

**FRANKLIN TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF MEETING
March 15, 2023**

A meeting of the Town Council was held on Wednesday, March 15, 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; 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.

CITIZEN COMMENTS: ► Ms. Amber Wilson, 903 Lincoln Street, stated that she was speaking as a resident and also as the president of the LGBTQ Alliance in Franklin. She stated that they are having their second annual Celebrate with Pride event on June 25. She proposed that they fly a Pride flag outside of Town Hall for the entire month of June or at least the weekend of the Pride event. She stated that this is looking to be an annual event. She stated that the City of Boston does it and a lot of other towns and cities in the Commonwealth do it.

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

PROCLAMATIONS/RECOGNITIONS: ► *Swearing In: Marciano Silva - Police Department; Swearing In: Christopher Gulla - Police Department; Swearing In: Michael LaCure - Police Department; Swearing In: Kevin Quinn - Police Department.* ► Chief of Police Thomas Lynch introduced the new police officers. He reviewed Officer Marciano Silva's education, background, and career. ► Officer Silva's wife pinned the badge. ► Chief Lynch reviewed Officer Christopher Gulla's education, background, and career. ► Officer Gulla's wife pinned the badge. ► Chief Lynch reviewed Officer Michael LaCure's education, background, and career. ► Officer LaCure's wife and son pinned the badge. ► Chief Lynch reviewed Officer Kevin Quinn's education, background, and career. ► Officer Quinn's father pinned the badge. ► Town Clerk Nancy Danello performed the swearing in.

Chair Mercer called a two-minute recess.

APPOINTMENTS: ► *Master Plan Update Committee.* ► Mr. Hellen stated that this item is to appoint the members of the Master Plan Update Committee. He referred to his Master Plan Update Committee Appointments memo to the Town Council dated March 10, 2023, that is provided in the meeting packet. He reviewed that they received a total of 16 applications for the six at-large seats and they tried to nominate folks who had the time and the passion to put the work in. He noted that this is going to be a 12 to 18 months project. He reviewed that the Master Plan Update Committee must be comprised of three members of the Town Council, two members of the Planning Board, one member of the ZBA, one member of the Conservation Commission, and six citizen members at large. He requested the Town Council ratify the appointments of the 13 individuals listed below to the Master Plan Update Committee.

- 1) Glenn Jones (Town Council)
- 2) Cobi Frongillo (Town Council)
- 3) Melanie Hamblen (Town Council)
- 4) Rick Power (Planning Board)
- 5) Jennifer Williams (Planning Board)
- 6) Bruce Hunchard (Zoning Board of Appeals)
- 7) Meghann Hagen (Conservation Commission)
- 8) Kenneth Elmore (At Large)
- 9) Erin Gallagher (At Large)
- 10) Joe Halligan (At Large)
- 11) Ginelle Lang (At Large)
- 12) Eric Steltzer (At Large)
- 13) Gino Carlucci (At Large)

► Councilor Jones read the appointments. ► **MOTION to Ratify** the appointments of the names listed above by the Town Administrator to serve as members of the Master Plan Update Committee with terms to expire upon delivery of a final report to the Planning Board for their consideration by **Jones. SECOND by Dellorco. Discussion:** ► Councilor Frongillo stated that he thinks this is a really great group in front of us. He stated that where he thinks it is the lightest and where he thinks they need to put in a concerted effort during the process in engaging the people throughout the process is around our schools, our arts, and around agriculture particularly in tying in arts and culture. ► Councilor Jones stated that this is an excellent selection of individuals. He pointed out that they are charged by Massachusetts state law that they must make a Master Plan. He stated that the current exiting Master Plan is available on the Town's website. ► **VOTE: Yes-9, No-0, Absent-0.**

HEARINGS: None.

LICENSE TRANSACTIONS: None.

PRESENTATIONS/DISCUSSIONS: ► **Discussion: FLOCK Cameras - Chief of Police Thomas J. Lynch.** ► Chief of Police Thomas Lynch reviewed the stationary FLOCK system license plate reader (LPR) proposal. He reviewed that the proposal is for the installation of two fixed license plate reader cameras sourced from FLOCK safety. He stated that they did research on this, discussed it with the Town Administrator, and are now bringing it forward to Town Council to let you know what we propose. ► Officer Michael Demers narrated a slideshow presentation. He reviewed a benefit analysis of the proposed system. He stated that more than 75 percent of crimes committed in the United States involve a motor vehicle. The LPR technology is established and already deployed nationwide. He stated that this technology only takes pictures of the back license plates of vehicles. He stated that they would like the LPRs stationed in two locations in town. He reviewed that many nearby towns already have this system including Medway and Bellingham. He explained the transparency portal is accessible by the public and provides data. He explained potential uses for this system including suicidal individuals, operators of vehicles who have felonious warrants, missing children, erratic operators, and local drug, firearm, and human trafficking. He reviewed various potential Franklin scenarios that this proposed system would be beneficial. He discussed the logic of the proposed locations at the Route 495 off and on ramps. He stated that this is a tool to help deter and solve situations. He stated that it only captures the rear license plate; it does not capture the front of the vehicle or the operator. He stated that FLOCK was chosen due to the great cost benefit of \$2,500 annually per camera with a one-time installation cost. He explained the ethical stance of the system. He stated that there are a lot of legalities to this, and if they say they will delete the data every 30 days, they have to. He stated that the number of days before it is deleted can be customized. ► Ms. Laura Holland, representative of FLOCK (via Zoom), reviewed the system

specifications. She reviewed how the vehicle recognition system works, system specifications, and balancing privacy considerations. She reviewed that the system takes a picture of the back of the vehicle and stores the image in a database and classifies the image based on key specifications. She stated that they call all those pieces of data the vehicle fingerprint. She stated that being able to have the ability to search on this can help as an investigative lead. She stated that the picture can be captured for a vehicle traveling as fast as 75 mph. She stated that it is a cloud-based connection through LTE; it functions 24/7 in all types of weather. She reviewed privacy concerns and stated that no photos of the front of the vehicle are stored, the camera does not record video, there are no facial recognition features only vehicle, and a flip-book of photos for each vehicle is created. She reviewed the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) recommendations regarding protecting privacy and noted that they take them seriously. ► Chief Lynch reviewed a recent incident where if the camera system was there, it would have provided some leads for finding the vehicle. ► Town Council members asked questions and made comments. ► Councilor Jones expressed a concern about the LTE based network and the possibly of cybercrime. He asked what is their cyber security. ► Ms. Holland reviewed the level of cyber security they provide. She stated that at this time they have had no instances of hacking. She stated that in general they do not see a lot of vandalism of their devices. ► Chief Lynch stated that he was not asking for any money from the Town Council and that he is taking care of it in another way to pay for it. ► Officer Demers reviewed that there would be two devices just for vehicles coming into town. He noted that there is no commitment to this and if it did not work out, they could pull out and the cost would be prorated back. ► Councilor Frongillo stated that governments role is a balance of liberty and security. He stated that his biggest point is this idea of audit law and asked can we publish searches and make that as transparent as possible. He asked if they are preparing to make that public or can we make a policy around this for when we do a search that information is shared. ► Ms. Holland explained what other communities do. She stated that some communities publish their search audit as part of their transparency. Other communities chose not to publish it on their transparency portal and bring it back to elected officials in a summary report of the audit log on a regular basis. ► Councilor Frongillo stated that he would be comfortable with either. He stated that if there is a commitment to transparency, he would feel much better. ► Chief Lynch stated that this is an investigative tool, not a video camera. ► Councilor Hamblen requested information on maintenance and repairs. ► Ms. Holland stated that they have a team that monitors the maintenance and health of all the cameras which is included in the leasing agreement. She stated that their cameras very rarely break. ► Councilor Chandler stated that there is not an expectation of privacy with license plates. He stated that we are fans of free movement and not fans of detaining people by mistake. He asked how many people are getting pulled over by mistake which is the part that he does not like about this. ► Chief Lynch explained that they would call the MECC and ask them to run a particular plate to make sure the plate matches; before you can act, you have to take the time to confirm. ► Ms. Holland discussed the question of possible mistakes being made, and she reviewed that they would verify that the plate that is in the image is the plate that is on the national registry. ► Chair Mercer stated that he would support giving this a shot and seeing how it helps the department.

► **Discussion & Project Presentation: 121 Grove Street, a “Friendly 40B” – Fairfield (Legislation for Action #9a).** ► Mr. Hellen stated that the Town Council will see a slideshow presentation on a project proposal for 121 Grove Street and legislation for action following it regarding a Friendly 40B. He reviewed, as provided in his memo to the Town Council dated February 24, 2023, that the decision before the Town Council will be to authorize, or not, the Town Administrator to fill out and file the requisite paperwork with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts for a Local Incentive Program (LIP) project. A LIP is a project where a community has over the required 10 percent and works with a developer to provide a required project with 25 percent affordable units (deeded, in perpetuity). The State housing agency, Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), is the next step in the project valuation process. The resolution tonight is to authorize the Town Administrator to submit the paperwork, which will allow for DHCD review and then the project will proceed to the local ZBA. It is important to note the proponent can move to the ZBA regardless of the Council’s decision this evening. The project has been

reviewed by the Planning Board (per town protocol) and is currently going through the Conservation Commission process regarding wetlands delineations. The Town Council has no jurisdiction on wetlands and the Conservation Commission proceedings. The EDC also had a Chapter 40B forum two weeks ago and had a preliminary presentation of the project at its February 22, 2023, meeting. ► Mr. Richard Cornetta, attorney working with Fairfield Residential; Mr. Robb Hewitt, Vice President of Fairfield Residential; Ms. Janice Hurst of Fairfield Residential; and Mr. John Shipe of Shipe Consulting addressed the Town Council. Mr. Cornetta reviewed that Fairfield Residential developed the property on Dean Avenue, Station 117, of about 257 apartment-style units by the train station. He stated that Fairfield is a national company. He reviewed that they started last June with the technical review for this proposal. He stated that there is a huge demand for housing and affordable housing. He stated that they have been before the Planning Board and Conservation Commission with this proposal. He stated that Fairfield, under the law, could apply to the Zoning Board of Appeals directly with this project; however, they want to work with Franklin so everyone can be proud of the project. He stated that another point is location. It is zoned as industrial. However, they believe through their research that even though it is an industrial property, it is not an industrial-desired property. He stated that there are not a lot of residential abutters. ► Mr. Hewitt narrated a slideshow presentation. He reviewed that Fairfield Residential is a national company. He stated that Fairfield owns the properties they develop. He stated that they like to control the quality of what they build. He discussed that Dean Avenue, Station 117, is one of their recent properties, and he showed photographs of the location. He discussed the amenities at Station 117. He stated that their market and affordable units are the same. He discussed the housing crisis in Massachusetts. He stated that this is an opportunity to meet the demand for high quality, diverse, and affordable housing. He stated that they prefer to be collaborative, and they like to get feedback. He discussed Franklin's Friendly 40B process. He stated that the next steps include submitting the application for site eligibility to DHCH or MassHousing, then they submit their application to the ZBA. He reviewed the location on Grove Street. He reviewed that it is 32 acres, there are no floodplains, no endangered species, abutted by the state forest, no direct residential neighbors, and no Title 5 septic concerns. He stated that the proposal is for 300 to 330 luxury apartments with a mix of one, two, and three bedrooms with 75 to 83 units deed restricted for affordability as workforce housing. He reviewed the proposed amenities and discussed items under consideration based on feedback to date. He showed a concept rendering of buildings from another project. He noted the location is great proximity to I-495, commuter rail station, shopping, Franklin state forest, and the rail trail. He noted benefits to the town and the public include that it significantly increases the tax assessment over the existing use and positive impacts for local retail. He noted that they will have to mitigate any traffic impacts based on a traffic study to be peer reviewed. He stated that this proposal would contribute to the state's mandates for affordable housing and increase the Town's SHI. He noted that there would be no impacts to abutters. He reviewed that they had a limited number of waivers including that they will need a waiver for the use as it is zoned for industrial. He noted that three stories are allowed, but they are suggesting four and five stories to decrease impervious coverage. He stated that Grove Street Residences will provide diverse and affordable rental housing options in Franklin. He stated that they are excited because they have developed in Franklin before. ► Town Council members asked questions and made comments. ► Councilor Hamblen stated that it is important to allow for new growth. She suggested a sidewalk to the Beaver Street playground. She stated that it is good that the fire department is okay with the height. She stated that the applicant is working with the Town and listening to feedback. She stated that the only concern would be that if the property were sold, they would keep track of the affordable housing units. ► Mr. Hewitt stated the units would be deeded in perpetuity. ► Councilor Frongillo stated that he wanted to reiterate the comments that they have heard. He reviewed his reasons that he loves this property. He stated that the location is that you cannot go anywhere without the use of a car. He stated that if we put a unit like this away from businesses and public services, they are only going to be adding to our traffic. He stated that his biggest ask if they move forward is their multi-use path space for people to access SNETT and the other opportunity is down near Beaver if you were going to bike to downtown, we would need to improve the safety. ► Councilor Jones confirmed the applicant's estimates were about 43 school-age children and about \$800,000 benefit to the community. He

stated that there is not a big cost benefit as it would require \$675,000 for the 43 children. He stated that this is a high-density housing development, and this is an industrial zoned area. He discussed that he does not see many green initiatives in this project. He stated that this project is in a busy area and this will add to the traffic. He discussed the walkability to downtown amenities and stated that this location is really off the beaten path. He stated that this is going to be a place where people will have to drive everywhere.

► Mr. Hewitt discussed that they are used to the Stretch Code and are starting to explore some solar ready roofs at some projects. He stated that they are always looking for some good ideas. ► Councilor Dellorco asked if there was a traffic study done on Grove Street. He discussed the number of tractor trailers that he sees on Grove Street. He stated that he thinks Grove Street should be all industrial. He stated that he is concerned about Beaver Street. He stated that when you put all these people in there, the traffic will greatly get backed up. He asked how many local contractors are used when it is being built. ► Mr. Hewitt stated that affordable rents range from \$1,800 to \$2,300. He stated that they usually get better pricing from local contractors, but they have to make sure they are qualified; everything is a bid process.

► Councilor Chandler discussed the industrial zoning of the location. He asked why at Station 117 there were no affordable units and here they have 25 percent. ► Mr. Hewitt stated that Station 117 was a rezone from the Town, and there was no ask for affordable units. ► Mr. Cornetta noted that Station 117 was an expensive project to clean as it was environmentally a mess; there were many mitigation measures that went into that project. ► Councilor Chandler stated that he was concerned the most with the Beaver Street light; there will be a lot of cars with the 350 apartments. He asked to see that part of the traffic study.

► Director of Planning and Community Development Bryan Taberner, in response to a question, stated that as this is a 40B, it is allowed, but multi-family is not an allowed use in an industrial zone. He stated that the ZBA has to approve this as they have the authority to give out the comprehensive permit or not. He stated that it does not matter if the Town Council likes or does not like the project; however, the Town Council's support does mean a lot. He noted that this is the Friendly 40B process. ► Councilor Chandler discussed parking and noted that for example 1.2 spots is not going to cut it. He stated that the public is not happy with the apartments. He stated that he cannot support more apartments. ► Mr. Hewitt stated that they would never do less than what was adequate; however, they do not want to build more parking and disturb more land than they have to. ► Councilor Cormier-Leger stated that they are looking for community partners and not just use this as a big project to make money. He discussed apartment rent costs, process to end a lease, and desire for homeownership. He stated that apartments seem to be more transient as people stay for a while and then move on which may be some of the concern about apartments. He asked if the developer contributed back to the town. He stated that the developers will be making probably millions of dollars on this project, and he asked if they could be a community partner with the town. ► Councilor Pellegrini stated that all she is hearing from the people out on the streets is that we have too many apartments and we do not need more apartments, and I have to agree with them. She stated that she is unhappy that Station 117 was sold. She stated that is not showing that they are about the town; they are only about their own pocket, and she is not about that at all. She stated that there are water bans and one of their slides states that there is ample water. She stated that she is concerned about Beaver Street, the light, and the traffic. She stated that the Town is over the 10 percent, so we do not have to push for affordable housing. She stated that she does not think they come out to be affordable. She stated that she wants to see some actual affordable housing units. She stated that they keep comparing this project to Dean Avenue. She stated that she talks to people living there and they are not happy with it. She stated that she has mixed feelings. ► Chair Mercer stated that for some of the questions asked we really do not have answers to yet. He noted that the delineation of the wetlands will decide how many units can go in there. He stated that he has issues with the number of units and the height of the buildings. He stated that there are unknowns here and he would like to have the answers. He stated that the Friendly 40B puts the ZBA in control of who builds what in the town. He stated that if we drop below the 10 percent, we do not have control, and it would all be from the state, and the town would have no control on who would be building it. He stated that at least this way, the Town can work with the contractor and fix concerns of the Town Council members and residents. He discussed that if there were 295 units, then the Town would not have to worry about their SHI number for many years. He stated that he is concerned that he does not

have enough good information to make an intelligent decision on what is before the Town Council this evening. ► Mr. Joseph Halligan, 1 Newell Drive, stated that he is familiar with the 30-acre property and it is not feasible for many industrial projects as the wetlands cut it up. He stated that these people can weave around that and put in smaller buildings and make it residential. He stated that it will never be developed as industrial. He stated that a similar project for this parcel was brought before the ZBA many years ago and it fell apart. He stated that traffic is a great concern, but all over Franklin traffic is a concern. He discussed that he has heard people talk about the need for affordable housing but not in my backyard. He stated that this project is an option for people who do not want to live in downtown; it is a different life style that some people will like. He stated that we really need affordable housing. He noted that Franklin lost population last year. He stated that he likes the project because of where it is located. He stated that we cannot have a carless society because of the size of the town; we will always have automobiles. He stated that a positive vote tonight will allow them to go to the ZBA, and the Town Council members could go to the ZBA and suggest some conditions. He stated that if we want affordable housing, it has to go somewhere. ► Mr. Hellen offered clarifying points. He stated that the water ban and water issues have nothing to do with this. He stated that this is about the water management permit. He stated that we have enough water for the town. He stated that there are a lot of local developers who flip projects; flipping projects is a market-based decision and is part of a free market. He stated that about the location, it is a struggling site as industrial, and this is one of the better uses. He noted that this is right near the Chilson Beach area. He discussed affordability and stated that the state sets the rates of \$1,800 to \$2,300. He discussed that there are only four single-family homes for sale in Franklin. He stated that if it is not increased, by 2030 the town will be under the 10 percent. He stated that he hears the number one concern in Massachusetts is housing. He noted that the Town just purchased over 200 acres of open space, which could have been single-family homes. He stated this is a very challenging decision. ► Mr. Cerel stated that he wanted to clarify on the projections going under 10 percent and what that means. He stated that if that happens, even if you are one unit short, a developer could come in with hundreds of units; as long as you are under 10 percent, multiple developers could come in with projects. ► Councilor Jones asked if the applicant would come back to the Town Council to do another presentation with answers to the questions asked tonight. ► Mr. Cornetta stated that there is a significant financial contribution to get to this point to provide all this detailed information which we know we will have to do for the ZBA. He suggested to allow us to go through the process and invest the money and do the studies and work with the ZBA where we invite you to participate in the process as well. He stated to let us go forward with this and we invite you to participate in that process that is in place. ► Councilor Jones proposed a motion to table Resolution 23-26: Franklin Town Council Support for Proposed GL Chapter 40B Affordable Housing Project at 121 Grove Street Pursuant to DHCD's Local Initiative Program (LIP): Friendly 40B, to the next meeting to try to afford some answers to some of the questions. ► Chair Mercer thanked the presenters for their presentation.

LEGISLATION FOR ACTION:

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

- a. ***Resolution 23-26: Franklin Town Council Support for Proposed GL Chapter 40B Affordable Housing Project at 121 Grove Street Pursuant to DHCD's Local Initiative Program (LIP): Friendly 40B (Motion to Approve Resolution 23-26 - Majority Vote).*** ► **MOTION to Waive** the Reading of Resolution 23-26: Franklin Town Council Support for Proposed GL Chapter 40B Affordable Housing Project at 121 Grove Street Pursuant to DHCD's Local Initiative Program (LIP): Friendly 40B by **Frongillo**. **SECOND** by **Dellorco**. **No discussion.** ► **VOTE: Yes-9, No-0, Absent-0.** ► **MOTION to Approve** Resolution 23-26: Franklin Town Council Support for Proposed GL Chapter 40B Affordable Housing Project at 121 Grove Street Pursuant to DHCD's Local Initiative Program (LIP): Friendly 40B by **Dellorco**. **SECOND** by **Hamblen**. **Discussion.** ► Councilor Frongillo stated that he thinks where he currently stands is leaning in favor of allowing them to move

forward; they seem like very willing participants. He stated that in no way is this an endorsement of the project where it stands but rather that we accept the basic understanding that this could add affordable housing to our inventory and adds revenue and the actual details still need to be worked out. He stated that he feels comfortable that they are strong partners and we continue to move forward. ► Chair Mercer stated that he thinks we as a Town Council have to have confidence that the ZBA as well as the Planning Board will continue to work and deal with the issues that they have brought forward. ► Councilor Pellegri stated that this resolution states that we are in support. ► Chair Mercer stated that it is in support of the paperwork being filed to let them continue to work with the authorities. ► Mr. Hellen reminded the Town Council that they are not permitting any project, and they have no jurisdiction over wetlands. He stated that there are waivers that are not under the purview of the Town Council. He stated that the support for the project is essentially to move the paperwork to the Department of Planning and Community Development. He stated that the ability for the Town Council or others to get their mitigation in is premature, and he does not have a timeline for that. ► Mr. Cerel stated that a letter of support comes from the chief executive officer of the municipality, which in this case is being given direction by the Town Council. ► Councilor Pellegri stated that she still would feel more comfortable without that word support because it is showing that we support this and some of us do not support this, but we are willing to listen to the next stages that have to be done. ► Mr. Cerel discussed what the support means. He stated that in the long run it is up to the ZBA where two of the three members would have to vote in the affirmative. ► Councilor Pellegri stated that for the reason of having that word in there, she is going to have to vote no. ► Councilor Chandler stated that he thinks that the bottom line is it does not matter what we say because they are going to go to the ZBA. ► Councilor Dellorco stated that when we went over the 10 percent, we thought that everything now would come to us, but that is not true. He stated that now, anyone can just go to the ZBA with a Friendly 40B, and what is left to be built in 2030 anyway as there will be nothing left to build. ► Chair Mercer requested a roll call vote. ► **ROLL CALL VOTE: Chandler-NO; Cormier-Leger-NO; Dellorco-NO; Frongillo-YES; Hamblen-YES; Jones-NO; Mercer-YES; Pellegri-NO; Sheridan-YES. ► VOTE: Yes-4, No-5, Absent-0. Motion Fails.**

b. Resolution 23-27: Acceptance of an Additional 2% COLA for Retirees, as Authorized by Chapter 269 of the Legislative Acts of 2022 (Motion to Approve Resolution 23-27 - Majority Vote).

► Councilor Jones read the resolution. ► **MOTION to Approve Resolution 23-27: Acceptance of an Additional 2% COLA for Retirees, as Authorized by Chapter 269 of the Legislative Acts of 2022 by Dellorco. SECOND by Hamblen. Discussion:** ► Mr. Hellen reviewed that Norfolk County is requesting all legislative bodies approve an additional 2 percent COLA for retirees over the 3 percent COLA this year to assist retirees with the impacts of inflation. By law, the Town Council is required to authorize this increase. Every community in Norfolk County has, or will, approve this COLA increase for retirees. In response to a question, he stated that this is not a budgetary item of the Town, it comes off the county assessment. He stated that there is no real budget impact; this will impact possibly in FY25/FY26. He stated that the pension system is run by the state. ► Councilor Frongillo asked for a presentation on pension liability. ► Mr. Hellen gave a brief review of the pension liability system and the funding. He stated that they send you the bill and you have to pay it or you do not; it is a challenging issue to get arms around. **VOTE: Yes-9, No-0, Absent-0.**

c. Bylaw Amendment 23-893: Amendment to Sewer System Map - Second Reading (Motion to Approve Bylaw Amendment 23-893 - Majority Roll Call Vote). ► Councilor Jones read the bylaw amendment. ► **MOTION to Approve Bylaw Amendment 23-893: Amendment to Sewer System Map by Dellorco. SECOND by Hamblen. Discussion:** ► Mr. Hellen stated that this is the second and final reading of the sewer map amendment which, if approved, will allow a sewer connection from the cannabis grow facility which is currently under construction at 160 Grove Street. ► **ROLL**

CALL VOTE: Chandler-NO; Cormier-Leger-YES; Dellorco-YES; Frongillo-YES; Hamblen-YES; Jones-YES; Mercer-YES; Pellegrini-YES; Sheridan-YES. ► VOTE: Yes-8, No-1, Absent-0.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT: ► Mr. Hellen gave a thank you to the Franklin Fire Department and Senior Center staff for the annual corned beef dinner. He stated that there is a meeting at 8:30 AM at the Senior Center Café tomorrow for citizens to come down and look at the fixes that have been made. He offered condolences to Police Sergeant Nicholas Palmieri, the Franklin Police Department community, the Oak Street School community, and Franklin Public Schools community for the loss of Bianca Palmieri.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS:

- a. **Capital Budget Subcommittee.** None.
- b. **Economic Development Subcommittee.** ► Councilor Hamblen stated that the next meeting is scheduled for next Wednesday at 6 PM at Council Chambers, and they will discuss accessory dwelling units.
- c. **Budget Subcommittee.** ► Chair Mercer stated that they met and discussion centered around a lot of the school side of the budget. He stated that he thinks the plan regarding the budget process is that they will not have another joint meeting until the budget hearings scheduled for May 24 and May 25.
- d. **GATRA Advisory Board.** ► Councilor Frongillo stated that they are not meeting this month, but they are preparing the budget and hoping to have that by May.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS: ► Councilor Sheridan requested a discussion regarding a place to put up different types of flags which was brought up earlier. ► Mr. Hellen noted that he was going to meet with Ms. Amber Wilson who spoke during Citizens Comments. ► Councilor Frongillo stated that he was going to say something similar and stated that if you feel that you need a policy, then I would like to provide you with that policy in order to make what I think is a no-brained decision to raise the Pride flag. ► Councilor Hamblen stated that she agreed with what Councilors Sheridan and Frongillo talked about. She stated that she thinks it would be really good to have a discussion about the pensions.

COUNCIL COMMENTS: ► Councilor Sheridan wished all a Happy St. Patrick's Day. ► Councilor Frongillo noted the Arts and Culture symposium at Dean College on March 30. He noted that the Open Space and Recreation survey is still open until April 16, and the Arts and Culture survey is open until June 1. He stated that Senior Center office hours are tomorrow. He stated that on March 29, from 4 PM to 6 PM, there is a Converse and Conserve workshop regarding if you own land and how to pass on an estate. ► Councilor Hamblen stated that she says everything that Councilor Frongillo said, and she gave condolences to the Palmieri family. ► Councilor Cormier-Leger gave condolences to the Palmieri family. He congratulated all new police officers. He thanked all who came out to the first Arts and Culture meeting at Dean College; it was a great discussion. He congratulated the cast, staff, and volunteers of *Something Rotten* at The Black Box; it was a fantastic performance. He stated that he gives his public support about the Pride flag and in general our efforts to figure this issue out. He stated that this will have his full support. ► Councilor Chandler stated that last week the MA Supreme Court ruled about when the Chair of a committee can ask people who are speaking to sit down and stop speaking. He asked if something can be provided about this. ► Mr. Cerel stated that he understands that the MMA is putting out detailed guidance and is working on it now so you will know how to proceed. ► Councilor Pellegrini stated that in our rules and orders there is something about the Chair being able to tell someone to sit down and maybe that is something that needs to be changed or added to. ► Mr. Cerel stated that you can still regulate disruptive conduct, but you cannot have a code of civility. ► Councilor Pellegrini noted the Franklin Rod & Gun Club's breakfast this Sunday which starts at 7:30 AM and is \$8 for adults and \$4 for children. She asked for an update on the Brick School and the old museum. She gave her deepest sympathies to the Palmieri family. ► Mr. Hellen stated that regarding the Red Brick Schoolhouse, the windows that were sent were rejected because they were 4 in. too wide; they were reordered and will be

here in possibly four to six months. He stated that the Historical Museum cupola is probably still one year out. He stated that the South Franklin Church regarding building by Habitat for Humanity is being worked on at their end. ► Councilor Jones gave his sympathies to the Palmieri family. He congratulated the new police officers. He thanked the Town Council members and his new teammates regarding the next Master Plan. He congratulated his son for being promoted to the highest rank of chief in the U.S. Naval Sea Cadet Corps; he stated that he is very proud of his son. ► Councilor Dellorco gave his condolences to the Palmieri family. He noted the passing of Olinto “Willie” Colace and gave his condolences to the Colace family. He stated that he has received some complaints about the traffic in front of St. Mary’s Church regarding the backups. ► Chair Mercer thanked everyone who was present for tonight’s meeting. He congratulated the new police officers. He thanked the presenters for tonight’s meeting.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: None.

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

Meeting adjourned at 10:46 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Judith Lizardi
Recording Secretary