

The Franklin City Council held a regular meeting on Monday, May 12, 2008 at 7:00 p.m. in Council Chambers, 207 W. Second Avenue.

Council members in attendance: James P. Councill, III, Mayor, Raystine Johnson, Vice-Mayor, Charles Wrenn, Rosa Lawrence, Mary Hilliard and Mark Fetherolf. ABSENT: Joseph Scislowicz.

Staff in attendance: Rowland Taylor, City Manager, H. Taylor Williams, IV, City Attorney, Phil Hardison, Chief of Police, Andy Rose, Director of Finance, Carolyn Joyner, Personnel Manager, Russ Pace, Director of Public Works, Sandy Holloman, Voter Registrar, Dexter Trump, Deputy Director of Power & Light, Jonathan Lackey, IT Director and Erin Turner, Executive Assistant.

Others in attendance: Dinah Babb, Treasurer, Brenda Rickman, Commissioner of the Revenue and Dan Howe, Downtown Franklin Association Director.

Invocation

Rev. Herbert Hunter offered the invocation.

Citizens' Time

Greg McLemore. 204 Madison Street. City employees are not allowed to work at the polls on Election Day, but Mr. McLemore does not believe that it is fair for Council members or their families to work at the polls either. Mr. McLemore would also like Council to consider the elimination of City decals.

Ellis Crum. Queens Lane. A concerned citizen called Mr. Crum regarding his utility bill that indicated he had used 91,000 gallons of water in 30 days. Mr. Crum stated that the citizen received a postcard in the mail indicating that there may be a problem, but believes that a certified letter or a visit from a City employee should have been considered.

Consent Agenda

- 1. **Financial Matters** – Budget Amendment 2008-40.

BUDGET AMENDMENT 2008-40

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF FRANKLIN, VIRGINIA that the 2007-2008 City Budget is hereby amended to recognize additional revenues and to appropriate such revenues for new uses.

	2007-2008 BUDGET	AMENDED BUDGET	INCREASE (DECREASE)
100 GENERAL FUND			

REVENUE

100 041040 0003			
Proceeds from Loan	\$0.00	\$400,000.00	<u>\$400,000.00</u>
TOTAL			\$400,000.00

EXPENDITURES

100 71400 8410			
Poplar Spring Expansion – A & E	\$0.00	\$80,000.00	\$80,000.00
100 71400 8411			
Poplar Spring Expansion Construction	\$0.00	\$320,000.00	<u>\$320,000.00</u>
TOTAL			\$400,000.00

***Proceeds from loan received on February 15, 2008 for the Poplar Spring Cemetery Expansion.**

2. Resolution Regarding National Public Works Week –

WHEREAS, that American Public Works Association (APWA) has sponsored the National Public Works Week since 1960; and,

WHEREAS, across the nation there are more than 29,000 members of the APWA; and,

WHEREAS, the week of May 18-24, 2008 will be used to energize and educate the public on the importance of the contribution of public works to our daily lives through their planning, building, managing and operating the very heart of our local communities and building the quality of life we cherish; and,

WHEREAS, the theme of this year’s National Public Works Week is “The Future Is Now” which has a dual purpose as both a celebration and a caution as it reminds us of how far public works has progressed and, yet, how far it has to go in assuring the highest quality infrastructure possible for each community; and,

WHEREAS, the City of Franklin Public Works Department is responsible for a tremendously long list of items within the City from drainage of City streets and property

to solid waste collection, to construction site and infrastructure plan approval, inspection and approval to water, sewer, wastewater treatment plan and airport operations to street cleaning to litter control to building maintenance to street repair to landscaping, grounds and cemetery maintenance to planning to the garage and fleet maintenance for all related activities to insuring that those who live and work in and visit the City of Franklin are provided quality services in an efficient and cost-effective manner; and,

WHEREAS, the City of Franklin supports the efforts of each member of our Department of Public Works and **THANKS** them for the daily and great work they perform to make this City the very best that it can be.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Franklin City Council designates May 19-24, 2008 as Public Works Week in the City; and,

FURTHER RESOLVED that all citizens are asked to provide special tribute to the workers of the Franklin Department of Public Works and thank them for the great work they perform on your behalf.

3. Resolution to Reduce the Risks of Climate Change -

WHEREAS, the City of Franklin's mission is to provide a high quality of life for the citizens of Franklin; and,

WHEREAS, the United States represents less than five percent of the world's population but contributes more than thirty percent of the world's greenhouse gas emissions; and,

WHEREAS, climate change calls for national and international responses, but ultimately greenhouse gas emissions are generated at the local level; and,

WHEREAS, the City of Franklin desires to take a leadership role in addressing worldwide environmental concerns; and,

WHEREAS, the Virginia Municipal League is sponsoring, "The Green Government Challenge"; and,

WHEREAS, the City of Franklin desires to qualify as a "Green City"; and,

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY OF FRANKLIN CITY COUNCIL AS FOLLOWS:

The City of Franklin will provide leadership in our community and region through public education, open dialogue, and partnerships regarding greenhouse gas emissions and energy efficiency.

Help educate the public, schools, other jurisdictions, professional associations, business and industry about reducing global warming pollution.

Make energy efficiency a priority.

Cooperate with other local and regional entities to coordinate region-wide greenhouse gas reduction strategies.

Support all appropriate Federal and State policies and legislation that will lead to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

4. Proclamation - Building Safety Week 2008 – May 5-11 –

WHEREAS, through the City of Franklin's continuing attention to building safety, citizens experience comfort and peace of mind that structures are safe and well-built; and

WHEREAS, building safety and fire prevention officials work year-round to ensure the safe construction of buildings; and

WHEREAS, Building Safety Week, sponsored by the International Code Council and promoted by the Virginia Department of Community Development statewide, is designed to educate the public about the role that the building safety and fire protection officials, local and state building departments, and federal agencies play in protecting our lives and property; and

WHEREAS, the theme, "Building Safety: Where You Live, Work and Play," encourages all Americans to raise awareness of the importance of building safety; green and sustainable building; pool, spa and hot tub safety; and new technologies in the construction industry; and

WHEREAS, as we observe Building Safety Week, we ask the citizens of Franklin to consider projects to improve building safety at home and in the community, and to recognize local building code officials and fire prevention officials and the important role they play in protecting lives and property;

NOW, THEREFORE, it is hereby proclaimed that May 5 through May 11, 2008, is BUILDING SAFETY WEEK in the CITY OF FRANKLIN. Accordingly, our citizens are encouraged to join communities across America to participate in Building Safety Week activities.

On motion made by Ms. Johnson and seconded by Mrs. Hilliard, the Consent Agenda was with the exception of Budget Amendment 2008-40 was unanimously approved by Council. The vote on this motion was as follows: AYE: Mr. Wrenn, Mrs. Lawrence, Ms. Johnson, Mrs. Hilliard, Mr. Fetherolf and Mr. Council. NO: none. ABSENT: Mr. Scislowicz.

On motion made by Mr. Wrenn and seconded by Mr. Fetherolf, the Budget Amendment 2008-40 was approved by Council. The vote on the motion was as follows: AYE: Mr. Wrenn, Mrs. Lawrence, Mr. Fetherolf and Mr. Council. NO: Ms. Johnson and Mrs. Hilliard. ABSENT: Mr. Scislowicz.

Public Hearing on 2008-2009 Budget

Mayor Council explained that the tax rate public hearing would be scheduled for a different time. The reassessment figures need to be finalized first.

The public hearing was opened for comment.

Robert Edwards. 103 Park Circle. The tax rate is getting too high and Council must look at cutting spending in other places.

William Kannan. 112 Page Street. Mr. Kannan suggested that the City get feedback from the newly elected Council members who are CPAs prior to adopting the budget. A salary freeze should be placed on the top 25% of paid employees. The City should sell the Industrial Park and get our tax money back. The schools are getting too much money and the City should cut back on their contribution to the school budget. Mr. Kannan also thinks that the 1.25 GPA for athletes is too low and an embarrassment to our school system.

Dale Parsons. 605 Quail Roost Road. Mr. Parsons stated that the City should consider a lower tax rate and thought the City should only give a 2% pay increase to those employees with a salary of \$45,000 or less.

Everett Williams. 117 Kings Lane. The City budget was prepared for normal economic times, but we are facing a hard economic crisis. International Paper and Hercules have both recently laid off a large number of their employees and cut their spending by at least 10%. Mr. Williams suggested that the City cut all operating costs by 5% and eliminate any unnecessary vehicles.

Don Blythe. 606 Clay Street. The economy is getting tough and the City needs to make cuts. Property values are going up in value by a tremendous amount and no one is happy about it. Mr. Blythe is not against employees with a low salary receiving a pay raise, but doesn't think that employees with higher salaries should receive a raise.

Dick Gilbert. 124 Woodland Circle. Mr. Gilbert stated that the elections for Council should be held in November. Ward 1 had less than 40% of voter turnout.

Bob Trainor. 221 Meadow Lane. Council should require the City departments to "cut their fat" and set a limit on their spending. The Council also needs to control the budget better.

Barham Dodson. 722 Clay Street. The Incubator was a bad idea and will take forever to pay off. Only 2 businesses have graduated and many of the businesses don't need to be housed in the Incubator. It's time to close it down.

Ellis Crum. 125 Queens Lane. Mr. Crum listed several problems he had with accepting the proposed budget which included the high salaries of managers and supervisors, pay raises for those higher salaried employees, the IT position contract being renewed, the additional \$19,000 being given to the Animal Control for overtime, the reduction in funds for the Boys and Girls Club, the reduction to the volunteer fire department fund, the lack of Council to hold the School Board accountable for their spending and the request to not give Council a raise.

Greg McLemore. 204 Madison Street. The City should work for the people; not the people working for the City. Why are the assessments so high if houses aren't selling? No one has said the budget is a good thing.

Bobby Tyler. 112 Queens Lane. The budget didn't become a problem this year; it has been on a downward slope for many years.

(Councilman Scislowicz arrived at 8:20 p.m.)

Steve Stewart. 400 Meadow Lane. Mr. Stewart stated that it was unclear in the budget if the City was interested in hiring an Assistant City Manager. He requested that Council "nip that in the bud" and vote down that issue tonight.

Jerry Cutchins. Clay Street. Mr. Cutchins stated that Council shut down the Incubator and force the businesses back downtown.

Joe Stutts. Woodland Drive. Mr. Stutts requested that Council only give pay raises to employees on the lower end of the pay scale such as police officers, firefighters, trash collectors and utility workers.

William Kannon then requested that each Council member comment on the proposed budget.

With no one else wishing to speak, the public hearing was closed.

Mayor Councill stated that the Assistant City Manager was not funded in the proposed budget. He further explained the requirement by state law that all property be reassessed every so many years. Mayor Councill requested that citizens attend School Board meetings if they were concerned about how the School Board was spending money.

Mr. Wrenn stated that he would like to have seen the City hire an HR Manager due to recent issues with personnel matters, but understood that it could not be done under the current budget. Mr. Wrenn further stated that he stands firm in that funds should not be cut to the Police Department because the crime in the City is not going away on its own. Public safety should not be compromised.

*Mayor Councill recognized Sgt. Patrick Wilson who has recently returned from serving in Iraq. Sgt. Wilson has resumed his duties at the Police Department since his return.

Vice-Mayor Johnson concurred that the Assistant City Manager position was not funded in the budget.

On motion made by Ms. Johnson and seconded by Mr. Fetherolf, it was unanimously resolved that the Assistant City Manager position was withdrawn from consideration in the proposed 2008-2009 budget. The vote on this motion was as follows: AYE: Mr.

Scislowicz, Mr. Wrenn, Mrs. Lawrence, Ms. Johnson, Mrs. Hilliard, Mr. Fetherolf and Mr. Councill. NO: none. ABSENT: none.

Vice-Mayor Johnson stated her concerns over many issues including the realignment of the Collections Department and the Treasurer's Office and the benefit to citizens, the IT position contract, the Incubator's progress, the need for new City vehicles, the Animal Control position receiving additional overtime funds and the cost of the Train Depot, Cemetery Expansion Project and the Farmer's Market. Vice-Mayor Johnson requested a work session to discuss these matters further and requested that Mr. Cheatham and Mr. Burgess (the newly elected Council members) attend the work session.

Mr. Williams stated that Mr. Burgess and Mr. Cheatham could attend the meeting, but would not be allowed to participate due to City Code requirements. Mr. Williams would research the matter further.

Mrs. Hilliard stated that the tax rate needs to be addressed and that she was looking forward to working with the newly elected Council members.

Mrs. Lawrence stated that she is still fairly new to the budget process. She, too, would like Mr. Burgess and Mr. Cheatham to attend the work session. She further stated that she was not in agreement with the Poplar Springs Cemetery Expansion Project.

Mr. Wrenn clarified that the first 1,500 cemetery lots will pay off the debt accrued on the cemetery expansion project, but that the City had to borrow the money to begin the project.

Mr. Fetherolf stated that he would like to address the pay increases after receiving more information at the work session.

Mr. Scislowicz stated that there is no easy solution to resolving budget issues and that he was pleased to see a large turnout of citizens, but questioned why they didn't attend other meetings when various projects were being discussed.

A work session was scheduled for June 9th at 5:30 p.m. in Council Chambers.

Approval of Minutes of the April 28, 2008 meeting

On motion made by Mrs. Hilliard and seconded by Mrs. Lawrence it was RESOLVED that the minutes for the April 28, 2008 meeting were approved as presented. The vote on this motion was as follows: AYE: Mr. Scislowicz, Mr. Wrenn, Mrs. Lawrence, Mrs. Hilliard, Mr. Fetherolf and Mr. Councill. NO: none. ABSTAIN: Ms. Johnson.

Quarterly Reports

Dan Howe presented the quarterly report to Council on the Downtown Franklin Association. Mr. Howe has become very active with numerous boards that will bring

tourism to the downtown Franklin area. Several events are planned for the summer including “A Day in the Park” with the Franklin Junior Woman’s Club and the We Be Jammin’ Concert Series which begins May 22nd. The DFA Board is also very active and working on several different projects.

Old/New Business

Mayor Councill discussed the request from Frank Roberts to reconsider the funds requested for the Hampton Roads Military and Federal Facilities Alliance.

Mayor Councill advised that the river gauges have been approved and Mark Mansfield was able to get \$45,000 to put towards the costs from the General. The remaining \$45,000 will be split among the seven localities.

Closed Session

On motion made by Mr. Fetherolf and seconded by Mr. Wrenn it was unanimously RESOLVED that Council meet in closed session to discuss (1) appointments to boards and committees and (2) to consult with the City Attorney to obtain his advice about a specific legal matter involving the consideration of an Agreement with the Southeastern Public Service Authority as permitted by Virginia Code Section 2.2-3711(A), (1) and (7). The vote on this motion was as follows: AYE: Mr. Scislowicz, Mr. Wrenn, Mrs. Lawrence, Ms. Johnson, Mrs. Hilliard, Mr. Fetherolf and Mr. Councill. NO: none. ABSENT: none.

Certification

On motion made by Mr. Scislowicz and seconded by Mr. Wrenn, it was unanimously RESOLVED that City Council hereby certifies that to the best of the knowledge of each member only public business matters identified in the motion which the closed meeting was convened were discussed, heard or considered. The vote on this motion was as follows: AYE: Mr. Scislowicz, Mr. Wrenn, Mrs. Lawrence, Ms. Johnson, Mrs. Hilliard, Mr. Fetherolf and Mr. Councill. NO: none. ABSENT: Mr. Scislowicz.

Adjournment

There being no further business, on motion duly made, seconded and unanimously adopted the meeting was adjourned at 10:25 P.M. The vote on this motion was as follows: AYE: Mr. Scislowicz, Mr. Wrenn, Mrs. Lawrence, Ms. Johnson, Mrs. Hilliard, Mr. Fetherolf and Mr. Councill. NO: none. ABSENT: none.

Mayor

Clerk to City Council