

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
MAYOR AND COUNCIL
OF THE BOROUGH OF FRANKLIN
HELD AT THE FRANKLIN MUNICIPAL BUILDING
46 MAIN STREET, FRANKLIN, NJ
FEBRUARY 25, 2025**

Mayor Sowden called the meeting to order and requested the Borough Clerk to call the roll. Upon roll call, the following members of the Governing Body were present: Mrs. Carnes, Mr. Formica, Mrs. Heath, Mr. Limon, Mr. Skellenger, Mr. Snyder and Mayor Sowden.

Absent: None

Mayor Sowden led the assembly in the flag salute.

Mayor Sowden stated "This meeting is being held in compliance with the provisions of the Open Public Meetings Act, N.J.S.A. 10:4-6 et sequentes. It has been properly advertised by posting in Borough Hall and printed in the New Jersey Herald/Sunday New Jersey Herald on January 12, 2025, and posted on the Borough website, which adequate notice has been certified by the Clerk."

PRESENTATIONS

At this time Councilwoman Heath and Council President Skellenger presented Franklin Revolver and Rifle Association a proclamation for being selected as the 2024 NRA Outstanding Club Award winner.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Mrs. Heath commented that she and Mr. Spidaletto attended the Chamber of Commerce Meeting today that was held in the Conference Room at Borough Hall.

Mr. Skellenger commented that all the appointments for Real ID all filled for the Mobile Unit; there are other appointments available for registration renewals, duplicate titles and one other thing that they have availability for. Mr. Skellenger emailed the director to try to get one more date for us.

Mr. Formica commented that he met with Neil on Monday with the grant writer to go over the AARP grant that we are looking into for picnic benches and seating. We are trying to finalize this grant by Friday.

Mr. Limon commented that there was a personnel and negotiations meeting and we are very close on the contract with the public works employees. There was a Historic Committee meeting and we discussed the state and national historic designation for the Zinc Site.

Mrs. Carnes had nothing to report.

Mr. Snyder commented that he met with the CFO and she informed that she doesn't have anything yet to go forward with the budget.

Mrs. Little had nothing to report.

Mr. Spidaletto commented that the CFO has been working with the auditors. The affordable housing numbers have been reported. The grant writers have been active since we brought them on; we have applied for 6 grants so far (Assistance to Firefighters grant, Local Freight Impact Fund, Local Recreational Improvement Grant, Firehouse Subs Foundation, AARP and T-Mobile Hometown grant). We just received correspondence from the County regarding the NJ State Plan Update Cross Acceptance Process.

Mr. Ursin suggested to consider designating the County to serve as our negotiating entity for this process.

Mr. Formica made a motion to have the County represent us and pass the sample resolution. Seconded by Mr. Skellenger.

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Upon roll call vote:

Ayes: Carnes, Formica, Heath, Limon, Skellenger, Snyder

Nays: None Absent: None Abstentions: None

Mr. Ursin had nothing to report.

Mayor Sowden congratulated the Franklin Revolver and Rifle Association. Mayor Sowden commented to the discussion that Councilman Limon brought up regarding the Historic Committee meeting the other night and how we were looking at the map and it shows a lot of Franklin. The discussion was, all of the people that are on that committee knows Franklin and it was a very historic and great place to grow up. All that area has documentation. To have everything documented, it just seems that it is such a shame that we are looking at this and we are being afraid of the Historic Designation.

OPEN PUBLIC SESSION

Mr. Skellenger made a motion to open the meeting to the public for anyone wishing to address the Governing Body. Seconded by Mrs. Heath. All were in favor.

Ms. Joanne Tatka stepped forward. Ms. Takta asked about the total amount collected for the cannabis.

Mayor Sowden commented that the total amount collected was \$1,837,294.08.

Ms. Tatka asked with the money collected from the cannabis tax and we have been getting reassessed, why did go with the 3.5% cap rather than the 2% that is allowed.

Mr. Ursin commented that the CAP bank that was recently passed does not mean that they are going for a 3.5% increase. That only means that the state puts caps on how much you can increase each year. So the CAP bank allows us that. If our CAP is 3.5% this year, we only raise taxes 2%, it allows us to take the 1.5% they do not use and use it in a future year in case there is an emergency. It allows us to preserve some of the CAP to be used in future years in case of an emergency.

Ms. Tatka commented she was reading that they have been finding dead geese in different places because of the bird flu, was that affected in Franklin. Ms. Tatka questioned the Certified Recycling Professional agreement that was on the agenda. Ms. Tatka asked about the grant qualification that Councilman Limon mentioned and asked if that meant if something could have a Historic Designation and be available to apply for grants. Ms. Tatka asked why it has not been done all these years for the church/schoolhouse.

Mayor Sowden commented that we do not want to declare it historic.

Ms. Dawne Rowe stepped forward. Ms. Rowe congratulated the Franklin Revolver and Rifle Association. Ms. Rowe suggested to publicize the grants so that the public knows.

Ms. Tatka commented on the amount of salt being used on the roads.

There being no one else present who wished to address the Governing Body, Mr. Skellenger made a motion to close the meeting to the public, seconded by Mrs. Carnes. All were in favor.

CONSENT AGENDA

Mayor Sowden requested that all persons present review the consent agenda and offer any comments they may have at this time regarding the consent agenda.

CORRESPONDENCE (ACCEPTANCE FOR FILING ONLY OF THE FOLLOWING):

1. Township of Vernon Resolution supporting publishing legal notices on official Government Websites.
2. Township of Vernon Resolution in support of referendum for 10 years extension of Sussex County Farmland Preservation, Recreation and Open Space Trust Fund.

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3. Township of Sparta Ordinance entitled comprehensive land management code to amend portions of section 18-4.31a entitled "planned commercial economic development zone (pced)".

REPORTS (ACCEPTANCE FOR FILING OF THE FOLLOWING):

1. Construction Permit Activity Report – January 2025
2. Permit List – January 2025
3. COH Report – January 2025
4. Water/Sewer Division Report – February 3 – February 7
5. Police Department Report – January 2025
6. County Board of Health Report – January 2025
7. Water/Sewer Division Report – February 10 – February 14

APPLICATIONS (APPROVAL OF THE FOLLOWING):

1. None filed.

RESOLUTIONS (APPROVAL OF THE FOLLOWING):

1. Payment of bills for the meeting of February 25, 2025.

Mr. Skellenger made a motion to approve the consent agenda of February 25, 2025. Seconded by Mrs. Heath.

Upon roll call vote:

Ayes: Carnes, Formica, Heath, Limon, Skellenger, Snyder

Nays: None Absent: None Abstentions: None

OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business for tonight's portion of the meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

Approval of the Minutes

Mr. Skellenger made a motion to approve the regular meeting minutes for February 11, 2025. (Absent: Mr. Limon, Mayor Sowden) Seconded by Mrs. Heath.

Upon roll call vote:

Ayes: Carnes, Formica, Heath, Skellenger, Snyder

Nays: None Absent: None Abstentions: Limon

Agreement for Certified Recycling Professional

Mrs. Heath made a motion to approve the agreement between the Borough of Franklin and SCMUA to retain the services of SCMUA for a Certified Recycling Professional that will be responsible for executing the mandatory annual 2024 municipal recycling tonnage report in the amount of \$300.00 annually. Seconded by Mr. Skellenger.

Upon roll call vote:

Ayes: Carnes, Formica, Heath, Limon, Skellenger, Snyder

Nays: None Absent: None Abstentions: None

Resolution #2025-27

Mr. Limon made a motion to adopt Resolution 2025-27 to approve authorizing the Borough's Certified Recycling Professional to submit the 2024 recycling tonnage grant application to NJ Department of Environmental Protection. Seconded by Mr. Skellenger.

Upon roll call vote:

Ayes: Carnes, Formica, Heath, Limon, Skellenger, Snyder

Nays: None Absent: None Abstentions: None

Discussion on Historic Preservation Committee

Mayor Sowden commented that in Section 10-11 Membership Terms and Meetings of the Historic Preservation Committee Ordinance, it says that persons who are residents of the municipality, we have these people who are past residents of the municipality who are still very interested in the history of the Borough. What he was

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hoping to do was to remove the residency requirement from the Committee classification.

Mr. Ursin commented that an amendment to the ordinance would need to be done.

Councilwoman Heath commented that you would think we could as Franklin residents be part of the committee rather than people that live out of town. How can we have people that do not live in Franklin voting for or being in favor of zoning or would these people be exempt.

Mr. Ursin asked if the people that are being considered would fit into class b membership.

Mayor Sowden commented that he is appointing the members as class b members.

Mr. Formica asked if we should remove number four.

Mayor Sowden commented that he would like the alternate members to fall under any category.

Mr. Ursin commented that under number 5 it should read that alternate members shall meet the qualifications of one of the classes and shall be designated as alternate 1 and alternate 2. If the council is interested in that amendment, you can introduce it tonight or you could ask me to draft it and put it on the agenda.

The consensus of the Council was to have the attorney draft the ordinance for the Council to review.

Mayoral Appointment

Mayor Sowden made the following appointment to the Historic Preservation Committee.

Historic Preservation Committee

Rebecca DeMaio, Class B Member (2-yr. unexpired term) Expires 12/31/2026

Peddlers Permit Application

Mr. Formica made a motion to approve the peddler permit application submitted by Carol Zofrea for the sale of ice cream. Seconded by Mr. Snyder.

Upon roll call vote:

Ayes: Carnes, Formica, Heath, Limon, Skellenger, Snyder

Nays: None Absent: None Abstentions: None

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mayor Sowden commented that the executive session was held prior to the meeting from 6:45pm-7pm.

MISCELLANEOUS COMMENTS

Mr. Skellenger commented that Councilman Formica always points out the grants we get and apply for.

Mrs. Heath congratulated the Franklin Revolver and Rifle Association.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further items for discussion by the Mayor and Council, Mr. Skellenger made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:54p.m., seconded by Mrs. Carnes. All were in favor.

John M. Sowden IV, Mayor

Colleen L. Little, Municipal Clerk