

**MINUTES OF THE TOWN OF FRANKLIN TOWN COUNCIL  
REGULAR MEETING  
MARCH 3, 2025**

**THE FRANKLIN TOWN COUNCIL** held a regular meeting on Monday, March 3, 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, 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 THE MARCH 3, 2025 TOWN COUNCIL AGENDA**

*Council Member Rita Salain made a motion, seconded by Council Member Joe Collins to adopt the Town Council Agenda for March 3, 2025 as presented. The motion carried unanimously. Vote: 6 – 0.*

**4. APPROVAL OF THE CONSENT AGENDA FOR MARCH 3, 2025**

- A.) Approval of the February 3, 2025 Regular Town Council Meeting Minutes
- B.) Budget Amendment
- ~~C.) Rezoning Request to Planning Board for review~~
- ~~D.) Request Town Clerk to Certify Petition for Annexation~~

Vice Mayor Stacy Guffey would like to pull items C & D from the Consent Agenda for further explanation.

*Council Member David Culpepper made a motion, seconded by Council Member Robbie Tompa to approve the consent agenda, items A & B, for the March 3, 2025 meeting. The motion carried unanimously. Vote: 6 – 0.*

C.) Rezoning Request to Planning Board for review

Town Planner Justin Setser stated that the rezoning petition was a standard rezoning petition from Shawn Peterson for 1.97 acres off Palmer Street. The request is to rezone the 1.97 acres to C-2.

Vice Mayor Guffey asked if the Town has started the process for notifying the public of these Planning Board rezoning meetings. Town Planner Setser said the change for notification would have to be done through text amendment to modify the UDO.

*Vice Mayor Stacy Guffey made a motion, seconded by Council Member David Culpepper to approve forwarding the rezoning request to the Planning Board for review as presented. The motion carried unanimously. Vote: 6 – 0.*

D.) Request Town Clerk to Certify Petition of Annexation

Vice Mayor Guffey asked for an explanation of the annexation process. Town Attorney John Henning, Jr explained the annexation process.

***Vice Mayor Stacy Guffey made a motion, seconded by Council Member Rita Salain to approve the request for the Town Clerk to certify petition for annexation as presented. The motion carried unanimously. Vote: 6 – 0.***

**5. RECOGNITION**

A.) Nicole Bradley, Town Clerk/HR Director – Certified Municipal Clerk Certification presented by Amie Owens, Town Manager

**6. PUBLIC SESSION**

Lake Silver, Congressman Chuck Edwards Western Office Field Representative, thanked the Town of Franklin for accommodating their Carolina Cruiser mobile office. He talked about the Disaster Supplemental Bill that Congressman Edwards wrote, \$17.4 billion will come directly to North Carolina. He also discussed FEMA issues. Individuals can call FEMA 223-FIX-FEMA to get help with issues. He then said their door is always open.

Jacob Reiche, 220 Forest Avenue/Owner of Smart Pharmacy, stated he had received a call from Angela Green (Town’s Code Enforcement Officer). He was told that the signs on his tool shed were illegal signs. He said he was told that the signage from his previous business location, now on his tool shed, is considered off premise advertising. Mr. Reiche disagreed, he said the tool shed is in his back yard, surrounded by trees and is not visible from other streets. He would like permission to keep the signs on his tool shed.

Mayor Horton said that Mr. Reiche would need to contact Town Planner Justin Sester and Code Enforcement Officer to see what remedies that could offer. Mayor Horton stated the Board does not take action during Public Session.

**7. CALLS FOR PUBLIC HEARING**

A.) Call for Public Hearing on Monday, April 7, 2025 at 6:08 p.m. or as closely thereafter as possible to allow for public input related to a text amendment to generators on mobile food trucks - Town Planner Justin Setser

The text amendment was reviewed by the Ordinance Review Committee and reviewed by the Planning Board at their February 17, 2025 meeting. The text amendment will amend the mobile food vending section in the Code of Ordinances to limit generator noise. The text amendment change would be in section 152.123 (M) 10 and section 95.10.

***Council Member Joe Collins made a motion, seconded by Council Member Rita Salain to set the public hearing for Monday, April 7, 2025 at 6:08 p.m. or as closely thereafter as possible to receive public input related to a text amendment to generators on mobile food trucks. The motion carried unanimously. Vote 6 – 0.***

- B.) Call for Public Hearing on Monday, April 7, 2025 at 6:11 p.m. or as closely thereafter as possible to allow for public input related to a proposed annexation of 7.2 acres located on Siler Road - Town Planner Justin Setser

There was a condition of annexation included with the conditional zoning request of the future apartment complex off Siler Road.

***Council Member Rita Salain made a motion, seconded by Council Member David Culpepper to set the public hearing for Monday, April 7, 2025 at 6:011 p.m. or as closely thereafter as possible to receive public input related to a proposed annexation of 7.2 acres located on Siler Road. The motion carried unanimously. Vote 6 – 0.***

## 8. NEW BUSINESS

- A.) Request approval of letter of support for joint application by the Town of Franklin, Main Spring Conservation Trust and Fernleaf for the Climate Smart Communities Initiative (CSCI)- Town Planner Justin Setser

Town Planner Justin Setser mentioned in his last Town Council update that he would like to work on a Resiliency Plan. The grant from CSCI will help fund the resilience plan/project. There will be no monies tied to the Town for this grant. The grant requires a letter of support and a community partner. Main Spring Conservation Trust was asked to partner with the Town on this grant and they have agreed. They will also submit a letter of support. The grant application deadline is March 21, 2025.

Councilman Culpepper asked if the plan was to recommend regulatory measures or to move infrastructure. Town Planner Sester said it would cover a wide gambit of things including vulnerabilities in our infrastructure.

Councilman Culpepper also asked if the study will tell what the cost will be for updates on infrastructure, cost of economic impacts on areas or identify problems. Town Planner Setser said it would help identify problems and then Town Council will come up with the plan to address the problems.

Town Planner Sester said the goal of a Resilience Plan is if something were to happen how does the Town bounce back from it.

Councilwoman Salain and Councilman Guffey thanked Town Planner Sester for finding the grant and working on the Resilience Plan.

***Vice Mayor Stacy Guffey made a motion, seconded by Council Member Rita Salain to approve the letter of support for the Climate Smart Communities Initiative The motion carried unanimously. Vote: 6 – 0.***

- B.) Request approval of the Capital Project Ordinance for Whitmire Inclusive Playground project- Finance Director Sarah Bishop

The Capital Project Ordinance for the Whitmire Inclusive Playground Project is needed in ordered to start making expenditures. The total cost for the project is \$1,194,762.91 and that includes materials and construction cost.

***Council Member Mike Lewis made a motion, seconded by Council Member Joe Collins to approve the Capital Project Ordinance for Whitmire Inclusive Playground project as presented. The motion carried unanimously. Vote: 6 – 0.***

- C.) Request approval of annual Audit Contracts with Martin, Starnes & Associates, CPAs, PA for FY 2025/2026 for the Town and TDA – Finance Director Sarah Bishop

***Council Member Joe Collins made a motion, seconded by Council Member Robbie Tompa to approve the audit contract with Martin, Starnes & Associates, CPAs, PA for FY 2025/2026 for the Town and the TDA as presented. The motion carried unanimously. Vote: 6 – 0.***

- D.) Request approval of Street Closures – Amie Owens, Town Manager

- 1) Friday, May 16, 2025 lotla Street from 11:30 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. Law Enforcement Memorial Day
- 2) Saturday, October 11, 2025 – lotla Street from Noon until 9:00 p.m. for Rocktober – a celebration of the Macon County Arts Council’s 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary
- 3) Tuesday, October 14, 2025 - lotla Street from 11:30 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. for Fire Fighters Memorial Day

***Council Member Mike Lewis made a motion, seconded by Council Member David Culpepper to approve the street closures as presented. The motion carried unanimously. Vote: 6 – 0.***

- E.) Request approval of Franklin Fire and Rescue First Responder Program Agreement – Fire Chief Ben Ormond

The First Responder Program Agreement is how Franklin Fire & Rescue does business on their first responder calls in Macon County. This agreement is an update to the 2005 original agreement.

Councilwoman Salain thanked Chief Ormond and the fire department for their excellent service.

***Council Member David Culpepper made a motion, seconded by Council Member Robbie Tompa to approve the Franklin Fire & Rescue First Responder Program Agreement as presented. The motion carried unanimously. Vote: 6 – 0.***

- F.) Request approval of Contract Change Orders 1, 2, 3 for Fire Apparatus net change order cost <\$4.322.00> - Fire Chief Ben Ormond

There are three change orders for the fire apparatus that is being built. The change orders leave a current credit of \$4,322.

***Council Member David Culpepper made a motion, seconded by Council Member Rita Salain to approve the contract change orders 1, 2, 3 for Fire Apparatus as presented. The motion carried unanimously. Vote: 6 – 0.***

## **9. DEPARTMENTAL UPDATES**

- A.) Fire Department – Chief Ben Ormond presented the 2024 Year in Review from Franklin Fire & Rescue. They responded to 1901 calls, 81 fire calls and 1399 medical calls, he showed a comparison to other fire departments on calls for service, he gave an update on trainings and public education.
- B.) Tax Collections/Events – Sabrina Scruggs, Tax Collector/Events Coordinator gave an update on tax collections 94% collection rate, over \$200,000 left to collect, 340 past due accounts. 83 Hillside Street went to court in February for foreclosure and will be sold on court house steps on March 28. She is working on Pickin’ on the Square line up and July 4<sup>th</sup> event.
- C.) Human Resources – Nicole Bradley, Human Resources Director gave an update on employee personnel policy, vacancies, meetings with Wayah Insurance for policy renewals and upcoming benefits enrollment.

## **10. ITEMS FROM COUNCIL**

### **A.) Resolution Requesting Repeal of Legislation (SB 382) – Mayor Jack Horton**

Town Attorney John Henning, Jr. discussed the potential impact of Senate Bill 382 at the Town Council Retreat. Mayor Horton said it’s important to let the General Assembly know how the towns feel about the zoning downsizing. The Town of Franklin can pass a Resolution letting the legislature know how they feel about the SB 382.

Councilman Culpepper said he was against the repeal and that when the Town governs, they have to be careful of their actions and legislate/govern fairly.

Mayor Horton said that sometimes the state legislatures aren’t always fully aware of what the local impacts are when they go to vote. He feels that the best government is the local government because we are the closest to the people. He hopes that SB 382 will be rescinded or revised and that the legislatures check with the local folks to find out what the impacts may be.

Vice Mayor Guffey said that any kind of legislation like this needs to be weighed heavily on a state level before it’s passed. The legislatures need to understand what they are voting for and the control should be left in the local hands where the people have the most contact with those who represent them.

***Council Member Joe Collins made a motion, seconded by Vice Mayor Stacy Guffey to approve the Resolution Requesting Repeal of Legislation (SB 382) as presented. The motion carried. Vote: 5 – 1. Council Member David Culpepper voted in opposition.***

- B.) Vice Mayor Guffey asked if there was a décor signage exemption. Town Planner Setser said he wasn’t aware of an exemption for decorative signage.

Town Attorney Henning said there is a process under the Ordinances to follow for appeal.

Councilman Culpepper said the shed sign issue is an example of someone being trapped by legislation. A sign on a barn/shed isn't the intent of the Ordinance.

Additional discussion was held about downzoning and property rights.

Councilwoman Salain said that it is important the work that is being done by Angela Green, Code Enforcement Officer, it is dealt with fairly from all perspectives. It has to be across the board and not hand selected on who gets cited.

Mayor Horton said Angela Green does a terrific job and appreciates her and the Town Board.

**11. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- A.) Next Town Council Regular Meeting is April 7, 2025
- B.) CityVision -April 29 -May 1, 2025 in Greenville, NC -registration open now

**15. ADJOURNMENT**

***Council Member Joe Collins made a motion, seconded by Council Member David Culpepper to adjourn the meeting at 7:11 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