

**FRANKLIN TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF MEETING
June 24, 2020**

As stated on the agenda, due to the growing concerns regarding the COVID-19 virus, this meeting will be conducted as a Remote/Virtual Town Council meeting. In an effort to ensure citizen engagement and comply with open meeting law regulations, citizens will be able to dial into the meeting using the provided phone number, or citizens can participate by using the Zoom link provided on the agenda.

A meeting of the Town Council was held on Wednesday, June 24, 2020 as a **Remote Access Virtual Zoom Meeting**. 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.

CALL TO ORDER: ► Chair Mercer called the **Remote Access Virtual Zoom Meeting** to order at 7:00 PM. ► Chair Mercer called for a moment of silence and all recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

ANNOUNCEMENTS: ► Chair Mercer stated this meeting is being conducted remotely consistent with Governor Baker's executive order of March 12, 2020, regarding the current state of emergency in the Commonwealth due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 virus. In order to mitigate the transmission of the COVID-19 virus, we have been advised and directed by the Commonwealth to suspend public gatherings and as such the governor's order suspends the requirements of the open meeting law to have all meetings in a publicly accessible physical location. Further, all members of public bodies are allowed and encouraged to participate remotely. He stated that this meeting will feature public comment. He noted the availability of the posted call-in number and Zoom meeting link provided on the agenda for the public to join and participate in the meeting. He reviewed that all supporting meeting materials that have been provided to the Town Council are available on the Town's website unless otherwise noted. He reviewed the remote meeting ground rules. He announced this **Remote Access Virtual Zoom 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.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: None.

PROCLAMATIONS/RECOGNITIONS: None.

APPOINTMENTS: ► **Annual Reappointments.** ► Mr. Hellen stated that at a previous meeting in June annual reappointments were done, and it was noted there would be a few more appointments as some members had not yet responded. There may also be a few outstanding appointments to be approved at a future Town Council meeting. ► Mr. Jones read the Appointed Committee Members June 2020 – 2nd Round list. ► **MOTION to Ratify** the Annual Appointments to the boards and commissions as presented on the Appointed Committee Members June 2020 – 2nd Round list by **Dellorco. SECOND by Kelly. No Discussion. ROLL CALL VOTE:** Bissanti-YES; Chandler-YES; Dellorco-YES; Earls-YES; Hamblen-YES; Jones-YES; Kelly-YES; Mercer-YES; Pellegrini-YES. ► **VOTE:** Yes-9, No-0, Absent-0.

HEARINGS: None.

LICENSE TRANSACTIONS: None.

PRESENTATIONS/DISCUSSIONS: None.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS:

- a. **Capital Budget Subcommittee.** ► None.
- b. **Budget Subcommittee.** ► None.
- c. **Economic Development Subcommittee.** ► None.

LEGISLATION FOR ACTION:

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

- a. **Resolution 20-33: Expenditure Limits for FY 2021 on Departmental Revolving Funds Established by Franklin Town Code Chapter 73, as provided in G.L. Chapter 44 Section 53E1/2, as Amended (Motion to Approve Resolution 20-33 - Majority Roll Call Vote).** ► Mr. Jones read the resolution. ► **MOTION to Approve** Resolution 20-33: Expenditure Limits for FY 2021 on Departmental Revolving Funds Established by Franklin Town Code Chapter 73, as provided in G.L. Chapter 44 Section 53E1/2, as Amended by **Dellorco. SECOND by Kelly. Discussion:** ► Mr. Hellen stated that by statute the Town Council is required to reauthorize the usage and spending on the account limits. These are the same funds and limits that the Town has had for years. ► Mr. Chandler asked what the respite program was. ► Mr. Hellen stated it is a program for respite coordination at the Senior Center. ► Mr. Cerel stated it is a program for adult daycare and an alternate program to give care providers time off for taking care of age-challenged people. ► Mr. Steve Sherlock commented on some of the current events held regarding this program. ► **ROLL CALL VOTE: Bissanti-YES; Chandler-YES; Dellorco-YES; Earls-YES; Hamblen-YES; Jones-YES; Kelly-YES; Mercer-YES; Pellegrini-YES.** ► **VOTE: Yes-9, No-0, Absent-0.**
- b. **Resolution 20-38: Acceptance of G.L. Ch. 60, Section 15B and the Establishment of a Tax Title Collection Revolving Fund for Treasurer-Collector (Motion to Approve Resolution 20-38 - Majority Roll Call Vote).** ► Mr. Jones read the resolution. ► **MOTION to Approve** Resolution 20-38: Acceptance of G.L. Ch. 60, Section 15B and the Establishment of a Tax Title Collection Revolving Fund for Treasurer-Collector by **Dellorco. SECOND by Kelly. Discussion:** ► Mr. Hellen stated both the finance director and treasurer collector wanted to create this new revolving fund where the revenue that comes in pays for the expenditures; it will take \$32,000 out of the operating budget and create a self-sustaining account. ► **ROLL CALL VOTE: Bissanti-YES; Chandler-YES; Dellorco-YES; Earls-YES; Hamblen-YES; Jones-YES; Kelly-YES; Mercer-YES; Pellegrini-YES.** ► **VOTE: Yes-9, No-0, Absent-0.**
- c. **Resolution 20-39: Establishment of the Metacomet Emergency Communication Center (MECC) Stabilization Fund (Motion to Approve Resolution 20-39 - Two Thirds (2/3) Majority Roll Call Vote).** ► Mr. Jones read the resolution. ► **MOTION to Approve** Resolution 20-39: Establishment of the Metacomet Emergency Communication Center (MECC) Stabilization Fund by **Dellorco. SECOND by Kelly. Discussion:** ► Mr. Hellen stated this was discussed at last week's budget hearing. There is an almost certain grant from the State to be established allowing the Town to not have to pay the assessment for FY21 or FY22 as well as 50 percent of the FY23 assessment and 25 percent of the FY24 assessment. This resolution is to create the stabilization account as prudent fiscal policy to put aside enough funds from the savings of the next four years to pay the bill for the full assessments for FY25 going forward of possibly \$1.5 million. He discussed other costs that have burdened the Town for the MECC's establishment and noted this stabilization fund is intended to also be able to patch any gaps that may occur as the MECC continues to be established. He reviewed the initial deposit into this account. He explained this is really a savings account to be able to pay the FY25 bill. ► **ROLL CALL VOTE: Bissanti-YES; Chandler-YES; Dellorco-YES; Earls-YES; Hamblen-YES; Jones-YES; Kelly-YES; Mercer-YES; Pellegrini-YES.** ► **VOTE: Yes-9, No-0, Absent-0.**

- d. Bylaw Amendment 20-855: Chapter 82, Water Fee Increase - First Reading (Motion to Move Bylaw Amendment 20-855 to a second reading - Majority Roll Call Vote).* ► Mr. Jones read the bylaw amendment. ► **MOTION to Move** Bylaw Amendment 20-855: Chapter 82, Water Fee Increase to a Second Reading by **Dellorco**. **SECOND** by **Kelly**. **Discussion:** ► Mr. Hellen stated this bylaw amendment was outlined in his memo provided in the Town Council's meeting packet. He stated the staff is proposing a water rate increase of 10 percent beginning September 1, 2020, and an additional increase scheduled for July 1, 2021. He stated the main driver for this is the water treatment plant on Grove Street and reconstruction of Wells 3 and 6. He stated the water treatment plant should be done in approximately one year. ► Chair Mercer noted there has not been any rain in the past two months. ► Mr. Hellen stated they are looking at a water ban. The State has had a Drought Management Task Force for over 20 years; they met today and Mr. Cantoreggi will provide an update. ► Mr. Brutus Cantoreggi, Public Works Director, reviewed a slideshow presentation titled providing a water use update. He stated that the Drought Management Task Force met and due to current conditions and forecasts, recommended that a Level 2 (significant drought) be declared which means no outside watering of lawns. He reviewed well pumping gallons per month in 2020, average daily pumpage, system concerns, well information regarding wells 6, 3, 8, and 9, and iron and manganese issues. ► Town Council members thanked Mr. Cantoreggi for his presentation and asked questions. ► Mr. Kelly said water is a necessity, and he is concerned about the increase in cost for residents. ► Mr. Cantoreggi stated that based on the State's permit, the Town is allowed to pump 3.14 million gallons per day on average. He stated that Franklin's water rates are in the middle of surrounding communities. He noted that the State goes by an average home using 220 gallons of water per day. He noted that residents with private wells can still water lawns; a sign must be put on their property noting the well. However, the water all comes from the same aquifer. He responded that the 10 percent rate increase would probably increase the average homeowner's water bill by \$25 to \$40 per year. He stated that even with the other wells online, there will always be a water conservation plan as it is a stipulation in the State's permit. However, with all wells online and going, the Town will be able to rest the wells and aquifers and have a reserve. Outdoor watering goes up significantly this time of year. In response to a resident's question about why the baseball fields are being watered when they cannot be used, he stated that the irrigation at the ball fields has been turned off, but they will be watered once a week to maintain them. If the field grass completely fails, there will be high cost to bring them back online. ► Mr. Hellen mentioned that Zoom or in-person outreach sessions will be held where Mr. Cantoreggi can talk to residents and answer questions about water use and development in Franklin. ► Mr. Justin Bates, 8 Longfellow Drive, stated that low-income households would be disproportionately affected by the water fee increase. ► Mr. Hellen stated that in the Town's bylaw regarding fees, there is a provision for a community assistance program; about 60 to 70 people take advantage of this each year based on income guidelines. ► Mr. Bates stated that 4.4 percent of Franklin's households are below the poverty line; therefore, 70 residents in this program is not many. He asked how those other households can take advantage of this program. ► Mr. Cantoreggi reviewed the community assistance program which is for all the enterprise funds so low-income residents can receive a substantial discount. He noted that many low-income residents may be in apartments or affordable housing so their water service is picked up by the landlord's fees. ► **ROLL CALL VOTE: Bissanti-YES; Chandler-YES; Dellorco-YES; Earls-YES; Hamblen-YES; Jones-YES; Kelly-YES; Mercer-YES; Pellegri-YES.** ► **VOTE: Yes-9, No-0, Absent-0.**
- e. Resolution 20-40: Salary Schedule: Full-Time Elected Official - Town Clerk (Motion to Approve Resolution 20-40 - Majority Roll Call Vote).* ► Mr. Jones read the resolution. ► **MOTION to Approve** Resolution 20-40: Salary Schedule: Full-Time Elected Official - Town Clerk by **Dellorco**. **SECOND** by **Kelly**. **Discussion:** ► Mr. Hellen stated the resolution speaks for itself. He noted that by statute an elected official's salary has to be approved by the local legislative body each year. ► **ROLL CALL VOTE: Bissanti-YES; Chandler-YES; Dellorco-YES; Earls-YES; Hamblen-YES; Jones-YES; Kelly-YES; Mercer-YES; Pellegri-YES.** ► **VOTE: Yes-9, No-0, Absent-0.**

- f. Resolution 20-41: Ratification of the Memorandum of Agreement between the Franklin Police Association employees and the Town of Franklin (Motion to approve Resolution 20-41 - Majority Roll Call Vote).* ► Mr. Jones read the resolution. ► **MOTION to Approve Resolution 20-41: Ratification of the Memorandum of Agreement between the Franklin Police Association employees and the Town of Franklin by Dellorco. SECOND by Kelly. Discussion:** ► Mr. Hellen stated this is the final bargaining agreement on the municipal side. He thanked those who worked on this negotiation. ► **ROLL CALL VOTE: Bissanti-YES; Chandler-YES; Dellorco-YES; Earls-YES; Hamblen-YES; Jones-YES; Kelly-YES; Mercer-YES; Pellegri-YES.** ► **VOTE: Yes-9, No-0, Absent-0.**
- g. Resolution 20-35: FY20 Capital Plan Round 2 (Motion to Approve Resolution 20-35 - Majority Roll Call Vote).* ► Mr. Jones read the resolution. ► **MOTION to Approve Resolution 20-35: FY20 Capital Plan Round 2 by Dellorco. SECOND by Kelly. Discussion:** ► Mr. Hellen stated both of the requests were unanimously approved by the Finance Committee and the Town Council Budget Subcommittee. ► **ROLL CALL VOTE: Bissanti-YES; Chandler-YES; Dellorco-YES; Earls-YES; Hamblen-YES; Jones-YES; Kelly-YES; Mercer-YES; Pellegri-YES.** ► **VOTE: Yes-9, No-0, Absent-0.**
- h. Resolution 20-32: FY20 Appropriation Transfers (Motion to Approve Resolution 20-32 - Majority Roll Call Vote).* ► Mr. Jones read the resolution. ► **MOTION to Approve Resolution 20-32: FY20 Appropriation Transfers by Dellorco. SECOND by Kelly. Discussion:** ► Mr. Hellen stated at the end of the year if departments have gone over or under budget there is a year-end transfer. He noted that this year all departments have worked within their budgets. ► **ROLL CALL VOTE: Bissanti-YES; Chandler-YES; Dellorco-YES; Earls-YES; Hamblen-YES; Jones-YES; Kelly-YES; Mercer-YES; Pellegri-YES.** ► **VOTE: Yes-9, No-0, Absent-0.**
- i. Resolution 20-34: Authorize Town Administrator to Grant Temporary Expansion Licenses (Motion to Approve Resolution 20-34 - Majority Roll Call Vote).* ► Mr. Jones read the resolution. ► **MOTION to Approve Resolution 20-34: Authorize Town Administrator to Grant Temporary Expansion Licenses by Dellorco. SECOND by Kelly. Discussion:** ► Mr. Hellen stated that the Town Council voted for temporary licenses at the June 3, 2020, Town Council meeting which the Town Attorney noted was acceptable; this is the last step in the process. ► Ms. Pellegri asked to be updated by Mr. Hellen if there are problems or if it is going well with all the outdoor eating establishments. ► Mr. Kelly and Mr. Jones congratulated the restaurants on opening back up. ► Mr. Hellen reviewed some of the guidance on outdoor establishments for social distancing. Phase III allows indoor dining with social distancing requirements, as well. He reviewed the outdoor dining arrangement for Teddy Gallagher's pub. ► **ROLL CALL VOTE: Bissanti-YES; Chandler-YES; Dellorco-YES; Earls-YES; Hamblen-YES; Jones-YES; Kelly-YES; Mercer-YES; Pellegri-YES.** ► **VOTE: Yes-9, No-0, Absent-0.**

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT: ► Mr. Hellen thanked Ms. Chrissy Whelton for all her hard work on the licensing. He stated there are three active COVID-19 cases in Franklin; there was an increase of one case in one week. He thanked everyone for the tremendous job they have done regarding COVID-19.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS: None.

COUNCIL COMMENTS: ► Mr. Bissanti thanked Franklin residents for their attendance at the budget meetings held at the high school football field. ► Mr. Chandler thanked Mr. Hellen for completing the last union contract. He noted a tweet from the State House about possible PPE cost reimbursements to help the towns. ► Ms. Hamblen thanked everyone for tuning into tonight's meeting. ► Mr. Kelly wished everyone a happy Fourth of July. He stated that the Town's resources should be located in one tab on the Town's website. ► Ms. Pellegri thanked everyone for their work in putting together the budget hearings. She suggested virtual fireworks for July 4th. ► Mr. Jones stated he was looking forward to getting back to regular meetings rather than Zoom. ► Mr. Dellorco thanked everyone for how well the budget hearings went last week. He wished everyone a happy July 4th. He gave condolences to the family of Mr. Paul Eastwood.

►Chair Mercer thanked everyone involved in putting together the budget hearings, especially Mr. Michael D’Angelo and Mr. Pete Fasciano. He wished everyone a happy Fourth of July.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: None.

ADJOURN: ►MOTION to Adjourn by Kelly. SECOND by Dellorco. No Discussion. ►ROLL CALL VOTE: Bissanti-YES; Chandler-YES; Dellorco-YES; Earls-YES; Hamblen-YES; Jones-YES; Kelly-YES; Mercer-YES; Pellegrini-YES. ►VOTE: Yes-9, No-0, Absent-0. Meeting adjourned at 8:43 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Judith Lizardi
Recording Secretary