

**FRANKLIN TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF MEETING
January 6, 2021**

A meeting of the Town Council was held on Wednesday, January 6, 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 Pellegrini. 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: None.

PROCLAMATIONS/RECOGNITIONS: None.

APPOINTMENTS: None.

HEARINGS: None.

LICENSE TRANSACTIONS: None.

PRESENTATIONS/DISCUSSIONS: ► *Hazard Mitigation Plan: Bryan Taberner, Director of Planning and Community Development.* ► Mr. Hellen reviewed his request that the Town Council adopt the 2020 update to the Town of Franklin Hazard Mitigation Plan. The Town is required to update this plan every five years with approval from the local legislative body and the federal government. He stated that one of the big issues in Franklin is flood zones. FEMA has reviewed and conditionally approved the Town's updated Hazard Mitigation Plan. Once adopted, Town staff and MAPC will coordinate with FEMA and MEMA, and FEMA will send a formal approval letter. ► Mr. Taberner reviewed that in the spring of 2019 the towns of Franklin and Bellingham executed a grant contract with Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs for hazard mitigation and climate change vulnerability planning. The \$48,000 Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness grant made it possible to hire the Metropolitan Area Planning Council for a two-phased natural hazards planning project: Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Workshop, held with representatives from each community, to assess the municipalities' vulnerability from climate change, and Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP) 2020 Updates for each town. The Federal Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 requires communities to develop, adopt, and regularly update a Hazard Mitigation Plan to be

eligible for FEMA hazard mitigation grants. Franklin's first HMP was prepared in 2010; an update was needed. Mr. Taberner narrated the provided slideshow presentation. He stated that the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness MVP Workshop with Bellingham was held on November 20, 2019, and attended by over 40 people. Discussion included future climate change projections which focused on identifying risks from climate change and resilience strategies. Franklin has been designated by the state as an MVP Community which makes the Town eligible for MVP Action grants to implement priority actions that are identified by the workshop. The Hazard Mitigation Plan is a plan for mitigating natural hazards including flooding, high winds, hurricanes, tornadoes, winter storms, snow and ice, brush fires, earthquakes, landslides, extreme temperatures, and drought. He noted that a mitigation plan is not an emergency response plan. He reviewed the steps of how the plan was developed. He discussed the 2020 Hazard Mitigation Plan goals: 1. Prevent and reduce the loss of life, injury, public health impacts, and property damages resulting from all major natural hazards. 2. Identify and seek funding for measures to mitigate or eliminate each known significant flood hazard area. 3. Integrate hazard mitigation planning as an integral factor in all relevant municipal departments, committees, and boards. 4. Prevent and reduce the damage to public infrastructure resulting from all hazards. 5. Encourage the business community, major institutions, and non-profits to work with the Town to develop, review, and implement the hazard mitigation plan. 6. Work with surrounding communities, state, regional, and federal agencies to ensure regional cooperation and solutions for hazards affecting multiple communities. 7. Ensure that future development meets federal, state, and local standards for preventing and reducing the impacts of natural hazards. 8. Take maximum advantage of resources from FEMA and MEMA to educate Town staff and the public about hazard mitigation. 9. Consider the impacts of climate change and incorporate climate mitigation and resilience in all planning efforts. 10. Protect the Town's critical water resources and water supply interconnections with the towns of Bellingham and Wrentham. He reviewed the tools and techniques for hazard mitigation which include: public education, prevention, property protection, natural resources protection, emergency services protection, and structural projects. He stated that DPCD is requesting the Town Council vote to adopt the updated HMP by approving Resolution 21-01. After receiving a formal adoption letter from FEMA, the Town will be able to apply for FEMA hazard mitigation grants for five years. ► Town Council members asked questions to which Mr. Taberner and Mr. Hellen responded. ► Mr. Taberner stated the intent is that generators back up major Town buildings. ► Mr. Hellen stated the Town's shelter is the high school gym. ► Chair Mercer stated that the generator taken from the old high school is now at the DPW; the plan is that it will be installed at the Parmenter School within the next six months. ► Mr. Hellen stated the Town Council appropriated money for a generator for the Town Hall building; it will be going out to bid. ► Mr. Taberner stated that the proposed climate change impacts show rising waters; FEMA has a software program to help project future climate impacts. He explained that evacuation routes would be covered under a hazard response plan. The Emergency Management Committee deals with those issues. ► Mr. Hellen stated that the fire chief is the emergency management director. He noted that a lot of the emergency messaging is done by cell phones. ► Chair Mercer thanked Mr. Taberner for his presentation.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS:

- a. **Capital Budget Subcommittee.** ► None.
- b. **Budget Subcommittee.** ► None.
- c. **Economic Development Subcommittee.** ► Ms. Hamblen stated that the EDC will hold its next listening session on housing and construction next Wednesday at 6:30 PM.

LEGISLATION FOR ACTION:

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

- a. **Resolution 21-01: To Adopt the Town of Franklin Hazard Mitigation Plan 2020 Update (Motion to Approve Resolution 21-01 - Majority Vote).** ► Mr. Jones read the resolution. ► **MOTION to Approve Resolution 21-01: To Adopt the Town of Franklin Hazard Mitigation Plan 2020 Update 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; Pellegrini-YES. ► VOTE: Yes-9, No-0, Absent-0.

- b. Resolution 21-02: Authorizing the Borrowing of Money to Pay Costs of the Beaver Street Interceptor Replacement Project (Motion to Approve Resolution 21-02 - Two Thirds Majority Vote).** ► Mr. Jones read the resolution. ► **MOTION to Approve** Resolution 21-02: Authorizing the Borrowing of Money to Pay Costs of the Beaver Street Interceptor Replacement Project by **Dellorco. SECOND** by **Kelly.**
- Discussion:** ► Mr. Hellen stated that he is requesting the Town Council to authorize the borrowing of \$25 million to cover the costs of the Beaver Street Interceptor Replacement Project. This vote will begin an estimated five-year process to construct a replacement for the 109-year-old Beaver Street Interceptor. He noted that included in the Town Council’s meeting packet is a series of project timelines and financial models outlining the project. The packet includes: an overview of costs associated with the project, project schedule (including state SRF application), estimated monthly drawdown over the life of the borrowing based on current assumptions, and October 21, 2020 Town Council project overview. The project timeline is as follows: 2021-2022 - Begin formal design and apply for State Revolving Fund (SRF) loan; Second half of 2022 - Public bids due and contract negotiations with hopeful ability to get a shovel in the ground; 2022-2025 - Construction; 2025 - Post Construction closeout. He noted that sewer rate increases will need to be increased beginning in 2023. He stated that this is an estimate based on current conditions and assumptions based in the model, such as interest rates and markets at that time. The staff will do all they can to mitigate increase to rates to pay for the project. He stated that the potential cost of inaction on moving forward would far outweigh the cost of action on this critical public infrastructure project. ► Town Council members asked questions and made comments. ► Mr. Kelly referenced the Plymouth, MA, sewer line disaster in 2016 and explained that this resolution is a good plan for Franklin. ► Mr. Bissanti stated that we are currently in a pandemic situation and difficult times; he wants to know where the money is going to come from to do this. The construction in and around the Town will be very intrusive to residents and businesses already suffering from the pandemic. He remembers two other less expensive options were provided. He is a no on the \$25 million; we can do this cheaper. Now is not the time for this type of project with the Town already suffering through the pandemic. ► Mr. Jones indicated agreement with Mr. Kelly. He confirmed that this may be one of the best times to borrow money. He stated it is an investment into the community for jobs for local labor. ► Mr. Hellen reviewed that the next 18 months is about the design; waiting could be devastating to the Town. ► DPW Director Brutus Cantoreggi stated that the sewer system helps the businesses; if the sewer fails, it is a disservice to the businesses. It is an important project. ► Mr. Dellorco stated agreement with Mr. Kelly and Mr. Jones. He said that we need to do this to secure the people of Franklin. ► Ms. Pellegrini asked what kind of money is going to be added to the tax bills to borrow \$25 million. ► Mr. Hellen said we do not need to raise any rates at this time. Rates will not have to be raised until construction starts in 1 ½ years. It is premature to say what the increase would be. He acknowledged that sewer rates will have to go up in 2023. The property tax rate will not go up because of this project as it is all embedded in the sewer enterprise fund. ► Mr. Chandler stated concern that there is no number of how much the rate would go up. He said it seems like we are the spend council; \$25 million is a big number. He asked about relining the pipes. ► Mr. Dellorco stated this reduces the pipe and the flow rate. ► Mr. Cantoreggi stated that the current sewer pipe is already at capacity; this project will increase the capacity. He explained that the current location is an awful place to have the sewer. To line the pipe, it would still be in the same location. Looking to the future, putting in a bigger pipe will increase the capacity. ► Mr. Frongillo indicated concern of ripping up the street and traffic. ► Mr. Cantoreggi explained the process during construction and that they will try to reduce disruption. ► Ms. Hamblen stated agreement with Mr. Kelly; we have to make the right decision for the future of Franklin. She asked about the draw down schedule and how it will be paid. ► Mr. Hellen explained the borrowing authorization process. ► Mr. Kelly discussed the timing of the construction portion. He suggested it could be done on one side of the road for traffic flow, or it could be done at night; it could potentially be done without a problem. He discussed if this is put off for a few years and the interest rates increase. He reviewed the problem for businesses in Franklin if the current sewer system were to fail. He stated the Town Council’s job is to protect the

citizens of Franklin. ► Mr. Jones stated that this is an investment into the future of the community. ► Mr. Bissanti stated it sounds like they would be signing an open-ended contract and that there is a possibility of a bill greater than \$25 million. He would feel more comfortable about the project knowing that the COVID pandemic is on the decline. He knows the pipe needs to be fixed, but why not wait a little longer to get a better handle on what is going on with the country and this state. He noted that the pipe is not even leaking at this time and asked why don't we explore the options of lining the pipe. He noted that the line could actually be breached during construction; he suggested that it should be lined. ► Mr. Frongillo asked if after the design phase could the Town then decide not to do it. ► Mr. Hellen explained the process. ► Chair Mercer stated he disagreed with Mr. Bissanti. He thinks the time is now to do this. It is a ticking time bomb; Plymouth says it all. He asked what the cost of inaction is. The bottom line is if something does happen, the Town's cost doubles or triples. He stated that we would not be doing our jobs if we did not move forward with this project now. He supports this project. ► **ROLL CALL VOTE: Bissanti-NO; Chandler-YES; Dellorco-YES; Frongillo-YES; Hamblen-YES; Jones-YES; Kelly-YES; Mercer-YES; Pellegrri-YES. ► VOTE: Yes-8, No-1, Absent-0.**

- c. Resolution 21-03: Gift acceptance - Fire Department, \$85 (Motion to Approve Resolution 21-03 - Majority Vote).* ► Mr. Jones read the resolution. ► **MOTION to Approve Resolution 21-03: Gift acceptance - Fire Department, \$85 by Dellorco. SECOND by Kelly. Discussion:** ► Mr. Hellen thanked the donators for their generous donations. ► **ROLL CALL VOTE: Bissanti-YES; Chandler-YES; Dellorco-YES; Frongillo-YES; Hamblen-YES; Jones-YES; Kelly-YES; Mercer-YES; Pellegrri-YES. ► VOTE: Yes-9, No-0, Absent-0.**
- d. Resolution 21-04: Gift acceptance - Police Department, \$5025 (Motion to Approve Resolution 21-04 - Majority Vote).* ► Mr. Jones read the resolution. ► **MOTION to Approve Resolution 21-04: Gift acceptance - Police Department, \$5025 by Dellorco. SECOND by Kelly. Discussion:** ► Mr. Hellen thanked the donators for their generous donations. ► **ROLL CALL VOTE: Bissanti-YES; Chandler-YES; Dellorco-YES; Frongillo-YES; Hamblen-YES; Jones-YES; Kelly-YES; Mercer-YES; Pellegrri-YES. ► VOTE: Yes-9, No-0, Absent-0.**
- e. Resolution 21-05: Gift Acceptance - Recreation Department, \$49,806.69 (Motion to Approve Resolution 21-05 - Majority Vote).* ► Mr. Jones read the resolution. ► **MOTION to Approve Resolution 21-05: Gift Acceptance - Recreation Department, \$49,806.69 by Dellorco. SECOND by Kelly. Discussion:** ► Mr. Hellen thanked Mr. Joseph Vendetti for this donation to be allocated towards the purchase and installation of a new playground at the Beaver Pond Recreation Area in the memory of Joseph and Mary Vendetti. ► Town Council members expressed thanks to Mr. Vendetti for the generous donation. ► **ROLL CALL VOTE: Bissanti-YES; Chandler-YES; Dellorco-YES; Frongillo-YES; Hamblen-YES; Jones-YES; Kelly-YES; Mercer-YES; Pellegrri-YES. ► VOTE: Yes-9, No-0, Absent-0.**

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT: ► *COVID-19 Update.* ► Mr. Hellen stated the application for the Community Preservation Committee at-large seats is available online. He is about to get the signatures back from the State Commissioner on the Capital and Asset Management and the State Division of Conservation and Recreation; the land swap for the Town is not 100 percent final, but the deal is in place. He stated that it is a complicated scenario, but the good news is the path is in front of us. He explained that Franklin's DPW will be doing work on the SNETT trail this year. He stated there are 91 active COVID-19 cases in Franklin; this is down from the pre-holidays. Hopefully, the Town will be coming out of the red. He discussed that he has been working on the vaccination clinic for first responders that will be opening next Wednesday. The vaccine is getting distributed; it is a phased in plan. He explained that as mandated by the State, they are working with other towns. The five towns include: Bellingham, Milford, Millis, Medway, and Franklin. The vaccine clinics will be held at the high school. He explained that Phase I is currently going on. They believe they will be able to get all first responders from the five towns vaccinated in one day. He reviewed the phased plan and those listed in each phase. He stated he understands concerns from the public.

He explained that during February through April they will be doing social media outreach regarding the vaccine. He stated that during the next six months they need as many people as possible to get the vaccine. It will be a bumpy road, but hopefully, there is light at the end of the tunnel. ► Chair Mercer stated that he speaks with Mr. Hellen numerous times a day about this. He noted that the rules and regulations change daily. He thanked the administrative staff, first responders, and Board of Health for their hard work. ► Ms. Pellegrini asked how they are doing with volunteers. ► Mr. Hellen stated they have a tremendous number of licensed volunteers at this time; we think we have enough nurses throughout the five towns for the first responders' vaccine phase. ► Mr. Jones gave his support to this effort. ► Mr. Dellorco offered his support to this effort. ► Mr. Bissanti confirmed that no one will be mandated or forced to get the vaccine. ► Town Council members discussed possible mandates in the country in the future that may require vaccines for travel or other activities; however, nothing is known at this time.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS: ► Mr. Bissanti stated he is receiving many inquiries regarding the MapleGate land, and he asked for elaboration. He stated the Definitive Plan was approved two meeting ago by the Planning Board. ► Mr. Hellen stated the permit was filed on December 11, 2020 by the Planning Department with the Town Clerk. There is a 20-day appeal period which was December 31, 2020. He does not believe there has been an appeal. After that, the Town would be presented with a purchase and sale agreement from the permitted entity. When that is delivered, the 120-day right of first refusal takes place. Unfortunately, there is nothing that can be done or told until the purchase and sale comes to the Town Council or the Town Administrator for review.

COUNCIL COMMENTS: ► Mr. Chandler noted that people are saving money on their electric bills. ► Ms. Pellegrini noted the passing of Ms. Ruth Anderson and Ms. Barbara Campisano Pinkham. ► Mr. Frongillo gave shout outs to those who put together the hazard mitigation plan, to those who worked on Franklin First cards to support small businesses in Franklin, and to the start of the winter sports season at Franklin High School. ► Mr. Bissanti gave condolences to the family of Ruth Anderson. He noted Comcast just raised their rates. ► Mr. Kelly stated he was glad for the vote to keep Franklin in smooth operation for the community. ► Mr. Jones thanked Dean Bank for helping him during the past week when he experienced a case of fraud. He reviewed that both Dean Bank and the Police Department conducted an investigation. ► Mr. Dellorco asked if the people who worked on Lincoln Street were going to come back and fix the road. He gave condolences to the family of Mr. Donald Buchanio. ► Mr. Hellen stated the first coat on Lincoln Street needed to settle before they could put on the second coat. ► Chair Mercer stated the Town Council took a large step forward for the future of Franklin with the Beaver Street Interceptor. He gave his condolences to the Buchanio, Anderson, and Campisano Pinkham families. ► Ms. Hamblen said happy New Year. ► Ms. Pellegrini asked Mr. Hellen to get white line striping on Dean Avenue because of the curve.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: None.

ADJOURN: ► MOTION to Adjourn 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; Pellegrini-YES. ► VOTE: Yes-9, No-0, Absent-0. Meeting adjourned at 9:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Judith Lizardi
Recording Secretary