

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

Members Present: Douglas Baker, Mayor  
James Johnson  
Travis Young  
Christian Marshall  
Ashley Zaccari  
Todd Zahner

Members Excused: Donna Fletcher, Deputy Mayor

In Attendance: James Wetzel, City Manager  
Harmony Motter, City of Franklin  
Cindi Power, City of Franklin  
T.J. Parks, Recording Secretary  
Brian Spaid, Solicitor  
Helen Fielding, The Derrick  
Alex Spaid, Dale Woodard Gent McFate  
Ken Bryan, Venango County Commissioner  
Michael Baker, 423 2<sup>nd</sup> Street  
Craig Dilley, 115 Buffalo Street  
John Wilson  
Bridget Sottiaux, 956 Liberty Street  
Jodi Baker-Lewis, 1255 Liberty Street  
Helen Fielding, The Derrick  
Elijah Daubenspeck, 3<sup>rd</sup> Ward Resident  
Damian Rudder, 445 Gurney Road, Franklin Blues & BBQ  
Doug Volmrich, 1260 Liberty Street  
Ashley Schmidt, 302 Spruce Street  
Bev Hart, 1333 Elk Street

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

**ADOPTION OF AGENDA – Resolution No. 24**

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

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES – Resolution No. 25**

Ms. Zaccari motioned to approve the minutes of the regular City Council meeting of February 2, 2026 as presented. Mr. Young seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

**PAY THE BILLS – Resolution No. 26**

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

**CITIZENS' INQUIRIES** – None

- John Wilson expressed frustration with the timing of a traffic light on 13<sup>th</sup> Street, which changes to red to allow opposing traffic through the intersection; however there is rarely traffic coming off of the opposing street. Mayor Baker said City staff will investigate the timing of the light.
- Bridget Sottiaux, resident of 956 Liberty Street, stated that people are parking beyond the “No Parking Sign” ahead of the intersection of Liberty and 10<sup>th</sup> Streets, creating already existing sightline issues. She mentioned numerous accidents and near misses occur at the intersection, particularly when St. Patrick Church is conducting Mass. Mayor Baker assured that City staff will look at additional ways to make the intersection safer.
- Michael Baker, resident of 423 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, was present to follow up with Council regarding his complaint of excessive stormwater runoff in his front yard which he brought up at the February Council meeting. He reminded Council that the excessive stormwater runoff is causing foundation issues and the yard around the sidewalk to sink. Mr. Wetzel stated that City crews are waiting for heavy rainfall to try to determine where the runoff is coming from.
- Ken Bryan, Venango County Commissioner, updated Council on the County’s ATV initiative. PennDOT provided a letter of support.
  - He also discussed a request from The Runway Restaurant to add signage promoting the restaurant to the sign at the Knights of Columbus building at 1436 Liberty Street. Mr. Spaid advised that the Zoning Ordinance does not allow signage for other businesses to be placed in another’s property to promote a business.
  - Installment of the sensory playground equipment at Riverfront Park started.
- Dan Palo, from the Franklin Rotary Club, announced that Rotary has raised \$51,000 so far for the dog park. There are two (2) grant applications outstanding and other fundraising opportunities upcoming.

**FRANKLIN LITTLE LEAGUE – BATTING CAGES** – Resolution No. 27

Ashley Schmidt of the Franklin Little League, updated Council on the League’s request to install batting cages from a couple years ago. The League is working with JM Warren to construct the cages which now have a more open design concept than previously discussed. JM Warren will also donate supplies to construct dug outs at the VFW field. The League would also like to take on some maintenance projects at the concession stand.

**CERTIFICATES OF APPROPRIATENESS** – None

**FINAL READING – BILL NO. 1 – ZONING ORDINANCE AMENDMENT –  
RESTRICTED PERSONAL GOODS RETAIL** – Resolution No. 28

Mr. Spaid read Bill No. 1, “Zoning Ordinance Amendment for Restricted Personal Good Retail,” into the record.

Mr. Marshall motioned and Mr. Johnson seconded to pass on Final Reading Bill No. 1 as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

**RESOLUTION TO PETITION PLCB – DOWNTOWN NOISE ORDINANCE  
EXEMPTION RENEWAL – Resolution No. 29**

Mr. Spaid presented a resolution authorizing the City to petition the Pennsylvania Liquor Control Board to substitute and enforce the City’s Noise Ordinance for section 493(34) of the Liquor Code for all licensees in a designated area of the Central Business District.

Mr. Johnson motioned to accept the resolution as presented, seconded by Mr. Young. The motion passed unanimously.

**PROCLAMATION – APRIL 2026 PENNSYLVANIA 811 SAFE DIGGING MONTH –  
Resolution No. 30**

Mayor Baker read a proclamation designating April as “Pennsylvania 811 Safe Digging Month.” Ms. Zaccari suggested creating a social media post to help raise awareness of the PA One Call laws.

Ms. Zaccari motioned and Mr. Marshall seconded to adopt the proclamation as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

**APPROVAL – MICHAEL D. MCKAIN FORESTRY AGREEMENT – Resolution No. 31**

Mr. Wetzel reminded that the owner of Arnold Forestry retired and recommended Michael D. McKain Forestry. The agreement consists of evaluating approximately 850 acres wooded areas within the City and mark trees suitable for sustainable removal. The forester would retain 10 percent of any timber sales made.

Mr. Johnson motioned and Ms. Zaccari seconded to approve the agreement with Michael D. McKain Forestry as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

**PARK AND PARADE ASSEMBLY REQUESTS – Resolution No. 32**

Mr. Wetzel introduced the following public assembly requests:

- March 28, 2026 • Fountain Park • FFAC • Easter Egg Hunt
- June 19, 2026 • Bandstand Park • Doug Volmrich • Blues and BBQ Festival
- July 12, 2026, 2026 • Bandstand Park • First UM Church • Outdoor Worship Service
- August 29, 2026 • Bandstand Park • UMPC Magee Women’s Pregnancy & Recovery Center • Overdose Awareness Day
- September 19, 2026 • Bandstand Park • Edward Jones • Mini Walk to End Alzheimer’s

Mr. Johnson raise concerns about the Blues and BBQ Festival occurring at the same time as the Juneteenth Celebration, which was approved at the February meeting. Mr. Wetzel stated that both organizations are working together to figure out a schedule that will allow the Juneteenth Celebration to continue without disruption from the Blues and BBQ Festival setup.

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

## **REPORTS**

### **Manager** –

- Announced that interviews for a new Meter Enforcement Officer have started following Cody Baker's resignation effective February 20, 2026.
- PennDOT contracted with The Traffic Group, Inc. who will be collecting traffic data on roughly 20 streets in the City between March 2<sup>nd</sup> and November 19<sup>th</sup>.
- The 2025 Pierce Saber for the Fire Department arrived. They are currently finishing up mounting and installation of equipment. Once that is completed, EMS inspection will be conducted.
- Requested time in Executive Session to discuss matters of negotiations, personnel and real estate.

**Solicitor** – Requested time in Executive Session to discuss matters of negotiations, personnel and real estate.

### **Mayor Appointments** – Resolution No. 33

Mayor Baker motioned to reappoint Jason Wible to serve an additional five (5) year term on the FICDA Board, expiring on January 1, 2031. Mr. Johnson seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

## **COUNCIL REPORTS**

**Mayor Baker** – Nothing to report

**Mrs. Fletcher** – Not present.

**Mr. Johnson** – Saddened by the closing of The Derrick and congratulated Helen Fielding on her exquisite journalism.

**Mr. Marshall** –

- Asked when the Park Mobile application will be ready for use. Mrs. Motter responded that she is not sure when the merger between Park Mobile and FlowBird is set to be finalized, but users can still operate the FlowBird application.
- Inquired about updates on the Betterment Project. Mr. Wetzel said that bids have been received and opened but no award announcements have been made.
- Attended the most recent FICDA Board meeting and accompanied the Board on a tour of the facility. He would like to have a similar tour of City-owned facilities.
- There were no announcements made when 13<sup>th</sup> Street was closed last week. Mr. Wetzel said National Fuel was doing the work and did not notify the City that there would be traffic disruptions.
- Requested time in Executive Session to discuss personnel matters.

**Mr. Young** – Nothing to report

**Ms. Zaccari –**

- Received an email from Pennsylvania Municipal League drawing attention to House Bill 1291 regarding public notice requirements and updates surrounding the closure of many local news papers. She will continue to watch for future updates on this legislation.
- Would like to see a comparison of the 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter budget and actual expenses.

**Mr. Zahner –** Notice an increase in the number of stray cats in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Ward. Encouraged residents to reach out to Precious Paws to have their pets spayed and neutered.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION - Resolution No. 34**

Ms. Zaccari motioned to enter into Executive Session at 7:55 P.M. to discuss matters of negotiations, personnel and real estate. Mr. Marshall seconded the motion which passed unanimously. The Executive Session ended at 9:28 P.M.

**OTHER BUSINESS** – None

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before the Council, the meeting was adjourned at 9:28 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,



T.J. Parks, Recording Secretary