



# CITY COUNCIL MEETING

Monday, August 18, 2025 at 5:30 PM

1 Benjamin Franklin Way Franklin, Ohio 45005

[www.FranklinOhio.org](http://www.FranklinOhio.org)

## CLERK'S JOURNAL

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### 1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Centers called the meeting to order at 5:31pm.

### 2. ROLL CALL

PRESENT

Paul Ruppert

Vice Mayor Todd Hall

Mayor Brent Centers

Michael Aldridge

Debbie Fouts

Matt Wilcher

ABSENT

D. Denny Centers

Staff: Mr. Westendorf, Ms. Dunn, Chief Colon, Chief Stitzel, Mr. Damian, Mr. Inman.

There were two 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. August 4, 2025

B. August 5, 2025

Motion made by Ruppert, Seconded by Vice Mayor Hall.

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

Motion passed.

### 5. RECEPTION OF VISITORS

Mayor Centers opened and closed the Reception of Visitors at 5:33pm as none asked to be heard.

### 6. PUBLIC HEARING

A. **ORDINANCE 2025-19** AN ORDINANCE ESTABLISHING THE CITY OF FRANKLIN COMMUNITY ENTERTAINMENT DISTRICT PURSUANT TO THE PROVISIONS OF OHIO REVISED CODE SECTION 4301.80 IN THE CITY OF FRANKLIN, OHIO; MAKING CERTAIN FINDING RELATED THERETO

A Community Entertainment District (CED) is a defined area designed to develop a mix of entertainment, retail, cultural, educational, social, and arts establishments. CEDs are established under Ohio Revised Code § 4301.80, permitting municipalities to apply. This ordinance establishes a CED in Downtown Franklin and defines the district boundaries.

Mayor Centers opened the Public Hearing at 5:38pm as none asked to be heard.

Motion made by Vice Mayor Hall, Seconded by Aldridge.

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

Motion passed.

**B. ORDINANCE 2025-20 ESTABLISHING STANDARDS FOR THE PROTECTION, PLANTING, AND CARE OF TREES IN THE CITY'S CORPORATE LIMITS, AND PROCLAIMING AN ANNUAL ARBOR DAY HOLIDAY IN THE CITY OF FRANKLIN**

The City of Franklin desires to participate in the "Tree City USA" program created by the Arbor Day Foundation—a global nonprofit organization dedicated to the protection and planting of trees in the interests of communal health and well-being. Participation in the program will increase the City's opportunities to obtain grant funding for various urban forestry purposes. This Ordinance satisfies certain requirements for the City to participate in the Tree City USA program by (1) enacting community tree protection regulations and (2) proclaiming an annual Arbor Day holiday in the City of Franklin.

Mayor Centers opened the Public Hearing at 5:43pm.

Cindy of 7450 Mentz Road asked to be heard. She asked if this Ordinance would have any impact on native flowers on City property. She does butterfly and bee gardens and educates on wildflowers. She would like to contribute and has been working with staff on figuring out a space to plant. This Ordinance only addresses trees. She has been working with City staff and will continue to do so.

Mayor Centers closed the Public Hearing at 5:49pm.

Motion made by Vice Mayor Hall, Seconded by Wilcher.

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

Motion passed.

**7. NEW BUSINESS**

**A. RESOLUTION 2025-49 ESTABLISHING THE RATES FOR SOLID WASTE, RECYCLING AND YARD WASTE COLLECTION IN THE CITY OF FRANKLIN FOR THE PERIOD FROM OCTOBER 1, 2025, THROUGH SEPTEMBER 30, 2026**

Section 931.04 of the Codified Ordinances authorizes Council to set, by resolution, the rates for garbage collection, including recycling and yard waste disposal. This Resolution establishes the trash and recycling collection rates for City residents for the 2025-2026 contract period with the City's waste hauler, Rumpke. The 2025-2026 contract period represents the third one-year renewal available under the current contract. There is no more potential one-year renewal periods remaining.

The new rates will go into effect as of October 1, 2025. The new rate represents a \$0.42 increase from the current trash rate. (New Rate \$16.97) The price of toters (\$1.50), tire pick up (\$275 per ton; \$2.75 per car tire off-rim; \$4.25 per car tire on-rim; and the excess trash collection cost (\$35.00 per hopper).

Motion made by Ruppert, Seconded by Vice Mayor Hall.

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

Motion passed.

**B. RESOLUTION 2025-50** ACCEPTING, ON BEHALF OF THE CITY OF FRANKLIN, THE MATERIAL TERMS OF A PROPOSED OPIOID LITIGATION SETTLEMENT WITH THE SACKLER FAMILY, AND ACCEPTING THE DISTRIBUTION AND DISBURSEMENT OF SETTLEMENT FUNDS THEREFORM IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE ONE OHIO MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

The State of Ohio continues to prosecute litigation against opioid supply chain participants, seeking to hold them accountable for their part in creating the opioid epidemic across Ohio. This Resolution accepts the latest settlement negotiated and agreed to by the State of Ohio, which resolves opioid litigation against the Sackler family (the owners/operators of opioid manufacturer/distributor, Purdue Pharma L.P.).

Motion made by Vice Mayor Hall, Seconded by Aldridge.

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

Motion passed.

**C. RESOLUTION 2025-51** ADOPTING THE WARREN COUNTY MULTI-JURISDICTIONAL HAZARD MITIGATION 5 – YEAR PLAN UPDATE

Warren County EMA has shared the Hazard Mitigation 5 – year plan update. All jurisdictions within the county must adopt the plan via resolution no later than November 5th, 2025 to remain eligible for mitigation grants and disaster relief assistance (federal).

The 2025 Hazard Mitigation Plan will continue to have similar themes as its predecessors, and focus on education and collaboration with jurisdictions, schools, businesses, and organizations to develop, implement and encourage mitigation strategies designed to create resiliency throughout the county.

Motion made by Ruppert, Seconded by Vice Mayor Hall.

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

Motion passed.

**D. RESOLUTION 2025-52** AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO APPLY FOR, ACCEPT, AND ENTER INTO A WATER SUPPLY REVOLVING LOAN ACCOUNT (WSRLA) AGREEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE CITY OF FRANKLIN FOR CONSTRUCTION OF THE WATER METER REPLACEMENT PROJECT; AND DESIGNATING A DEDICATED REPAYMENT SOURCE FOR THE LOAN

On February 3, 2025, Council passed Resolution 2025-10 Authorizing the City's Purchase of Water Meters. This resolution authorizes the City to enter into an Water Supply Revolving Loan Account (WSRLA LOAN) Agreement to replace & upgrade City of Franklin Water Meters.

Motion made by Ruppert, Seconded by Wilcher.

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

Motion passed.

**9. CITY MANAGER'S REPORT**

Mr. Westendorf reported that Ms. Trice, Mr. Inman, Ms. Paulsen, and their staff have done an excellent job with the Water Meter Replacement Program, completing a significant amount of work in addition to their regular duties.

He recognized City staff, including Public Works, Police, and Fire & EMS, for their efforts in managing Franklin City Schools traffic patterns with the start of the new school year and the lack of busing. He noted that the roundabout at the high school is handling traffic very well.

Franklin City Schools have begun using the pee wee fields at Community Park, and staff have reinforced that parking on the grass is not permitted. Athletic Director Bob Knipper has requested to place a storage facility on City park property. Mr. Westendorf requested a formal proposal in order to quantify the request and noted his preference to consolidate and clean up multiple storage facilities at Atrium Field. Council was in favor of encouraging storage consolidation inside the fence and exhausting all options before any additional requests are presented to Council.

The City has entered into a use agreement with Franklin Pee Wee and Franklin City Schools. At their request, goal posts were removed from the pee wee fields. Mr. Westendorf noted that OHSA now requires schools charge for game entry, which creates a challenge given that baseball and other activities are held in a public park.

Judge Ruppert responded to the information request from National Center for State Courts (NCSC) for court study that past Friday evening. Martin Russell requested a status update, and Mr. Westendorf noted that the first phase of the study should be returned within six months. He recommended staying the course as no new information is available at this time.

A new collaboration effort is underway with Springboro, Springboro Community Schools, Miamisburg, and the South Community Advisory Council to provide a Premier Health medical clinic for employees.

August is Overdose Awareness Month, and WCPO featured a segment on the City's efforts. Downtown Lights will be purple during the month of August in support of the #LightUpPurpleWC campaign.

Mr. Westendorf announced that an Economic Development Incentive Work Session will be scheduled. The last full Council work session on this topic was in November 2021. Andy Brossart and Caleb Bell from Bricker will be invited to discuss incentives, their benefits, and drawbacks. The session is expected to last 90–120 minutes, and Ms. Dunn will reach out with time options.

He also shared a draft version of the interactive zoning map for the City of Franklin.

The Retail Strategies kickoff will take place next week.

Mr. Westendorf reported that Dixie Highway has reopened well ahead of schedule.

The Urban Blu restroom has been delivered to the spray park, though other equipment was returned to be re-fabricated, causing delays. Lighting is scheduled to be installed in September, with a grand opening likely in the spring. A communication strategy will be forthcoming.

## **10. COUNCIL COMMENTS**

Mr. Wilcher thanked City staff for their efforts in assisting with school pick-up and drop-off, noting this as one of many examples of the City's ongoing support of Franklin City Schools. He stated that the roundabout has proven to be very effective, preventing what could have been a problematic intersection. He commended the Car Show as an excellent event and asked if it was still on track to continue next year. He noted that several new clubs were in attendance observing the event, although

he has not yet met with them. The only complaint he heard was regarding the lack of food vendors. Mr. Wilcher also inquired about the issue of semi-trucks parking on the ramp at SR 123, which causes safety concerns when they re-enter traffic at low speeds. While the City cannot prohibit trucks from parking there, the Ohio State Highway Patrol has been asked to discourage the practice. Mr. Westendorf noted that rest stops in the area are being reconstructed to expand truck parking capacity, but the shortage continues in the meantime.

Mrs. Fouts asked for updates on the CVS property closure and the Swifty property. Mr. Westendorf explained that the CVS building is not owned by CVS directly. Retail Strategies has been notified and is working to establish connections to ensure the highest and best use for the location. Regarding the Swifty property, underground tanks have been removed, which allows the company to stop paying fines to the State. Property Maintenance is addressing the remaining issues at the site. Mrs. Fouts also noted that Lee's Famous Recipe is building a new restaurant and referenced an article that incorrectly stated the re-development was not possible.

Mr. Aldridge shared that he greatly enjoys attending downtown events, noting that both the fireworks and Car Show were very successful. He reported that Pisanello's sold more than 1,000 pizzas during the event, despite competition from the VOA Country Concert held the same evening. He praised City staff for their efforts and noted that delays with the spray park are not staff-related, but due to weather and safety concerns. He emphasized the importance of opening the park safely. Mr. Aldridge remarked on the strong community outreach efforts by the Police and Fire Departments, highlighting National Night Out as a successful event that allowed the community to connect with first responders. He noted that even the Mayor participated in demonstrations. He added that he has observed Fire Department personnel engaging with the community and commended their efforts. Regarding the roundabout, Mr. Aldridge stated that while he was initially hesitant, he is now a strong supporter after seeing its effectiveness. He referenced a recent visit to Carmel, Indiana, which has more than 150 roundabouts, and noted how efficiently traffic moves there.

Mr. Ruppert asked if the Speedway on Second Street would be reopening. Mr. Westendorf reported that the Health Department was not notified of the fire incident, which caused delays. The target reopening date is August 25.

Vice Mayor Hall stated that National Night Out was an excellent event and expressed hope that the Car Show will continue to be successful, even if it evolves in a slightly different way. He shared that it was enjoyable to walk downtown and hear live music, which contributes to a strong community atmosphere. He noted that the City has consistently attempted to work with Franklin City Schools on various projects, although success has been limited. He emphasized that while the City often receives criticism for school-related issues, such as transportation, the City does not bus students but works hard to help mitigate problems. He acknowledged that there will always be misunderstandings about roles and responsibilities, but stressed that Franklin takes on many challenges and collaborates more with its schools than most cities. He hopes that residents recognize the City's extensive cooperation and contributions, even though the City is sometimes unfairly blamed.

Mayor Centers stated that National Night Out was a very well-organized event, with smooth setup and excellent participation. He shared that he had received a call noting that Halloween falls on a Friday this year, which coincides with the first week of postseason football if the Wildcats advance. He suggested reaching out to area communities to coordinate dates for Trick or Treat. The Mayor also referenced calls

about whether the back gate at Community Park should remain open or closed. Council discussed the matter and staff shared that officers appreciate having multiple entrance options. Mayor Centers reminded Council and the public that the next Fourth Friday on Fourth Street event will be held this week. Finally, he shared that Warren County Commissioner Young will be touring downtown Franklin soon, having heard so much about recent improvements.

## **11. 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 at 7:24pm.

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Brent Centers, Mayor

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Khristi Dunn, Clerk of Council