

REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING
Council Chambers, City Hall
August 4, 2025

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

Members Excused: Todd Zahner

In Attendance: James Wetzel, City Manager
Cindi Power, City of Franklin
Kevin Saragian, Police Chief
Charles Gibbons, Code Enforcement Officer
T.J. Parks, Recording Secretary
Brian Spaid, Solicitor
Helen Fielding, The Derrick
Alex Spaid, Dale Woodard Gent McFate
Devin Erwin, 1427 Elk Street
Roxanne Spaid, Shade Tree Commission
Ryan Rudegeair, Franklin Area Chamber
Matt Beith, 174 Pioneer Road
Eric Cook, 817 Elk Street
Ted Green, 320 Front Street

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

ADOPTION OF AGENDA – Resolution No. 93

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – Resolution No. 94

Mr. Lyons motioned to approve the minutes of the FY-2025 CDBG Preliminary Public Hearing and the regular City Council meeting, both of July 7, 2025, as presented. Mr. Johnson seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

PAY THE BILLS – Resolution No. 95

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

CITIZENS' INQUIRIES – None

CERTIFICATES OF APPROPRIATENESS – Resolution No. 96

The following requests came before HARB at its July 22, 2025 meeting:

- 1427 Elk Street – Porch/Fence
- 852 Liberty Street – Porch Roof

Mr. Wetzel indicated that a quorum was not met; therefore, the requests do not come with a positive or negative recommendation. He also noted that since the HARB meeting, the applicant for 852 Liberty Street has decided to withdraw his application for the time being.

Mrs. Fletcher motioned and Mr. Johnson seconded to approve the request for 1427 Elk Street as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

FIRST READING – BILL NO. 4 – ZONING MAP AMENDMENT –

Mr. Matt Beith reminded Council of the request for zoning change at 206 8th Street to demolish the existing structure and to rebuild a structure of similar size and style to establish a café that serves locally sourced food and beverages, as well as merchandise that promotes Franklin’s history and outdoor recreation opportunities. The request has been taken to the Planning and Zoning Board, which provided a positive recommendation for Council’s approval.

Mr. Spaid read Bill No. 4, “Zoning Map Amendment”, in its entirety into the record.

Resolution No. 97 – Mr. Marshall motioned to pass Bill No. 4 on first reading as presented. Mr. Lyons seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Resolution No. 98 – Mr. Johnson motioned and Ms. Zaccari seconded to schedule a public zoning hearing on September 8, 2025 at 7:00 P.M. prior to the regular City Council meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

2025 VENANGO COUNTY HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN UPDATE ADOPTION – Resolution No. 99

Mr. Wetzel explained that the County hired Michael Baker International to assist with updating the County-wide Hazard Mitigation Plan which is required to be updated every five (5) years. The plan was reviewed and approved by FEMA. By adopting the plan, the City would not have to develop its own plan, should a natural disaster occur.

Mayor Baker motioned to adopt the plan as presented. Mrs. Fletcher seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

APPROVAL – ARBORIST FOR TREE CANOPY DEVELOPMENT PLAN – Resolution No. 100

Mr. Parks reminded Council of the Urban and Community Forestry Grant that was awarded to the City in the amount of \$269,400. The Community Development Department opened Requests for Proposals on July 24th to obtain the services of a Tree Risk Assessment Qualified (TRAQ) arborist. One proposal was received from Eocene Environmental Group of West Des Moines, Iowa in the amount of \$24,755.34. Their proposal also consisted of pricing for

additional services, such as additional in-person meetings and providing historical canopy coverage data. Per the grant requirements, work can only be conducted in the two (2) census tracts deemed as Environmental Justice areas; otherwise, a 20% match is required.

Mr. Johnson motioned to accept the proposal from Eocene Environmental Group as presented. Ms. Zaccari seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

APPROVAL – MUNICIPAL LIEN – 710 11TH STREET – Resolution No. 101

Mr. Wetzel explained that part of a tree on property located at 710 11th Street fell on a vehicle and pulled down wires as well. After the site was cleared, the remainder of the tree was considered a safety hazard and needed to be removed. The property owners do not have homeowner's insurance or the funds to remove the tree out-of-pocket. Mr. Spaid has been advised to prepare a municipal lien in the amount of \$4,500, pending Council's approval.

Mr. Lyons and Mr. Johnson seconded to approve the issuance of a municipal lien in the amount of \$4,500 on property located at 710 11th Street. The motion passed unanimously.

PARK AND PARADE ASSEMBLY REQUESTS – Resolution No. 102

Mr. Wetzel introduced the following public assembly request:

- September 21, 2025 • Bandstand Park • Redeemer Anglican Church • Worship in the Park

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

REPORTS

Manager –

- The 2025 Municipal League Summit will be held in Erie, PA on October 1-4, 2025. Mr. Wetzel requested that Council name a voting delegate and an alternate delegate.
 - **Resolution No. 103** – Mayor Baker motioned to name Ms. Zaccari as the primary delegate, and himself as the alternate delegate. Mrs. Fletcher seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
- The Venango County Historical Society submitted a request for an easement to install a French drain around the property that would feed into a nearby storm sewer. They would need access to the City's right-of-way to lay piping that would go into the storm sewer. There were concerns about the street trees in the right-of-way; the contractor assured that the trees would not be affected. Mr. Spaid said he would include a provision that would require the Historical Society to replace the trees if they become damaged within a certain timeframe of the project.
 - Mayor Baker motioned and Mrs. Fletcher seconded to approve the easement request with the condition that the trees be replaced if they become damaged. The motion passed unanimously.
- Mr. Wetzel asked if Council would like to place Engine 34 for public bid on Municibid. No Council members objected.

- Informed Mr. Marshall that Venango County EMA has a list of warming and cooling stations throughout the County for those who need to use the facilities. There are a few locations in the City.

Solicitor – Requested time in Executive Session to discuss matters of negotiations.

Mayor Appointments – None

COUNCIL REPORTS

Mayor Baker – Nothing to report.

Mrs. Fletcher –

- Asked when the demolition of the two (2) blighted houses at 533 3rd Street is scheduled to occur. Mr. Wetzel will check with Mrs. Power.
- Asked when Curb Market will go back to its original location at the 12th Street island. Mr. Wetzel indicated that only the base coat has been laid following work associated with the General Authority's A-108 project. The base coat is not flush with the existing pavement which creates a tripping hazard. Final restoration is anticipated in September.
- Expressed concerns over bicycles on sidewalks.

Mr. Johnson – Mentioned an article in the Pittsburgh Tribune that promoted Franklin and commended Jodi Lewis of the Franklin Area Chamber for assisting with the information provided in the article.

Mr. Marshall –

- Continues to receive concerns about the situation with the CATA bus stop on Buffalo Street, particularly as people are standing out in the hot sun with no shade. Riders are sitting on residents' porches. He asked if it would be possible to put a sign on the existing bus shelter stating that riders may wait in the shelter until the bus arrives.
- Received correspondence from Sherrif Foy that the County would be willing to cover half the cost of a speed hump behind the Courthouse on Elk Street if the City will cover the remainder of the cost. Mr. Wetzel indicated concerns that requests for speed humps throughout the City will continue.
- Would like to look into the equipment necessary to have the ability to live-stream City Council meetings. Mr. Wetzel reminded that an LSA grant application was submitted in November 2024 which included technical upgrades to Council Chambers.

Mr. Lyons – Asked if there will be picnic tables at the 11th Street Playground. Mr. Parks indicated that there will be picnic tables once the upgrades are completed this fall.

Ms. Zaccari –

- Reminded that August is the last month for the Thursday night concert series in Bandstand Park, ending with the Ronnie Beith tribute on August 28.
- 25th Annual Rock In River Fest at Riverfront Park on August 16th from 10 A.M. to 4 P.M.
- Received many compliments on the Miller-Sibley pool this summer.

- Promoted the Youth Maker Minds tent at the Franklin Curb Market.

Mr. Zahner – Not present.

EXECUTIVE SESSION - Resolution No. 104

Mr. Johnson motioned to enter into Executive Session at 7:55 P.M. to discuss matters of negotiations. Mrs. Fletcher seconded the motion which passed unanimously. The Executive Session ended at 8:31 P.M.

OTHER BUSINESS –

- **Resolution No. 105** – Mr. Johnson motioned to approve the Management Agreement between the City of Franklin and the Franklin Industrial and Commercial Development Authority, retroactive to January 1, 2025 and expiring December 31, 2026. Ms. Zaccari seconded the motion which passed unanimously.
- **Resolution No. 106** – Mrs. Fletcher motioned and Mr. Marshall seconded to accept the engagement letter from Strassburger McKenna Gutnick & Gefsky to serve as Special Counsel to prepare the agreement between the City of Franklin and the McElhattan Foundation in relation to the McElhattan Challenge. The motion passed unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Council, the meeting was adjourned at 8:34 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,



T.J. Parks, Recording Secretary