

REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING  
Council Chambers, City Hall  
November 10, 2025

Members Present: Douglas Baker, Mayor  
Donna Fletcher, Deputy Mayor  
James Johnson  
Samuel Lyons  
Christian Marshall  
Ashley Zaccari  
Todd Zahner

Members Excused: None

In Attendance: James Wetzel, City Manager  
Harmony Motter, Deputy Manager  
Andrew Eckel, Fire Chief  
Dan Wetzel, Franklin Fire Department  
Mark Bresee, Franklin Fire Department  
Brian Spaid, Esq., City Solicitor  
T.J. Parks, Recording Secretary  
Kevin Siragian, Franklin Police Chief  
Amanda Power, Community Development  
Cindi Power, City of Franklin  
Alex Spaid, Dale, Woodard, Gent, McFate  
Helen Fielding, The Derrick  
Jodi Lewis, Franklin Area Chamber of Commerce  
Josh Jolly, Franklin Area Chamber of Commerce  
Chuck Brehm, 440 Elk Street

Mayor Baker called the meeting to order at 7:04 P.M.

**ADOPTION OF AGENDA – Resolution No. 135**

Mrs. Fletcher moved to adopt the agenda as presented, seconded by Mr. Lyons. The motion passed unanimously.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES – Resolution No. 136**

Mr. Johnson motioned to approve the minutes of the FY-2025 Final CDBG Public Hearing and the regular City Council meeting, both of October 6, 2025, and the Special Council Meeting minutes of October 27, 2025, as presented. Mr. Marshall seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

**PAY THE BILLS – Resolution No. 137**

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

**CITIZENS' INQUIRIES** – None

**FRANKLIN AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE PRESENTATION**

Jodi Baker-Lewis, Franklin Area Chamber of Commerce Director, presented a check in the amount of \$25,000 as reimbursement to the City for services provided during Applefest. Ms. Lewis also presented as a check in the amount of \$770, which is one third of the parking revenues. Mrs. Fletcher stated that she was very displeased with allowing mobile homes and trailers in the parking lots.

**COMMUNITY AMBULANCE SERVICE RESOLUTION – Resolution No. 138**

Mr. Wetzel presented a resolution accepting a \$240,000 charitable donation from Community Ambulance Service, Inc. to the City to be given in \$60,000 increments annually over the course of four (4) years towards the purchase of a fire engine for the City's Fire Department.

Mayor Baker motioned and Mr. Johnson seconded to accept the donation from Community Ambulance Service, Inc. as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

**CERTIFICATES OF APPROPRIATENESS – Resolution No. 139**

The following requests came before HARB at its October 28, 2025 meeting:

- 1223 Liberty Street – Marquee
- 1247 Liberty Street – Sign, Paint
- 1411 Liberty Street – Sign

Mr. Johnson motioned and Mr. Marshall seconded to approve the requests as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

**APPROVAL – SALE OF 1327 EAGLE STREET VACANT LOT – Resolution No. 140**

Mr. Wetzel reminded Council of the offer of \$800 for the vacant lot at 1327 Eagle Street from Brenton Bemis of Bemis Rentals. This property was part of the 2024 bid of vacant lots with no bids being received. Mr. Bemis indicated potentially constructing a house or apartment building the future.

Mr. Johnson motion to accept the offer from Bemis Rentals as presented, seconded by Mr. Marshall. The motion passed unanimously.

**FIRST READING – BILL NO. 5 – MECHANICAL AMUSEMENT DEVICE TAX – Resolution No. 141**

Mr. Spaid read Bill No. 5, "Mechanical Amusement Device Tax", in its entirety into the record.

Ms. Zaccari indicated that she would like to see all businesses and organizations taxed equally. The ordinance, as written, does not impose the tax on service clubs that have the machines. Messrs. Marshall and Lyons expressed support for waiving the tax to services clubs as they are very generous donors to City and other community organizations.

Mr. Lyons motioned to pass on First Reading Bill No. 5 as presented. Mr. Marshall seconded the motion. The motion passed 6-1, with Mayor Baker voting in opposition.

**FIRST READING – BILL NO. 6 – 2026 BUDGET – Resolution No. 142**

Mr. Spaid read Bill No. 6, “2026 Budget”, in its entirety into the record.

Mrs. Fletcher motioned and Mr. Johnson seconded to pass on First Reading Bill No. 6 as presented. The motion passed 6-1 with Mr. Lyons voting in opposition.

**FIRST READING – BILL NO. 7 – 2026 REAL ESTATE TAX – Resolution No. 143**

Mr. Spaid read Bill No. 7, “2026 Real Estate Tax”, in its entirety into the record. The ordinance calls for a 1 millage rate increase.

Mr. Johnson motioned to pass on First Reading Bill No. 7 as presented. Mr. Marshall seconded the motion. The motion passed 6-1 with Mr. Lyons voting in opposition.

**FIRST READING – BILL NO. 8 – 2026 EARNED INCOME TAX – Resolution No. 144**

Mr. Spaid read Bill No. 8, “2026 Earned Income Tax”, in its entirety into the record.

Mrs. Fletcher motioned to pass on First Reading Bill No. 8 as presented, seconded by Mr. Lyons. The motion passed unanimously.

**ESTABLISH DATE FOR 2026 BUDGET HEARING – Resolution No. 145**

Mr. Wetzel requested to hold the 2026 Budget Hearing at 7 P.M. prior to the December 1, 2025 City Council meeting.

Mr. Zahner motioned and Ms. Zaccari seconded to hold the 2026 Budget Hearing at 7 P.M. on December 1, 2025. The motion passed unanimously.

**FY-2025 CDBG RESOLUTION – REVISED - Resolution No. 146**

Mrs. Power explained that the resolution the City has been using is not in DCED’s approved format. Since the City has a new CDBG program manager, she has requested that the FY-2025 resolution previously submitted be resubmitted using DCED’s format. She explained that there are no material changes to the resolution.

Mr. Lyons motioned to approve the revised FY-2025 CDBG resolution as presented, seconded by Ms. Zaccari. The motion passed unanimously.

**PARK AND PARADE ASSEMBLY REQUESTS – None**

## REPORTS

### Manager –

- Chief Eckel introduced the Fire Department's new full-time firefighter, Mark Bresee.
- Mr. Wetzel stated that CATA has requested to relocate the Buffalo Street bus shelter from its current location to Lot B prior to the end of the year, if feasible. There have been no resolutions between CATA and the Housing Authority nor have repairs been made to the pavement adjacent to the shelter. He hopes the transfer will be simple and can be done in-house.
- Mrs. Motter explained that FlowBird, the mobile app for paying parking fees, is now ParkMobile. With the name change came modifications to the app's fee structure within the year. The City currently pays a transaction fee of 3% plus \$0.20. With the new fee structure, there will be an additional \$0.40 charge per transaction, which Mrs. Motter feels should be the customers' responsibility to pay.
- Mr. Wetzel explained that PennDOT reached out to him requesting to change the configuration of the mast arm light poles at the intersections of 12<sup>th</sup> and Liberty and 13<sup>th</sup> and Liberty to better light the intersections. The new pole design, however, would not match the existing decorative poles. Council collectively agreed that the existing style poles are iconic to the City and provide ample lighting at the intersections.
- The recently purchased Pierce fire engine is scheduled for final inspection on December 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>.
- Mr. Spaid sent his annual letter to City of Pittsburgh attorneys stating that the City will not be paying for the use of the term, "Light Up Night."
- Request for handicapped parking space at 521 12<sup>th</sup> Street. Chief Saragian recommended approval. There were no objections from Council.
- PA Fish and Boat Commission had to postpone the 3<sup>rd</sup> Street boat launch rehabilitation project until Spring 2026.
- 11<sup>th</sup> Street playground rehabilitation project is anticipated to be completed within a couple of weeks.
- A zoning hearing request for a bed and breakfast at 1138 Otter Street was denied by the Zoning Hearing Board. The applicant indicated she will be appealing to the Court of Common Pleas.
- The City's Christmas Party will be held in Council Chambers on Friday, December 12, 2025 from 11 A.M. to 1 P.M., during which time City Hall will be closed to the public.
- Requested time in Executive Session to discuss real estate matters.

### Solicitor –

- In reference to the Venango County Historical Society installing drains within the City's right-of-way at their South Park Street location, Mr. Spaid will present an easement agreement between the City and the Historical Society for Councils approval at the December meeting.
- Mr. Spaid will continue to work on the dog park agreement with the Rotary Club.
- He will also continue to work on updating the Parking Ordinance.

**Mayor Appointments** – Mayor Baker motioned to make the following appointments and reappointments:

- **Resolution No. 147** – Appoint Stephanie Grandelis to serve the remainder of the five (5) year term expiring on June 4, 2027. Mr. Marshall seconded the motion which passed unanimously.
- **Resolution No. 148** – Reappoint Bessie Rankin to serve an additional five (5) year term on the Housing Authority Board, expiring on November 11<sup>th</sup>, 2030. Mr. Johnson seconded the motion which passed unanimously.
- **Resolution No. 149** – Reappoint Michael Nightingale to serve an additional five (5) year term on the FICDA Board, expiring on January 1, 2031. Mr. Lyons seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

## **COUNCIL REPORTS**

**Mayor Baker** – Nothing to report.

**Mrs. Fletcher** –

- Reminded everyone of Light Up Night on Saturday, November 22, 2025 at 6 P.M.
- Announced the community’s holiday tree will be arriving on Friday, November 14<sup>th</sup>.
- Has matters to discuss in Executive Session

**Mr. Johnson** – Attended a Veterans Day celebration at the Beach City Baby hangar at the Venango Airport, sponsored by Adam Guthrie.

**Mr. Marshall** –

- Thanked the Planning and Zoning Commission for their research on limiting vape shops within the City.
- Attended the October General Authority meeting on behalf of Nick Hess who raised concerns over the clean-up work at his store’s property on 12<sup>th</sup> Street.
- Was glad to see a successful turnout for Downtown Trick or Treat and the Witch Walk.
- Asked for a copy of the City’s building assessment that was conducted in 2021 by architect Amos Rudolph.
- Concerned about the water leaking from the pool at Miller-Sibley. Mr. Wetzel suggested speaking with Devin Hines and Mark Moyer from the Water Department, as they primarily take care of pool-related issues.
- Inquired about training some firefighters to conduct code enforcement to ease the burden on Mr. Gibbons. Mr. Wetzel said he would discuss with Chief Eckel.
- Looking forward to the upcoming Wine Walk, Light-Up Night and Small Business Saturday.

**Mr. Lyons** – Thanked veterans, firefighters, and police officers for this service.

**Ms. Zaccari** –

- HARB has been working with FFAC to create a mural inventory
- Venango County Heart and Soul will be presenting their Five (5) Groups of Venango County Values based on feedback from surveys and other community input methods.

**Mr. Zahner** – Glad to see the traffic light at 13<sup>th</sup> Street and Atlantic Avenue is fixed.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION - Resolution No. 150**

Mrs. Fletcher motioned to enter into Executive Session at 8:04 P.M. to discuss matters of Real Estate negotiations and other matters. Mr. Johnson seconded the motion which passed unanimously. The Executive Session ended at 8:52 P.M.

**OTHER BUSINESS** – None

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before the Council, the meeting was adjourned at 8:52 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T.J. Parks', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

T.J. Parks, Recording Secretary