



# CITY COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING

Thursday, September 25, 2025 at 5:30 PM

1 Benjamin Franklin Way Franklin, Ohio 45005

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## CLERK'S JOURNAL

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### 1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Centers called the meeting to order at 5:30pm.

### 2. ROLL CALL

PRESENT

Paul Ruppert

Vice Mayor Todd Hall

Mayor Brent Centers

Michael Aldridge

Debbie Fouts

Matt Wilcher

Staff: Mr. Westendorf, Ms. Dunn, Captain Pacifico

There was one guest in attendance.

### 3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Centers led the pledge of allegiance.

### 4. EXECUTIVE SESSION

- A. To consider the appointment and employment of a public employee or official pursuant to ORC 121.22 (G)(1).

Motion to enter executive session made by Ruppert, Seconded by Fouts.

Voting Yea: Ruppert, Mayor Centers, Aldridge, Fouts, Wilcher

Voting Nay: Vice Mayor Hall

Motion passed. Council entered into executive session 5:32pm.

Motion to exit executive session made by Wilcher, Seconded by Fouts.

Voting Yea: Ruppert, Vice Mayor Hall, Mayor Centers, Aldridge, Fouts, Wilcher

Motion passed. Council exited executive session 5:49pm.

### 5. NEW BUSINESS

- A. **RESOLUTION 2025-66** A RESOLUTION APPOINTING A QUALIFIED PERSON TO THE VACANT COUNCIL SEAT TO SERVE THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2025

Council decided to wait until after the November 4, 2025, election to make their appointment. They plan to appoint the candidate who receives the highest number of votes. That individual will serve the remainder of Mr. D. Centers term through December 31, 2025, and will also begin a new four-year term on January 1, 2026.

If the election is close and results are delayed due to a recount or certification process, Council has already interviewed all three candidates and can make an appointment during a special meeting to ensure the 60-day deadline is met.

## **6. CITY MANAGER REPORT**

Mr. Westendorf reported that the 2026 Charter Review is approaching. He would like to move forward with appointing the committee now to meet the May election deadline. Staff will bring committee appointment recommendations to the October 6 meeting.

Mr. Westendorf has communicated to Judge Ruppert that he has concerns about the politicization of the full-time judgeship recommendation. He reinforced the purpose of the study, which is an independent professional assessment. Finance staff confirmed all financial figures, and the information presented to Council, the Court, and NCSC is 100% accurate. The City allocates all funds, and state-certified audits demonstrate full compliance with all laws, as evidenced by certificates of excellence. NCSC will expedite Phase I of the study, expanding its scope at no additional cost. They are offering confidential interviews to all Court and Probation staff. Staff has proactively added Phase II funding to the 2026 budget request.

Water Tower and Pump House testing had begun at community park, and the equipment should be operational by that Friday. Mr. Westendorf applauded Mr. Inman's forward thinking with the project, saying that repairs to any part of the pump house could be made without interruption of service. This will serve generations to come.

Photos were shared of the roundabout beautification at SR-123, which started with plantings in front of the Parks and Recreation building on Sixth Street.

The City of Franklin would be presented with the 2025 APA Ohio Because We Plan Award for the Downtown Franklin Main Street Streetscape Plan. Mr. Westendorf will be attending the award presentation, along with partners from McBride Dale Clarion and Human Nature.

Mr. Westendorf shared a video of testing at the Spray Park. Work continues at the park with an anticipated opening next spring.

Staff will meet with Warren County Commissioner Jones on October 6 to review Parks and Recreation plans.

Mr. Westendorf will be in Washington DC next week for the Warren County Fly In.

## **7. COUNCIL COMMENTS**

Mayor Centers reported that Mr. Westendorf made a presentation to the Warren County Commissioners regarding the recent residential TIF. After the presentation, Commissioners understood and supported Franklin's need to utilize TIF for the Shaker Farms residential development. The Mayor

reached out and thanked the commissioners for their time and offered to host them for a tour. Commissioners Jones accepted.

Mr. Wilcher is excited to see the Spray Park working and looks forward to its opening.

Mrs. Fouts is grateful for feedback from the community on the council appointment and thinks waiting is a fair process. She is grateful for the interview process as she learned a lot about the candidates.

Mr. Aldridge had a resident approach him about bringing recreational softball back to community park. He thinks it would be worth exploring. Mr. Westendorf will follow up with Mr. Inman

Mr. Ruppert had no comments.

Vice Mayor Hall had no comments.

## **8. ADJOURNMENT**

Motion made by Vice Mayor Hall, Seconded by Aldridge.

Voting Yea: Ruppert, Vice Mayor Hall, Mayor Centers, Aldridge, Fouts, Wilcher

Motion passed. Council adjourned 6:18pm.

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Brent Centers, Mayor

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Khristi Dunn, Clerk of Council