

**FRANKLIN TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF MEETING
December 20, 2023**

A meeting of the Town Council was held on Tuesday, December 20, 2023, at the Municipal Building, 2nd Floor, Council Chambers, 355 East Central Street, Franklin, MA. Councilors present: Brian Chandler, Theodore Cormier-Leger, Robert Dellorco, Cobi Frongillo, Melanie Hamblen, Glenn Jones, Thomas Mercer, Deborah Pellegrini, Patrick Sheridan. Councilors absent: None. Administrative personnel in attendance: Jamie Hellen, Town Administrator; Amy Frigulietti, Deputy Town Administrator; Mark Cerel, Town Attorney.

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 the following as posted on the agenda. A Note to Residents: All citizens are welcome to attend public board and committee meetings in person. Meetings are live-streamed by Franklin TV and shown on Comcast Channel 11 and Verizon Channel 29. In an effort to maximize citizen engagement opportunities, citizens will be able to continue to participate remotely via phone or Zoom. He announced that this meeting is being recorded by Franklin TV; this meeting may be recorded by others. ► He announced that tomorrow, December 21, the Town Council has office hours from 8:30 AM to 9:30 AM at the Senior Center. ► He announced that *On Track* is a current exhibit displayed at the Franklin Historical Museum constructed by Historical Commission member Scott Mason. This year's edition recreates the Thomson Press building and New Haven locomotive roundhouse. The exhibit is on display at the museum on Saturdays from 10 AM to 1 PM and Sundays from 1 PM to 4 PM through January 14, 2024.

CITIZEN COMMENTS: ► DPW Director Brutus Cantoreggi stated that they had to close the bridge at the end of Elm Street going into Medway; it is a MassDOT requirement. He said it is a really old stone bridge and because of the volume of the water going under it, they monitor it. He said the dive team is going to check it out in a few weeks, and it will probably be reopened. He said it is a very well-made bridge. ► Ms. Maureen Sullivan, resident at 871 King Street, said she has an easement onto Washington Street and is the owner of 553 King Street which is two lots at the corner of King Street and Washington Street. She said she was at the Town Council meeting the Wednesday before the election and was serious at the meeting. She said this Financial Way is still and will always be for the time that she owns the property at 553 King Street, an absolutely no go to take down the Digital building and put in up to 400 more trucks per day. She asked if this is a serious thing and if this Town really thinks that these roads can handle that. She said that her driveway at 871 King Street has completely sunken in. She said she built that home 27 years ago. She discussed how when the Jefferson Remington School was being built, the Town tried to widen the street and build sidewalks. She noted the house at 861 Washington Street and said the previous owners had such a sinkhole. She discussed her cement driveway has cracked and has given flat tires as it is so sharp. She noted that homes in the area have had cracked septic systems. She said the road is being destroyed and cannot handle the 200 to 300 trucks per day and now they are adding about 400 trucks per day. She said the trucks cannot fit around the corner as it is. She said nothing is going to widen that street. She said the trucks hit the utility pole and the sidewalks all the time. She said it is an absolute mess. She explained her driveway at 553 King Street. She discussed that she was also a caretaker for a resident, and it is a danger to get the person out of their driveway. She said a restaurant on the other side is what it is. She discussed the steepness of the driveway. ► Chair Mercer stated that Ms. Sullivan's three minutes are up and requested she finish her statement. ► Ms. Sullivan said she has three residences, so she gets more minutes. ► Chair Mercer said no she does not. ► Ms. Sullivan said the day of the meeting Planning Board Chair Greg Rondeau got a call which said shut her down, and she was shut down, and Planner Amy Love who ran the meeting was confused why you are putting traffic off. Ms. Sullivan said she was pushed aside and was not heard. She said she came to the Town Council and said it

was a no go, and no one has talked about the building coming down and the health issues with that. She asked what are we supposed to breathe in, just fumes from 600 trucks per day. ► Chair Mercer said Ms. Sullivan has gone five minutes, and he had to shut her down. Ms. Sullivan said she would be back at the next meeting.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: ► *November 1, 2023; November 15, 2023; November 21, 2023.*

► **MOTION to Approve** the November 1, 2023 meeting minutes by **Dellorco. SECOND** by **Jones. No discussion.** ► **VOTE: Yes-9, No-0, Absent-0.** ► **MOTION to Approve** the November 15, 2023 meeting minutes by **Dellorco. SECOND** by **Jones. No discussion.** ► **VOTE: Yes-9, No-0, Absent-0.**

► **MOTION to Approve** the November 21, 2023 meeting minutes by **Dellorco. SECOND** by **Jones. No discussion.** ► **VOTE: Yes-9, No-0, Absent-0.**

PROCLAMATIONS/RECOGNITIONS: ► *Proclamation: William “Ken” Norman.* ► Board of Assessors Chair Chris Feeley read aloud the proclamation honoring William “Ken” Norman on 16 years of dedicated service to the Town of Franklin Board of Assessors. ► Chair Mercer thanked Mr. Norman. ► Representative Jeff Roy stated that he had a set of resolutions from the Massachusetts House of Representatives. He said he gave Mr. Norman a citation a few weeks ago. He said that resolutions are significant as they require a vote on the floor of the House of Representatives. He said the vote took place of December 11, 2023, and it was unanimous. He read aloud the resolutions congratulating and honoring Mr. Norman on his years of appointed volunteer service for the Town of Franklin.

APPOINTMENTS: None.

PUBLIC HEARINGS: None.

LICENSE TRANSACTIONS: ► *2024 Annual Alcohol License Renewals (See attached “2024 Town of Franklin Alcohol License Renewals”).* ► Councilor Jones read the license transaction for the 2024 Town of Franklin Alcohol License Renewals; he read aloud the list that was provided in the Town Council members’ meeting packet. ► **MOTION to Approve** the renewal of alcoholic beverages licenses listed on the attached Renewal List for the year 2024 with the issuance of licenses that have inspections, fees or taxes outstanding to be withheld (physically held in the Town Administrator’s Office) until all items are resolved by **Jones. SECOND** by **Dellorco. Discussion:** ► Mr. Hellen stated that Councilor Jones summarized it very well. ► **VOTE: Yes-9, No-0, Absent-0.**

PRESENTATIONS/DISCUSSIONS: None.

LEGISLATION FOR ACTION:

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

- a. *Resolution 23-71: Town Council Approval of County ARPA Funds. (Motion to Approve Resolution 23-71 - Majority Vote).* ► Councilor Jones read the resolution. ► **MOTION to Approve** Resolution 23-71: Town Council Approval of County ARPA Funds by **Dellorco. SECOND** by **Hamblen. Discussion:** ► Mr. Hellen referenced his memo to the Town Council dated December 15, 2023, which is provided in the meeting packet; he stated the amounts requested are listed in his memo. He stated the funds need to be allocated before the end of this year. He stated the money can still be spent over the next three years. He noted that approximately one-third of all calls received by the Police Department for services are mental health related. He stated that they are trying to take advantage of the federal stimulus money over the next three years to connect people to services. He said that he hopes this will work out really well. He noted the half million dollars for sewer improvements. He said they have not spent any ARPA money yet in the last couple of years on sewer, so this will at least take some of the capital requests so that the rate payers do not have to fund these projects. He noted

the money to go to the Franklin Food Pantry, SAFE Coalition, and YMCA. He said all of the organizations are seeing a rise in the demand for services. He said hopefully these monies can help to support these organizations. He explained that this is it; the federal money is gone after this. He said there was a lot of work behind the scene with the county to make sure these would be approved. He thanked Ms. Frigulietti for her work and taking this off his plate. ► Town Council members asked questions, made comments, and thanked the organizations for their efforts toward helping the community. ► In response to a question, Mr. Hellen reviewed the restrictions of what the money could be used for. He said most of these are obvious. The county money is highly restricted regarding the ARPA money. He said they needed to work with the county to make sure it would be approved by the federal government. He said public health is an allowable use under the county funds. He said water and sewer is an allowable use. He said broadband is an allowable use. He noted that they benefitted in the CARES Act because there were no restrictions at that time the way the law was written. He stated that he is not aware of other towns that have allocated this much money toward public health, particularly mental health. ► Councilor Frongillo stated that he wanted to highlight a cool opportunity he had with the migrants that have come to town. He said he thinks people expected a whole bunch worse and a lot of communities have. He said and, if you are wondering why, it is kind of been quiet and things have been pretty smooth, it is due very much in a large part to a whole bunch of work from a whole bunch of volunteers. He said he had the pleasure of helping to sort through donations and just seeing, he knew of it, but to see it in person the number of donations, the number of volunteers who have stepped up, and how the Interfaith Coalition and SAFE Coalition have gone in systematically and met with everyone and every migrant family in the hotel and learned exactly what their needs are for clothing and food and are doing individual bags to meet the needs of the migrants. He said it was a really touching thing to see. ► In response to a question, Mr. Hellen explained ARPA Direct does not need county approval and we go through the regular process. He stated that the hotel/motel money the Town lost during the pandemic that we normally would have recouped are going toward rebuilding Baron Road which everyone is aware of. He said they have not allocated any funds to the high school bleachers. He said he is well aware of how much the visitor bleachers need to get fixed and how much all the Town Councilors and administration hear about it. ► Councilor Cormier-Leger asked Scott from the YMCA to help understand the process on how the 400 teens will receive the scholarships from the \$100,000 for the YMCA, and if the money is going into a restricted fund or an annual fund. ► Audience member who did not identify himself said what they are going to do is help recruit. He said they are going to expand the reach of how many teens belong as members. He said they will use social media and other communication methods to let teens know in town that this is available to them. He said one of the strategies is that if we can get them to become a member of the Y, we can engage them in programming and that is going to help with their physical fitness and well-being and anxiety issues. He discussed what some of the kids will be into and where they will fit. He said the money is going into a restricted fund for this specific program only for teens in Franklin only between the ages of 13 to 17. ► Councilor Chandler said he thinks the teenagers got lost in the shuffle more than anybody during this whole pandemic; he is happy they can give some money for that and use it for mental health. ► Chair Mercer thanked the entire staff for all the work that went in to making these difficult decisions that needed to be made and that they fell into the criteria given that needed to be followed. ► **VOTE: Yes-9, No-0, Absent-0.**

- b. ***Bylaw Amendment 23-902: A Bylaw to Amend the Code of the Town of Franklin by Inserting Chapter 147, Snow and Ice, Removal Of - Second Reading (Motion to Approve Bylaw Amendment 23-902 - Majority Roll Call Vote).*** ► **MOTION to Waive the reading by Hamblen. SECOND by Dellorco. No discussion.** ► **VOTE: Yes-9, No-0, Absent-0.** ► **MOTION to Approve Bylaw Amendment 23-902: A Bylaw to Amend the Code of the Town of Franklin by Inserting Chapter 147, Snow and Ice, Removal Of by Dellorco. SECOND by Jones. Discussion:** ► Chair Mercer said this is a second reading, and they went through it quite at length at the last meeting. ► **ROLL CALL VOTE: Chandler-YES; Cormier-Leger-YES; Dellorco-NO; Frongillo-YES; Hamblen-YES; Jones-NO; Mercer-YES; Pellegrini-YES; Sheridan-YES.** ► **VOTE: Yes-7, No-2, Absent-0.**

- c. **Bylaw Amendment 23-903: A Bylaw to Amend the code of the Town of Franklin at Chapter 82, Fees, Municipal Service - Second Reading (Motion to Approve Bylaw Amendment 23-903 - Majority Roll Call Vote).** ► **MOTION to Waive the reading by Cormier-Leger. SECOND by Dellorco. No discussion. ► VOTE: Yes-9, No-0, Absent-0. ► MOTION to Approve Bylaw Amendment 23-903: A Bylaw to Amend the code of the Town of Franklin at Chapter 82, Fees, Municipal Service by Dellorco. SECOND by Hamblen. Discussion:** ► Mr. Hellen said DPW Director Brutus Cantoreggi went through this at the last meeting. He said the mattress disposal fee is getting increased for the reasons that Mr. Cantoreggi stated at the last meeting. He said the Town's rate is \$65 which is a pretty good price. ► Councilor Cormier-Leger asked if there has been any feedback from residents since this was discussed at the last meeting. ► Mr. Hellen said he has not received any calls/emails from anyone opposing this. ► Councilor Jones asked if there has been a significant rise in people leaving items on the sides of the roads and asked how are we going to educate these people. ► Mr. Cantoreggi said yes. He said he does not think it is about education. He said the people know what they are doing when they throw it on the side of the road. He said the people doing it is a constant thing; they are not nice people. ► Councilor Dellorco noted that it may not even be Franklin residents doing this; they may be from out of town. ► Mr. Max Morrongiello, 127 Central Park Terrace, stated that he rises in support of the proposal, but he cannot rest easy knowing how much the fee will disproportionately affect low-income Franklinites. He said for residents like himself who are on SSI disability, the \$65 fee is equivalent to almost an entire two days' worth of income. He said Franklin's bylaws offer a solution to help folks with low income and it is called the Community Assistance Program. He reviewed the discounts. He said he urges the Town to expand the program to provide discounts for mattress recycling and more of the Town's numerous fees. He said it keeps him up at night knowing that low-income people in Franklin are struggling. ► **ROLL CALL VOTE: Chandler-YES; Cormier-Leger-YES; Dellorco-YES; Frongillo-YES; Hamblen-YES; Jones-YES; Mercer-YES; Pellegrini-YES; Sheridan-YES. ► VOTE: Yes-9, No-0, Absent-0.**
- d. **Resolution 23-72: Davis-Thayer Building Reuse Advisory Committee Charge - Extension of Committee Terms and Deadline to Make Final Report (Motion to Approve Resolution 23-72 - Majority Vote).** ► Councilor Jones read the resolution. ► **MOTION to Approve Resolution 23-72: Davis-Thayer Building Reuse Advisory Committee Charge - Extension of Committee Terms and Deadline to Make Final Report by Dellorco. SECOND by Hamblen. Discussion:** ► Mr. Hellen said the committee has held about six meetings so far; however, the appraisal and expression of interest are far larger projects than anticipated, so the committee is looking for an extension through June so they can get those materials completed. ► Councilor Pellegrini asked how is the appraisal coming. ► Mr. Hellen said the procurement is being drafted and should be out momentarily, and then we will get bids in. He said he expects a couple of more months for the appraisal to be done. He discussed the expression of interest process that they are putting together. He said people do call about Davis-Thayer regarding what is going on. ► Councilor Cormier-Leger said he wanted to urge the committee to approve this because as somebody who sits on the subcommittee, they really are at a standstill as they wait for the expression of interest to be crafted. He said he asks everyone to give them a little more patience with the process. ► Chair Mercer explained the discussions they had when they put this committee together. He said they need to do this right, and this is the right move. ► **VOTE: Yes-9, No-0, Absent-0.**
- e. **Resolution 23-73: Revised 2024 Town Council Meeting Schedule (Motion to Approve Resolution 23-73 - Majority Vote).** ► Councilor Jones read the resolution. ► **MOTION to Approve Resolution 23-73: Revised 2024 Town Council Meeting Schedule by Dellorco. SECOND by Hamblen. Discussion:** ► Mr. Hellen noted that they will take Valentine's Day off the schedule which was already voted. ► **VOTE: Yes-9, No-0, Absent-0.**

- f. **Resolution 23-74: Receipts Reserved for Appropriation Transportation Network Companies (TNC) Ride Assessment Transfer and Appropriation (Motion to Approve Resolution 23-74 - Majority Vote).** ► Councilor Jones read the resolution. ► **MOTION to Approve** Resolution 23-74: Receipts Reserved for Appropriation Transportation Network Companies (TNC) Ride Assessment Transfer and Appropriation by **Dellorco. SECOND** by **Hamblen. Discussion:** ► Mr. Hellen reviewed his memo to the Town Council dated December 15, 2023, indicating that they are asking the Town Council to approve the transfer and appropriate \$7,871.10 from the Receipts Reserved for Appropriation TNC Ride Assessment Fund for the purpose of road repairs. Cities and towns receive funds from the Commonwealth through a state assessment on transportation network companies, such as Uber and Lyft, operating in the Commonwealth. Cities and Towns must reserve and appropriate these funds to address the impact of those companies on roads and bridges. The Department of Revenue has recently altered its guidance on how these funds must be appropriated and we are complying with this new regulation. ► **VOTE: Yes-9, No-0, Absent-0.**
- g. **Resolution 23-75: Gift Acceptance - Police Dept. (\$5,000), Veterans' Services Dept. (\$3,145) & Senior Center (\$200) (Motion to Approve Resolution 23-75 - Majority Vote).** ► Councilor Jones read the resolution. ► **MOTION to Approve** Resolution 23-75: Gift Acceptance - Police Dept. (\$5,000), Veterans' Services Dept. (\$3,145) & Senior Center (\$200) by **Dellorco. SECOND** by **Hamblen. Discussion:** ► Chair Mercer thanked the donors for their generosity. ► **VOTE: Yes-9, No-0, Absent-0.**
- h. **Resolution 23-76: Cable Funds in Support of PEG Service and Programming per MGL Ch. 44, §53F3/4 (Motion to Approve Resolution 23-76 - Majority Vote).** ► **MOTION to Waive** the reading by **Cormier-Leger. SECOND** by **Dellorco. No discussion.** ► **VOTE: Yes-9, No-0, Absent-0.** ► **MOTION to Approve** Resolution 23-76: Cable Funds in Support of PEG Service and Programming per MGL Ch. 44, §53F3/4 by **Dellorco. SECOND** by **Hamblen. No discussion.** ► **VOTE: Yes-9, No-0, Absent-0.**

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT: ► Mr. Hellen thanked all the folks involved for the work done for the storm response. He said in one day there were 86 calls for service for the fire department. He said all personnel had to be called in. He noted that there are still some folks without power; however, most power has been restored. He thanked all staff for another incredible year. He thanked all those involved in the response to the humanitarian crisis. He said Franklin has been hailed as doing a really good job on this. He thanked the Town Council for their support. He wished all a happy holiday season.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS:

- a. **Capital Budget Subcommittee. None.**
- b. **Economic Development Subcommittee. None.**
- c. **Budget Subcommittee. None.**
- d. **Master Plan Update Committee.** ► Councilor Jones said they will be meeting again on December 13. He said they had the consultants discuss the inventory and assessment report draft; the draft document will be reviewed early next year. He said they have been discussing a Master Plan survey that is available on the Town's website and will be open until January 3, 2024. He said January 10 is their next scheduled meeting date. He said the next year's schedule will be posted shortly.
- e. **Davis-Thayer Building Reuse Advisory Committee. None.**
- f. **Police Station Building Committee. None.**
- g. **GATRA Advisory Board.** ► Councilor Frongillo said they have not met since the last Town Council meeting. The next meeting is January 17, 2024. He reminded everyone that all GATRA rides are free through the end of the year.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS: ► Councilor Sheridan requested an update of the homeless situation in Franklin. ► Councilor Hamblen requested to look at the discounted fees and maybe put it on the EDC's

goals regarding the citizen's comment. ► Mr. Hellen said they have not done a full townwide fee analysis in eight years. He said Ms. Frigulietti will be leading that process, and it is already on the workplan. ► Councilor Cormier-Leger asked if was possible to have a discussion with National Grid, Verizon, or other utility service providers to give an update and tell us what the needs are so that something like this does not happen again. He said that it seems like for every major weather event people are without power and broadband or DSL; people are without basic needs. He said they have a problem with the grid and too many trees, and they need to get a public/private discussion going. ► Chair Mercer said they had National Grid here three years ago, and they talked about a tree program moving forward; maybe we can talk to them and get an update. ► Mr. Hellen said we can have them come in, and they have come in before. ► Councilor Jones said the electric company has worked hard, and he gives everyone credit. He said there could be a better program, and citizens have to do their part on the tree issues.

COUNCIL COMMENTS: ► Councilor Cormier-Leger said it is wonderful to see federal dollars used locally. He thanked Mr. Hellen and the entire crew for the response during the storm. He thanked everyone who put up the decorations throughout town, and he thanked everyone for a great year. He wished all a great new year. ► Councilor Chandler thanked all and wished all happy holidays. He thanked all who watch and come to the meetings for their engagement. ► Councilor Pellegrini discussed Facebook comments regarding people who had problems and the great responses received. She said the decorations are fantastic. She wished all happy holidays. ► Councilor Sheridan wished all happy holidays. He noted 2024 is an election year. ► Councilor Frongillo noted office hours at the Senior Center tomorrow from 8:30 AM to 9:30 AM. He noted after-school programming and English as a second language courses available for the migrants. He noted the winter farmers market at Fairmount Fruit Farm. ► Councilor Hamblen thanked all who came out to the last winter farmers' market. She said they talked about sustainability for many hours. She thanked all who got Franklin up and running again after the storm. She wished everyone a happy and safe New Year. ► Councilor Jones wished all happy holidays. He said there were many good things that came out of 2023; 2024 will be just as much of a challenge, but will be fun. He said he looks forward to setting the goals in January. He wished all happy holidays. ► Councilor Dellorco wished all happy holidays. He gave a shout-out to the National Grid workers. He said that for storms like that you can cut down all the trees, but you are still going to lose power. He said that National Grid cannot go up until it is under 35 mph wind. ► Chair Mercer discussed what happens when people lose power. He noted that until the winds drop below 35 mph, National Grid is not allowed to go out. He thanked the DPW and all others for the town's decorations. He thanked Dean College for stepping up their decorations. He said that he was proud of how the town looked for the holiday season. He said they have had two great years, they have accomplished a lot, and they got a lot of goals to the finish line. He thanked everyone, the Town Council, and the department heads for all the work they did in helping the Town Council achieve the goals. He said it starts all over again in January as they put a new set of goals together for the next two years. He wished all happy holidays. ► Councilor Jones thanked Chair Mercer for his leadership.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: None.

ADJOURN: ► MOTION to Adjourn by Dellorco. SECOND by Jones. No discussion. ► VOTE: Yes-9, No-0, Absent-0.

Meeting adjourned at 8:28 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Judith Lizardi
Recording Secretary