



City Council Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, September 24, 2019, 6:00 p.m.
Bessie Rowell Community Center

Call to order

Councilor Brown called the meeting to order at 6:07 p.m.

City Council in attendance:

Councilor Jo Brown, Councilor George Dzujna, Councilor Kathy Rago, Councilor Karen Testerman, Councilor Starkweather, Councilor Paul Trudel, Councilor Desrochers

Others in attendance:

City Manager Judie Milner

Absent

Councilor Ribas, Councilor Clarenbach

The Education topic is first normally but will be reviewed last due to the extent of the topic.

Recreation

Councilor Dzujna informed the group that there have been a couple of new organizations signing up to add their events to the City Calendar, one of which is a local church. As far as tracking attendance at events, he doesn't have numbers but groups have said the new added exposure has been very good. Dzujna will have to ask the organization leaders to keep track of attendance at their events and then George can let the group know at a future LEAN workshop. He did speak with Jim Jones regarding the Music on the Hill event over the weekend and the turnout wasn't as great as hoped. This was likely due to other community events that were happening on the same evening.

Councilor Brown asked City Manager Milner if she had an update on the CDFA tax credits and Milner stated that Watts is in the process of getting final approvals to purchase \$100K in tax credits and it appears that another vendor is going to purchase a large percentage of the remaining credits leaving room for a few smaller vendors to be able to participate in this round. The City is going to try to participate in another round of tax credits in the March 2020 timeframe. Milner explained the different ways a company can apply the tax credits that works best for them and further explained how the tax credit works in this case. She stated that 75% of what would have gone to the state fund would come to a project here in Franklin, which is currently the Whitewater feature.

Milner asked the group to let her know when there are any more businesses that would like to take advantage of this tax credit.

Business

Councilor Dzujna attended the Choose Franklin Meeting and spoke to the board members about the hopes of changing to a Chamber of Commerce however the direction of the board wasn't in support. He informed them that this is the direction of the City and offered them a chance to be a part of this inevitable change. The reservations of the Choose Franklin Board members were based on the unknowns of the responsibilities, commitment level, and a change to their mission statement.

Milner shared other thoughts on moving this idea forward. She was surprised to learn that Choose Franklin wasn't focused on promoting businesses in Franklin in the first place. The group asked what their current mission statement means and they were not sure however Dzujna shared that there were four categories or subcommittees that would handle certain areas in the City. This was originally how Community Day was organized.

Milner met with the Executive Group of the Downtown Committee and discussed the pros and cons of pushing this forward. The consensus of this group was that this should be happening organically among the businesses here in Franklin and that it is too early to push them to do this. Milner suggests that this come off the table for now but hold on to it so it can be discussed again in the future. Dzujna mentioned there are two other volunteers to help with a Chamber that have a strong background in helping move this forward if and when the time comes.

There was further discussion from the Council on ideas of what a Chamber of Commerce would do for Franklin. Councilor Trudel asked if Choose Franklin basically organizes and supports community events more or less. The group agreed that yes, this is more in line with what their mission statement says. Brown offered further explanation as to why Choose Franklin can't take this on stating that the level of commitment could be daunting since the Choose Franklin Board is made up of people who already have full time jobs. Trudel suggested that the title Choose Franklin is and will be more and more misleading. The group agreed with him. Councilor Testerman found the Choose Franklin Mission Statement on-line and read it to the group.

Milner stated that this task will be pushed out approximately six months. Testerman shared the different mixes of businesses in Concord vs. Manchester and asked the group what could be done to attract the right businesses and identify what those are. Brown suggested high quality restaurants and possibly a spinoff of Vulgar. Milner stated that successful communities sell retail of the main thing that they are about so for Franklin, that would be a canoe shop and a bike shop. Councilor Desrochers added that anything that has to do with outdoors basically would be great.

Safety

Councilor Testerman updated the group on the upcoming Police Committee Meeting on Monday at 6 p.m. and one of the topics will be discussing how the community can get involved by keeping a watchful eye and reporting on what they see happening in their City.

Brown shared that our comfort dog Miller is doing an amazing job in Franklin. He has been visiting the schools, Mountain Ridge, and going on emergency calls. Brown added that the Middle School is in need of Miller a bit more due to the issues that are happening there. She also shared information that there is a video on the Police Website of Miller at a fundraiser in Alton chasing a basketball during a visit from the Harlem Wizards. City Manager Milner added that the teenagers would not have opened up the way they did had it not been for the comfort dog Miller. Testerman stated that the mental health issues are state-wide and Brown shared yet another incident where Miller was at the hospital with a young person when an adult came in with the same kind of issues as the child and Miller was there to comfort the adult as well. They all agreed that Miller is worth his weight in gold.

Milner informed the group that Chief Goldstein was on Chronical the other morning talking about the serious problems that First Responders face and their alarming rate of suicide.

Resources

Councilor Starkweather gave a brief update on the Franklin for a Lifetime activities then Milner added some details on the efforts of the Marketing Group.

Milner stated that the Marketing Group is made up of millennials who have businesses in our downtown. The Marketing Group is working on a trademark/symbol for Downtown, the Franklin Falls reboot, and signage. They are focusing on old wood and possibly steel. Items that represent what Franklin used to be. Marty Parichand's sign is going up soon so the group can take a look and get an idea of the types of signage the Marketing Group would like to see.

Vulgar Brewery is planning to open over Columbus Day weekend with a soft opening on that Friday before Columbus Day.

Dzujna mentioned that there is a rumor going around regarding which buildings downtown are getting fixed up and how that is decided. Milner replied that the buildings getting fixed are non-profits who took advantage of the tax credits and grants that were available to them.

Brown asked Milner for an update on the Developing the Arts Focus Group. This Focus Group is made up the Opera House Executive Director, Jule Finley, C.J. Willingham, Niel Cannon, Todd Workman, City Manager Milner, and a young woman who works for Tilton City Hall and is majoring ART in college.

Milner continued to explain that PCL was sending in an application for a Technical Assistance Grant to look at the feasibility of the ARTS block. The City was also sending in a Technical

Assistance Grant for the Opportunity Zone project. The Opportunity Zone Grant was more important at the time so PCL backed their grant application out. The next steps are to pull together the Arts Focus Group again and have a broader discussion on different locations for the ART Block. Niel Cannon liked the Episcopal Church building that used to be the old food pantry. Activities for October were updated.

Milner shared that the CAP Office is not going for another grant or redesign their old building so they are looking into leasing at another location and will be moving from City Hall soon. The City can't take that old building down at this time as MSD is in critical need of some new equipment. CAP did say that there might be some funds to take their old building down or give the City some money to take it down for them. Milner explained that they lost their original grant because they put their project out for bid first and then the cost for building materials jumped 40%.

Brown asked Milner the status of funding strategy for Stanley Mill. Milner replied that she met with the Environmental Attorney, Sherry Young, and she sent some language to DES to then send to Stanley which they did. The City is waiting for a response from Stanley and still looking for people who worked for them. There will be a small up-front fee from Sherry and a contingency at the end when she wins. The ultimate goal is to take the building down. Novis completed phase one but will need to do another one because the first one will be outside of six months. There are contaminants under the back half of the mill and the back piece of the armory.

Franklin Pride

The Social Media Buster is needed every day. Testerman recommended posting the Pod Casts with Councilor Kathy Rago and City Manager Milner. They are very positive and should be posted to the City Website and other social media platforms. Brown suggested adding activities to the roadmap regarding the publishing of podcasts in different areas and even solicit for subjects that the City should be talking about.

Milner reported the results of the survey that was posted recently with regards to social media and televising the City Council Meetings. Out of 98 responses, 68% said they would watch a video stream of the Council meetings. Of those, they were split between elderly residents and young parents. The winning platform for social media was Facebook, which was chosen by 65%.

Councilor Trudel asked if recording the City Council meeting then placing it on the website would be a less expensive option than a live stream. Rago stated that it's likely expensive to do a live streaming and would probably be fine if the meeting was recorded and then posted to the City website. Dzujna asked if it would be expensive to record the meetings. Brown replied that Dan Darling recorded an event for her and it was only \$150.00 so it wasn't terribly expensive. Dzujna said that Dan used to record the Choose Franklin meetings. Milner stated that she is going to have Frank work on these ideas and check with Dan. Milner will bring this to the Council to approve the best option. Testerman suggested Facebook live but Trudel said many people don't want to sign up for Facebook. Comments would need to be restricted.

Talent

Milner shared that the department heads are going to be coming to a Special City Council meeting on a monthly basis. The departments are at different stages of training with their teams. People who report directly to Milner will meet with her separately to review their training plan. The training schedules might be pulled together for the December meeting. Brown suggested moving the training activities to December and add establishing the monthly meetings. Milner stated that the new employee skills matrix should be ready by the end of this year and employees can expect to begin seeing them used during their review process starting in the spring.

Value

The group needs to seek guidance from Richard Ellert to ask for his assistance with the Root Cause Analysis piece. Brown moved the October tasks to November and Milner is reaching out to Ellert to ask for the next date in October that he can attend a meeting with the City. The department heads are very excited to participate in the monthly meetings.

These department monthly meetings will be a Special City Council Meeting workshop like this but be focused on the department only. Milner reviewed dates with the group for this Special City Council Meeting, the first one will focus on the Police Department.

The group discussed the need for equipment and trucks for the Municipal Department and Brown asked if Franklin privatized it, could we look at recycling again? Milner responded that it is possible but it can be expensive. She will continue to look at different options.

Education

Brown, Testerman, and Rago thought the School Liaison meeting went well. They discussed how being considerate of each other was extremely important. Consolidation and collaboration were a large part of the meeting as well. Brown informed the Liaison committee that by combining forces, money could possibly be moved around in order to hire back a teacher. The entire budget would be looked at. Consolidating the School's IT with the City's was discussed at that meeting however it was mentioned that the school's IT employee will be leaving due to the amount of work required of her. Brown stated that this is also a great reason to consolidate and combine teams so the workload can be shared as well. Brown stated that even the school board members seemed to be agreeable that it was a good meeting. Unfortunately, after Brown left the School Board Meeting, a vote was taken and consolidation of Finance and IT for the City and School was voted down. She said that a school board member, who wants to remain anonymous, said that it was presented to the school board that a letter was sent from City Manager Milner who mandated that the City will be taking over the Financials and the

School will be taking over IT. Their legal counsel supported that it was against the law to do this so they took a vote and seven to two voted against the consolidation effort.

City Manager Milner responded to this informing tonight's attendees that she did not send a letter but followed the activities in the roadmap of sending an email to Superintendent LeGallo asking if he would allow Business Administrator Braman and City Finance Director Lossani to start having meetings to begin to looking at the feasibility of Finance and IT consolidations. Milner stated that her email was brought to the School Board meeting that night and was voted on.

Dzujna stated that he spoke with Scott Burns and Burns mentioned that a Feasibility Study was done before the City asked for it and found out that it wouldn't work and so that was why the vote was decided on the way it was. Burns also shared that IT has a lot of confidential information which is too much of a security risk to allow the City to possibly have access to it.

Testerman stated that when she observed over at the Franklin Police Dispatch, she had to sign of confidentiality agreements.

Brown reviewed an overview of upcoming meetings. The next School Liaison Meeting is scheduled for October 11th and then the Joint Finance Committee on October 23rd. She also shared with the Council that School Board member Delaney Carrier reached out to her. He had been at that School Board Meeting when they voted. He informed Brown that there are school board members that just do not want to consolidate. She said that she is meeting with Delany on Thursday at her shop and wants to just listen to what he wants to share.

Desrochers stated that the collaboration conversations have been happening for years and nothing has changed. Brown stated that Mayor Giunta is equally frustrated and wants to keep trying.

Public attendee Janet Desrochers asked if the City records audio of all the meetings they have with the school and that she has even looked for school board meeting minutes at times and is unable to find recent minutes. Rago suggested that all meetings, including meeting held with the school, need to be recorded going forward so what is said becomes part of the record. The group reviewed some of the issues around important items missing from the minutes and agreed that they all need to be recorded going forward.

Dzujna stated that every School Liaison meeting and Joint Finance meeting should have an agenda item for Collaboration. Testerman added that any messages promoting Franklin that may be shared on social media or the City Website should constantly include the message the City is trying to collaborate to find ways to save the City money and operate as efficiently as possible.

Councilor Rago shared that message with the school during the Joint Finance Committee meeting last night. Councilors Testerman, Dzujna, and Brown said that Rago did really well running the meeting last night.

Brown provided some information on the upcoming Manufacturing Night Event on Friday, September 25th. She, along with many others are looking forward to bringing back some manufacturing to the schools. Superintendent LeGallo, Principal Charette, and Councilor Brown are planning to attend a meeting with WATTS HR tomorrow. Vitex is also very interesting in participating with the High School on this effort as well. Brown explained that the High School has two rooms available for the shop classes. She also mentioned that there are discussions on providing the students with a math class that is more focused on manufacturing needs such as using tape measures and the like.

Brown then explained that the Digital Divide Access project is being funded by Franklin Savings Bank. This digital access project would give certain students access to areas of teachings to gain knowledge in either technology, math, manufacturing, or other types of classes designed to aid in closing a knowledge gap of an underprivileged group.

Brown reviewed the program details and agenda for the upcoming Manufacturing Night Event.

Dzujna shared a great success story Michael Mullavey, who graduated Franklin High School and has done amazingly well personally and financially through his career at WATTS.

Brown moved to the topic of Communication and its challenges. She is hoping that Richard Ellert can provide some guidance on what works best depending on the industry. There was further discussion and frustration over the level of understanding of how the City's Fund Balance works.

Councilor Dzujna asked if a list of salaries for City employees and School employees could be made. Brown suggested that by showing the public that City workers do not get paid what most think they do. He asked Rago if she could work with Director Lossani to create the list.

City Manager Milner shared information on the Teacher's Salary Scale. She explained that the teachers are lower than the top 5 City Department heads, also lower than the Deputy Fire Chief and Lieutenant, and lower than the MSD Assistant Director. The rest of the City Staff, including the City prosecutor, sergeants, captain, are all beneath the salary of a teacher.

Public attendee Janet Desrochers shared that the school pays a small percentage for health insurance and no matter what the City is trying to do, they seem to always look like the bad guy. In comparison to the vacations that the teachers receive as well, City employees do not receive the same.

Milner stated that she received a Right-to-Know request from Superintendent LeGallo on the City Health Insurance and what employee raises were given for this year. Milner also stated that this year she got them both into the budget but couldn't for the last 7-8 years. This may be mentioned during the next City Council meeting and if it is, it would be prudent to also include the same type of information for the school's side.

**Motion to adjourn made by Councilor Trudel. Seconded by Councilor Rago.
All in favor. Motion PASSED.**

Meeting adjourned at 8:01PM

Respectfully submitted,

Audrey Lanzillo