



# CITY COUNCIL MEETING

Monday, December 02, 2024 at 6:00 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 6:00pm.

### 2. ROLL CALL

PRESENT

Paul Ruppert

Vice Mayor Todd Hall

Mayor Brent Centers

Michael Aldridge

Debbie Fouts

Matt Wilcher

ABSENT

Denny Centers

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

There were approximately 33 guests and one member of the press 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. November 18, 2024

Motion made by Ruppert, Seconded by Vice Mayor Hall.

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

Motion passed.

### 5. PRESENTATIONS

A. Certificate of Merit (Chief Stitzel)

Chief Stitzel presented certificates of merit to Firefighter Bradley Lawson, Lt. Mike Posega, and Firefighter Brad Cooper for their bravery and heroic actions on November 8, 2024. Their quick thinking and courage saved a life during a structure fire.

Council recessed from 6:06pm - 6:15pm.

## 6. RECEPTION OF VISITORS

Mayor Centers opened the Reception of Visitors at 6:15pm.

Sherry King Mack Walsh of 5700 S Dixie Highway asked to be heard. She was in a car accident in the city. She was unhappy with how the Officer handled the accident. Mayor Centers said they will ask the Chief to look into the report and see what had happened. The Chief asked to speak with her in the hallway to answer her questions.

Mayor Centers closed the reception of visitors at 6:34pm.

## 7. PUBLIC HEARING

### 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 90 DAYS

The City of Franklin currently has a moratorium in effect that suspends the City's review and issuance of zoning approvals for new development in the SR 73, SR 123, and Dixie Highway corridors to allow the City time to fulfill its zoning/planning objectives.

The moratorium is set to expire on January 14, 2025. The City needs additional time to fulfill the purposes of the moratorium. This Ordinance extends the current moratorium for an additional 90 days following the current January 14, 2025 expiration date. The new expiration date will be April 14, 2025.

Mayor Centers opened the public hearing at 6:44pm.

Taylor Millard of 12 Hepner Ave in New Lebanon Ohio asked to be heard. Ms. Millard would like to open a barber shop at 183-A E. 6th Street. An extension of the moratorium will put her opening date into April when SR-123 would be closed for the roundabout construction.

Mayor Centers said that Council shares her frustrations, but unfortunately legal counsel advised that lifting the moratorium for a single parcel would invalidate the moratorium elsewhere.

Mayor Centers closed the Reception of Visitors at 6:47pm.

Mr. Aldridge wished this use could be granted without cancelling out the rest of moratorium. This is not a fun part of the job because they want Ms. Millard to bring her business here. With all the work being done, it doesn't make sense to risk it. He hopes she can stick it out until April.

Ms. Millard asked about a conditional use permit. Mr. Westendorf replied that condition use permits are not issued under the moratorium as well. He does not expect her zoning use to be changed under the revisions.

Motion made by Vice Mayor Hall, Seconded by Aldridge.

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

Motion passed.

## 8. NEW BUSINESS

### A. RESOLUTION 2024-71 UPDATING THE CITY OF FRANKLIN PERSONNEL POLICY MANUAL

The proposed changes were reviewed and recommended by Franklin's Civil Service Commission on 11/25/2024. The changes include an increase from two weeks to three weeks in the allowable annual vacation carryover and builds in discretion for the City Manager to make an exception to the three-week

limit on a case-by-case basis. Additionally, the proposed change increases vacation conversion to pay from two weeks to three weeks one time per year.

Council had questions regarding the policy change that were discussed during executive session pursuant to ORC 121.22 (G)(1). The vote took place later in the meeting.

**B. RESOLUTION 2024-72 ACCEPTING THE ANNEXATION OF CERTAIN TERRITORY TO THE CITY OF FRANKLIN, OHIO, PURSUANT TO AN ANNEXATION PETITION FILED WITH AND GRANTED BY THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF WARREN COUNTY, OHIO, AS PROVIDED FOR IN OHIO REVISED CODE SECTION 709.16**

On August 29, 2024, a petition was filed with Warren County for the annexation of 19.665 acres in Franklin Township to the City of Franklin. On June 17, 2024 Council adopted Resolution 2024-11, authorizing this annexation. On September 24, 2024 the Warren County Commissioners approved the proposed annexation. Passage of this resolution accepts the annexation.

Motion made by Vice Mayor Hall, Seconded by Wilcher.

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

Motion passed.

**B. FEMA Assistance to Firefighters Grant Application (Chief Stitzel)**

Chief Stitzel request approval (verbal motion) to submit an application for the FEMA Assistance to Firefighters Grant to purchase three Life Pack 35's.

The Life Pack 35 is an emergency response monitor/defibrillator. Total Cost for the project is \$270,006.30. The Local Share is 5% of the total amount or \$13,500.31. The Federal Share is 95% or \$256,505.99

Motion made by Ruppert, Seconded by Aldridge.

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

Motion passed.

**9. CITY MANAGER'S REPORT**

Downtown Update: The chandelier at Fourth and Main was being installed. Staff and crews are working to close out the project. By the end of Wednesday, Fourth and Main should open and remain open. There are finishing touches that are needed. We will be ready to turn on lights and sounds for the first time as part of the Franklin In Lights celebration on Saturday evening. There are significant punch list items to be dealt with later. Temperatures are not cooperative this year. These will be addressed in early 2025.

RAISE Grant: Mr. Westendorf and Ms. Steed traveled to Toledo and met with Metroparks staff who have received three RAISE grant awards in a row. They learned that political influence at the state and federal level is very important. They are working with Mr. Reynolds from the Governor's office to form a three-county coalition: Butler, Warren, and Montgomery. Staff are also working to get letters of support and commitment from ODOT, MCD, and Duke.

The application is similar to last year except we will replace the roundabout on SR-123 with intersection improvements at Sixth and Riley. Otherwise, the project is unchanged. The method and approach in applying will have significant changes based on feedback from last year's application.

Water treatment solar project: Mr. Inman gave an update on the solar project. The project has started, and trees have been cleared from the site. A road is being installed and racking for the panels are going

in. The project has an estimated completion date of April. This will bring significant savings to the City and creates green energy. There is already an agreement with Duke in place.

Dial Park & Splashpad: Mr. Westendorf gave an overview of pool operations. At this point, the pool cannot be repaired. Replacement is estimated at \$4 million. Mr. Westendorf proposed considering a year-round facility to justify the cost and bringing in other partners for the project, like Franklin Township and Carlisle. A splashpad could be added to Dial Park and operational by June of 2025.

Mrs. Fouts asked about planning and shared concerns for those who use the pool and do not have the luxury of going on vacations or visiting other pools. Mr. Westendorf said the proposed splash pad is a nice summer activity and would serve those residents who were using the pool. It buys us time to plan for another facility.

Mrs. Fouts wants to consider community park as a splash pad location. The restrooms are already in place at that park. Mr. Westendorf said that Community Park is susceptible to flooding. The cost to fill in the pool is estimated at \$300,000. Staff are working on ideas to cut down those costs. Mrs. Fouts doesn't want to rush the implementation of the splash pad. Council would like to see the pool options before deciding on the location for the splash pad. Mr. Westendorf will work on having Human Nature present options at the next Council meeting.

Franklin in Lights would be held on December 7th. Ms. Dunn reviewed the activities and schedule of events for the evening.

There is a vacancy for the City's seat on the Warren County Board of Health board. The Mayor asked Council to email Ms. Dunn with any requested changes to committees or boards for 2025.

Council thanked Mr. Westendorf for presentation on the pool and splash pad options.

## **10. COUNCIL COMMENTS**

Mr. Wilcher thanked staff for providing options. Ten years ago, Council wasn't given options. It is fun to have options to discuss and provide amenities for our citizens. A decision about the pool going forward is a big discussion and with large costs. He doesn't know if we can support a new pool on our own and likes the idea of bringing in other communities. He is looking forward to Franklin in Lights and will see everyone on Saturday at 4:00pm!

Mrs. Fouts appreciates the information. Replacing something that has been a staple for so long is a big decision.

The chandelier downtown has caused interesting conversations on social media.

She would like to have a property maintenance discussion with staff. There are some businesses that need attention.

She is looking forward to everything going on. She knows that everyone would love a splash pad. She would like to ensure there is plenty of shade for the splash pad.

Mr. Aldridge has a trip scheduled and hates to miss Franklin in Lights. He hopes to see drone footage and pictures from the event.

Mr. Ruppert thanked road crews for the leaf pickup. The machine is very efficient and does a great job. The crews assisted a neighbor of his during the process with some limbs. He appreciates the extra effort. He spoke to someone building a new home that is having water pressure issues. He asked if the water pressure would be better once the water tower and pump station were done at the park. Mr. Inman asked him to send any pressure issues to public works as they are happy to look into it.

Vice Mayor Hall said we sit and complain about weird stuff. We have completed a project that is four years in the making. He wants to take a step back and say thank you. It's been a lot of work. Mr. Westendorf is good at what he does and as a result, keeps getting things to do. He is pleasantly surprised by the reaction to downtown. This is only phase one of the project; he is looking forward to phase two.

Mayor Centers asked for a high-level update on the Slipcast development. Mr. Westendorf reported that the property closed in October. The private lender chosen by Slipcast had only done eight SBA loans in it's history. They were given some bad information and it's been a time-consuming process. Slipcast has hired a private firm to help with the process. They are in the final stages of determining if the lender can close a deal. They should have a decision on December 12. If the lender cannot close the deal, they will find another lender. The process should only take 5-6 weeks. The project is still on track and will occur. Construction will likely not start until January with completion at the end of 2025. The Mayor complimented the Chamber45005 Night of Gratitude event saying it was a nice evening and successful event. Their holiday lunch was held earlier that day. Ms. Dunn has been helping with Chamber events and he reported positive changes.

**11. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

- A. To consider the appointment, employment, and compensation of a public employee or official pursuant to ORC 121.22 (G)(1).
- B. Preparing for, conducting, or reviewing negotiations or bargaining sessions with public employees concerning their compensation or other terms and conditions of their employment pursuant to ORC 121.22 (G)(4).

Motion to enter Executive Session made by Aldridge, Seconded by Ruppert.  
Voting Yea: Ruppert, Mayor Centers, Aldridge, Fouts, Wilcher  
Voting Nay: Vice Mayor Hall  
Motion passed. Council entered Executive Session at 8:08pm.

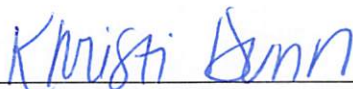
Motion made by Ruppert, Seconded by Aldridge.  
Voting Yea: Ruppert, Vice Mayor Hall, Mayor Centers, Aldridge, Fouts, Wilcher  
Motion passed. Council exited Executive Session at 9:24pm.

**13. NEW BUSINESS**

A. **RESOLUTION 2024-71** UPDATING THE CITY OF FRANKLIN PERSONNEL POLICY MANUAL  
After discussion during executive session, Mayor Centers called for a motion for Resolution 2024-71.  
Motion to approve made by Vice Mayor Hall, Seconded by Wilcher.  
Voting Yea: Ruppert, Vice Mayor Hall, Mayor Centers, Aldridge, Fouts, Wilcher  
Motion passed.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Motion made by Vice Mayor Hall, Seconded by Ruppert.  
Voting Yea: Ruppert, Vice Mayor Hall, Mayor Centers, Aldridge, Fouts, Wilcher  
Motion passed. Council adjourned at 9:25pm.



Khristi Dunn, Clerk of Council



Brent Centers, Mayor