

**FRANKLIN TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF MEETING
May 5, 2021**

A meeting of the Town Council was held on Wednesday, May 5, 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. Chair Mercer called for a moment of silence; 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. He stated that Councilor Hamblen would be participating remotely.

CITIZEN COMMENTS: ► Mr. Colin Cass and Ms. Sue Cass, 146 Longhill Road, discussed the dog park at Dacey Park. Mr. Cass stated that this is an asset for the Town. He takes his dogs to the dog park. There have been conversations concerning introducing an area for small dogs. He does not think this is necessary. He discussed that subtracting from the existing area for the small dog area, rather than adding to the existing area, would be a mistake. The current dog park should not be made smaller. If the change cannot be made to enlarge the current dog park, then nothing should be done at all. He stated that the interaction between large dogs and small dogs is mingling.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: None.

PROCLAMATIONS/RECOGNITIONS: ► *Brutus Cantoreggi, Public Works Director - American Public Works Association, Public Works Director of the Year Award.* ► Mr. Rich Benevento and Mr. Anthony Garro of American Public Works Association, New England Chapter, addressed the Town Council. Mr. Benevento reviewed the history and membership of the APWA and described the Top 10 award. He reviewed the career, leadership, community service, and accomplishments of Mr. Cantoreggi. ► Mr. Garro stated that they are proud to present Mr. Cantoreggi with this award. He read aloud the award verbiage. ► Mr. Cantoreggi stated that the award is about the Town. He thanked the Town Council for all the projects they have funded. He stated the departments in the Town of Franklin have great working relationships with other departments. He stated that his staff and crew are great. He thanked his family for their support. He stated that Franklin is a great community to work for. He thanked the APWA for the award.

Chair Mercer called a two-minute recess.

APPOINTMENTS: None.

HEARINGS: 7:10 PM. ► Bylaw Amendment 21-868: Chapter 185, Zoning Article V, Special Regulations. ► Chair Mercer declared the public hearing open. ► Mr. Hellen discussed that this is on tonight's agenda under Legislation for Action for non-financial changes to the Town's stormwater bylaw that are now required under the permit. The bylaw change was approved by the Town Council and referred to the Planning Board for a public hearing and unanimously approved at their February 22, 2021 meeting. The changes to the Town's bylaw are required and are general house cleaning and updating items. ► **MOTION to Close the public hearing by Jones. SECOND by Dellorco. No discussion.** ► **ROLL CALL VOTE: Bissanti-NO; Chandler-YES; Dellorco-YES; Frongillo-YES; Hamblen-YES; Jones-YES; Kelly-YES; Mercer-YES; Pellegrini-YES.** ► **VOTE: Yes-8, No-1, Absent-0.**

LICENSE TRANSACTIONS: ► La Cantina Winery/La Cantina Brewery, Change of Category on their Farmer Series Pouring Permit from Wines to Wine and Malt Beverages, 355 Union Street, Franklin, MA 02038 ► Councilor Jones read the license transaction. ► **MOTION to Approve the request by La Cantina Winery/La Cantina Brewery for a change of category on their Farmer's Series Pouring Permit by Jones. SECOND by Kelly. Discussion:** ► Mr. Hellen stated that the pouring permit would be expanded to wine and malt beverages, not just wine. All departments have signed off. ► Mr. Robert Vozzella stated that he is applying for the permit to expand their current offerings. ► Councilor Bissanti stated that Mr. Vozzella has been doing a great job. He asked about the malt beverage. ► Mr. Hellen stated that it is beer. ► Councilor Chandler confirmed that the governor rescinded the pandemic restrictions effective May 29th which includes that there had to be food with these licenses. ► Councilor Jones and Councilor Hamblen stated support for this change. ► Ms. Alissa Obrien, 19 Geb Street, asked about the address listed on the license, if they make the malt liquor on the premise, if the beer will be consumed on premise, and about the outdoor concerts. ► Mr. Vozzella reviewed that the address is correct, and they will be manufacturing beer in small batches. He stated the beer will be consumed on premise and the outdoor area is licensed. ► Ms. Obrien stated that if they are going to include malt liquor, it will probably increase the number of patrons and there has already been a problem with parking and the music has been very loud. ► Mr. Hellen stated that the Town Council is the local licensing authority. From his knowledge, they have not heard any of these concerns. He would be happy to meet with her to address her concerns. He stated that Mr. Vozzella already has a pouring permit for wine. Tonight's transaction is to increase the pouring permit. ► Chair Mercer encouraged Ms. Obrien to contact the Town Administrator to discuss her concerns. ► Councilor Kelly asked for the business hours. ► Mr. Vozzella stated they are closed by 9 PM. ► Councilor Kelly stated that he thinks La Cantina is a great business; this is the right thing to do for a small business. He is 100 percent for this. ► Councilor Dellorco stated that he hears Ms. Obrien's concerns, but the Vozzella family has been very good to the Town of Franklin. He is sure they would work with her regarding her concerns. ► Councilor Bissanti noted the Union Café is already in the area. ► Ms. Obrien requested La Cantina keep the noise down and not park illegally on Geb Street. ► Chair Mercer stated that he suggested to Ms. Obrien that she call the Town Administrator to make an appointment to meet with Mr. Hellen regarding her concerns. The concerns she has are not what is being voted on which is a change in a license that already exists. ► **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.**

PRESENTATIONS/DISCUSSIONS: ► Melanson & Heath - FY20 Audit. ► Mr. Hellen thanked Mr. Scott McIntire and Ms. Jen Reddington from the Town's auditing firm Melanson & Heath for the work they have done. He thanked Town staff and the Finance team for a great year. He stated that the audit is available on the Town's website. ► Mr. McIntire stated that the audit went well; the books and records were in good order. There are a handful of accounting estimates in the financial statements; there are actuarial standards that go into the estimates. ► Ms. Reddington reviewed the Independent Auditors'

Report on page 4 of the PDF document and stated that the Town received a clean opinion which is the best that can be received. There were no exceptions found throughout the auditing procedures. She reviewed the Statement of Net Position and explained that the net pension liability went down this year and the net OPEB liability went up this year. She stated that the Town has \$6.8 million in the OPEB Trust Fund; the Town has \$71.8 million OPEB liability. She suggested the pension and OPEB funding strategies be looked at yearly. She reviewed the Governmental Funds Balance Sheet on page 19 of the PDF document and focused on the General Fund. She discussed the Unassigned Fund Balance of \$11,231,583. She stated this is the most important number as bond rating agencies look at this. It should be between 5 percent to 10 percent of the budget. This year, the Town is at 9.1 percent which is slightly less than the previous year. She stated this would be looked at as a strong financial position. She reviewed that in the prior year, the Town used \$3.1 million of Free Cash as shown on page 62 of the PDF document. She noted a change in total revenues which has decreased from the prior year due to motor vehicle and license and permits as has happened to many towns due to COVID-19. Overall, the numbers were very consistent with the prior year. She thanked Town staff for their work on the audit. She stated that there was no management letter this year. ► Town Council members thanked the auditors and the Town staff.

► **Franklin TV - Pete Fasciano.** ► Mr. Pete Fasciano, Executive Director Franklin TV, narrated his slideshow presentation and provided a review of Franklin TV. He stated that this presentation is an opportunity to let people know what Franklin TV is doing with the money. He stated that they are a local TV community with public access, education, and government channels. They are a 501c(3) nonprofit organization, and they are contracted by the Town of Franklin. They are not a department of Town services; they pay tax as an annual pilot fee to the Town. They are not associated with the cable carriers; however, their work is paid for by the cable carriers. Comcast and Verizon collect a five percent access fee to support the local channels. Funds are sent to the Town of Franklin each quarter. He explained that in February 2017 their radio station WFPR.fm began broadcasting; their volunteer group produces over 400 original programs annually. He reviewed their mission which is to produce TV and radio programming; these programs are created by and for Franklin residents. He reviewed their services and staff. He discussed that annually they receive about \$660,000. He reviewed the metrics of the rate card he created and stated that the sum value of their work in terms of commercial value is over \$1.5 million. He reviewed that in the public interest, convenience and necessity, they amplify the public good. He noted that since 2017 there has been about a 10 percent to 12 percent reduction in cable subscribers; he anticipates another 10 percent to 12 percent reduction over the next five years. ► Town Council members thanked Franklin TV for their work.

► **Anne Marie Tracey - Town Communications and Civic Engagement Update.** ► Ms. Anne Marie Tracey, Marketing and Communication Specialist, narrated a slideshow presentation and provided an explanation of the Town's communications and marketing. She reviewed that when she began in 2019, the Town's website, Twitter account, and YouTube channel existed; she added Facebook, Instagram, monthly newsletters, LinkedIn, and a podcast channel. She reviewed the number one audience is the citizens; however, they are also being looked at by other audiences such as businesses, groups and organizations, employees, and other municipalities. Her goal is to provide a menu of options for the various audiences. She stated the website is the hub of information for the Town; her goal is to make sure the site is navigable. She reviewed 2020 website analytics as well as the analytics for the beginning of 2021 and stated they are trending upward. She stated the newsletter was started in January 2020; the growth rate is 102 percent in the past 12 months. She reviewed the Town's social media presence and stated the Twitter following is the largest; she is working on growing Facebook. She reviewed the podcast option Talk Franklin and the public messaging campaign. She reviewed her relationship with the local media including Franklin Gazette, Franklin Town News, Franklin TV & Radio, and other local stations. She reviewed her marketing efforts including Department Spotlights, Business Guide, Franklin Gift Card Program, and Franklin Cultural District. She reviewed her next steps including pop-up shops initiative, mini-visitors center, curating photos, wayfunding/branding steering committee, and developing new and

engaging content for social medial. She noted that she also works for Franklin Public Schools. ► Town Council members thanked Ms. Tracey. ► Mr. Steve Sherlock, Franklin Matters, noted that after the Town Council meetings he meets with Chair Mercer to create a condensed version of the Town Council meeting.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS:

- a. **Capital Budget Subcommittee.** ► Councilor Pellegrini stated they met tonight. She stated they passed all of the department requests for \$765,547. This was also voted 7-0 by the Finance Committee.
- b. **Budget Subcommittee.** ► None.
- c. **Economic Development Subcommittee.** ► Councilor Hamblen stated they will meet next Wednesday at 5:30 PM to talk about restaurant revitalization fund, downtown and C-1 parking, and housing production plan.

LEGISLATION FOR ACTION:

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

- a. ***Bylaw Amendment 21-868: Chapter 185, Zoning Article V, Special Regulations - Second Reading (Motion to adopt Bylaw Amendment 21-868 - Two Thirds Majority Roll Call Vote).*** ► Councilor Jones read the bylaw amendment. ► **MOTION to Adopt** Bylaw Amendment 21-868: Chapter 185, Zoning Article V, Special Regulations by **Dellorco. SECOND** by **Kelly. Discussion:** ► Councilor Bissanti asked for clarification on exactly what they are voting on in this item. ► Mr. Hellen read aloud the words that are being revised in this amendment; he stated that this is the only change being voted on in this item. ► Councilor Bissanti stated that he does not want to see this interwoven with stormwater. He confirmed this has to do with green practices only. ► Chair Mercer stated that we are bringing the bylaw into compliance with state and federal requirements by voting this. ► Councilor Bissanti stated that by voting this item, the Town is one step closer to the stormwater mandate. ► Mr. Hellen stated that the mandate is here; it is whether we want to comply with the mandate or not. ► Mr. Cerel stated that there is a federal stormwater permitting process which renews every 10 years by which the municipality deals with comprehensively. In issuing that permit, they piled on a lot of conditions that had to be done. The Town is complying with the conditions of the permit; it has nothing to do with the stormwater utility. ► **ROLL CALL VOTE: Bissanti-NO; Chandler-YES; Dellorco-YES; Frongillo-YES; Hamblen-YES; Jones-YES; Kelly-YES; Mercer-YES; Pellegrini-YES.** ► **VOTE: Yes-8, No-1, Absent-0.**
- b. ***Resolution 21-24: Gift Acceptance - DPW Highway & Grounds Division, Sand Sweeper (Motion to Approve Resolution 21-24 - Majority Vote).*** ► Councilor Jones read the resolution. ► **MOTION to Approve** Resolution 21-24: Gift Acceptance - DPW Highway & Grounds Division, Sand Sweeper by **Dellorco. SECOND** by **Kelly. Discussion:** ► Mr. Hellen stated that this was an incredible donation. He thanked the Franklin Housing Authority and Lisa Audette for their generous donation and continued support; he stated the value is \$3,300. ► **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.**
- c. ***Resolution 21-25: Ambulance Refund Acceptance - Fire Department (Motion to Approve Resolution 21-25 - Majority Vote).*** ► Councilor Jones read the resolution. ► **MOTION to Approve** Resolution 21-25: Ambulance Refund Acceptance - Fire Department by **Dellorco. SECOND** by **Kelly. Discussion:** ► Fire Chief James McLaughlin provided the history of this item. In 2019 the Franklin Fire Department purchased a new ambulance from Frazer Ltd. After less than two years of ownership, the ambulance has had a litany of unanticipated problems and has been out of service for months at a time. He expressed his dissatisfaction with the ambulance and its performance with

representatives from Frazer Ltd. The company has agreed to refund the Town \$294,138.80 for the ambulance. The original purchase price of the ambulance was \$296,110.66 which included miscellaneous items totaling \$1,971.86. The Fire Department will keep these miscellaneous items for the new ambulance. The new ambulance is scheduled to come in by the end of the year. He stated they have three vehicles; they want to have four. ► Mr. Hellen stated that Frazer Ltd. was very professional to deal with. He noted that this item is before the Town Council because any refund greater than \$150,000 has to receive Town Council approval, and the Town is required by law to appropriate the funds for a new ambulance. ► **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.**

- d. Resolution 21-26: Gift Acceptance - Historical Commission, \$100 (Motion to Approve Resolution 21-26 - Majority Vote).* ► Chair Mercer stated this item is being held.
- e. Resolution 21-27: Gift Acceptance - Police Department, \$300 (Motion to Approve Resolution 21-27 - Majority Vote).* ► Councilor Jones read the resolution. ► **MOTION to Approve Resolution 21-27: Gift Acceptance - Police Department, \$300 by Dellorco. SECOND by Kelly. Discussion:** ► Mr. Hellen thanked the donors for their generous donations. ► **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.**

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT: ► *COVID-19 Update.* ► Mr. Hellen stated that the Town of Franklin is in the green zone regarding COVID-19 cases. He noted that the governor has issued a new plan related to the pandemic. He stated that passport renewals began on May 5th and will continue every Wednesday through July. He hopes to hire a parttime passport agent and install photo booth services in July. The Library is reopened and the Senior Center has begun some programs. He noted the Senior Center newsletter will provide updates. ► *FY22 Budget Update.* ► Mr. Hellen thanked the Finance Committee for endorsing the Town Administrator's FY22 budget proposal. The next step in the budget process is the Town Council's budget hearings on May 26th and May 27th. He pointed out that a great interest rate was received for borrowing for the fire trucks and technology. He stated the Town's current bond rating is AA+. Regarding 300 Fisher Street, he received notification that the EPA will begin field work on the cleanup in spring 2021. He stated that the purchase and sale agreement was received from the land owner off the Maple Hill subdivision; he noted that there is a legal review of the documents that must take place. The Town has the right of first refusal. The purchase price of the property is \$4,590,000.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS: ► Councilor Jones requested a facilities report. ► Mr. Hellen stated it is scheduled for late June.

COUNCIL COMMENTS: ► Councilor Frongillo reviewed the high school sports teams. He noted the tragic loss of Hopkinton teen Mikayla Miller. ► Councilor Bissanti discussed the Mikayla Miller tragedy. He stated that bullying could have had something to do with it. He reminded everyone to keep vigilant. ► Councilor Kelly thanked the Town Clerk's office for their quick response to something he requested. ► Councilor Chandler thanked Sue and Colin Cass for speaking about the dog park during Citizen Comments. He is thankful that no one was hurt at the fire at the elderly housing. ► Councilor Pellegri stated that she followed the Finance Committee meetings on cable. She noted that many people follow the meetings, but not via Zoom. She asked if the Senior Center could be used to give out vaccines. ► Mr. Hellen stated that it could be looked into; however, the guidance threshold is very high. About 5,000 people per day or week would have to be serviced. It was looked at, but the Senior Center cannot produce that kind of capacity. ► Councilor Jones gave a shout out to Meghan in his apprenticeship program who was chosen as apprentice of the month. ► Councilor Hamblen thanked Mr. Fasciano and Ms. Tracey for their great presentations and enthusiasm. She congratulated Mr. Cantoreggi for his award. She reiterated

that the Finance Committee meetings were very informative, and she thanked all Town departments and staff who were involved. ► Councilor Dellorco thanked all who were involved in the Finance Committee work. He noted that Franklin Paint experienced cases of COVID-19; the plant was shut down for one month. ► Chair Mercer reiterated congratulations to Mr. Cantoreggi. He thanked the administration and finance team for having a great audit. He stated that Franklin TV and Mr. Fasciano are doing a great job.

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 9:39 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Judith Lizardi
Recording Secretary