



CITY COUNCIL MEETING

Monday, March 16, 2026 at 5:30 PM

1 Benjamin Franklin Way Franklin, Ohio 45005

www.FranklinOhio.org

CLERK'S JOURNAL

1. CALL TO ORDER

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

2. ROLL CALL

PRESENT

Ryan Roberts

Paul Ruppert

Vice Mayor Todd Hall

Mayor Brent Centers

Michael Aldridge

Debbie Fouts

Robert Lipps

Staff: Mr. Westendorf, Mr. Yoder, Ms. Trice, Ms. Dunn, Ms. Steed, Chief Colon, Chief Stitzel, Mr. Miller, Mr. Damian and an on-duty police officer.

There were five guests in attendance.

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Centers led the pledge of allegiance.

4. APPROVE THE CLERK'S JOURNAL AND ACCEPT THE TAPES AS THE OFFICIAL MINUTES

A. March 2, 2026

Motion made by Ruppert, Seconded by Vice Mayor Hall.

Voting Yea: Roberts, Ruppert, Vice Mayor Hall, Mayor Centers, Aldridge, Fouts, Lipps

Motion passed.

5. PRESENTATIONS

A. Warren County Park District, Matt Latham, Chief Executive Office

Matt Latham, Chief Executive Office of Warren County Park District gave an overview of the Warren County Park District.

The Park District offers a free educational program to local jurisdictions. Council was interested in partnering with the District on offering those in City parks.

6. RECEPTION OF VISITORS

The Mayor opened and closed the Reception of Visitors at 5:50pm as none asked to be heard.

7. PUBLIC HEARING

A. RESOLUTION 2026-22 APPROVING THE APPLICATION TO ADD CERTAIN REAL PROPERTY TO THE FRANKLIN NEW COMMUNITY AUTHORITY DISTRICT AND TO AMEND THE PETITION FOR ESTABLISHMENT OF THE FRANKLIN NEW COMMUNITY AUTHORITY AS A NEW COMMUNITY AUTHORITY UNDER CHAPTER 349 OF THE OHIO REVISED CODE. (Karisa Steed)

In April of 2023, City Council approved the establishment of the Franklin New Community Authority (the "NCA"), pursuant to City Ordinance 2023-10. Consistent with the City's approach to direct new development projects through the NCA, the application ("Application") attached to this Resolution as Exhibit B is being submitted by the property owner for real property located within the City on 5000 Commerce Center Drive and identified by parcel identification number 0421400023. By adding the property to the NCA, the developer will benefit by being able to be reimbursed for a portion of certain costs it is committing to infrastructure improvements to such property that otherwise would have been needed to be constructed by the City. Additionally, the Application amends the Petition as previously approved by the City to include the new property and to allow the voluntary imposition of community development charges on the property.

Mayor Centers opened and closed the Public Hearing at 5:51pm as none asked to be heard.

Motion made by Vice Mayor Hall, Seconded by Aldridge.

Voting Yea: Roberts, Ruppert, Vice Mayor Hall, Mayor Centers, Aldridge, Fouts, Lipps
Motion passed.

8. OLD BUSINESS

A. Parks Discussion

Council and staff continued their discussion about Community Park and the option of filling in the community pool, which is collapsing and poses safety concerns.

Quotes range from \$65,000 to \$75,000 with the City doing various parts of the work to save costs. Council was in favor of moving forward as proposed.

9. NEW BUSINESS

A. Liquor License Application - Main Street Tavern

Main Street Tavern is requesting a new D-5J Liquor Permit. The D-5J Permit shall be issued only within a community entertainment district and may be issued to the owner or the operator of a retail food establishment to sell beer and intoxicating liquor at retail.

If granted, the business will be instructed by the Division of Liquor Control to cancel their current D2, D3, and D3-A permits.

Staff and Council had no objections.

10. CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

Proposed Charter amendments will appear on the May 5, 2026 ballot for City of Franklin voters. Mr. Westendorf showed an educational video that will be shared on social media leading up to the election.

Mr. Westendorf thanked the Public Works and Fire & EMS team for their work in mitigating flooding at community park.

The City has secured multiple grant awards to support upcoming infrastructure improvements. Funding has been awarded for the resurfacing of State Route 73, with construction anticipated in Fiscal Year 2031. The project will extend from Middletown Corporation to the intersection. The eastbound portion of the project has a total estimated cost of \$1,200,960, with \$860,220 (71.6%) secured through Surface

Transportation Program (STP) funding. The westbound portion will be funded through Urban Paving resources.

South Main Street continues to be identified as a priority corridor. The segment from 8th Street to the intersection remains the next targeted phase; however, water main improvements must be completed prior to resurfacing. Additionally, an intersection redesign will be required, and a Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) study is underway. Keller Partners is assisting the City with obtaining funding for these planning and engineering efforts.

Additional grant awards include \$539,000 for water tower painting, scheduled for September through October 2026, and \$200,000 for the resurfacing of South Main Street between 6th and 8th Streets.

An additional grant-funded project is set to begin soon. The resurfacing of South and North River Street, from 2nd Street to Van Horn, is scheduled to begin construction in April 2026.

The City recently completed a community survey to better understand resident perspectives. A total of 226 responses were received, with a strong majority (74%) identifying as City residents (167 respondents). Township residents accounted for 17% (38 respondents). Questions focused on housing preferences across a range of housing types, priorities for future development and redevelopment, and preferred methods for receiving information and communicating with the City. These topics were selected to provide a comprehensive understanding of community needs, growth expectations, and effective engagement strategies.

A groundbreaking ceremony for Slipcast Brewing occurred earlier that day. They Brewery is planning to open in the Spring of 2027.

11. COUNCIL COMMENTS

Mr. Lipps attended the groundbreaking. It was nice to see everyone in attendance; there was a great turnout. This is one of the first of many projects in Franklin. Franklin is leading the way in Warren County with our downtown and development.

Mrs. Fouts couldn't attend the groundbreaking but is excited for the project and happy for Main Street Tavern. It's an exciting time.

Mr. Aldridge said it wasn't long ago we were navigating social media and connecting with the public. We have come along way. The survey results give real feedback from residents. He asked Mr. Inman for an update on a utility pole on Deardoff.

Mr. Roberts congratulated the High School Wrestling team as they had 3 state placers. The City is making great progress, thanks to staff for your hard work.

Mr. Ruppert attended the groundbreaking; it was a cold but good event. There were lots of people in attendance.

He has walked up and down Sixth Street since the 1960's and it's great to see something happening there. It's always been an eyesore, but things are changing. It looks a lot nicer than it did. He is proud of this City.

He will celebrate 60 years of marriage tomorrow.

Vice Mayor Hall is glad Slipcast is moving forward and construction is underway. He is excited for them to open. We all hear noise until things happen. The City Manager receives criticism because he's moved us forward and people do not always like change. Now we've done things people said we couldn't do. This City is changing. It takes longer than we wanted. The work on Main Street has been very beneficial. Be patient and we will get more business.

Mayor Centers said the transformation of the Sixth Street gateway is a big deal. He commended staff and thanked our community partners regarding an emergency situation that occurred recently involving a missing child. The child was found safe and everyone did an incredible job. The Mayor attended the Warren County Chamber Alliance Drive-In in Columbus. School Funding was an issue that was discussed; it has an effect on Economic Development. There was no good news from the legislators. Mr. Westendorf added that last year, 83% of property tax levies were successful. There is a school funding issue as the state level.

The Mayor also attended the America-250 committee meeting. The group is planning various events to celebrate the Nation's birthday.

The Slipcast groundbreaking was a great event.

He congratulated the Finance Department on the GFOA and PAFR awards.

12. EXECUTIVE SESSION

A. To consider the purchase of property for public purposes, and to consider the sale or other disposition of unneeded property in accordance with section 505.10 of the Revised Code. Premature disclosure of information would give an unfair competitive or bargaining advantage to a person whose personal, private interest is adverse to the general public interest pursuant to ORC 121.22 (G)(2).

Motion to enter made by Ruppert, Seconded by Aldridge.

Voting Yea: Roberts, Ruppert, Mayor Centers, Aldridge, Fouts, Lipps

Voting Nay: Vice Mayor Hall

Motion passed. Council entered Executive Session at 6:38pm.

Motion to exit made by Aldridge, Seconded by Lipps.

Voting Yea: Roberts, Ruppert, Mayor Centers, Aldridge, Fouts, Lipps, Vice Mayor Hall

Motion passed. Council exited Executive Session at 8:43pm.

13. ADJOURNMENT

Motion made by Vice Mayor Hall, Seconded by Lipps.

Voting Yea: Roberts, Ruppert, Mayor Centers, Aldridge, Fouts, Lipps, Vice Mayor Hall

Motion passed. Council adjourned at 8:43pm.

Brent Centers, Mayor

Khristi Dunn, Clerk of Council