

May 1, 2017 meeting,

The regular meeting of the Town of Franklin Board of Aldermen was held on Monday May 1, 2017 at 7 p.m. in the Town Hall Board Room. Mayor Robert S. Scott presided. Vice-Mayor Patti Abel, Aldermen Joe Collins, Adam Kimsey, Brandon McMahan and Barbara McRae were present.

Alderman Billy Mashburn was absent.

Motion was made by McRae, seconded by Kimsey to excuse Alderman Mashburn from the Board of Aldermen meeting. Motion carried. Vote 5 to 0.

The Pledge of Allegiance was done.

Adoption of the May 1, 2017 Town Board Agenda

Mayor Scott – I need to make one agenda change if I may. I would like to move the discussion on Angel Medical Center up to the first item under New Business.

No objection from the Board.

Alderman Collins – Mr. Mashburn isn't here tonight and he obviously has a strong opinion on the matter that was A. on the agenda. There's no urgency to it on time. I would like for the opportunity to be full strength when we vote on it. I would like for us to table that discussion and put it on next month's meeting.

Motion was made by Collins, seconded by Abel to table discussion on Board Action Regarding the Charter of the Town of Franklin to change its style of Municipal Corporation from Board of Aldermen to Town Council until June 5, 2017 meeting and approve agenda as amended. Motion carried. Vote: 3 to 2. Aldermen McMahan and McRae opposed.

Approval of the April 3 and April 17, 2017 Town Board minutes

Motion was made by McMahan, seconded by Kimsey to approve the April 3 and April 17, 2017 Town Board minutes. Motion carried. Vote: 5 to 0.

Public Session

Janet Watson – We've got a situation on Depot Street with noise in a building down there. The Saturday before Easter it started at about 9:00 p.m. and continued until about 4:00 or 5:30 a.m. Sunday morning. I called dispatch a couple of times. I finally got to sleep. On Easter morning, they were heard at Wells Grove Church when they had their sunrise service. This is ridiculous. Friday morning at about 10:00 a.m. it started again and it went all day long. At 9:00 p.m. I called dispatch. I wanted to talk to Chief Adams but I was unable to talk to him so I asked if I could speak to Mayor Bob Scott but they said he was unavailable. I picked up the phone to see if I could get his number and I did. So he met Chief Adams at the building. I think it ended at about 2:20 a.m.

Mayor Scott – I think it was a little before that.

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Janet Watson – I live up on Cook Street. They were using the Christmas lights that you shine on your house and shining them across the road onto the lumber yard. Something has to be done.

Mayor Scott – I know what you are saying and we are working on an ordinance.

Kate McMahan – Thank you for allowing me to speak. I can stand here and talk about the birthing experience and how I wanted to deliver at Angel but due to unforeseen circumstances I had to deliver at Mission. I could talk to you about my concerns for women and babies but while these are important issues, I think bigger and with more dollar signs. I have two big concerns about how this will impact our community. First, I'm concerned about how this decision will impact our community on an economic level. Immediately I thought about the current employees at in the labor and delivery department at Angel. Then I thought about our community in the long-term. Will young people want to move here and raise their families? Will businesses still be interested in bringing their companies here if we don't even have basic medical services? My other concern is that this is a symptom of perhaps a larger problem. With labor services being cut, I wonder if we will continue to receive all other services of the hospital. Other departments like pathology have already been cut. Will there be further cuts in the future? What I'm asking of all of you is to help our community understand what their healthcare will look like in the future and if there is anything that we can do to help our situation. For example, Mission is a non-profit. Is there any way for us to look at their books and see what the losses are at Angel? Is it possible that as a community we could help to bridge the gap? Thank you.

Jodi Libasci – I have the exact same concerns that Kate stated. I have the point of view that a lot of moms have, knowing the nurses and doctors up there and just being completely shocked that these wonderful people who are so caring and with such knowledge are not going to be a part of our hospital anymore which is a shame. Many people in the county have the opinion that labor and delivery is the best part of Angel. Also, I feel that it's a mother's right to deliver their baby with the doctor who they have spent nine months with. If they have to travel to another doctor how will that doctor know the things that they need to know? One concern is that Medicaid patients are what is causing this deficient at the hospital. They're on Medicaid because they are lower income. Are they going to have the means to travel to Asheville? I also feel like if it's a money thing then how much money is going to be tied up in ambulances and helicopters trying to get these mothers to the hospital in fast manner if they need to? Thank you for your time.

Maggie McRae – I am a retired certified nurse midwife. I question that 20 percent are going to Mission anyway to have their children. I have sent a lot of women to Mission because of pre-term labor. Those same issues will be here but it will be worse because we will not have labor and delivery here. The newspaper reported that in 2013 there were 219 babies born at Angel. That number increased to 400 in 2015. What wasn't mentioned in that article is that increased because nurse midwives moved to practice here at Angel. They moved to Angel because here they could do water births. They felt that openness at Angel because they didn't feel that at Harris. Not only do you have nurses, nurse midwives, physicians and their staff losing their jobs. Once you have a pregnant woman, you have a family. If you get an arrangement with Harris to deliver those babies, guess what is going to happen? They probably will not come back to Franklin and that affects pediatric services. When there are newborn babies, that's how they get pediatric services.

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Lauren Hickman – I have something written from a friend of mine who wasn't able to come tonight, Alyssa Corzgard Puckett who gave birth here in Franklin. It says I'm appalled that our town and its women aren't considered important enough for a labor unit. Not to mention all of the wonderful staff who try their best to make the child birthing experience its best who will have to find jobs. There are a lot that can go wrong on the way over to Sylva or Asheville like winter weather, traffic accidents. Why is it so easy for Mission to think that it is no big deal for us to drive to other towns or counties to have our children? That's from Alyssa. I would ask the board to maybe approach Mission as a board and maybe meeting with them to maybe clarify what could be done to preserve that service for our community.

Nancy Scott – Angel has been doing this for a long time. They have done a very good job for the women. I think this is a huge issue for these young women and for our community to attract young people. We don't want to just be a retirement community. We need these young people here and their vitality. I don't understand why they are saying they are going to spend \$45 million on a new hospital. We don't need a new hospital, we need these services.

Susannah Koppers – Part of why I signed up to speak was to address the name change so I will hold off on that part until the next meeting. I would like to read a statement by a member of our grass-roots progressive group, Angela Martin. Though I don't live in the town, I consider tonight's meeting of utmost importance for the future of the women in our area. To not embrace the idea of calling women council member or preferable salutation instead of the outdated term Aldermen, and recent corporate trends to jeopardize the safety of women in child birth sends both the direct and figurative message to women of our region that our safety and viability of citizens is not respected in Franklin, North Carolina. I want to point out that in this room there are quite a few of us. We are willing to work hard and do whatever we can to change this. We hope that we can get the support of our Town Aldermen.

David Culpepper – I don't want to be here talking about this but I was born here in this hospital as well in 1978. I really want to call out Dr. Paulson, the President of Mission for his pompous attitude towards the community. He continually beat his hand on the table telling us that he is going to build a new hospital out of charity for this community. What he really sees is a magnet for retirees so that they can milk them out of their money and not provide labor services. Mission may not be a for-profit hospital but Dr. Paulson is certainly a for-profit person. That being said, he may be operating in what he thinks is the best for Mission but I think he is wrong about the data. I don't think this is just a retirement community. We are recruiting young and youthful people to come in that are going to need labor and delivery services. Even more so, the hospital isn't going to have as many retirees here to service if there isn't young people here opening restaurants and building businesses to serve these retirees. I think he's wrong about the data. I don't know what kind of demographics we have but if you have the data, maybe you can give it to them. Thank you.

Carol Peterson – I'm an OBGYN at the hospital. I was actually one of the first recruits when they started this unit. I don't really have anything prepared. I just want to speak to the fact that some people can get over the mountain easily but also we are a very resource poor community for some of the women here. Some women here can't drive, some don't have cars. Unfortunately a lot of them make up the high risk portion of patients that we have. So they are going to come to the hospital and we're going to lose a couple. We're going to lose a few babies because they will not have the capacity to get over the mountain.

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Carol Peterson - Over the last five years, since I've been here, I can't tell you how often it has been life or death and we've had ten minutes. We've done C-sections under local anesthetic because the anesthesiologist didn't have time to get there. Those people are going to die. So the doctors, we'll be okay. We'll get jobs. The nurses, some of the most brilliant women that I've ever worked with will be okay. They will get jobs. They're not going to be unemployed but I really think the people who really, really need this service are the ones who don't have the resources to get out. The other thing I want to speak to you about is the real beauty of this practice is that we really do know every patient we deliver with. We have a personal relationship with everyone. I really do think it's a loss. I've gone through all of the stages of grief this week and I'm back to acceptance because I really don't think that we can move Mission. I don't think we can but if you think you can, Godspeed.

Amanda Haggard – I could reiterate a lot of the things that have been said here about lost revenues. A lot of people will move away from here because these services are no longer offered. I would also like to speak to you more on a personal basis. I had my son here, I had my daughter here. My step-daughter was born here, my step-son. We're a mixed family. My step-daughter is pregnant. Sometimes you can't make your children do what you want them to do but that doesn't excuse the fact that I also don't want my step-daughter to lose her life. These quick decisions that have to be made. If she has to go to the emergency room and she's transported, what will happen? I don't know. I'm fearful of that. I have several friends who are pregnant. What will happen to them? I hope the Board thinks about that and considers the impact that that will make on the community.

Megan Browning – I feel very passionate about this. My parents were born here, I was born here, and my children were born here. I was fortunate to have Dr. Burrell deliver with me. My child was able to continue seeing him after he was born. These kids won't be able to do that. I don't understand. If you find a ruby, you don't just throw it away, you put it on display. The labor and delivery services is the best part about that hospital. There is not one person up there that I can't go to that doesn't know my name. They will give you a hug if you have a miscarriage, a stillbirth, you've had false labor. They are there for you. They put everything aside to comfort you. Have you been there when there are two emergency surgeries at once? What happens when there is one helicopter out? Two helicopters out? Ambulances? How are we going to help all of these people?

Jennifer Wallace – I recently delivered two children via C-section and it was wonderful. The people up there take such good care of you. I was scared of being cut open but they held my hand and brushed the sweat off my forehead. They're so compassionate and they love doing what they do. My doctors and my office are like family. I love every one of them. They delivered both of my babies and they were fine but I did have to go back because of jaundice. I was scared. I had no idea what that was but they assured me everything would be fine. Think about umbilical cords wrapping around throats, all of the problems that could happen. Think about the families. My 15 month old daughter wouldn't have been able to come see me. The grandparents wouldn't be able to come. There is so much that can go wrong so fast. I really hope that you all reconsider this. We need these services.

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Denise Hoyle – I work at the Angel Medical Center in the women’s healthcare unit. I’ve been at Angel for 26 years. I don’t live in Macon County but I think that makes me pretty close to a citizen of this county. I want to briefly state that for a period of time I was the manager of the Women’s Healthcare Unit. I spent probably hundreds of hours in meetings discussing the unit. It was a \$9.5 million unit that they were designing for us. It was based on the demographics that were collected by people from Mission. There was the utmost confidence that we would make the money back to pay for this unit. Nothing has changed about the demographics. I have to question what has changed. I also have some caution about the promise of a \$45 million hospital because we were all promised just a few short years ago that we were going to have a brand new [women’s] unit and that we had the amount of deliveries needed to support it. Our deliveries have consistently gone up. As a matter of fact, deliveries have doubled. We don’t know all of the reasons that this is happening but I do know what I was told then and what I’ve been told now and very little has changed. I hope something can be done so that labor and delivery can be retained here in Franklin.

Carmella Brolin – I’ve gave birth to two of my daughters here. We were on the border of Otto and Franklin and the second daughter came so quick, we were going to Harris the whole time, we didn’t make Harris. We were at the old emergency room. I could not have made it over that mountain. Seeing this happen is breaking my heart. My second daughter is now pregnant and she is due the day of the closing. She is a nervous wreck. I have no words. If we could just try to come together and change their minds. Maybe it won’t happen but we can try.

Kelli Bowles – I know nothing about the financial stuff but I just wanted to be heard. I birthed my daughter four years ago and I was terrified. Then five months ago I birthed my son here and I wasn’t so worried. Both times, my birthing experience went exactly as I had hoped for. It was a dream come true to labor the way that I had hoped to. I had a choice. I didn’t have to worry about getting to Asheville. I knew that I would be safe. The laboring experience was the most beautiful experience of my life. I was cared for by the most amazing and caring women. Both times, the car ride was the worst part for me. If I would have had to of travel, I wouldn’t have made it. Without too much detail, I know I wouldn’t have. I was blessed that I didn’t have an emergency but I’m fearful for any women that might.

Amanda Stringer – I’m 32 weeks pregnant. I have to drive to Asheville and this is my fifth kid. I got sent to Mission for being high risk. We should have high risk here. I don’t want to go to Mission but I have to. It’s terrifying to know that I can go into preterm labor. It is intense driving over to Mission. I would hate to think that I could go into preterm labor again and have to drive over to Mission. When you’re in the moment that hour drive is terrifying.

Daniel Johnson – My wife works on the unit. I think the financial part of it has been a little up the hill. He talked a lot in the press conference about how much the unit is losing but what he didn’t say is that all labor and delivery units lose money. All of them. The unit here doesn’t lose anymore proportionately than Mission Asheville or any of the other hospitals in the system. So I think that is veiled as a reason as to why they are taking it away. He did say that they made \$61 million last year so if that is the case I think there is certainly a way that they can make it work here.

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Maggie McRae – Can I made an addendum? I don't think Mission figured in the costs of helicopter and emergency service. And you all work for us. Senator Jim Davis works for us and lives here. Maybe we need to stand in front of his office. And Mission? We pay taxes so we pay Mission. I don't think we give money for them to provide a service but we pay taxes and they get money from that.

New Business: Discussion on Angel Medical Center

Alderman McMahan – I want to thank everybody that spoke tonight. I'm in absolute agreement with everyone that came out and spoke. It breaks my heart. I look at these babies in the room and I think about my little boy and I hate to think about anything happening to any of them and what would happen if the facility wasn't where it needs to be. It breaks my heart but honestly don't know what we can do.

Alderman McRae – I would like to say that you ladies and gentlemen were so impressive. I hope that we can get you some answers.

Mayor Scott – I would like to ask the board to let the Town Manager and myself draft a letter. I think we could say to Dr. Paulus, please reconsider this and that maybe you could look at other areas the cut so that we can keep Labor and Delivery. Would the board authorize that or would any of you like to write the letter? I think we need to send it off in the next 48 hours. This is about the only thing that this Board can do.

Motion was made by McMahan, seconded by Abel to designate the Mayor and Town Manager to write a letter to Mission. Motion carried. Vote: 5 to 0.

New Business: Street Closing Requests

Town Manager Summer Woodard presented this item.

Street closing requests:

Monday May 15, 2017 – Law Enforcement Memorial Day – Close lotla Street from 11:00 a.m. until 1:30 p.m.

Friday May 19, 2017 – Freedom Rocks the Square – Close lotla Street from 6:00 p.m. until 9:30 p.m.

Saturday June 3, 2017 – Franklin in Bloom – Close Phillips Street from 8:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m.

Saturday August 19, 2017 – Public Safety Day – Close lotla Street from 9:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m.

Motion was made by Collins, seconded by Abel to allow the street closings. Motion carried. Vote: 5 to 0.

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New Business: Depot Street Sidewalk Construction Agreement between the Town of Franklin and the North Carolina Department of Transportation

Town Manager Summer Woodard informed the Board of a mistake on the document that was presented last month. The Town's contribution increased by \$3,600 making the match \$58,800.

Motion was made by Kimsey, seconded by Abel to approve the agreement with North Carolina Department of Transportation. Motion carried. Vote: 5 to 0.

New Business: Water Treatment Plant Bid Acceptance

Summer Woodard – Town Manager – We had our second rebid Thursday April 27 at 2:00 p.m. in this Board Room. The winning bid and the lowest bid is from Brush Mountain Builders and they're from Lenoir, NC. Their bid proposal was for \$1,578,000.00. If you remember when we looked at the bids a couple of months ago, the lowest bid was at \$2.8 million. One reason for the decrease is that the Town has looked at purchasing the Aqua Flow which is a significant cost savings.

Motion was made by McRae, Abel seconded to award the bid to Brushy Mountain Builders contingent on legal review. Motion carried. Vote: 5 to 0.

New Business: Proposed Fiscal Year 2017 – 2018 Town of Franklin Budget

1. **Presentation of Proposed Fiscal Year 2017-2018 Town of Franklin Budget.**

Motion was made by Collins, seconded by McMahan to acknowledge receipt of the Proposed Fiscal Year 2017-2018 Town of Franklin Budget. Motion carried. Vote: 5 to 0.

2. **Set Budget Work Session for Monday May 15, 2017 at 5:30 p.m. in the Town Hall Boardroom**

Motion was made by McRae, seconded by Kimsey to set the Budget Work Session for Monday May 15, 2017 at 5:30 p.m. in the Town Hall Boardroom. Motion carried. Vote: 5 to 0.

3. **Set Public Hearing for Fiscal Year 2017-2018 Town of Franklin Budget for Monday June 5, 2017 at 7:05 p.m.**

Motion was made by Collins, seconded by Kimsey to set a Public Hearing for Fiscal Year 2017-2018 Town of Franklin Budget for Monday June 5, 2017 at 7:05 p.m. Motion carried. Vote: 5 to 0.

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Legal: Cross Connection Ordinance

Town Attorney John Henning presented this item. Ordinance is attached.

Motion was made by Kimsey, seconded by Abel to adopt the Cross Connection Ordinance. Motion carried. Vote: 5 to 0.

Legal: Minimum Housing Code Violations

Town Attorney John Henning Jr. presented this item.

Motion was made by Kimsey, seconded by McMahan to have a Public Hearing concerning legal action towards properties at 14 Brittney Lane, 76 Hillcrest Avenue, and 456 Pauline Avenue on June 5, 2017 at 7:10 p.m., 7:15 p.m., and 7:20 p.m. Motion carried. Vote: 5 to 0.

Announcements

Town Board Budget Work Session Monday May 15, 2017 at 5:30 p.m. in the Town Hall Boardroom.

Town Hall Offices will be closed Monday May 29, 2017 in observation of Memorial Day.

Adjournment

Motion was made by McMahan, seconded by Kimsey to adjourn the meeting at approximately 8:10 p.m. Motion carried. Vote: 5 to 0.

Robert S. Scott, Mayor

Travis Tallent, Town Clerk

