

**FRANKLIN TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF MEETING
November 4, 2020**

A meeting of the Town Council was held on Wednesday, November 4, 2020, 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, Melanie Hamblen, 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 stated, as posted on the agenda, 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. Residents can attend and participate via the Zoom platform. 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. 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.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS FOR CHAIR, VICE CHAIR, CLERK:

Nominations were accepted for Town Council Chair. **Nomination of Mercer by Dellorco. SECOND by Bissanti. No Discussion. Motion to Close nominations for Chair by Jones. SECOND by Dellorco. No Discussion. VOTE (to close nominations): Yes-8, No-0, Absent-0. VOTE (for Mercer for Chair): Yes-8, No-0, Absent-0.**

Nominations were accepted for Town Council Vice Chair. **Nomination of Dellorco by Bissanti. SECOND by Hamblen. No Discussion. Motion to Close nominations for Vice Chair by Jones. SECOND by Dellorco. No Discussion. VOTE (to close nominations): Yes-8, No-0, Absent-0. VOTE (for Dellorco for Vice Chair): Yes-8, No-0, Absent-0.**

Nominations were accepted for Town Council Clerk. **Nomination of Jones by Bissanti. SECOND by Dellorco. Motion to Close nominations for Clerk by Dellorco. SECOND by Hamblen. No Discussion. VOTE (to close nominations): Yes-8, No-0, Absent-0. VOTE (for Jones for Clerk): Yes-8, No-0, Absent-0.**

CITIZEN COMMENTS: None.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: None.

PROCLAMATIONS/RECOGNITIONS: None.

APPOINTMENTS: None.

HEARINGS: None.

LICENSE TRANSACTIONS: None.

PRESENTATIONS/DISCUSSIONS: ► **Temporary Town Clerk - Nancy Danello.** ► Ms. Danello reported that the election brought out 6,155 voters. Ballots are still being received and will be accepted until November 6th; however, they must be postmarked by November 3rd. The vote by mail ballots received to date is 8,265 and in-person early voting was 6,060 for a total of 20,480 votes cast as of today. There are 24,758 registered voters in Franklin for an 83 percent voter turnout. She thanked her team, the administration, and staff for making this election a success. ► Chair Mercer thanked Ms. Danello.

► **Think Franklin First - Anne Marie Tracey.** ► Ms. Tracey, Marketing and Communication Specialist, shared a new economic development and Town of Franklin marketing project that she has been working on in collaboration with a number of other Town organizations. She narrated a slideshow presentation. She stated that Think Franklin First gift cards is a shop local initiative for economic development sponsored by Dean Bank, the Random Smile Project, and the Town of Franklin. She reviewed the goals of the project which include directing spending from online retailers and other competition into the Franklin economy and providing a local alternative to generic gift cards. This will help to support local businesses and build community pride and support. She stated that the target audiences include local alternatives to generic gift cards, gifts for teachers, coaches, and mentors, thank you gifts, and stocking stuffers. She stated the gift cards will be sold online and in person at Dean Bank and can be redeemed at participating Franklin businesses; this is a great way to shop local and gift local. ► Town Council members asked questions and thanked Ms. Tracey for her presentation. ► Ms. Tracey explained that franklingiftcard.com is the website to purchase gift cards, refill a gift card, check the balance on a gift card, and learn which businesses in Franklin accept the gift cards. She stated that Shop Franklin is an independent group in Franklin. She noted that the Downtown Partnership is also involved in this initiative. ► Mr. Hellen discussed that the Downtown Partnership will become an endorsee and will help promote the initiative and get the word out. He discussed the use of the Franklin emblem on the gift cards and reviewed other communities that have started such initiatives. ► Ms. Tracey stated that complaints would be handled based on whether it is a gift card problem or another type of complaint. She stated she has spoken to many people from other communities who have started similar initiatives. She reviewed that the gift cards can be used at Franklin businesses opting into the program. She sent an email to all local businesses regarding this new initiative and has conducting personal outreach. She stated that currently she has referred about 30 Franklin vendors to Swipelt to set up the redemption process. She reviewed that there are fees involved; however, Dean Bank has agreed to cover those costs for the first year so they will not be passed on to the local businesses.

► **Town Council Goals midterm update.** ► Mr. Hellen discussed the status update on the goals set forth at the Town Council Workshop on January 8, 2020, for the two-year legislative session. He stated the Town departments and administration have made substantial progress on these goals despite the pandemic. He stated that the updated list of goals is provided in the Town Council's meeting packet and available on the Town's website. ► Town Council members asked questions and noted how much has been accomplished despite the pandemic. ► Ms. Hamblen thanked all involved in the stormwater presentations. She stated almost all the lot lines clean ups have been completed; she thanked all who worked on the project. She asked about the security improvements in the schools. She thanked Mr. Ryan Jette for Concerts on the Common. ► Mr. Hellen stated improvements were done in the schools while they were out of session; security improvements revolved around installing cameras. ► Ms. Alecia Alleyne, Administrative Assistant, stated the charging stations are up and functional, and there is no payment required at this time; payment may be considered in the future. ► Mr. Hellen noted that there would be a Complete Streets discussion next year. ► Mr. Kelly requested a review of the Town Administrator and noted that in the past a committee for this annual review has been established. ► Mr. Chandler noted that on the Town's website the hiring of four new paramedics is listed; he noted where the money was coming from. He asked about the Nu-Style building on Grove Street. ► Mr. Hellen stated that there was a contract for the Nu-Style building, but the individual did not fulfill the obligations of that contract. He stated that there will be a high expense when the Town does clean it up. ► Mr. Bissanti asked about the postponed Charter review discussion. ► Mr. Hellen stated there are statutory procedures to do a Charter review; it is an extensively substantial process. He suggested there should be citizen engagement process, as well. ► Chair Mercer thanked Mr. Hellen and the Town Council for establishing and accomplishing the goals during a pandemic year. He stated he will be working with Mr. Hellen regarding planning for the Charter review.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS:

- a. **Capital Budget Subcommittee.** ► None.
- b. **Budget Subcommittee.** ► None.
- c. **Economic Development Subcommittee.** ► None.

LEGISLATION FOR ACTION:

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

- a. **Resolution 20-63: Acceptance of Grant of Utility (Drainage) Access and Maintenance Easement on Lot 78a, Mine Brook Estates Subdivision (Motion to Approve Resolution 20-63 - Majority Vote).** ► Mr. Jones read the resolution. ► **MOTION to Approve** Resolution 20-63: Acceptance of Grant of Utility (Drainage) Access and Maintenance Easement on Lot 78a, Mine Brook Estates Subdivision by **Dellorco. SECOND** by **Hamblen. Discussion:** ► Mr. Hellen stated this is a routine matter for a grant of utility access easement. ► **VOTE: Yes-8, No-0, Absent-0.**
- b. **Resolution 20-64: Town Council Authorization Pursuant to G.L. Chapter 44, Section 70 for Town to Execute Memorandum of Understanding and Otherwise to Participate in Federal Government Reimbursement Program for Foster Care Transportation (Motion to Approve Resolution 20-64 - Majority Vote).** ► Mr. Jones read the resolution. ► **MOTION to Approve** Resolution 20-64: Town Council Authorization Pursuant to G.L. Chapter 44, Section 70 for Town to Execute Memorandum of Understanding and Otherwise to Participate in Federal Government Reimbursement Program for Foster Care Transportation by **Dellorco. SECOND** by **Hamblen. Discussion:** ► Mr. Hellen stated this is a complicated reimbursement for which \$7,236 will be reimbursed and go into the Town's General Fund. ► **VOTE: Yes-8, No-0, Absent-0.**
- c. **Bylaw Amendment 20-863: Chapter 82, Municipal Service Fees - Temporary Reduction in Municipal Service Fees for Common Victualer All Alcohol and Wine & Malt Licenses for the 2021 License Renewal Season - First Reading (Motion to Move Bylaw Amendment 20-863 to a Second Reading - Majority Vote).** ► Mr. Jones read the bylaw amendment. ► **MOTION to Move** Bylaw Amendment 20-863: Chapter 82, Municipal Service Fees - Temporary Reduction in Municipal Service Fees for Common Victualer All Alcohol and Wine & Malt Licenses for the 2021 License Renewal Season to a Second Reading by **Dellorco. SECOND** by **Hamblen. Discussion:** ► Mr. Hellen stated that restaurants are going to have a difficult winter due to the pandemic. This is a proactive approach to approve a temporary fee reduction of about 25 percent for about 24 businesses in Town. It is a delicate balance between helping the businesses and not losing revenue for the Town. The second reading will be on November 18th. The license renewals take place in December. ► Ms. Pellegri asked about the advertising of this bylaw amendment. ► Mr. Bissanti stated he admires the intent; however, it is difficult to understand the Town's loss of revenue. He asked if these businesses have expressed hardship. ► Mr. Hellen stated that it is well known that these businesses are experiencing hardship. He stated that with this bylaw amendment, the Town will lose \$13,000 in revenue. He stated this is just a one-year change. ► **VOTE: Yes-8, No-0, Absent-0.**

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT: ► **COVID-19 Update.** ► Mr. Hellen stated there are 14 active COVID cases; Franklin is still in the yellow zone on the State map. He stated there will be additional guidance coming from the Board of Health regarding the governor's mask mandate. ► **Board of Health Catering & Food Trucks Update.** ► Mr. Hellen stated that based on the last Town Council meeting, he has convinced the Board of Health to entertain opportunities where a private caterer can share a kitchen. He stated that the Board of Health is asking interested individuals to go to the Board of Health with their plan. He stated the Board of Health is trying to balance the economic needs of those in the community with keeping people safe. He stated the food truck issue will not be brought back up. It has been determined that for those businesses needing to bring food in, they can work with local businesses for catering, and the Board of Health will work with them on the certifications needed. He stated that Mr. Kevin Ryan from the Police Department is retiring after 40 years. He wished him a happy retirement. Mr. Hellen thanked the Police Department for their work as the past few

months have been busy. He discussed that recently six shots were fired against Franklin police officers; however, the Franklin police did not fire any shots back.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS: ► Ms. Pellegrini stated that she had asked to have information regarding the \$522,000 phishing scam on tonight's agenda; she hopes it will be on the next meeting agenda. ► Chair Mercer stated that is the goal. ► Mr. Jones requested a presentation to invite an IT professional who is an expert in hacking to help educate the Town Council and citizens regarding ways to spot and avoid hacking situations. He requested a presentation by National Grid regarding power outages.

COUNCIL COMMENTS: ► Mr. Chandler congratulated Mr. Kevin Ryan for his 40 years of service in the Police Department. He noted appreciation for all the work Mr. Kelly and Mr. Bissanti do for the Town. ► Ms. Hamblen thanked all involved in the tunnel opening at the SNETT trail. She thanked the Franklin firefighters for inviting her to attend one of their trainings. She noted a business listening and networking session hosted by the EDC scheduled for November 16th at 6:30 PM for retail, personal services, and fitness. She thanked everyone involved in the elections. She stated she was thankful for the opportunity to allow shared kitchens. ► Ms. Pellegrini gave condolences for the passing of Mr. Pearce Murphy. She stated that former Franklin resident Ms. Jennifer O'Malley Dillon was appointed as Joe Biden's campaign manager. She stated that the election went well and she thought it had to do with early voting; she hopes that early voting will continue. She thanked the election workers and others who worked on the election. She stated that she is thrilled that the CPA passed in Franklin. She thanked Mr. Kelly and Mr. Bissanti for running for office. ► Mr. Bissanti thanked those who gave him support during his campaign. He stated that he is happy the CPA passed. He thanked the Town Clerk's office for how professionally the election was handled. ► Mr. Jones agreed that Mr. Kelly and Mr. Bissanti serve their community well. He expressed appreciation for the big voting turnout. He expressed appreciation for the ballot questions that passed. He congratulated everyone who won in the election. He congratulated Mr. Kevin Ryan on his retirement. ► Mr. Dellorco thanked the Town Clerk's office for the great job done on the election. He wished Mr. Kevin Ryan a great retirement. He thanked the Franklin Police Department on their detective work. He expressed appreciation for the CPA ballot question passing. ► Chair Mercer thanked the Town Clerk's office and administrative staff for the great job done on the election. He thanked Ms. Susan Speers for taking the lead and others who helped with getting the CPA passed. He congratulated Mr. Kevin Ryan on his retirement and thanked Mr. Kelly and Mr. Bissanti for all they do for the Town.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: None.

ADJOURN: ► MOTION to Adjourn by Jones. SECOND by Dellorco. No Discussion. ► VOTE: Yes-8, No-0, Absent-0. Meeting adjourned at 8:38 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Judith Lizardi
Recording Secretary