

**FRANKLIN TOWN COUNCIL  
MINUTES OF MEETING  
March 25, 2020**

*As stated on the agenda, due to the growing concerns regarding the COVID-19 virus, this meeting will be conducted as a Remote/Virtual Town Council meeting. In an effort to ensure citizen engagement and comply with open meeting law regulations, citizens will be able to dial into the meeting using the provided phone number, or citizens can participate by using the Zoom link provided on the agenda.*

A meeting of the Town Council was held on Wednesday, March 25, 2020 as a **Remote Access Virtual Zoom Meeting**. Councilors present: Andrew Bissanti, Brian Chandler, Robert Dellorco, Eamon McCarthy Earls, Melanie Hamblen, Glenn Jones, Matthew Kelly, Thomas Mercer, Deborah Pellegrini. Councilors absent: None. Administrative personnel in attendance: Jamie Hellen, Town Administrator; Chrissy Whelton, Assistant to the Town Administrator.

**CALL TO ORDER:** ► Chair Mercer called the **Remote Access Virtual Zoom Meeting** to order at 7:00 PM. He confirmed via roll call that Town Council members and Administrative personnel were present and could hear the Chair.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:** ► Chair Mercer stated this meeting is being conducted remotely consistent with Governor Baker's executive order of March 12, 2020, regarding the current state of emergency in the Commonwealth due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 virus. In order to mitigate the transmission of the COVID-19 virus, we have been advised and directed by the Commonwealth to suspend public gatherings and as such the governor's order suspends the requirements of the open meeting law to have all meetings in a publicly accessible physical location. Further, all members of public bodies are allowed and encouraged to participate remotely. He stated that this meeting will feature public comment. He noted the availability of the posted call-in number and Zoom meeting link provided on the agenda for the public to join and participate in the meeting. He reviewed that all supporting meeting materials that have been provided to the Town Council are available on the Town's website unless otherwise noted. He reviewed the remote meeting ground rules. He announced this **Remote Access Virtual Zoom Meeting** is being recorded by *Franklin TV* and available for viewing on Comcast Channel 11 and Verizon Channel 29; this meeting may also be recorded by others.

**CITIZEN COMMENTS:** ► Mr. Steve Sherlock, Franklin Matters, confirmed that it is possible to join the meeting via the Zoom link and encouraged other citizens to do so as well. He thanked the Town Council for providing remote meetings.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** None.

**PROCLAMATIONS/RECOGNITIONS:** None.

**APPOINTMENTS:** None.

**HEARINGS:** None.

**LICENSE TRANSACTIONS:** None.

**PRESENTATIONS/DISCUSSIONS:** None.

**SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS:** None.

**LEGISLATION FOR ACTION:**

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

- a. **Resolution 20-18: Update to the 2020 Town Council Meeting Schedule (Motion to Approve Resolution 20-18 - Majority Vote).** ► Mr. Jones read the resolution. ► **MOTION to Approve Resolution 20-18:** Update to the 2020 Town Council Meeting Schedule by **Hamblen. SECOND** by **Kelly. Discussion:** Mr. Hellen stated that due to the Coronavirus and the effects it has had on the typical functioning of municipal government, he is asking the Town Council to change some future meeting dates. He requested to add the following: April 29<sup>th</sup> meeting, and June 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> budget meetings. He requested to delete the following: May 21<sup>st</sup> meeting. He wanted to put these dates on the calendar to give the citizens and Town Council members notification. The meetings will be posted according to the 48-hour rule; people may sign up for agenda email notifications. He stated that the budget dates are based on the best information available at this time as information from the state is continually changing. If there are any adjustments to the budget cycle from the state, he will return to the Town Council to adjust the budget meeting dates. ► **ROLL CALL VOTE: Bissanti-YES; Chandler-YES; Dellorco-YES; Earls-YES; Hamblen-YES; Jones-YES; Kelly-YES; Mercer-YES.** ► **VOTE: Yes-8, No-0, Absent-1.** (Ms. Pellegrini was not available on the Zoom platform.)

**TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT:** ► Mr. Hellen stated he received confirmation from MassDOT that Route 140 is going to be paved next week by the state between Lewis Road and the Wrentham line. He provided a Coronavirus update. He encouraged people to continue to practice social distancing. The virus numbers are increasing. The state has stepped up its ability to do testing in the thousands per day. The fastest way back to normalcy is for everyone to take care of their own personal responsibly to wash hands and stay 6 ft. away from each other. The governor has limited social gatherings to 10 people while still adhering to social distancing guidelines. The COVID-19 crisis will require all people to do what is required for a few more weeks to change the trajectory of the virus statistics. Governor Baker announced today that he is closing public schools through May 4, 2020. Mr. Hellen stated that at this time, he believes this may extend to all other municipal departments, the Town Hall, and other public services offered. He stated it was put on the Town's website that at this time the Town is not accepting cash payments; checks and money orders will be accepted. He stated the first addition of the Business and Employee Support document was put on the website with the latest information about unemployment resources and other important information; this document will continually be updated. Information for seniors is posted on the Town's website with information on senior shopping hours and available resources.

Chair Mercer read a public comment from a resident regarding a letter sent out by the Superintendent of Schools stating they were in contact with DESE regarding online learning and the extension of school closures through May 4, 2020. Mr. Hellen stated the letter will be posted on the website. Ms. Anne Marie Tracey, Marketing and Communication Specialist, confirmed that the letter and any additional information will be posted on the website and made available via all communication channels.

**FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS:** ► None.

**COUNCIL COMMENTS:** ► Mr. Bissanti thanked Chair Mercer for embracing technology and holding remote meetings. ► Mr. Chandler thanked the residents for being great and the businesses for providing special shopping hours for seniors. He noted that some businesses are not allowing reusable bags to be brought into stores because of germs. ► Mr. Earls encouraged people to adhere to social distancing guidelines. He applauded the bio-tech industries for all they are doing and for creating testing for COVID-19. ► Ms. Hamblen thanked everyone for doing a good job during this crisis. She reminded people to practice

social distancing and treat everyone with kindness. ► Mr. Kelly gave a shout-out to all the small business owners and those who are out of work. He asked people not to spread rumors and get the truth. He stated that he hopes the state and the town will begin to look at what the plan is after this crisis. For instance, increased measures of cleaning will be needed; this will add a cost to the budget. He thanked everyone for working hard during this crisis. ► Ms. Pellegrini stated she had joined the remote meeting at 7:04 p.m. but was not able to be heard. She requested people stay inside and be safe. ► Mr. Jones stated he is embracing this technology. He stated that he sees most people are following the social distancing rules. ► Mr. Dellorco encouraged everyone to stay the course as outlined by the governor. He noted the governor suspended the use of all reusable bags. He encouraged everyone to be safe. ► Mr. Hellen confirmed that the governor issued an executive order stating that citizens cannot bring their reusable bags into grocery stores. ► Chair Mercer thanked everyone who helped put together this remote meeting. He encouraged everyone to be safe and continue to follow social distancing guidelines.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION: None.**

**ADJOURN: ► MOTION to Adjourn by Kelly. SECOND by Dellorco. No Discussion. ► ROLL CALL VOTE: Bissanti-YES; Chandler-YES; Dellorco-YES; Earls-YES; Hamblen-YES; Jones-YES; Kelly-YES; Mercer-YES; Pellegrini-YES. ► VOTE: Yes-9, No-0, Absent-0. Meeting adjourned at 7:37 PM.**

Respectfully submitted,

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Judith Lizardi  
Recording Secretary