

REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING
Council Chambers, City Hall
June 3, 2024

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

Members Excused: None

In Attendance: James Wetzel, City Manager
Harmony Motter, Deputy Manager
Charles Gibbons, City of Franklin (via Teleconference)
Amanda Power, Community Development
Michael Gorman, City of Franklin (via Teleconference)
Kevin Saragian, Franklin Police Chief
T.J. Parks, Recording Secretary
Brian Spaid, Solicitor
Helen Fielding, The Derrick
Bev Hart, 1333 Elk Street
Jennifer Taylor, 1526 Buffalo Street
David Ballard and Melissa Ditzenberger, 233 Overlook Drive
Barbara Matthews, 1239 Liberty Street
Irene McCabe, Resident
Jeff Hawke, 121 Summit Drive
Chip Abramovic, Franklin Blues and BBQ
Stephanie Felmlee, 313 13th Street
Danielle Benson, 1256 Liberty Street
Nancy Schettig, 333 Gurney Road
Stephanie Rodgers, Gurney Road
Steve Carter, 329 Gurney Road
Dave Comiske, 1315 Liberty Street

Mayor Baker reconvened the meeting at 7: 00 P.M.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA – Resolution No. 85

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – Resolution No. 86

Mr. Wetzel noted that the amount listed under “Used Bucket truck Bid Results” should have read \$50,000, not \$55,000.

Mr. Johnson motioned to approve the minutes of the regular City Council meeting of May 6, 2024, as corrected. Mrs. Fletcher seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

PAY THE BILLS – Resolution No. 87

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

CITIZENS' INQUIRIES –

- Danielle Benson, owner of Smoke Cantina restaurant, requested permission to allow live outdoor music in the alley alongside the restaurant as part of the Sidewalk Café program. Due to the limited amount of space in the alley, the entertainment would consist of one person for instrumental and/or vocal accompaniment. The Sidewalk Café ordinance does not permit outside music within the public right of way. Solicitor Spaid said he would look into the reasoning behind disallowing music before Council makes a decision on Ms. Benson's request, which may involve revisions to the Sidewalk Café ordinance.
- Steve Carter, resident of Gurney Road, discussed his concerns about erratic driving in the Franklin Heights neighborhood. He cited a recent instance where his mailbox was taken out by a speeding vehicle and several near-miss incidents of his neighbors being hit. Mr. Carter asked Council to consider adding speed humps along Gurney Road.

HANDYMAN PRESENTATION – JUSTIN STEINBUGL

Mr. Steinbugl did not show up to present his proposed services.

CERTIFICATES OF APPROPRIATENESS – Resolution No. 88

The following requests came before HARB at its May 28, 2024 meeting:

- 421 12th Street – Soffit and Corbel Repair
- 1411 Liberty Street – Replace Covered Patio
- 722 Wiley Avenue – Re-roofing Project
- 1246 Liberty Street – Window Decals

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

FINAL READING – BILL NO. 4 – ZONING ORDINANCE AMENDMENT – SIGN REGULATIONS – Resolution No. 89

Mr. Spaid read Bill No. 4, "Zoning Ordinance Amendment – Sign Regulations," into the record.

Mr. Lyons motioned and Mrs. Fletcher seconded to pass, on second reading, Bill No. 4, "Zoning Ordinance Amendment – Sign Regulations," as presented. Mr. Marshall and Mrs. Smith voted in opposition of the ordinance. The motion to approve passed 5-2.

DISPOSAL OF PARCELS BID RESULTS – Resolution No. 90

Mr. Wetzel presented the results of the vacant properties bid opening that occurred at 10:00 A.M. on May 28, 2024. Of the twenty-one available properties, eight (8) bids were

received for seven (7) properties. All of the properties that received a bid received only one (1), except for 1203 Sassafras Street, which received two (2). The high bids were presented as follows:

- 79 Buffalo Street – William Hale - \$75.00
- 420 4th Street – Jeffrey Brenan - \$3,002.00
- 1326 Eagle Street – David Lenhart - \$800.00
- 1407 Eagle Street – Sadyra Harris - \$707.59
- 1203 Sassafras Street – Jerry Misiaszek - \$1,200.00
- 708 14th Street – Sadyra Harris - \$2,250.79
- 817 Old Mercer Road – Michael Owens - \$50.00

Mr. Johnson motioned to accept the bids as presented. Mrs. Fletcher seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

RESOLUTION – CITY OF FRANKLIN V. TRACY

Mr. Spaid presented a resolution to begin the Declaration of Taking process for properties that are blighted and abandoned for the purpose of demolishing the structures. Rose Tracy, the owner of the properties, does not have the means to make the necessary repairs to make them habitable, nor has she expressed a desire to do so. The properties are identified as parcel numbers 10,102.-002..-000 and 10,102.-002..-000/02.

Resolution No. 91 – Mr. Johnson motioned and Mr. Marshall seconded to approve the resolution as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

Resolution No. 92 – Mr. Johnson motioned and Mrs. Smith seconded to retain the services of Beith Associates to conduct an appraisal of the properties, and to utilize Cynthia Moon as an alternate. The motion passed unanimously.

APPROVAL – ARLE GRANT – GRANT STREET IMPROVEMENTS – Resolution No. 93

Mr. Parks requested permission to submit an Automated Red Light Enforcement (ARLE) grant application that will make various pedestrian safety improvements to areas in the Third Ward including high-visibility crosswalks and pedestrian crossing signs along Grant Street (Route 322), increase stop sign size at all stop-controlled intersections and installing reflectorized strips to stop sign posts, trim vegetation in advance of stop signs, add stop bars and dashed white edge lines at intersections, and delineation along both sides of the street within the curbed sections of Grant Street between Coefield Corners and Mayor’s Garden at Atlantic Avenue. Additional improvements include addressing sun glare to the traffic signal at 13th Street and Atlantic Avenue, and revise the overhead signage at 13th Street and Atlantic Avenue and 417 south to be in compliance with MUTCD standards. Lastly, the application would include the installation of object markers at the end of the islands within the Coefield Corners intersection. The estimated cost for the project is \$340,000 and does not require matching funds.

Mr. Lyons motioned to approve submission of the ARLE Grant as presented. Mr. Johnson seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

2024 HOME INVESTMENT PARTNERSHIPS PROGRAM

Mr. Wetzel requested a request for a Letter of Support from the Venango County Planning Commission for the submission of a HOME Investment Partnerships Program Grant. The application will request \$750,000, to be split between the City of Franklin and the City of Oil City, to bring eligible properties within the County up to code and provide safe, sanitary and decent living conditions for residents.

Resolution No. 94 – Mrs. Fletcher motioned and Mr. Lyons seconded to accept the submission the Letter of Support as presented. The motion passed unanimously, with the exception of Mrs. Smith, who abstained from voting to avoid a possible conflict of interest.

Mr. Wetzel also presented a resolution to allow the County to file the application to request \$375,000 on the City’s behalf.

Resolution No. 95 – Mrs. Fletcher motioned and Mr. Lyons seconded to accept the resolution as presented. The motion passed unanimously, with the exception of Mrs. Smith, who abstained from voting to avoid a possible conflict of interest.

PARK AND PARADE ASSEMBLY REQUESTS

Mr. Wetzel introduced the following public assembly requests:

1. June 14, 2024 • Bandstand Park • Blues and BBQ • Live music prior to Flag Day Ceremony
2. June 18 & 20, and July 16-18, 2024 • 3rd Street Playground, Riverfront Park, Miller-Sibley Park • Venango Co. Substance Use Prevention • Summer Program Series (activities for kids)
3. October 5-6, 2024 • 12th Street from Buffalo to end of Trails to Ales II property • David Ballard • Trails Food Truck Event

Resolution No. 96 – Mayor Baker motioned to accept requests 1 and 2, seconded by Mr. Lyons. The motion passed unanimously.

Council expressed concerns about the request from Trails to Ales II, as the event is requested to take place over Applefest weekend. Mr. Ballard clarified that the event would only utilize six (6) to eight (8) parking spots in front the Trails to Ales II property and no alcohol will be permitted outside.

Resolution No. 97 – Mr. Marshall motioned to accept the request from Trails to Ales II as presented. Mr. Lyons seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

REPORTS

Manager –

- **Landowner Letter of Commitment – Watershed Restoration & Protection Program Grant**
 - The General Authority is applying for grant funds through the Watershed Restoration & Protection Program to remediate the abandoned dam at 3rd Street. The grant requires a Landowner Letter of Commitment from the City as the City is a part owner of the property.
 - **Resolution No. 98** – Mr. Johnson motioned and Mrs. Fletcher seconded to accept the Landowner Letter of Commitment as presented. The motion passed unanimously.
- Introduced Kevin Saragian as the new police chief.
- A FEMA community Assistance Visit was conducted the week of May 13th. They will provide a written report within sixty (60) days as it pertains to the floodplain.
- Fire engine #33 has been repaired in-house and is put back into service.
- The General Authority approved the engineering agreement with The EADS Group to inspect the work being conducted by FKL Development.
- Bids for City Hall HVAC upgrades are out and bid opening is scheduled for June 21, 2024 at 2:00 P.M.
- **Resolution No. 99** – Mayor Baker motioned to schedule a public hearing for CDBG FY-2024 for July 1, 2024 at 7:00 P.M. prior to the City Council meeting. Mr. Lyons seconded the motion which passed unanimously.
- The City employee picnic will be held at the Miller-Sibley pavilion on August 2, 2024 from 11:00 A.M. to 1:00 P.M., during which time City Hall will be closed.
- Requested time in Executive Session to discuss matters of negotiations.

Solicitor –

- Advised that the FEMA finding may be a hassle, as the findings in numerous municipalities have indicated a number of buildings were built without the proper permits. If the issues are not resolved, FEMA can restrict the community’s ability to get flood insurance, both residential and commercial.
- Some of the food trucks coming into town are not applying for Mercantile Licenses, as required by ordinance. Mr. Spaid is looking into the possibility of adding a flat fee to businesses that have vendors so each vendor does not have to pay a Mercantile License fee.
- Four (4) Easement Agreements will be coming before Council in July for approval relating to the General Authority’s A-108, as it will affect property owned by the City.
- Requested time in Executive Session for matters of negotiations and personnel.

Mayor Appointments – **Resolution No. 100**

Mayor Baker motioned to reappoint Marilyn Anderson and Charles Brehm to serve additional five (5) year terms on the Shade Tree Commission, which will expire on June 4, 2029. Mr. Johnson seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

COUNCIL REPORTS

Mayor Baker – Looking forward to seeing the downtown events this summer.

Mrs. Fletcher –

- Thankful for the line painting
- Reminded residents that they are responsible for mowing their grass

Mr. Johnson – Also receives frequent complaints about speeding in various areas of town.

Mr. Marshall – Continuing to receive complaints about speeding in the lower end of Elk Street. Mrs. Smith suggested sending residents a survey asking which safety countermeasures they would prefer within their neighborhoods. In the meantime, Mr. Wetzel said he would look into the cost of temporary speed humps.

Mr. Lyons – Reminded everyone that the Miller-Sibley pool opens for the summer on Friday.

Mrs. Smith – Excited for the summer events in the City and other communities. Urged attendees to exercise caution when walking and driving.

Mr. Zahner – Nothing to report.

EXECUTIVE SESSION - Resolution No. 101

Mr. Johnson motioned to enter into Executive Session at 8:09 P.M. for the purposes of negotiations and personnel. Mr. Lyons seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

OTHER BUSINESS - None

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Council, the meeting was adjourned at 9:30 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,



T.J. Parks, Recording Secretary