

**MINUTES OF THE TOWN OF FRANKLIN TOWN COUNCIL  
REGULAR MEETING  
October 6, 2025**

**THE FRANKLIN TOWN COUNCIL** held a regular meeting on Monday, October 6, 2025, at 6:00 p.m. in the Town Hall Board Room located at 95 East Main Street Franklin, NC.

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

**Mayor Jack Horton called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. with the following members present:** Vice Mayor Stacy Guffey and Council Members: Joe Collins, David Culpepper, Mike Lewis, Rita Salain and Robbie Tompa.

**2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Vice Mayor Stacy Guffey.

**3. ADOPTION OF OCTOBER 6, 2025 TOWN COUNCIL AGENDA**

Mayor Horton noted that a presentation regarding the future use of the old hospital property was scheduled, but had been postponed as all research had not been completed.

***Council Member Mike Lewis made a motion, seconded by Council Member Robbie Tompa to adopt the Town Council Agenda for October 6, 2025 as presented. The motion carried unanimously. Vote: 6 – 0.***

**4. APPROVAL OF THE CONSENT AGENDA OCTOBER 6, 2025**

- A.) Approval of the Town Council Minutes September 2, 2025
- B.) Budget Amendment
- C.) Tax Releases
- D.) Ordinance Review Committee recommend amendments to Chapter 30

***Council Member Rita Salain made a motion, seconded by Council Member Joe Collins to approve the consent agenda for the October 6, 2025 meeting, as presented. The motion carried unanimously. Vote: 6 – 0.***

**5. PUBLIC SESSION**

No one signed up to speak.

**6. CALL FOR PUBLIC HEARING**

- A.) Call for Public Hearing on Monday, November 3, 2025 at 6:05 p.m. or as closely thereafter to gain public input regarding zoning to Commercial C-2 for property located at 3044 Georgia Road PIN# 6583529447 – Town Planner Justin Setser

Town Planner Justin Setser presented a call for a public hearing regarding initial zoning of property located at 3044 Georgia Road. He explained that the property was recently annexed, was outside the ETJ, and needed initial zoning. The Planning Board had reviewed the 0.56-acre property and recommended C-2 zoning (Commercial Secondary). The property borders two satellite annexation parcels that are already zoned C-2.

Councilman Lewis asked if this was the zoning that the applicants wanted, to which Town Planner Setser confirmed it was, noting the property would be used for a commercial restaurant/strip store type of business.

***Council Member David Culpepper made a motion, seconded by Council Member Mike Lewis to call for Public Hearing on Monday, November 3, 2025 at 6:05 p.m. or as closely thereafter to gain public input regarding zoning to Commercial C-2 for property located at 3044 Georgia Road, as presented. The motion carried unanimously. Vote 6 – 0***

## **7. PUBLIC HEARING**

A.) Public Hearing on Monday, October 6, 2025 at 6:05 p.m. or as closely thereafter as possible to gain input from the public regarding text amendments to Chapter 152 sections - 152.162, 152.163 and 152.070 -Town Planner Justin Setser

Town Planner Justin Setser explained that the amendments were initiated when the Council expressed interest in having the Planning Board hold public comment. While reviewing these changes with the Town Attorney, they found other items that needed updating in the UDO.

Mr. Setser detailed the changes:

- Section 152.070 - Updates the board of adjustment membership from 7 to 8 members, including 3 ETJ members rather than 2, reflecting a change made in 2020 but never updated in the text.
- Removing outdated references to "Board of Aldermen" and changing to "Town Council"
- Striking language about paying Planning Board members a stipend, which had not been done since 2008
- Section 152.162 - Revising fee language for rezoning applications
- Section 152.163 - Changing "principles of growth" to "comprehensive plan" and adding provisions for the Planning Board to hold public comment periods in addition to the Town Council's required public hearings

Councilman Culpepper clarified that while the Planning Board would now hold public comment, the Council would still be required to hold its own public hearings as mandated by state statute. Town Attorney John Henning, Jr. explained this provides the public another opportunity for input, creating more transparency and allowing Council to say they've gone beyond what's legally required.

**Mayor Horton opened the Public Hearing at 6:10 p.m.**

No one signed up to speak.

**Mayor Horton closed the Public Hearing at 6:11 p.m.**

***Vice Mayor Stacy Guffey made a motion, seconded by Council Member Rita Salain to approve the text amendment changes to Chapter 152.162, 152.163 and 152.070, as presented. The motion carried unanimously. Vote: 6 – 0.***

## 8. NEW BUSINESS

A.) Request approval of the Capital Project Ordinance for the Clear Well and High Service Pump Station Project including budget amendments -Finance Director Sarah Bishop

Finance Director Sarah Bishop presented the Capital Project Ordinance for the Clear Well and High Service Pump Station Project. She reported that financing was completed with Webster Bank on September 11, following LGC approval. The total project amount is \$6,338,019.75, which includes contracted amount of \$6,301,400 and closing costs of \$36,619.75. The budget amendments included appropriating the Town's portion of retained earnings of \$3,113,019.75.

Town Manager Amie Owens explained that this project would increase the Town's capacity for treated water storage from 56,000 gallons to 250,000 gallons, which represents one-quarter of the total capacity. This improvement will provide more options during system maintenance and emergencies, reducing the need for mandatory conservation efforts.

Town Manager Owens confirmed that the project has been approved by NC DEQ and must be completed by October 2027, with a preconstruction meeting scheduled for this Friday, October 10. She also noted that the Town is still pursuing a grant of \$2.97 million that could help reduce costs.

***Council Member Mike Lewis made a motion, seconded by Council Member Rita Salain to approve the Capital Project Ordinance for the Clear Well and High Service Pump Station Project including the budget amendments, as presented. The motion carried unanimously. Vote 6 – 0.***

B.) Request approval of Incentive Application -Renee's Cake Shoppe -Façade Grant in the amount of \$ 2,668.75 -Finance Director Sarah Bishop

Finance Director Sarah Bishop, who also serves as Main Street Coordinator, presented the second application received for the façade grant program. Renee's Cake Shoppe applied to replace an aging awning on the back of their building, which is causing water drainage issues. The project qualifies for the 50% matching grant program, with a Town contribution of \$2,668.75.

Mayor Horton noted that this is a reimbursement program where owners complete the work first and then receive the grant funds. Town Council members expressed satisfaction that business owners are taking advantage of the program to improve the appearance of downtown, including the back areas of Main Street.

***Council Member Mike Lewis made a motion, seconded by Council Member Robbie Tompa to approve the façade grant application for Renee's Cake Shoppe, as presented. The motion carried unanimously. Vote 6 – 0.***

C.) Request approval of disposition of assets -K9 Toro and 10 x 10 kennel -Town Manager Amie

Town Manager Amie Owens explained that K9 handler, Sergeant Kirkland, had left the department for another agency. The request was to sell K9 Toro and a 10x10 kennel to Sergeant Kirkland's new agency. Toro was donated to the Town in August 2020 and still has approximately 2 years of useful service life remaining. Due to the 5-year partnership between Toro and Sergeant Kirkland, it would be difficult to retrain the dog with a new handler.

The value of the K9 was listed at \$3,365 and the kennel at \$500, for a total of \$3,865. Sergeant Kirkland's new agency would pay this amount before the dog is released.

Police Chief Devin Holland clarified that this does not mark the end of the K9 program for the Town of Franklin, but it is being temporarily suspended to focus on recruiting and retaining patrol officers. Town Manager Amie Owens noted that the Town has a good relationship with the Macon County Sheriff's Office, which has multiple K9s available when needed.

***Council Member Mike Lewis made a motion, seconded by Council Member David Culpepper to the disposition of assets – K-9 Toro and the 10x10 kennel, as presented. The motion carried unanimously. Vote 6 – 0.***

## **9. DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS**

- A.) Finance – Sarah Bishop, Finance Director reported that most of the audit work was completed and had gone through technical review; however, there was a delay in finalizing the audit due to a yet-to-be released clarification for the compliance software. Ms. Bishop also reported that sales tax revenues for the year ending June 30, 2025, exceeded the budget by over \$700,000, and property tax collections were on track for the current fiscal year. She also mentioned that another property owner on Main Street had inquired about the façade improvement grant program, indicating growing interest from business owners.
- B.) Planning/IT/Facilities – Justin Setser, Town Planner/IT Director gave an update on land/sign permits issued this year, and code violations. Setser shared exciting news about a sidewalk project along East Franklin that had been approved in 2021. He noted that with the assistance of Rose Bauguess from the Southwestern Commission, a grant from the Federal Toll Credit Program had been awarded to the Town to assist with this project. The project would create a sidewalk from near Poindexter Tire up East Main Street and along Old Cat Creek to connect with First Street. Mr. Setser also distributed information about the Hazard Mitigation Plan that is updated every 5 years for Macon and Clay Counties. A public survey was available via QR code and would be on the town website. He also announced that the Women's History Park in Franklin had been selected by the North Carolina Chapter of the American Planning Association as a "Great Place Award" recipient for this year. The award recognizes outstanding public art and parks and will be presented on October 15 in Charlotte.
- C.) Police Department – Chief Devin Holland reported that the department remains busy with calls and events. He addressed the recent departure of two officers and reported progress in recruitment. He stated that Police Department hosted its first blood drive at the police station in September, exceeding their goal of 18 donors with 24 participants.

## **10. ITEMS FROM COUNCIL**

- A.) Commercial Infrastructure Grant – Vice Mayor Stacy Guffey  
Vice Mayor Stacy Guffey introduced revisions to the previously discussed Industrial Infrastructure Incentive Grant. Town Manager Amie Owens explained that they had modified it to be a commercial infrastructure program available in all commercial districts (C1 through C3) and industrial (I1) zones. The grant would be a matching program with a maximum of \$15,000, similar to other Town grants.

The current funding pool of \$60,000 has only used about \$6,000 to date. The program would focus on infrastructure projects linked to economic development, job creation, and job retention.

Councilman David Culpepper expressed that while he was more comfortable with the program being available to everyone rather than just corporations, and he remains cautious about corporate welfare projects.

***Council Member Mike Lewis made a motion, seconded by Vice Mayor Stacy Guffey to approve the Commercial Infrastructure Grant Incentive, as presented. The motion carried unanimously. Vote 6 – 0.***

B.) Draft Main Street Redesign RFP- Vice Mayor Stacy Guffey

Vice Mayor Stacy Guffey presented information on a Request for Proposal (RFP) for redesigning Main Street, which was suggested by NCDOT during previous meetings. The RFP would include a refined process that coincides with NCDOT's planned repaving of Main Street.

The comprehensive plan would address speed mitigation, street design, sidewalk widening opportunities, road diet, treescape, and would include both Main Street and Palmer Street. Vice Mayor Guffey suggested conducting preliminary research to get a ballpark figure for costs, with estimates ranging from \$50,000 to \$75,000.

Town Manager Owens noted that the RFP would also include looking at infill development opportunities and second-floor housing. The project would be extensive and take time to complete, but would provide multiple options for the Town to consider. She mentioned that NCDOT plans to let bids for repaving in November 2026.

No formal action was taken, but Council Members were asked to provide feedback on the draft RFP.

C.) Appointment to TDA Board – vote via ballot

The Council conducted a ballot vote to fill a vacancy on the Tourism Development Authority Board. Mayor Horton emphasized the importance of considering what candidates could contribute to the goals of the TDA.

Following the vote, Town Clerk Nicole Bradley announced that Colin McGinnis, owner of Gracious Plates on Main Street, received four votes and would be appointed to the TDA Board.

## 11. ANNOUNCEMENTS

- A.) Next Town Council Regular Meeting is Monday, November 4, 2025
- B.) Fire Fighters Memorial Day – Tuesday, October 14, 2025
- C.) 29<sup>th</sup> Annual Pumpkinfest – Saturday, October 18, 2025

## 12. CLOSED SESSION

- A.) Enter into Closed Session under NC General Statute§ 143-318.11(a)(6) Personnel
- B.) Enter into Closed Session under NC General Statute§ 143-318.11(a)(5) to discuss acquisition of real property by purchase, option, exchange or lease

***Council Member Mike Lewis made a motion, seconded by Council Member David Culpepper to enter into Closed Session NC General Statute§ 143-318.11(a)(6) Personnel and NC General Statute§ 143-318.11(a)(5) to discuss acquisition of real property by purchase, option, exchange or lease. The motion carried unanimously. Vote 6 – 0.***

**Town Council entered into Closed session at 7:09 p.m.**

**Town Council returned to Open session at 8:08 p.m.**

Upon returning to open session, Mayor Horton reported that no action was taken regarding property acquisition. He announced that the Town Council had conducted Town Manager Amie Owens' annual performance evaluation, noting her outstanding job over her four years of service.

***Council Member Mike Lewis made a motion, seconded by Council Member Robbie Tompa increase Town Manager Owens' salary from \$101,660 to \$110,000, effective January 1, 2026. The motion carried unanimously. Vote: 6-0.***

Mayor Jack Horton thanked Town Manager Owens for a job well done.

There was additional discussion regarding sidewalks down 441 South and around Town.

Councilwoman Salain asked for an update on the sidewalk pressure washing. Town Manager Owens stated the bid had been awarded and should begin soon.

Town Manager Owens also mentioned plans for planting trees in the bump-outs on Main Street in the spring.

Councilman Robbie Tompa mentioned the TDA Board was discussing two potential projects for downtown.

## **12. ADJOURNMENT**

***Council Member Joe Collins made a motion, seconded by Council Member Rita Salain to adjourn the meeting at 8:24 p.m. The motion carried unanimously. Vote: 6-0.***

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C. Jack Horton, Mayor

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Nicole Bradley, Town Clerk