

**FRANKLIN TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF MEETING
Second Budget Hearing
May 26, 2016**

A meeting of the Town Council was held on Thursday, May 26, 2016 at the Franklin Municipal Building, 355 East Central Street, Franklin, Massachusetts. Councilors present: Andrew Bissanti, Robert Dellorco, Glenn Jones, Matthew Kelly, Thomas Mercer, Peter Padula, Deborah Pellegri, Judith Pond Pfeffer, Robert Vallee. Councilors absent: None. Administrative personnel in attendance: Jeffrey Nutting, Town Administrator; Jamie Hellen, Deputy Town Administrator.

CALL TO ORDER: Chairman Kelly called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM with a moment of silence and the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: None.

ANNOUNCEMENTS: ► Chairman Kelly announced the meeting would be recorded by *Franklin TV* and available for viewing on Comcast Channel 11 and Verizon Channel 29. This meeting may also be recorded by others.

PROCLAMATIONS/RECOGNITIONS: None.

CITIZEN COMMENTS: None.

APPOINTMENTS: None.

LICENSE TRANSACTIONS: None.

PRESENTATIONS/DISCUSSIONS: None.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS: None.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT: None.

OLD BUSINESS: None.

NEW BUSINESS: None.

COUNCIL COMMENTS: ► Mr. Dellorco apologized for not being in attendance at the Town Council meeting last night. ► Ms. Pfeffer noted the Memorial Day Parade is scheduled for Monday at 10:30 AM; it is the best parade of the year. ► Ms. Pellegri noted the breakfast tomorrow is at the Elks.

Chairman Kelly declared a seven-minute recess.

HEARINGS: *FY 2017 Budget Hearing.* ► **MOTION to Open** the FY 2017 Budget Hearing by **Jones**. **SECOND** by **Dellorco**. **No discussion. VOTE: Yes-9, No-0, Absent-0.**

► Ms. Pfeffer read each *Operating Budget Town of Franklin Fiscal 2017 Line Item*.

► Mr. Vallee requested a Hold on Line Item 210: Police. ■ Mr. Vallee stated that all area towns within a 25-mile radius with population similar to Franklin were surveyed last year; Franklin has fewer police officers than all towns surveyed. Franklin has 29 sq. miles. He asked Police Chief Stephen Semerjian when he submitted his budget if he requested additional police officers. ■ Police Chief Semerjian stated

they are fortunate to have one person in the Academy currently. ■Mr. Vallee stated this is not adequate to protect the community. Why do we have less than all towns that were surveyed? ■Mr. Nutting stated according to the survey it showed Franklin has the average amount of 46. ■Chief Semerjian stated they have done well; at one point the staff got to 50. He stated he believes the community was well protected with current staffing. ■Mr. Vallee stated other communities have more. ■Chief Semerjian stated cannot add employees if cannot keep them employed. ■Mr. Padula recollected there was concern about adding someone else as if budget were reduced would have to let them go. He asked Chief Semerjian if he did not have that fear, would it be easier to ask for more people to work on the force. ■Chief Semerjian said Yes. He stated he is working within the parameters he is given. Usually ask for more, but through the process, it gets chipped away at. He noted department is not suffering. He stated every year there is a discussion about having more officers. There is an entire year to put that mechanism in place, but when we come to the budget process we are in the same spot again and he is asked why town does not have more officers. Throughout the course of the year there was no push to put more money in. At end of last year's meeting, it was discussed that this issue would be worked on throughout the year and it did not happen. So, we are in the same situation and have in the budget as much as the Town Administrator can allot. ■Mr. Nutting stated he meets with all department heads regarding the budget. He asks for a baseline in order to keep everyone employed. He noted healthcare and pensions are going up. Community keeps getting awards for safe community. Every department indicates need to get more people and then have to weigh all those requests and facts. Doing the best we can. ■Mr. Vallee stated Chief Semerjian should be recommending to the Town Council what he needs, not what the Town Administrator gives. ■Mr. Dellorco stated he wants to make sure to keep good officers here. If have to go up on budget to retain officers so they do not go to another town, must look at this. ■Ms. Pfeffer stated last year there was a discussion about more police officers due to opioid crisis and overdoses. This year cannot just fault the Town Administrator. Have added some employees in other departments, but only one person added to the police department. If more people are needed, then Chief Semerjian needs to come to Town Council and let them work with the Town Administrator to get the staffing needed.

► Mr. Vallee and Mr. Mercer requested a Hold on Line Item 220: Fire. ■Mr. Vallee stated he wanted three ambulances 24/7. ■Fire Chief Gary McCarraher stated he only had enough staffing for two ambulances 24/7. In Franklin the trend analysis shows fire and EMS increasing steadily. He stated he had asked for one additional person to the 48 firefighters currently have. Same request as last year as it did not get funded last year. He stated he is very concerned with the numbers regarding ambulances/staffing. Incrementalism is the way to prepare in the budget. He stated they are also looking at alternative means to free up ambulance time such as the State study. ■Mr. Vallee stated Chief McCarraher should request the number of people he needs to staff three ambulances. ■Chairman Kelly asked for the cost to the town of the mutual aid calls. ■Ms. Pfeffer asked for the yearly overtime costs. ■Chief McCarraher stated about \$300,000; but, will never eliminate that due to staffing. Have 48 firefighters with 10 on each of four shifts and vacation coverage. ■Mr. Padula stated that to call for an out-of-town ambulance takes more response time, approximately seven minutes. Must look into this more closely. ■Mr. Mercer asked about the statistics provided last year, and if those facilities are putting more burden on the ambulances than last year. ■Chief McCarraher stated the average is 1.8 calls per bed per year; when started looking at this it was 1 call per bed per year.

MOTION to Close the FY 2017 Budget Hearing by Mercer. SECOND by Jones. No discussion.
VOTE: Yes-9, No-0, Absent-0.

LEGISLATION FOR ACTION:

- 1. Resolution 16-33: Adoption of the FY 2017 Budget.** Ms. Pfeffer read the resolution. **MOTION to Move Resolution 16-33 for Adoption of the FY 2017 Budget by Mercer. SECOND by Jones. No**

discussion. ► ROLL CALL VOTE: Bissanti-YES; Dellorco-YES; Jones-ABSTAIN; Kelly-YES; Mercer-YES; Padula-YES; Pellegri-YES; Pfeffer-YES; Vallee-YES. **VOTE: Yes-8, No-0, Absent-0, Abstain-1.**

EXECUTIVE SESSION: None.

ADJOURN: MOTION to Adjourn by Mercer. SECOND by Jones. VOTE: Yes-9, No-0, Absent-0. Meeting adjourned at 8:44 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Judith Lizardi
Recording Secretary