

**FRANKLIN TOWN COUNCIL  
MINUTES OF MEETING  
November 19, 2025**

A meeting of the Town Council was held on Wednesday, November 19, 2025, at the Municipal Building, 2nd Floor, Council Chambers, 355 East Central Street, Franklin, MA. Councilors present: Jane Callaway-Tripp, Ted Cormier-Leger (via Zoom), 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 that Councilor Cormier-Leger would be participating remotely in tonight’s meeting. ► He announced upcoming events. Town Council office hours will be held November 20 at 8:30 AM at the Senior Center. 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.

**CITIZEN COMMENTS:** ► Mr. Mark Minnichelli, 31 Longfellow Drive, thanked Town Council members for their time. He said in the past he asked the status of the subsidized housing inventory (SHI) be reviewed. Franklin should not just meet the minimum 10 percent standard which Franklin has exceeded and is currently at 11.05 percent. He reviewed how the SHI number is calculated and proposed an idea for consideration for the inventory which he called the actual subsidized housing inventory that only counts the actual number of units that are affordable and setting that new number to 10 percent. ► School Committee Vice Chair David Callaghan, 30 Plain Street, gave an update from the Franklin School Committee. They had their first meeting of the new term last night. Mr. Paul Griffith was voted chair, and he is vice chair. He noted the successful redistricting. He explained they had an MCAS policy discussion as Massachusetts voters took away that graduation requirement and discussed the resources and bandwidth to develop the policies and procedures by the superintendent’s office with the absence of the MCAS. There are many unfunded mandates. The next meeting is December 9. ► Ms. Celia Courtright, 213 Peck Street, said the town spoke for change in the election. Previous Town Council members gave airtime to rumors and rarely or never corrected them causing misinformation to persist. She questioned how to establish trust between the Town Council and citizens. She noted some rumors, talked about an article in the Observer, and said she learned it was the Town Council members who were voted out and new Town Council members who were spreading rumors. She said new Town Council members were put in to correct this and asked members to own up to it and correct it. We the people are paying attention to this stuff; stop spreading rumors you have not verified. ► Mr. Steve Sherlock, 13 Magnolia Drive, Community Information Director for Franklin Matters Franklin Public Radio, again noted the proper use of the microphone. ► Ms. Kim Mu-Chow, 4 Briarwood Road, reviewed the second annual Franklin Community Coat Drive from November 10 to December 6 with various coat pick up points

to drop off for new or gently used coats. ► Ms. Lyn O'Brien, 16 Holmes Avenue, noted lack of room to sit and asked for consideration in a new place to hold meetings.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** ► *October 22, 2025 & October 29, 2025.* ► **MOTION to Approve** the October 22, 2025 meeting minutes by **Grella. SECOND** by **Ojukwu. No discussion.** ► **ROLL CALL VOTE:** Callaway-Tripp-YES, Cormier-Leger-YES, Dellorco-YES, Grella-YES, Griffith-YES, LeBlanc-YES, Malloy-YES, Morrongiello-YES, Ojukwu-YES. ► **VOTE: Yes-9, No-0, Absent-0.** ► **MOTION to Approve** the October 29, 2025 meeting minutes by **Grella. SECOND** by **Ojukwu. No discussion.** ► **ROLL CALL VOTE:** Callaway-Tripp-YES, Cormier-Leger-YES, Dellorco-YES, Grella-YES, Griffith-YES, LeBlanc-YES, Malloy-YES, Morrongiello-YES, Ojukwu-YES. ► **VOTE: Yes-9, No-0, Absent-0.**

**PROCLAMATIONS/RECOGNITIONS:** ► None.

**APPOINTMENTS:** ► *Cultural Council - Elizabeth O'Day; Finance Committee - Jennifer D'Angelo; Historical Commission - Brandon Carrico.* ► Councilor Griffith read the appointments. ► **MOTION** to ratify the appointments by the Town Administrator of the individuals named above to serve on Town committees with terms to become effective November 19, 2025, and to expire as listed on the document titled "Appointments" provided in the online meeting packet by **Griffith. SECOND** by **Grella. Discussion:** ► Councilor Morrongiello said he wanted to make clear in future resolutions for Finance Committee appointments that the Town Council is the appointing authority not the town administrator. ► Mr. Hellen said that is correct and in the Town Charter. Historically, the Town Council has asked him to work with the Finance Committee who would vet the candidates. They would then come back through him to the Town Council. If the Town Council would like, they can do the interviews for the candidates. ► **ROLL CALL VOTE:** Callaway-Tripp-YES, Cormier-Leger-YES, Dellorco-YES, Grella-YES, Griffith-YES, LeBlanc-YES, Malloy-YES, Morrongiello-YES, Ojukwu-YES. ► **VOTE: Yes-9, No-0, Absent-0.**

**PUBLIC HEARINGS - 7:00 PM:** ► None.

**LICENSE TRANSACTIONS:** ► None.

**PRESENTATIONS / DISCUSSIONS:** ► None.

**LEGISLATION FOR ACTION:**

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

- a. **Resolution 25-71: Adoption of MGL Chapter 32B, Section 21-23 For the Purpose of Town's Participating in the Group Insurance Commission (Motion to Approve Resolution 25-71 - Majority Vote).** ► Councilor Griffith read the resolution. ► **MOTION to Approve** Resolution 25-71: Adoption of MGL Chapter 32B, Section 21-23 For the Purpose of Town's Participating in the Group Insurance Commission by **Grella. SECOND** by **Ojukwu. Discussion:** ► Mr. Hellen reviewed his memo to the Town Council dated November 14, 2025, which was provided in the online meeting packet. The Town Council will consider authorizing the town administrator to engage with the Franklin "Public Employees Committee (PEC)" for a "discussion of and vote on engaging in the process to change employee health insurance benefits under MGL Chapter 32b, sections 21-23." For the town to enter the GIC, the town is required to apply by December 1, 2025, for inclusion on July 1, 2026. The current Insurance Advisory Committee (IAC), made up of all bargaining units and a retiree representative, has unanimously agreed, 8-0, to join the GIC. The Town's benefits team is present to answer questions. Background: The Municipal Health Reform Act added Sections 21-23 to Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 32B in 2011. This section of the law creates a legal process that allows a municipality to change how it offers health insurance to its employees and retirees, including by joining the State's Group Insurance Commission (GIC). As presented in his memo, he reviewed advantages, unknowns/challenges, and

provided resource links. He explained loss runs are at 110 percent. Deductibles are unaffordable and joining the GIC they will be lower. There are more plan choices and some more affordable. This will also reduce time spent on healthcare for staff. Moving to GIC will bring efficiencies. All unions voted in favor to recommend to move to the GIC. This could help with the budget deficit. This would allow time to educate people to choose the right plan for them. Open enrollment for GIC is in April. He said getting into GIC will be a strong recruitment tool. ► Town Council members asked questions and made comments. ► In response to questions, Mr. Hellen said 55 municipalities and school districts in Massachusetts are on the GIC. Some reasons for not doing this in the past may include loss of control for employees, it is a three-year commitment, loss runs were at a point where we could control our own destiny. ► HR Director Karen Bratt said this year it made sense for the 600 retirees on Medicare and on a Medicare Advantage plan with us. She said every GIC plan has a lower rate. She said you have to have both active and retirees on the GIC plan. Regarding impact to employees, it depends on the plan they choose. Compared to our high-deductible plan that 70 percent of employees are on, their deductible will drop. For instance, for an individual there is a \$2,500 deductible; the GIC is down to \$400 or \$500 depending on plan. She reviewed additional plan savings examples. Generally, it will be advantageous for the employee. She explained they are currently on a Harvard Pilgrim plan and discussed GIC providers for employees. She said the GIC has 460,000 subscribers. She confirmed this was for school and town employees. ► Councilor Cormier-Leger said that currently employee health insurance that the Town is paying for both the school side and the municipal side is a 14 percent increase year over year. ► Mr. Hellen explained currently employee healthcare is split partially for school employees and the municipal budget. However, if there was a year to merge it into once place, this would be the year as there would be efficiency. ► Ms. Bratt explained all retirees for town and school are in account 910. ► Mr. Hellen explained that it is hard to predict if it will continue at 14 percent; it could be 17 percent or go down to 10 percent. He is hopeful that with the employee base getting younger, this is a good time to transition and to educate everyone. As it is a change, there will be more engagement. The GIC rates come out in February for FY27. We will have better and more accurate numbers earlier in the budget process. There are still a lot of unknowns with what is coming from the federal level. ► Ms. Bratt explained that anyone over 65 by Massachusetts law, if you are still working, you can stay on the town's regular plan as either an individual or family. Some people choose to go on Medicare and drop the active coverage. Once you are retired, when you turn 65, you are required to go on Medicare. Typically, you go on Medicare part A as soon as you turn 65 and go on part B when you retire. That cost was about \$186 per month and just went up to \$202 per month. Then once on Medicare, you switch to what we have now being a Medicare Advantage plan with Aetna. That is the plan that recently increased 67 percent. The full cost of the plan was \$336; now it is \$559 per month. The town is paying 70 percent of that cost every month. The retiree's premium went from \$107 month to \$167. ► Councilor Ojukwu summarized what he was hearing that if we do this it will largely lower costs for employees and retirees, lessen burden for staff in terms of work, provide a range of plans, potential positive impact on town's financial deficit, but there is a risk that too many will sign up, and we deal with the risk with education. This is a good financial and healthcare decision provided we are good at educating. ► Ms. Bratt reviewed some of the costs of the plans, noted they will continue to do a lot of engagement with the IAC, and noted possible financial savings. She confirmed current out-of-pocket maximum as \$5,000 individual and \$10,000 family and this is the same. ► Mr. Hellen discussed schools pay insurance out of their budget and municipal departments do not and putting all insurance into one account that is paid from a central office instead of having schools pay from their budget. He said it will save staff time as well. It will take a couple of years to transition fully. He said it is a good idea. He discussed having it all centralized will help digging into the numbers to determine why we consume such a high amount of healthcare and high-cost claims. ► Ms. Bratt said 67 percent of employees are on high deductible. ► Councilor Griffith noted that once it is combined, instead of the schools having 54 percent of the budget, it would go down to 47 percent. She encouraged the change. ► Mr. Hellen clarified this does not mean the school budget can stay at the number it is. He discussed offsets from some of the schools revolving funds. ► Ms. Bratt said they have a model for what they would have saved if in GIC this year which was \$1.4 million. She confirmed 50 percent is the minimum the Town can contribute by state law. She discussed \$150

reimbursement per subscriber for fitness plans, and the GIC has the same. ► Mr. Hellen discussed enterprise funds from the rate payers and the employees in those are in the overall town budget, but we inject indirect money for healthcare or other benefits from those accounts into the budgets, and it is basically an offset. ► Ms. Bratt explained they do not offer money back for not being on the plan. She reviewed that Wellpoint has three different plans, and they will do education about the difference.

► **ROLL CALL VOTE:** Callaway-Tripp-YES, Cormier-Leger-ABSENT, Dellorco-YES, Grella-YES, Griffith-YES, LeBlanc-YES, Malloy-YES, Morrongiello-YES, Ojukwu-YES. ► **VOTE: Yes-8, No-0, Absent-1** (Councilor Cormier-Leger had disconnected).

**b. Resolution 25-72: General Fund Appropriation Reductions FY26 (Motion to Approve Resolution 25-72 - Majority Vote).** ► Councilor Griffith read the resolution. ► **MOTION to Approve Resolution 25-72: General Fund Appropriation Reductions FY26 by Grella. SECOND by Malloy. Discussion:**

► Town Council members asked questions and made comments. ► Councilor Morrongiello confirmed there will no longer be a deputy town administrator in the budget. He asked what liability will we face as part of the town administrator's contract. ► Mr. Cerel said this is a financial matter. ► Councilor Morrongiello said he is concerned how this resolution will affect that. ► Mr. Hellen said there is an outstanding deliberation that will require an executive session. He noted the last deputy town administrator and community opinion. They are managing a town of 34,000 people with much responsibility and just two people. The Town of Stow has 10,000 residents and four people in the TA office. For himself and Ms. McCann, the biggest issue is work-life balance. He has no one answering phones. There is not someone in the office at all times. He and Ms. McCann need help. They propose a part-time admin for specific duties. He said for communications, they have had two different people who have both gotten laid off. They had one position for both schools and town. The citizens satisfaction survey indicated getting out the news was important. These are the two positions we need now. At some point, the Town Council will have to address the need for a deputy town administrator. He cannot say much more outside of executive session. ► Chair Dellorco said there is no time limit to get an assistant town administrator. ► Mr. Hellen explained even with the 1.5 FTEs, his predecessor had more people in the office 30 years ago than he does today. He suggested the 1.5 employees would be permanent and adding the deputy town administrator position as well. This is a big issue for bandwidth. ► Councilor Cormier-Leger asked if there was opportunity to explore a shared service agreement with the schools for some administrative. ► Mr. Hellen said he has offered that before, but it has not worked out; that is a question for the School Committee and superintendent. ► In response to questions and comments, Mr. Hellen said all local receipts are at an all-time high and noted how they do projections. ► Councilor Malloy said if they were going to bring back positions, he would like to bring back the Senior Center nurse. He is reluctant for these two new hires. He suggested the part-time person now and holding off on the communications position. ► Mr. Hellen said we have to have a final budget reconciliation tonight to move forward. He needs someone in the office now. Dozens of towns pay \$185,000 or more for a deputy TA. His salary and a deputy's will always be community pinatas. The skill needed at this position and for a deputy is more than people understand. He said the admin position is very important. He said this is a Town Council decision. He said there is need to continue the conversation about what his office is going to look like. He said the admin right now is the priority. ► CFO Kerri Bertone said it is imperative we vote on this tonight as she has to report to the Department of Revenue tomorrow in order to set the tax rate on December 3. This is for a budget deficit. ► Mr. Hellen said it could be approved as is and pause on the posting and come back and talk about it and that would not require any amendments. ► Councilor Ojukwu discussed that communications with the town are critical and recommended approving the communications role. Maybe they can approve it and find a different way to fund it. ► Councilor Grella recommended holding off on hiring these until we have a chance to figure it out. ► Councilor Morrongiello said any constraints on the TA office affects the Town Council and recommended hiring the positions right away. ► Chair Dellorco said he agrees with both discussions, and it is a hard decision; approve it and Mr. Hellen does his thing and we work around it and see what happens. ► Mr. Hellen said approve the budget tonight and further discuss it, and he will put a pause on it until then. ► Councilor Callaway-Tripp recommended approving and getting the part-time third person and approving but not

doing anything yet about the communications person and possibly figuring out how to do this together with the schools. ► Mr. Hellen explained working with schools on this has not worked before, but he agrees with Councilor Callaway-Tripp. He said for a joint position, they have to get strong commitment that they are going to fund their share; he is onboard for a joint position. ► Ms. Bratt noted it is difficult to work together as the two different offices have different priorities; it is a tough position to split. ► Mr. Cerel said he wants to focus on the resolution in front of the Town Council. This is a legal requirement to rebalance the budget making the two deductions as shown. ► Director of Arts, Culture and the Creative Economy Cory Shea said she and a few department heads wanted to share information. She said she provided the Town Council members with information about what her department is and what she does. Arts and culture are for everyone, and it brings people together. She talked about all that she has done in her 1 year and 9 months in her position and said arts and culture is not an expense to trim. ► Director of Veterans' Services Shannon Nisbett introduce members of her department and talked about the facets of their job and the many services they provide. ► Senior Center Director Sarah Amaral explained that she wanted to talk about the senior center as it is on the memo to potentially be closed in FY27 or in the future. She reviewed the services that are offered, programs, respite care, and volunteers and noted they are a lifeline to people. She asked who will meet the needs if they are closed. She said the seniors of Franklin matter. ► Library Director Felicia Oti said the library board and staff were in attendance. She explained what the library does and the role they play in the community. She talked about the library collection, number of residents who use the library, and services and programs they provide. The library offers great value for the investment. ► Public Works Director Brutus Cantoreggi brought up that his budget is down \$800,000 in two years. The majority of the money came out of road maintenance and everyone will see the lack of maintenance five years down the road. He talked about the picking up of trash barrels and noted the lights are not up in the downtown area. The lights are only \$8,000, but we cannot do it anymore. ► **ROLL CALL VOTE:** Callaway-Tripp-YES, Cormier-Leger-YES, Dellorco-YES, Grella-YES, Griffith-YES, LeBlanc-YES, Malloy-YES, Morrongiello-YES, Ojukwu-YES. ► **VOTE: Yes-9, No-0, Absent-0.**

- c. ***Resolution 25-73: Franklin Town Council's Withdrawal of Support of Proposed Chapter 40B Affordable Housing Project Located at 444 East Central Street (Motion to Approve Resolution 25-73 - Majority Vote).*** ► Councilor Griffith read the resolution. ► **MOTION to Approve Resolution 25-73: Franklin Town Council's Withdrawal of Support of Proposed Chapter 40B Affordable Housing Project Located at 444 East Central Street by Callaway-Tripp. SECOND by Ojukwu.**

***Councilor Grella and Councilor Malloy recused themselves.***

**Discussion:** ► Mr. Hellen reviewed his memo to the Town Council dated November 17, 2025, which was provided in the meeting packet. As requested on November 12, the Town Council will consider repealing the LIP Application for 444 East Central Street. The original application was approved by the previous Town Council, 5-4, in April 2024. The original application and additional related materials from the April 2024 meeting are linked in the memo. We have attached a draft of a resolution to rescind the local LIP support of the project. He stated that letters are provided on the table for residents to take. He noted that there have been rumors and confusion regarding repealing the LIP. He said last Friday, Attorney Freeman for the proponent reached out to the State of Massachusetts to get clarification on this issue. That letter from Derya Samadi, General Counsel of the Office of the General Counsel, will be posted online tomorrow. The letter was shown on the screen. He read aloud most of a letter from the state. He noted case law and previous precedent and explained the misinformation that is out there. He explained that if the LIP is rescinded, it does not mean that the proponent has to start over and the town can invoke safe harbor. He noted the EOHLC, the state housing authority, issued their recent SHI numbers, and the town is at 11 percent. He further discussed misinformation on social media. That is where opinions and rumors are. The facts are in this room with the town officials. He wanted to make sure people are aware that they are probably not going to get any other affordable housing complexes that go to the SHI for at least two or three more years. He said there is a true threat in the next few years to go below 10 percent

and that is when the unfriendly 40Bs come, and there are no concessions. He talked about the project on Pleasant Street and that it may take many years and should not be counted on anytime soon. ► Town Council members asked questions and made comments. ► Councilor Ojukwu said he would push back on the change being from just the Town Council change. He noted a letter from the previous Town Council noting they were not happy with some of the changes. Rescinded support would be based on the facts today. He asked if there was other interest in the space if this does not go through. ► Mr. Hellen said housing law and case law is challenging. He discussed that the ZBA chose to have a peer review notably on a higher number of parking spaces for the project. As the hearings unfolded, the Town Council wrote a letter, and the proponent did go back to the ZBA to update their plan to mirror a lot closer to what was approved by the Town Council. He said the proponent has worked with the ZBA on mitigation issues. He noted the space is zoned as Commercial II. ► Mr. Cerel talked about what is a substantial change. It means something that changes a project in a greater impact than what was originally proposed. Such as if the number of units increased by 10 percent. He noted the number of units in this project has been reduced. He noted another example is if it went from ownership to rental. He said there is nothing here that this state agency would consider a substantial change. The state has made it clear that it is their final decision whether or not to rescind the project eligibility letter (PEL). ► Councilor Ojukwu said his thinking is this proposal would be better financially for the town than for instance a fast-food restaurant. If we rescind the LIP, it does not stop the process. He said what does is if they cannot get through the ZBA. ► Councilor Griffith talked about significant changes and that the state did not use that phrase in their letter. She questioned any material changes in the project. She said she would like to make a motion to amend the current resolution. ► **MOTION to Amend** the current Resolution 25-73 and strike the second paragraph regarding results of the local election on November 4, 2025, and change that to say: whereas as a result of many material changes made to the project after local approval was granted the Franklin Town Council signed a letter on August 8, 2025, indicating they no longer approved the amended project by **Griffith. SECOND by LeBlanc. No discussion.** ► **ROLL CALL VOTE (on the amendment to Resolution 25-73):** Callaway-Tripp-YES, Cormier-Leger-YES, Dellorco-YES, Grella-RECUSED, Griffith-YES, LeBlanc-YES, Malloy-RECUSED, Morrongiello-YES, Ojukwu-YES. ► **VOTE: Yes-7, No-0, Absent-0, Recused-2.** ► Discussion continued with the resolution as amended. ► Councilor Callaway-Tripp said she is happy the amendment was fixed. There were dramatic changes. There are now over 30 variances, it went from three stories to four stories, and they are closer to the abutters' property line than originally. She read allowed her statement regarding when a LIP 40B project undergoes material changes such as with this project. She said if the Town Council does not concur with the changes, they are fully within their legal rights to rescind support. This not about anti-housing; it is about being pro-resident. ► Councilor Morrongiello asked the proponent how much they have invested in the project, what feedback from the abutters has been incorporated into the project, their commitment to traffic mitigation, and tax revenue for the town. He asked if a decrease counts as a significant change. He questioned liability to the town. ► Mr. Jesse Schomer, attorney of Dain Torpy on behalf of the proponent, said the cost to go to a different subsidizing agency would be in the order of five to six figures. He said he wanted to correct the statement. It is not correct to say the developer would go back to the starting line. Once a project has a project eligibility letter (PEL) that is the ticket to the dance. This project has a PEL and is conclusive evidence of project eligibility regardless of what this board does and regardless of the reason. He explained the process. He explained changes to projects always occur and discussed the final approval process. He reminded the Town Council that HLC's guidelines also required that the Town Council take action that is reasonable and not unreasonably withhold their support for project changes. He noted the changes to the project have been for the benefit of the project and increased mitigation for abutters. ► Mr. A.J. Alevizos of TAG Central LLC said all changes made have been to the benefit of the town and abutters. He reviewed the changes and said the project is smaller now. He said they are pleased with the project they have gone through. He said he is looking forward to talking about mitigation efforts in the final approval. ► Mr. Hellen said he does not get involved with boards on their mitigation issues. The boards are in charge of doing that and noted the peer review process. ► Mr. Alevizos said he heard Station 117 brings the town almost \$1 million a year. That is a similar size project to this one. ► Mr. Cerel said reductions are not considered a negative change. ► Mr.

Hellen explained EOHLC is who will determine a substantial change. His opinion is that there is not anything that will be seen as a negative change. ► Mr. Cerel said to vote on this is adding another layer of complexity. This is before the ZBA right now. He explained any imposed conditions that the developer feels are uneconomic can be appealed. The current state philosophy is for the need for increased housing. ► Mr. Hellen said there is only a \$60,000 annual expenditure in the operating budget for legal expenses outside of the in-house attorney. He does not know if the Town Council's votes on this would impact the budget if there were litigation against the Town Council on this. Tonight's vote is putting the town in the position of more legal complexity. ► Mr. Schomer explained the proponent is not threatening litigation; however, if the Town Council votes as they may, his client has to protect his investment in the property and project. He noted the financial benefits to the town and noted the town's funding challenges; this project will bring significant revenue to the town. ► Councilor Morrongiello pointed out this vote does make a difference in terms of the town's finances, capital budget, and operating budget. He talked about the traffic and getting the intersection fixed. He is looking at all the stakeholders including potential tenants, business owners, and employees. He said he is listening and trying to respond to the feedback. ► Councilor Cormier-Leger said what a mess this has become. He said clearly the people of Franklin do not want this project. He said any repeal vote would be ceremonial at best which is unfortunate. ► Councilor LeBlanc said this is a mess. He said we were elected partly for this. He read Mr. Schomer's response that said even if the Town Council votes to rescind support for the project, HAC law says the applicant is entitled to a reasonable period of time to either negotiate with the town or seek a PEL from a different subsidizing agency under a different subsidy program, and the applicant would do the later. He said this comment shows there is not even a good faith effort to bring this home. He noted that they are trying to jam this through by December 31. He talked about that the applicant will walk out with not having to subsidize the GATRA bus, walking trails, and King Street intersection. He said right now he is willing to vote this and fight to the end. ► Mr. Schomer said the paragraph was not a threat; it was recognizing the reality of the situation for his client. He reviewed the LIP process and the relationship. If the Town Council takes the action to rescind support, they have to respond to that and take it as an indication that you no longer support the project, and so they will need to find another partner, mostly likely Mass Housing. ► Mr. Hellen addressed the bus stop and the intersection. He said a lot of these issues have come up at the ZBA hearings. He said the Town Council has initiated this discussion about rescinding support. He talked about the King Street intersection. He said maybe the proponent could speak to some of the issues at this time. ► Mr. Alevizos said in speaking to the King Street improvement, they agreed to fund a study to design a rotary or something to fix the intersection. ► Councilor Griffith discussed the decrease in units, expected tax revenue, number of expected students, and 205 expected emergency calls per year. The size of one building went up and that could be a substantial change. She reviewed what is allowed by right and by special permit in Commercial II. If we rescind approval, what comes next. Even if we do not have the capability to do anything and this becomes a demonstrative vote, one of the reasons we have a very nearly new Town Council is because the residents were not feeling heard; we can say we tried. ► Mr. Joel D'Errico, 72 Deer View Way, reviewed his time in the 1990s on the Town Council. He reviewed a time when the Town Council was misinformed about a company being a public service corporation, and they put up a cell tower which then it had to come down. He said this project is the most undesirable project that has ever come to fruition in this community. He said the prior Town Council was told this by the residents. He talked about Station 117 and said he did calculations and each unit brings in approximately \$3,500 per year which is nothing. Safe Harbor got botched and then nothing was done about it by Mr. Hellen. He talked about the surveys that people say they do not want this. He talked about the changes to four stories and a bigger building which is the word substantial. ► Mr. Gary Love, 39 Red Gate Lane, said the town does not want this. He has asked for the town's legal opinion multiple times. We are at the 10 percent. The handbook says the HAC cannot overrule. Regarding what is being done for the abutters, we have seen little concrete expenditures on this. He said it is time to do something. ► Ms. Susan Rappa, 40 Red Gate Lane, said regarding the buffer for the abutters, it was 30 ft. and now it is 40 ft. That is for a three- and four-story building and a parking lot next to her single-family home. She said Mr. Alevizos told her it is a chain link fence and not a vinyl fence, and it is not a row of trees, but it is randomly placed trees.

She noted other impacts from the projects and waivers and variances needed, and said residents do not support the project. She requested the Town Council rescind their support. ► Mr. Mark Minnichelli, 31 Longfellow Drive, said he is a member of Ben for Franklin and continues to support the project. We need more affordable options for Franklin, and this will add revenue to the town. A small number of children added across many grades will not add large costs. Removing this project is not a fiscally responsible choice. He requested the Town Council vote to continue to support the project. ► Mr. John Johnson, 23 Northern Spy Road, said the citizens have made it clear that they do not want this. He requested the Town Council rescind their vote. ► Chair Dellorco said it is not affordable. He voted no for it the last time. He said whoever does the traffic studies should be fired. He talked about the traffic at that side of town on Rt. 140. Voting yes on the amended resolution means we withdraw. ► Mr. Schomer said everyone has voiced their concerns about the project. A vote would be symbolic. The project will continue under a different subsidy program. While the sentiment in the room is overwhelming negative, there are many residents who did not come out tonight to voice their support for the project. He said 40B has been the most successful housing production tool for municipalities and developers in Massachusetts. ► **MOTION to Approve Resolution 25-73 As Amended. No First Made. No Second Made. No discussion.** ► **ROLL CALL VOTE (on the resolution as amended):** Callaway-Tripp-YES, Cormier-Leger-ABSENT, Dellorco-YES, Grella-RECUSED, Griffith-YES, LeBlanc-YES, Malloy-RECUSED, Morrongiello-NO, Ojukwu-YES. ► **VOTE: Yes-5, No-1, Absent-1, Recused-2** (Councilor Morrongiello voted no; Councilor Cormier-Leger had disconnected).

*Chair Dellorco declared a two-minute recess.*

*Councilor Cormier-Leger had left the meeting. Councilor Grella and Councilor Malloy re-entered the meeting.*

- d. Resolution 25-74: 2026 Schedule of Town Council Meetings (Motion to Approve Resolution 25-74 - Majority Vote).* ► **MOTION to Waive the reading by Ojukwu. SECOND by Griffith. No discussion.** ► **VOTE: Yes-8, No-0, Absent-1.** ► **MOTION to Approve Resolution 25-74: 2026 Schedule of Town Council Meetings. No First Made. No Second Made. Discussion.** ► Councilor Morrongiello discussed office hours. ► Mr. Hellen said they are voting on the Town Council meeting dates, not office hours at the Senior Center. He reviewed why the office hours are done on the third Thursday and said they do not have to be kept there. ► Chair Dellorco said he has an issue with June 3. ► Mr. Hellen recommended moving it to June 10. ► **MOTION to Amend Resolution 25-74: 2026 Schedule of Town Council Meetings by Griffith. SECOND by Grella. No discussion.** ► **VOTE: Yes-8, No-0, Absent-1.** ► **MOTION to Approve Resolution 25-74: 2026 Schedule of Town Council Meetings As Amended by Griffith. SECOND by Ojukwu. No discussion.** ► **VOTE: Yes-8, No-0, Absent-1.**
- e. Resolution 25-75: Gift Acceptance - Fire Department (\$1,000), Veterans Services Department (\$1,175) (Motion to Approve Resolution 25-75 - Majority Vote).* ► Councilor Griffith read the resolution. ► **MOTION to Approve Resolution 25-75: Gift Acceptance - Fire Department (\$1,000), Veterans Services Department (\$1,175) by Grella. SECOND by Ojukwu. Discussion:** ► Chair Dellorco thanked all who donated. ► **VOTE: Yes-8, No-0, Absent-1.**

**TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT:** ► Mr. Hellen wished all a happy Thanksgiving.

**SUBCOMMITTEE & AD HOC COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

- a. **Capital Budget Subcommittee.** ► None.
- b. **Economic Development Subcommittee.** ► None.
- c. **Joint Budget Subcommittee.** ► None.
- d. **Police Station Building Committee.** ► None.

**FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS:** ► Councilor Malloy requested a Chapter 70 review. ► Councilor Ojukwu requested a five-year forecast review. ► Councilor LeBlanc requested department heads talk about what they do for the community and would like to have School Committee comments as a more formal item in the agenda to allow for a conversation. ► Mr. Cerel explained that they cannot talk back and forth as there is no notice on the agenda. ► Councilor Griffith suggested a discussion on an initiative for the Town Council to do a quarterly service project; that would be a good way to do physical service for the community, not just administrative. ► Councilor Morrongiello asked to put on the agenda an issue regarding the assessor's office of personal property. ► Councilor Ojukwu suggested a Town Council representative at School Committee meetings. ► Chair Dellorco requested Friendly 40Bs policy be put on the agenda for discussion. ► Mr. Hellen reviewed prohibiting large rental buildings. ► Councilor Malloy agreed it should be put it on the agenda.

**COUNCIL COMMENTS:** ► Councilor LeBlanc said he is passionate about economic development and affordable housing. He met with Lisa Piana of the Downtown Partnership. The Little Shop of Olive Oil is a great shop. ► Councilor Morrongiello said the Town Council members are starting to work as a team. He went to the Historical Museum for an event. ► Councilor Callaway-Tripp thanked residents who attended the meeting. We are listening. Happy Thanksgiving. We cannot fix everything in a day. ► Councilor Malloy thanked the three citizens appointed to committees tonight. The high school girls volleyball team won the state championship. The soccer team is on track for a state championship and the cheerleaders. ► Councilor Ojukwu said field hockey placed second. He noted citizens who attended and emailed and thanked the proponents of the 40B for trying to answer the questions. ► Councilor Griffith talked about residents being engaged at the meetings. She noted the coat drive is important. The Franklin Food Pantry has a Turkey Trot on Thanksgiving morning and noted they give out holiday meals. She reviewed rental levels in Franklin and said Franklin has about 18 or 19 percent rental to homeownership. Massachusetts in general is 36 percent. She said there is a need for it in Massachusetts. ► Councilor Grella talked about the citizens comment about rumors and Town Council members participating in rumors. As far as he knows, that is not true. He said absolutely not closing the Senior Center. We hear you. ► Chair Dellorco said happy Thanksgiving. He gave a shout-out to Charles Yergatian who was a former chair of the Town Council and Finance Committee; he passed away on November 16 at 97 years old. Chair Dellorco gave condolences to the family.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION:** ► *Exemption #3: Collective Bargaining (Police Patrol) - To discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the public body and the Chair so declares.*

► Chair Dellorco said we have an executive session tonight for Exemption #3: Collective Bargaining (Police Patrol) - To discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the public body and the Chair so declares. **MOTION to Enter** into executive session for Exemption #3: Collective Bargaining (Police Patrol) - To discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the public body and the Chair so declares and to not return to open session by **Grella. SECOND by Griffith. No Discussion.** ► **ROLL CALL VOTE:** Callaway-Tripp-YES, Cormier-Leger-ABSENT, Dellorco-YES, Grella-YES, Griffith-YES, LeBlanc-YES, Malloy-YES, Morrongiello-YES, Ojukwu-YES. ► **VOTE: Yes-8, No-0, Absent-1.**

*Open Session ended at 10:22 PM.*

Respectfully submitted,

Judith Lizardi  
Recording Secretary