FRANKLIN TOWN COUNCIL

Agenda & Meeting Packet

January 7, 2026

6:00 PM

Meeting will be held at the Franklin Municipal Building
355 East Central Street - 2nd Floor, Council Chambers

A NOTE TO RESIDENTS: All citizens are welcome to attend public meetings in person. **To view the live meeting remotely, citizens** are encouraged to watch the live stream on the Franklin Town Hall TV YouTube channel or the live broadcast on Comcast Channel 9 and Verizon Channel 29. **To listen to the meeting remotely** citizens may call-in using this number: 1-929-205-6099. **To participate in the meeting remotely** citizens may join a Zoom Webinar using the information provided below. Meetings are recorded and archived by Franklin TV on the Franklin Town Hall TV YouTube channel and shown on repeat on Comcast Channel 9 and Verizon Channel 29.

ZOOM WEBINAR DETAILS: ID #829 1107 4306 & Link: https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82911074306

- **Any participants who wish to speak** during the webinar must enter their **full name and email address** when joining the webinar.
- All participants will be automatically muted upon joining the webinar. In order to speak, participants will need to select the "Raise Hand" function to request to be unmuted.
- All speakers will be required to state their full name and street address before commenting.

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1. **ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE CHAIR**
    a. *This meeting is being recorded by Franklin TV and shown on Comcast channel 9 and Verizon Channel 29. This meeting may be recorded by others.*
    b. *Chair to identify members participating remotely.*
    c. *Upcoming Town Sponsored Community Events.*
2. **CITIZEN COMMENTS**
    a. *Citizens are welcome to express their views for up to three minutes on a matter that is not on the agenda. In compliance with G.L. Chapter 30A, Section 20 et seq, the Open Meeting Law, the Council cannot engage in a dialogue or comment on a matter raised during Citizen Comments. The Council may ask the Town Administrator to review the matter. Nothing herein shall prevent the Town Administrator from correcting a misstatement of fact.*
3. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**
    a. December 3, 2025
4. **PROCLAMATIONS / RECOGNITIONS** - *None Scheduled*
5. **APPOINTMENTS**
    a. Municipal Affordable Housing Trust - Mark Minnichelli
6. **PUBLIC HEARINGS - 6:00 PM** - *None Scheduled*
7. **LICENSE TRANSACTIONS** - *None Scheduled*
8. **PRESENTATIONS / DISCUSSION**
    a. Town and School Facilities Presentation – Kevin Harn, Facilities Director
9. **LEGISLATION FOR ACTION**

a. Resolution 26-01 - Friendly 40B Policy
(Motion to Approve Resolution 26-01 - Majority Vote)

b. Zoning Bylaw Amendment 26-946: A Zoning Bylaw Amendment to the Code of the Town of Franklin at Chapter 185, Attachment 7, Part VI Use Regulation Schedule - *Referral to the Planning Board*
(Motion to Refer Zoning Bylaw Amendment 26-946 to the Planning Board - Majority Vote)

c. Zoning Bylaw Amendment 26-947: A Zoning Bylaw Amendment to the Code of the Town of Franklin at Chapter 185, Attachment 9, Schedule of Lot, Area, Frontage, Yard and Height Requirements - *Referral to the Planning Board*
(Motion to Refer Zoning Bylaw Amendment 26-947 to the Planning Board - Majority Vote)

d. Resolution 26-02: Gift Acceptance - Veterans Services Dept. ($2,470)
(Motion to Approve Resolution 26-02 - Majority Vote)

10. TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

a. Personnel Update

11. SUBCOMMITTEE & AD HOC COMMITTEE REPORTS

12. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

13. COUNCIL COMMENTS

14. EXECUTIVE SESSION - *None Scheduled.*

15. ADJOURN

Note: Two-Thirds Vote: requires 6 votes
Majority Vote: requires majority of members present and voting

FRANKLIN TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF MEETING
December 3, 2025

A meeting of the Town Council was held on Wednesday, December 3, 2025, at the Municipal Building, 2nd Floor, Council Chambers, 355 East Central Street, Franklin, MA. Councilors present: Jane Callaway-Tripp, Ted Cormier-Leger, Robert Dellorco, Gene Grella, Caroline Griffith, Michael LeBlanc, Stephen Malloy, Max Morrongiello, Kenneth Ojukwu. Councilors absent: None. Administrative personnel in attendance: Jamie Hellen, Town Administrator; Mark Cerel, Town Attorney; Julie McCann, Operations Manager.

CALL TO ORDER: ►Chair Dellorco called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM. He called for a moment of silence. All recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE CHAIR: ►Chair Dellorco reviewed the following as posted on the agenda. A Note to Residents: All citizens are welcome to attend public meetings in person. To view the live meeting remotely, citizens are encouraged to watch the live stream on the Franklin Town Hall TV YouTube channel or the live broadcast on Comcast Channel 9 and Verizon Channel 29. To listen to the meeting remotely citizens may call-in using the number on the agenda. To participate in the meeting remotely citizens may join a Zoom Webinar using the information provided on the agenda. Meetings are recorded and archived by Franklin TV on the Franklin Town Hall TV YouTube channel and shown on repeat on Comcast Channel 9 and Verizon Channel 29. Any participants who wish to speak during the webinar must enter their full name and email address when joining the webinar. All participants will be automatically muted upon joining the webinar. In order to speak, participants will need to select the "raise hand" function to request to be unmuted. All speakers will be required to state their full name and street address before commenting. This meeting is being recorded by Franklin TV and shown on Comcast channel 9 and Verizon Channel 29. This meeting may be recorded by others. ►He announced upcoming events. Town Council office hours will be held December 18 at 8:30 AM at the Senior Center. The Franklin Historical Musuem and Historical Commission invite all to the grand opening of the new exhibition, Franklin in Miniature, which will be shown through December and January. The second annual A Wreath of Franklin will be held on December 13 from 11 AM to 4 PM. Vendors will be at the Black Box and several stores downtown will be participating. ►A video problem was noted; Franklin TV is working on it.

CITIZEN COMMENTS: ►Ms. Caleigh Keating, 26 Schofield Drive, Youth Services Librarian, noted the Pancakes & Pajamas event on December 13 at 10:30 AM with Mr. Jamie Barrett performing music. ►Mr. Scott Mason, 22 Eisenhower Drive, invited all to the Franklin in Miniature exhibit at the historical museum this Saturday; the exhibit runs through February 1, 2026. It captures in miniature the railroad in Franklin from 1932. ►Treasurer Collector Anne Marie Duggan notified taxpayers that as of January 1, 2026, the mailing address for the payment processing center/lockbox is changing. Notices and reminders will be mailed with the upcoming real estate, utility, and motor vehicle bills, and it will be put on the webpage. She noted all payment options for bills. If any questions, please call her office. ►Director of Arts, Culture, and the Creative Economy Cory Shea reviewed the second annual A Wreath of Franklin will be held on December 13 from 11 AM to 4 PM and hoped all come out to the event. ►Ms. Kim Mu-Chow, 4 Briarwood Road, reviewed the second annual Franklin Community Coat Drive is ending on December 6 and noted various coat pick up points to drop off new or gently used coats. She said the winter coat give away is on December 13 from 9 AM to 12 PM at the Franklin United Methodist Church. ►Senior Center Director Sarah Amaral said Winter Wonderland is December 11 from 4:30 PM to 7 PM at the Senior Center; it is for all ages. She reviewed the many activities to be held at the event. She reviewed that senior tax work-off is open and taking applications. Eligible Franklin homeowners can earn up to $1,500 off their property taxes. The full application packet is at the senior center and on the webpage. ►Mr. Mark Minnichelli, 31 Longfellow Drive, talked about bills in the Massachusetts legislature that have to do with public utilities and giving municipalities the opportunity claw back a little bit of power from the public utilities and save money for the town at the same time. He is going to send information via email to each Town Council member. He explained House bill #3446 and Senate bill #2248 require gas companies to inform municipalities when they are going to rip up streets to work on utilities. The second bill is the tactile transition bill: House #3539 and Senate #2249. He explained this allows towns to establish clean energy utilities within the town that provide the community access to low cost solar and wind energy. He asked the Town Council to support these. ►Director of Veterans' Services Shannon Nisbett talked about the veterans' work-off program. It is almost the same as the senior work-off program except that you qualify for it being a veteran or surviving spouse of a veteran. She said application forms are online. Please call her office if you have any questions. ►Mr. Brian Young, 5 Berkeley Drive, asked the Town Council to make a requirement of all town departments who submit and send bills to residents that those bills must be fully transparent and itemized. He said this came about with his recent real estate tax bill. He said the tax bill is not just on residential taxes; it includes a lot of other components. He said it was itemized years ago, but now it is not. He said his utility bill is itemized. He explained that he received information that debt exclusion and 2.5 percent increase is included in the bill. He would like to have that information itemized on the bill. Residents have the right to transparency so we know what we are paying and where that money is going. He asked the Town Council to require this. ►Mr. Steve Sherlock, 13 Magnolia Drive, Community Information Director for Franklin Matters Franklin Public Radio, said when he is present there is a backup audio recording. He explained how the recording of the meeting works.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: ►None.

PROCLAMATIONS/RECOGNITIONS: ►***Amy Galose, Creative Corner.*** ►Councilor Cormier-Leger invited Director of Arts, Culture, and the Creative Economy Cory Shea to join him. He said Ms. Amy Galose, owner of Creative Corner Art Studio, has been in business for 20 years. She is being recognized because she does not say no to anybody who comes to her who needs help. He talked about the art programs she has offered. He said the proclamation recognizes Creative Corner Art Studio in celebration of the grand opening at its new downtown location at 21 East Central Street on December 12 serving kids across MetroWest Massachusetts providing them with nurturing environments to express themselves through the arts and congratulated Ms. Galose on her 20 years. ►Ms. Galose said she was blessed to be able to do what she does and said all should come and visit.

APPOINTMENTS: ►***Franklin's 250th Anniversary Celebration Committee: New Member Maureen Brennan.*** ►Councilor Cormier-Leger read the appointment. ►**MOTION** to ratify the appointment by the Town Administrator of Maureen Brennan to serve as a Member of Franklin's 250th Anniversary Celebration Committee with a term to expire on June 30, 2029 by **Cormier-Leger. SECOND** by **Grella. Discussion**: ►Mr. Hellen said Ms. Brennan is to replace Mike Carroll who does not live in town. The official charge has the Town Council to ratify the officers. The committee already had their first meeting. ►**VOTE: Yes-9, No-0, Absent-0.**

►***Franklin's 250th Anniversary Celebration Committee: Ratification of Officers 1. Chair: Jayson Joyce, 2. Vice Chair: Robert Browne, 3. Clerk: Alan Earls, 4. Treasurer: Charleen Belcher.*** ►Councilor Cormier-Leger read the ratification of officers' appointment. ►**MOTION** to ratify the nomination of officers by and for Franklin's 250th Anniversary Celebration Committee as stated above by **Cormier-Leger. SECOND** by **Grella. No discussion**. ►**VOTE: Yes-9, No-0, Absent-0.**

LICENSE TRANSACTIONS: ►None.

PRESENTATIONS / DISCUSSIONS: ►***Five-Year Fisc*****al Forecast**. ►Mr. Hellen said he was not going to go through the slideshow that was provided in the meeting packet. He will go through the fiscal forecast and some of the assumptions and leave time for questions. He put the information on the screen and noted slide 9 of 23. He reviewed what they did this past year after the override failure and the final budget was approved, the previous Town Council also executed all the collective bargaining agreements for the town's major unions. That is a really big deal. This is by far the best fiscal forecast that we have had as a community in the last five or six years since the pandemic. The assumptions are very good and very strong. He said it is a little hard to see, but he noted the FY26 and other columns. He discussed the revenue chart. He discussed the prior year levy plus 2.5. He noted FY27 projected which is just under $100 million, and we assume $1.1 million in new growth. He said we will evaluate that number. The fiscal forecast is not a document that is ironclad in stone; it will ebb and flow. He said the tax levy is $100 million. Take the $100 million and add 2.5 percent to calculate. The hardest part of the calculation is dealing with new growth. He said in 2020 the new growth was at $1.8 million which was a record high. We have lost $1 million in tax levy capacity in the last five or six years. That is a lot. He said we will have to see what will happen in FY28 and FY29. He noted new growth is coming down because residences are not doing improvements such as kitchens, additions, and pools, so properties are staying stagnantly valued. He explained the new growth environment. He said then you add in the second column which is debt exclusions which are votes, like the high school and Tri-County, at the ballot, and you raise the tax to pay that debt exclusion bond over a period of time, usually 20, 30, or 40 years. He explained by law that is added to the tax levy. He said this is the way we have to present this and have to do this. All of this is baked into state law. We are not doing this to confuse people. He said the next category of our revenue sheet is state aid. He assumed 1 percent growth of state aid for the next five years. He explained the state budget is going to get more difficult. If that goes up, fantastic. He discussed the state budget. He explained this is what is called a cherry sheet. He discussed other revenues which are the local receipts. Those are the locally generated revenues by the municipal staff and the equivalent of the revolving funds for the schools. He said in the past they have had a conservative local receipts number. Over the last couple of years, they have gone with a more moderate projection system, and they look at the past few years receipts and upcoming economy. He said this will be looked at again in January. He would not count on local receipts going up. He explained revenues being brought in by various municipal departments are higher. He explained net stabilization other transfers. He said in FY24 it was $3 million. But that has fallen off the chart as we are looking forward. Any one-time monies would go into that net budget stabilization other transfers. He said in 2018 and 2019 we used all of the town's rainy day budget stabilization money to fund the school budget gap in both of those years. He explained the enterprise funds. He discussed total revenues and other funds. In FY27 we are roughly looking at a budget projection of $158 million in revenue if all assumptions are pretty much on target. He said, however, the assessments and other votes are essentially for state aid deductions off of the cherry sheets which he explained including the school choice assessment. He said the charter school assessment is the biggest piece of all of this. We have to pay that tuition to the charter school. You have seen that account almost double in 10 years. That was money lost from the Franklin Public Schools to the charter school. He discussed a big mistake that was made was not opposing the expansion of the charter school. He said at the top of the chart it shows $30.7 million in chapter 70 aid for the schools; you cannot say the schools should get all that money because below it shows an assessment of almost $7 million via student choice and the charter school assessment. He reviewed the projection of a deficit of $1.9 million going into FY27, and that is with the assumptions he noted. ►Town Council members asked questions and made comments. ►In response, Mr. Hellen said he did not know if the charter school has a Franklin resident preference. He explained that paying into the charter school is like paying into a vocational school for the funding for per pupil costs. He talked about Horace Mann coming off the debt exclusion. He said over the past five years, Horace Mann and Keller Sullivan debts are completely off the books. He discussed that on the next four sheets are all the expenses which are really the payouts. He said everything you see in assessments and other votes is all state law. He responded to a discussion by Councilor LeBlanc about how to view how much the revenue grew year over year, and that in reality it is hard to see the revenue increased 3.1 percent. Mr. Hellen said the real issue with state aid that needs to be looked at is those assessments and other votes are attached to the state aid issue on state revenue. The levy is the levy. Local receipts are within our control here locally. When you aggregate up all the numbers like you are saying, which are all accurate, you separate out state aid from those considerations because we are assuming a 1 percent growth but a 4 percent decline. He explained how the relationship of state aid is a problem and noted the perfect storm report that the MMA put out. In response to Councilor Malloy's comment that there is some other remediation that the state makes to offset some of the charter school cost, Mr. Hellen said there is, but it does not offset it for us. The state has another line item in the budget that just goes directly to the charter schools. He explained there are two ways charter schools are funded. ►Councilor Ojukwu asked to see historical information on the projections. He discussed that the stronger Franklin Public Schools are, the fewer students we are going to have leaving for charter schools. It was discussed that chapter 70 that is a formula at the state level that every community has. Currently, Franklin gets the second most chapter 70 aid of any town in the state of Massachusetts, behind Boston. There have been thoughts about changing the chapter 70 formula, but that is a major risk to Franklin. ►Mr. Hellen further explained how chapter 70 was created in the 1970s, the formula, the changes throughout the years, and hold harmless for declining enrollment spikes. A lot of districts today have declining enrollment in school districts. It will be interesting how the legislature deals with this. It is a huge vulnerability for the town. He explained the state will at some point look at hold harmless. It is a huge area of concern in the next few years. He said if the town funded its school system to the level that people desire, there would be fewer people going to other schools. He noted when the new Tri-County School opens, there may be more students going there. He responded to additional Town Council questions and comments. He explained the state is seeing declining enrollment as people are moving out of the state regarding affordability issues. He explained the School Committee should have advocated to limit the number of kids coming from Franklin to the charter school. There is not much you can do about it now. He explained other items that may be a debt exclusion in the future: Remington Jefferson remodel, Police Station, Oak Street School roof, Recycling Center, and other items such as the Senior Center. He said in January they will get a full facilities presentation. He discussed in the capital plan some things are basic maintenance. In response to further questions, he noted the approximate length of time left on current debt exclusions. He reviewed what happens when you sell town assets such as Davis Thayer School. Those monies cannot be used in the operating budget. He discussed a previous memo from August about capital projects. He said that was about ideas to get the conversation started. There was a comment in the memo about postponing the capital program while the Town Council goes through the exercise. Maybe we have to wait until open enrollment is done to look at actual numbers. He said on the capital plan they are going to see for instance the Senior Center sprinkler as well as many other items such as police cruisers and fire department gear. The Town Council will have to look at those requests. There will be a lot of choices that have to be made. He noted the Town of Natick has over twice the tax levy as Franklin. Discussion commenced on the schools and possible use of revolving funds for projects as currently they look at free cash from the municipal side and that may not be possible. He discussed the Norfolk County Retirement section of the document. He said the good news is for the second year we lobbied the county pension board to not try to fully fund this whole thing quicker than they were trying. That would have been big pension increases. He said they are getting an 8 percent increase which is manageable. He explained the town departments are not driving up the costs. He said benefits is your biggest cost driver. DPW and facilities have been cut. Retirement and pension going up 8 percent is going to drive up your overall average. Health insurance is at 14 percent. We have no control over this. He said the cost drivers are issues and drive up the municipal budget. He talked about the schools revolving funds and enterprise funds. He explained they are very similar funds and cannot be used for just anything. He said he would end with this. The next time we will see revised numbers is when the governor puts out her budget at the end of January. He said they will receive a cherry sheet in February. He said he has set up meetings with the departments. They will go through and refine everything. In early March he will present a preliminary budget. He said the Town Council has to figure out when they want to start working with the School Committee and how they want to do those meetings. He asked how are you going to work with the school community and what is the roadmap forward.

►***Deputy Town Administrator & Town Administration staffing.*** ►Item not taken.

PUBLIC HEARINGS - 7:00 PM: ►***FY26 Tax Classification Hearing***. ►Chair Dellorco declared the public hearing open. ►Chair of the Board of Assessor's Chris Feeley, Director of Assessing Kevin Doyle, and Board of Assessors Member Cheryl Hanly addressed the Town Council. ►Mr. Feeley narrated a slideshow presentation and answered Town Council members' questions as they were asked. Slide one regarded new growth. He confirmed a lot of new growth is personal property. He said there is not an audit of the process for businesses declaring their personal property. ►Councilor Morrongiello asked if businesses can be audited to create more revenue from new growth as he does not want to leave anything on the table and to make sure businesses are contributing their fair share. ►Mr. Feeley said he does not know if it would create more revenue in comparison to the cost, but they can look at it. He explained how the number for new growth was added and how they determined there was $70 million more in real property. ►Mr. Doyle said this is a specialized area in assessing. The company they hire has done this for many years. They do discovery on the road. They go through all the main streets. They review the accounts that exist and collect data on site, and we send out a list to all the accounts, and they report back to us, and we get a good return regarding personal property. There are items that are eligible for growth since the previous January, and that contributes to the new number. He confirmed much of it is through self-reporting. ►Mr. Feeley explained the next slide is how they establish the levy limit. They look at last year's levy limit, add 2.5 percent, and then the new growth number which then gives a subtotal of the new levy limit. ►Mr. Doyle reviewed the details of the slide and how the levy was established. He discussed a state mandate of a maximum of $25 which is part of the original proposition 2.5. He said we cannot have a single-tax rate, a uniform tax rate, higher than $25 per thousand. ►Mr. Feeley explained the chart showing the median single-family value and the single rate and the change from the previous year and the single tax based on that median value. He confirmed that if the value of the home goes up by more than 2.5 percent, the rate would come down because it cannot go up more than the 2.5 percent. ►Councilor LeBlanc asked for the average and median on commercial industrial property and discussed the rates. ►Mr. Feeley said the next slide is in regard to a split tax rate, and it shows how changing the residential tax rate increases the commercial industrial rate. He noted changing the rates does not increase the revenue. He said splitting the tax rate is a question for the Town Council. He noted that commercial industrial is not only UPS and industrial parks, it is small businesses as well. ►Town Council members discussed splitting the tax rate. ►Mr. Feeley discussed giving that thought, asking the community, and to think about it for next year. ►Mr. Hellen confirmed that the tax rate has to be signed off on tonight due to state law. ►Mr. Feeley explained that if doing a split tax rate, that tax you are increasing the commercial industrial property is an expense to that business that would then change the value of that business in a negative way. ►Ms. Hanly said she was the assessor in the Town of Westwood. She discussed that as an assessor, they do not create the market, but they have to reflect it. She explained they can base residential values on sales, but with commercial industrial properties they are looking at an income approach to value. ►Mr. Doyle explained how they get the income valuation for commercial industrial. ►Mr. Cerel explained and discussed that this is not an exact science, and that there are attorneys and appraisers prepared to take it to the Appellate Tax Board, a state agency, and put in a different lower valuation model than whatever the town has assessed. He said the town has expense as well in this process. ►Mr. Feeley explained the chart and said if you decrease residential $1.22, it increases the commercial almost $6. ►Councilor Ojukwu asked what are the largest five to ten companies in Franklin as mom-and-pop stores are in the commercial rate, and how can we continue to attract businesses to Franklin. ►Mr. Feeley said he would get that information. ►Councilor Cormier-Leger commented that the current tax rate is low. He discussed that adding higher taxes on the small businesses will be very difficult for them. He does not want to see those storefronts empty. He asked how do we attract new businesses. He said there may be a few places that would be okay with the split tax rate, but many of the small businesses would be negatively impacted by such a tax rate change. ►Councilor Callaway-Tripp noted split tax rates including a split rate of commercial, residential, and industrial as is done in some other towns and said she will provide that information. ►Mr. Feeley said he has not heard of that and would like to see that. ►Councilor LeBlanc said he just went to the state's website, and there are no towns or cities that offer a difference between commercial and industrial. ►Mr. Feeley explained the small business exemption and that the business would have to be worth less than $1 million, and there has to be less than 10 employees. ►Chair Dellorco confirmed the town has offered some breaks to get business to come into town. ►Mr. Hellen said yes and reviewed tax-increment financing. ►CFO Kerri Bertone reviewed the top five as Cedar Village, Dell EMC, Forge Parkway, 300 Financial Park, and Big Box Property. ►Councilor Morrongiello said only 19 people are benefiting from the low-income tax exemption. He asked that the website form be updated to indicate age 65, not 70, and work with the Senior Center to engage more seniors. ►Mr. Peter Borowiec, 28 Tuscany Drive, talked about split tax rates in cities and towns in Massachusetts and talked about a different way than proposition 2.5 overrides. He said he is glad his letter to the Observer brought up this discussion. We have to look at other alternatives. He said he found that impact fees can be charged when a big well financed developer comes into town and assessment is done on what the water usage is going to be and hand in hand goes what is the impact going to be on the sewerage system in the town. He said an impact fee can be levied. He discussed his over 55 community and what they pay for. He noted an example of impact fees and said he was glad they were looking into it. ►Mr. Cerel explained that the exercise you are engaged in at the moment is revenue neutral. There is a fixed amount of money in the entire package, and all you are doing is allocating the revenues you are authorized to collect. He explained impact fees are illegal in Massachusetts. ►Mr. Hellen said he would encourage anyone who has data from online such as from AI or Google to please check with the department affiliated with that as those data sets may not be correct. He noted the average Franklin household uses 50 gallons of water per day. He discussed they were going to talk about the economics of development at a future meeting. ►Councilor Grella said there 52 communities larger than Franklin, and of those, 47 have a split tax rate. He read aloud the commercial tax rates from surrounding communities. He said if they took the largest split they could do, it would still put Franklin below average for all the communities that he listed. He said if you took some burden off the residents, maybe the next time they went for an override, the residents would be more willing as they are the voters. ►Mr. Joe Halligan, 1 Newell Drive, said he owns commercial and residential properties in town that he has rentals. He said his residential properties far exceed all of this property on Rt. 140. If this goes through, it is a windfall as he will save a ton of money on all the homes. He said he cannot take the money; he does not believe in a split tax rate. He explained the landlord just passes the tax. He said he spent 18 months on the Master Plan Committee. The issue is we need more industrial commercial property. He said 100 percent of that tax revenue does not get spent on schools, infrastructure. He explained what most of the Town Council members ran on was the huge housing projects in Franklin. Now you are going to reward all the people who own those projects. All the 40Bs and multi-family projects do not come under commercial. They are residentially taxed. They are hoping you pass the split tax rate. They will make more money. The rents are not going down as they are market rate. No one will benefit except the landlords. That is why landlords are not here contesting this. He suggested a workshop to understand all this. He discussed that it is very expensive to run a business and keep the help. He gave examples of the difficulty of owning a business. He discussed the burden of shifting this on commercial people right now. He discussed the need for transparency. He reiterated the need for a workshop on this. ►Mr. Tony Dasilva, 34 Cassandra Avenue, said he lives in an over 55 community. He said either way they are not going to increase the revenue. He said they have to stop looking at the revenue side of the problem and start looking at the expense side of the problem. Let us figure out where we can start to cut expenses before we look at increasing taxes. He noted that the Town Council members ran on transparency. ►Chair Dellorco declared the public hearing closed.

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

a. ***Resolution 25-76: Tax Classification Residential Factor (Motion to Approve Resolution 25-76 - Majority Vote).*** ►Councilor Cormier-Leger read the resolution. ►**MOTION** to **Approve** Resolution 25-76: Tax Classification Residential Factor that the Residential Factor will be set at 1.000000 by **Cormier-Leger. SECOND** by **Ojukwu. Discussion**: ►Councilor LeBlanc discussed that 20 years ago he was pushing the split tax rate, and they will continue to talk about it in the future. ►**VOTE: Yes-8, No-1, Absent-0.** (Councilor Grella voted no.)

b. ***Resolution 25-77: Tax Classification Open Space Exemption (Motion to Approve Resolution 25-77 - Majority Vote).*** ►Councilor Cormier-Leger read the resolution. ►**MOTION** to **Approve** Resolution 25-77: Tax Classification Open Space Exemption that there Not Be an exemption for open space by **Cormier-Leger. SECOND** by **Morrongiello. No discussion.** ►**VOTE: Yes-9, No-0, Absent-0.**

c. ***Resolution 25-78: Tax Classification Small Business Exemption (Motion to Approve Resolution 25-78 - Majority Vote).*** ►Councilor Cormier-Leger read the resolution. ►**MOTION** to **Approve** Resolution 25-78: Tax Classification Small Business Exemption that there Not Be an exemption for small businesses by **Cormier-Leger. SECOND** by **Grella. Discussion.** ►Councilor LeBlanc asked if this were to be, what would the exemption amount be. ►Ms. Hanly said it is 10 percent of the property assessed value multiplied by the tax rate for those who qualify only. She reviewed personal property exempt from taxation is the first $10,000 of personal property because with $11 per $1,000 rate, they would not want to send out an $11 tax bill. This was adopted many years ago. ►**VOTE: Yes-9, No-0, Absent-0.**

d. ***Resolution 25-79: Tax Classification Residential Property Exemption (Motion to Approve Resolution 25-79 - Majority Vote).*** ►Councilor Cormier-Leger read the resolution. ►**MOTION** to **Approve** Resolution 25-79: Tax Classification Residential Property Exemption that there Not Be an exemption for residential properties by **Cormier-Leger. SECOND** by **Grella. No discussion.** ►**VOTE: Yes-8, No-0, Absent-0, Abstain-1.** (Councilor Morrongiello abstained.)

e. ***Resolution 25-80: Tax Classification Senior Means Tested Exemption (Motion to Approve Resolution 25-80 - Majority Vote).*** ►Councilor Cormier-Leger read the resolution. ►**MOTION** to **Approve** Resolution 25-80: Tax Classification Senior Means Tested Exemption that there Not Be an exemption for senior means tested by **Cormier-Leger. SECOND** by **Grella. Discussion:** ►Councilor LeBlanc said there was a lot of confusion about what this meant last year. He said he will be voting against this. He discussed that this is another avenue to offer seniors additional relief off their taxes. ►Mr. Feeley said he thinks it is 70 years old to qualify for this, but they have to apply for the Massachusetts Senior Circuit Breaker and the maximum on that is $2,700 currently, and we can offer a percentage of that. ►Councilor LeBlanc said he looked up who was offering this through the state website. He said it talks about income, the value of the residence, and he thinks we need to learn more about it. He said his point is it is another mechanism to offer tax relief to seniors. ►Mr. Feeley said when people apply for this it affects the tax rate, so it would be a burden on the assessor’s office by a lot by how many people apply and verification is needed, and it would hold up the process of setting the tax rate. He gave an example to clarify. It is a lot of work for shifting the burden. He is not sure it is the best choice. He explained you have to qualify for the Massachusetts Senior Circuit Breaker which he does not know all the criteria, and real estate taxes have to be more than 10 percent of your income. He said he is confident that the Town Council does not have a choice tonight as this would have all had to have been done as the people would have had to already apply. ►Councilor LeBlanc said he disagrees with that. He said this should be done before an election. This is not something a three-week Town Council should be voting on. He said this was brought up last year and was never addressed. He will vote no to this resolution. ►Mr. Cerel said they are coming down on a deadline. It forces the situation in every municipality. He recommended if you want to have workshops or discussions anticipating what you want to do the following year and study it and be prepared to address it intelligently for next year. ►Councilor Morrongiello said he thinks we should continue to look at it, and possibly there is room to expand the assessor’s office to look at these issues. He asked how many extra people would be needed to implement this. ►Mr. Feeley said he cannot answer as he does not know how many people would apply. He noted there are 9,500 residential properties in Franklin, and each would have to apply every year to qualify. The information would have to be verified and qualified which would be at least one full-time person. ►Councilor Morrongiello said maybe they can schedule a time in October to have a pre-tax rate hearing before they actually vote on it. ►Chair Dellorco said they could have a workshop on the split tax rate and do it all together. ►Mr. Hellen noted the assessors go to the Senior Center a few times to talk to veterans and seniors about their exemptions. He said they are doing outreach. Some people are not eligible, and some people do not apply. He reviewed that two members on this Town Council from the previous Town Council endorsed the municipal empowerment act which has a provision which he read aloud about a new senior means tested property tax exemption for qualifying seniors. He said it is frustrating to be here two years later after the letter was written, and the legislators have not responded to it. He said this has been languishing on Beacon Hill for three years. ►Mr. Cerel said there is a lot of beneficial legislation in that package. ►Councilor Malloy asked if we do not approve this, what is the impact on the assessor’s office. ►Mr. Feeley said he does not think they will be able to submit to the Department of Revenue tomorrow. ►Councilor Ojukwu said it seems clear that we all want this, but it would be difficult to enact right now. ►Councilor Callaway-Tripp said she feels blindsided that they really do not have all the information, and they have to do a vote. She will vote to pass it due to timing, but she wants to do a full-on exploration. She wants a copy of the previous initiative the previous Town Council signed. ►**VOTE: Yes-8, No-1, Absent-0.** (Councilor LeBlanc voted no.)

f. ***Resolution 25-81: Cable Funds in Support of PEG Service and Programming per MGL Ch. 44 §53F3/4 (Motion to Approve Resolution 25-81 - Majority Vote).*** ►**MOTION** to **Waive** the reading by **Ojukwu. SECOND** by **Callaway-Tripp. No discussion**. ►**VOTE: Yes-9, No-0, Absent-0.** ►**MOTION** to **Approve** Resolution 25-81: Cable Funds in Support of PEG Service and Programming per MGL Ch. 44 §53F3/4 by **Dellorco. SECOND** by **Grella. Discussion**: ►Councilor Morrongiello discussed what a good job public access studio does covering these meetings. ►**VOTE: Yes-9, No-0, Absent-0.**

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT: ►Mr. Hellen said for the last meeting in December items on the agenda will include annual license renewals, a snow presentation by DPW, social equity policy of the Cannabis Control Commission, four-slide presentation on town charters, and an item regarding the town is headed in the wrong direction. In January they will get a presentation on public facilities and public infrastructure. ►Mr. Cerel explained for the alcoholic beverages license renewals it is strictly an administerial act.

SUBCOMMITTEE & AD HOC COMMITTEE REPORTS:
►**Police Station Building Committee.** ►Mr. Hellen said the next meeting is scheduled for January 6, 2026.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS: ►Councilor Malloy requested to revisit the 40B policy. ►Councilor Ojukwu requested a workshop on the split tax rate and the senior exemption discussion. ►Councilor Griffith requested to discuss MBTA land swap with the Children's Museum to push that forward. She said tonight's tax conversation should start next September. She asked about subcommittees. ►Mr. Hellen said he would talk about the land swap at the December 17 meeting; it is a complicated land swap. ►Councilor LeBlanc asked when they would be doing goals. ►Mr. Hellen said usually the first meeting in January. He noted bandwidth and morale are low. He said maybe a third party will come in and do a three or five-year strategic plan; the school committee would be onboard. He noted some goals are just not financially feasible. ►Councilor LeBlanc said this should not be done at a Town Council meeting; he said it should be done in a workshop. ►Councilor Morrongiello said he agrees with the strategic planning concept. He requested a discussion with the HR Director. ►Councilor Cormier-Leger requested to examine moving public comments to later in the agenda and to talk about a hard stop to the meetings at 10 PM. ►Councilor Grella requested to discuss how they work with the School Committee. ►Chair Dellorco said he is going to sit down with the School Committee, and he is going to try to bring the Town Council and School Committee together and get workshops together.

COUNCIL COMMENTS: ►Councilor Malloy asked about public meeting law, and what they can do, and can they have workshops on that. ►Mr. Cerel said workshops are an exception to open meeting law; there is still a prohibition on deliberating. A workshop on more details on open meeting law or general training or educational type thing is permissible. ►Mr. Hellen explained if deliberations they have to post it as a public meeting, and if there are 10 workshops, that is 10 extra meetings. He discussed being judicious about what they want to do. ►Councilor Griffith talked about the focus on optics right now. She said one of the main issues is that we have created this unnecessary divide between the school side and the town side. She said we need to be focused on one town, and we need to work together. She said they mentioned the Senior Center office hours. The last meeting they voted on the calendar, and they did not vote on the office hours. She would like to see office hours changed as it is difficult for some residents and Town Council members to attend. She suggested varying location, day, and time. She said the last meeting they had a debate thrown in their laps, and she is proud of this Town Council about their voting. ►Councilor LeBlanc thanked the staff for sitting through the long meeting. ►Councilor Morrongiello noted a comment earlier about the rules of the meeting and citizens comments. He said Councilor Malloy is the liaison to the town administrator to work on some of the rules, and that would be a great fit. He gave a shout-out to all employees. ►Councilor

Callaway-Tripp wanted to make sure someone gets back to Mr. Young about the property tax bills and the formula and the breakdown, and she would like that for all residents and clear this up. She said for goals, the first is gaining the trust of residents. We need to start bringing up what residents are questioning and give them the answers and break it down and make it simple. She noted the lighting on the Common. ►Councilor Cormier-Leger thanked Franklin Fire and Police Departments regarding the unified basketball tournament. He reminded all about Giving Tuesday and charities are still in need of support. Also, some town departments have funds that they oversee that they can accept donations. He requested whatever we can do in support of Mr. Young's request and to make the bill a little easier would be appreciated. ►Councilor Grella said we have to do a better job of getting ahead of items they are going to vote on. He discussed the split tax rate and that residential owners are going to pay an increase of 6 percent. He said we have to think about doing something different. ►Chair Dellorco said he agreed with Councilor Grella and said he agreed with Mr. Halligan that we should do a workshop and then get the word out and go from there.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: ►None.

ADJOURN: ►**MOTION** to **Adjourn** by **Cormier-Leger. SECOND** by **Malloy. No Discussion.** ►**VOTE: Yes-9, No-0, Absent-0.**

Meeting adjourned at 9:51 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Judith Lizardi
Recording Secretary

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR
TOWN of FRANKLIN

MEMORANDUM

January 2, 2026

To: Town Council
From: Jamie Hellen, Town Administrator

RE: Appointment - Municipal Affordable Housing Trust

I am asking the Town Council to ratify the Town Administrator's appointment of Mark Minnichelli as a Member of the Municipal Affordable Housing Trust. All terms are 1 year in length, and Mark will be completing the term of a former member with a term expiring on June 30, 2026.

Mark's volunteer application is included in the agenda packet for the January 7, 2026 Town Council meeting.

Thanks to Mark for volunteering his services to the Town of Franklin!

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Town of Franklin MA

355 East Central Street
Franklin, MA 02038
Phone: 508-520-4949

Volunteer Form

Good Government Starts with You!

Date Submitted:	December 16, 2025
Name:	Mark D Minnichelli
Home Address:	31 Longfellow Drive Franklin, MA 02038
Mailing Address:	31 Longfellow Drive Franklin, MA 02038
Phone Number(s):	[redacted]
Email Address:	[redacted]
Current Occupation/Employer:	retired
Narrative:	I am currently "actively retired". I volunteer my time to help provide care for my elderly mother in Franklin, I serve on 2 local grassroots organizations for the good of Franklin (EnergizeFranklin which shares information with the Franklin community about ways to save money with clean energy, and BEN4Franklin which advocates for more abundant, affordable housing in Franklin), I am an active member of the First Universalist Society in Franklin (FUSF), I am an active citizen of the Town of Franklin (I participate in many town meetings as a citizen contributor), and I spend time with my extended family in Franklin! I will make time to be an effective contributor to this important funding mechanism!
Board(s) / Committee(s):	___Municipal Affordable Housing Trust Fund Committee

APPOINTMENTS

Municipal Affordable Housing Trust

Mark Minnichelli
31 Longfellow Drive
Franklin, MA 02038

The Town Administrator has appointed Mark Minnichelli to serve as a Member of the Municipal Affordable Housing Trust with a term to expire on June 30, 2026.

MOTION to ratify the appointment by the Town Administrator of Mark Minnichelli to serve as a Member of the Municipal Affordable Housing Trust with a term to expire on June 30, 2026.

DATED: ____________ , 2026

A TRUE RECORD ATTEST:

____
Nancy Danello, CMC
Town Clerk

VOTED: ___________________________

UNANIMOUS: _______________

YES: _________ NO: __________

ABSTAIN:_____ ABSENT: _____

RECUSED: __________________

____
Ted Cormier-Leger, Clerk
Franklin Town Council

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR
TOWN of FRANKLIN

MEMORANDUM

January 2, 2026

To: Town Council
From: Jamie Hellen, Town Administrator

RE: Facilities Presentation & Discussion

The Town will receive a comprehensive presentation on the Facilities Department, which oversees the $1.3 million square feet of school and town owned buildings.

The presentation will focus on the organizational chart, what the department manages, the diverse and extensive responsibilities of the department, recent projects and upcoming projects and decisions to make.

As many know, the next two years will be a pivotal time for town and school facilities with many large decisions to make that will have major financial effects on the town.

- Chronic underfunding on operating budget capacity and how to finance larger capital projects. The Facilities Department was cut over $400,000 in FY26 after making additional cuts due to high inflation between 2022 and 2025. I would also note facilities took cuts during the two pandemic years, as well. These cuts predominantly affect school buildings.

- Three major projects are needed in the near future, which will require debt service: a new police station, renovation of the Washington Street School (Remington-Jefferson) and a new roof at the Franklin Middle School (Horace Mann). All 3 projects will require a formal procurement of an Owner's Project Manager (OPM) by state law. All projects will be over $1.5 million and will likely require a debt exclusion to finance them (as there is no operating budget capacity). The Police Station has an OPM that has been on board for two years and guided the Building Committee so far.

- Senior Center sprinkling system. A $750,000 capital request will be presented this month.

- King Street Memorial Park Renovation Phase II (approximately $950,000 of CPA funds).

- What to do about the Davis-Thayer property?
    - See Davis-Thayer Reuse Committee website and formal recommendation)
    - The Town budget uses approximately $150-$200,000 in operating money to support DT, in addition to any one-time capital expenditures. The Town had to spend about $30,000 to fix a leak in the roof last year.

- Where to locate and how to finance the Police Station?
    - See the Police Station Building Committee website
    - August 27, 2025 PSBC meeting, which gives an in depth presentation on the progress of the project.
    - January 6, 2026 PSBC meeting agenda.

- When does the town hire an OPM (and finance the renovation of the Washington Street school and the roof at the Middle School?
    - The funds have been allocated to hire an OPM for Washington Street School, but have been hesitant to begin without commitments from elected leaders on how to finance these projects.

- What is the future of the Parmenter parcel, which was formally recorded in memory of Gerald Parmenter?
    - The Recreation Department has been temporarily located there due to the disruption of the Beaver Street Interceptor project, but making this a permanent move may be a financially (and programmatically) wise decision as the Town could see the Recreation Building on Beaver Street.
    - The Director of Arts, Culture and Creative Economy has also been working out of the building with incredible potential for additional cultural activities in that space.
    - Town and school offices have also temporarily stored records there. The site could be used as an excellent space for central town and school archives.
    - The Police Station, Recreation and Arts could all fit on that parcel, which would be financially advantageous and create a thriving area, notably maintaining an active area for children and families like the Parmenter family envisioned.
    - The Parmenter Building will need to have a full code review conducted to evaluate renovation costs, but this analysis is not too expensive and would set up the community to make a more informed decision.

- What should the town do with the Federated Church on the Common?
    - The town has evaluated the feasibility of acquiring the parcel for many municipal purposes. The Church reached out to the town two years ago and have been actively evaluating the potential use as an arts center, municipal parking for downtown cultural activities, historical preservation of a unique landmark in town and for other municipal purposes.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR
TOWN of FRANKLIN

MEMORANDUM

January 2, 2026

To: Town Council
From: Jamie Hellen, Town Administrator

RE: Friendly 40B Policy

The Town Council will consider approving the current staff Friendly 40B policy dated November 2024.

The main idea here is to show the residents that the town's legislative body is not accepting any further applications for friendly 40 B's for rentals. It has been very clear there is widespread concern over larger rental apartment complexes. This policy will formalize a Council policy that rental apartment complexes will not be considered through the Friendly 40B process.

The Town is currently at 11.05% according to the most recent biennial release from the state. Please see the link and you can view the interactive map of the entire state.

I have asked the Director of Planning and Community Development, Morena Zelaya, to work with the Municipal Affordable Housing Trust to discuss the short and long term strategies on affordable housing in town at greater length. The 2025 Townwide Master Plan also looks at these issues. Morena will evaluate the current SHI% released by the state in November, evaluate what market rate units are in the pipeline and contrast that with what eligible SHI projects could be added if they are granted occupancy in the future (762 Washington Street Habitat for Humanity home, 121 Grove Street, Franklin Ridge Senior Living, 444 East Central Street, and St John's project on Pleasant Street). I would expect the committee and staff may have further updates on these matters later this year.

In the meantime, the policy being considered tonight sets to assure residents the legislative body of the community has listened to their concerns about large apartment buildings. The policy still allows applications for all other housing types.

TOWN OF FRANKLIN
RESOLUTION 26-01

ADOPTION OF "FRIENDLY CHAPTER 40B PROJECTS - LOCAL INITIATIVE PROGRAM (LIP)" POLICY

The Franklin Town Council, on behalf of the Town of Franklin, hereby adopts the policy titled "Friendly Chapter 40B Projects – Local Initiative Program (LIP)", dated November 25, 2024, attached hereto as "Exhibit 1".

This resolution shall become effective according to the provisions of the Town of Franklin Home Rule Charter.

DATED: ____________ , 2026

A TRUE RECORD ATTEST:

Nancy Danello, CMC
Town Clerk

VOTED: __________________________

UNANIMOUS: _______________

YES: _________ NO: __________

ABSTAIN:_____ ABSENT: _____

RECUSED: __________________

____
Ted Cormier-Leger, Clerk
Franklin Town Council

EXHIBIT 1

PLANNING &
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
TOWN of FRANKLIN

November 25, 2024

Friendly Chapter 40B Projects – Local Initiative Program (LIP)

According to the Massachusetts Department of Housing & Community Development (DHCD), the Town of Franklin currently has 11.97% of the Town's year-round housing units on the Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI). Because Franklin is above the 10% affordable housing threshold, it can permit "Friendly 40B" projects to build mixed-income housing. Unlike traditional 40B projects, this allows municipalities to remain in control of most aspects of project design and construction. A "Friendly 40B" project - that is, a project that has local support because of the contribution it can make to the community's need for more diverse housing options, and the contributions the developer agrees to make to local needs (infrastructure, public safety, land protection, etc.).

All 40B developments are required to create housing where at least 25% of housing units are affordable according to DHCD regulations, but not all projects are equal in other ways (e.g., type and size housing units; location; proximity to transit; traffic impacts; public space; recreation or open space resources; aesthetics; building design; community character; wetland protection; safety; walkability; sustainability; low impact development).

The Town is not under pressure to increase its SHI by immediately approving additional 40B developments. Given that the Town has received inquiries regarding Friendly 40B's projects, the Town staff has put together a preliminary process to follow in determining if the project meets the needs of the Town and follows the LIP process.

Until further notice, the Town policy will be to accept Friendly 40B applications that provide for home ownership and not rentals. The Town is requiring "Friendly 40B" projects not include any housing that are large scale rental apartments exceeding 20 units. The Town will only consider Friendly 40B projects that offer home ownership, including, but not limited to, single-family subdivision developments, duplex or triplex housing developments, and condominium style and cottage style developments or small scale family rental projects (20 units or under). The Town recognizes that project proponents may choose to apply through state MassHousing agency for rental projects above the 20 unit threshold.

Franklin's Town Administrator has appointed the Town Planner as a single point of contact to serve as the primary municipal liaison for all issues relating to Chapter 40B affordable housing development matters. The Municipal Point of Contact will assist developers/applicants to sort out the 40B process and related requirements. Casual early pre-permit discussions with the Municipal Point of Contact are highly recommended.

Municipal Point of Contact for Chapter 40B Development Issues:

Amy Love, Town Planner
Planning and Community Development Town of Franklin
355 East Central Street Franklin, MA 02038-1352
Phone: 508-520-4907
Email: alove@franklinma.gov

Below outlines the Town of Franklin recommended Checklist to proceed with a LIP application:

1. **Project Information**
    a. Project Name: ______________________________________
    b. Applicant Point of Contact:____________________________
    c. Project Team – Name, Title, contact
    d. Project Location: ____________________________________
    e. Number of Units: ____________________________________
    f. Bedroom Count: 1 Bedroom______2 Bedrooms_____3 Bedrooms ____
    g. Rental or Ownership

2. **Criteria for Review**
    a. Percent of Affordable Units
    b. Number of Affordable Units
    c. Number of units to count on the SHI
    d. Public Benefits
        i. Public Access/Trails/Open Space
        ii. Road Improvements
        iii. Amenities
        iv. Positive or Negative Impacts on the Town
        v. Safety/Fire Impacts to Town

3. **Review Process**
    a. **Tech Review**
        i. Attend a Technical Staff Review meeting held on Wednesdays at 3:00PM

    b. **Planning Board – Provide a non-binding review from the Planning Board**
        i. Review to include
            1. Compliance with Section 185-31 of Town Zoning By-Law
            2. List of waivers, as minimal as possible
            3. Special Permit Criteria
            4. Stormwater Review
            5. Parking review
            6. The applicant is required to notify direct, immediate abutters when the non-binding review is scheduled.

    c. **Conservation Commission (if required) – non-binding review from the Commission**
        i. Review to include
            1. Wetland Resource Impacts
            2. Completed ANRAD
            3. Wetland Crossings
            4. Area Wetland maps and disturbance

d. **Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD)**
    i. A Letter acknowledging the number of units that will be accepted on the Town's SHI List.

e. **Town Council Presentation**
    i. Applicant should present an overview of the proposed project and outline the benefits for the Public
    ii. Gather feedback from Town Council members

f. **Zoning Board of Appeals Approval**
    i. Applicant shall submit a full application for the ZBA review and decision.

Please note, the Applicant is free to submit an application directly to Zoning Board of Appeals. However, if the Applicant wants the support from the Town, and file under the LIP, it is highly suggested they follow this checklist.

PLANNING &
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
TOWN of FRANKLIN

MEMORANDUM

Date: January 2, 2026

To: Town Council & Planning Board
From: Morena Zelaya, Director of Planning & Community Development

RE: Zoning Bylaw Amendments to comply with MBTA Communities Statute

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We are asking the Town Council and Planning Board to approve one last set of minor changes to downtown zoning to comply with the MBTA Communities Law.

The Town of Franklin was recently made aware that there are a few provisions in the zoning bylaws keeping us from being fully compliant with the MBTA Communities Act. The Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities (EOHLC) identified these items after careful review of the Town's Zoning bylaws and we are confident that the changes identified below are the last ones related to MBTA Communities. While the Town previously received the attached interim compliance letter dated January 27, 2025, nevertheless, a few small tweaks are required to our town zoning bylaws in order to be in compliance with the state law:

- Zoning Bylaw Amendment 26-946: §185 Attachment 7. Part VI, Striking Note 2 from GRV and CI, which removes the following language "Lot area must be 25% greater than that required for a single-family dwelling."
- Zoning Bylaw Amendment 26-947: §185 Attachment 9, Amendment to Note 7 language, which revises the language by removing "with three housing units" when referring to multi-family residential, and the addition of Note 16 which sets a minimum frontage requirement of 50ft for mixed-use and multifamily developments.

These two changes will allow necessary parcels within GRV and CI to conform and be counted towards the Town's unit capacity count.

What is at stake with compliance?

By coming into full compliance with the MBTA Communities Act the Town will be eligible for the MBTA Communities Catalyst Fund which has grants ranging from $250,000-$1M for eligible projects. More importantly, the Town will also continue to be eligible for state discretionary grant programs of which the

Town has received approximately $7.9 million since 2020. Notably, the MassWorks Infrastructure Program grants have benefited the community in numerous ways, including, $2.2 million for the reconstruction of lower Grove Street, $3.2 million in subsidies for the Franklin Ridge senior affordable housing project, rewarding Franklin for being a Housing Choice Community (which offers us lower interest rates for large sewer and water projects like the Beaver Street Interceptor), as well as many other grants for a jail diversion program, fire safety grants, water and sewer system upgrades, and grants for local seniors and veterans to name a few.

Noncompliance will jeopardize almost all grant funding from the state. By forfeiting compliance with the state statute, the Town will be deprived of millions in grant funding opportunities every year to perform many projects that could otherwise not be able to be funded.

Finally, as of December 22, 2025, almost all (167 of 177) MBTA Communities have submitted and/or adopted zoning to comply with the law. 126 of these communities have been found to be fully compliant.

Town of Franklin MBTA Communities Act History

The Town has been working towards full compliance since the Act was passed in 2021. Earlier amendments undertaken, like the currently proposed amendments, were also relatively minor and aligned with the Town's identified goals. In 2023 the Town approved two bylaw amendments related to MBTA Communities. These amendments actually *decreased* the amount of "by right" units/per acre allowed under current zoning at that time.

- Zoning Bylaw Amendment 23-889 made changes to §185, Attachment 7, Part VI, Use Regulation Schedule: Residential Uses, Multifamily or Apartment, allowing multifamily housing in the CI and GRV zoning districts by-right, up to 1 unit per 2,250 SF of lot area.
- Zoning Bylaw Amendment 23-898R made changes to §185, Attachment 9, Schedule of Lot, Area, Frontage, Yard and Height Requirements, increasing the Maximum Impervious Coverage in GRV.

However, the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) found that these changes were insufficient to meet the Town's minimum multi-family unit capacity as required by the state. In August 2024, the Department of Planning and Community Development (DPCD) submitted three additional zoning bylaw amendments related to MBTA Communities which also tied in recommendations from the "Franklin For All" project performed by MAPC.

- Zoning Bylaw Amendment 24-906: Changes to §185-3. Definitions, Mixed Use Development Definition
- Zoning Bylaw Amendment 24-907R: Changes to §185-21 Parking, Loading and Driveway Requirements
- Zoning Bylaw Amendment 24-908: §185 Attachment 7. Part VI, Addition of Mixed Use Development to Use Regulation Schedule

With these changes, the Town and MAPC, both relying on the State's compliance model, were confident that the Town would be found to be in compliance. In December 2024 the Town submitted its MBTA Communities District Compliance Application to EOHLC. In January 2025 the Town received a Confirmation of Interim Compliance letter from them confirming that the Town was in interim compliance, pending further review, because the Town's application submission was on time. Subsequently, in May 2025, longtime DPCD Director, Bryan Taberner, retired and the new director, Morena Zelaya, started in the role in September. However, while the model, a cumbersome Excel spreadsheet, was robust, it could not account for every nuance of the zoning bylaws. EOHLC contacted Ms. Zelaya in early October to notify her that, after further review, the Town had been found to be below its required minimum multi-family unit capacity. EOHLC staff specifically said that they were awaiting the hiring of a new director before contacting the Town regarding these needed changes. We have received verbal assurances from the State, and hope to have written confirmation soon, that these are the final changes necessary.

SPONSOR: *Town Administration*

TOWN OF FRANKLIN
ZONING BY-LAW AMENDMENT 26-946

A ZONING BY-LAW AMENDMENT TO THE CODE OF THE TOWN OF FRANKLIN AT CHAPTER 185, ATTACHMENT 7, PART VI USE REGULATION SCHEDULE

BE IT ENACTED BY THE FRANKLIN TOWN COUNCIL THAT:
Chapter 185 of the Code of the Town of Franklin is hereby amended by the following **additions** and ~~**deletions**~~ to §185, Attachment 7, Use Regulations Schedule Part VI:

USE REGULATION SCHEDULE
PART VI

Symbols in the Use Regulations Schedule shall mean the following:

Y = A permitted use.

N = An excluded or prohibited use.

BA = A use authorized under special permit from the Board of Appeals.

PB = A use authorized under special permit from the Planning Board.

P/SP = Permitted as of right. A special permit from the Board of Appeals is required if the proposed project results in an increase in estimated water consumption of more than 15,000 gallons per day.

	District													
Principal Uses	**RRI RRII RVI RVII**	**SFRIII**	**SFRIV**	**GRV**	**NC**	**RB**	**CI**	**CII**	**DC**	**B**	**I**	**LI**	**O**	**MBI**
6. Residential														
6.1 Multifamily or Apartment														
a. With Four or More Housing Units[4]	N[1]	N	N	**Y**[~~2~~,3]	PB[2,8]	N	**Y**[~~2~~,3]	N	Y[5,6]	N	N	N	PB[7,8]	N
b. With Three Housing Units	N	N	PB[2]	**Y**[~~2~~]	Y[2]	N	**Y**[~~2~~]	Y	Y	N	N	N	N	N
c. As Part of Mixed Use Development	N	N	N	**PB**[~~2~~,3]	PB[2,8]	N	**Y**[~~2~~,3]	N	Y[5,6]	N	N	N	PB[7,8]	N
6.2 Single-family	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N
6.3 Two-family														
a. New	N	N	Y[2]	**Y**[~~2~~]	Y[2]	N	Y	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N
b. By conversion	BA	BA	BA	Y	Y	N	BA	Y	BA	N	N	N	N	N

NOTES:

1. Except PB in RVI District per § 185-38, and RVII District per § 185-50.
2. Lot area must be at least 25% greater than that required for a single-family dwelling.
3. No more than one dwelling unit per 2,250 square feet of lot area may be permitted; additional dwelling units may be allowed by Special Permit from the Planning Board.
4. All multifamily developments with 10 or more housing units are required to address the Affordable Housing requirements in § 185-51.
5. All dwelling units shall be located on floors above the street level floor.
6. No more than one dwelling unit per 2,000 square feet of lot area will be permitted; additional dwelling units may be allowed by Special Permit from the Planning Board.
7. All multi-family residential developments require a minimum of 5-acres.
8. No more than one dwelling unit per 3,000 square feet of lot area will be permitted.

The foregoing Zoning By-law Amendment shall take effect in accordance with the Franklin Home Rule Charter and Massachusetts General Law Chapter 40A, Section 5.

DATED: ____________, 2026

VOTED: __________________________

UNANIMOUS: _______________

YES: _________ NO: __________

ABSTAIN: ____ ABSENT: _____

RECUSED: __________________

A TRUE RECORD ATTEST:

____

Nancy Danello, CMC
Town Clerk

____

Ted Cormier-Leger, Clerk
Franklin Town Council

SPONSOR: *Town Administration*

TOWN OF FRANKLIN
ZONING BY-LAW AMENDMENTS 26-947

A ZONING BY-LAW AMENDMENT TO THE CODE OF THE TOWN OF FRANKLIN AT CHAPTER 185, ATTACHMENT 9, SCHEDULE OF LOT, AREA, FRONTAGE, YARD AND HEIGHT REQUIREMENTS.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE FRANKLIN TOWN COUNCIL THAT:
Chapter 185 of the Code of the Town of Franklin is hereby amended by the following **additions** and ~~**deletions**~~ to §185, Attachment 9, Schedule of Lot, Area, Frontage, Yard and Height Requirements:

185 Attachment 9

Schedule of Lot, Area, Frontage, Yard and Height Requirements

District	Minimum Lot Dimensions				Minimum Yard Dimensions			Maximum Height of Building		Maximum Impervious Coverage of Existing Upland	
	Area (square feet)	Continuous Frontage (feet)	Depth (feet)	Lot Width (minimum circle diameter)	Front (feet)	Side (feet)	Rear (feet)	Stories	Feet	Structures	Structures Plus Paving [3]
Rural Residential I	40,000	200	200	180[4]	40	40	40	3	35	20	25
Residential VI	40,000	200	200	180[4]	40	40	40	3	35	20	25
Residential VII[11]	40,000	200	200	180[4]	40	40	40	3	35	20 [12]	25 [12]
Rural Residential II	30,000	150	200	135[4]	40	35	35	3	35	20	25
Single Family Residential III	20,000	125	160	112.5	40	25	30	3	35	25	35
Single Family Residential IV	15,000	100	100	90	30	20	20	3	35	30	35
General Residential V	10,000	100 [16]	100	90	20	15	20	3	40	45	55
Neighborhood Commercial	18,000	100	100	90	20	30	40	3	35	30	35
Rural Business[13]	40,000	200	200	180	40	30	40	1.5	30	10	30
Downtown Commercial	5,000	50	50	45	5[10]	0[2]	15	3[9]	40[9]	80	90
Commercial I[7]	5,000	50	50	45	20[1]	10[14]	15	3[15]	40[15]	80	90
Commercial II	40,000	175	200	157.5	40	30	30	3[15]	40[15]	70	80
Business	20,000	125	160	112.5	40	20	30	3[15]	40[15]	70	80
Mixed Business Innovation	40,000	175	200	157.5	40	30[5]	30[5]	3[15]	40[15]	70	80
Industrial	40,000	175	200	157.5	40	30[5]	30[5]	3[6]	-	70	80
Limited Industrial	40,000	175	200	157.5	40	30[8]	30[8]	3[6]	40[6]	70	80
Office	40,000	100	100	90	20	30[5]	30[5]	3[6]	40[6]	70	80

Setbacks: No structure or pole carrying overhead wires shall be put up within 60 feet nor shall a billboard be erected within 100 feet of right-of-way which is 75 feet or more.

NOTES:

1 But no new structure shall be required to provide a deeper yard than that existing on that parcel upon adoption of this amendment.

2 Increase to 20 feet when abutting a residential district.

3 See definition of Upland §185-3, §185-36. Impervious Surfaces and §185-40. Water Resource District.

4 Within open space developments (see § 185-43), the lot width must be met for individual lots shall be no less than 1/2 those required within the underlying district.

5 Increase by the common building height of the structure, when abutting a residential use.

6 Buildings up to 60 feet in height may be permitted by a special permit from the Planning Board.

7 Permitted residential uses must observe requirements of General Residential V District for residential use building only.
Multifamily residential ~~with three housing units,~~ and Mixed use buildings are exempt from this requirement.

8 Increase by 1.5 the common building height of a structure, when abutting a residential district or use.

9 Buildings up to 50 feet in height may be permitted by a special permit from the Planning Board provided the structure is set back at least 15 feet from frontage.

10 Minimum five-foot setback required on first floor, street level; upper floors can overhang required first floor set back.

11 See §185-50.

12 Total impervious surface in the upland shall be no more than 50% if a special permit for multiple, single-family dwelling units is granted in RVII.

13 Maximum gross building footprint of non-residential primary use structures is 3,500 square feet.

14 The10 feet side setback is only required on one side of lot; if lot abuts a residential district, a twenty feet setback is required on the abutting side.

15 Buildings up to 50 feet in height, regardless of the number of stories, may be permitted by a special permit from the Planning Board.

16 Minimum continuous frontage of 50ft for mixed-use & multifamily buildings.

The foregoing Zoning By-law Amendment shall take effect in accordance with the Franklin Home Rule Charter and Massachusetts General Law Chapter 40A, Section 5.

DATED: ____________, 2026

VOTED: __________________________

UNANIMOUS: _______________

YES: _________ NO: __________

ABSTAIN: ____ ABSENT: _____

RECUSED: __________________

A TRUE RECORD ATTEST:

____
Nancy Danello, CMC
Town Clerk

____
Ted Cormier-Leger, Clerk
Franklin Town Council

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR
TOWN of FRANKLIN

MEMORANDUM

January 2, 2026

To: Town Council
From: Jamie Hellen, Town Administrator

RE: Resolution 26-02: Gift Acceptance - Veterans Services Department

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The Veterans Services Department has received several generous donations in the total combined amount of $2,470.00. These donations will be applied toward the Franklin Municipal Veterans' Assistance Fund to be used at the Department's discretion in support of local Veterans and their families.

The Town extends our sincere appreciation to all who have donated to the Franklin Community.
Thank you for your continued generosity and support!

Donation Summary:

Veterans Services Dept: $2,470.00

• Professional Firefighters of Franklin	$ 1,000.00
• Tracy and Malcolm MacLeod	$ 1,000.00
• Neil Brennan	$ 150.00
• Lou and Linda Colella	$ 100.00
• Kathy and Brian Durand	$ 100.00
• Erica Lerch	$ 100.00
• Dawn Anderson	$ 20.00
TOTAL:	**$ 2,470.00**

Please let me know if you have any questions.

TOWN OF FRANKLIN
RESOLUTION 26-02

ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS - VETERANS SERVICES DEPT.

WHEREAS, the Veterans Services Department has received generous donations in the total amount of Two Thousand Four Hundred Seventy Dollars and Zero Cents ($2,470.00) to be used at the discretion of the Department as follows:

Donation Summary:

VETERANS SERVICES DEPARTMENT - $2,470.00

- Donations to be used at the discretion of the Veterans Services Department through the Franklin Municipal Veterans' Assistance Fund in support of local veterans and their families.

List of all donors is included in the January 7, 2026 Town Council meeting agenda packet.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

The Town Council of the Town of Franklin on behalf of the Veterans Services Department gratefully accepts these generous donations to be used at the discretion of the Veterans Services Department for the purposes noted above.

This Resolution shall become effective according to the provisions of the Town of Franklin Home Rule Charter.

DATED: ____________ , 2026

VOTED: __________________________

UNANIMOUS: _______________

A TRUE RECORD ATTEST:

YES: _________ NO: __________

ABSTAIN:_____ ABSENT: _____

RECUSED: __________________

Nancy Danello, CMC
Town Clerk

____
Ted Cormier-Leger, Clerk
Franklin Town Council