

**FRANKLIN TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF MEETING
February 16, 2022**

A meeting of the Town Council was held on Wednesday, February 16, 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 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.

CITIZEN COMMENTS: None.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: None.

PROCLAMATIONS/RECOGNITIONS: None.

APPOINTMENTS: ► *New Hire: Police Department - Derek Mackey;* ► *New Hire: Police Department - Tyler Brabham;* ► *New Hire: Police Department - Joseph Burchill;* ► *New Hire: Police Department - Michael Demers;* ► *New Hire: Police Department - Conor Desmond.* ► Police Chief Thomas Lynch stated that four of the five new hires are in attendance at the meeting. He reviewed Officer Tyler Brabham's education, background, and career. He was pinned by his father. ► Police Chief Thomas Lynch reviewed Officer Joseph Burchill's education, background, and career. He was pinned by his uncle. ► Police Chief Thomas Lynch reviewed Officer Michael Demers's education, background, and career. He was pinned by his wife and sons. ► Police Chief Thomas Lynch reviewed Officer Conor Desmond's education, background, and career. He was pinned by his father. ► Town Clerk Nancy Danello performed the swearing in for the new hires.

Chair Mercer called a two-minute recess.

HEARINGS: None.

LICENSE TRANSACTIONS: None.

PRESENTATIONS/DISCUSSIONS: ► *Discussion: West Street Neighborhood Parking - Thomas J. Lynch, Chief of Police.* ► Mr. Hellen stated that this item is based on the citizens' comments from a few weeks ago. ► Police Chief Thomas Lynch and Lt. Jason Reilly provided a historical background summary of the issue. Chief Lynch stated that around 2018 there were many complaints in the West Street

neighborhood; he stated that in referring to the West Street neighborhood, he means West Street, East Street, Church Avenue, Walnut Street, Nason Street, and a portion of Union Street. He stated that residents had issues and concerns about increases in the number of vehicles parking in the neighborhood. Trash removal, vehicles blocking driveways, snow removal, and lack of parking for guests was becoming an issue. Noise, disturbances, children's safety, trash, and disrespect of people's property were also issues. He stated that they looked at why there was an increase in parking in the neighborhood. He stated that at the time Dean College had increased the number of programs, bachelor's degrees, and commuter parking. He stated that in July 2018, the Town Council amended the bylaw pertaining to downtown parking with an emphasis on the West Street neighborhood. He stated that signage was installed and 92 striped parking spots were added to the streets. He explained that the Police Department conducted surveys on the parking to collect data. He stated that parking enforcement was increased. They worked with Dean College and learned that some students did not want to pay for Dean's parking passes, so they parked on the street spaces. They consulted with Dean College further to address the issue. Dean College moved some spaces to address the concern. He stated that more Police Department surveys were conducted to collect data on the parking. They continued parking enforcement, issued citations, and towed two vehicles. He stated that after January/February 2019, he did not receive any more complaints from the neighborhood regarding the issue. Now the complaints are starting to arise again. ► Lt. Reilly provided a review of what the Police Department has been doing since September 2021. He stated that he spoke to two residents and a few businesses regarding the complaints of having no places to park. He explained that there are five different types of parking signs installed in the area which are not consistent. He noted that the winter parking ban is not posted on any of the signs. He stated that most of the Dean students are moving their cars every two hours to avoid a violation; this is perfectly legal to do. With no overnight parking ban, a vehicle can legally stay in one spot for about 19 hours. He stated that the violators were predominately Dean College students. They are parking overnight closer to their dorms. He noted that some of the business owners are parking in front of their place of business. He stated that the police have written over 200 citations since September. He stated that they have reached out to Dean security about this. He suggested that the Town look at more consistent and clear signage in downtown that would include no overnight parking, possibly increase the fines, and increase education for the stakeholders. He explained that parking has to exist within three groups: business owners, customers who want to go to those businesses, and the residents who live there. ► Chief Lynch confirmed that a parking ticket is \$15. He suggested increasing the fine. ► Mr. Hellen confirmed that there is no Dean representative attending tonight's meeting. ► Councilor Chandler stated that he is frustrated with the situation. ► Councilor Dellorco stated that eliminating overnight parking is a concern as it would put residents' guests in violation if they parked on the street. ► Councilor Hamblen asked for suggestions. She reiterated consistent signage, higher fee for violations as \$15 is rather low, and clarification of the winter parking ban. ► Councilor Frongillo stated that he thinks the problem will only get worse. He suggested signage, increased fines, looking at municipal lots, and looking at a residential parking pass. He stated that the Town Council should examine the parking policies. ► Chief Lynch reviewed the allowed parking. ► Councilor Sheridan asked about a residential parking pass. ► Chief Lynch stated that the residential parking pass is a lot of logistical overhead to do. Everyone would have to go to the police station to prove they live there to get a pass. The question becomes whether that is going to be all through Town. He stated that it is a lot of work for whoever is going to do that job, most likely the police. ► Councilor Cormier-Leger stated that he would be in support of looking into a residential parking decal. He stated that it has proven to work in many congested communities. ► Lt. Reilly stated that he has recently received two complaints. ► Councilor Pellegrini stated that it is a big problem. She asked if they could do a resident-only parking permit. She stated that this is Dean College's problem; the Town Councilors have to take care of the residents. She stated that the businesses are parking in front of their stores and that is a terrible thing to be happening. She stated that now they are saying their customers do not have a place to

park, but that is because they are taking up the spaces in the front. She stated that something has to be done about that. She stated that maybe we have to go back to parking meters; the cars are there all day long and they should not be. ► Councilor Jones suggested this be put forth to the EDC to discuss further options. He stated that we need to sit down with business owners about this. ► Councilor Dellorco stated that if they are going to do the residents parking, they are going to have to do it for many streets. ► Chair Mercer pointed out that there is one piece that he is having trouble with. There are 92 parking spots. Every time this is checked, there are only 33 spots being used; everyone is trying to park in the same 25 or 30 spots. So, it is not an overall parking issue as there are enough spots, but they are not all being utilized. He stated that he is concerned about having a resident pass because the residents have families that come home for the night or weekend. He asked how do you differentiate that. He stated that he agrees with Councilor Jones that this is something to be discussed. He asked the administration to work the Police Department to come up with some recommendations through EDC and have the EDC come back to the Town Council for a final disposition. ► Ms. Jane Callaway-Tripp, 607 Maple Street, suggested increasing the ticket fee and asked if each ticket fine can be increased with successive tickets. She stated that she thought it was an automatic tow during the winter parking ban. She stated that Dean has plenty of parking for their student; the trouble is, the students do not want to walk. Dean has to take some responsibility for this. If a student has had multiple tickets and towing, Dean can revoke the student's right to have a car on campus. She suggested that if residents have overnight guests, they could get a special placard for overnight parking. Dean students are not residents of the Town; they are not paying taxes. She noted that not making businesses downtown supply parking for their customers will only make this problem worse. ► Mr. Gary MacKintosh, 24 East Street, stated that a ticket of \$15 is not enough incentive to modify someone's behavior; a \$50 ticket would be more meaningful. He discussed the cost of the Dean College parking permit versus getting a \$15 ticket. ► A resident asked that the Town Council discuss the snow on the sidewalks after a storm. ► Mr. Hellen stated that he agreed with Mr. MacKintosh. Dean College has enough parking; it is their problem. They charge \$350 for parking for one year. The ticket fine is only \$15 if a person gets caught. He stated that he thinks people do not want to walk too far. He stated that there is plenty of parking for everyone. However, it is cheaper to skirt the rules, park where you want, and not spend money on the Dean parking permit.

► ***Presentation: Diversity, Equity & Inclusion - Sara Ahern, Superintendent of Schools.***

► Superintendent Ahern and Assistant Superintendent Lucas Giguere addressed the Town Council. Dr. Ahern narrated the slideshow presentation Franklin Public Schools Diversity, Equity, Inclusion. The presentation slides were provided in the Town Council's meeting packet. She stated that schools are a microcosm of the greater community. She noted that this presentation was given to the School Committee, and reiterated that the slideshow presentation is available in the Town Council's meeting packet. She reviewed that school-based efforts include administrators, faculty/staff, families, and students. She stated that they have set a mission to affirm diversity, promote equity, and foster inclusion. She noted the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee which is a 40-plus member committee. She reviewed the prerequisites to becoming a culturally proficient school district. She stated that the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee identified language of what is meant when talking about diversity, equity, and inclusion. She stated that they are putting their best foot forward and continuing to learn. They are doing this for every current and future graduate. She stated that as the students become more diverse, they want to make sure each student sees themselves reflected in the Franklin Public Schools community. She stated that they want to make a more equitable and just society. She reviewed selected areas of focus including steps the School Committee has taken, professional development for faculty and staff, highlighted areas of curriculum and instruction, school culture both proactive and reactive responses, and district supports. Mr. Giguere reviewed specifics on professional development. Dr. Ahern reviewed curriculum and instruction opportunities to infuse diversity, equity, and inclusion. She reviewed curriculum incorporated

in English Language arts, history and social sciences, health and wellness, seal of biliteracy, inclusive classrooms, curriculum materials, and enrichment and field trips. Mr. Giguere discussed the importance of the seal of biliteracy. He discussed school culture including core values and mission statements, responsive classroom, a world of difference, no place for hate, resource groups, clubs, unified sports, and holidays and months of recognition. Dr. Ahern noted that many of these things around school culture have been disrupted because of the pandemic. Mr. Giguere discussed responding to bias-based incidents. He reviewed prior years' statistics and stated that in 2021-2022 there were 60 investigations, 19 bullying findings, and 25 civil rights violations. He discussed the policies of bullying and the procedures for investigations. Dr. Ahern reviewed efforts underway regarding district supports including having a director of diversity, equity, and inclusion. She noted how comprehensive their efforts have been and that she will look forward to the information on the equity audit. ► Chair Mercer noted that this is a different audience than at a School Committee meeting. ► Town Council members asked questions and made comments. ► In response to questions, Dr. Ahern reviewed how the Town, Town Council, police, businesses, etc., can help. She discussed the non-financial pieces. She said that the Town Administrator has been a great resource and guide. She said that they are making some strides in the community with the Freedom Team. She said one missing piece is around when incidents happen providing an opportunity to heal. She said that we can do some things internally. She said that it is incredibly powerful to see the number of supportive people out there and knowing the community is behind them. She noted the Love Franklin initiative. She discussed the financial component of resources and materials. She stated that there is a lot on people's plates and a lot of new learning and unlearning to take place. She stated that their administrators are out straight with all the things on their plates. That is a concern she has; there may be financial components to that as well. Mr. Giguere talked about the biased-based incidents and civil rights violations. He explained the process of what happens after an investigation and a finding. A findings letter goes to both the victim and the aggressor. A disciplinary/corrective action takes place. He stated that education is also provided. Dr. Ahern stated that one of the functions of the resource group is to help elicit student voices and put their voices out as constructively as possible. She stated that she would have to get back to the Town Council with the number of students with first language not English. She stated that they have 91 or 95 students who are English learners. She stated that 16 percent qualify for free and reduced lunch. Students with disabilities are at 18.4 percent. There are 17 percent of students identifying in a reporting category for the department of education. She stated there are nine students identifying as non-binary for their gender. She stated the financial assistance program outlines the fee-based programs that are offset. She discussed two surveys: MetroWest Youth Behavior Survey which students in grades seven through twelve took in the November timeframe with results coming out in April, and a Climate and Culture Survey. She noted that due to the pandemic relationships took a step backward. She stated that she thinks there are some experiences students are exposed to outside of the school setting that students are learning from including the media which provide less than favorable influences that students are emulating. She stated that social media has exploded as well. She discussed how students are coping with current events. She said it affects them in profound ways; they want to hear from trusted adults about current events. ► Mr. Hellen stated his appreciation for the presentation. He stated that he has been able to see in a comprehensive way all that has been done to help in the schools. He stated that culture is changing. He stated that he hopes the viewers come away with a sense of confidence that the School Department is taking this seriously and is doing much to solve it. He stated that the School Department has shown us the model of what we can do. He stated that instead of detention, they bring people together, sit down, and talk about it; that is powerful stuff. He stated that he thinks the Freedom Team has a lot of potential in the community to bring people together. He stated they look forward to more progress in the future. ► Chair Mercer thanked the presenters for their enlightening presentation. It provided the Town Council and listening audience very good information. He stated that we are such a fortunate community to have the school central offices and the Town's municipal offices in the same building and to have the

town administrator and superintendent of school's offices back-to-back so they can go in and share information.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS:

- a. **Capital Budget Subcommittee.** ► Councilor Pellegri stated that they met tonight; they went through about seven departments. She stated that we will be having another meeting perhaps next week or the week after to go over the second half of the department heads; then they will make a recommendation to the Town Council.
- b. **Budget Subcommittee.** ► None.
- c. **Economic Development Subcommittee.** ► Councilor Hamblen stated that they will meet on March 2nd prior to the Town Council meeting.
- d. **Town Administrator Evaluation Ad Hoc Subcommittee Report.** ► Councilor Jones stated that he provided the Town Council members with a letter on behalf of the Town Administrator Evaluation Ad Hoc Subcommittee for the 2021 Annual Review of the Franklin Town Administrator. He read the letter aloud. He asked the full Town Council for endorsement of the 2021 Town Administrator's evaluation, and if approved, the written evaluation will go into Town Administrator Jamie Hellen's personnel file. He read the goals achieved by the Town Administrator in an exemplary manner. He stated that the ad hoc subcommittee gave the Town Administrator an exemplary grade of A for his annual performance. He stated that they expect the Town Administrator's good work will continue into the future. ► Chair Mercer, ad hoc subcommittee member, stated that he would like to add that forefront in his mind during this evaluation was the time period in which the goals were accomplished due to COVID. He told Mr. Hellen a job well done. ► Councilor Dellorco, ad hoc subcommittee member, agreed that it was a very difficult time and Mr. Hellen handled it like a trooper. He stated that Mr. Hellen always tries to provide answers right away when asked. ► Councilor Jones stated that discussion of the Town Administrator's performance is based on the set goals; therefore, comments should be restricted to these items. ► Councilor Chandler stated Mr. Hellen is doing a great job. ► Councilor Hamblen stated that Mr. Hellen always answers every question immediately which shows his commitment to the community. ► Councilor Pellegri thanked Mr. Hellen for all he does. ► **MOTION to Enter** into the record the 2021 Annual Review of the Franklin Town Administrator Jamie Hellen by **Jones. SECOND** by **Hamblen. 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 22-13: Adoption of Fiscal Policies (Motion to Approve Resolution 22-13 - Majority Vote).** ► Councilor Jones read the resolution. ► **MOTION to Approve** Resolution 22-13: Adoption of Fiscal Policies by **Dellorco. SECOND** by **Hamblen. Discussion:** ► Mr. Hellen stated that this was one of the goals for the year. The action before the Town Council is to approve the latest version of financial policies for the Town. He stated that the Finance Committee approved the current draft unanimously at their February 9, 2022, meeting. The track-changes version of the document has been included in the Town Council members' meeting packet. He noted changes including that the budget stabilization policy was added. He stated that the other two big ones regarded the hotel/motel tax revenue and the marijuana tax revenue; they are proposing to use both of those revenue sources to add to local receipts to support the operating budget. He noted that the occupancy rate of the hotels is still low since the pandemic. ► Town Council members asked questions. ► In response to questions, Mr. Hellen stated that when you have local receipts there is a series of categories, and by diversifying that portfolio, you can create more support. By adding these items in, it will create a more diverse source

of revenue. He discussed that with CPC there, he does not see the need of putting \$100,000 into the open space stabilization account. He stated that there are so many competing demands for money at this time. ► **VOTE: Yes-9, No-0, Absent-0.**

- b. Resolution 22-14: Cable Funds in Support of PEG Service and Programming per MGL Ch. 44, §53F3/4 (Motion to Approve Resolution 22-14 - Majority Vote).** ► Councilor Jones read the resolution. ► **MOTION to Approve Resolution 22-14: Cable Funds in Support of PEG Service and Programming per MGL Ch. 44, §53F3/4 by Dellorco. SECOND by Hamblen. No discussion.** ► Councilor Jones stated that people have tried to come up with ideas to find additional revenue by taxing items such as utility poles. However, if you tax the utility companies, the companies assess the fees to the subscribers. ► **VOTE: Yes-9, No-0, Absent-0.**

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT: ► Mr. Hellen thanked the Town Council for their evaluation and for their support. He stated that this is the greatest job he has ever had.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS: ► Councilor Frongillo stated that he would like to review parking.

COUNCIL COMMENTS: ► Councilor Cormier-Leger congratulated the Police Department's new recruits. He thanked the School Department for the great presentation. He wished his friend Jerry Bruno a happy birthday. ► Councilor Chandler apologized that he did not get back to a resident. He spoke about the lights at the Village Mall and noted that a yield sign is missing. Mr. Hellen stated that he would call Carlos Rebelo to get in touch with Mass Highway about this. ► Councilor Pellegrini noted the passing of former Town employee Eleanor Copley. She stated that she received a call from a woman who attended the South Franklin Congregational Meeting House when it was a church. She asked for people who also attended the church to call her. She stated that she would like to hear some stories about the meeting house and maybe have a get together with those people. ► Councilor Frongillo noted some of the high school athletic teams. He stated that office hours are tomorrow at 8:30 AM at the Senior Center. He stated that he would like to speak to the Police Chief again about how to recruit people of different backgrounds and genders. ► Councilor Hamblen thanked the police for tonight's presentations and discussions. She noted the Franklin for All forum on March 7th at 7 PM. She stated that she has been appointed to the Massachusetts Municipal Associations Policy on Energy and Environment Committee. ► Councilor Jones thanked everyone at the DPW who helped out with the snowstorm. He thanked the School Department for their presentation. He thanked everyone on the School Committee for all the work done in that past two years. ► Councilor Dellorco gave a shout-out to the School Department for tonight's presentation. He gave a shout-out to Franklin Police and Fire for their response to the incident on Saturday as no one got hurt and the person is getting the help that they need. ► Chair Mercer thanked Chief Lynch and Lt. Reilly for the presentation and getting things started in the process of the parking. He noted that the Federated Church used to have their Christmas Eve service at the old South Franklin Church in the 1960s.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: None.

ADJOURN: ► **MOTION to Adjourn by Jones. SECOND by Dellorco. No Discussion.** ► **VOTE: Yes-9, No-0, Absent-0.**

Meeting adjourned at 10:08 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Judith Lizardi
Recording Secretary