

**FRANKLIN TOWN COUNCIL  
MINUTES OF MEETING  
October 20, 2021**

A meeting of the Town Council was held on Wednesday, October 20, 2021, at the Municipal Building, 2nd Floor, Council Chambers, 355 East Central Street, Franklin, MA. Councilors present: Andrew Bissanti, Brian Chandler, Robert Dellorco, Cobi Frongillo, Melanie Hamblen, Glenn Jones, Thomas Mercer, Deborah Pellegri. Councilors absent: None. Administrative personnel in attendance: Jamie Hellen, Town Administrator; Mark Cerel, Town Attorney; Alecia Alleyne, 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; all recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:** ►Chair Mercer reviewed the following as posted on the agenda. A Note to Residents: All citizens are now welcome to attend public board and committee meetings in person. Additionally, in an effort to maximize citizen engagement opportunities and comply with open meeting law regulations, citizens will be able to continue to participate remotely via phone or Zoom. The meetings will also be live-streamed by Franklin TV and shown on Comcast Channel 11 and Verizon Channel 29. He stated that this meeting is being recorded by Franklin TV and may also be recorded by others. ►DPW Director Brutus Cantoreggi announced that the leaf pick-up service scheduled for the week of November 15<sup>th</sup> will be delayed as the vendor is having difficulty getting truck parts. He stated that less than five percent of the people use the service. Therefore, he would like to propose that the leaf pickup be cancelled this year. He would like to allow residents to drop off leaves at the Recycling Center, and the vendor would pay for the grinding for this service.

**CITIZEN COMMENTS:** ►Mr. Steve Sherlock, Franklin Matters and Franklin TV/Radio, reminded all about the second Candidates Night to be held Thursday, October 21, 2021, at 6:30 PM, live at the Senior Center. The candidates from the four contested elections have been invited. ►Ms. Sue Cass, 146 Longhill Road, thanked the Town Council for their year of hard work. ►Acting Town Clerk Nancy Danello reminded all that the Town Clerk's office is open for in-person early voting. ►Ms. Jaqueline Macil, 95 Elm Street, spoke about what is happening in the world. She stated that many people are making difficult choices in their lives. She noted the book *1984* written in 1949 and urged everyone to see the movie. She stated that we are close to that society. She discussed lyrics to a song written by Lee Greenwood and played the verse for the Town Council to hear; she stated that she is passionately patriotic.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** None.

**PROCLAMATIONS/RECOGNITIONS:** None.

**APPOINTMENTS:** ►*David Ogilvie: Fire Department, New Hire.* ►Fire Chief James McLaughlin introduced David Ogilvie and reviewed Mr. Ogilvie's background and education. ►Acting Town Clerk Nancy Danello performed the swearing in. ►Mr. Ogilvie's family was present and his wife performed the pinning.

**HEARINGS:** None.

**LICENSE TRANSACTIONS:** None.

**PRESENTATIONS/DISCUSSIONS: ► *American Rescue Plan Act: Jamie Hellen, Town Administrator.***

► Mr. Hellen narrated a slideshow presentation and provided a summary of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). He acknowledged that Ms. Alleyne has coordinated most of the federal monies, to date. He stated that Franklin received \$2.92 million in CARES Act money. He stated that staff have provided numerous public accountings of these funds. He stated that spending ends December 31, 2021. He said that Town uses include PPE, Chromebooks, UV lighting, HEPA filters, staff COVID-19 leave and equipment, and gear for various departments. He stated that the funds have been used. He stated that the estimated amount for FEMA is \$593,535; this includes reimbursement from federal and state disaster recovery declarations. He stated that during State of Emergencies for public safety, deficit spending is allowed. He stated that it is typical during an average snowstorm or federal disaster declaration to have a two-to-three-year delay in reimbursement. He stated that all other federal funds for Franklin Public Schools are separate appropriations. He thanked the congressional and legislative partners. As provided on his slideshow presentation, he reviewed the ARPA funds breakdown, both municipal allocation and county allocation. He said that the Town is scheduled to receive \$10,188,837. Congressional legislation approved this in March 2021. He stated that all funds have an expiration date of December 31, 2024. He noted that the county government is going to administer the county allocations; therefore, Franklin will lose \$198,630, which is three percent, for the county's administration fees and county projects. He discussed the following ways in which ARPA funds can be spent: support public health, economic impact, revenue replacement, employee premium pay, infrastructure water and sewer, and infrastructure broadband. He stated that guidance on ARPA funds is going to continue to evolve. He stated that Municipal Allocation #1 for \$1.73 million has been received. He suggested this money be saved and reviewed his reasons. He reviewed the projects list for County Allocation #1 for \$3,211,185 which included the following: water main replacement, stormwater infrastructure, public safety/wireless broadband tower, mental health clinician Franklin Police Department, and commercial vax fridge. He stated the slideshow presentation will be posted on the Town's website. ► Town Council members asked questions and made comments. ► Mr. Hellen explained that Norfolk County has received 50 percent of the money; the county is taking three percent. The county is performing reviews and will approve projects submitted based on compliance. The money has not yet been disbursed. ► Regarding the need for a cell tower, Police Chief Thomas Lynch discussed the service dead zones in Franklin impacting public safety. ► Mr. Hellen discussed how the money would help the Town comply with some stormwater regulations this year. ► Resident, West Central Street, asked about the required deadlines for the money to be spent. ► Mr. Hellen stated that the money must be firmly spent by the designated deadlines, not just obligated to be spent. ► Ms. Jaqueline Macil, 95 Elm Street, asked about the new tower. She stated that where she lives when the power goes out, they have difficulty getting on the Verizon website as they cannot get a signal. She asked if this tower will help people with this situation. ► Mr. Hellen stated that the new tower will be built with a 5G system. He hopes this will improve the reception at Ms. Macil's property.

**► *2020 Federal Census & Reprecincting Update: Nancy Danello, Acting Town Clerk and Kate Sjoberg, GIS Coordinator.***

► Acting Town Clerk Nancy Danello narrated a slideshow presentation. She discussed that the decennial census is designed to count every resident in the United States every 10 years. This determines the number of seats each state has in the U.S. House of Representatives. It is used to distribute billions of dollars in federal funds to local communities. She stated that the data collected includes the number of residents living at a particular location, ownership/rental status, occupancy status, sex, age, race, and Hispanic/Latinx/Spanish origin. She reviewed the currently available data. She noted that the 2000 Census was the last decennial census to use the long form; she reviewed the data that was not collected during this decennial census. As shown on the provided slides, she reviewed the increases and decreases in each category based on the data collected which includes population increased five percent and housing units increased 10 percent. She discussed reprecincting which is the drawing of new local/municipal precincts every 10 years. She reviewed reprecincting versus redistricting and stated that reprecincting is required by state law. Proposed precincts are reviewed and approved by the local municipalities. She stated that the

Franklin review team consisted of the Town Clerk's office, town planner, GIS coordinator, town attorney, and technical assistance from the secretary of state. She explained that redistricting is required by federal law. After the release of the decennial census, Massachusetts is constitutionally mandated to change its House, Senate, Governor's Council, and Congressional districts to account for changes in population. ► GIS Coordinator Kate Sjoberg showed maps depicting the current state legislative districts to be redrawn. She reviewed the reprecincting guidelines and standards that must be abided by. She explained that there may be no more than 4,000 residents per precinct and census block boundaries must be followed. She showed and discussed the 2010 precinct map and the proposed 2020 precinct map. She reviewed the proposed precinct 9. She discussed that some precincts went through very small changes while other precincts went through substantial changes. She explained the function of the Local Election Districts Review Commission (LEDRC) regarding their ability to reject any submitted plans that did not follow the standards. She reviewed the reprecincting timeline and the challenges of the timeline due to COVID-19. She discussed Governor Baker's law H.4118 which reversed the order of redistricting and noted that this law will be repealed on January 1, 2022 and revert back to the way it was always done. She reviewed the proposed House districts and noted that Franklin is unchanged from what they are currently. She reviewed the proposed Senate legislative districts and noted that Franklin is currently split in two districts and the proposed has Franklin in only one district. She stated that assuming all goes through, the changes in precincts are effective December 31, 2021. ► Town Council members asked questions and made comments. ► Mr. Hellen confirmed no additional reprecincting will have to be done until 2030. ► Ms. Danello stated that at each election a greeter stands by the district designation board. ► Mr. Cerel stated that as Franklin's Town Councilors are voted at-large and not by precinct, this has virtually no effect. ► Ms. Jaqueline Macil, 95 Elm Street, asked about the law Governor Baker put in and if the state senatorial and representative districts will remain in the same geographical area for the remainder of this decade or is that going to be gerrymandered every year. ► Ms. Sjoberg stated that what the state is going through right now with redistricting they have to go through every 10 years, and it is valid for a decade. ► Mr. Ted Cormier-Leger, 4 Ashbury Drive, stated that there seems to be confusion about the definition of homeless on various census data and what it includes. ► Mr. Cerel stated that it is part of the Census Bureau's data being collected and there should be a definition on that website. ► Mr. Hellen noted that regarding homelessness, there is some level of definition around a certain number of days that a person must be in a transient state.

#### **SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS:**

- a. **Capital Budget Subcommittee.** ► None.
- b. **Budget Subcommittee.** ► None.
- c. **Economic Development Subcommittee.** ► Ms. Hamblen stated that they met tonight; Ms. Lily Rivera, Marketing and Communications Specialist, gave a presentation on branding and way-finding signs.

#### **LEGISLATION FOR ACTION:**

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

- a. ***Resolution 21-59: Update of Town's Voting Precincts (Motion to Approve Resolution 21-59 - Majority Vote).*** ► Councilor Jones read the resolution. ► **MOTION to Approve Resolution 21-59: Update of Town's Voting Precincts by Dellorco. SECOND by Hamblen. No discussion. ► VOTE: Yes-8, No-0, Absent-0.**
- b. ***Resolution 21-60: Further Amending the Senior Citizen Property Tax Work-off Abatement Program (Motion to Approve Resolution 21-60 - Majority Vote).*** ► Councilor Jones read the resolution. ► **MOTION to Approve Resolution 21-60: Further Amending the Senior Citizen Property Tax Work-off Abatement Program by Dellorco. SECOND by Hamblen. Discussion:** ► Mr. Hellen stated this is one of the most popular programs in Town. This resolution would raise the minimum wage to \$14.25 per hour

for 100 hours of service, effective January 1, 2022, which is commensurate with the State's anticipated increase in minimum wage to \$14.25 per hour effective January 1, 2022. He noted that cities and towns are exempt from minimum wage requirements; however, Franklin chooses not to do that. He confirmed that the Town currently pays minimum wage for this program, and when the minimum wage goes up on January 1, 2022, the wage will go up for this program, as well. ► Councilor Chandler stated that this wage is still too low and the seniors deserve at least \$1 over minimum wage. ► It was confirmed that by law, the amount for this program cannot be more than minimum wage. ► Councilor Bissanti stated agreement with Councilor Chandler. ► Councilor Jones and Councilor Dellorco stated agreement that the amount of pay should be increased for this work-off program. ► **VOTE: Yes-8, No-0, Absent-0.**

- c. ***Resolution 21-61: Further Amending the Veterans' Property Tax Work-off Abatement Program (Motion to Approve Resolution 21-61 - Majority Vote).*** ► Councilor Jones read the resolution. ► **MOTION to Approve** Resolution 21-61: Further Amending the Veterans' Property Tax Work-off Abatement Program by **Dellorco. SECOND by Hamblen. Discussion:** ► Mr. Hellen stated that this is the same program just spoken about. This resolution will increase the number of eligible veterans to 100. ► Mr. Cerel stated that if you are a disabled veteran, you can have someone else perform the work for you. ► **VOTE: Yes-8, No-0, Absent-0.**
- d. ***Resolution 21-62: Acceptance of G.L. Chapter 59, Section 5C ½ and Increase in Certain Property Tax Exemptions Pursuant Thereto (Motion to Approve Resolution 21-62 - Majority Vote).*** ► Councilor Jones read the resolution. ► **MOTION to Approve** Resolution 21-62: Acceptance of G.L. Chapter 59, Section 5C ½ and Increase in Certain Property Tax Exemptions Pursuant Thereto by **Dellorco. SECOND by Hamblen. Discussion:** ► Mr. Hellen explained that this resolution approves increases in the amount of the property tax exemption available to veterans who are partially disabled from the current amount of \$400 to \$800, and to veterans who are fully disabled from the current amount of \$1,000 to \$2,000. These property tax exemption increases will be effective for the current fiscal year (2022) which began on July 1, 2021. He stated that prior to these proposed increases, they were updated for the fiscal years beginning July 1, 2010, and July 1, 2016. ► Town Councilor members commented on the eligibility into this program and thanked all veterans for their service. ► Mr. Ernest Carruthers, Quartermaster of Franklin VFW, 62 Southgate Road, thanked Town Councilor members for meeting with them and for their support. ► Ms. Shannon Nisbett, Veterans' Services Officer, 14 Orchard Street, thanked the Town Council members, VFW, and other veterans; she stated that disabled veterans deserve our support. ► **VOTE: Yes-8, No-0, Absent-0.**
- e. ***Resolution 21-63: Cable Funds in Support of PEG Service and Programming per MGL Ch. 44, §53F3/4 - \$28,000 (Motion to Approve Resolution 21-63 - Majority Vote).*** ► Councilor Jones read the resolution. ► **MOTION to Approve** Resolution 21-63: Cable Funds in Support of PEG Service and Programming per MGL Ch. 44, §53F3/4 - \$28,000 by **Dellorco. SECOND by Hamblen. Discussion:** ► Mr. Hellen stated that this is a requirement to be voted on. ► **VOTE: Yes-8, No-0, Absent-0.**
- f. ***Resolution 21-64: Cable Funds in Support of PEG Service and Programming per MGL Ch. 44, §53F3/4 - \$28,000 (Motion to Approve Resolution 21-64 - Majority Vote).*** ► Mr. Hellen stated that this resolution should be amended to indicate "Comcast" instead of "Verizon". ► Councilor Jones read the resolution. ► **MOTION to Approve** Resolution 21-64: Cable Funds in Support of PEG Service and Programming per MGL Ch. 44, §53F3/4 - \$28,000 by **Dellorco. SECOND by Hamblen. No discussion.** ► **VOTE: Yes-8, No-0, Absent-0.** ► Chair Mercer noted that if either of the two above resolutions need to be amended, it will be done at a later time.

**TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT:** ► Mr. Hellen stated that the Town had been in bankruptcy court with Dean Foods. It has been confirmed that all bills, penalties and interest, and all monies have been fully collected by the Water Department. He noted that the purchase of the Maple Hill open space 70-acre parcel closed and now the Town of Franklin officially owns the parcel.

**FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS:** ► Councilor Frongillo stated that he looks forward to a presentation on open space. ► Councilor Bissanti stated that he is going to keep moving forward on homelessness. He requested a discussion on cell towers; he stated that there are private entities willing to do this.

**COUNCIL COMMENTS:** ► Councilor Frongillo stated that Franklin sports are doing well. He stated that in this election cycle there has been quite a bit discussed about the Town Clerk. He reviewed his understanding of the mishap that occurred in a previous Town election and requested confirmation that Ms. Danello was vetted before being hired as Acting Town Clerk. ► Mr. Hellen stated that all the records including his appointment letter regarding this situation are on the Town Clerk's website. He reviewed the process of making an interim/acting appointment of Town Clerk if an elected Town Clerk steps down. He stated that the Town Attorney was worked with. He stated that local knowledge was valuable in making this appointment. ► Mr. Cerel stated that the issues arose during the tenure of the former Town Clerk who resigned. ► Councilor Bissanti noted the passing of Colin Powell and stated that he admired Mr. Powell. He stated that Franklin is a family and that is how they have to go forward in this election. ► Councilor Chandler stated that this election cycle has been difficult. He noted the next Candidates Night will be held tomorrow night. ► Mr. Cerel advised the Town Councilor members to stay clear of discussing/commenting on the upcoming election. ► Councilor Hamblen thanked the community for allowing her to serve as a Town Councilor member. ► Councilor Pellegrini noted tomorrow night's Candidates Night. ► Councilor Jones noted he joined the Town Council in 2009; he stated that the Town Council works together as a team. He thanked all those who have allowed him the opportunity to be a Town Council member. ► Councilor Dellorco stated that we should all get along; the Town Council is here to help people. ► Chair Mercer stated that as Chair, he thanks his fellow councilors; they have accomplished many good things for the community.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION:** None.

**ADJOURN:** ► **MOTION** to Adjourn by Jones. **SECOND** by Dellorco. **No Discussion.** ► **VOTE:** Yes-8, No-0, Absent-0.

**Meeting adjourned at 9:26 PM.**

Respectfully submitted,

---

Judith Lizardi  
Recording Secretary