

**City of Franklin Common Council
Regular Meeting Minutes
January 22, 2025**

The regular meeting of the Common Council of the City of Franklin, Indiana was called to order at 6:00 p.m. at City Hall, 70 E. Monroe Street, with Mayor Steve Barnett presiding. Council members Kenneth Austin, Todd Shuck, Anne McGuinness, Jennifer Price, Josh Prine, and Shawn Taylor answered roll call. Clerk-Treasurer Jan Jones and City Attorney Lynnette Gray were also present. Irene Nalley was absent. Franklin Mayor's Youth Leadership Council Members Marni Moore and Willa Thomas were also in attendance.

Mayor Barnett opened the meeting and asked the Clerk-Treasurer to call the roll.

Bryan Ries offered an invocation, & led the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance.

Announcements & Public Comments

There were no Announcements or Public Comments

Consent Agenda

Mayor Barnett presented the consent agenda for approval.

- Approval of the January 6, 2025 Common Council Minutes

Council President Austin made a motion to approve the consent agenda as presented, seconded by Councilor Taylor. A voice vote was taken with all members stating aye. The motion carried.

Old Business

Council President Austin motioned to present Old Business by title only, seconded by Councilor Price. A voice vote was taken with all members stating aye. The motion carried.

Approval of Ordinance 2024-12: Amending General Provisions, Building Sewers & Connections, and Rates & Charges Related to the Sewer Service System (Public Hearing and Official Action) - Senior Planner Joanna Tennell stated there have been internal meetings to address residents' concerns brought before the City. Ms. Tennell defined terms and explained the price structure used in the ordinance (available on the online agenda). Similar metered neighborhoods were used to calculate unmetered rates affecting 144 total unmetered users in the City. Residents still have the option to install an approved meter and have a precise reading on their usage. Mayor Barnett opened up the Public Hearing. Resident Georganna Haltom thanked everyone for taking on this large project and listening to concerns. She stated her current usage is 3,000 gallons. Ms. Haltom requested that the City provide the meters so they would be consistent throughout the City. Mayor Barnett noted that the City doesn't purchase any water meters. These are managed by Indiana American Water. Mayor Barnett stated we have a \$35 million sewer plant in the works. Our sewer system has not been upgraded since the 1990s and parts are structurally unsound. Ms. Haltom agreed that this is a need. Ms. Haltom felt asking residents to pay for their meters is unfair based on its cost, especially for a single-person home. City Attorney

Lynn Gray stated the City will not be selling water meters; the meters purchased by the residents must be compatible for the City to access. Ms. Haltom thanked the Board for listening. Mayor Barnett closed the Public Hearing. Councilor Taylor motioned to approve the amendment of General Provisions, Building Sewers & Connections, and Rates & Charges Related to the Sewer Service System, seconded by Councilor Shuck. A voice vote was taken with all members stating aye. The motion carried.

Approval of Ordinance 24-11 Repealing Ordinance 15-10 Employee Handbook - Clerk-Treasurer Jan Jones read the final amendments to the Employee Handbook. This was introduced on 12/2/24, had the Public hearing on 12/16/24, and was tabled until tonight. Mayor Barnett said he had been contacted by a news source asking why we [the City] were taking away comp time/vacation time and clarified that these are not being taken away. Mayor Barnett reviewed firefighters' annual base salary in 2017 was \$51,000.00; in 2025, it is \$72,000.00, a 41.18% increase or 5.15% per year. That salary, plus the City-paid health insurance of \$22,914.00, totals \$94,914.00. The fire budget in 2017 was \$3,962,000.00; in 2025, it is \$5,883,000.00. In addition, Mayor Barnett read a list of new vehicles and updated resources the Fire Department has received since 2017. Of the City of Franklin's General Fund, totaling \$22,382,000.00, Public Safety receives 68.91%. Mayor Barnett stated that public safety is our number one concern, and while it has been suggested that we are neglecting it, that is not the case. Mayor Barnett wanted to state publicly that we [the City] appreciate our firefighters and public safety employees. City Attorney Lynn Gray reviewed the timeline leading to this updated Employee Handbook, listed non-salary benefits, and explained why changes were made. Ms. Gray stated that the City's liability is \$666,052.95, which the City owes to all employees eligible to be paid out for their accrued comp/benefit time. Of the total, \$567,111.16 is owed to the Fire Department, which is 85%. This is problematic because as benefit time is earned at an employee's paid rate in one year, it is being paid out at a higher rate in future years. At the end of 2025, all earned benefits will be paid in full to our firefighters [and other eligible employees]. Moving forward, they can bank 72 hours; they will also receive 72 hours, totaling 144 hours each year thereafter. This will now match our Police Department. Ms. Gray outlined the updated Short-term Disability Policy. Our financial planner, Jeff Peters, informed Ms. Gray that this unfunded liability must be reported and disclosed when the City applies for bonds, grants, etc. Ms. Gray stated a donation bank of days has been mentioned. Our HR firm is developing this with us, and it may be considered going into 2026. Ms. Gray shared statistics on employee short-term disability claims and thanked the Clerk Treasurer's Office for compiling those. Ms. Gray also thanked Councilor Shuck for his assistance with the short-term disability information. Councilor Shuck presented information on our short-term disability and how the upcoming payout can be managed. He explained that the City has been acting as a bank, averaging 5% interest. Now, employees can invest that money in a bank of their choice, which can serve as a fund for potential disability situations. Councilor Shuck presented several investment scenarios showing the growth difference. Council President Austin thanked Council Shuck and stated that the City has done its due diligence. Council President Austin motioned to approve Ordinance 24-11 as amended, seconded by Councilor McGuinness. A roll call vote was taken with each member stating aye. The motion carried.

Approval of Budgetary Ordinance 24-22 Amending Budgetary Ordinance 24-20 Salary Ordinance - Clerk-Treasurer Jan Jones stated that approval of the new Employee Handbook, reflects changes in Budgetary Ordinance 24-22 that now need approval. Mayor Barnett said this was introduced on 12/2/24, tabled on 12/16/24, and tonight is the Public Hearing and approval. Mayor Barnett opened the Public Hearing. There were no public comments. Mayor Barnett closed the Public Hearing. Councilor McGuinness motioned to approve Budgetary Ordinance 24-22, seconded by Councilor Taylor. A voice vote was taken with all members stating aye. The motion carried.

New Business

Council President Austin motioned to present New Business by title only, seconded by Councilor Taylor. A voice vote was taken with all members stating aye. The motion carried.

Introduction of Ordinance 2025-01: Rezoning to be known as FCSC Earlywood Rezoning – Senior Planner Joanna Tennell informed this is a request to rezone property at 500 Earlywood Drive, where the Earlywood Education Facility has operated for 50 years. FCSC acquired this property with plans to demolish the existing structure and build a new preschool facility. The area is zoned Industrial General, but the facility operated under Legal Non-Conforming Use. However, with current zoning, any new buildings must meet those zoning standards. For the school to proceed, this area would need to be rezoned Institutional. This request was heard at the 12/17/24 Plan Commission Meeting and received unanimous approval. This will be introduced tonight, and the public hearing will be on 2/3/25. A representative from FCSC will be present to answer questions at that meeting.

Request approval of encumbrances carried over to 2025 - Clerk-Treasurer Jan Jones explained the listed encumbrances (available on the online agenda). Council President Austin motioned to approve encumbrances carried over to 2025, seconded by Councilor Shuck. A voice vote was taken with all members stating aye. The motion carried.

Request to declare stale dated checks canceled - Clerk-Treasurer Jan Jones explained that all checks outstanding and unpaid for a period of two years as of Dec. 31st of each year will be declared canceled. Referring to the list (available on the online agenda) the total is \$8,745.84. Councilor Price motioned to approve as presented, seconded by Councilor Taylor. A voice vote was taken with all members stating aye. The motion carried.

Introduction of Budgetary Ordinance 25-01 Authorizing an Additional Appropriation for Non-Tax Supported Funds – Mayor Barnett explained these funds are donations, grants, or other gifted money received for use by the various departments.

Introduction of Budgetary Ordinance 25-02 Additional Appropriation into Board of Works, Cemetery, and Fire Capital Line Items— Mayor Barnett referred to the Remaining 2024 Balances spreadsheet (available on the online agenda) and explained projects with remaining balances. This request is to put that money into the 400 Series [of the three departments], as we have previously.

Other Business

2024 Completed Projects and Anticipated Projects for 2025 - Mayor Barnett presented the list of completed 2024 projects and upcoming 2025 projects (available in online agenda). Mayor Barnett elaborated on several of the upcoming projects, outlined grants and financial plans for them, and future collaborations with the County and State.

Council Comments

Council President Ken Austin gave kudos to the Street and Parks Departments for all their efforts during the snow.

Councilor Shawn Taylor thanked everyone for their hard work and for providing the information necessary to make the decisions tonight. They are not made lightly.

Councilor Todd Shuck offered to answer any questions related to the short-term disability presentation and informed City employees that they could receive free advice from financial advisors in Franklin.

Councilor Jennifer Price thanked all City employees for the great job they do and echoed Councilor Taylor and Councilor Shuck's comments.

Franklin Mayor's Youth Leadership Council President Marni Moore said they had a great time hosting the Kuji delegation. Their project to install lights at the pickleball court should be completed in May, and they're pursuing small projects.

Adjournment

As there was no further business to come before the Common Council, a motion and a second were made to adjourn at 7:02 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jan Jones, Clerk-Treasurer
Enrolled: 01/27/25

Steve Barnett, Mayor

Attest:

Jan Jones, Clerk-Treasurer