City of Franklin

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HISTORIC
FRANKLIN
TENNESSEE

Meeting Minutes

Work Session

Tuesday, November 25, 2025 | **4:30 PM** | **Williamson County Auditorium**

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Ken Moore called the meeting to order at 04:30 PM

Board Members Present: Ann Petersen, Brandy Blanton, Clyde Barnhill, Beverly Burger, Matt Brown, Jason Potts, Patrick Baggett

Greg Caesar arrived at 4:51PM

Board Members Absent: None

Staff Present: Eric Stuckey, Mark Hilty, Kristine Brock, Vernon Gerth, Shauna Billingsley, Angie Skarp

CITIZEN COMMENTS

Comments on agenda items may be made in person or by emailing recorder@franklintn.gov before noon on the day of the meeting. Comments will be submitted for the record.

WORK SESSION DISCUSSION ITEMS

1. **Consideration Of Event Permit For Franklin Makers Market At Bicentennial Park On May 2, 2026**

Sponsors: Milissa Reierson, Lisa Clayton, Monique McCullough

The item was acknowledged and is planned for the December 9, 2025 Board of Mayor and Aldermen Meeting for consideration.

2. **Consideration Of COF Contract No. 2024-0324, With Friends Of Franklin Parks For Lease Agreement For Workers Houses At The Park At Harlinsdale Farm**

Sponsors: Lisa Clayton, Heather Eusebio

Lisa Clayton, Parks Director, presented a proposed lease agreement between the City of Franklin and the Friends of Franklin Parks for the restoration and future use of two historic worker houses at the entrance to the Harlinsdale Farm park. She explained that, similar to the Hayes House partnership, the agreement establishes a public–private model in which the City provides utilities and infrastructure and then enters into a 50/50 cost-share with Friends of Franklin Parks for design, construction, and restoration work. The goal is to rehabilitate two of the four historic worker houses, open them to the public, and make them available for city use during large special events. Ms. Clayton noted that one of the structures is largely gutted and will be repurposed as a small meeting or event-support space, while the second house with its existing kitchen and restroom will be restored to reflect its original function. She emphasized that all work must comply with preservation standards due to the property's historic designation.

Torrey Barnhill, Executive Director of Friends of Franklin Parks, added context on the cultural and historical significance of the homes, referencing the book *The Parts That Can't Be Sold*, which details the stories of the workers and families who shaped the farm. She stressed that restoring these houses would help preserve and share these stories with the community while activating the campus for future programming.

Vice Mayor Baggett asked about the lease term and how subleasing or rentals would be handled. Staff clarified that the agreement includes an initial 15-year term with two 5-year extensions, and that the arrangement is more akin to event-based rentals rather than long-term leasing. Friends of Franklin Parks would be permitted to rent the space during their events, subject to the city's standard special event permitting process.

Alderman Burger inquired whether individuals or entities must be a formal organization to rent the houses, the intended uses for each structure, and whether the historic kitchens will be preserved. Ms. Clayton explained that the rentals will be open to the general public, with one house serving as a flexible event-support area and the other retaining its kitchen and restroom. She also noted that both homes are structurally restorable, though some may require significant work due to age and deterioration.

Then, Alderman Burger asked whether all four houses could be restored and whether any were beyond repair. Ms. Clayton confirmed that all structures are considered restorable under historic preservation guidelines, though some may require repurposing rather than full restoration.

The item is planned for the December 9, 2025 Board of Mayor and Aldermen Meeting for consideration.

3. **Update/Discussion of Proposed Development Of Bousquet Place (AKA The Hill Property)**

Sponsors: Vernon Gerth, Tom Marsh

Staff, led by Vernon Gerth with support from Walter Denton and Tom Marsh, provided an update on the proposed development at Bousquet Place, also known as the Hill property. Representatives from The Hill LLC were also present. Staff reminded the board that the original concept for the property included 33 units, which at the time required a $5.1 million subsidy request. After being directed to explore greater density, the development team returned with a revised plan for 44 total units: 10 affordable and 34 workforce units. By refining administrative costs, adding units, and making internal financial concessions, the requested subsidy decreased to approximately $3.48 million. Staff noted the importance of evaluating per-unit subsidy costs, emphasized the ongoing cost differences between affordable and workforce units, and clarified that the subsidy could be spread out over future fiscal years. They also highlighted the loss of a previously pledged $1 million in county ARPA funds and presented an alternative scenario in which the affordable units could be converted to workforce units in an attempt to reduce the subsidy but also forfeit associated grants and financial contributions. Staff concluded by stating that the development team needs direction from the board on whether to proceed, as they have limited capacity to continue redesigning the proposal.

Representatives from The Hill LLC spoke about their multi-year commitment to the project, describing significant financial sacrifices, including lowering their administrative fee from 6% to 2% and personally contributing $250,000 to help close the funding gap. They stressed the urgency of local workforce housing needs and shared that key community partners such as Pinnacle Bank and The Housing Fund remain committed. Habitat for Humanity emphasized the transformational impact of homeownership and noted that they have not built in Franklin since 2018, making the opportunity to deliver 44 units uniquely significant. Staff also reiterated that the proposed affordable units would be protected through permanent deed restrictions.

Alderman Brown raised an early financial question regarding the consequences of converting the 10 affordable units into workforce units. After learning that such a change would result in the loss of both Housing Fund investment and approximately $600,000 in CDBG allocations, he concluded that moving away from affordable units could create measurable losses rather than savings.

Alderman Blanton expressed full and enthusiastic support for moving the project forward. She reflected on the long history of delays and emphasized that the need for action is now greater than ever. Blanton argued that while the project will not solve Franklin's housing challenges alone, its success could demonstrate the viability of future partnerships. She acknowledged the high price tag but compared it to other major city investments, stressing that a bold step is necessary to address one of the city's greatest needs. She expressed frustration that the project had not been completed years earlier, when costs would have been lower.

Alderman Potts similarly voiced strong support and framed the project as a defining moment for the city's long-stated commitment to attainable housing. He asked the development partners what the future of affordable and attainable housing in Franklin would look like if this project did not move forward. The response highlighted a rapidly shrinking supply of feasible opportunities. Potts explained that after years on the Housing Commission, he sees this project as a critical chance to prevent further displacement and gentrification pressures. He emphasized that missing this opportunity would have long-term consequences for housing equity in Franklin.

Alderman Barnhill reiterated ongoing concerns about the cost differential between affordable and workforce units. He questioned whether shifting all units to workforce might simplify the development and potentially improve financial efficiency. While he acknowledged the importance of reimbursing the Water Department and supported the idea of 44 total units, he expressed hesitation about whether the mix of affordable and workforce units was the right balance. He remained open to supporting the project but leaned toward a workforce-only approach unless further analysis indicated otherwise.

Alderman Caesar expressed appreciation for the detailed financial breakdown and the developers' efforts to reduce costs. He acknowledged the community's need for both affordable and workforce housing but voiced concern about long-term sustainability and the city's fiscal responsibility. Caesar highlighted the importance of predictability in future city budgets and questioned whether this project, given its size and subsidy level, represented the best strategic use of housing funds. Still, he recognized the rarity of homeownership opportunities at this scale and said he was inclined to support the project if the numbers could be stabilized and the long-term commitments clearly defined.

Alderman Petersen expressed support for the project and emphasized the important of moving this forward.

Vice Mayor Baggett focused on the project's broader policy significance. He commended the applicants for their years of effort and recognized that rising costs and lost county contributions had made the path forward increasingly difficult. Baggett stated that Franklin has repeatedly discussed the need for attainable and workforce housing, and that this project represents a tangible, meaningful opportunity to act rather than talk. He acknowledged the financial challenge but argued that inaction would only worsen affordability over time. Baggett concluded that, with refinements and careful budgeting across multiple fiscal years, the project could become a cornerstone example of how Franklin supports housing for its workforce.

4. Consideration Of Next Steps To Select Commercial Tenants For The Commercial Spaces On 3rd Avenue South (New City Hall Block)

Sponsors: Mark Hilty, Kelly Dannenfelser

Kelly Dannenfelser, Assistant Director of Planning & Sustainability, presented the next steps for selecting commercial tenants for the new ground-floor commercial spaces along Third Avenue South as part of the City Hall block redevelopment. She explained that approximately 4,500 square feet of space, potentially divided into up to three tenant bays, will be available adjacent to the new public park. Staff recommends hiring a licensed commercial brokerage firm to market the spaces, vet tenants, manage leasing, and provide ongoing property management. Ms. Dannenfelser reviewed draft tenant-selection criteria focused on activating the streetscape, complementing downtown's character, serving surrounding neighborhoods, encouraging local business, and avoiding uses incompatible with the historic district or late-night hours. She also revisited findings from the 2022 Gibbs Planning Group study, which identified potential demand for uses such as specialty foods, a small market, and two to-four restaurants. She requested board feedback on refining the criteria before the RFQ is released later this year, with a firm selected by spring.

Alderman Burger emphasized the importance of starting with community input, suggesting surveys of downtown residents, merchants, the Convention & Visitors Bureau, hotel partners, and workers at the courthouse to understand what is missing in the downtown core. She noted that certain uses, such as gourmet foods, a pharmacy, and small specialty markets, could fill current gaps, while others like bakeries or bookstores are already well represented. She encouraged staff to gather targeted feedback to guide the tenant mix.

Alderman Blanton agreed that stakeholder input is crucial and highlighted that city staff should also be included, as they will be regular users of the area. She voiced support for fast-casual dining or portable food options suitable for parkgoers and downtown workers, rather than additional retail that could compete with nearby businesses. She advised avoiding duplicates of existing offerings such as bakeries or multiple coffee shops and encouraged opportunities for small, local entrepreneurs to occupy the space.

Alderman Brown echoed support for something fast casual near the park and noted that, while residents often request a small grocery, the economics of that use make it difficult in a small footprint. He stressed that the top priority should be securing locally owned businesses rather than chains, emphasizing the importance of supporting tenants who are deeply rooted in the community but are being squeezed out of Main Street by market pressures.

Vice Mayor Baggett cautioned against the board becoming overly prescriptive about specific uses and suggested focusing instead on high-level criteria, such as: local ownership, compatibility with downtown, and non-competition with existing businesses. He highlighted the broader challenge of retaining small, long-time downtown tenants and noted that this project offers a rare opportunity to support local businesses without distorting the wider marketplace. Baggett encouraged relying on the professional broker to bring forward a balanced package of tenant options rather than debating individual preferences and referenced existing surveys from the Downtown Neighborhood Association that staff should review before conducting new outreach.

5. City Hall Redevelopment Block Update

Sponsors: Mark Hilty, Kelly Dannenfelser, Chris Koeper

Mark Hilty, Assistant City Administrator for Public Works, provided a construction and financial update on the City Hall block redevelopment project. The project features a new three-story, 97,000-square-foot building with an underground parking garage of approximately 200 spaces, an upgraded community plaza at the square, enhanced Third Avenue streetscape elements, a one-acre public park, and upgraded utilities throughout the site.

Mr. Hilty reported on construction progress, noting that the project site is divided into two areas: Area A, beneath the building, and Area B, beneath the park. As of October–November 2025, most of the piers in Area A have been constructed, with columns already emerging above ground, and the parking garage slab pour scheduled to begin soon. In Area B, 18 of the 172 total piers remain to be poured, expected to be completed by the end of the following week.

On project costs, Mr. Hilty explained that the first two phases (ERPs 1 and 2) were initially estimated at just over $30 million but came in at $27.5 million. Additional work due to unforeseen subsurface conditions added approximately $2.4 million, though only about $1.5 million of that is expected to be used. He noted that bids for ERP 3 are currently under review and tracking at or below anticipated costs, with a final number expected by the second week of December.

From a financial perspective, the guaranteed maximum price (GMP) has been adjusted to $94.7 million, including the added subsurface work. To date, about $7 million has been spent on design and $8.5 million on construction. Hilty confirmed that the project remains within budget contingencies, and the anticipated completion is targeted for late summer to fall 2027.

6. **Consideration Of Resolution 2025-88, A Resolution Authorizing The City Of Franklin, Tennessee, To Issue Its General Obligation Bonds In The Aggregate Principal Amount Of Not To Exceed $118,000,000**

Sponsors: Kristine Brock

Kristine Brock, Assistant City Administrator, presented an overview of Resolutions 2025-88 and 2025-90, which authorize the City of Franklin to issue general obligation (GO) bonds not to exceed $118 million. These bonds will fund several key projects, including:

- **Fire apparatus replacements**: Three pieces ordered nearly a year ago, expected delivery in 2027.
- **Major road resurfacing**: $7.5 million for the 2026 and 2027 paving seasons.
- **Pearl Bransford Park and Robinson Lake improvements**: $15 million to complete funding for the combined park project.
- **Long Lane and Church Street road improvements**: Early-stage design and right-of-way acquisition funded through the bond.
- **New City Hall**: $85 million of the project's debt-funded portion included in the bond issuance, with additional funding from cash reserves.

Ms. Brock outlined the bond process, including working with Bass Berry & Sims for tax-exempt opinions, PFM as financial advisor, rating requests from Moody's and Standard & Poor's, and a competitive sale to determine the underwriter with the lowest interest rate. She emphasized that the bonds are backed by the city's full faith and credit, one of the strongest forms of municipal security, supported primarily by property taxes.

The presentation included an estimated debt service schedule tailored to each project, with shorter amortization for fire apparatus and road resurfacing, and 20–25-year terms for larger projects like City Hall and Pearl Bransford Park. Ms. Brock noted that total GO debt remains below 40% of the 10-year CIP and is being used strategically to fund long-term community assets.

Finally, she outlined the timeline for the 2026 bond issuance: board consideration on December 9, engagement with credit rating agencies in early January, public market offering later in January, and anticipated closing in mid-February, at which point the city will reimburse previously spent City Hall project funds.

The item is planned for the December 9, 2025 Board of Mayor and Aldermen Meeting for consideration.

7. **Consideration Of Resolution 2025-90, A Resolution Authorizing The Issuance Of Not To Exceed $118,000,000 In Aggregate Principal Amount Of General Obligation Bonds Of The City Of Franklin, Tennessee; Making Provision For The Issuance, Sale And Payment Of Said Bonds; Establishing The Terms Thereof And The Disposition Of Proceeds Therefrom; And Providing For The Levy Of Taxes For The Payment Of Principal Of, Premium, If Any, And Interest On The Bonds**

Sponsors: Kristine Brock

The item was heard concurrently to Item Six and is planned for the December 9, 2025 Board of Mayor and Aldermen Meeting for consideration.

8. ***Consideration Of Change Order 1 To COF Contract No. 2025-0174, With Garney Construction For The Ewingville Drive Emergency 48" FRP Repair In The Amount Of $1,452,381.52**

Sponsors: Michelle Hatcher, Brian Goodwin

Michelle Hatcher, Director of Water Management, and Dillon Gaster, Fiscal Affairs Manager, provided an update on the City of Franklin's contract 2025-0174 with Garney Construction, covering emergency sewer repairs at Ewingville Drive, as well as ongoing Hobas pipe replacement projects. The presentation detailed the historical challenges with Hobas pipe, dating back to the first break in 2014 and a major failure in 2017, which prompted extensive replacements and lining efforts. The current projects involve deep excavations, bypass pumping, and temporary easements acquired from multiple property owners, with completion projected by June of next year. Ms. Hatcher explained the technical reasons for pipe failures, which led to the decision to replace rather than line certain sections to ensure long-term reliability.

Dillon Gaster outlined funding strategies for the $7 million project, including reallocating budgetary savings from the sewer operating fund, general fund payments for land now repurposed for parks, and the sewer fund balance. He emphasized that no additional debt issuance is anticipated at this stage, with ongoing evaluation of rate structures and long-term funding for future Hobas pipe replacements. The team also discussed lessons learned from schedule delays, project contingencies, and the importance of inspection oversight.

Summary of Board Comments:

- Concern about impact on the Berry Farms area due to temporary shutoffs of the reclaimed water line during seeding season and the expected timeline for service restoration in March or April.
- Clarification on costs related to maintaining bypass pumps and whether a reduced rental fee could be negotiated when the pumps are not actively pumping water.
- Emphasis on the importance of keeping residents and commercial consumers informed about service disruptions and timing for water restoration.

The presentation concluded with staff assuring ongoing monitoring, proactive prioritization of remaining Hobos pipe replacements, and alignment of funding and budget amendments for the upcoming fiscal year, while maintaining sufficient reserves and debt coverage.

The item is planned for the November 25, 2025 Board of Mayor and Aldermen Meeting for consideration.

9. **Discussion Of Hobas Ewingville Repair**

Sponsors: Michelle Hatcher

The item was heard concurrently to Item Eight.

10. **Consideration Of Resolution 2025-95, A Resolution Authorizing The Use Of The Competitive Sealed Proposal Procurement Method For Choosing The Service Provider For Banking Services For A Term Of Award**

Sponsors: Kristine Brock, Margaret Wilson

The item was acknowledged and is planned for the December 9, 2025 Board of Mayor and Aldermen Meeting for consideration.

11. **Consideration Of Resolution 2025-96, A Resolution To Amend The Franklin Police Department Wrecker And Towing Service Rotation Policy And Agreement**

Sponsors: Shauna Billingsley, Deb Faulkner

The item was acknowledged and is planned for the December 9, 2025 Board of Mayor and Aldermen Meeting for consideration.

12. ***Consideration Of COF Contract No. 2025-0532, With Stag Liuzza, LLC For Legal Representation In A PFAS Class Action Lawsuit On A Contingency Fee Basis**

Sponsors: Shauna Billingsley, Bill Squires

The item was acknowledged and is planned for the November 25, 2025 Board of Mayor and Aldermen Meeting for consideration.

13. **Consideration Of Amendment 1 To COF Contract No. 2025-0247, With Thomson Reuters For Removal Of Doc Auto Module From City HighQ Contract**

Sponsors: Shauna Billingsley, Bill Squires

The item was acknowledged and is planned for the December 9, 2025 Board of Mayor and Aldermen Meeting for consideration.

14. **Consideration Of Draft Policies And Procedures Relating To The Consideration Of Petitions For The Creation Of Real Estate Infrastructure Development Districts**

Sponsors: Eric Stuckey, Vernon Gerth, Walter Denton, Shauna Billingsley, Kristine Brock

Eric Stuckey, City Administrator, and Betsy Knotts, bond counsel with Bass Berry & Sims, presented a draft policy framework for considering petitions to create Real Estate Infrastructure Development Districts ("IDDs"). The framework is designed to guide future decisions on using this tool to achieve clear community benefits rather than focusing on individual projects. The overarching goal is to promote "better development, not more development," prioritizing quality over quantity.

The process outlined in the draft policy begins with developers submitting a Notice of Intent and a draft petition, similar to procedures used for tax increment financing. City staff collaborates with developers for up to 60 days to refine the petition before official filing. Once filed, the city posts notices, holds a public hearing, and evaluates the petition, with the option for developers to notify residents directly. The entire process is designed to be efficient, taking anywhere from one to five months.

Financing under the policy involves the use of a conduit issuer for special assessment bonds, ensuring that the city's AAA credit rating is protected. Bonds are secured by revenues generated within the district rather than general city obligations. The policy is fiscally conservative, with flexible bond terms and a preferred value-to-lien ratio of 3:1, exceeding the legal minimum of 2:1 to ensure strong financial outcomes.

Municipal benefits are guided by examples provided in the policy (Exhibit D), which serve as recommendations rather than mandatory requirements. Staff generally recommends approval if a petition fully addresses at least one of the four pillars and partially addresses another. Benefits must directly relate to the district and may include infrastructure, redevelopment, extraordinary development, or attainable housing initiatives. A key component of the policy is collaboration with the community, avoiding approaches where developers dictate terms without input.

The policy also clarifies the city's responsibilities, including vetting developers, enforcing delinquencies, monitoring compliance, and reporting on post-creation obligations. While transparency and public input are emphasized, the process is flexible and policy-driven rather than legally mandated. Overall, the draft policy provides a structured, transparent, and fiscally responsible framework for IDDs, balancing developer incentives with community benefits while protecting the city's financial health.

Public Comment:
Janet Curtis, 3665 N Chapel Road, Franklin, TN, expressed opposition to special assessments like the Real Estate Infrastructure Development Districts.

Board Comments:
Alderman Brown agreed with staff's overall goals for the IDD but argued the policy is becoming overly complex. He emphasized that the tool should help the City encourage for-sale housing, direct where growth occurs, elevate development quality, and achieve benefits like attainable housing. Alderman Brown expressed concern that tying IDDs too tightly to zoning and requiring final site plans would eliminate meaningful negotiation. He also opposed limiting the tool to reimbursement financing, saying it would exclude smaller, local developers, and cautioned against rigid ratios like 2:1 or 3:1. Finally, he stressed that evaluation criteria should guide the Board, not empower staff to block proposals, and warned that the City needs a workable policy soon before applicants petition the Board without clear standards in place.

Vice Mayor Baggett stressed the need to begin with strong, clearly defined criteria for IDDs, noting that the Board can always grant exceptions but should not start with a "bare-bones" framework that invites risk or misuse. He cautioned that IDDs must deliver meaningful public benefit and emphasized that the tool should support high-quality, unique projects rather than function as an impact-fee financing mechanism.

Alderman Burger cautioned that the draft IDD policy has become overly bureaucratic and burdensome, turning what should be a simple, market-driven finance tool into a quasi-planning mechanism that could deter developers from using it. She urged the City to streamline the program so it remains attractive, effective, and consistent with the original statutory intent.

Alderman Potts supported maintaining flexibility in the IDD program but emphasized the importance of a conservative financing approach, particularly favoring a 3:1 ratio to protect the City's long-term fiscal health.

Alderman Caesar emphasized the need for balanced IDD guidelines that provide clarity to developers without stifling creativity or overburdening the process. He stressed that IDDs should not be used to accelerate development or simply reallocate impact fees, but rather to support needed infrastructure the community wants without placing the full cost on taxpayers. He also supported fees that reflect actual costs, flexible but clear financing criteria, and a program accessible to local developers rather than only large outside firms.

15. **Proposed 2026 Calendar Of Board Of Mayor And Aldermen And Committee Meetings**

Sponsors: Angie Skarp, Cayce Anderson

The item was acknowledged.

OTHER BUSINESS

ADJOURN

Meeting Adjourned @ 07:18 PM

Dr. Ken Moore, Mayor

Minutes Prepared by Sarah Schilling, Deputy City Recorder - City Recorder's Office — 12/2/2025, 2:04 PM

The above minutes should be used as a summary of the motions passed and issues discussed at the meeting. This document shall not be considered a verbatim copy of every word spoken at the meeting.