



## **City Council Meeting Minutes Monday, August 2, 2021 - 6:00 p.m. Council Chambers, City Hall**

**Council in attendance:** Interim Mayor Olivia Zink, Councilor Jo Brown, Councilor Scott Clarenbach, Councilor Bob Desrochers, Councilor Jay Chandler, Councilor Paul Trudel (by phone), Councilor Karen Testerman (arrived at 6:09 p.m.), Councilor Ted Starkweather.

Absent: Councilor April Bunker.

**Others in attendance:** City Manager Judie Milner, City Department Heads, and members of the public.

Mayor Zink called the meeting to order in Council Chambers at 6:00 p.m.

Salute to the Flag was led by Councilor Brown.

Councilor Desrochers honored recently deceased Veteran Joseph St. Jacques who served in the U.S. Army from 1972-1976 and did a tour in Vietnam. A moment of silence commenced in his honor.

### **Public Hearings**

#### **Veterans' Tax Credits**

The public hearing opened at 6:02 p.m.

Ward 3 resident Leigh Webb addressed the Council and addressed comments made at a previous City Council Meeting by Representative Dave Testerman and Councilor Karen Testerman that they personally would be in support of doing away with the Veterans Tax Credit. Webb stated that per state RSA, a Veterans tax credit can be anywhere from \$50.-\$750. He suggested that Veterans needing financial assistance could apply and based on their financial situation could get possibly get more of a tax credit. Those who are more financially able, would get less or a cap amount. Those who don't apply at all because they don't wish to receive a tax credit then they can do that if they wish. Webb asked if this could be considered as part of the larger discussion among the Council this evening.

There were no further comments.

The public hearing on Veterans' Tax Credits closed at 6:07 p.m.

**Legislative Update**

None

**Comments from the public**

Ward 2 resident Michael George asked the Council when the roads will get repaired. He stated the roads in Franklin are very bad. He also provided the locations of specific potholes in the roads. City Manager Milner replied that she would inform the MSD road crew tomorrow to repair the pothole right away.

Ward 1 resident George Dzujna thanked Councilor Chandler and Councilor Brown for putting up the project information board by the amphitheater at the Whitewater Park. Many people are finding it helpful. Dzujna suggested that the City put up project boards for all City projects to help alleviate misinformation on social media.

Drug Task Force Coordinator Kandyce Tucker and Police Chief David Goldstein provided information on the upcoming National Night Out Event tomorrow evening at Odell Park. Kandyce shared the planned activities and Chief Goldstein explained the history of where and when this event began and that it sends the message of standing up against crime by way of the community coming out and coming together for an evening of fun activities. Nationally, 38 million people are expected to participate.

Ward two resident Dave Testerman stated that he would like the City to get rid of the Veterans Tax Credits. He stated that he doesn't need to be paid to be a Veteran and especially where the City is struggling financially.

Ward 1 resident and Veteran Larry Hennessy shared with the Council that he is not in the position to forgo the Veterans Tax Credit and that he relies on this credit which helps him pay his mortgage or buy food. He also stated that some communities allow a \$2,500 in tax credits for fully disabled Veterans. He further added that an increase in the tax credit should be considered for those in need especially the Veterans returning from Afghanistan.

**City Council Acknowledgements**

None.

**Mayor's Update**

None.

Interim Mayor Zink moved Agenda Item III up to replace Agenda item I.

**Agenda Item III.**

**Motion – Councilor Desrochers moved that the Franklin City Council increase the Veterans Tax Credit from \$300 go \$400 for fiscal year 2022. Seconded by Councilor Clarenbach.**

The Council shared stories of their personal experiences of themselves and their families who served the United States with great honor. Many came home from various wars with diseases that the government shamefully wouldn't even recognize and would fight to deny Veterans help that they rightfully deserved.

Councilor Brown suggested that the Legislative Committee meet and discuss a sort of sliding scale. She also stated that the Council needs to consider the City's struggling budget and hopes to find a compromise.

Councilor Chandler addressed the public who spoke earlier tonight and stated that there was reference made to the Council that many of those on the Council were not Veterans. Chandler and other members of the Council replied with their stories but most importantly that the reference was not accurate. At least half of the Council served their County directly and understand what it means. He is in support of Councilor Brown's suggestion to meet and discuss this important subject further.

**Motion – Councilor Brown moved to amend the motion to allow the Legislative Committee to look at the Veterans Tax Credit with an eye for ensuring that the Veterans most in need are not left without and look at a sliding scale based on income. Seconded by Councilor Starkweather.**

Councilor Clarenbach supports looking at a financial balance for the City and based on level of disability, Clarenbach suggested the Legislative Committee review this and confirm they can legally make any changes to the state statute on disabled Veterans tax credits.

Councilor Brown added that the Federal Government already provides compensation for disabled Veterans. She is in support of the Legislative Committee reviewing the tax credits for all of Franklin's Veterans considering their financial need and not just for the disabled Veterans.

Councilor Desrochers expressed frustration and no longer wants to hear that the City doesn't have the money.

Roll call to the amended motion to send to Legislative Committee:

Councilor Chandler	<u>Yes</u>	Councilor Zink	<u>Yes</u>	Councilor Bunker	<u>Absent</u>
Councilor Desrochers	<u>No</u>	Councilor Brown	<u>Yes</u>	Councilor Trudel	<u>Yes</u>
Councilor Starkweather	<u>No</u>	Councilor Clarenbach	<u>Yes</u>	Councilor Testerman	<u>Yes</u>

**Motion PASSED.**

Roll Call on the original Motion:

Councilor Chandler	<u>No</u>	Councilor Zink	<u>Yes</u>	Councilor Bunker	<u>Absent</u>
Councilor Desrochers	<u>Yes</u>	Councilor Brown	<u>No</u>	Councilor Trudel	<u>No</u>
Councilor Starkweather	<u>No</u>	Councilor Clarenbach	<u>No</u>	Councilor Testerman	<u>No</u>

**Original Motion FAILED.**

**Motion – Councilor Brown moved that the Legislative Committee look at what can be done with the Veterans Tax Credit with regard to a sliding scale and consider the impact on disabled Veterans to determine what would be a fair and appropriate tax credit for our Veterans. Seconded by Councilor Trudel.**

Councilor Chandler stated that he wants a time limit on making these decisions.

Councilor Trudel is in support of including this along with several additional items already on the agenda for the next Legislative Committee meeting.

**Motion – Councilor Trudel amended the motion to be discussed by the Legislative Committee and that a decision be brought back to the Council no later than October. Seconded by Councilor Brown.**

Councilor Testerman requested that they have list of City priorities so the Council can review that list when making decisions. She also asked that the School look at their budget and consider spending some of their money on shared City spaces that they utilize.

Councilor Trudel stated that due to COVID, the City lost valuable time in making some of these decisions that come from the various committees. It is time to get the committees back together so that they can provide the City Manager with direction.

There was no further discussion.

Roll call on the amended motion:

Councilor Chandler	<u>Yes</u>	Councilor Zink	<u>Yes</u>	Councilor Bunker	<u>Absent</u>
Councilor Desrochers	<u>Yes</u>	Councilor Brown	<u>Yes</u>	Councilor Trudel	<u>Yes</u>
Councilor Starkweather	<u>Yes</u>	Councilor Clarenbach	<u>Yes</u>	Councilor Testerman	<u>Yes</u>

**All in favor. Motion PASSED.**

Roll call on the original motion:

Councilor Chandler	<u>Yes</u>	Councilor Zink	<u>Yes</u>	Councilor Bunker	<u>Absent</u>
Councilor Desrochers	<u>Yes</u>	Councilor Brown	<u>Yes</u>	Councilor Trudel	<u>Yes</u>
Councilor Starkweather	<u>Yes</u>	Councilor Clarenbach	<u>Yes</u>	Councilor Testerman	<u>Yes</u>

**All in favor. Motion PASSED.**

**Councilor Trudel exited on the phone from the Council Meeting.**

**Agenda Item I.**

Council to consider approval of City Council meeting minutes.

**Motion – Councilor Brown moved that the Franklin City Council approve minutes of the June 24, 2021 City Council Special Meeting, the minutes of the July 6, 2021 City Council Special Meeting, and the minutes of the July 12, 2021 City Council Meeting. Seconded by Councilor Desrochers.**

Councilor Starkweather abstained from his vote on approving the minutes of the July 12, 2021 City Council Meeting because he was not present at that meeting.

There was no further discussion.

**6 in favor. 1 abstention. Motion PASSED.**

**Agenda Item II.**

School Board Update

Superintendent Dan LeGallo and School Board Chair Tim Dow were not able to attend tonight due another important meeting.

City Manager Milner provided a brief School update for the Council. Milner stated that the School Board is meeting on August 23<sup>rd</sup> to discuss their plans and options relating to the COVID mandates for opening the classrooms this fall.

**Agenda Item IV.**

Council to consider Property Tax Deed

**Motion – Councilor Testerman moved that the Franklin City Council accept the tax deeds on the following parcels: Map/Lot: 107/001/000 (land only), Map/Lot: 078/006/006 (Building only), and Map/Lot: 096/061/006 (Building only). Seconded by Councilor Brown.**

City Manager Milner stated that there isn't a clear reason why taxes have not been paid on these properties. The state has been offering funding to help homeowners over the past year so there have been other options available to assist however it is unfortunate these property owners likely did not apply for the assistance.

Councilor Desrochers stated that one of these properties is a run-down trailer and he doesn't

wish the City to take properties like these and make it the City's issue. City Manager Milner replied that the City works with the trailer park owner since they also would like to recoup their lot rent. Miler recommends that the City proceed with the taking the property then working with the land owner as it sends a positive message to the community by assuring removal of any abandoned deteriorating trailers.

There was no further discussion.

**All in favor. Motion PASSED.**

**Motion – Councilor Brown moved that the Franklin City Council deny the Tax Deed on the following parcel: Map/Lot: 098/051/0EX (Land & Building). Seconded by Councilor Testerman.**

Councilor Desrochers asked what recourse the City has at recouping the back taxes if they are not paid. He suggested a building lien or a legal document in place.

Milner replied that this can come back again as tax deed property and the City can take it the following year if it is not paid. The denial is good for only one year.

There was no further discussion.

**All in favor. Motion PASSED.**

#### **Agenda Item V.**

Council to consider rescheduling the September 6<sup>th</sup> City Council Meeting falling on the Labor Day holiday.

**Motion – Councilor Desrochers moved that the Franklin City Council move the September 6, 2021 City Council to Tuesday, September 7, 2021. Seconded by Councilor Chandler.**

Members of the Council are not available on this day and would like to suggest another date.

**Vote taken. Motion FAILED.**

**Motion – Councilor Testerman moved that the Franklin City Council move the City Council meeting from September 6, 2021 to September 13, 2021. Seconded by Councilor Clarenbach.**

**All in favor. Motion PASSED.**

**Agenda Item VI.**

Council to consider approval of SQF LLC Installation of 5 utility poles in the right of way.

**Motion – Councilor Desrochers moved that the Franklin City Council approve the installation of 5 utility poles in the public right of way by SQF LLC & US Cellular at the following locations:**

**119 Central Street**

**59 West Bow Street**

**185 Sanborn Street**

**220 South Main Street**

**21 Edwards Street**

**Seconded by Councilor Chandler**

Councilor Starkweather requested that these installations be made away from the edge of the sidewalk so not to impede winter snow plowing and damaging City equipment.

Residents within a certain radius have been notified.

Councilor Desrochers expressed concern of certain areas having underground wires and road cuts. He stated that this will cause more road bumps and potholes. Planning and Zoning Director Seth Creighton replied that there are regulations that require new development to install underground utilities in certain areas unless a waiver was submitted. A waiver was not submitted in case.

**All in favor. Motion PASSED.**

**Agenda Item VII.**

**Other Business**

**1. Council Appointments**

**a) Motion – Councilor Brown moved that the Franklin City Council appoint Seth Creighton as the City’s primary Representative to the LRPC TAC Committee. Term of Service is two years to January 2023.**

**b) Motion – Councilor Brown moved that the Franklin City Council re-appoint Justin Hanscom as the City’s Deputy Representative to the LRPC TAC Committee. Term of Service is two years to January 2023.**

**Seconded by Councilor Testerman.**

There was no discussion.

**All in favor. Motion PASSED.**

2. Committee Reports - none

3. City Manager's Update

- a) Contingent Grant Line Activity – no activity for the month
- b) Trust fund for school funding – \$146.04
- c) Welcome – Seth Creighton, Planning & Zoning Director
- d) National Night Out – 8/3 5-7pm Odell Park
- e) Filing Period – 8/18 – 8/27/21
- f) PPP Private Public Partnership connections & collaboration – Thank you Jule Finley for the art in downtown storefronts.
- g) Thank you Jason Grevior & John Hastings for seeing a need and filing it regarding American Flags on Central Street. They have volunteers to purchase flags and put them out along Central Street.
- h) Congratulations 2021 Cappie Winners – Brothers Donuts & FSB
- i) Next LEAN Workshop Meeting will be on August 23<sup>rd</sup>. The Council should continue the ARPA Funds discussions. Milner submitted the application for the ARPA funds on July 29<sup>th</sup>.
- j) Media Connections – WMUR, Laconia Daily Sun, Union Leader, NH Business Review, NH Public Radio, US News, and Andover Beacon regarding the Whitewater Park. Outdoor magazine has featured an article about our Water park as well.
- k) Mill City Park Update – water construction is on hold due to all the rainfall and Lake Winnepesaukee is too high and drains at a slow rate. Thank you Councilors Brown and Chandler for putting the "Project Board Sign". Mowing next to Kayak Man will be done by Mill City Park.
- l) Results on the Hotel feasibility Study from the Technical Assistance Grant is expected by mid-September.
- m) City Clerk Katie Gargano has given her resignation. City Manager Milner and the City Council congratulated her on her new job and applauded her for all her hard work over the years.
- n) City Manager Milner will be on Vacation from 8/9-8/13, Director Gaudette point person
- o) Milner shared a spreadsheet with the Council of the Mayor Committee meeting meetings split out during the year so there are no more than two extra meetings per month.
- p) The Fife farm/lease did not plant on the areas of the potential solar locations this year. Councilor Desrochers requested information on the termination of the solar lease. Milner stated that the Council agreed to send the leases to City Attorney Paul Fitzgerald to see if there is way to legally terminate the lease. Milner stated that this should be next in the forefront for



the City Attorney to focus on. Desrochers stated that the attorney should have an answer for the City by the September 13<sup>th</sup> meeting. He cannot understand how the City can't get out of the lease since they are not doing a thing to move this project forward. The City has waited long enough.

**4. Late Items.**

Council to consider the purchase of one used 2013 Model 7900 International Dump Truck with attachments.

City Manager stated that Municipal Services Director Brian Sullivan just requested this new urgent need. She explained the City's needs and fiscal impact.

City Mechanic Jeff Lutz answered questions from the Council regarding the current conditions of the City's MSD trucks.

**The Council's gave consensus to move forward with the recommendation to purchase this dump truck and a Resolution with the appropriations will be forthcoming in September for a public hearing and a vote in October.**

Councilor Clarenbach drafted a letter for the Special Committee regarding redistricting. Councilor Chandler thanked Councilor Clarenbach for drafting the letter. The Council discussed the letter and offered minor wordsmithing suggestion. There was further discussion on who the letter should come from.

The Council agreed to have City Clerk Gargano to sign the letter and to include the added wording stating the City Council concurred.

**Motion to adjourn was made by Councilor Clarenbach and seconded by Councilor Starkweather. All in favor. Motion PASSED.**

**The meeting adjourned at 7:45 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,

Audrey Lanzillo