

**FRANKLIN TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF MEETING
March 3, 2021**

A meeting of the Town Council was held on Wednesday, March 3, 2021, at the Municipal Building, 2nd Floor, Council Chambers, 355 East Central Street, Franklin, MA; residents could attend and participate via the Zoom platform. Councilors present: Andrew Bissanti, Brian Chandler, Robert Dellorco, Cobi Frongillo, Melanie Hamblen (via Zoom), Glenn Jones, Matthew Kelly, Thomas Mercer, Deborah Pellegri. Councilors absent: None. Administrative personnel in attendance: Jamie Hellen, Town Administrator; Mark Cerel, Town Attorney (via Zoom); Chrissy Whelton, Assistant to the Town Administrator.

CALL TO ORDER: ► Chair Mercer called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. He called for a moment of silence and all recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

ANNOUNCEMENTS: ► Chair Mercer reviewed that due to the continued concerns regarding the COVID-19 virus and Governor Baker's declared State of Emergency, we will be conducting a remote/virtual Town Council meeting for all public access and participation. The public will not be permitted to enter the building or participate in person. Only pre-approved participants on the meeting agenda will be allowed to enter the building and participate in person. 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 clicking on the link provided on the agenda. The provided link and phone number will be active for the duration of the meeting for citizens to ask questions/voice concerns. If residents are just interested in watching the meeting, it will also be live-streamed by Franklin TV and shown on Comcast Channel 11 and Verizon Channel 29. This meeting is being recorded by Franklin TV and may also be recorded by others.

CITIZEN COMMENTS: None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: *February 3, 2021 and February 17, 2021.* ► **MOTION** to Approve the February 3, 2021 meeting minutes by **Dellorco**. **SECOND** by **Kelly**. **No discussion.** ► **ROLL CALL VOTE:** **Bissanti-YES; Chandler-YES; Dellorco-YES; Frongillo-YES; Hamblen-YES; Jones-YES; Kelly-YES; Mercer-YES; Pellegri-YES.** ► **VOTE:** Yes-9, No-0, Absent-0. ► **MOTION** to Approve the February 17, 2021 meeting minutes by **Dellorco**. **SECOND** by **Kelly**. **No discussion.** ► **ROLL CALL VOTE:** **Bissanti-YES; Chandler-YES; Dellorco-YES; Frongillo-YES; Hamblen-YES; Jones-YES; Kelly-YES; Mercer-YES; Pellegri-YES.** ► **VOTE:** Yes-9, No-0, Absent-0.

PROCLAMATIONS/RECOGNITIONS: None.

HEARINGS: None.

LICENSE TRANSACTIONS: None.

APPOINTMENTS: ► *Conservation Commission - Andrew Mazzuchelli.*
Mr. Bissanti recused himself.

► Mr. Jones read the appointment. ► **MOTION** to **Ratify** the appointment by the Town Administrator of Andrew Mazzuchelli to serve as a member of the Franklin Conservation Commission with a term to expire on June 30, 2022, by **Jones**. **SECOND** by **Dellorco**. **Discussion:** ► Mr. Hellen noted that after this appointment, all the Town's board and committee vacancies will be filled. He welcomed Mr. Mazzuchelli. ► Mr. Mazzuchelli stated he looked forward to serving the Town and the Conservation Commission. ► **ROLL CALL VOTE:** **Chandler-YES; Dellorco-YES; Frongillo-YES;**

Hamblen-YES; Jones-YES; Kelly-YES; Mercer-YES; Pellegrini-YES. ► VOTE: Yes-8, No-0, Absent-0.

Mr. Bissanti re-entered the meeting.

► In response to Ms. Pellegrini's question, Mr. Hellen stated there are no public appointments to the Insurance Advisory Committee, and a second person was appointed and ratified last year to the Tri-County Regional School Committee.

PRESENTATIONS/DISCUSSIONS: ► Senior Circuit Breaker Income Tax Credit - Erin Rogers, Senior Center Director. ► Ms. Rogers provided an overview of the Senior Circuit Breaker Income Tax Credit. She stated that it is a program for seniors age 65 and older whose property taxes plus half of their water and sewer bills are more than 10 percent of their annual gross income. Renters can also qualify if their rent is greater than 25 percent of their annual income. For the 2020 tax season, the refund can be as high as \$1,150. To obtain the credit, a Massachusetts state income tax return with Schedule CB must be filed. She stated that citizens can call the Senior Center with questions. ► Town Council members thanked Ms. Rogers for her presentation. ► Mr. Hellen pointed out the local community assistance program through the DPW for discounts on water/sewer/trash bills. ► Ms. Pellegrini asked that information on discounts be put on the website. ► Ms. Hamblen confirmed details of the local community assistance program. ► Mr. Dellorco asked if information could be mailed to seniors as putting the information on the website may not be easily obtainable by some people. ► Ms. Rogers stated the information was put into their newsletter that was recently mailed out. ► Mr. Hellen stated that he has reached out to Franklin TV to run PSAs regarding this type of information. It is costly to put information such as this in the newspaper. ► Mr. Cerel pointed out that information on the senior circuit breaker income tax credit is available on the State's website.

► **Downtown Franklin MBTA Parking Lot.** ► Mr. Hellen stated that he summarized information for this discussion in his letter to the Town Council dated February 26, 2021, which was provided in the Town Council's meeting packet. He stated that this item is on the list of goals for this session. There is no legislation for action this evening but rather a discussion on the myriad of issues at the station. He referenced a letter he sent to the state and MBTA in the Fall of 2019, regarding the horrific infrastructure at the station. He noted Dean College President Paula Rooney, Representative Roy, and the State Senate delegation have sent letters and advocated on the Town's behalf. Ultimately, it is very expensive to renovate the lot which is why it has not been fixed. ► Town Council members noted the safety issues at the MBTA parking lot and asked questions. ► Mr. Hellen discussed some of the possible reasons why other MBTA stations have been renovated. He noted that in the recent economic development legislation, Chapter 358 of the Acts of 2020, the State will be issuing guidance in the near future regarding new zoning required within a half mile of all commuter rails stations. ► Chair Mercer confirmed that if someone were to get hurt, it is the responsibility of the MBTA. ► Mr. Hellen noted that the Town charges less to park in the Town's lot than the MBTA charges to park in MBTA lot. ► Mr. Kelly discussed that this has been an issue for many years. He suggested that it may take the occurrence of a safety incident for the MBTA to fix the parking lot. ► Mr. Jones noted the MBTA's unwillingness to work with Franklin. ► Mr. Hellen stated that he thought the best opportunity to bring some change is relative to transit-oriented development and rezoning around the station. ► Ms. Hamblen agreed with the possible benefits of rezoning the downtown area.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS:

- a. **Capital Budget Subcommittee.** ► None.
- b. **Budget Subcommittee.** ► Mr. Kelly stated a meeting will be held on March 17, 2021, at 6 PM.
- c. **Economic Development Subcommittee.** ► Ms. Hamblen stated the subcommittee met tonight. She noted a few items will be coming forward to the Town Council. There is a change in the tasting room

bylaw and the food truck material update. She stated that the subcommittee saw a draft of a business guide to make it easier for businesses to know what they have to do.

LEGISLATION FOR ACTION:

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

- a. *Bylaw Amendment 21-869: Chapter 82, Municipal Service Fees Section 82-6 Schedule of Service Fees, Subsection F. Fire - Second Reading (Motion to Adopt Bylaw Amendment 21-869 - Majority Roll Call Vote).*** ► Mr. Jones read the bylaw amendment. ► **MOTION to Adopt** Bylaw Amendment 21-869: Chapter 82, Municipal Service Fees Section 82-6 Schedule of Service Fees, Subsection F. Fire by **Dellorco. SECOND** by **Kelly. Discussion:** ► Mr. Hellen stated that this item was heavily reviewed at the last meeting. ► Fire Chief James McLaughlin reviewed the difference between a BLS (basic life support) and ALS (advanced life support) transport. ► **ROLL CALL VOTE: Bissanti-YES; Chandler-YES; Dellorco-YES; Frongillo-YES; Hamblen-YES; Jones-YES; Kelly-YES; Mercer-YES; Pellegrini-YES. ► VOTE: Yes-9, No-0, Absent-0.**
- b. *Resolution 21-12: Cable Funds in Support of PEG Service and Programming per MGL Ch. 44, §53 F3/4 (Motion to Approve Resolution 21-12 - Majority Roll Call Vote).*** ► Mr. Jones read the resolution. ► **MOTION to Approve** Resolution 21-12: Cable Funds in Support of PEG Service and Programming per MGL Ch. 44, §53 F3/4 by **Dellorco. SECOND** by **Kelly. Discussion:** ► Mr. Hellen stated that this is the quarterly requirement from the DOR. ► **ROLL CALL VOTE: Bissanti-YES; Chandler-YES; Dellorco-YES; Frongillo-YES; Hamblen-YES; Jones-YES; Kelly-YES; Mercer-YES; Pellegrini-YES. ► VOTE: Yes-9, No-0, Absent-0.**

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT: ► ***COVID-19 Update.*** ► Mr. Hellen announced the Fire Department's 2nd Annual St. Patrick's Day corn beef and cabbage dinner for seniors. This year it will not be in person; however, there will be a drive through. He stated those interested should call the Senior Center to make reservations. He stated that Phase 4.1 is anticipated on March 22, 2021. He noted that Franklin's library will reopen to the public on March 22nd. He thanked the library staff for their work during the pandemic. He stated that K-12 school staff will be allowed to make vaccine appointments beginning March 11th; CVS already has appointments available. He stated that at this time there are not any local vaccine clinics. He noted that Governor Baker made it clear that there are not enough vaccine doses to vaccinate all people who are available to receive the vaccine. ► Ms. Pellegrini stated that 211 is a phone number to call for vaccine appointments.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS: ► Mr. Frongillo stated that he looks forward to a future conversation on downtown zoning. ► Mr. Bissanti, Mr. Kelly, Mr. Jones, Mr. Dellorco, and Ms. Hamblen requested downtown zoning on a future agenda.

COUNCIL COMMENTS: ► Mr. Frongillo noted the Town's sports teams. He stated that while listening to a national podcast, Franklin was highlighted as innovative and doing some great things. ► Mr. Bissanti stated this is a dynamic community. ► Mr. Chandler asked about the buses at King Street. He recognized School Committee Vice Chair Denise Spencer for the good job moderating the legislative forum. ► Mr. Hellen stated the Town has let the buses park there for the month until they can return to their site on Panther Way. ► Ms. Pellegrini stated that Franklin's birthday is March 2; the Town is 243 years old. She noted the CPC met last night. ► Mr. Hellen confirmed the CPC's meeting packets will be available online. ► Mr. Jones congratulated Chris Feeley as Chair of the CPC. ► Mr. Dellorco gave condolences to the Dickinson family. ► Ms. Hamblen reiterated that the Franklin library will be reopening. She encouraged everyone to continue to keep safe. ► Chair Mercer stated it is important to

remind the community of what a great job they have done through the pandemic; they need to continue to do that moving forward. He noted the retirement of Mr. Dave Allard.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: None.

ADJOURN: ► MOTION to Adjourn by Jones. SECOND by Kelly. No Discussion. ► ROLL CALL VOTE: Bissanti-YES; Chandler-YES; Dellorco-YES; Frongillo-YES; Hamblen-YES; Jones-YES; Kelly-YES; Mercer-YES; Pellegri-YES. ► VOTE: Yes-9, No-0, Absent-0. Meeting adjourned at 8:18 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Judith Lizardi
Recording Secretary