

**FRANKLIN TOWN COUNCIL  
MINUTES OF MEETING  
May 23, 2012**

A meeting of the Town Council was held on Wednesday, May 23, 2012 at the Franklin Municipal Building, 355 East Central Street, Franklin, Massachusetts. Councilors present; Andrew Bissanti, Robert Dellorco, Glenn Jones, Matt Kelly, Thomas Mercer, Judith Pfeffer, Tina Powderly, Jeff Roy, Robert Vallee. Administrative personnel in attendance: Jeffrey Nutting; Town Administrator, Mark Cere; Town Attorney and Maxine Kinhart; Assistant to the Town Administrator. Other officials present: Police Chief Stephan Semerjian, Superintendent of Schools Maureen Sabolinski, and Town Clerk Deborah Pellegri.

**CALL TO ORDER:** Chairman Vallee called the meeting to order at 7:00PM with a moment of silence and the Pledge of Allegiance.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:** Chairman Vallee announced that the Town Council meeting is being recorded by Comcast, Verizon and Franklin Matters. Chairman Vallee also made the following announcements: ► The Memorial Day Parade will begin at 10:30AM on Monday. Andy Bissanti will be Grand Marshall and the parade is run by Rotary Club Member and Town Councilor; Matt Kelly. ► At the June 6, 2012 Town Council Meeting, Senators Spilka and Ross will be in attendance to give the Council a budget update. The Franklin School of Performing Arts will also be in attendance at the June 6, 2012 Meeting.

**HEARINGS: *First Public Hearing - FY 2013 Franklin Budget***

► Mr. Nutting thanked his staff and all of the department heads for producing the FY13 budget. Mr. Nutting provided a brief overview of the budget. The FY13 budget includes a modest increase of 1.8 million dollars. Property tax revenue has increased, while state aid has not increased. The FY13 proposed budget includes the one-time use of \$350,000 from the Stabilization Account to help balance the budget. Using these funds to balance the budget will mean no reduction in municipal staff for the first time in four years. Health Insurance costs have decreased by 3% this year thanks to the cooperation of employees. There is a modest wage increase, resultant from Collective Bargaining. The proposed FY13 budget includes the following increases: 16 hours to the Town Clerk's Office, 16 hours to the Fire Department Office, 15 hours for the Parking Control Officer and 1.2 people for the Public Library. These adjustments are necessary to meet the workloads of the departments. Overall, general government increased by 1.2%, Public Safety by 2.8%, Franklin Schools by 3.2%, The Department of Public Works by 2%, Human Services by 13% (mostly resultant from increased demand for Veteran's Benefits), Cultural Budget 6% (almost all is for the Public Library), Employee Benefits 2%. Debt is slightly down thanks to Treasurer Dacey having refinanced some debt. Mr. Nutting said the Town can expect some challenges in FY14 – primarily unfunded health insurance liability, roads and storm water. Mr. Nutting stated the Town continues to be very lean and near the bottom of all spending categories compared to towns similar in size. ► School Committee Chair Paula Mullen addressed the Council. Ms. Mullen announced that none of the School Committee would be available for the second budget

meeting held on May 24, 2012 as Franklin High School's Awards Ceremony is being held at the same time. Miriam Goodman; Business Administrator presented a brief overview of the School Department's FY13 proposed budget. The proposed FY13 Budget includes a proposed 3.2% increase over FY12's Budget. Ms. Goodman explained the 'budget drivers' are healthcare costs and contractual obligations to employees. Most funds are spent in the classrooms on the students. According to the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), Franklin spends an average of \$10,693/per student and the state average is \$13,371/per student. The School Department will also be using one-time use money from the Federal Education Jobs Fund in an effort to balance the budget. ► Councilor Powderly made a statement regarding the FY13 Budget. Councilor Powderly stated the FY13 Budget has been reviewed at a number of joint budget subcommittees meetings. The subcommittee meetings are attended by representatives of the School Department, School Committee, the Town Council, Finance Committee and members of Town Administration. Councilor Powderly said she was pleased with the level of communication and transparency during the budget process and she was also pleased the FY13 Budget was able to achieve a level of service with no employee lay-offs for the first time in many years. Councilor Pfeffer read through the Budget line items. There were several line items that were "held" by Councilors. Councilor Powderly requested a hold on line item 161: Town Clerk Salaries and Expenses. Councilor Powderly asked about the size of the budget increase for that department. Town Clerk Deborah Pellegrini explained her department is requesting one of the two part-time employees become a full-time employee. The increase in staffing would allow Ms. Pellegrini to devote her time to completing her official duties and would allow her office to process Passport Applications, which account for between \$20,000 - \$30,000 a year in town revenue. Councilor Mercer requested a hold on line item 164: Elections & Registration. Councilor Mercer asked for clarification on why there did not appear to be an increase in the budget to reflect the recent election. Town Clerk Deborah Pellegrini explained the recent election was not included in the budget as it was a special election. Councilor Roy requested a hold on line item 210: Police Salaries & Expense. Councilor Roy asked for clarification on why there is a \$125,000 increase of salaries for FY13. Mr. Nutting explained the department was ½ person short in FY12 and the department also hired a parking clerk. Councilor Roy requested a hold on line item 300: Town Schools. Councilor Roy stated he was concerned the classroom teachers earn 20% below the State average. Councilor Jones asked for clarification on the budget increase for the School Committee. School Superintendent Maureen Sabolinski explained the funds are for the School Committee's professional development training, which is necessary to remain in compliance with State laws. Councilor Powderly asked about class equity and class size. Ms. Sabolinski reviewed how class size is determined, and discussed how enrollment is often difficult to predict. Councilor Roy requested a hold on line item 390: Norfolk Aggie (Norfolk County Agricultural High School). Councilor Roy asked for clarification of why there is an increase of approximately \$100,000 in the proposed budget. Mr. Nutting explained more students from Franklin are attending Norfolk Aggie. Councilor Powderly asked for clarification on the new charge listed on the budget. Mr. Nutting explained two years ago, Norfolk Aggie began collecting additional funds from towns. The Town has for the previous two years paid these additional fees out of Free Cash. But considering that this will be an on-going expense,

the Town has decided to add it as a new line item. Councilor Roy requested a hold on line item 440: DPW-Highway, Admin, Engineer. Councilor Roy pointed out that the DPW salaries are listed as unchanged from the previous budget. Mr. Nutting explained there are three employees out on Worker's Compensation. The Town is therefore not spending funds on these employee's salaries. The Town expects the three employees to return to work when they are medically ready. Councilor Roy requested a hold on line item 610: Library Salaries & Expense. Councilor Roy stated he was concerned about maintaining certification, and whether enough funds have been allocated to the Library for FY13. Mr. Nutting explained an additional \$50,000 has been allocated to the Library and he has requested the Library Board of Directors meet with him this fall to review the Library's budget. Councilor Powderly requested a hold on line item 919: Benefits - Retirement & Pension, Health/Life Insurance Benefits, Retired Teacher Health Insurance, Workers Compensation, Unemployment Compensation, Medicare, OPEB, Compensation Reserve. Councilor Powderly commented that OPEB (Other Post Employment Benefits) is a real concern and the Town needs to structure the benefits in the future to plan ahead. Based on an OPEB study, Mr. Nutting said the Town has 85 million dollars in unfunded liability. The study recommends a Trust be set up with 1.5 million dollars added annually. Mr. Nutting suggested the Town begin funding the Trust increasing the amount by 100 thousand dollars annually. Councilor Jones asked about using funds from this year's budget to add to the Trust. Mr. Nutting stated that he would prefer to wait until the Fall when any potential budget adjustments will be made. **MOTION** by Councilor Powderly to close the public hearing **SECONDED** by Councilor Jones. **VOTE to Approve: Yes-9, No-0.** Chairman Vallee announced the same process used this evening would be used for the second budget hearing scheduled for Thursday May 24, 2012. **MOTION** by Councilor Powderly to move the budget to a second hearing **SECONDED** by Councilor Jones. **VOTE to Approve: Yes-9, No-0**

Chairman Vallee called a five-minute recess at 7:47PM.

#### **LEGISLATION FOR ACTION:**

***Resolution 12-35: Salary Schedule – Full-Time Elected Officials:*** Councilor Pfeffer read the resolution to increase the salaries of the Town Clerk from \$70,770 to \$72,185 and the Treasurer-Collector from \$83,485 to \$85,155. **MOTION** by Councilor Jones to move Resolution 12-35 **SECONDED** by Councilor Kelly. **DISCUSSION:** Mr. Nutting stated these two salary increases were modest. **VOTE to Approve: Yes-9, No-0.**

***Resolution 12-37: Establishment of a Fire Department Fire Rescue Training Revolving Account For Fiscal Year 2013*** – Councilor Pfeffer read the resolution to establish a Fire Department Fire Rescue Training Revolving Account to be used to collect participation fees generated from the marketing of open slots in regular training provided by the department. **MOTION** by Councilor Jones to move Resolution 12-37 **SECONDED** by Councilor Mercer. **DISCUSSION:** Mr. Nutting explained this account would be used for money coming in and out. **VOTE to Approve: Yes-9, No-0.**

***Resolution 12-38: Establishment of a Council on Aging Supportive Day Program Revolving Account for Fiscal Year 2013*** - Councilor Pfeffer read the resolution to

establish a Council on Aging Supportive Day Program Revolving Account to be used to collect participation fees generated from the enrollment in the day program provided by the department. **MOTION** by Councilor Jones to move Resolution 12-38 **SECONDED** by Councilor Dellorco. **DISCUSSION:** Mr. Nutting explained the account would be for salaries and expenses to run the day programs at the Senior Center. **VOTE to Approve: Yes-9, No-0.**

***Resolution 12-39: Establishment of a Council on Aging Senior Center Activities Program Revolving Account for Fiscal Year 2013*** – Councilor Pfeffer read the resolution to establish a Council on Aging Senior Center Activities Program Revolving Account to be used to collect fees generated from the participation in all senior center activities offered, other than the supportive day program. **MOTION** by Councilor Jones to move Resolution 12-39 **SECONDED** by Councilor Kelly. **VOTE to Approve: Yes-9, No-0.**

***Resolution 12-40: Establishment of a Use of Facilities Account for Fiscal Year 2013*** - Councilor Pfeffer read the resolution to establish a Use of Facilities Revolving Account to be used to deposit usage fees generated from the collection of fees for the use of town and school buildings to defray costs of utilities and maintenance of said buildings. **MOTION** by Councilor Jones to move Resolution 12-40 **SECONDED** by Councilor Mercer. **VOTE to Approve: Yes-9, No-0.**

**COUNSELOR COMMENTS:** ► Councilor Powderly states this is the best budget that she has been a part of and she appreciates the budget format. She thanked Susan Gagner: Comptroller. ► Councilor Roy apologizes for not being able to attend the second Budget Hearing on May 24, 2012 as he will be attending the High School Awards Ceremony. Councilor Roy said that if he was able to attend the second budget hearing, he would vote yes to all line items presented. Councilor Roy announced his involvement with Franklin High School's Senior Project. Councilor Roy was impressed by the students involved in the project is pleased Franklin High School has such a program in place. Councilor Roy also thanked Vinnie DeBaggis for his years of service. ► Councilor Bissanti said he admired Town employees for working during difficult times and appreciated being a part of Franklin High School's Senior Project. ► Councilor Jones thanked Mr. Nutting for his work on the budget and was grateful there are no lay-offs.

**ADJOURN:** **MOTION** by Councilor Jones to adjourn **SECONDED** by Councilor Dellorco. **VOTE to Approve: Yes-9, No-0.** Meeting adjourned at 8:04PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jan Brecht, Recording Secretary