



**City Council Meeting Minutes
Monday, February 13, 2023 - 6:00 p.m.
Council Chambers, City Hall**

Council in attendance: Mayor Jo Brown, Councilor Jay Chandler, Councilor Leigh Webb, Councilor Bob Desrochers, Councilor George Dzujna, Councilor Ted Starkweather, Councilor Valerie Blake (via telephone), Councilor Paul Trudel, Councilor Vince Ribas and Councilor Olivia Zink

Absent: None

Others in attendance: City Manager Judie Milner, Fire Chief Mike Foss, P&Z Director Seth Creighton, Finance Director Pessy Gaudette, and members of the public.

Mayor Brown called the meeting to order in Council Chambers at 6:02 p.m.

Salute to the Flag was led by Councilor Webb.

Public Hearings:

Resolution 15-23 appropriating \$60,000 from sale of 599 S. Main Street for the City Hall project.

Mayor Brown stated that she had received many letters and emails in support of the Franklin Opera House/City Hall renovations and would like to open this up for any extra comments.

The public hearing opened at 6:05 p.m.

Many residents came before the council to express the importance of having the Franklin Opera House in the city of Franklin and all were in support of doing whatever possible to renovate the building.

The public hearing on Resolution 15-23 closed at 6:40 p.m.

Comments from the Public:

Public comments opened at 6:40 p.m.

There was no discussion.

Public comments closed at 6:40 p.m.

Agenda Item I.

Council to consider Resolution 15-23 appropriating \$60,000 from the sale of 599 S. Main Street towards the City Hall project.

Motion - Councilor Ribas moved that the Franklin City Council adopt Resolution 15-23 appropriating \$60,000 in one-time unanticipated FY2023 revenues for the City Hall project. Seconded by Councilor Dzujna.

Mayor Brown asked if there was any discussion on resolution 15-23.

Councilor Webb asked Milner to explain the City Hall study that is being presented. Milner stated that the study will take a look at everything and give concrete numbers, along with a plan to go forward. This will also help with going after grants as well. What is left over from the \$60,000 revenues after paying for the study will go towards the capital reserve for the City Hall project.

The council expressed their support for the Opera House and Fire Chief Foss and P&Z Director Creighton were also able to answer any of their questions on the topic.

By a roll call vote.

Roll Call:

Councilor Blake	<u>yes</u>	Councilor Desrochers	<u>yes</u>	Councilor Starkweather	<u>yes</u>
Councilor Webb	<u>yes</u>	Councilor Dzujna	<u>yes</u>	Councilor Trudel	<u>yes</u>
Councilor Chandler	<u>yes</u>	Councilor Ribas	<u>yes</u>	Councilor Zink	<u>yes</u>

All in favor. Motion PASSED.

Mayor Brown read Resolution 15-23:

RESOLUTION #15-23

A Resolution Relating to a Supplemental Appropriation for Fiscal Year 2023.

In the year of our Lord, Two Thousand Twenty-Three,

WHEREAS, the City Council of the City of Franklin, New Hampshire adopted a budget for Fiscal Year 2023 which began July 1, 2022, **and**;

WHEREAS, the City Council of the City of Franklin, New Hampshire understands Soldiers Memorial Hall (City Hall) needs significant repair to bring it to code compliance, **and**;

WHEREAS, the City Council of the City of Franklin, New Hampshire understands the City brought in \$60,000 in unanticipated one-time revenue for the sale of 599-601 South Main Street, **and**;

WHEREAS, the City Council of the City of Franklin, New Hampshire wishes to appropriate the one-time revenue for the City Hall Project, **Now**,

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that at the scheduled meeting of the City Council on Monday, February 13, 2023 at 6pm the City Council of the City of Franklin, New Hampshire does hereby adopt resolution #15-23 authorizing an increase in FY2023 revenues:

Sale of Municipal Property Revenue Acct. No. 01-0-000-35011-000 – Sixty Thousand dollars (\$60,000)

And an increase in FY2023 expenditure accounts,

Buildings Acct No. 01-9-012-40720-000 – Sixty Thousand dollars (\$60,000).

Agenda Item II.

Discussion on City Hall.

Milner started by addressing some myth busters, clarifications and education:

- Milner thanked everyone for coming forward with all of their concerns.
- Soldiers Memorial Hall is an important historical building.
- Renovations are needed – They have made small improvements along the way and has been several years in the making.
- The City Manager is not going to fire the Fire Chief. He is not the bad guy in all of this.
- City Offices/Opera House is a public and private partnership, which will continue.
- If anyone were to move out of the building, it would not be the Opera House. The recommendation would be to have the city offices move.
- Members of the opera house board have been included in discussions.
- The city and the Opera House put measures in place to ensure the safety of the public while working through this.
- Dan Darling and Milner have been in contact about options should they need to move out for renovations.
- The point of the city council meeting is to not upset the public, but get direction from the council.
- Difficult lift for the council to bond a project – city owners of the building will need to do and public support goes a long way.
- Milner stated that she is aware that there is some confusion regarding the timeline and funding for this project.
- The City Manager’s Economic Development Task Force has well over 100 years of combined experience at the Federal Agency, State Agency, Regional Development, and Local Development.
- Brought in over \$4m in funding directly to the municipality, efforts led to \$75m in new investments that the city can capture.

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- This is not the same “poor” Franklin as 10 years ago, or even 5 years ago.
- This is a pivotal point in revitalization; the city needs to stay the course and show investors and other stakeholders that we not only talk the talk, but also walk the walk.
- Need to follow the footsteps of the bank, Davis & Towle, Chinburg, Buell Block and Waterhorse Pub.
- This is the first project of this magnitude in a very long time that is paid for from the general fund of the City, but the city is no stranger to projects of this magnitude or greater in the water and sewer enterprise fund.
- Hiring an architect and/or engineer is very typical of municipal projects in order to ascertain the scope and estimated (educated) cost of the project – it is done on all w/s projects.
- If a qualified firm wishes to respond to the RFQ/RFP with a pro bono response, it’s ok.
- Asking council for the authority to borrow up to \$X (\$5 million has been discussed as a preliminary number).
- It is especially important for applying for funding as it is a Demonstrated Match making funding applications stronger.
- The City Manager’s Economic Development Task Force will do everything it can to secure funding from other sources to offset the cost – likely, the Opera House portion and the Task Force is currently vetting a strategy that could reduce the burden by up to 46% by utilizing historical and new market tax credits. This is not ready for presentation yet.
- It is imperative that the city move quickly on securing the numbers and design strategy for the building, as everything is contingent on that to move forward.

Councilor Webb did ask if an RFQ is more expensive when keeping to a historical building and hiring someone with experience with that. Creighton answered letting him know that it is not more expensive.

Milner mentioned that some of the items that were on the list to be repaired have already been completed.

She also stated that the LCHIP grant is one that is on the table for the project.

There is a workshop meeting scheduled for March on the Pay & Class study and Milner recommended having another one scheduled for this topic as well.

March 20th was scheduled for a workshop on City Hall and March 27th was scheduled for a workshop on the Pay & Class study.

Milner added that it will take a couple of weeks to write the RFQ and will give three weeks to receive responses. This will be a total of 6-7 weeks.

Agenda Item III.

Other Business.

Milner had some late items to go over. She stated that she had sent the council a tiered option for the retention bonus proposal, per the request of the council at the last meeting.

The amount was originally going to be \$3,000 for all employees.

Councilor Ribas had mentioned an idea for the tiered amounts, along with Finance Director Gaudette.

The council agreed to go with the following tiered option for the retention bonus being voted on at the next city council meeting:

Employees with 0-9 years of service - \$2,900

Employees with 10-19 years of service - \$3,150

Employees with 20-29 years of service - \$3,400

Milner stated that the next item had to do with a resident who came in about some nonpublic minutes and they would like the council to consider unsealing the minutes from September 10th, 2018. It is regarding a piece of property that the city was looking at disposing of and that property has been taken care of so the recommendation would be to unseal those minutes.

Motion – Councilor Ribas moved that the Franklin City Council unseal the minutes from the September 10th, 2018 meeting. Seconded by Councilor Trudel.

Roll Call Vote:

Councilor Starkweather	<u>yes</u>	Councilor Dzujna	<u>yes</u>	Councilor Ribas	<u>yes</u>
Councilor Blake	<u>yes</u>	Councilor Webb	<u>abstained</u>	Councilor Trudel	<u>yes</u>
Councilor Desrochers	<u>yes</u>	Councilor Chandler	<u>yes</u>	Councilor Zink	<u>yes</u>

8 in favor; 1 abstention. Motion PASSED.

Motion – Councilor Webb moved that the Franklin City Council enter into nonpublic according to RSA 91-A:3 II(a) The dismissal, promotion, or compensation of any public employee or the disciplining of such employee, or the investigation of any charges against him or her, unless the employee affected (1) has a right to a meeting and (2) requests that the meeting be open, in which case the request shall be granted. Seconded by Councilor Chandler.

Roll Call Vote:

Councilor Starkweather	<u>yes</u>	Councilor Dzujna	<u>yes</u>	Councilor Ribas	<u>yes</u>
Councilor Blake	<u>yes</u>	Councilor Webb	<u>yes</u>	Councilor Trudel	<u>yes</u>
Councilor Desrochers	<u>yes</u>	Councilor Chandler	<u>yes</u>	Councilor Zink	<u>yes</u>

All in favor. Motion PASSED.

Entered into nonpublic at 8:16 p.m.

**Motion – Councilor Ribas moved to leave nonpublic session and return to public session.
Seconded by Councilor Trudel.**

Roll Call Vote:

Councilor Starkweather	<u>yes</u>	Councilor Dzujna	<u>yes</u>	Councilor Ribas	<u>yes</u>
Councilor Blake	<u>yes</u>	Councilor Webb	<u>yes</u>	Councilor Trudel	<u>yes</u>
Councilor Desrochers	<u>yes</u>	Councilor Chandler	<u>yes</u>	Councilor Zink	<u>yes</u>

All in favor. Motion PASSED.

Public Session reconvened at 9:21 p.m.

Motion – Councilor Dzujna moved to seal the minutes. Seconded by Councilor Ribas.

Roll Call Vote:

Councilor Starkweather	<u>yes</u>	Councilor Dzujna	<u>yes</u>	Councilor Ribas	<u>yes</u>
Councilor Blake	<u>yes</u>	Councilor Webb	<u>yes</u>	Councilor Trudel	<u>yes</u>
Councilor Desrochers	<u>yes</u>	Councilor Chandler	<u>yes</u>	Councilor Zink	<u>yes</u>

All in favor. Motion PASSED.

Motion – Councilor Dzujna moved that the Franklin City Council renew City Manager Judie Milner’s 5-year contract, subject to some contract revisions. Seconded by Councilor Ribas.

Roll Call Vote:

Councilor Starkweather	<u>yes</u>	Councilor Dzujna	<u>yes</u>	Councilor Ribas	<u>yes</u>
Councilor Blake	<u>yes</u>	Councilor Webb	<u>yes</u>	Councilor Trudel	<u>yes</u>
Councilor Desrochers	<u>yes</u>	Councilor Chandler	<u>yes</u>	Councilor Zink	<u>no</u>

8 in favor; 1 opposed. Motion PASSED.

ADJOURNMENT:

**Motion to adjourn was made by Councilor Zink and seconded by Councilor Ribas.
All in favor. Motion PASSED.**

The meeting adjourned at 9:26 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Lisa A. Jones
Executive Secretary

