

The Mayor and Council of the City of Franklin met in Regular Session on Tuesday, July 15, 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 Garrison led everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance.

GUESTS:

Ed “Tiger” Verdin, Executive Director of Louisiana Partnership for the Arts, and the students of Hanson Memorial High School were present to promote and acknowledge their participation in the Bridges Project. The eight students from Hanson Memorial High School and eight students from the Baton Rouge area were invited to the 2025 Edinburgh Fringe Festival in Scotland. Local students attending include Amelia Reynolds, Charlotte Reynolds, Johnae’ Hebert, Mattie Judice, Makayla Miller, Ethan Verdin, Fletcher Doucet, and Onnie Doucet (not present).

Jake Benoit representing Senator John Kennedy’s office introduced himself and offered his services concerning federal programs and offices if needed.

PUBLIC COMMENT (for items on the agenda):

Mrs. Diane Wiltz, while referring to the Hanson students and the opportunity they are being given, expressed the importance of mentors in children’s lives and the impact the opportunity will have on them; even though they may not realize it today. She and Councilwoman Rack reminisced on the impact their mentors and the arts had on their lives.

MINUTES:

A motion was made by Councilman Autin to accept the June 17, 2025 Regular Meeting minutes. Second by Councilman Robison 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 expressed the City’s commitment to infrastructure improvement. Our 60 year old Franklin Water Plant is currently undergoing a comprehensive \$2.4 million foundational rehabilitation that began in March of this year. This investment is crucial to ensuring long-term reliability in our water system. At the same time, my administration continues to actively seek additional funding opportunities to modernize our nearly 100 year old water distribution lines. These upgrades are essential to improving service and public health for generations to come. Although these issues with our water system didn’t begin overnight, they certainly won’t be fixed completely overnight. After seven years of applying for many sources the foundational rehab has begun.

Mayor Fouclard addressed recent social media concerns regarding the future of Bayou Bend Health Systems. He stated that as Mayor and as a board member of the Hospital Service District, he can confidently reiterate that Bayou Bend Health Systems is on strong financial footing. CEO Stephanie Guidry made it clear that, while budget proposals at the federal level have raised national concerns, our local hospital is not at risk of closure.

He stated that the hospital is experiencing exciting growth. Construction on the hospital’s expanded surgical suites and new MRI wing is nearing completion and Bayou Bend’s Wellness Center is breaking ground on a new outdoor expansion, which will include eight state-of-the-art pickleball courts and an outdoor walking track—further reinforcing the hospital’s commitment to health and wellness in the Franklin area.

Mayor Foulcard mention infrastructure improvements are also happening on our roadways. The Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development continues its full reconstruction of Northwest Boulevard, from the railroad tracks to Highway 182. This phase is expected to be completed by early September in preparation for grinding. Sometime after

grinding finishes, DOTD will move forward with rehabilitating the section from the tracks to Highway 90, including adding a large roundabout at Chatsworth and Yokley intersection with NW Blvd. These upgrades will significantly improve traffic flow and safety for all who live and travel in and out of Franklin.

Mayor Foulcard stated that the City of Franklin recently hosted a Small Business Workshop in partnership with the Louisiana Small Business Development Center (SBDC). This Economic Vitality event brought together local business owners and aspiring entrepreneurs for a day of learning, networking, and planning. It was an overwhelmingly positive experience, and we've already requested that SBDC return quarterly to support our local business community. These workshops are free for anyone to attend. Events like these are critical to keeping our Revitalization Movement moving forward and stronger than ever.

DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS:

Mayor Foulcard stated that the May 2025 Financial Statements were presented to the council. Fire Chief Boykin "Chuck" Bourgeois recognized Asst. Chief Justin Martin for graduating Louisiana's first Fire Chief Academy and becoming a Certified Fire Executive. He stated that Mr. Martin is prepared to be his successor when his retirement day comes. The mayor and council expressed congratulatory statements.

INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES:

A motion was made by Councilman Robison to introduce Ordinance No. 3469 – an Ordinance declaring certain movable property no longer needed for public purposes as surplus movable property; due to said movable property constituting a burden of unnecessary expense and consuming needed space and offering said property for sale that could be utilized by others; authorizing the mayor and council of the city of Franklin to auction said surplus movable property through the sealed bid process to the bidder submitting the highest sealed bid.

NEW BUSINESS:

A motion was made by Councilman Garrison to approve the appointment of Willie Rack to the Franklin Municipal Fire and Police Civil Service Board as a college list board member for a three year term. Second by Councilman Autin 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 approve the appointment of Glenn Maze to the Franklin Municipal Fire and Police Civil Service Board as a college list board member for a three year term. Second by Councilman Levine and carried. Roll call is as follows:

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

NAYS: None.

ABSENT: None.

Councilman Autin discussed Section 54-340 of the code of ordinances prohibiting the attachment of signs and other objects to utility poles. He mentioned that companies and citizens are attaching signs to utility poles and they should not be. He asked the public to refrain from this practice and referenced the law that prohibits such.

City Clerk Karen LeBlanc asked the council to consider expanding the agenda to include the selection of the contractor for the Multi-Property Clearance /Demolition Project.

A motion was made by Councilman Garrison to expand the agenda to include the selection of the contractor for the Multi-Property Clearance /Demolition Project. Second by Councilman Levine and carried. No public comment on the expansion. Roll call is as follows:

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

NAYS: None.
ABSENT: None.

Mrs. LeBlanc stated that the City issued a request for quotes demolition and clearance of 24 blighted and condemned properties located throughout Franklin. A committee that included two representatives from the City and the Grant's Manager from South Central Planning & Development Commission reviewed and assessed the packages. Based on the scores and pricing, it was recommended that the contract be awarded to SDPro, LLC.

A motion was made by Councilwoman Rack to approve the recommendation to award the contract for the LCDBG Clearance Program, Multi-Property Clearance /Demolition Project to SDPro, LLC. Second by Councilman Levine 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 Teche Theatre Summer Production, Hanson students' Bridges Project, Bayou Beaux Dance Recital, City-Wide Clean Up, and Bayou to Main Marketplace.

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

ATTEST:

CITY OF FRANKLIN, LOUISIANA

Karen LeBlanc
Clerk of the Council

EUGENE P. FOULCARD, MAYOR