

The Mayor and Council of the City of Franklin met in Regular Session on Tuesday, May 20, 2025, at 6:00 PM at City Hall, 300 Iberia Street, Franklin, Louisiana. Mayor Eugene P. Foulcard called the meeting to order. Also present were Councilmembers Chuck Autin, Pearl Rack, Joseph Garrison, Lester Levine, Jaime Robison, and City Clerk Karen LeBlanc. Absent was City Attorney Russel J. Cremaldi.

The invocation was offered by Mayor Foulcard and Councilman Autin led everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance.

GUESTS:

Evan Boudreaux, St. Mary Parish Government Director of Economic Development, discussed Saronic's \$250 million investment in Franklin with their acquisition of the Gulf Craft Campus. Franklin's location gives the company direct access to the Gulf. Franklin is set to become Saronic's global prototyping and production hub for their medium unmanned surface vessels.

Mr. Boudreaux mentioned that the investment will bring upward of 500 new jobs over the next three to five years; welders, pipe fitters, electricians, engineers, architects, robotic technologists. A fast-track workforce training program is in the works. He stated that he is also working with existing contractors and small businesses in St. Mary Parish to give them first access to Saronic's needs to ensure that every dollar spent on this project can stay in St. Mary Parish. He thanked the mayor and council for support in moving Franklin and St. Mary Parish forward.

Councilman Levine expressed excitement for the educational and job opportunities this will bring to the residents of Franklin.

Mayor Foulcard mentioned that the groundwork for this opportunity was laid under former Mayor Harris' administration. He was on the council at the time when infrastructure was installed and funded through the City, Parish, Delta Regional Authority, and Gulf Craft.

Tony Sonnier with Louisiana Rural Water Association presented the results of water and sewer rate study that is required by the Louisiana Department of Health. To ensure the sustainability factor of 1.15 (or a 15% profit), he recommended a \$5.50 per 1,000 gallons increase on current water rates with a 2.5% increase yearly for the next 10 years. The sewer system should have a sustainability factor of 1.25. Sewer rates were recommended to be increased from \$2.60 per 1,000 gallons for the first 2,000 gallons and \$1.20 per 1,000 gallons thereafter to \$3.10 per 1,000 gallons for the first 2,000 gallons and \$1.50 per 1,000 gallons thereafter with a 3% increase yearly for the next 10 years.

Mr. Sonnier expressed that the sustainability of the water and sewer system will determine the City's ability to successfully get loans and be awarded grants.

PUBLIC COMMENT (for items on the agenda): None.

MINUTES:

A motion was made by Councilman Autin to accept the April 15, 2025 Regular Meeting minutes. Second by Councilman Garrison and carried. Roll call is as follows:

YEAS: Councilmembers Autin, Garrison, Levine, Rack, and Robison

NAYS: None.

ABSENT: None.

MAYOR'S EXECUTIVE REPORT:

Mayor Foulcard presented his report. He stated that the City of Franklin Water Plant is at a critical turning point as it nears 60 years old. This decision comes in the wake of a dramatic increase in operational costs and rehabilitation needed for the plant.

He and the Franklin City Council are committed to addressing these problems head-on. He thanked Senator Robert Allain and State Representative Vincent St. Blanc for the Capital Outlay Funding. In March, the Water Plant high-service pumps and turbidity meters were replaced, the service basins were cleaned out, and new backwash pumps were installed. Organizational changes have also been made with the operators and outside consultants have been acquired.

Mayor Foulcard stated that the next phase will include installation of much-needed water valves throughout the city. He stated that many valves were overlaid when the streets were paved. Valves will be GPS marked so they can be identified.

He explained that the city's water system needs to be sustainable to we can meet 25% match requirements for state and federal grants.

Mayor Foulcard expressed that he will continue working closely with the Louisiana Department of Health, the Louisiana Rural Water Association, regional experts, engineering firms and our Federal and State elected officials to bring Franklin's water system into the future.

Mayor Foulcard expressed sadness in the recent shootings in the city and offered prayers to those affected. He vowed to continue to fight the good fight for Franklin.

DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS:

Mayor Foulcard stated that the March 2025 Financial Statements were presented to the council.

Ed Hay, Director of Finance, reported to the council that there are 4,700 accounts on the books right now that owe the City \$900,000. Of that total, 2,700 accounts are active and owe a total of \$361,000. In short, over the years, 2,000 customers have left the city of Franklin owing \$537,000. The City has no way of collecting these funds. 647 customers are delinquent to a tune of \$193,000. He encouraged customers to be responsible and pay for the services they receive.

INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES:

A motion was made by Councilman Garrison to introduce Ordinance No. 3468 – An Ordinance establishing the sewer user charge to be assessed as a monthly charge to all residents and customers receiving sewer services from the City of Franklin, St. Mary Parish, Louisiana, with said income to be utilized for construction, renovation and operation of the City of Franklin's sewer system, or for any public purpose, defining the same; providing for billings to said residents and customers; and repealing all ordinances or parts of ordinances in conflict herewith.

ADOPTION OF ORDINANCES:

A motion was made by Councilman Garrison to adopt Ordinance No. 3467 – An Ordinance fixing the rates of tax to be assessed by the municipal corporation of City of Franklin, Parish of St. Mary, State of Louisiana, subject to taxation therein, for the year 2025.

Second by Councilman Robison and carried. Roll call is as follows:

YEAS: Councilmembers Autin, Garrison, Levine, Rack, and Robison

NAYS: None.

ABSENT: None.

ABSTAIN: None.

RESOLUTIONS:

A motion was made by Councilman Garrison to adopt a resolution establishing the water rates to be charged for gallons used as a monthly charge to all residents and customers of the City of Franklin, St. Mary Parish, Louisiana. Second by Councilman Robison and carried. Roll call is as follows:

YEAS: Councilmembers Autin, Garrison, Levine, Rack, and Robison

NAYS: None.

A motion was made by Councilman Levine to adopt a resolution lifting the open alcohol container law at Caffery Park for the Franklin Youth Baseball Organization's Co-Ed Softball Tournament to be held on May 23-24, 2025. No glass containers. Second by Councilman Robison and carried. Roll call is as follows:

YEAS: Councilmembers Autin, Garrison, Levine, Rack, and Robison

NAYS: None.

ABSENT: None.

A motion was made by Councilwoman Rack to adopt a resolution of the Mayor and Council of the City of Franklin authorizing the submission of an application for Louisiana Highway Safety Commission FFY 2025 Special Waves Grant Program, and authorizing all actions necessary to implement and complete the activities outlined in said application. Second by Councilman Garrison and carried. Roll call is as follows:
YEAS: Councilmembers Autin, Garrison, Levine, Rack, and Robison
NAYS: None.
ABSENT: None.

A motion was made by Councilman Garrison to adopt a resolution authorizing Eugene P. Foulcard, Mayor of the City of Franklin, to enter into a Cooperative Endeavor Agreement with the Louisiana Department of Veterans Affairs of the State of Louisiana for May 1, 2025 to April 30, 2026. Second by Councilwoman Rack and carried. Roll call is as follows:
YEAS: Councilmembers Autin, Garrison, Levine, Rack, and Robison
NAYS: None.
ABSENT: None.

PROCLAMATIONS:

A motion was made by Councilman Garrison to adopt a proclamation declaring May 2025 as Older Americans Month. Second by Councilman Autin and carried. Roll call is as follows:
YEAS: Councilmembers Autin, Garrison, Levine, Rack, and Robison
NAYS: None.
ABSENT: None.

NEW BUSINESS:

A motion was made by Councilman Garrison to select the Franklin Banner-Tribune as the City of Franklin's Official Journal for the period beginning July 1, 2025 and ending June 30, 2026. Second by Councilman Robison and carried. Roll call is as follows:
YEAS: Councilmembers Autin, Garrison, Levine, Rack, and Robison
NAYS: None.
ABSENT: None.

A motion was made by Councilwoman Rack to approve the FY 2024-2025 Louisiana Compliance Questionnaire. Second by Councilman Garrison and carried. Roll call is as follows:
YEAS: Councilmembers Autin, Garrison, Levine, Rack, and Robison
NAYS: None.
ABSENT: None.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Mayor Foulcard made announcements for upcoming events including the City-Wide Clean Up, Bayou to Main Marketplace, and 5th Annual Soul Food Festival.

A motion to adjourn was made by Councilman Levine. Second by Councilman Robison and carried.

ATTEST:

CITY OF FRANKLIN, LOUISIANA

Karen LeBlanc
Clerk of the Council

EUGENE P. FOULCARD, MAYOR