

**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
MAY 26, 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, Mrs. Heath, Mr. Limon, Mr. Skellenger, Mr. Snyder and Mayor Sowden.

Absent: Mr. Formica

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

PRESENTATIONS

There were no presentations for tonight's meeting.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Mr. Limon commented that he talked to Concetto regarding the status of High Street.

Mr. Spidaletto commented that the hole was filled in with concrete two weeks ago, other fill was added last week and today it was paved. We just need the final review from our engineer on the roadway and if Council is in agreement to it and if the engineer saying that everything is OK that roadway can be opened up.

Mrs. Carnes commented that the rain did hold off for us yesterday and it was great to see people out and it was a beautiful ceremony that was done across from the Borough Hall.

Mr. Snyder had nothing to report.

Mrs. Heath commented that on May 17th, Judy Williams helped organize some games and exhibits for the Franklin Band Concert and Curt's Dog House served 100 hot dogs for everyone who attended the mini parade (compliments of the Borough). Mrs. Heath has reached out to recreation regarding a report from the Carnival. Upcoming events for Recreation: June 20th Sussex Minors Baseball Game, June 27th Franklinite and Day, Fireworks; Recreation is planning a lot of activities including Miss Franklin Pageant, September 5th Mets Games and September 26th Windcreek trip.

Mr. Skellenger thanked the district 24 office for the help in obtaining the Motor Vehicle Mobile Unit. June 9th the Motor Vehicle Mobile unit will be at Franklin Pond, all real id appointments are taken but there are still appointments available for other services.

Mrs. Little had nothing to report.

Mr. Spidaletto commented that the rails to trails grant application has been submitted, he and Mrs. Heath and Mr. Skellenger attended the business-to-business lunch today at Servant's Heart Ministry. Servants Heart is a local trade school.

Mr. Windels had nothing to report.

Mayor Sowden thanked the American Legion for the parade. About a month ago we talked about flags and banners for the 250th Anniversary and Mayor Sowden asked how the Council was feeling about that and asked if we wanted to move forward and put an order together. Mayor Sowden would like to get things rolling so that by the 4th of July we'll be displaying some really nice flags throughout the town. Mayor Sowden wanted to let everyone know that he had a little chat yesterday about Michael Rorick and his wife and how they were some of the founding families that

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founded Franklin. The Historical Commission and Society are going to do, with the County, a small ceremony and monument at the gravesite.

Mrs. Williams commented that yes, we have the revolutionary war marker, we have the marker from DAR and we just need to form a committee to discuss how and when the ceremony will be done.

OPEN PUBLIC SESSION

Mr. Limon 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. Patty Trojanowski stepped forward. Ms. Trojanowski found a flag on the ground on Main Street. Ms. Trojanowski commented that she noticed that the roof on the church has a hole in it.

Ms. Joanne Tatka stepped forward. Ms. Tatka asked what flags were being talked about, regular American flags.

Mayor Sowden commented American Flags with the 250th Anniversary on them.

Ms. Tatka commented she thought it was brought up at one meeting about doing the flags for honoring heroes.

Mayor Sowden commented that we will be doing those but not until later on next year.

Ms. Tatka asked if the Catholic Church owned any land regarding rails to trails.

Mayor Sowden commented that the Church does not own land as it was sold to the State of New Jersey.

Ms. Tatka asked if Franklin House was back on the tax rolls.

Mayor Sowden commented that we are still looking into it.

Ms. Tatka commented that something was brought up about data centers at the last meeting and there was an article in the Herald and the Herald was listing it by Counties and for Sussex County it listed one in Franklin. Which used to be the satellite place behind Walmart, is that a data center. Do people work there yet and do they use a lot of water.

Mayor Sowden commented that as far as we know it is, to our knowledge people still work there and there is not a lot of water use.

Mrs. Carnes commented that the one that had been there behind the Walmart for a number of years, it's an older data center so it does not use as much electricity or water but the ones now they are proposing to build are more the AI technology that is coming that is requiring a lot more.

Ms. Tatka asked if anything was found out about the Metal Tec property.

Mr. Spidaletto commented that it was investigated by the County Board of Health and they did a thorough job. They spoke with the owners of the company and there was light disturbance there. Hardyston also came out and checked that location. The County Board of Health provided us with a report that did not find any violations at all. They were trying to expand their back driveway a little bit to accommodate vehicles.

Ms. Tatka questioned the payment plan for the laundry mat.

Mayor Sowden commented that they became in arrears while doing construction and what has to happen is they have to be made whole by the time they start to do business so we wanted to be business friendly and we worked out a payment plan.

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Ms. Colleen Crouch stepped forward. Ms. Crouch asked what the job is or why we have a zoning office and staff. Ms. Crouch has been reporting about her neighbor and a wood pile being on the property line. The first time that she has emails going back and forth with Michelle about the wood pile is September 2025. The wood pile is still there. Ms. Crouch commented that they cannot sit in their backyard because it is full of mice and it stinks. Ms. Crouch has an email from Michelle saying that the property owner has been summoned but the legal system is broken and there are no consequences for not appearing in court over a zoning summons. So why do we need a zoning office?

Mayor Sowden commented that we have to have a zoning office by law. Mayor Sowden commented that we will follow up on this.

There being no one else present who wished to address the Governing Body, Mr. Snyder 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 person's 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 Sparta Ordinance amending Chapter XVIII, entitled "Comprehensive Land Management Code" of the Township of Sparta code to amend Section 18-4.21 entitled "C-1H Community Commercial – Historical Zone".
2. Township of Fredon resolution urging the New Jersey State Legislature and Governor to repeal the gas tax escalator and restore accountability to fuel tax increases.
3. Township of Wantage resolution urging the New Jersey State Legislature and Governor to repeal the gas tax escalator and restore accountability to fuel tax increases.
4. Sandyston Township letter in re: to assembly resolution AR58 and senate resolution SR29 opposing all proposals to change the designation of the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area to National Park and Preserve, including proposal by the Delaware River National Park and Lenape Preserve Alliance.
5. Sandyston Township letter in re: two remediation fees assessed to municipalities.

REPORTS (ACCEPTANCE FOR FILING OF THE FOLLOWING):

1. County Board of Health Report – April 2026
2. COH Report – April 2026
3. Permit List – April 2026
4. Permit Activity Report – April 2026
5. Road Department Report – April 2026

APPLICATIONS (APPROVAL OF THE FOLLOWING):

1. None filed.

RESOLUTIONS (APPROVAL OF THE FOLLOWING):

1. Payment of bills for the meeting of May 26, 2026.

Mrs. Heath made a motion to approve the consent agenda of May 26, 2026. Seconded by Mr. Limon.

Upon roll call vote:

Ayes: Carnes, Heath, Limon, Skellenger, Snyder

Nays: None Absent: Formica 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 and executive session minutes for May 12, 2026. (Absent: None) Seconded by Mrs. Heath.

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Upon roll call vote:

Ayes: Carnes, Heath, Limon, Skellenger, Snyder

Nays: None Absent: Formica Abstentions: None

Resolution 2026-56

Mr. Snyder made a motion to adopt Resolution 2026-56 establishing salaries for certain employees of Franklin Borough for the year 2026. Seconded by Mr. Skellenger.

Upon roll call vote:

Ayes: Carnes, Heath, Limon, Skellenger, Snyder

Nays: None Absent: Formica Abstentions: None

Resolution 2026-57

Mrs. Heath made a motion to adopt Resolution 2026-57 authorizing additional compensation for the Municipal Court Administrator. Seconded by Mr. Skellenger.

Upon roll call vote:

Ayes: Carnes, Heath, Limon, Skellenger, Snyder

Nays: None Absent: Formica Abstentions: None

Resolution 2026-58

Mr. Skellenger made a motion to adopt Resolution 2026-58 authorizing the Borough Clerk to renew liquor licenses for the 2026-2027 licensing term. Seconded by Mrs. Heath.

Upon roll call vote:

Ayes: Carnes, Heath, Limon, Skellenger, Snyder

Nays: None Absent: Formica Abstentions: None

Resolution 2026-59

Mr. Limon made a motion to adopt Resolution 2026-59 authorizing a disabled veteran exemption on block 709 lot 5. Seconded by Mrs. Carnes.

Upon roll call vote:

Ayes: Carnes, Heath, Limon, Skellenger, Snyder

Nays: None Absent: Formica Abstentions: None

Resolution 2026-60

Mr. Limon made a motion to adopt Resolution 2026-60 authorizing a disabled veteran exemption on block 1101, lot 74, qual C1063. Seconded by Mr. Skellenger.

Upon roll call vote:

Ayes: Carnes, Heath, Limon, Skellenger, Snyder

Nays: None Absent: Formica Abstentions: None

Resolution 2026-61

Mr. Snyder made a motion to adopt Resolution 2026-61 cancellation of tax sale certificate for block 2702 lot 8. Seconded by Mr. Skellenger.

Upon roll call vote:

Ayes: Carnes, Heath, Limon, Skellenger, Snyder

Nays: None Absent: Formica Abstentions: None

Proclamation Honoring Eddie Mindlin

Mayor Sowden read the proclamation into the record.

Mrs. Heath made a motion to adopt the proclamation honoring Eddie Mindlin. Seconded by Mr. Limon.

Upon roll call vote:

Ayes: Carnes, Heath, Limon, Skellenger, Snyder

Nays: None Absent: Formica Abstentions: None

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Payment Plan for the property located at 104 Main Street (Laundry Mat)

Mr. Windels commented that the Council still has to determine what they want the payment plan to be and then we will go back to the owner for confirmation and then a formal agreement will be drafted.

Mrs. Heath commented that we are just authorizing you to do a payment plan.

Mr. Spidaletto commented that the laundry mat had contacted us on this and some other things. Mr. Ursin and Mr. Windels has been working with them and their attorney. As was mentioned before, they are in arrears for \$16,000 in regards to their water/sewer. The owner of the facility has offered to initially start with a down payment of \$5,000 and then make payments from here on out. Should for whatever reason, the owner of the company faults we could set a lien on their property.

Mayor Sowden commented but meanwhile we want to get this business rolling as much as he wants to get it rolling. We don't want to be a deterrent.

Mr. Windels commented that a motion should be made to direct Neil and the Borough Counsel to draft the agreement for the payment plan for the water/sewer account for the laundry mat.

Mrs. Heath made the motion, seconded by Mr. Skellenger.

Upon roll call vote:

Ayes: Carnes, Heath, Limon, Skellenger, Snyder

Nays: None Absent: Formica Abstentions: None

EXECUTIVE SESSION

There was no executive session.

MISCELLANEOUS COMMENTS

Mr. Limon commented that he will be unavailable for the June 23rd meeting.

Mrs. Heath thanked everyone for the condolences on the passing of her sister.

Mayor Sowden commented that the rails to trails will officially be opened on Franklin Day/Nite from Maple Road to Wildcat Road. The gates are now up and there is signage there.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further items for discussion by the Mayor and Council, Mrs. Heath made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:40p.m., seconded by Mrs. Carnes. All were in favor.

John M. Sowden IV, Mayor

Colleen L. Little, Municipal Clerk