



CITY COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING

Wednesday, August 27, 2025, 5:00 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 5:07 PM.

2. ROLL CALL ROLL CALL

PRESENT

Denny Centers

Paul Ruppert

Vice Mayor Todd Hall

Mayor Brent Centers

Michael Aldridge

Debbie Fouts

Matt Wilcher

STAFF: Jonathan Westendorf, Karisa Steed, Jenna Trice, Adam Colon, Cindi Chibis

There were six guests in attendance.

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance Led by Mayor Centers.

4. NEW BUSINESS

- A. **RESOLUTION 2025-53** AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO NEGOTIATE AND EXECUTE AN AMENDMENT TO FURTHER EXTEND THE RIGHT TO REPURCHASE CERTAIN REAL PROPERTY CURRENTLY OWNED BY RILEY REAL ESTATE, LLC AND MORE PARTICULARLY IDENTIFIED AS WARREN COUNTY AUDITOR'S PARCEL NO. 04-31-138-028

Jonathan Westendorf introduced Resolution 2025-53 requesting Council's approval of an additional twelve (12) month extension for the Slipcast project.

Mayor Centers opened the floor for questions at 5:14 PM.

Mr. Brian Willitt of Slipcast introduced himself, provided his address, and explained that the request was made to satisfy the requirements of project funders. He then responded to Council questions.

Wilcher expressed support for the extension. Michael Aldridge concurred.

Fouts expressed concern regarding the requested twelve (12) month extension on top of the recently approved nine (9) month extension.

Hearing no additional comments or questions, Mayor Centers called for a motion.

Motion made by Vice Mayor Hall, Seconded by Aldridge.

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

Voting Nay: Fouts

Resolution 2025-53 adopted.

B. RESOLUTION 2025-54 AMENDING RESOLUTION 2023-43 TO DESIGNATE BEGGERS' NIGHT IN THE CITY OF FRANKLIN FOR THE YEAR 2025

Westendorf explained that the City was requesting confirmation of the proposed date, Friday, October 31, 2025, for Beggars Night, or direction to select an alternate date.

Mayor Centers requested and received confirmation that the proposed date was coordinated with neighboring communities and that there was no compelling reason to make a change.

All Council members voiced support for keeping the October 31 date.

No motion was made; the matter dies for lack of action.

5. WORK SESSION

A. Economic Development

Westendorf opened the discussion on economic development by expressing appreciation of the opportunity to take measure of where we are, how far we have come, and where we are headed.

Westendorf shared applicable community financial realities, and reviewed obstacles that must be overcome to ensure continued development. He spoke about the strategic utilization of existing and new financial tools to support growth and improvements. Throughout his presentation, he remained focused on the concept that we are “Driven by Duty” toward community transformation including residential development, industrial development, retail and commercial expansion, and vibrant downtown commerce and living. He emphasized the need for “Cathedral Thinking” - a far-reaching vision and shared commitment to long-term implementation.

Westendorf then introduced Andy Brossart, Bradley Payne Advisors, Adam Seeley Bricker Graydon, LLP and Caleb Bell Bricker Graydon, LLP.

Seeley commended Franklin for being at the forefront of economic initiatives and shared examples of what he is seeing in other communities.

Brossart reviewed the long-term financial benefits of projects such as Sheetz, Walther Engineering, Modula, and Shaker Farms for both the City and Franklin City Schools.

Bell explained financing tools including NCAs (New Community Authorities), CRAs (Community Reinvestment Areas) and TIFs (Tax Increment Financing). Using Shaker Farms as an example, he provided detailed modeling of their potential positive financial impact on the City and the schools. He emphasized the need for long-term sustainability mechanisms.

Council then discussed the City's relationship with the schools, reaffirming the importance of maintaining open communication for the benefit of the community.

Westendorf outlined public infrastructure projects for 2026-2029, noting an anticipated \$16 million investment. Several projects are expected to qualify for OPWC funding. He also updated Council on the City's Bond Anticipation Note (BAN), and its repayment outlook.

Westendorf concluded with the statement, "Our Word is Our Bond", stressing Franklin's political stability and track record of delivering on commitments which makes the community attractive for investment. "We are doing things right".

Steed emphasized the importance of relationship building with developers, acknowledged the complexity of financial tools, and expressed confidence in the City's direction.

Trice affirmed that most community members support the City's efforts stating that "our reputation matters".

Westendorf closed by thanking all participants for their time and support. He reaffirmed his commitment to continue working with the schools, and appreciating Council's confirmation that CRA, NCA, and TIF remain viable tools for future development.

6. COUNCIL COMMENTS

D. Centers thanked everyone for the meeting and expressed confidence that the City will continue to take the high road when facing challenges.

Fouts acknowledged that community criticism can sometimes feel discouraging, but she commended City Council and staff for their strong performance and dedication.

Wilcher noted that the school district's short-term, school-focused priorities can at times differ from the City's long-term, community-wide goals, but he encouraged continued open dialogue between the City and the schools.

Ruppert expressed appreciation for the thorough review of financial tools available for economic development. He shared his confidence that the City will continue building trust with community members.

Aldridge praised the City for partnering with an impressive team of professionals to guide community growth. He encouraged Council and staff to focus on doing what is right rather than giving too much weight to comments on social media.

Vice Mayor Hall recognized that change can be difficult, but emphasized the importance of moving forward in the best interest of the community, which will also benefit the school district.

Mayor Centers concluded by recognizing the efforts and accomplishments of the team, as well as the expertise of the contractors, and encouraged City leadership to "keep moving forward."

8. ADJOURNMENT

Motion made by Vice Mayor Hall, Seconded by Fouts.

Voting Yea: D. Centers, Fouts, Ruppert, Vice Mayor Hall, Mayor Centers, Aldridge, Wilcher
Council adjourned at 7:41 PM.

Brent Centers, Mayor

Khristi Dunn, Clerk of Council