

REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING
Council Chambers, City Hall
June 2, 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
Cindi Power, City of Franklin
Kevin Saragian, Police Chief
T.J. Parks, Recording Secretary
Amanda Power, City of Franklin
Brian Spaid, Solicitor
Helen Fielding, The Derrick
Alex Spaid, Dale Woodard Gent McFate
Dan Wetzel, Franklin Fire Department
Andrew Eckel, Fire Chief
Dave Ballard and Melissa Ditzenberger, 233 Overlook Drive
Ryan Rudegeair, 1255 Liberty Street
Stephanie Felmlee, 313 13th Street
Amber Dale and James Wray, Seneca, PA

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

ADOPTION OF AGENDA – Resolution No. 59

Mayor Baker requested to add item 12.A, Adoption of Anti-displacement Plan, to the agenda.

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – Resolution No. 60

Mr. Lyons motioned to approve the minutes of the regular City Council meeting of May 5, 2025, as presented. Mr. Marshall seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

PAY THE BILLS – Resolution No. 61

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

CITIZENS' INQUIRIES –

- Dave Ballard, owner of Trails to Ales, asked Council to consider rearranging the dumpsters in Lot C to tidy up the appearance of the rear entrances to the businesses. Mr. Wetzel said that he has been brainstorming options and will contact Mr. Ballard to discuss them.
- Bev Hart, resident of 1333 Elk Street, discussed concerns with City Hall not being fully handicap accessible. Mrs. Power stated that a Local Share Account grant application to make ADA upgrades to City Hall was submitted November of 2024; awards have not been announced yet. Upgrades include making the 13th Street entrance, the door through the lobby into the hallway and the door into the Finance Department handicap accessible, as well as new flooring.

CERTIFICATES OF APPROPRIATENESS – Resolution No. 62

The following request came before HARB at its May 27, 2025 meeting:

- 1260 Liberty Street – Sign
- 1262 Liberty Street – Sign

Mrs. Fletcher motioned and Mr. Lyons seconded to approve the request as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

FIRST READING – BILL NO. 2 – OPEN CONTAINER (SIP N' SHOP) AMENDMENT – Resolution No. 63

Mr. Spaid read Bill No. 2, “Open Container Amendment”, in its entirety into the record. He explained the purpose of the amendment is to allow lids on the clear cups provided through the Sip n’ Shop program.

Mr. Marshall motioned and Ms. Zaccari seconded to approve on First Reading Bill No. 2. The motion passed unanimously.

FIRST READING – BILL NO. 3 – TRAFFIC CODE AMENDMENT – ELK STREET – Resolution No. 64

Mr. Spaid read Bill No. 3, “Traffic Code Amendment – Elk Street”, in its entirety into the record.

Mr. Marshall motioned and Mr. Johnson seconded to approve on First Reading Bill. No. 3. The motion passed unanimously.

PENNDOT RIGHT-OF-WAY RESOLUTION – PARCEL #25 (15TH STREET)– Resolution No. 65

In regards to the Route 62 Betterment Project, Mr. Wetzel presented a resolution that will grant PennDOT right-of-way access to 0.058 acres of land for property labeled as Parcel No. 25,

located on the easterly side of 15th Street and south of the 15th Street water booster station. 660 square feet of gravel will need to be roved from this area. The Commonwealth offered a one-time settlement fee of \$4,000 for the right-of-way access and direct damages for the removal and replacement of the gravel. The resolution also authorizes the City Manager to execute documents necessary to carry out the right-of-way request.

Mr. Johnson motioned to accept the right-of-way request as presented. Mr. Lyons seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

**PENNDOT RIGHT-OF-WAY & TEMPORARY CONSTRUCTION EASEMENT
RESOLUTION – PARCEL #28 (15TH STREET)– Resolution No. 66**

PennDOT has also requested a right-of-way for 997 square feet for transportation construction improvements on land identified as Parcel No. 28, which is located on the westerly side of 15th Street and south of South Bell Avenue, as well as a temporary easement for 1,053 square feet of the same property. The Commonwealth offered a one-time settlement fee of \$1,300. Again, the resolution authorizes the City Manager to execute all documents necessary to carry out the right-of-way and easement agreements.

Mr. Lyons motioned and Ms. Zaccari seconded to accept the resolution as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

**PENNDOT TEMPORARY CONSTRUCTION EASEMENT RESOLUTION – PARCEL
#136 (12TH STREET & LIBERTY STREET) – Resolution No. 67**

PennDOT also requests a temporary construction easement for 142 square feet on a parcel of land identified as Parcel No. 136, located on the northwest corner of the intersection of Liberty Street and 12th Street. Mr. Wetzel presented a resolution to grant PennDOT the requested easement and to authorize the City Manager to execute all documents associated with carrying out the easement agreement.

Mr. Johnson motioned to accept the resolution as presented. Ms. Zaccari seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

ANTI-DISPLACEMENT PLAN – Resolution No. 68

Mrs. Power described the City of Franklin Residential Anti-displacement and Relocation Assistance Plan, which is required under Section 104(d) of the Housing and Community Development Act. Any moderate to low income housing units demolished and converted using funds from the act will be replaced.

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

**APPROVAL – USED FIRE ENGINE – CHERRYTREE TOWNSHIP VFD – Resolution
No. 69**

Since Engine 34 has been out of service, the Fire Department has been borrowing engines from nearby fire departments. Cherrytree Township lent the City a 2001 GMC Smeal fire truck which has been removed from their service and available for purchase. Chief Eckel offered

\$10,000, which Cherrytree Township has accepted, and estimated another \$10,000 would be needed to conduct minor maintenance, equipment and lettering to have the truck fully in service.

Mrs. Fletcher heard that Rocky Grove VFD has a fire truck available and asked Mr. Eckel if that is a consideration. Mr. Eckel said he is currently borrowing a truck from Rocky Grove under a Memorandum of Understanding, but nobody has mentioned it being for sale.

Mr. Lyons asked if the engine from Cherrytree is in decent shape since the price is so cheap. Mr. Eckel explained that Cherrytree Township recently purchased a new truck from Bradford Township and was willing to negotiate a reasonable deal.

Mr. Johnson motioned to accept the purchase of the new fire engine from Cherrytree Township in the amount of \$10,000 and to allocate an additional \$10,000 for minor repairs. Ms. Zaccari seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

APPROVAL – FIRE ENGINE – GLICK FIRE EQUIPMENT – Resolution No. 70

Since the May meeting, Chief Eckel has reached out to numerous fire truck dealers searching for demo vehicles. Eight vehicles were located ranging in price from \$700,000 to \$1,000,000 with various delivery dates from now until February 2026. After careful consideration, Mr. Eckel feels the best fit and value would be a Pierce Saber pumper at a COSTARS price of \$792,732 and would be available in September 2025.

Chief Eckel has been working with Costars vendor, Volunteer's Financing Services, Inc., of Jonestown, PA to finance the truck. They will complete all paperwork needed for an Office of State Fire Commissioner Fire & EMS loan, which will have a term of 20 years at 2% interest in the amount of \$329,405. They will also complete all other paperwork needed to finance the remainder for 15 years with a five (5) year fixed loan amount of 6.57% interest, which Mrs. Motter explained would be \$39,000 per year. The State Fire Commissioner Fire and EMS loan would be an annual expense of \$20,000 per year.

Mr. Johnson motioned and Mr. Lyons seconded to accept the purchase of the fire engine and financing, subject to the review of the Solicitor and Finance Director. The motion passed unanimously.

PARK AND PARADE ASSEMBLY REQUESTS – Resolution No. 71

Mr. Wetzel introduced the following public assembly requests:

- July 12, 2025 • Fountain Park • Amber Dale • Wray-Dale Wedding
- August 30, 2025 • Bandstand Park • UPMC Magee Pregnancy & Women's Recovery Center • Overdose Awareness Event
- September 1, 2025 • Bandstand Park • Venango County Prayer Ladies • Prayer & Worship in the Park
- October 18, 2025 • 12th Street, between Liberty and Buffalo Streets • Franklin Retail Association • Witch Walk

Mr. Wetzel noted that the request for the Overdose Awareness Event was previously submitted, but they have changed their time from evening hours to 11 A.M. to 3 P.M.

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

REPORTS

Manager –

- State approved the transfer of the LSA grant that the City was awarded to the General Authority for the abandoned 3rd Street dam removal.
- Russell Standard is hoping to begin seal coating in Miller Park, 15th Street, 16th Street, Elk Street and Liberty Street, weather dependent.
- Traffic light at 12th and Liberty Streets is flashing because the A-108 contractor hit a wire. Contractor has a company coming in to troubleshoot.
- Prepared guidelines to allow non-profit organizations to offer paid parking in City lots during Applefest as a way for their organization to raise funds. Each organization would be asked to make a donation to the City based upon the number of parking spaces utilized.
- Presented a petition with 21 signatures for speed humps in the 700 block of Buffalo Street. There is a digital speed sign in the 500 block, collecting speed data for reference.
- Asked permission to place Engine 35 on Muncibid.
 - **Resolution No. 72** – Mrs. Fletcher motioned and Mr. Lyons seconded to approve placing Fire Engine 35 on Muncibid. The motion passed unanimously.
- Requested time in Executive Session for the purposes of potential litigation and real estate.

Solicitor –

- Feels that there won't be any legal issues with making non-profits tax exempt from the games of chance tax.
- Requested time in Executive Session to discuss matters of personnel and real estate.

Mayor Appointments – **Resolution No. 73**

Mayor Baker motioned to reappoint Hope Bittner to serve on the Shade Tree Commission for an additional five (5) year term to expire on June 4, 2030. Mr. Lyons seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

COUNCIL REPORTS

Mayor Baker – Nothing to report.

Mrs. Fletcher – Congratulated the Black Knight Marching Band's performance in Washington, D.C.

Mr. Johnson –

- Attended the Franklin High School graduation ceremony.
- Informed of the Oil Region Library Association's referendum petition. They need 378 signatures.