

**FRANKLIN TOWN COUNCIL  
MINUTES OF MEETING  
February 4, 2026**

**Link to FranklinTV YouTube Recording: [2/4/2026 Town Council Meeting](#)**

A meeting of the Town Council was held on Wednesday, February 4, 2026, at the Municipal Building, 2nd Floor, Council Chambers, 355 East Central Street, Franklin, MA. Councilors present: Jane Callaway-Tripp, Ted Cormier-Leger, Robert Dellorco, Gene Grella, Caroline Griffith, Michael LeBlanc, Stephen Malloy, Max Morrongiello, Kenneth Ojukwu. Councilors absent: None. Administrative personnel in attendance: Jamie Hellen, Town Administrator; Mark Cerel, Town Attorney; Julie McCann, Operations Manager.

**CALL TO ORDER:** ► Chair Dellorco called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM. He called for a moment of silence. All recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE CHAIR:** ► Chair Dellorco reviewed the following as posted on the agenda. A Note to Residents: All citizens are welcome to attend public meetings in person. To view the live meeting remotely, citizens are encouraged to watch the live stream on the Franklin Town Hall TV YouTube channel or the live broadcast on Comcast Channel 9 and Verizon Channel 29. To listen to the meeting remotely citizens may call-in using the number on the agenda. To participate in the meeting remotely citizens may join a Zoom Webinar using the information provided on the agenda. Meetings are recorded and archived by Franklin TV on the Franklin Town Hall TV YouTube channel and shown on repeat on Comcast Channel 9 and Verizon Channel 29. Any participants who wish to speak during the webinar must enter their full name and email address when joining the webinar. All participants will be automatically muted upon joining the webinar. In order to speak, participants will need to select the “raise hand” function to request to be unmuted. All speakers will be required to state their full name and street address before commenting. This meeting is being recorded by Franklin TV and shown on Comcast channel 9 and Verizon Channel 29. This meeting may be recorded by others.

**CITIZEN COMMENTS:** ► School Committee Chair Paul Griffith, 11 Sunken Meadow Road, said they have had two meetings focused on the budget. He said they have approached the budget from a zero-balance budget approach; everything is considered as needed. They are educating about 4,300 students each year. They have a spending rate of roughly \$19,000 per pupil. They voted on an approved a budget from the schools with a 2.5 percent increase coming in at \$72 million. He explained they had another meeting last night where they voted to move over their health care expenses into the centralized town health care budget line item of 910. He said now their budget is just their operating budget in the same way every other organization in town is. He noted the cooperative nature during the process. He said they have a hearing on February 10, and everyone can come and ask questions. They will be going through the budget line by line. He said they appreciate Councilors Morrongiello, Callaway-Tripp, and Griffith for coming in and being present for the budget discussion this past week. ► Ms. Kim Mu-Chow, 4 Briarwood Road, on behalf of the Council on Aging, said Franklin Ridge has broken ground and is having an informational session at the Senior Center this Friday from 1:30 PM to 3:30 PM. Franklin TV is also taping this. She said at a previous meeting someone said we do not need senior housing. She explained that the largest growing unhoused population in the nation is seniors. ► Mr. Gino Carlucci, 1 Toni Lane, President of the Quattro Eroi Lodge of the Sons and Daughters of Italy, said they are celebrating their 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year and have events scheduled. He thanked the Franklin Historical Museum for hosting an exhibit celebrating their 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The exhibit will kick off on April 12 with a presentation by author and historian Stephen Puleo. He said the anniversary celebration will conclude with a pasta dinner in May; he will return to the Town Council and bring more details. ► DPW Director Brutus Cantoreggi provided an update. He said they are pretty close to spending their snow budget this year. They are a couple of hundred thousand dollars short of their \$1.4 million allocated budget. The good thing is they have a stabilization fund with \$700,000. He

discussed the last storm was the eighth largest storm in the Boston area ever. He said the last storm cost \$325,000.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** ► *December 17, 2025.* ► **MOTION to Approve** the December 17, 2025 meeting minutes by **Grella.** **SECOND** by **Cormier-Leger.** **No discussion.** ► **VOTE: Yes-9, No-0, Absent-0.**

**PROCLAMATIONS/RECOGNITIONS:** ► **None.**

**APPOINTMENTS:** ► **None.**

**PUBLIC HEARINGS - 6:00 PM:** ► **None.**

**LICENSE TRANSACTIONS:** ► **None.**

**PRESENTATIONS / DISCUSSIONS:** ► **Discussion: 2026-2027 Town Council-Town Administrator Goals.** ► Mr. Hellen reviewed his memo to the Town Council dated January 30, 2026, which was provided in the online meeting packet. He noted there is a list that reflects some of the issues from the last Town Council that are on the front burner in addition to some things that this Town Council has already talked about. He said it is up to this Town Council how you want to develop the list. He said department heads are here to answer any questions. He discussed that there was some conversation about a strategic planning exercise which is really more of a vision, values, and purpose driven exercise. The town does not have to do this. The Town of Westford just did one, and the Town of Wrentham presented their final report last night. A lot of communities go through these exercises. Bandwidth and money are at a premium. He said they had a department head meeting yesterday; there is a lot more that everybody has in common in this community than does not. He discussed the information in the meeting packet and the next discussion topic on the agenda and that there are illustrative examples of other communities that have recently done it. He said it is not something we have to do. He said they have done interviews with a couple of consultants who do this including the one that did the Wrentham project. He said he and the school superintendent both feel that if there is the desire of the School Committee and the Town Council to do something like that, it could be something that could be an exercise to bring people together. ► Councilor Malloy suggested no need to read the goals as we have all reviewed them. He confirmed we do not have to decide this tonight. He said he might favor a liaison group of the Town Council to get feedback from all of us to build out something a little more comprehensive with the idea that we would all get a chance to review it, and on March 4, finalize on most, if not all, of what the direction should be. ► Chair Dellorco said in the past we have put out a lot of goals and unfortunately, we could not do a lot of them. ► Councilor Malloy said on the list is all good stuff, but he thinks they need some fewer higher level overarching kinds of priorities. ► Chair Dellorco said he agrees with a committee, that way we would come back with a more general variety of knowing what could go by and what could not go. It is not a one-night discussion. ► Councilor Grella said he agrees and said if they got input from everyone and that list could get synthesized and take a look at it and narrow it down. ► Councilor Ojukwu said in the news in the past week there have been announcements of things that are going to impact Franklin such as Thermo Fisher with their layoffs. It got him thinking about two things: our subcommittees and thinking about economic development, and also taking a step back in our need to have discussions about our strategic goals. He said what are our core principles and our strategic goals. He said to make that effective and impactful, it is going to need us and likely the School Committee to have a third party to take those principles and actually make an action plan. He said he worries if we try to do it all ourselves, we are going to slip away. ► Chair Dellorco said he agrees. ► Councilor Ojukwu said we need to think longer term. He said he agrees 100 percent with the idea that there is no way we can line up on all the goals today. He said he agrees that we need to make some decisions ourselves, and we can get that conversation started between ourselves and the School Committee, but to make it impactful and effective we will need some third-party help. He said there are folks who are trained in that regard. ► Mr. Hellen said there are two different consultants in the packet. There are trained facilitators also. He said there was a

capital account approved by the Town Council for marketing, branding, and phasing. And after the marketing project got a little controversial, we basically postponed that. He said if you were to do a third party, it would not cost your operating budget any money, and you would not have to spend any more free cash, you would just have to use the excess of that account to draw that down. It would be money well spent. He said you would not have to vote for any appropriations. He said it cost Wrentham \$15,000, but it did not include the schools. He said you could probably just double that. He confirmed they have that money. ► Councilor Griffith said she thought the plan was wonderful and was worried about the money for a consultant. Knowing we have the money in the marketing and branding account, and can repurpose that money for something like this, she would love to see that including bringing in the schools to get all voices at the table. ► Councilor Cormier-Leger said Town Council goals is a little different than long-term vision and long-term planning. We have to be careful about how we talk about that stuff. He said Town Council goals would normally already be set by now. He said he thinks the Town Council goals as outlined by the town administrator are a great place to start because it gives direction and focus. Things can always be revisited. He said a longer-term plan with a consultant and five-year plan is really important and is glad to hear we have money in an account to cover it. He said he does not think we can do it ourselves and need a third-party to lead that. He said he would be in favor to approve some goals tonight for this Town Council and staff for now and with one of the objectives being a long-term plan. ► Councilor LeBlanc said Councilor Cormier-Leger said what he was going to say. He said we need a set of goals that is short-term for 2026 and 2027. He asked Mr. Hellen about his list regarding him and his staff. ► Mr. Hellen said there are not too many things on the list. He said this is the stuff that was on the burner. He said as written, he does not think it is a daunting list for us to accomplish. He said in the finance section, it is mostly things in process that we already do. ► Councilor LeBlanc said he wants to find ways to do economic development. He wants to make sure it is addressed. ► Mr. Hellen talked about the capital plan. The charter requires a five-year plan, and they are trying to get to a 10-year capital plan. ► Councilor Morrongiello said he has been talking about strategic planning for a while. He is supportive of doing a strategic plan, but wants to pass a set of goals tonight. It is already February. He said he put out a poll and received 150 responses. He said he wants a fixed bus route for GATRA in addition to the on-demand service. The biggest thing he was hearing was the desire for more objectivity in the budget process, and he has some language that he read aloud. He said when people read the budget narrative, he wants to make sure they know why things are funded the way they are. ► Mr. Hellen said he would have to get the language just read; it was a lot. He said it is not a bad goal. He said part of the inconvenient truth is that we can analyze this stuff and spend more money analyzing. He said 80 percent of our costs are pretty baked. He said Natick has 39 librarians and we have 13. He said he would argue in Councilor Morrongiello's language that there should not be any FTE requirement for this. He said this year you will all learn the budget really well. He discussed that at some point the majority of the budget is staff. He said we all know that people feel understaffed and overworked. He requested Councilor Morrongiello send him the language read aloud, and he will add it to the list, and when we come back on March 4 take a look at it and see how the group feels. He noted there is no legislation for action for this on the agenda tonight. He noted a lot of this is collective bargaining as well. ► Councilor Morrongiello discussed other items from his survey and noted language for Mr. Hellen to include. ► Mr. Hellen requested an email from Councilor Morrongiello with the items. ► Councilor Callaway-Tripp said she thinks we need to set something like what Councilor Cormier-Leger said. She said we need to organize the goals into priorities, and she also believes in having a liaison as she believes we all want the same things, but we have different ideas on how to get there. She said her two goals are to bring the town together and make sure this budget is something that will be sustainable. She asked if we did this with a liaison, would there be an opportunity to have it as a public meeting where residents can come to the microphone to speak with the liaison. ► Mr. Hellen said yes. He explained that if you have the two-year goals, you at least have a sketch. While the community is going through a several month's process, we can still get other goals done. He said there will be a public portion to it. He explained a high-level scenario of what they do including that most of the strategic planning meetings are done in public. He is sure they could put in a public meeting portion and explained some possible methods for doing this. He explained this can be customized as well. ► Councilor Callaway-Tripp said they need to work it where residents are involved and included. ► Councilor Grella explained they are mixing goals and objectives and discussed the difference. He said they need to agree on the core goals. He said he agrees with working with a

third party on the strategic plan. ► Chair Dellorco said he agrees. He said this list of goals is nothing like they had before. He asked Mr. Hellen if the Town Council members should email him with other goals. ► Mr. Hellen said yes; send him an email and he will compile them into one document. He said on March 4 they will discuss these and also invite in a consulting firm. He discussed there will be goals coming up in October that we did not anticipate and other community priorities as well. He said they usually do a midway report. He said some of the climate items are going to be challenging and how much money does it take on these. He said he will call to see if he can get the consultants to come in on March 4. He said he met with the School Committee chair and the superintendent, and we did agree that when DESI comes here on March 18, we will try to figure out after that presentation if there is some other work we can do while the School Committee is already here for that presentation. ► Mr. Steve Sherlock, 13 Magnolia Drive, Franklin Matters and Franklin Public Radio, Community Information Director, discussed that it is the School Committee's plan to have a meeting scheduled for March 18. He discussed the open space planning has community input and the Master Plan had the same thing. He said the Master Plan is designed for 10 years, and the Housing Production Plan is designed for the future. He said we are not recognizing what has already been done. He said the next thing you are going to do is to have to be really engaging with the community. In order to get away from the divide, we are going to have to get everybody together. He said terminology is going to be key. ► Mr. Mark Minnichelli, 31 Longfellow Drive, said there are so many professionals in Franklin, they could do a quick reach out to the community and save some money. There may be someone that would volunteer their time to do this. He said he would advocate for the GATRA bus. He would love the climate leader community goal left on as well. ► Chair Dellorco said he would love the GATRA bus, but money is very tight. ► Mr. Hellen said we are not shy to do things that are hard. There are some pretty hard choices coming up with the budget. He said he likes the long-term vision for the GATRA bus route on Rt. 140. That is a long-term goal. He said he wants to manage expectations. ► Chair Dellorco confirmed everyone would email Mr. Hellen their goals. Regarding the subcommittee, he said they should put a small group together. ► Mr. Hellen said you have to post a meeting. He said send him an email on what you want. He discussed the process of a subcommittee. ► Councilor Cormier-Leger said it is important we tell the consultants that we have these plans mentioned already in place and would like to build on them. He explained that Mr. Hellen should say to the department heads that it is okay to dream a little. He does not want people to feel hopeless. ► Chair Dellorco said he agrees with Councilor Cormier-Leger.

► **Discussion: Town and School Strategic Planning:** Item noted in previous discussion.

#### LEGISLATION FOR ACTION:

**Note:** Two-Thirds Vote requires six votes; Majority Vote requires majority of members present and voting.

- a. **Resolution 26-08: Adoption of Amendment to the Procedures Manual of the Franklin Town Council (Motion to Approve Resolution 26-08 - Majority Vote).** ► Councilor Cormier-Leger read the resolution. ► **MOTION to Approve Resolution 26-08: Adoption of Amendment to the Procedures Manual of the Franklin Town Council by Grella. SECOND by Griffith. Discussion.** ► Councilor Cormier-Leger said he received via email some suggested edits, but those councilors would really need to present those edits so it can be voted on to amend. ► Councilor LeBlanc proposed a slight change. He said right now the newer language we are suggesting tonight is that the meetings will commence at 6 PM and end by 10 PM and it requires six councilors' votes to have it continue beyond 10 PM. He would like to propose for language that the regular meetings may not begin earlier than 6 PM. He said to take away the 10 PM. He said what they were trying to achieve is that meetings be no longer than four hours. He said what he would like to propose is provide that on the agenda provided that an agenda item is not then under consideration, the meeting shall be not more than four hours at any one sitting. He said and the other piece of it is that if we are in the middle of an agenda item, we will finish that agenda item and just not be taking another one up after that. He said the other thing was that it did say a minimum of six councilors. He said that is on the high side, that has to be a super majority, it should just be a simple majority, and the language would read otherwise unless otherwise voted by a majority vote of the council. He then reiterated his three changes. He said he can put that in exact language and put that as an

amendment. ► Councilor Morrongiello said he seconded the amendment. ► Chair Dellorco said, so he said that he wants that as amended and Councilor Morrongiello seconded. ► **MOTION to Amend Resolution 26-08: Adoption of Amendment to the Procedures Manual of the Franklin Town Council as stated by LeBlanc. SECOND by Morrongiello. Discussion.** ► Councilor Cormier-Leger read aloud from his cell phone the exact language for the amendment as emailed to him by Councilor LeBlanc. ► Chair Dellorco asked Councilor LeBlanc if he was satisfied with that. Councilor LeBlanc said yes. ► **VOTE (on the amendment): Yes-9, No-0, Absent-0.** ► Councilor Cormier-Leger asked Mr. Hellen if he could send that to Mr. Hellen. ► Mr. Hellen said yes, that was just what he was going to say. ► **Discussion (continued on the resolution):** ► Councilor Morrongiello said he appreciates the process as changed with the order of the agenda items. ► Chair Dellorco said he agrees. ► **VOTE (on the resolution as amended): Yes-9, No-0, Absent-0.**

**TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT:** ► Mr. Hellen congratulated Ms. Kim Carney for winning the USA Field Hockey 2025 Grow the Game Award. He noted the Recreation Department essentially runs the field hockey program for the state of Massachusetts. He congratulated Senior Center Director Sarah Amaral for being selected to serve on the Massachusetts Councils on Aging Legislative Committee. He said the Communications Director position was accepted and that person will be starting on February 23. He said she will be introduced at a meeting in March. He said Thermo Fisher is closing their plant in Franklin. He said the same thing with Panera Bread. He said this is on the heels of Cold Chain Technologies. He said he reaches out to all the firms when he gets such an announcement, and he sets up a meeting to try to understand if there is anything locally or that the state could have done. He said they will be meeting with Thermo Fisher in a few weeks. He said so far, the message has been that there is nothing locally that could have been done. A big part of it was the loss of the NIH grants, and the cost of living here is very expensive.

**SUBCOMMITTEE & AD HOC COMMITTEE REPORTS:** ► None.

**FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS:** ► Councilor Griffith said Bill H4297 is in state legislature to provide an additional percentage of Chapter 70 funding to towns specially designated for arts education. She would like to see the Town Council write a letter supporting that. ► Mr. Hellen said they have some formal letters he can share for this. ► Councilor Morrongiello asked if it would be more effective to send a letter or have a resolution voted on by the Town Council. ► Mr. Hellen discussed they can do a resolution, either way. ► Chair Dellorco said either way. ► Councilor Callaway-Tripp said she agrees with Councilor Griffith. ► Councilor Morrongiello asked for a resolution by the joint meeting. ► Mr. Hellen said good idea. ► Councilor Cormier-Leger said he would be another vote for support of this as a unified front for this.

**COUNCIL COMMENTS:** ► Councilor Griffith said she would like to say she knows there is a lot of concern in the community about the traffic on Lincoln Street around school pickup. She said she wants to mention that the school administration is working on this. She said an email was sent out that they can no longer queue for pickup until 2:20 PM. She thanked the Franklin Police Department who is supporting this. She asked for parents to help and have their buy in on this to wait to line up. She said today is World Cancer Day, and she wanted to send love and support to cancer warriors and survivors. She said the Franklin Fire Department is hosting on the 18<sup>th</sup> a Stop the Bleed workshop on recognizing and controlling severe bleeds to help save lives. She said the Franklin Recreation Department is looking for teenagers who want to be leaders in training for the summer camp programs. She said Franklin Food Pantry is collecting soup donations through the 8<sup>th</sup> for their annual super bowl challenge. She said Scott Mason's Franklin in Miniature exhibit is still on display through the 15<sup>th</sup> at the Historical Museum. ► Councilor LeBlanc said when someone wants to put a sign up, they have to go through Design Review Commission. He said when a sign goes up it has to come down when appropriate. He gave an example and said when they are not in business, the sign has to come down and enforce those regulations. He said next week they are going to talk about the budget. He said he wanted to put his stake in the sand. He discussed that what he does for a living is financially driven. He has a finance background. He said he wanted to outline what his expectations are for the budget and discussed what he expects and listed his guidelines and what he would be looking for next

week. ► Councilor Morrongiello asked about the issue at Lincoln Street and asked if high school students can take the GATRA bus home after school. ► Mr. Hellen said he does not know, and he will look into it. ► Councilor Morrongiello said he appreciates what the DPW does. ► Councilor Callaway-Tripp said she is anxious to move forward with the liaison and getting into the budget. ► Councilor Cormier-Leger said great job to DPW and all staff for getting us through some tough winter weeks. He gave a shout-out to staff, crew, and actors at Franklin Performing Arts for their great production of Steel Magnolias. He gave a shout-out to the School Committee as they are juggling a ton, and the Facebook comments have not been so kind as of late. He noted a coffee he had with a School Committee member and one thing they talked about was expanding the afterschool program in the buildings. He said it is not our purview, but he is putting it out there in the universe and discussed what some other schools do. He said Go Pats. ► Councilor Grella said he was speaking on behalf of three former Patriot's player residents and said Go Pats. ► Chair Dellorco said the DPW did a great job on the roads. He said Go Pats.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION: ► *Exemption #6: Considering the purchase, exchange, lease or value of real property, because an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the Public Body: i. Former Davis-Thayer Elementary School, ii. Former Parmenter Elementary School, iii. "Other Property" potentially available for Town purchase/acquisition.***

► Chair Dellorco said we have an executive session tonight for consideration of the purchase, exchange, lease or value of real property, because an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the Public Body: Former Davis-Thayer Elementary School, Former Parmenter Elementary School, "Other Property" potentially available for Town purchase/acquisition, and we will not be coming back after executive session, and the chair so declares. ► **MOTION to Enter** into executive session for consideration of the purchase, exchange, lease or value of real property, because an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the Public Body: Former Davis-Thayer Elementary School, Former Parmenter Elementary School, "Other Property" potentially available for Town purchase/acquisition, and we will not be coming back after executive session, and the chair so declares by **Morrongiello. SECOND by Griffith. No Discussion. ► ROLL CALL VOTE:** Callaway-Tripp-YES, Cormier-Leger-YES, Dellorco-YES, Grella-YES, Griffith-YES, LeBlanc-YES, Malloy-YES, Morrongiello-YES, Ojukwu-YES. ► **VOTE: Yes-9, No-0, Absent-0.**

***Open Session ended at 7:42 PM.***

Respectfully submitted,

Judith Lizardi  
Recording Secretary