



CITY COUNCIL MEETING

Monday, November 18, 2024 at 6:00 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 6:00pm.

2. ROLL CALL

PRESENT

D. Denny Centers

Paul Ruppert

Vice Mayor Todd Hall

Mayor Brent Centers

Michael Aldridge

Debbie Fouts

Matt Wilcher

Staff: Mr. Westendorf, Ms. Steed, Ms. Trice, Ms. Dunn, Chief Colon, Chief Stitzel, Mr. Conway, Mr. Inman, Ms. Chibis

There were three guests and one member of the press.

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. November 4, 2024

Motion made by Ruppert, Seconded by Aldridge.

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

Voting Abstaining: Vice Mayor Hall

Motion passed.

5. PRESENTATIONS

A. Committee Reports

Mayor Centers gave an update on the Safety Committee held earlier that evening. There was further discussion about the need for an upcoming fire levy. The Committee would like to host a town hall with staff to get opinions from the voters.

A portion of tasers in the Division of Police are coming to the end of their life cycle. Will need to consider a leased service agreement at the end of 2025 or in 2026.

They discussed the 2025 AFG grant application. Legislation to follow at the December 2 Council meeting.

6. RECEPTION OF VISITORS

Mayor Centers opened the Reception of Visitors at 6:05pm.

Paul Short of 1 Pam Drive asked to be heard. Mr. Short has lived at his residence for 48 years. He gave Council a picture to review. He was sent a property maintenance violation for a boat that was parked illegally. He said his home is well maintained. The notice says the boat is required to be parked in the rear yard with a privacy fence and on an impervious surface. He would like to request a variance.

Council said the home looks beautiful and well maintained. Staff has been directed to enforce the property maintenance code. Mr. Westendorf will personally follow up with Mr. Short.

Taylor Millard of 12 Hepner Ave in New Lebanon Ohio asked to be heard. She has been a barber for eight years. She currently works at a shop in Carlisle. She recently obtained a lease at 183 A East 6th Street in Franklin. There is a current moratorium on that property. She is worried about the proposed extension on the agenda for the moratorium.

Mr. Westendorf said the moratorium is proposed to be extended through April to ensure updates are processed through Planning Commission and Council. Staff has been working to update next ring of zoning from Downtown Zoning Updates. The Comprehensive plan was done with extensive community feedback. This will shape the zoning updates. He does not anticipate the use of a barber shop being prohibited in the location, but cannot guarantee and moratorium applies to every property listed. There will be a public input process during the Planning commission Hearings as well as Council hearings.

The Mayor asked if an exception was allowed. Mr. Westendorf responded that exceptions can lessen the authority of the moratorium. Mr. D. Centers told Ms. Millard that “we want to have you in town” and asked “Can you wait a little while?” Mrs. Fouts said that Council is business friendly, and she doesn’t like not having a choice. She asked for the topic to be discussed in executive session. There was continued discussion about options regarding the moratorium. Council will discuss further and consult with the law director. Ms. Millard gave her contact information to Ms. Dunn. Staff will follow up with her.

Mr. Charles Richards of 3844 Beal Rd asked to be heard. He is the owner of the strip mall where Ms. Millard will be leasing space. He asked about notification of zoning changes for current businesses. Mr. Westendorf explained that all existing uses would be allowed if there was a change and explained that any new zoning code would apply with an occupancy change. He encouraged Mr. Richards to give his information to Ms. Dunn to receive notices of public hearings.

Mayor Centers closed the Reception of Visitors at 6:39pm.

7. NEW BUSINESS

A. RESOLUTION 2024-69 AMENDING RESOLUTION 2024-55 AND AUTHORIZING POSITION TITLES AND THE NUMBER OF POSITIONS FOR EACH TITLE FOR CITY OF FRANKLIN PERSONNEL FOR THE YEAR 2024

Due to an upcoming retirement, the Water & Sewer Lead position is being increased from one to two authorized positions.

Motion made by D. Centers, Seconded by Vice Mayor Hall.

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

Motion passed.

B. RESOLUTION 2024-70 AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO SUBMIT A LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION FUND APPLICATION TO THE OHIO DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES ON BEHALF OF THE CITY OF FRANKLIN

This Resolution authorizes the City Manager to apply for a Land and Water Conservation Fund Grant to add a new shelter, walking path, playground equipment and restrooms at Dial Park. The cost of this project is currently estimated at \$500,000, and the City's share would be \$250,000. If our application for the grant is approved, the Land and Water Conservation Fund Program is a reimbursement-type program, so the City would have to pay the entire project cost upfront, and we would then be reimbursed \$250,000 under the Grant Program. The costs for this Project would be paid out of the Recreation Fund.

Motion made by Vice Mayor Hall, Seconded by Aldridge.

Voting Yea: D. Centers, Ruppert, Vice Mayor Hall, Aldridge, Wilcher

Voting Nay: Mayor Centers, Fouts

Motion passed.

8. INTRODUCTION OF NEW LEGISLATION

A. ORDINANCE 2024-33 EXTENDING THE MORATORIUM ON THE ISSUANCE OF ZONING PERMITS AND APPROVALS FOR NEW DEVELOPMENT ALONG THE STATE ROUTE 73, STATE ROUTE 123, AND DIXIE HIGHWAY CORRIDORS FOR A PERIOD OF 120 DAYS

9. CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

Main Street Update: The substantial completion date is December 6th, immediately before Franklin in Lights on December 7th. Hopefully by the end of week all pavers should be down at intersection of Fourth and Main, dependent on a pending snowstorm. Chandelier installation was scheduled to begin on Wednesday. Fourth and Main would be closed Wednesday through Saturday, but could possibly open sooner than Saturday. The schools and downtown businesses had been notified. Fencing around transformers will take more time. Tables to go on poles that support chandelier will also take more time. There are punch list items to be addressed into the spring, due to weather. Applicable retainers will be held until work is completed.

Staff had a kickoff meeting with the grant writer for the RAISE 2.0 application. The rules slightly changed from last year, but mostly still the same as the last application. There will be additional review processes and submittal requirements. Staff will meet with Ethan Reynolds from the Governor's office to walk through the entire project and discuss different financing needs. He will help identify various state projects to bring funding to the project.

Mr. Westendorf and Ms. Steed will be traveling to Toledo to see the parks system that received three RAISE grants consecutively. They want to see what they are doing and how to leverage moving forward. They will be meeting with the lead Metro Park employee who submitted the grants for Toledo.

Last year, the City of Franklin applied while still designing the project. Design is finalized and this year will focus on feedback from the Department of Transportation. There is a challenging Senate climate in Ohio in terms of seeking letters of recommendation.

The EPA has mandated letters be sent regarding service lines that could contain lead. The language is not friendly but was set by EPA. Staff created a video and scheduled Town Halls to address questions that arise from the letters.

Franklin in Lights would be held on December 7th.

Staff provided a recap of the Fury 5K event. There were 236 registered participants, and the event raised \$15,000 for the K9 fund. Next year, the event will be held on November 8, 2025.

We will recognize crews who rescued residents during a recent fire at an upcoming meeting.

Mr. Robert Lipps declined to renew his service on the Warren County Board of Health for next year. He has a college course that conflicts with the meeting time. Please send any recommendations for this vacancy to Mr. Westendorf.

11. COUNCIL COMMENTS

Mr. Wilcher wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving and said to have a safe and happy holiday.

Mrs. Fouts wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving. She enjoyed the meeting and spirited conversation. She appreciates Ms. Millard coming in and wanting to start a business. She also appreciates Mr. Short and how he maintains his property.

Mr. Aldridge thanked Ms. Dunn for obtaining iPads for Council use, which will save a great deal of paper. He said the 5K was a great event with a great turnout.

He also thanked Ms. Millard for coming to the meeting. He understands frustration with government processes, especially when it seems that common sense doesn't prevail. He assured her what is happening is done for the bigger picture. Council wants her business in the City; it is not personal. They will do their due diligence with legal counsel.

He appreciated the healthy debate regarding the Land and Water grant application. The City is going to spend money on that park anyway, and staff does a great job with grants and getting additional funding. He said it is good to have a healthy, respectful debate. Everyone has the same vision for community.

Mr. D. Centers echoed Mr. Aldridge's comments, he hopes to see Ms. Millard's business in Franklin. He anticipates missing the next Council meeting.

Mr. Ruppert agreed with Mr. Aldridge and added that what is going to be done at Dial Park will be another gem for this city. The appreciation for work at Community Park has been outstanding. He went by yesterday and there were 30 kids at the playground. He can't imagine how many kids will enjoy the facility at Dial Park. He fully supports the project.

Vice Mayor Hall said that we have made upgrades and now we must put the same amenities in this new park. He understands trying to save money, but we must back things when we can get help, that's important. If not, we are paying full price.

He asked Chief Colon if the speed meter could be placed on David Blvd, preferably in front of 500 David Blvd. A resident has put out homemade speed limit signs, so he'd like to address the issue.

Mayor Centers said the Fury 5K was wonderful and he knows how much work went into it. He loved seeing Council and staff participation.

The Night of Gratitude was wonderful. It's the least leadership can do for staff to show gratitude. It is nice to see everyone with their families. The event was well done.

He attended a freshman summit at Franklin High School along with other City staff. Students presented information on mental health issues and how leadership at the Schools and the City can help. It was wonderful and the student suggestions were great. The students took the assignment seriously. He would like to invite the students to present to Council as well. Council welcomed the idea.

12. EXECUTIVE SESSION

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

- B. To consider confidential information related to the trade secrets of an applicant for economic development assistance pursuant to ORC 121.22 (G)(8).
A unanimous quorum of the public body determines, by a roll call vote, that the executive session is necessary to protect the interests of the applicant or the possible investment or expenditure of public funds to be made in connection with the economic development project.

Motion to enter made by Ruppert, Seconded by Fouts.

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

Motion passed. Council entered executive session at 7:28pm.

Motion to exit made by Wilcher, Seconded by Fouts.

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

Motion passed. Council entered executive session at 8:58pm.

13. ADJOURNMENT

Motion made by Vice Mayor Hall, Seconded by D. Centers.

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

Motion passed. Council adjourned at 8:58pm.

Brent Centers, Mayor

Khristi Dunn, Clerk of Council