CITY COUNCIL MEETING

Monday, September 21, 2026 at 5:30 PM

1 Benjamin Franklin Way Franklin, Ohio 45005

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CLERK'S JOURNAL

1. CALL TO ORDER

Vice Mayor Todd Hall called the meeting to order at 5:31pm.

2. ROLL CALL

PRESENT
Ryan Roberts
Paul Ruppert
Vice Mayor Todd Hall
Michael Aldridge
Debbie Fouts

ABSENT
Mayor Brent Centers
Robert Lipps

Staff: Mr. Westendorf, Ms. Steed, Ms. Trice, Ms. Dunn, Chief Colon, Mr. Damian, Mr. McMqueen, Mr. Miller, Chief Stitzel, Ms. Chibis and one on duty officer.

There were six guests in attendance.

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mr. Miller led the pledge of allegiance.

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

A. August 17, 2026

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

5. PRESENTATIONS

A. Mental Health Recovery Board

A representative from the Mental Health Recovery Board serving Warren and Clinton counties asked for Council's support on their upcoming levy.
Mr. Aldridge asked about the board's relationship with the schools. Talbert House and Greater Cincinnati Behavioral Health Services are provider agencies that provide services to the schools.
Vice Mayor Hall clarified that this is a renewal levy and asked the representative to leave yard signs.

6. RECEPTION OF VISITORS

Vice Mayor Hall opened the reception of visitors at 5:37pm.

Cindy Lee of 7450 Mentz Road asked to be heard. She asked about the public auction of Cheney Dynos property. It was staff's understanding that Cheney has retained ownership of the land, based on information on the Warren County Auditor's website.

She asked why the City is asking businesses to leave if they are trying to build up the downtown, specifically the Dayton Sign Shop. Vice Mayor Hall explained that the city took ownership of the building that Dayton Sign Shop was located in. They allowed leases to remain. The tenant had a pattern of being late on payments. The decision from Council was to move people out of buildling as to not be landlords moving forward.

Vice Mayor Hall closed the reception of visitors at 5:42pm.

7. PUBLIC HEARING

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 (Steve Inman)

The proposed legislation creates Chapter 926 titled “Permits and Fees,” to establish permitting requirements and associated fees for water, sanitary sewer lateral, and storm sewer lateral service line installation, replacement, and alteration. It requires that a permit be obtained for each service line prior to commencement of work and establishes application and re-inspection fees. The legislation further requires all applicable work to conform to the City of Franklin’s specifications and clarifies that the new permit and fee requirements are in addition to any other applicable City permitting requirements.
The applicable fees will be established within Chapter 1701, Appendix A as follows:

- Service Line Permit Fee: $50.00
- Re-Inspection Fee: $50.00

The proposed requirements are intended to provide a consistent permitting process, ensure proper inspection and documentation of service line work, and support compliance with City specifications and standards.

Vice Mayor Hall opened and closed the Public Hearing at 5:44pm as none asked to be heard.

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

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

The Ordinance proposes various amendments Table 1107.04-2: Nonresidential Districts Use Table and Section 1107.10 Industrial Use Standards.
The text amendments to the City’s Municipal Code are aimed at updating the use permissions for “Information Technology/Data Center” and modifying the use specific standards for the use “Fulfillment Center.”
Planning Commission recommended approval of the text amendments to Council during its August 12, 2026, meeting.

Vice Mayor Hall opened and closed the Public Hearing at 5:48pm as none asked to be heard.

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

C. ORDINANCE 2026-21 APPROPRIATIONS FOR CURRENT EXPENSES AND OTHER EXPENDITURES FOR THE CITY OF FRANKLIN, OHIO, FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 31, 2026 AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY

This Ordinance makes appropriations in the General Fund, Street Fund, Economic Development Fund, Fire Fund, Fire Replacement Fund, Street Light Fund, Employee Benefits Fund, Storm Water Fund, Storm Water Replacement Fund, Capital Fund, and Water Fund.

Vice Mayor Hall opened and closed the Public Hearing at 5:51pm as none asked to be heard.

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

8. NEW BUSINESS

A. RESOLUTION 2026-57 AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO EXECUTE AN AGREEMENT WITH AXON ENTERPRISE, INC.

This resolution authorizes the City Manager to enter into a five-year agreement with Axon Enterprise, Inc. for body-worn cameras, in-car video systems, TASER 10 conducted-energy weapons, a Skydio unmanned aircraft system, digital evidence management and storage, and related equipment, software, licensing, training, maintenance, and support services for the Franklin Division of Police. The cost is $717,016.57 over five years.

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

B. RESOLUTION 2026-58 AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO EXECUTE A CONTRACT WITH THE PREMIER GROUP LLC WITHOUT COMPETITIVE BIDDING OR ADVERTISEMENT

This resolution authorizes the City Manager to enter into a contract with the Premier Group LLC for necessary materials and labor to complete roof repair work on the Police Department building. The contract would ordinarily be subject to competitive bidding based on the total cost of the work. However, because the repair is urgently necessary to ensure the safety and security of the building, and personnel and property therein, the resolution waives the need to bid the contract so the work may proceed without delay. The cost is $99,950, paid from the Police Division Capital Outlay Fund.

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

C. RESOLUTION 2026-59 ACCEPTING THE AMOUNTS AND TAX RATES AS CERTIFIED BY THE WARREN COUNTY BUDGET COMMISSION FOR 2027, AUTHORIZING THE NECESSARY TAX LEVIES AND CERTIFYING THE TAX LEVIES TO THE WARREN COUNTY AUDITOR

This Resolution is the final step in the Tax Budget process. The County Budget Commission receives the tax budget from each jurisdiction within the County and then certifies back to each jurisdiction the amounts and rates for inside (un-voted) and outside (voted) property tax levies. This Resolution is a legal requirement and is done on an annual basis.
Property tax revenue projections for the General Fund for Year 2027 is $737,000. Levy proceeds for the Fire & EMS Fund is $3,200,000. For cities, the tax budget is mostly to certify the money we will receive from property tax. Property tax revenues account for less than 9% of total budget for 2027

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

D. RESOLUTION 2026-60 AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO EXECUTE ANY CONTRACTS FOR THE OHIO PUBLIC WORKS COMMISSION'S STATE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT AND/OR LOCAL TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMS AS REQUIRED, FOR PROGRAM YEAR 2027 (PY 41) FOR THE PARK AVENUE/MIAMI AVENUE ROUNDABOUT AND SONNY LEWIS WAY EXTENSION PROJECT (ODOT PID 119967)

The OPWC's Issue II process now operates on a one-year cycle. Projects submitted this year are being considered for funding next year. An application is due for any projects requesting funding in Program Year 2027 (PY 41). City staff recommend submitting the Park Avenue/Miami Avenue Roundabout and Sonny Lewis Way Extension Project (ODOT PID 119967) for funding.
The project includes construction of a single lane roundabout at Park Avenue and Miami Avenue and an extension of Sonny Lewis Way to Lower Carlisle Road.
Funding breakdown is as follows:
Estimated Total Project Cost: $4,039,117.00

- CMAQ (Federal Funding): $1,259,193.00
- OPWC Grant Funding: $1,194,195.00
- OPWC Loan (0% interest over 3-year term: $600,000.00
- Local Share: $985,729.00

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

E. RESOLUTION 2026-61 AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION AND DELIVERY OF A DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE CITY AND OH FRANKLIN EAST 2ND, LLC; AND APPROVING RELATED MATERIALS

OH Franklin East 2nd, LLC intends to develop real property within the City into an automotive services/repair and quick service restaurant. The estimated costs for public infrastructure improvements necessary to implement a Traffic Impact Study and improve storm sewers, stormwater remediation, and ingress and egress to the property is estimated to be $642,550. The City has offered to leverage a tax increment financing (TIF) program, as well as add the property to the Franklin NCA in order to contribute up to $250,000 to defray a portion of the costs for the public infrastructure improvements. Approval of this Development Agreement will establish the basic terms for the City's official consideration of a non-school TIF, and begin the process of adding the property to the Franklin NCA

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

9. INTRODUCTION OF NEW LEGISLATION

A. ORDINANCE 2026-22 AN ORDINANCE TO CONSIDER A PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT APPLICATION AND PRELIMINARY DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR DEHART VALLEY FROM HPA PROPERTY ACQUISITIONS LLC FOR APPROXIMATELY 294.45 ACRES LOCATED SOUTH OF CLEARCREEK PARK, EAST OF GORSUCH ROAD, AND NORTH OF BEAL ROAD

B. ORDINANCE 2026-23 AN ORDINANCE TO REZONE APPROXIMATELY 294.45 ACRES FOR DEHART VALLEY FROM R-1A ONE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT TO PUD PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT FOR PROPERTY LOCATED SOUTH OF CLEARCREEK PARK, EAST OF GORSUCH ROAD, AND NORTH OF BEAL ROAD

C. ORDINANCE 2026-24 AUTHORIZING THE ISSUANCE OF NOTES IN THE AMOUNT OF NOT TO EXCEED $2,300,000 IN ANTICIPATION OF THE ISSUANCE OF BONDS FOR THE PURPOSE OF ACQUIRING LAND AND INTERESTS IN LAND, AND RETIRING NOTES PREVIOUSLY ISSUED FOR SUCH PURPOSE; AND AUTHORIZING AND APPROVING RELATED MATTERS (Jenna Trice)

10. CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

Mr. Westendorf reported that the Hometown Novelties ribbon cutting was held earlier that day and was hosted by the Northwest Warren County Chamber. He noted that the business had been working on the site for approximately one year.

Mr. Westendorf provided a recap of the Warren County Fly-In to Washington, D.C., which he and Ms. Steed attended the previous week. He said it was a valuable opportunity to meet and work with legislators and regional partners. The group met with representatives from the Federal Railroad Administration and the Service Transportation Board to discuss rail-related matters, including the condition and future of the Black Bridge.
Mr. Westendorf explained that the Black Bridge, which carries rail traffic from 6th Street toward Franklin Yards, is not receiving the volume of rail traffic it previously did. The estimated cost to update the bridge for continued rail use is approximately $2.3 million. He noted that it is currently unclear whether the railroad will abandon the line. Discussions in Washington also included what would happen to the bridge if the rail line is abandoned.

The Public Works team has completed the repairs to the Clear Creek Bike Trail. The work was completed in time for a Springboro bike event held over the weekend.

Repairs to the Lion's Bridge have been completed. The work included repairs to the rockers and realignment of the base plate. He noted that the rockers on both sides of the bridge may need to be replaced within the next five years.
The bridge will be inspected quarterly to monitor for movement. If there is no movement, no additional work will be necessary at this time. If movement is detected, the City will pursue funding, estimated at approximately $300,000 to $500,000. Mr. Westendorf emphasized that this is a maintenance issue and is not indicative of a need for replacement.

The contractor moved onto the 6th Street project site that day to begin work. Rail was discovered beneath 6th Street that will need to be addressed as part of the project. The current target completion date is October 31.

Mr. Westendorf reported that the City may receive approximately $746,000 through a federal appropriation request supported by Congressman Landsman for the water main replacement project across the river. The funding was initially included in the FY2027 appropriations bill, with an additional request being made through Senator Husted for funding from the available balance.

The City anticipates receiving approximately $1.1 million through the U.S. Department of Urban Development for engineering related to riverbank stabilization. A study has been authorized by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to evaluate riverbank stabilization. The study will determine the scope of the necessary work and its estimated cost. If the study can be funded through the City's existing allocation, the City will proceed. If the cost exceeds the available funding, the City will seek an additional federal commitment to fund the study. Once the study is completed, the City will be in a position to pursue funding for implementation.

The City is currently in the application period for transportation grants projected six years into the future, including Surface Transportation Program (STP) and Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) funding. Mr. Westendorf discussed upcoming grant opportunities through the Miami Valley Regional Planning Commission (MVRPC), including a potential project for Main Street from 8th Street to the bridge and resurfacing SR 73 from the Commerce Center to I-75. He also noted that the Warren County Transportation Improvement District is seeking funding for a study of potential roadway improvements. Staff recommends that the City skip this grant cycle due to other projects already planned.

Mr. Westendorf reported on a potential Ohio Department of Natural Resources Land and Water Conservation Fund grant for playground equipment at Dial Park. Funding of up to $450,000 may be available in conjunction with a $250,000 State Capital funding award. He noted that fundraising efforts and the remaining funding balance will also be considered.

Tim McQueen, the City's Construction Inspector gave a report following his first two months with the City. He noted the value of having a staff member regularly present in the field to work directly with contractors and communicate with the City Engineer and Public Works Department when issues arise. He said the position has improved field oversight and contractor accountability and helps ensure that issues are identified and addressed before work is accepted.

The last Fourth Friday of the season will be on September 25 and will celebrate Dolly Parton Day as declared by the Governor.

New stickers will be added to signage at public works where maintenance requests and words of thanks can be submitted directly to the parks team.

Mr. Westendorf requested the cancellation of the October 19 and December 21 Council meetings.

11. COUNCIL COMMENTS

Mr. Aldridge thanked those in attendance for coming to the meeting. He noted that while a great deal of information is presented during Council meetings, it represents only a fraction of the work City staff performs each day.

He expressed appreciation for the creative solutions staff develop and stated that they are excellent stewards of taxpayer dollars. Mr. Aldridge shared that he recently participated in a golf outing with a Public Works Director from another community and spoke highly of Franklin's staff, who were impressed by the work being accomplished by the City.

Mr. Aldridge stated that staff across all departments are impressive and thanked them for their dedication and service. He also publicly recognized Officer Figliola for his retirement and thanked him for 29 years of service to the community.

Mr. Roberts congratulated Officer Figliola on his retirement and thanked him for his years of service and protection to the community.

He echoed Mr. Aldridge's comments regarding City staff, noting that, having worked in Public Works throughout his career, he believes there are few communities in the state or country that perform at the level of Franklin's employees. He thanked all staff members for their hard work and dedication.

Mr. Ruppert commented on the exceptional work of the Public Works Department, noting that staff not only address issues but do so with a high level of quality and professionalism.

He stated that some residents have expressed concerns regarding communication from the City, but he disagrees with those sentiments. He cited the new parks maintenance request system, newsletters, utility bill inserts, and social media as examples of the City's efforts to keep residents informed. Mr. Ruppert questioned whether many communities communicate with residents more effectively than Franklin.

He also commented that adding positions such as the Construction Inspector is a positive step that will help manage the City's growing workload. He noted that many significant projects are underway and expressed appreciation for the work being done by staff.

Mrs. Fouts agreed with the previous comments and noted that the workload and number of projects underway have increased significantly since she first joined Council.

She commented on the amount of coordination required among staff, contractors, and projects, and stated that Mr. Westendorf's leadership and organization do not go unnoticed. Mrs. Fouts also expressed appreciation for the teamwork and camaraderie demonstrated by City staff.

Mrs. Fouts noted that she receives complaints regarding the number of metal plates currently located in roadways and suggested that sharing long-term road plans with residents may help provide additional context for ongoing projects. She remarked that residents often desire improvements but can become frustrated with the pace and impacts of construction. She added that the new roundabout project will be a valuable addition to the community and thanked staff for their continued work.

Vice Mayor Hall stated that he would compare Franklin's staff favorably with any community in Ohio. He noted that the City accomplishes a significant amount of work with a relatively small staff and that all departments, including Police, Fire, Public Works, and Administration, contribute to that success.

He commented that Franklin is a unique community and that, despite limited staffing levels, the City often accomplishes more than communities with larger populations and greater resources. He noted

that while the City has added some new employees, many staff members have remained with the organization and continue to provide exceptional service.
Vice Mayor Hall also expressed concerns regarding recurring electrical outages affecting residents and stated that he believes additional conversations with utility providers are needed to address the issue. He noted that some neighboring communities do not appear to experience the same frequency of outages and stated that reliable service is important for residents.
Vice Mayor Hall asked staff to follow up regarding concerns related to the former Swifty property, including the condition of a canopy structure.
He asked everyone to remember the Centers family during Mayor Centers' absence and encouraged the community to continue offering support. Vice Mayor Hall expressed appreciation for residents who attend meetings and ask questions directly, noting that open communication often helps resolve concerns and improve understanding.

Motion to cancel the regularly scheduled Council meetings on October 19 and December 21 made by Aldridge, Seconded by Fouts.
Voting Yea: Roberts, Ruppert, Vice Mayor Hall, Aldridge, Fouts
Motion passed.

12. EXECUTIVE SESSION

A. To consider the purchase of property for public purposes pursuant to ORC 121.22 (G)(2).
B. To consider the appointment, employment, and compensation of a public employee or official pursuant to ORC 121.22 (G)(1).

Motion made by Ruppert, Seconded by Fouts.
Voting Yea: ROBERTS, Ruppert, Vice Mayor Hall, Aldridge, Fouts
Motion passed. Council entered into Executive Session at 7:27pm.

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

13. NEW BUSINESS

A. RESOLUTION 2026-62 AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO EXECUTE A PURCHASE AND SALE AGREEMENT AND OTHER DOCUMENTS FOR THE CITY OF FRANKLIN'S PURCHASE OF CERTAIN REAL PROPERTY IDENTIFIED AS WARREN COUNTY AUDITOR'S PARCEL ID NUMBER 0431101004

To allow the City Manager to execute a purchase and sale agreement for the City's purchase of 521 S. River Street for $615,000. The purchase of this real property described in this Resolution is expected to be in the best interests of the general welfare of City of Franklin residents by furthering economic development, growth, and stability in the City's downtown area.

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

B. RESOLUTION 2026-63 AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO EXECUTE A PURCHASE AND SALE AGREEMENT AND OTHER DOCUMENTS FOR THE CITY OF FRANKLIN'S PURCHASE OF CERTAIN REAL PROPERTY IDENTIFIED AS WARREN COUNTY AUDITOR'S PARCEL ID NUMBER 0431101004

To allow the City Manager to execute a purchase and sale agreement for the City's purchase of 14 East Fourth Street for an amount not to exceed $125,000. The purchase of this real property described in this Resolution is expected to be in the best interests of the general welfare of City of Franklin residents by furthering economic development, growth, and stability in the City's downtown area.

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

14. ADJOURNMENT
Motion made by Aldridge, Seconded by Ruppert.
Voting Yea: Roberts Ruppert, Vice Mayor Hall, Aldridge, Fouts
Motion passed. Council adjourned at 9:26pm.

Todd Hall, Acting Mayor

Khristi Dunn, Clerk of Council