

**FRANKLIN TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF MEETING
June 18, 2020**

A meeting of the Town Council was held on Thursday, June 18, 2020, at Franklin High School Football Field, Pisini Stadium, Oak Street, Franklin, MA. Councilors present: Andrew Bissanti, Brian Chandler, Robert Dellorco, Eamon McCarthy Earls, Melanie Hamblen, Glenn Jones, Matthew Kelly, Thomas Mercer, Deborah Pellegrini. Councilors absent: None. Administrative personnel in attendance: Jamie Hellen, Town Administrator; Mark Cerel, Town Attorney; Chrissy Whelton, Assistant to the Town Administrator.

CALL TO ORDER: ► Chair Mercer called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. ► Chair Mercer called for a moment of silence and the Pledge of Allegiance.

ANNOUNCEMENTS: ► Chair Mercer stated this meeting is being recorded by *Franklin TV* and available for viewing on Comcast Channel 11 and Verizon Channel 29; this meeting may also be recorded by others.

CITIZEN COMMENTS: None.

HEARINGS: 7:10pm. ► FY 2021 Budget Hearing

Chair Mercer declared continuation of the first public hearing and the second public hearing on the FY 2021 budget open. ► Chair Mercer provided the answer to Mr. Ciccone's question posed at yesterday's meeting. In the FY20 budget, ATC, the HVAC supplier, was listed at \$271,000. Some of the bills are paid by the DPW Enterprise; in FY20 that amount was \$15,000. Facilities spent \$256,000 on ATC for the HVAC equipment throughout all Town facilities and schools. The FY21 budget for ATC is 239,000; more cuts may be needed to this line item. Regarding Jasco Electric, \$42,000 was budgeted in FY20, and to date \$40,422 has been expended. In FY21, the budget was reduced by \$23,535 bringing the line item down to \$18,465. ► Chair Mercer reminded everyone of the process for the budget hearing.

The following line items were held at last night's meeting.

► Hold on Line Item 422: DPW-Highway. ■ Chair Mercer thanked Mr. Brutus Cantoreggi, DPW Director, and his staff for their work during these past months. He asked what the changes were in the budget for this year. ■ Mr. Cantoreggi discussed the unfunded mandate of stormwater. He stated the Town appealed, but the permit is in effect, and it is costing the Town money. Reductions in line items have been made to cover costs and the Enterprise Fund has been established. ■ Ms. Hamblen asked about the weed spray along the highway and sidewalks. She stated they had worked on an opt-out program for people who did not want their houses sprayed. She asked if it was time to stop the spraying and if there is a contract for it. ■ Mr. Cantoreggi stated this takes care of the infrastructure and pleases the residents. He stated there is a contract up for this year. The paradox is that if it is not done there are problems as the weeds can expand the concrete and cause damage. He is open to suggestions on what to do as it is \$40,000 that could be saved.

► Hold on Line Item 422: DPW-Park & Tree. ■ Mr. Kelly stated the FY20 line item was less by \$100,000 than FY21. He asked what would it take to get Franklin's road at a good level. ■ Mr. Cantoreggi explained the increase and stated that through the collective bargaining process they can now outsource some of the work. The \$100,000 added to this line item was due to decreases in other line items. He discussed the road repair program. He stated the fields are at a great level right now. He stated he would need \$1.2 million a year more to keep up with the roads and continuously handled the infrastructure. He stated there are 31 staff members in DPW at this time, and they are down two people; comparable towns such as Natick and Needham have about 100 personnel. ■ Mr. Dellorco asked when a tree that is unsafe can be cut by the Town. ■ Mr. Cantoreggi said the trees that are in question are on private property. He has notified the private property owners via certified mail. He does not think it would be right to hire the two people missing in the

department at this time. ■Mr. Richard Ciccone, 185 Chestnut Street, said prior Town Councils said that when roads were redone, there was a five-year policy that the road could not be cut. The Town is now not redoing roads fully, but rather piecemeal. Does the five-year no-cut road policy still exist? ■Mr. Cantoreggi stated that this is a Town bylaw and it is followed. It is written for a full-depth reconstruction. Chip seal, overlay, and other methods still allow for the road to be cut into. The Town Council could modify the current policy.

► Hold on Line Item 422: DPW-Recycling. ■Mr. Kelly asked for an update on the recycling center, transfer of land with the state, current hours, and plans for the next budget year. ■Mr. Hellen discussed the land transfer deal and noted there are several state agencies involved; the agreement should be completed by the State by Labor Day. ■Mr. Cantoreggi stated they are back to the regularly scheduled hours; however, they are dealing with some pandemic issues. ■Mr. Kelly stated that some employees have expressed frustration that there are no restrooms located there. ■Mr. Cantoreggi said there is no sewer available there; they have water and a porta-potty.

► Hold on Line Item 422: DPW-Administration. ■Mr. Kelly said his question was answered in a previous discussion by Mr. Cantoreggi. ■Mr. Dellorco asked if any summer help would be hired. ■Mr. Cantoreggi said he would like to, and it is cost effective. However, he only puts one person in a vehicle at this time during Phase II; maybe he can hire in July during Phase III. ■Mr. Bissanti asked about the employees who did not feel comfortable working at the recycling center during COVID-19. ■Mr. Cantoreggi explained the situation of those employees and how he covers those roles. ■Mr. Cerel discussed the EPA permit regarding stormwater. There was litigation in the federal courts. The permit issued has conditions agreed upon and the federal government has imposed those conditions. ■Chair Mercer said there are a lot of questions about stormwater. He asked Mr. Cantoreggi to give a brief overview of stormwater. ■Mr. Cantoreggi gave a brief overview of what stormwater is and provided information about how citizens can learn more; there is much information on the Town's website. EPA is requiring that the stormwater is treated. Stormwater has to be dealt with; the choice the Town makes is how to pay for this. In response to a question, he reviewed some line items that would be first to cut if they had to reduce the budget further. They would hold off on filling the two open positions and the seasonal positions. Maybe they would use less salt during the winter plowing; however, then they have to deal with car accidents. Possibly, money can be saved on the field conditions, trash pickup at the parks, or reduce recycling center hours. ■Mr. Hellen explained the creation of the Stormwater Enterprise Fund. ■Mr. Bissanti asked how the Charles River plays into this. ■Mr. Cantoreggi explained the permit and communities that have an MS4 stormwater permit. In the permit, the Town has to deal with the phosphorus problem in the Charles River. ■Mr. Chandler asked what this means for the average homeowner. ■Mr. Cantoreggi said it may be around \$90 per year. ■Mr. Richard Ciccone, 185 Chestnut Street, asked about damage to the water quality. ■Mr. Cerel discussed the Clean Water Act.

► Hold on Line Item 510: Board of Health. ■Chair Mercer thanked Health Director Cathleen Liberty, Health Agent Ginny McNeil, and the Board of Health for the job they have done dealing with COVID-19.

► Hold on Line Item 541: Council on Aging. ■Chair Mercer thanked Senior Center Director Karen Alves for her many years of service and wished her a good retirement. He noted Ms. Erin Rogers takes over the position.

► Hold on Line Item 630: Recreation. ■Mr. Dellorco asked how the Recreation Department was doing in regards to COVID-19. ■Recreation Department Director Ryan Jette stated that programs are set to resume on July 13, 2020. He thinks that this year revenues will be down, but he hopes that in looking at this fiscal year and the next fiscal year together, they should break even. He reviewed some of the current projects including the work on Fletcher Field. They have been very active finding alternative sources of funding such as grants and gifts for some of the projects. In the last five years they have had about \$600,000 of donations for projects. He noted that starting on July 24th they will have four weeks of Concerts on the Common.

► Hold on Line Item 710: Debt Service-Principal. ■ Mr. Earls asked to be updated on the current debt service both principal and interest. He asked about CARES Act money that has been received. ■ Mr. Hellen stated that overall, the budget message is that debt principal and interest is \$6.6 million of the Town's operating budget. He explained the current debt position and reviewed the future plans. He stated the Town's bond rating is great and the audit went very well. He explained the Town of Franklin was the recipient of \$2.92 million of CARES Act money from the federal government. He explained what the money could and could not be used for associated with the COVID-19 crisis. He discussed that 4,000 Chromebooks were ordered in anticipation of a hybrid learning situation for the schools.

► Hold on Line Item 434: Solid Waste Budget. ■ Mr. Kelly stated his questions were answered by Mr. Cantoreggi; therefore, he will remove his hold on Line Item 434.

► Hold on Line Item 440: Sewer. ■ Mr. Kelly stated his questions were answered by Mr. Cantoreggi; therefore, he will remove his hold on Line Item 440.

► Hold on Line Item 450: Water Budget. ■ Mr. Kelly stated his questions were answered by Mr. Cantoreggi; therefore, he will remove his hold on Line Item 450.

► Chair Mercer discussed the budget hearing process. ► No Town Council members or public citizens had any additional questions. ► Mr. Hellen stated the Finance Committee recommended in a unanimous vote the budget presented to the Town Council. ■ Mr. Kelly thanked the Town Council's Budget Subcommittee. He reviewed the budget process. He stated that COVID has made these very tough times. They will look at this budget again in September/October. Now, it is up to the residents to tell the Town Council what they want their town to look like over the next five years. ► Chair Mercer stated this budget will continue to be a work in progress. As the answers come in, they will continue to work on the budget and do the best they can do for the citizens of Franklin.

► **MOTION to Close the public hearing by Dellorco. SECOND by Kelly. No Discussion. ► VOTE: Yes-9, No-0, Absent-0.**

LEGISLATION FOR ACTION:

Note: Two-Thirds Vote requires six votes; Majority Vote requires majority of members present and voting.

- a. ***Resolution 20-31: Adoption of FY21 Budget (Motion to Approve Resolution 20-31 – Majority Vote).*** ► Mr. Jones read the resolution. ► **MOTION to Approve Resolution 20-31: Adoption of FY21 Budget by Dellorco. SECOND by Kelly. No Discussion. ► VOTE: Yes-9, No-0, Absent-0.**
- b. ***Resolution 20-36: Community Preservation Act, G.L. Chapter 44B, Sections 3-7 Authorization for Ballot Vote (Motion to Approve Resolution 20-36, CPA Ballot - Majority Roll Call Vote).*** ► Mr. Jones read the resolution. ► **MOTION to Approve Resolution 20-36: Community Preservation Act, G.L. Chapter 44B, Sections 3-7 Authorization for Ballot Vote by Dellorco. SECOND by Kelly. No Discussion. ► VOTE: Yes-9, No-0, Absent-0.**
- c. ***Resolution 20-37: Authorize the Borrowing of Money to Pay Costs of Various Capital Improvements (Motion to Approve Resolution 20-37 - Majority Vote).*** ► **MOTION to Waive the reading by Kelly. SECOND by Dellorco. No Discussion. ► VOTE: Yes-9, No-0, Absent-0. ► MOTION to Approve Resolution 20-37: Authorize the Borrowing of Money to Pay Costs of Various Capital Improvements by Dellorco. SECOND by Kelly. Discussion:** ► Mr. Hellen summarized the projects in this resolution. The Finance Committee reviewed and approved these projects. Authorizations include: \$1.4 million for municipal building improvements, \$3.1 million for technology for schools and Town, up to \$2.0 million for sidewalks, \$3.0 million for major renovations to Remington Jefferson School, \$1.75 million for a new roof, \$1.0 million for Parmenter School, \$1.5 million for high school improvements, \$3.0 million

for the recycling center. He noted that this is an authorization; it does not specify when or if these projects are going to be done. ► **VOTE: Yes-9, No-0, Absent-0.**

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT: ► Mr. Hellen stated the CPA will be a ballot question on a two percent surcharge. For a median home value in Franklin, the surcharge would be \$104.58. That revenue would bring in \$1.4 million to \$1.6 million to the Town. He noted the Town website has factual information about the CPA for citizens to view. He thanked all department heads, facility, staff, and Franklin TV for their work on this budget hearing.

COUNCIL COMMENTS: ► Mr. Kelly congratulated all graduates. He wished his brother a happy birthday. ► Ms. Pellegrini thanked everyone who worked to put this outdoor meeting together. She thanked Ms. Karen Alves for all her years of service. She congratulated the graduates. ► Ms. Hamblen thanked the FinCom, Administration, Town Council members, and department heads for their work on the budget. ► Mr. Chandler thanked everyone who attended the budget meetings. ► Mr. Jones thanked everyone in the schools for their hard work with all they have done during this crisis. ► Mr. Dellorco thanked everyone for their work in putting together the budget. ► Chair Mercer thanked everyone and the public for coming to the meetings these past two nights. He thanked Mr. D'Angelo for his help with the decision to hold the budget meetings at the high school field. He said the budget will continue to be worked on going forward.

ADJOURN: ► MOTION to Adjourn by Kelly. SECOND by Dellorco. No Discussion. ► VOTE: Yes-9, No-0, Absent-0. Meeting adjourned at 9:17 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Judith Lizardi
Recording Secretary