and too copies of the oaths to file in the Clerk of Court's Office.

There was a brief recess to allow individuals to take their place at the dais. Mayor Stacy Guffey took over the meeting following the recess.

7. ELECTION OF VICE MAYOR AND REMARKS FROM TOWN COUNCIL

Council Member Rita Salain made a motion, seconded by Council Member Robbie Tompa to nominate Mike Lewis as Vice Mayor of the Town of Franklin Town Council for the next term. The motion carried unanimously. Vote: 6 – 0.

Council Member Joe Collins expressed confidence in the new board, noting they had a good mix of people, ideas, and age groups.

Council Member Travis Higdon expressed appreciation for the opportunity to serve.

Council Member Rita Salain stated she was glad to continue serving and still had goals to accomplish, including beautification of Main Street, supporting Main Street businesses, and addressing housing issues in the community.

Vice Mayor Mike Lewis expressed confidence in the new members, noting he had known them for many years.

Council Member Robbie Tompa expressed excitement for the future, hoping to continue improving Franklin as a place where families can grow up and remain.

Council Member Jeff Berry thanked voters and expressed his commitment to serving the Town, working on existing projects, and creating new ideas that will keep Franklin viable in the future.

Mayor Guffey delivered remarks about Franklin's unique approach to local government, emphasizing how the Town's voters cross party lines to support candidates based on character rather than party affiliation. He stressed that the board is nonpartisan and that no political party controls the board - only the people of Franklin do. Mayor Guffey pledged to be accessible to citizens and to work for the community regardless of political affiliation or whether citizens live within city limits.

8. PUBLIC COMMENT
No one signed up to speak.

9. NEW BUSINESS

A.) Request Reappointment of Town Manager, Town Attorney and Town Clerk – Mayor Stacy Guffey

Council Member Joe Collins made a motion, seconded by Vice Mayor Mike Lewis to approve the reappointment of Amanda (Amie) Owens as Town Manager, John Henning, Jr., as Town Attorney and Nicole Bradley as Town Clerk as presented. The motion carried unanimously. Vote: 6-0.

B.) Adoption of the 2026 Town Council Meeting Schedule-Town Manager Amie Owens
The 2026 Town Council Meeting Schedule was presented and it was noted that there is one meeting date that will be held on a Tuesday due to the Labor Day holiday on the first Monday in September.

Vice Mayor Mike Lewis made a motion, seconded by Council Member Robbie Tompa to approve the 2026 Town Council Meeting Schedule as presented. The motion carried unanimously. Vote: 6-0.

C.) Adoption of the 2026 Town Holiday Schedule- Town Manager Amie Owens
The Town of Franklin Holiday Schedule for 2026 was presented. The Town of Franklin follows the NC State Offices Holiday Schedule.

Council Member Rita Salain made a motion, seconded by Vice Mayor Mike Lewis to approve the 2026 Town Holiday Schedule as presented. The motion carried unanimously. Vote: 6-0.

D.) Request appointment of Member to Franklin Tourism Development Authority - Town Manager Amie Owens
Town Manager Amie Owens presented an application from Heather Childress Custer to fill a vacancy on the Tourism Development Authority (TDA) Board. The position requires someone who collects occupancy tax within Franklin's town limits. When asked about her business, Ms. Custer identified it as The Grove Hostel.

Council Member Robbie Tompa made a motion, seconded by Council Member Rita Salain to approve the appointment of Heather Childress Custer to the Franklin Tourism Authority as presented. The motion carried unanimously. Vote: 6-0.

E.) Request Approval of Amendment to Audit Contract with Martin Starnes & Associates, CPAs, P.A. – Finance Director Sarah Bishop
Finance Director Sarah Bishop explained that the amendment would extend the audit deadline to February 12th due to delays in receiving required information from the federal government. She noted that the audit report was complete but was waiting on a final release from the federal government for a supplement that was released the previous week. She also stated that

the audit presentation should occur at the next board meeting, but recommended approving the amendment as a precaution. She emphasized there would be no change in fees.

Council Member Joe Collins made a motion, seconded by Vice Mayor Mike Lewis to approve the amendment to the audit contact as presented. The motion carried unanimously. Vote: 6-0.

10. DEPARTMENTAL UPDATES

A.) Human Resources - Nicole Bradley, Human Resources Director gave an update on, annual evaluations, employee OSHA trainings, employee holiday luncheon, and current open positions.

B.) Tax Collection/Events - Sabrina Scruggs, Tax Collector gave an update on a successful Pumpkin Fest, new business registrations, current tax collection figures and Winter Wonderland.

C.) Fire Department -Fire Chief Ben Ormond gave an update on fire/medical calls, trainings, substation renovation completion, new ATV purchase, and the RFP on the new fire engine.

11. ITEMS FROM COUNCIL

A.) Mayoral Appointments to Board and Committees – Mayor Stacy Guffey

- ABC Board: Councilman Joe Collins
- Appalachian Trail Community Council: Councilman Jeff Berry
- Friends of the Greenway: Councilwoman Rita Salain
- Macon County Economic Development Commission: Mayor Stacy Guffey
- Macon County Recreation Commission Board: David Culpepper
- Main Street Initiative: Mayor Stacy Guffey
- Ordinance Review Committee: Vice Mayor Mike Lewis
- Planning Board: Councilwoman Rita Salain and Councilman Jeff Berry (to alternate or attend jointly)
- Southwestern NC Regional Home Consortium: Councilwoman Rita Salain
- TDA Board: Councilman Robbie Tompa
- Transportation Advisory Committee: Councilman Travis Higdon (with Mayor Guffey as alternate)
- Board of County Commissioners Liaison: Mayor Stacy Guffey
- Making Progress for Progress Housing Initiative: Councilwoman Rita Salain
- Macon County Program for Progress: Councilman Jeff Berry

B.) Annual Council Retreat – January 23-24, 2026 – Mayor Stacy Guffey

Town Manager Amie Owens announced the annual council retreat would be held January 23-24, 2026, at Fontana Village Resort. Russ Harris from Southwestern Commission will serve as facilitator to help develop a strategic plan for the next five years.

Mayor Stacy Guffey emphasized the importance of the retreat for building relationships and discussing town issues in a less formal setting.

12. ANNOUNCEMENTS

A.) Next Town Council Meeting is Monday, January 5, 2026
B.) Town Offices Closed for Christmas Holiday - December 24, 25 & 26, 2025 (Wednesday, Thursday, Friday) in accordance with the NC State Holiday Schedule
C.) Annual Ruby Drop – Downtown – December 31, 2025 – two drops one at 9:00 p.m. and another at midnight
D.) Town Office Closed for New Year's Holiday- January 1, 2026 – in accordance with NC State Holiday Schedule

13. CLOSED SESSION

A.) Enter into Closed Session under North Carolina General Statute §143-318.11(a)(5) to discuss acquisition of real property by purchase, option, exchange or lease and §143-318.11(a)(3) to discuss attorney client privilege

> ***Vice Mayor Mike Lewis made a motion, seconded by Council Member Robbie Tompa to enter into Closed Session*** **NC General Statute§ 143-318.11(a)(5) to discuss acquisition of real property by purchase, option, exchange or lease and NC General Statute§ 143-318.11(a)(3) attorney-client privilege.** ***The motion carried unanimously. Vote 6 – 0.***

Town Council entered into Closed session at 7:05 p.m.

Town Council returned to Open session at 8:02 p.m.

Upon returning to open session, Mayor Guffey reported that no action was taken.

14. ADJOURN

> ***Council Member Rita Salain made a motion, seconded by Council Member Robbie Tompa to adjourn the meeting at 8:04 p.m. The motion carried unanimously. Vote: 6- 0.***

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Stacy J. Guffey, Mayor

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Nicole Bradley, Town Clerk