CITY COUNCIL MEETING

Monday, August 17, 2026 at 5:30 PM

1 Benjamin Franklin Way Franklin, Ohio 45005

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CLERK'S JOURNAL

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Centers called the meeting to order at 5:30pm.

2. ROLL CALL

PRESENT
Ryan Roberts
Paul Ruppert
Vice Mayor Todd Hall
Mayor Brent Centers
Michael Aldridge
Debbie Fouts
Robert Lipps

Staff: Mr. Westendorf, Mr. Yoder, Ms. Trice, Ms. Dunn, Ms. Steed, Chief Stitzel, Chief Colon, Mr. Damian, Mr. Inman and Ms. Chibis.

There were 11 guests and one member of the press in attendance.

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Centers led the pledge of allegiance.

4. APPROVE THE CLERK'S JOURNAL AND ACCEPT THE TAPES AS THE OFFICIAL MINUTES

A. August 3, 2026

Motion made by Ruppert, Seconded by Aldridge.
Voting Yea: Roberts, Ruppert, Vice Mayor Hall, Mayor Centers, Aldridge, Fouts, Lipps
Motion passed.

5. PRESENTATIONS

A. Committee Reports

Mayor Centers and Mr. Westendorf gave an update from that evening's Finance Committee meeting. Ms. Trice provided a financial update as of July 31, 2026. Year-to-date revenues total $10,472,391, while year-to-date expenditures total $9,730,032. All minimum fund balances are currently being met or exceeded.
The Committee discussed appropriations that will be presented at the next City Council meeting. Items include new staff salaries and benefits, insurance reimbursement, Police and Fire expenses, including the first tower payment for the fire truck, police department roof repairs, and an increase for Axon Enterprise.

6. RECEPTION OF VISITORS

Mayor Centers opened and closed the Reception of Visitors at 5:42pm as none asked to be heard.

7. PUBLIC HEARING

A. ORDINANCE 2026-15 AMENDING PART FIVE, CHAPTER 505, OF THE CODIFIED ORDINANCES OF THE CITY OF FRANKLIN, OHIO AND CREATING CHAPTER 505.20 (UNAUTHORIZED FEEDING OR ATTRACTING ANIMALS)

The proposed ordinance establishes regulations regarding the unauthorized feeding or attracting of animals on public and private property. The intent is to reduce public health and safety concerns, minimize nuisance conditions, and discourage the establishment and growth of unmanaged animal populations.

The City of Franklin has partnered with the Warren County Humane Society to address the community's stray cat population through Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) programs. These efforts are designed to humanely reduce and stabilize feral cat colonies over time. However, large-scale, open feeding of animals on public property undermines these efforts by attracting additional stray and feral animals into the area, increasing colony sizes beyond what the environment can sustain, and creating ongoing concerns related to sanitation, property maintenance, and public safety.

This legislation is intended to support the City's ongoing animal management efforts by prohibiting the unauthorized placement of food, water, or shelter that sustains or attracts animals on public property. It also clarifies that feeding or attracting animals on private property may only occur with the authorization of the property owner. The ordinance does not prohibit authorized animal care activities but provides the City with a mechanism to address situations where unmanaged feeding contributes to nuisance conditions or negatively impacts the community.

Ms. Hurley from the Warren County Humane Society added that word ban sounds bad and it's usually taken aggressively. City staff have been working in communication with her. This ban gives a tool to deal with reckless and destructive feeding. She is in favor of the Ordinance because it causes wildlife to lose lives. She is looking out for all wildlife, not just cats. Once unwanted animals enter homes/sheds, they are considered a nuisance and must be euthanized. She is in favor of permitted and structured feedings. Unorganized feeding thwarts efforts in trapping for TNR.

Mayor Centers opened the Public Hearing at 5:59pm.

Adam Young, employed at the U.S. Post Office at 712 E. Second Street, asked to be heard. Mr. Young appeared in his U.S. Post Office uniform and presented counterpoints to the proposed Ordinance. He acknowledged that overfeeding is occurring.

Mayor Centers asked about conflicting information regarding overfeeding and the City’s TNR program.

Vice Mayor Hall asked Mr. Young if he had stopped feeding the cats. Mr. Young confirmed that he had not. He stated that Mr. Westendorf had asked him to reduce his feeding activities to assist with the TNR efforts. Mr. Young said he agrees with coordinated feeding but noted that the proposed Ordinance had not yet been enacted, so he had not stopped feeding. Vice Mayor Hall asked where Mr. Young lived, and he responded that he lives in Centerville. When asked if he feeds cats there, Mr. Young confirmed that he does.

Ms. Hurley added that since Franklin began its TNR program, which is provided at no cost to Franklin residents and would typically cost approximately $20 per cat, 106 cats have been spayed or neutered. She stated that the next TNR date is scheduled for September.

Doug Greathouse, 41 W. Sixth Street, asked to be heard. Mr. Greathouse offered his property as a potential designated feeding area and stated that he does not want to see the cats removed.

Dwayne Ferguson, 15 W. Sixth Street, asked to be heard. Mr. Ferguson thanked Mr. Westendorf and Mr. Young for their efforts and stated that he supports the overall direction of the proposed Ordinance. He asked about the penalty if the Ordinance is adopted. After learning that a violation would constitute a minor misdemeanor, he stated that the penalty seemed excessive and asked Council to reconsider it.

Dennis West, 211 Pine Street, asked to be heard. Mr. West stated that he appreciates the direction the City is taking and believes progress is being made, although it will take time. He said the cats have become a nuisance on his property and asked Council what could be done to address the issue. He stated that he has had to pay to treat his yard for fleas and regularly clean his driveway, porch, deck, and other areas. Mr. West asked Council not to take the issue lightly and expressed his support for Council's efforts. He stated that he has participated in TNR and intends to continue doing so.

Kendra Parker, 107 W. Bryant Avenue and an FCS bus driver, asked to be heard. Ms. Parker expressed concern about the criminal penalty associated with the proposed Ordinance. Mayor Centers clarified that the Ordinance would not prohibit feeding on a person's own private property or on private property where the property owner has given express permission.

Vice Mayor Hall stated that the issue has been ongoing for more than a year and that City officials have discussed the matter and asked individuals to stop feeding, but the feeding has continued. The possibility of addressing the issue as a property maintenance violation was discussed. It was stated that other efforts have been exhausted. Mr. Westendorf added that two separate people have sold their homes on Main Street as a result of the stay cat overpopulation and resulting nuisance issues.

Dwayne Ferguson, 16 W. Fifth Street, asked to be heard again and inquired about the addresses of homes that had been sold and whether the City had purchased them. Staff will provide the addresses and confirmed the City had not purchased the properties.

Mr. Young asked to be heard again. He stated that he cares for cats at three properties, two of which he has permission to feed on, and one of which is a property where a house has been demolished.

Hailey, 246 Ruth Drive, asked to be heard and spoke in opposition to the proposed Ordinance.

Katie, 7263 Shaker Road, asked to be heard. She spoke in favor of spaying and neutering animals and expressed support for the City's TNR program and organized feeding. She asked that it be emphasized that residents may still feed cats on their own property and requested that additional information about the TNR program be made available to residents.

Mayor Centers closed the Reception of Visitors at 6:48 p.m. Mayor Centers thanked those in attendance for their participation.

Following the Reception of Visitors, Vice Mayor Hall asked Mr. Young whether he would stop intentionally feeding the cats. Mr. Young did not answer the question. Mayor Centers asked whether

Mr. Young would stop feeding outside of organized feeding locations if organized feeding were established. Mr. Young stated that he would.

Mr. Ruppert and Mayor Centers requested that staff coordinate with the Humane Society regarding organized feeding, noting that City staff does not have the capacity to manage the effort. It was stated that citations would be a last resort and that all other options had been exhausted.

Mr. Aldridge thanked those in attendance for their respectful participation.

Mrs. Fouts stated that a family had complained because their children were unable to play in their yard due to the issues associated with the cats.

Motion made by Vice Mayor Hall, Seconded by Aldridge.
Voting Yea: Roberts, Ruppert, Vice Mayor Hall, Mayor Centers, Aldridge, Fouts, Lipps
Motion passed.

B. ORDINANCE 2026-16 AMENDING PART FIVE, CHAPTER 509, OF THE CODIFIED ORDINANCES OF THE CITY OF FRANKLIN, OHIO AND CREATING CHAPTER 509.10 (Climbing Upon or Jumping Off Bridges)

The proposed ordinance establishes safety regulations prohibiting individuals from jumping, hanging, climbing, or otherwise occupying areas of bridges not intended for pedestrian or vehicular use within the City of Franklin.

The City has experienced ongoing issues involving both minors and adults jumping from bridges into the Great Miami River and other waterways. These activities often occur from significant heights into water of unknown or insufficient depth, creating an extreme risk of serious injury or death. In addition to the danger posed to those participating, these incidents frequently require responses from police, fire, and emergency medical personnel, placing first responders at unnecessary risk and diverting emergency resources from other public safety needs.

This legislation is intended to provide law enforcement with a clear enforcement mechanism to discourage these dangerous behaviors before injuries occur. By prohibiting jumping, hanging, climbing, and occupying structural areas of bridges outside those designed for normal travel, the ordinance reinforces the City's commitment to protecting public safety.

The ordinance is preventative in nature and is intended to reduce hazardous conduct, protect residents and visitors, and minimize the need for emergency rescue operations resulting from unsafe bridge activities.

Mayor Centers opened and closed the Public Hearing at 7:05pm as none asked to be heard.

Motion made by Fouts, Seconded by Ruppert.
Voting Yea: Roberts, Ruppert, Vice Mayor Hall, Mayor Centers, Aldridge, Fouts, Lipps
Motion passed.

C. ORDINANCE 2026-17 AMENDING PART FIVE, CHAPTER 531, OF THE CODIFIED ORDINANCES OF THE CITY OF FRANKLIN, OHIO AND CREATING CHAPTER 531.04 (FAILURE TO SUPERVISE A MINOR)

The proposed ordinance establishes accountability for parents, guardians, or other responsible adults who fail to adequately supervise minors who repeatedly engage in unlawful or dangerous behavior. The legislation is intended to address ongoing incidents involving bridge jumping, vandalism, destruction of public property, and other criminal offenses committed by juveniles within the community.

The ordinance provides for a written warning following a minor's first qualifying offense and creates a progressive enforcement process only when repeated violations occur. Its primary purpose is to encourage parental involvement, deter recurring misconduct, and protect public safety and City property while reducing the need for repeated law enforcement intervention.

Mayor Centers opened and closed the public hearing at 7:10pm.

Motion made by Vice Mayor Hall, Seconded by Aldridge.
Voting Yea: Roberts, Ruppert, Vice Mayor Hall, Aldridge, Fouts, Lipps
Voting Nay: Mayor Centers
Motion passed.

D. ORDINANCE 2026-18 AN ORDINANCE DELINEATING OVERLAYS IN RELATION TO THE PROPOSED SHAKER MEADOWS INCENTIVE DISTRICTS #1 THROUGH #4, WITHIN THE CITY OF FRANKLIN, OHIO; ADOPTING A WRITTEN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN AS TO SAME; SETTING THE TIME AND PLACE OF A PUBLIC HEARING; AUTHORIZING AND RATIFYING THE GIVING OF NOTICE TO THE FRANKLIN CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT, THE WARREN COUNTY CAREER CENTER, AND THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF WARREN COUNTY, OHIO, ALL PURSUANT TO OHIO REVISED CODE SECTION 5709.40(C) AND ITS RELATED RULES AND LAWS.

Approves statutory overlays and the Economic Development Plan for four proposed Shaker Meadows incentive districts encompassing portions of parcels 0836351005 and 0835102001; sets the public hearing; and authorizes required notices.

Mayor Centers opened and closed the Public Hearing at 7:36pm.

Motion made by Vice Mayor Hall, Seconded by Roberts.
Voting Yea: Roberts, Ruppert, Vice Mayor Hall, Mayor Centers, Aldridge, Fouts, Lipps
Motion passed.

8. NEW BUSINESS

A. RESOLUTION 2026-53 AWARDING THE BID AND AUTHORIZING EXECUTION OF THE CONTRACT WITH INTEGRITY CONTRACTORS FOR THE 6TH STREET IMPROVEMENTS PROJECT

The base bid included installing curb and gutter, storm sewer, catch basins, concrete sidewalk matching the Revitalized Downtown Main Street improvements, street lighting, and utility work along Sixth Street, as well as reconstructing a portion of the alley between Riley Boulevard and Main Street.
Alternate 1 included resurfacing Sixth Street with spot pavement repairs.
Alternate 2 included the full-depth reconstruction of Sixth Street.

Motion to approve Base + Alt. 1 made by Ruppert, Seconded by Lipps.
Voting Yea: Roberts, Ruppert, Vice Mayor Hall, Mayor Centers, Aldridge, Fouts, Lipps
Motion passed.

B. RESOLUTION 2026-54 FINAL LEGISLATION AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO EXECUTE A CONTRACT WITH THE OHIO DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (ODOT) FOR THE RESURFACING OF S MAIN STREET FROM SIXTH STREET TO EIGHTH STREET (Eric Damian)

This Resolution is the final legislation required by ODOT for the resurfacing of S Main Street from Sixth Street to Eighth Street. The project will also replace curb, ADA ramps, sidewalks and storm sewer. This Project is scheduled to be awarded in October 2026 with construction beginning in spring/summer of 2027.
Preliminary legislation was passed July 6, 2026.
The total cost for this Project is currently:
Engineering/Design: $72,300.00 (100% Local; already paid)
Federal funds: $713,754.96
OPWC funds: $172,607.85 (currently applied; $194,640.00 available)
City/local funds: $17,124.48
Total: $975,787.29

Motion made by Lipps, Seconded by Vice Mayor Hall.
Voting Yea: Roberts, Ruppert, Vice Mayor Hall, Mayor Centers, Aldridge, Fouts, Lipps
Motion passed.

C. RESOLUTION 2026-55 SELECTING VERDANTAS IN RESPONSE TO THE CITY OF FRANKLIN'S REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS FOR PROFESSIONAL SERVICES FOR THE PREPARATION OF CONSTRUCTION CONTRACT PLANS FOR THE SECOND STREET SIGNAL UPGRADE PROJECT (ODOT PID: 119965) AND AUTHORIZING THE CITY'S ENTRY INTO AN AGREEMENT WITH VERDANTAS TO PROVIDE SUCH SERVICES

The City posted a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for the preparation of construction contract plans for upgrading existing traffic signals with new mast arm poles, signal heads and traffic control equipment to be networked with the City's centrally controlled system. Fiber optic infrastructure will be extended along E Second street between Riley Blvd and I-75. All 7 intersections will be upgraded and integrated into the City's existing ATMS signal system and expanded for future technology.
The City reviewed all submitted letters of interest based on the criteria set forth in the RFQ and recommends that Verdantas be selected to provide such services. City Staff have coordinated with Verdantas and ODOT to define the scope of the project and received a proposal agreement for such services from Verdantas for the following:
Total Lump Sum – Basic Services $308,050.00
Total If-Authorized Services $53,000.00
Total Contract Amount $361,050.00
The base contract amount is $308,050.00, with up to $53,000.00 for if-authorized services, resulting in a total contract amount of $361,050.00. A total of $331,000.00 is included in the 2026 Fund 401 budget, with the remaining $30,050.00 to be included in the Fund 401 budget for 2027.
Motion made by Lipps, Seconded by Aldridge.
Voting Yea: Roberts, Ruppert, Vice Mayor Hall, Mayor Centers, Aldridge, Fouts, Lipps
Motion passed.

D. RESOLUTION 2026-56 AUTHORIZING CONTRACT MODIFICATION NO. 1 TO THE PROFESSIONAL SERVICES AGREEMENT WITH BURGESS & NIPLE, INC. FOR THE PARK AVENUE/MIAMI AVENUE ROUNDABOUT PROJECT (ODOT PID 119967).

The City previously entered into a professional services agreement with Burgess & Niple, Inc. for the preparation of construction contract plans for the Park Avenue/Miami Avenue Roundabout Project. As

the design has progressed, additional services are needed for right-of-way acquisition and the relocation of the existing water main.
Contract Modification No. 1 includes $45,475.00 for right-of-way acquisition services to be performed by O.R. Colan Associates as a sub-consultant to Burgess & Niple and $52,300.00 for water-main relocation design services to be performed by Burgess & Niple. The total amount of the modification is $97,775.00.
The original contract was budgeted in Fund 401 (ODOT Program Fund) in the amount of $482,091.00, consisting of $374,318.00 for Basic Services and $107,773.00 for If-Authorized Parts. Contract Modification No. 1 will increase the contract by $97,775.00, resulting in a revised total contract amount of $579,866.00.
The $45,475.00 for right-of-way acquisition services was also previously budgeted in Fund 401. The City will be eligible for reimbursement through ODOT for 67% of this cost, or $30,468.25, using the federal CMAQ funding awarded to the Project. The remaining $15,006.75 will be the City's local share.
For the water-main relocation design, $50,000.00 was appropriated in May 2026 in anticipation of this work. The remaining $2,300.00 will be paid from funds already budgeted for the Project.

Motion made by Vice Mayor Hall, Seconded by Ruppert.
Voting Yea: Roberts, Ruppert, Vice Mayor Hall, Mayor Centers, Aldridge, Fouts, Lipps
Motion passed.

9. INTRODUCTION OF NEW LEGISLATION

A. ORDINANCE 2026-19 AMENDING PART NINE, TITLE THREE TO CREATE CHAPTER 926 "PERMITS AND FEES" AND AMENDING "APPENDIX A" OF CHAPTER 1701 OF THE CODIFIED ORDINANCES OF THE CITY OF FRANKLIN, OHIO TO INCLUDE FEES FOR SERVICE LINE PERMITS

B. ORDINANCE 2026-20 AMENDING THE UNIFIED DEVELOPMENT ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF FRANKLIN, OHIO

10. CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

Mr. Westendorf reported concerns regarding prolonged power outages in the Harpland neighborhood, noting that there have been four outages within the past 24 months, with outage durations longer than average. Duke cited access issues with rear-lots. A resident has filed a complaint with the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (PUCO).

An Overdose Awareness Community Cookout was to be held on August 26 from 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at the Food Truck Park.

The City received $547,611 in funding to address Safe Routes to School improvements. The project will not require a local match; however, funding will be limited to the awarded amount. Franklin City Schools has committed an additional $200,000 toward the project. The total project cost is estimated at $622,000. A project kickoff meeting is scheduled for October 26.
The Fourth Street improvement project will include resurfacing from Ben Franklin Boulevard to Millard Avenue, with construction anticipated during the summer of 2027. Safe Routes to School improvements are anticipated in 2028-2029.

Mr. Westendorf discussed scheduling a joint meeting with Franklin City Schools. The first available option is in late October; however, he recommended scheduling the meeting in December following the election results.

11. COUNCIL COMMENTS

Mr. Robert Lipps stated for the record that he is not a cat hater and noted that he has two rescue cats. He reported that the speed bumps near Jr. High are working, with drivers slowing down in the area. Mr. Lipps stated that he will be absent from the next three Council meetings due to professional development and expects to return for the November 2 Council meeting.

Mrs. Fouts thanked everyone who attended the meeting and stated that she had learned a great deal from the public comments. She expressed appreciation that the City is addressing the issue and noted that residents who are deeply affected by the situation are likely to reach out to Council. She stated that action is needed and thanked Mr. Roberts and Mr. Lipps for bringing their input and knowledge to the discussion. Mrs. Fouts stated that it is unfortunate that legislation is necessary. She noted a tragedy that occurred in a neighboring community.

Mr. Aldridge had no comments.

Mr. Roberts had no comments.

Mr. Ruppert stated that he understands those who are passionate about cats. He noted that the issue seems relatively minor compared to the challenges facing the City's neighbors to the west and expressed hope that they are able to recover.

Vice Mayor Hall stated that it is unfortunate that legislation is necessary but said the issue would not stop without action. He expressed sadness that the matter had reached this point. Vice Mayor Hall also commented on the positive start to the school year and stated that he was glad to hear that things were going well. He suggested that Council wait to meet with the school before proceeding with further discussion.

Mayor Centers stated that the school year has gotten off to a great start and thanked the schools and City staff for their coordination and efforts. He also stated that National Night Out was a great event that was well coordinated and well attended.

The Mayor said that Council and staff have been notified that he is temporarily pausing his duties as Mayor to fulfill military obligations, effective at the conclusion of this meeting. Vice Mayor Hall will step into the role as normal. It is the opinion of legal counsel that Vice Mayor can fill the Mayor's seat on Planning Commission and Finance Committee. Mr. Yoder added that all opinions agree that Mr. Centers remains a member of council – there is no vacancy and he should not be penalized for military service. The Charter says when the Mayor is absent, the Vice Mayor will fill in. It is recommended that Council preemptively pass a motion to excuse Mayor Centers and that Vice Mayor Hall be appointed to Planning Commission.

Motion to excuse Mr. Lipps from next 3 meetings made by Vice Mayor Hall, Seconded by Roberts.
Voting Yea: Roberts, Ruppert, Vice Mayor Hall, Mayor Centers, Aldridge, Fouts
Voting Abstaining: Lipps
Motion passed.

Motion to excuse Mayor Centers during his military obligations made by Aldridge, Seconded by Lipps.
Voting Yea: Roberts, Ruppert, Aldridge, Fouts, Lipps
Voting Abstaining: Vice Mayor Hall, Mayor Centers

Motion to appoint Vice Mayor Hall to Planning Commission during Mayor Center's absence made by Ruppert, Seconded by Roberts.
Voting Yea: Roberts, Ruppert, Aldridge, Fouts, Lipps
Voting Abstaining: Vice Mayor Hall, Mayor Centers
Motion passed.

Mr. Aldridge said we are proud of how you represent Franklin and our country. We will be thinking of you.

12. EXECUTIVE SESSION

A. To consider the purchase of property for public purposes pursuant to ORC 121.22 (G)(2).

C. To consider the appointment, employment, and compensation of a public employee or official pursuant to ORC 121.22 (G)(1).

Motion made by Roberts, Seconded by Aldridge.
Voting Yea: Roberts, Ruppert, Mayor Centers, Aldridge, Fouts, Lipps
Voting Nay: Vice Mayor Hall
Motion passed. Council entered into executive session at 8:08pm.

Motion made by Fouts, Seconded by Lipps.
Voting Yea: Roberts, Ruppert, Mayor Centers, Aldridge, Fouts, Lipps, Vice Mayor Hall
Motion passed. Council exited Executive Session at 9:21pm.

13. ADJOURNMENT

Motion made by Vice Mayor Hall, Seconded by Lipps.
Voting Yea: Roberts, Ruppert, Mayor Centers, Aldridge, Fouts, Lipps, Vice Mayor Hall
Motion passed. Council adjourned at 9:21pm.

Todd Hall

Todd Hall, Acting Mayor

Khristi Dunn

Khristi Dunn, Clerk of Council