

**FRANKLIN TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF MEETING
April 1, 2015**

A meeting of the Town Council was held on Wednesday, April 1, 2015 at the Franklin Municipal Building, 355 East Central Street, Franklin, Massachusetts. Councilors present: Andrew Bissanti, Robert Dellorco, Brett Feldman, Matt Kelly, Thomas Mercer (by Remote Participation), Peter Padula, Judith Pond Pfeffer, Robert Vallee, Steve Williams. Administrative personnel in attendance: Jeffrey Nutting, Town Administrator; Maxine Kinhart, Assistant to the Town Administrator; Mark Cerel, Town Attorney; Judith Lizardi, Recording Secretary.

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: *February 4, 2015, March 4, 2015, March 18, 2015, March 18, 2015 – Executive Session.* **MOTION** to **Approve** by Padula. **SECOND** by Kelly. **ROLL CALL VOTE:** Bissanti-YES; Feldman-YES; Kelly-YES; Mercer-YES (by remote); Padula-YES; Pfeffer-YES; Vallee-YES; Williams-YES. **YES-8, NO-0, Absent-1 (Mr. Dellorco not yet present).** **Passes.**

ANNOUNCEMENTS: Chairman Vallee announced the meeting would be recorded by Franklin TV and available for viewing on Comcast Channel 11 and Verizon Channel 29. This meeting may also be recorded by and available on *Franklin Matters*.

PROCLAMATIONS/RECOGNITIONS: ► *Purple Heart Town.* Chairman Vallee read Proclamation: “The Town Council of the Town of Franklin hereby proclaims the Town of Franklin as a Purple Heart Town...honoring the service and sacrifice of our nation’s men and women in uniform wounded or killed by the enemy while serving to protect the freedoms enjoyed by all Americans.”

CITIZEN COMMENTS: None.

APPOINTMENTS: ► *Horace Mann Statue Committee* - Jeff Roy, Tom Mercer, Robert Dellorco, Lisa Piana and Mary Olsson.

HEARINGS: None.

LICENSE TRANSACTIONS: ► *Transfer of Liquor License - Jimmy D’s d/b/a The GBU.* **MOTION** by Pfeffer to **Approve** the transfer of the license formerly held by Socco Rose d/b/a The GBU and the new manager to be James A. DeVito. **SECOND** by Feldman.

Mr. Kelly recused himself; Mr. Padula recused himself.

ROLL CALL VOTE: Bissanti-YES; Feldman-YES; Mercer-YES (by remote); Pfeffer-YES; Vallee-YES; Williams-YES. **YES-6, NO-0, Abstain-2, Absent-1 (Mr. Dellorco not yet present).** **Passes.**

LEGISLATION FOR ACTION (*legislation item addressed out of order*):

2. Resolution 15-14: Appropriation: Capital FY 15 – Diesel Asphalt Hot Box. Ms. Pfeffer read the resolution to transfer/appropriate \$35,000 for the 2015 Capital Improvement Plan-DPW Diesel Asphalt Hot Box. **Discussion:** ► Mr. Nutting stated that that price has been reduced to \$30,000. ► Carlos Rebelo, Highway Superintendent, provided information on the Diesel Asphalt Hot Box. Carried on a trailer, it heats up the hot-top which helps to melt the tar into existing potholes making a more secure, long-lasting and quality patch repair. It can be used year-round to fill potholes. This device has been discussed during the past few years. If approved, it will take three weeks to get into operation. The Hot Box should last ten years with minor repairs. ► Mr. Kelly emphasized that this idea was originally brought to Council's attention by a Franklin citizen during a Senior Center breakfast meeting—the Council does listen, thanks citizens and encourages citizens to continue to offer suggestions and ideas.

Amend Resolution 15-14: Appropriation: Capital FY 15 – Diesel Asphalt Hot Box: Cost reduced by \$5,000 to new purchase price of \$30,000. MOTION to Amend Resolution 15-14 by Pfeffer. SECOND by Feldman. ROLL CALL VOTE: Bissanti-YES; Feldman-YES; Kelly-YES; Mercer-YES (by remote); Padula-YES; Pfeffer-YES; Vallee-YES; Williams-YES. **YES-8, NO-0, Absent-1 (Mr. Dellorco not yet present). Passes.**

Mr. Dellorco entered the meeting.

MOTION to Move Resolution 15-14 by Pfeffer. SECOND by Kelly. ROLL CALL VOTE: Bissanti-YES; Dellorco-YES; Feldman-YES; Kelly-YES; Mercer-YES (by remote); Padula-YES; Pfeffer-YES; Vallee-YES; Williams-YES. **YES-9, NO-0. Passes.**

PRESENTATIONS/DISCUSSIONS: ► **Gary McCarraher – Ping4alerts!** Ping4alerts! is an emergency communications system that allows public safety groups to send location-based emergency alerts and other information to people that signed up for the free ping4alerts! app on a mobile device. The receivers can then receive safety alerts on their mobile device. No identifiable information of the receiver is provided to the Town. The app connects automatically to Twitter and Facebook. This app would be available for Town-wide use for public safety, public works, schools, and Town administration. Currently, Mass. Emergency Management uses this app to communicate with public at various times to send emergency information. Ping4alerts! sends safety information and critical messages directly to smartphones in targeted areas. Information may come in the form of text, image or links to information on what to do to protect oneself and others. There is no downside as service is free and does not compromise privacy. App has great potential to get needed information out to people. Each Town department will access it through a laptop and code.

► **Melanson Heath, FY 14 Audit:** Karen Snow and Zachary Fentross from Melanson Heath, and Susan Gagner, Comptroller Town of Franklin, presented an overview of the FY 14 Audit. Ms. Snow briefly reviewed the financial statements. She called attention to the unassigned general fund balance of 9.4% of annual expenditures in the general fund—this is an increase over the previous year. The unassigned general fund balance is healthy and in the target range. She noted that these statements include long-term liabilities. This includes bonds payable which increased quite significantly because of the high school bond. The OPEB liability increased by

about \$5.4 million which is has been doing every year. It is estimated to be about \$89 million over the next 30 years. Most likely within the next five years governmental accounting procedures will require the entire \$89 million liability to be put on the financial statement. Also, the Town of Franklin's portion of the unfunded liability for the Norfolk County Retirement System at this time is estimated to be \$45 million. Beginning FY 2015 this liability will be required to be recognized on the financial statement. The Town's Bond rating went up to AA+. Part of the reason it was upgraded is because of the solid fund balance with no immediate plans to spend the fund balance down. Ms. Snow stated that the Town had a good year overall with positive revenues. Held line on expenditures and turned back \$1.3 million which shows solid and well-managed results on the general fund budget. In comparing Franklin with other towns of comparable size in putting aside money, Ms. Snow stated that only a few smaller, very wealthy communities are fully funding OPEB liability, although most towns have now established an OPEB Trust and are putting in a little bit every year. Very few clients have not started to fund it. Ms. Snow recommended that the Town continue to develop the long-term project regarding comprehensive policies and procedures by both Finance and Treasurer's offices to make sure that the Town's assets are fully protected. Ms. Snow thanked the Town's departments and offices for their help with the audit.

► Mr. Nutting stated the OPEB \$89 million is still not being funded as it should be to meet the 30-year schedule. The liability is there and it will need to be funded. These pressures did not exist a decade ago. Other financial pressures include health insurance costs that are growing and technology that must be replaced more frequently. ► Mr. Kelly gave credit to the Town Administrator and staff to get Town to AA+ rating. ► Mr. Padula expressed concern as to how the Town will pay the \$89 million in liabilities. ► Mr. Nutting stated that regarding funding for pensions in 2032, there should be a \$7 million drop. Regarding OPEB—the State must step in and change the statutory laws. Life span is different, health insurance is very expensive, retirement is often earlier, and regulations are needed for continued pension reform. This will not affect people that have already retired, but it needs reform. The Town is in solid financial condition because each Town Council has been fiscally prudent, recognizing budget and capital plans.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS: Economic Development Committee will be meeting April 8, 2015 at 6PM to further discuss the Pond Street RFP.

LEGISLATION FOR ACTION (*continued*):

1. Resolution 15-13: Appropriation: Town Administration – Insurance Recovery Account.

Ms. Pfeffer read the resolution to appropriate Insurance Proceeds to pay invoices related to damages at the Keller Sullivan School. **MOTION** to **Move** Resolution 15-13 by Pfeffer.

SECOND by Kelly. **Discussion:** Mr. Nutting reiterated the sprinkler break in the school in November. Council must authorize to pay invoices. No cost to taxpayers. **ROLL CALL VOTE:** Bissanti-YES; Dellorco-YES; Feldman-YES; Kelly-YES; Mercer-YES (by remote); Padula-YES; Pfeffer-YES; Vallee-YES; Williams-YES. **YES-9, NO-0. Passes.**

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT: ► Condolences to the family of Susan Rittenhouse who served on the Library Board. Sue is thanked for her wonderful public service. Thoughts and prayers go to the family. ► Sunday openings have been a big success at Transfer Station and

will continue year round, although closed on some Sundays, holidays and due to weather events. ► Finance Committee meeting will be held next Tuesday night to deliberate Capital Plan. ► FEF Spelling Bee next Wednesday is a fun event. ► Welcome Maureen Sabolinski back to work. ► Received a letter from a citizen thanking the DPW for their great work and response to a call. ► Snow and ice budget about \$550,000 over the original \$950,000. FEMA will be contacted for reimbursement, and will try to pay off with free cash.

OLD BUSINESS: ► Mr. Kelly stated the need to get someone for PR for the Town. All the great things done in the Town should be recognized. ► Mr. Nutting stated PR will be included in budget. ► Mr. Bissanti expressed that the need for a public relations office should have been done three years ago. From reading many articles about Franklin, it is evident a PR person is a much needed resource. ► Ms. Pfeffer reminded Council that last time this was discussed Council was going to look at Dean or local college student for PR internship. ► Mr. Nutting stated currently interviewing professional firms. It is better to get a professional to be available at all times. ► Chairman Vallee suggested that since there is a great TV studio in Town they could hire a news person and produce a Franklin TV show with daily newscasts. ► Mr. Nutting stated they have many shows planned and a radio station which will help pump out the news---this is about one year away.

NEW BUSINESS: None.

COUNCIL COMMENTS: ► Mr. Dellorco expressed sympathy to the Galvin family for their loss. ► Chairman Vallee reminded the Council of the new TV studio in Town.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: None.

ADJOURN: MOTION by Kelly to **Adjourn. SECOND** by Williams. **ROLL CALL VOTE:** Bissanti-YES; Dellorco-YES; Feldman-YES; Kelly-YES; Mercer-YES (by remote); Padula-YES; Pfeffer-YES; Vallee-YES; Williams-YES. **YES-9, NO-0. Passes. Meeting adjourned at 8:01PM.**

Respectfully submitted,

Judith Lizardi
Recording Secretary