

REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING  
Council Chambers, City Hall  
January 6, 2025

Members Present: Douglas Baker, Mayor  
Donna Fletcher, Deputy Mayor (via phone conference)  
James Johnson  
Christian Marshall  
Samuel Lyons  
Ashley Smith  
Todd Zahner

Members Excused: None

In Attendance: James Wetzel, City Manager  
Harmony Motter, Finance Director  
Cindi Power, City of Franklin  
Kevin Saragian, Police Chief  
T.J. Parks, Recording Secretary  
Amanda Power, City of Franklin  
Brian Spaid, Solicitor  
Alex Spaid, Dale Woodard Gent McFate  
Helen Fielding, The Derrick  
Joshua Byers, 612 Sibley Avenue

Mayor Baker called the meeting to order at 7:01 P.M.

**ADOPTION OF AGENDA – Resolution No. 1**

Mr. Johnson moved to adopt the agenda as presented, seconded by Mr. Marshall. The motion passed unanimously.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES – Resolution No. 2**

Mr. Marshall motioned to approve the minutes of the 2025 Budget Hearing, Cable Franchise Hearing, FY-2024 CDBG Modification Hearing and the regular City Council meeting all of December 2, 2024, and the Special City Council meeting of December 30, 2024, as presented. Mrs. Fletcher seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

**PAY THE BILLS – Resolution No. 3**

Mr. Lyons moved to pay the bills as presented. Mr. Johnson seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

**CITIZENS' INQUIRIES** – None

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**CERTIFICATES OF APPROPRIATENESS –**

The following requests came before HARB at its December 17, 2024 meeting:

- 927 Elk Street – Balconies
  - **Resolution No. 4** – Mr. Marshall motioned and Ms. Smith seconded to approve the request for 927 Elk Street as presented. The motion passed unanimously.
  
- 612 Sibley Avenue – Fencing
  - Mr. Wetzel explained that HARB was unable to come to a consensus on making a recommendation to Council as the gated portion of the proposed fence goes across a portion of City-owned property. Mr. Byers, the property owner, explained that the fence is for the safety of a handicapped family member. Mr. Spaid advised denying the request for a Certificate of Appropriateness until he can confirm that the project does involve City property and develop an appropriate solution that works for everyone.
  - **Resolution No. 5** – Mr. Johnson motioned and Mr. Lyons seconded to deny the request for 612 Sibley Avenue. The motion passed unanimously.

**APPROVAL – CDBG FY-2024 MODIFICATION – ADMINISTRATION FUNDS –**

**Resolution No. 6**

Mrs. Power reminded Council of the FY-2024 CDBG budget modification hearing that was held on December 2, 2024, that included a \$1,707 deduction in the amount of administrative funds being requested for a new total of \$53,553. As there were no adverse comments made during the public comment period, Mrs. Power respectfully requested Council approve the requested modification.

Mr. Marshall motioned and Ms. Smith seconded to approve the requested modification to the City’s FY-2024 CDBG application as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

**RATIFY – MAIN STREET MATTERS FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT GRANT**

**RESOLUTION – Resolution No. 7**

Mr. Parks reminded Council of their approval to submit a façade improvement grant application to the Main Street Matters program through the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED). He explained that a resolution template is typically provided with the grant application; however that was not the case, so a resolution was drafted based on the language required in the grant guidelines. After the grant application was submitted, DCED provided a resolution template and asked the City to pass the resolution again.

Ms. Smith motioned to accept the resolution as presented. Mr. Marshall seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

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**RATIFY – SUBMISSION OF FEMA ASSISTANCE TO FIREFIGHTERS GRANT APPLICATION – Resolution No. 8**

Mr. Wetzel informed Council of a joint Regional Assistance to Firefighters Grant application between the Sandycreek Township VFD and the Franklin Fire Department for 28 self-contained breathing apparatus, additional face pieces and RIT packs. The total amount being requested is \$329,550 with the City’s portion being \$197,400. If successful, the City’s 5% match would be \$9,870.

Mrs. Fletcher motioned to ratify approval of the grant application submission as presented. Mr. Lyons seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**FINAL READING – BILL NO. 11 – TRAFFIC CODE AMENDMENT – ELK STREET – Resolution No. 9**

Mr. Spaid read Bill No. 11, “Traffic Code Amendment – Elk Street,” into the record.

Mr. Marshall motioned to pass on Final Reading, Bill No. 11. Mr. Johnson seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

**FINAL READING – BILL NO. 12 – INCURRING OF LEASE RENTAL INDEBTEDNESS – PENNVEST LOAN – Resolution No. 10**

Mr. Spaid read Bill No. 12, “Incurring of Lease Rental Indebtedness – PENNVEST Loan,” into the record.

Mr. Marshall motioned and Ms. Smith seconded to pass on Final Reading Bill No. 12. The motion passed unanimously.

**PARK AND PARADE ASSEMBLY REQUESTS – Resolution No. 11**

Mr. Wetzel introduced the following public assembly request:

- February 8, 2025 • Fountain Park • FFAC • Franklin On Ice

Mr. Johnson motioned to accept the public assembly request as presented, seconded by Mr. Lyons. The motion passed unanimously.

**REPORTS**

**Manager –**

- Mr. Wetzel presented a request for a handicap parking spot at 614 10<sup>th</sup> Street. The property is a rental property with no official tenant(s), however it may be rented upon condition of approving the handicap parking request. Chief Saragian did not recommend approving the request because there is no parking in the 600 block of 10<sup>th</sup> Street between November 15<sup>th</sup> and April 15<sup>th</sup> due to snow removal logistics, the steepness of the hill and the fact that the parking spot would be for a prospective tenant, not an existing one. After discussion, Council agreed not to approve the request.
- The Franklin Police Department is currently conducting background check on two (2) potential new hires.

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- The Franklin Fire Department has recently hired two (2) minutemen who will be starting soon.
- The Venango County Hazard Mitigation Plan Review is scheduled for January 9<sup>th</sup> at 10 A.M. at 737 Elk Street, or a virtual option is available at 6 P.M. the same day.
- Mr. Wetzel presented a letter of support that the Franklin Rotary Club asked Council to execute as they are applying for a grant for the dog park. No information was provided on the specifics of the grant, i.e. the amount being requested, who the potential grantor is and what aspect(s) of the project the grant would fund. Mr. Wetzel said he reached out to the Rotary for that information but has not heard back. When he does, he will inform Council.
- Requested time in Executive Session for matters of real estate negotiations, potential litigation and personnel.

**Solicitor** – Mr. Spaid stated that he is continuing to work on an agreement between the City and the Franklin Rotary for the dog park.

## **Mayor Appointments** –

## **COUNCIL REPORTS**

### **Mayor Baker** –

- Announced his intention to run for another four (4) year term as Mayor.
- Welcomed everyone back for an exciting and hopeful new year.

**Mrs. Fletcher** – Expressed concern regarding the state of the property at 1016 Elk Street. Since a house fire in October, there has been excessive litter throughout the yard. Mr. Wetzel said he will discuss the matter with Mr. Gibbons.

### **Mr. Johnson** –

- Announced that he intends to run for another four (4) year term on Council.
- As a member of the Honorable Knights, he is working on establishing a program to ensure that children who commit good deeds get recognized.

### **Mr. Marshall** –

- Announced that he will run for another four (4) year term on Council.
- Would like to see more communication with the public regarding matters such as road closures.
- Received a request from Smoke Cantina to extend the Sidewalk Café period so restaurant owners may take advantage of warm weather that may pop up outside of the timeframe currently laid out in the ordinance.
- Suggested looking into grants and possible tax incentives to help owners of historic homes maintain their properties.
- With the upcoming closure of Feldman's Jewelers, Mr. Marshall congratulated Doug and Nikki Volmrich on their retirement after many successful years in business.

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**Mr. Lyons** – Announced that he does not intend to run for another term on Council and thanked all Council members and City staff whom he has worked with over the past 20 years.

**Mrs. Smith** –

- Reminded everyone of the Nature Art Showcase which takes place at the Barrow-Civic Theater and is held in conjunction with Franklin On Ice.
- Thanked Mr. Shreffler to putting together an end-of-year summer of Franklin Fine Arts Council sponsored events.

**Mr. Zahner** – Nothing to report.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION - Resolution No. 12**

Mr. Johnson motioned to enter into Executive Session at 7:29 P.M. to discuss matters of real estate negotiations, potential litigation, and personnel. Mrs. Fletcher seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before the Council, the meeting was adjourned at 8:45 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,



T.J. Parks, Recording Secretary