

**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  
MARCH 24, 2026**

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.

At this time Mayor Sowden requested a moment of silence in memory of Stephen Sluka who passed away earlier this month.

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 11, 2026, and posted on the Borough website, which adequate notice has been certified by the Clerk."

**PRESENTATIONS**

Mr. Jim Affinito, Vice Chairperson of Recreation, stepped forward. Mr. Affinito addressed the Governing Body in regards to a plaque for 9/11 Memorial and a placement of the plaque at the Senior Center.

Mayor Sowden commented that as far as the stone goes, you might be able to reach out to our local quarry and see about possibly getting a piece of Franklin Marble.

Mr. Affinito commented that they are looking to do fireworks on the second night of the carnival. Hoping to do fireworks on May 16<sup>th</sup> to draw people in; a proposal was sent in for this event. Mr. Affinito asked if there was anyway, we could find \$13,200 for the fireworks display May 16<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Affinito commented that softball has reached out regarding the dugouts, is there any word on the dugouts.

Mr. Formica commented that we are waiting for the contractors.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Mrs. Heath commented that the Easter Egg Hunt is scheduled for April 4<sup>th</sup> at 11am at the Franklin Pond, Ages 0-12. April 18<sup>th</sup> is the Spring Fling where the Senior of Year will be announced. May 13 – May 16 is the Carnival.

Mr. Skellenger had nothing to report.

Mr. Formica had nothing to report.

Mr. Limon had nothing to report.

Mrs. Carnes had nothing to report.

Mr. Snyder commented that the finance committee met last Thursday and discussed capital expenditures.

Mayor Sowden asked if the committee looked into any of the open space division of the budget as far as putting funds there.

Mayor Sowden commented that one thing he has started to do is reach out to the State and set up a meeting for the rail to trails to program for this coming Thursday or Friday but the State cannot make it but he did start talking to the County about open space and grants for rail to trails. The County recommended that if a couple of towns go in with us, we have a better chance of getting some kind of a grant. We are trying to work on getting in touch with Sparta and Hardyston to see how that could work because then we would all kind of be tied together. Mayor Sowden

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commented that he was thinking about Hamburg as well. In those grants there is clause in there where you would have to put in 10%; now that 10% doesn't mean that it has to be in cash, it could be in materials or labor.

**OPEN PUBLIC SESSION**

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

There being no one present who wished to address the Governing Body, Mr. Formica made a motion to close the meeting to the public, seconded by Mr. Skellenger. 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 Hardyston Ordinance amending Chapter 185 entitled 'Zoning' of the code of the Township of Hardyston to delete the existing section 185-90.1 entitled very-low-, low- and moderate-income housing and to replace it in its entirety with a new section 185.90.1 entitled "Affordable Housing" and to make other amendments.
2. Township of Hardyston Ordinance amending Chapter 185, Zoning ordinance of the Township of Hardyston, to establish a new "AH-1 Affordable Housing overlay-district" for the property identified as Block 67 Lot 2.08 and Block 67.29 Lot 1 in the Township.
3. Township of Hardyston Ordinance amending Chapter 185 Zoning ordinance of the Township of Hardyston, to establish a new AH-2 Affordable housing overlay-district for the property identified as Block 67 Lot 16.03 and Block 67.05 Lot 1 in the Township.
4. Township of Hardyston Ordinance Adopting certain amendments to the redevelopment plan identified as the Route 94 redevelopment plan for Block 16 Lot 18.01 and Block 14 Lot 24.01.
5. Township of Sparta Ordinance amending Chapter 18 entitled comprehensive land management code to prohibit detention, correction or other carceral facilities within all zones throughout the Township of Sparta.
6. Township of Sparta Ordinance Amending Chapter 18 Comprehensive Land Management code, including section 18-8.4, "Residential Development Fees for Low- and Moderate-income housing and section 18-8.5 "Incentive zoning and mandatory set-asides" and replacing them in their entirety, and repeals appendix A-18.4, "Residential development fees for low- and moderate-income housing" of the Appendix A "Fee Schedule" and replace in its entirety.

**REPORTS** (ACCEPTANCE FOR FILING OF THE FOLLOWING):

1. County Board of Health – February 2026
2. Municipal Court Report – February 2026

**APPLICATIONS** (APPROVAL OF THE FOLLOWING):

1. None filed.

**RESOLUTIONS** (APPROVAL OF THE FOLLOWING):

1. Payment of bills for the meeting of March 24, 2026.

Mr. Limon made a motion to approve the consent agenda of March 24, 2026. Seconded by Mr. Skellenger.

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.

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### NEW BUSINESS

#### Approval of the Minutes

Mrs. Heath made a motion to approve the regular meeting minutes for March 10, 2026. (Absent: None) Seconded by Mr. Formica.

Upon roll call vote:

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

Nays: None Absent: None Abstentions: None

#### Resolution 2026-43

Mr. Limon made a motion to adopt Resolution 2026-43 authorizing advertisement and solicitation of bids for test well drilling and pumping test services. Seconded by Mr. Formica.

Upon roll call vote:

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

Nays: None Absent: None Abstentions: None

#### McDaniel Brothers Shows Agreement

Mrs. Heath made a motion to approve the agreement with McDaniel Brothers Shows for the amusement rides and related services at the Franklin Carnival on May 13, 2026 thru May 16, 2026. Seconded by Mr. Formica.

Upon roll call vote:

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

Nays: None Absent: None Abstentions: None

#### Approval of NJ State Firemen's Association Membership Application

Mr. Skellenger made a motion to approve the application for membership of John Friend as Firematic member to the Franklin Fire Department as endorsed by Corey Houghtaling, Franklin Fire Department Chief. Seconded by Mr. Formica.

Upon roll call vote:

Ayes: Carnes, Formica, Heath, Skellenger, Snyder

Nays: None Absent: None Abstentions: Limon

#### Discussion on Newly Adopted NJ Law Involving Rent Control

Mr. Ursin explained that for years this council has maintained a rent control ordinance for the mobile home park and as a result of the State adopting rent control laws at the State level; it looks like local control is now going to be preempted and the rent control is going to be controlled by the State (DCA) rather than locally. Mr. Ursin's review of it indicates that we should probably vacate our ordinances regarding rent control and leave it to the State because they are preempting you by regulating it.

Mr. Snyder asked why it was done this way.

Mr. Ursin commented that he did not study all the legislative history but he thinks it is essentially because it has been applied very inconsistently throughout the State. Mr. Ursin commented that this legislation will take the Borough of Franklin out of the equation all together.

Mr. Snyder asked if this would cause a burden to anyone living in the trailer park.

Mr. Ursin commented that it depends on what the State allows and he is not sure if it is going to be more restrictive or less restrictive. If it was less restrictive and the landlord was able to raise rent 5% instead of 2%; sure, it would be a small burden on people who live there.

### EXECUTIVE SESSION

There was no executive session.

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**MISCELLANEOUS COMMENTS**

Mr. Ursin commented that the Council is aware that every town went through the Affordable Housing regulations and then the lawsuits with the court to confirm affordable housing and so previously he had updated the council as to what our plan was. Mr. Ursin commented that the Borough's plan got approved by the court today and the affordable house case is dismissed. So, it essentially adopted the settlement that you made between the Borough of Franklin and Fair Share Housing and dismissed the objection of the Zinctown Development.

Mr. Spidaletto commented that all the congressional grants went in last week.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further items for discussion by the Mayor and Council, Mr. Skellenger made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:30p.m., seconded by Mr. Formica. All were in favor.

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John M. Sowden IV, Mayor

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Colleen L. Little, Municipal Clerk