

REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING
Council Chambers, City Hall
February 2, 2026

Members Present: Douglas Baker, Mayor
Donna Fletcher, Deputy Mayor (via teleconference)
James Johnson
Travis Young (via teleconference)
Christian Marshall
Ashley Zaccari
Todd Zahner

Members Excused: None

In Attendance: James Wetzel, City Manager
Brian Spaid, Esq., City Solicitor
T.J. Parks, Recording Secretary
Harmony Motter, Deputy Manager
Amanda Power, Community Development
Aaron Campbell, Police Chief
Cindi Power, City of Franklin
Alex Spaid, Dale, Woodard, Gent, McFate
Helen Fielding, The Derrick
Robin Rodgers Murray, St. John's Church
Dolley Hampton, St. John's Church
Ray Ullery-Watson, St. John's Church
Linda Lusher, Franklin Rotary Club
Denise Jones, Together We Can
Beverly Lawrence, Together We Can
Dave Ballard and Melissa Ditzenberger, 233 Overlook Drive
Wendy Thompson, St. John's Church
Mike Grill, St. John's Church
Michael Baker, 423 2nd Street

Mayor Baker called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA – Resolution No. 12

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – Resolution No. 13

Mr. Marshall motioned to approve the minutes of the regular City Council meeting of January 5, 2026 as presented. Mr. Johnson seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

PAY THE BILLS – Resolution No. 14

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

CITIZENS' INQUIRIES – None

- Mayor Baker read a proclamation recognizing and celebrating the 200th anniversary of St. John's Episcopal Church.
- Michael Baker, resident of 423 2nd Street, addressed Council with a complaint regarding excessive stormwater runoff in his front yard, which is causing foundation issues and the yard around the sidewalk to sink. Mr. Spaid advised that the City look into the source of the water before recommending any possible solutions.

FRANKLIN ROTARY CLUB – LITTLE FREE LIBRARY AND BUDDY BENCH REQUEST – Resolution No. 15

Linda Lusher, member of the Franklin Rotary Club, presented the club's proposal to install a Little Free Library and a Buddy Bench at the Miller-Sibley park in Sugarcreek Borough. Since the Buddy Bench is a relatively new concept to most, Ms. Lusher explained that it will be a colorful, easy to recognize bench to promote kindness, encourage friendship, combat bullying, and discourage antisocial behavior. Installation would occur near the concession stand and the location has been approved by the Street Department.

Ms. Zaccari motioned and Mr. Johnson seconded to approve the installation of a Little Free Library and Buddy Bench at the Miller-Sibley park as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

CERTIFICATES OF APPROPRIATENESS – Resolution No. 16

The following requests came before HARB at its January 27, 2026 meeting:

- 1263 Elk Street – Sign
- 1270 Liberty Street – Façade, signs, paint
- 313 13th Street – Sign

Ms. Zaccari motioned to approve the requests as presented. Mr. Marshall seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

FIRST READING – BILL NO. 1 – ZONING ORDINANCE AMENDMENT – RESTRICTED PERSONAL GOODS RETAIL – Resolution No. 17

Mr. Spaid read Bill No. 1, "Zoning Ordinance Amendment for Restricted Personal Good Retail," in its entirety into the record.

Mr. Spaid explained that the ordinance is very restrictive and will not allow a vape shop to become established within the City except for in very limited locations due to the 1,000 foot restrictions. Ms. Zaccari is concerned that the ordinance is too restrictive and will discourage business opportunities in the City. Mr. Spaid clarified that businesses can still sell vapes but they

cannot be their primary source of business, as the ordinance describes the amount of shelf space a business is allowed to have for such products.

Mr. Marshall motioned and Mrs. Fletcher seconded to pass on First Reading Bill No. 1 as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

ESTABLISH DATE FOR ZONING AMENDMENT PUBLIC HEARING – Resolution NO. 18

Mayor Baker motioned to schedule the Zoning Amendment Public Hearing for Monday, March 2, 2026 at 7 P.M. prior to the regular City Council meeting. Mr. Marshall seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

APPROVAL – BARRETT FLATS WATER TREATMENT PLANT LAND USE REVIEW – Resolution No. 19

Mr. Wetzel explained that the General Authority plans to construct a new water treatment plant adjacent to the existing plant at Barrett Flats on Waterworks Road using PENNVEST funds. PENNVEST requires applicants to contact local agencies which deal with land use in the project area and to present any comments on land use concerns.

There being no land use concerns relating to the project, Ms. Zaccari motioned to approve as presented. Mr. Johnson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

APPROVAL – EADS ENGINEERING RETAINER AGREEMENT – Resolution No. 20

Mr. Wetzel presented a proposed agreement for professional services between The EADS Group and the City of Franklin. The agreement would allow the City to retain The EADS Group for any engineering services that may be required and be billed as expenses for services are incurred.

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

PARK AND PARADE ASSEMBLY REQUESTS – Resolution No. 21

Mr. Wetzel introduced the following public assembly requests:

- April 5, 2026 • Riverfront Park • Franklin Alliance Church • Easter Service
- May 2-3, 2026 • Fountain Park • Franklin Gardeners Association • May Garden Mart
- June 5-7 and June 12-14, 2026, 2026 • Bandstand Park • Barrow Civic Theatre • Shakespeare in the Park
- June 19, 2026 • Bandstand Park • Together We Can • Juneteenth Celebration

Mr. Johnson motioned to accept the public assembly requests as presented, seconded by Ms. Zaccari. The motion passed unanimously.

REPORTS

Manager –

- Mrs. Motter reminded Council that the mobile parking application will be changing ownership from Flowbird to ParkMobile. The existing application charges the City a 3% processing fee plus \$0.20 per transaction for the consumers. Under new ownership, an additional \$0.40 will be charged per transaction. Mrs. Motter asked Council to approve the additional \$0.40 be charged to the consumer rather than the City covering the added expense.
 - **Resolution No. 22** – Mr. Marshall motioned to allow the additional \$0.40 transaction fee to be covered at the consumer's expense. Ms. Zaccari seconded the motion which passed unanimously.
- Mr. Wetzel introduced Aaron Campbell as the new Police Chief.
- The Pennsylvania Department of Health requested that the City's resolution and possibly the Parks Ordinance be updated with the State's current language regarding the Young Lungs At Play program, which encourages smoke and tobacco-free parks, playgrounds and recreational areas for children.
- The City was awarded \$25,000 from the McElhattan Foundation to conduct a feasibility study of the City's parking lots and installation of electric vehicle charging stations.
- Now that the HVAC upgrades at City Hall are complete, Mr. Wetzel reported that kilowatt hours at City Hall has reduced significantly according to recent utility bills.
- Commended the City crews that pitched in and helped manage the significant snowfall that occurred the past couple of weeks.
- The City is considering moving the Liberty Fest Parade to 6 P.M. on Saturday, June 27th as opposed to late morning when the parade has been held for the past several years. Due to the Route 62 Betterment Project, an alternate route may need to be discussed.
- Requested time in Executive Session to discuss matters relating to personnel.

Solicitor – Requested time in Executive Session to discuss matters at the advice of the solicitor and potential litigation.

Mayor Appointments – None

COUNCIL REPORTS

Mayor Baker –

- Commended the Community Development Department for their efforts in distributing food using CDBG FY-2021.
- Also commended the Street, Water, and Wastewater Departments for pitching in to clear streets and sidewalks of snow.

Mrs. Fletcher – Asked if there have been any state legislation updates regarding e-bikes. Nobody was aware of any updated information.

Mr. Johnson –

- Also commended the City departments on their snow removal efforts.

- Thanked Mr. Abromovich for his service as Venango County Commissioner.

Mr. Marshall –

- Inquired about the number of skilled games permits. Mrs. Motter said the Finance Department received a couple today but have not received any others. Reminders of the February 15th deadline were sent out to businesses recently.
- Asked Council to consider adding a paid holiday for City staff between New Year and Good Friday, suggesting Martin Luther King, Jr. Day and/or Presidents Day. Mr. Wetzel advised that the City's personnel code would need to be updated.
- Asked if there are any updates regarding the roofs at the Fire and Street Departments. Mr. Wetzel said he is waiting for a determination on the LSA grant application that was submitted for the Fire Department. The leaks at the Street Department have been patched and are not a major concern at the moment.
- Requested time in Executive Session to discuss matters relating to personnel.

Mr. Young – Nothing to report

Ms. Zaccari –

- Reminded everyone of this weekend's festivities, including Franklin On Ice, Chili Cookoff, Nature Art Showcase and Sale, and magic show at the Barrow-Civic Theatre.
- Knights of Columbus will be hosting a free community lunch on February 7th from 11 A.M. to 1 P.M.
- Franklin Fine Arts Council will be hosting a fundraising event on February 19th from 5 – 8 P.M. at Trails to Ales II.
- Congratulated Ryan Rudegeair on his new position as the Director of the Franklin Area Chamber of Commerce.

Mr. Zahner – Nothing to report

EXECUTIVE SESSION - Resolution No. 23

Ms. Zaccari motioned to enter into Executive Session at 8:11 P.M. to discuss matters of personnel and potential litigation. Mr. Marshall seconded the motion which passed unanimously. The Executive Session ended at 9:16 P.M.

OTHER BUSINESS – None

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Council, the meeting was adjourned at 9:17 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,



T.J. Parks, Recording Secretary