

**FRANKLIN TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF MEETING
January 5, 2022**

A meeting of the Town Council was held on Wednesday, January 5, 2022, at the Municipal Building, 2nd Floor, Council Chambers, 355 East Central Street, Franklin, MA. Councilors present: Brian Chandler, Theodore Cormier-Leger, Robert Dellorco, Cobi Frongillo, Melanie Hamblen, Glenn Jones, Thomas Mercer, Deborah Pellegrini, Patrick Sheridan. 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, 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. ► Chair Mercer announced the Department of Conservation & Recreation (DCR) Certification of Announcement. He read aloud a memorandum to the Town Council from the Town Administrator dated December 30, 2021: According to state regulation 301 CMR 51.08(1)(b), the Town is obligated to announce a parcel of land of approximately six acres in the Town of Franklin being considered by the state and that the 120-day period of notice is waived. This announcement relates to the land swap between the state and town for the enhanced recycling station and giving town land to the state forest.

CITIZEN COMMENTS: ► Mr. Colin Cass, 146 Longhill Road, stated that tomorrow is January 6th making it the one-year anniversary of the most shameful event in American history. Franklin will observe that anniversary tomorrow on the Town Common between 5 PM to 6 PM. He stated that we will honor the people who got hurt or died there defending our capital. He urged all concerned citizens to attend. ► DPW Director Brutus Cantoreggi gave updates regarding public works. He stated that the solid waste/trash/recycling program has been having delays. He noted that Waste Management has had over 40 percent employees out. However, they have done a good job notifying him every day. He stated that if trash/recycling is not picked up on the correct day, it is being picked up the next morning. If citizens have questions or trash/recycling is not being picked up by the next day, please call the DPW. He stated that at public works they have also been dealing with Covid issues; they have had over 30 percent of employees out. They have done things at the department to keep people separated, and they have staggered staff. He stated that a snowstorm is coming Friday. However, they are short staffed; it will take a little longer to get things done.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: ► *November 17, 2021 and December 1, 2021.* ► **MOTION to Approve** the November 17, 2021 meeting minutes by **Dellorco. SECOND by Jones. No discussion.** ► **VOTE: Yes-9, No-0, Absent-0.** ► **MOTION to Approve** the December 1, 2021 meeting minutes by **Dellorco. SECOND by Jones. No discussion.** ► **VOTE: Yes-9, No-0, Absent-0.**

PROCLAMATIONS/RECOGNITIONS: ► *Franklin Library Association.* ► Chair Mercer read aloud a proclamation honoring the Franklin Library Association (FLA) for their continued support of the Franklin Public Library. ► A representative on behalf of the FLA Board of Directors stated that it has been a privilege and honor to work with Library Director Felicia Oti, her staff, Town Administrator Jamie

Hellen, and many others. He thanked the former presidents of the FLA and noted that the FLA has been established for 150 years.

APPOINTMENTS: None.

HEARINGS: None.

LICENSE TRANSACTIONS: None.

PRESENTATIONS/DISCUSSIONS: ► *Town Council Goals Session 2022-2023.* ► Mr. Hellen stated that the draft 2022-2023 Town Council and Town Administration Goals document is available on the Town's website in the Town Council members' meeting packet. These goals represent the high-level projects from the organization. He noted that the list is very long and will need to be prioritized. He noted that these goals have been worked on with the departments, and he believes the goals are attainable. ► Chair Mercer asked for Town Council members' comments on any items on the draft document. ► Councilor Hamblen asked about the item listed as review sidewalk snow removal bylaw. ► Mr. Hellen stated that this is another round of review for this item. He reviewed the prior bylaw that asked people living in certain districts to shovel their sidewalks; this bylaw was repealed a few years ago. He stated that the bylaw is back on the list based on the DPW Director's presentation on snow. ► Councilor Jones read aloud the draft 2022-2023 Town Council and Town Administration Goals document. ► Councilor Chandler asked about the police station study and Nu Style property. ► Mr. Hellen stated that the police station study has not begun yet, and he reviewed the process. He noted that regarding policy development on the redevelopment of North Grove Economic Development Area (aka Nu Style), they may be coming in to give a presentation in May or June. ► Councilor Frongillo stated that there are a lot of smaller goals that fall underneath the bigger goals. He stated there is talk and money being put forward to extend the SNETT trail to downtown; he would like to include this extension into the goals. He stated that they had started to talk about expansion and improvement of residential composting and asked if that would fall under solid waste. He asked for language that includes to expand the Town's walking and biking networks or language which allows them to look at bike lanes, as well and not have to wait for complete streets grant. He stated that he would like to discuss creating a more equitable taxation system. He stated that the Town has a responsibility to mitigate impacts on climate change. He stated that many towns around Franklin are establishing goals on how they can achieve net-zero carbon emissions. He stated that there are many grant opportunities for this. ► Mr. Hellen stated that regarding SNETT, the appropriate goal is to complete the work of the \$700,000 ARPA money. He stated that to connect it to downtown may not be achievable by the time this Town Council's two years are up, and the financial obligation is significant. He clarified that the bike lanes item should be put as an item under complete streets. He stated that he does not know what it entails regarding net-zero carbon emissions. He stated that the goals have been set by the state for 2050. He would have to check to see what it would entail from a cost and staff perspective for generating a net-zero carbon emissions plan for the Town. ► Chair Mercer stated that instead of putting that item on the goals, he asked Mr. Hellen to look into it and report back. ► Councilor Jones asked how many more public ways need to be accepted. ► Mr. Hellen stated that there are another handful of public ways ready to be finalized. After that, there are another hundred roads of which some are not reasonably feasible. ► Councilor Jones asked that as part of the energy reduction plan, how much impact has it had on the community so far, he asked about electrical vehicle charging stations, and he asked if there has been any communication with the EPA regarding stormwater progress. ► Mr. Hellen stated that the EPA is not going to call or check in with the Town; the EPA will just issue a mandate as they have done with other towns such as Quincy. He stated that he does not have an update on the progress of the energy update plan. He stated that he spoke with the staff last week, and they like the electric vehicles. ► Ms. Alleyne stated that some units were installed at the DPW, and she has applied for two additional green vehicles. ► Councilor Jones said they need to focus on the Beaver Street Interceptor as it is a one-hundred-year-old sewer pipe. ► Councilor Dellorco asked if there is a warranty for the

electric vehicles as they are expensive to fix. ► Ms. Alleyne stated that there is some warranty through the dealership. ► Councilor Pellegrini asked about the study done for the old museum on Washington Street. She asked if it should be carried forward to now see what they are going to do with the museum. ► Chair Mercer stated that they will add that item. ► Councilor Cormier-Leger asked if they could strengthen the language from discuss a sidewalk master plan and discuss finance for current infrastructure assets, roads, parking lots, sidewalks maintenance, to develop a plan. ► Mr. Hellen stated that there is \$2 million for the construction of the sidewalk on Washington Street. Maybe the DPW will be able to fit that in. Outside of that, adding the word develop may be setting a goal that is unachievable due to the cost of sidewalks. There has to be a financing mechanism to the number of sidewalks people are requesting. ► Chair Mercer stated that they could look to develop a list of areas to do sidewalks on; however, unless there is funding, there is nothing that can be done. He stated that he wants to be careful about putting items on goals that are not achievable. He asked Mr. Hellen if a list of sidewalks needing repair was made. Mr. Hellen stated that the Town Council made it a previous priority to work on sidewalks on Washington Street and Beaver Street. ► Councilor Cormier-Leger stated that he would like to see enhancements to the Town Common. ► Mr. Hellen noted that there is a downtown improvements capital account. ► Councilor Hamblen asked for a presentation about Maple Hill. She asked that in regard to water conservation, is there any kind of grant to encourage people to put rain gauges on their lawn sprinklers or require when a new sprinkler system is installed it must include a rain gauge. ► Councilor Sheridan asked for a presentation by Parks and Recreation. He asked about lifeguards at Beaver Pond. ► Councilor Dellorco stated that there has been talk about bringing the lifeguards back. ► Chair Mercer stated that these goals sometimes are moved from one Town Council to another as the item may need to be continued. This list is a compilation of the last two years and some items that just do not go away. ► Mr. Maxwell Morrongiello, 127 Central Park Terrace, discussed a residential tax exemption for next year as part of a fiscal goal. He stated that he would like to cut the taxes for low-income residents making the tax code more progressive. This would be accomplished by shifting the tax burden to those who could more easily afford it.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS:

- a. **Capital Budget Subcommittee.** ► None.
- b. **Budget Subcommittee.** ► None.
- c. **Economic Development Subcommittee.** ► Ms. Hamblen stated that they met tonight and began the Franklin For All project. She stated that ZBA Chair Bruce Hunchard, Planning Board Chair Greg Rondeau, Planning Board Clerk Beth Wierling, and EDC members are on the Steering Committee. She stated that the Steering Committee met with MAPC. This is a six-month project. She stated that the next meeting is February 2, 2022, at 5:45 PM. There will be a public forum on March 7, 2022, at 7 PM. She would like everyone's input.

LEGISLATION FOR ACTION:

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

- a. **Resolution 22-01: Gift Acceptance - Franklin Public Library (\$65,500) (Motion to Approve Resolution 22-01 - Majority Vote).** ► Councilor Jones read the resolution. ► **MOTION to Approve Resolution 22-01: Gift Acceptance - Franklin Public Library (\$65,500) by Dellorco. SECOND by Hamblen. Discussion:** ► Mr. Hellen stated thank you to the Franklin Library Association for their generous donation. ► **VOTE: Yes-9, No-0, Absent-0.**
- b. **Resolution 22-02: Gift Acceptances - Veterans' Services Department (\$1,450), Senior Center (\$300) (Motion to Approve Resolution 22-02 - Majority Vote).** ► Councilor Jones read the resolution. ► **MOTION to Approve Resolution 22-02: Gift Acceptances - Veterans' Services**

Department (\$1,450), Senior Center (\$300) by **Dellorco. SECOND** by **Hamblen. Discussion:** ► Mr. Hellen stated thank you to the donators. ► **VOTE: Yes-9, No-0, Absent-0.**

- c. **Resolution 22-03: Appropriation to Pay Prior Years Bills (Motion to Approve Resolution 22-03 - 2/3 Majority Vote).** ► Councilor Jones read the resolution. ► **MOTION to Approve** Resolution 22-03: Appropriation to Pay Prior Years Bills by **Dellorco. SECOND** by **Hamblen. Discussion:** ► Mr. Hellen reviewed that a series of bills came into the Town from Pitney Bowes after the start of the new fiscal year. By statute, the Town Council needs to approve these. This resolution will permit the Town to appropriate FY22 funds to pay for the prior fiscal year's bills. All three outstanding bills are from Pitney Bowes and total \$1,932.12. ► Councilor Pellegrini stated that these bills are extremely late. ► Finance Director Chris Sandini stated that it was not a normal year due to Covid. The mail was coming in but someone was not always there to receive it. As well, due to a change in procurement officer personnel, for a time, no one was looking at the bills which could be accessed online. ► **VOTE: Yes-9, No-0, Absent-0.**

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT: None.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS: ► Councilor Chandler asked when the Town Charter presentation would be. ► Mr. Hellen stated that it is not scheduled yet.

COUNCIL COMMENTS: ► Councilor Sheridan stated that he hopes everyone will come for the vigil tomorrow. ► Councilor Frongillo stated that he is excited that the pop-up shop is moving into a larger space. ► Councilor Hamblen stated that she hopes everyone has a peaceful and healthy New Year. ► Councilor Cormier-Leger acknowledged the terrible tragedy regarding Shirley Owens. He thanked everyone who helped the family and put together the vigil. He wished get well to former Town Council member Andrew Bissanti. ► Councilor Chandler agreed with Councilor Cormier-Leger's comments. He asked the DPW Director about the end of Panther Way and the ice issue. ► Chair Mercer reminded all that questions should not be asked during Council Comments. ► Councilor Chandler requested an update from the DPW Director regarding the end of Panther Way and the ice issue. ► Councilor Pellegrini stated that the town stepped up for Shirley Owens; it was a tragic time. She stated that the Food Pantry is moving to the former Edward's building. She gave condolences to the family of Sam Pasquantonio. ► Councilor Jones noted how the community supported the family of Shirley Owens. He wished get well to Andrew Bissanti. He encouraged everyone to stay optimistic in 2022. He gave a shout-out to Vallee's Fine Jewelers for the great work they do. ► Councilor Dellorco stated that it was great to see they way the Town came out for Shirley Owens. He requested everyone pray for Andrew Bissanti. ► Chair Mercer stated that the community outpouring for the Owens family was phenomenal. He thanked the Town departments for taking care of dealing with the house. He offered condolences to the family of Sam Pasquantonio. He gave thoughts and prayers to Andrew Bissanti and his family. He stated that he hopes and prays the pandemic is soon in the rear-view mirror.

Chair Mercer recused himself from the Executive Session; he stated that Vice Chair Dellorco will conduct the rest of the meeting.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: ► a. *Considering the purchase, exchange, lease or value of real property, because an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the Board - Schmidt's Farm, Prospect Street.* ► Vice Chair Dellorco stated that the Town Council needs to meet in executive session for the purpose of considering the purchase, exchange, lease or value of real property, because an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the Board on the Schmidt's Farm property on Prospect Street.

► **MOTION** to **Enter** executive session for the purpose of considering the purchase, exchange, lease or value of real property, because an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the Board, Schmidt's Farm, Prospect Street, and the open meeting will not reconvene at the conclusion of the executive session by **Jones**. **SECOND** by **Hamblen**. **No Discussion**. ► **ROLL CALL VOTE: Chandler-YES; Cormier-Leger-YES; Dellorco-YES; Frongillo-YES; Hamblen-YES; Jones-YES; Pellegrini-YES; Sheridan-YES**. ► **VOTE: Yes-8, No-0, Absent-0**.

Open Session ended at 8:17 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Judith Lizardi
Recording Secretary