

The Mayor and Council of the City of Franklin met in Regular Session on Tuesday, April 18, 2023, 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, Joseph Garrison, Lester Levine, Jaime Robison, City Attorney Russel J. Cremaldi, and City Clerk Karen LeBlanc. Absent was Councilman Larry Guilbeau.

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

GUESTS:

Theresa “Tessi” Boykin announced her title as Mrs. Franklin Plus America 2023. She stated that she is excited and proud to promote and represent Franklin at the Mrs. Louisiana Plus America Pageant to be held in Monroe.

Marcus Johnson and Marquita Wiggins were present promoting Crohn’s Awareness Day and educating the public on Crohns’s Disease.

RESOLUTIONS:

A motion was made by Councilman Garrison to expand the agenda to include a Resolution adopting a Citizen Participation Plan relative to the Louisiana Community Development Block Grant Program. Second by Councilman Levine and carried. No public comment heard on the expansion. Roll call is as follows:

YEAS: Councilmembers Autin, Garrison, Levine, and Robison

NAYS: None.

ABSENT: Councilman Guilbeau

A motion was made by Councilman Garrison to adopt a Resolution adopting a Citizen Participation Plan relative to the Louisiana Community Development Block Grant Program. Second by Councilman Autin and carried. Roll call is as follows:

YEAS: Councilmembers Autin, Garrison, Levine, and Robison

NAYS: None.

ABSENT: Councilman Guilbeau

DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS:

Mayor Foulcard stated that the City’s Financial Statement for the month of February 2023 was presented to the council.

PUBLIC COMMENT (for items on the agenda): No comment heard.

MINUTES:

A motion was made by Councilman Garrison to accept the March 21, 2023 Regular Meeting minutes. Second by Councilman Levine and carried. Roll call is as follows:

YEAS: Councilmembers Autin, Garrison, Levine, and Robison

NAYS: None.

ABSENT: Councilman Guilbeau

ADOPTION OF ORDINANCES:

A motion was made by Councilman Garrison to adopt Ordinance No. 3438 – An Ordinance fixing the rates of tax to be assessed by the municipal corporation of the City of Franklin, Parish of St. Mary, State of Louisiana, subject to taxation therein, for the year 2023. Second by Councilman Autin and carried. Roll call is as follows:

YEAS: Councilmembers Autin, Garrison, Levine, and Robison

NAYS: None.

ABSENT: Councilman Guilbeau

PROCLAMATIONS:

A motion was made by Councilman Garrison to adopt a Proclamation declaring May 19th as Crohn’s Awareness Day in the City of Franklin. Second by Councilman Levine and carried. Roll call is as follows:

YEAS: Councilmembers Autin, Garrison, Levine, and Robison

NAYS: None.

ABSENT: Councilman Guilbeau

A motion was made by Councilman Levine to adopt a Proclamation declaring the month of April as Fair Housing Month. Second by Councilman Garrison and carried. Roll call is as follows:
YEAS: Councilmembers Autin, Garrison, Levine, and Robison
NAYS: None.
ABSENT: Councilman Guilbeau

A motion was made by Councilman Levine to adopt a Proclamation declaring the week of April 10 – 14, 2023 as Community Development Week. Second by Councilman Robison and carried. Roll call is as follows:
YEAS: Councilmembers Autin, Garrison, Levine, and Robison
NAYS: None.
ABSENT: Councilman Guilbeau

MAYOR'S EXECUTIVE REPORT:

Mayor Foulcard presented his report. He stated that after Chief Beverly tendered his retirement from the Franklin Police Department, he immediately called for the Civil Service Exam to be held. Eleven individuals submitted their applications to take the Civil Service Examination with six passing. All six were interviewed by me, two members of the Public Safety Committee, and two members of the Civil Service Board. After much vetting, deliberation and discussion between him and the councilmen on an individual basis, a few of the candidates rose above the others.

Mayor Foulcard stated that the position of Police Chief is one of seven department heads in the City of Franklin. He takes every appointment very seriously. He takes pride in the fact that the current department heads for the City of Franklin come together and work together as a team to keep things running smoothly and safely for our citizens. There is no "I" in team. While each department head has specific duties, the Police Chief is tasked with the safety and security of each and every citizen in the City of Franklin.

He stated that the chief is responsible for preservation of peace and order, prevention of crime, apprehension of criminals, operation of the police station, assistance to the courts and law enforcement officials as well as many other duties. But as equally important, our Chief of Police, along with his department must be vigilant and transparent with our citizens through community policing. At the moment, our city and nation are seeing the threats of gun violence like no other time in our history. He stated that he and the council both hear the cries and demands from our community for more to be done to combat gun violence. This has to be a two way street between the Franklin Police Department and the entire Franklin community and outlying regions. The Franklin Police Department cannot do this alone. It will take each and every one of us to combat the threats of gun violence we are seeing today. While the public is demanding more from our Police Department, he now demands more from our public.

Mayor Foulcard expressed that just the past weekend the St. Joseph community was stricken with gun violence that resulted in the loss of life of a young mother, Ms. Bryant. His thoughts and prayers are with her family and friends as they mourn a life cut short due to the senseless acts of those with a disregard for life.

He stated that until our community rises up together with local law enforcement, including the Franklin Police Department, can we battle the evils of society. Although this happened outside of the city limits, this still impacts the entire neighboring region. Enough is enough! Until the families of those doing wrong stand up and do what is right we will continue to see sporadic gun violence across our region. The community must work hand in hand with law enforcement. He prays each and every day for our community. He has put much thought and prayer into his decision as to who will be the next Chief of Police for the City of Franklin.

He stated that his prayers have led him to appoint Mr. Cedric Handy as Chief of Police for the City of Franklin and the appointment must be ratified by the Franklin City Council. Mr. Handy comes with over 20 years of law enforcement experience. His law enforcement career is well rounded, having a background of being a narcotics detective, swat team certified, active shooter instructor, crisis/emergency planning, as well as being a long-time community school resource officer for over 10 years. Mr. Handy holds an Associate's Degree in Business, a Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice and is currently working on his Master's Degree in Criminal Justice

Mayor Foulcard then submitted Mr. Cedric Handy's name to the City Councilmen for their consideration as the next Franklin Chief of Police effective April 23, 2023.

Councilmembers Garrison, Autin, and Levine expressed their pleasure and support of the mayor's appointment.

NEW BUSINESS:

A motion was made by Councilman Garrison to appoint Cedric Handy as Police Chief effective April 23, 2023. Second by Councilman Levine and carried. Roll call is as follows:

YEAS: Councilmembers Autin, Garrison, Levine, and Robison

NAYS: None.

ABSENT: Councilman Guilbeau

Mr. Handy thanked God for guiding his footsteps over the past 20 years. He expressed thanks to the mayor and council for trusting him with the safety of the citizens of Franklin. Many of his family members, friends, and representatives from other law enforcement agencies throughout the area were present in support of Mr. Handy. He stated that the support of all those in attendance lets him know he has done something right.

ORDER APPOINTING ATTORNEY

Pursuant to La. R. S. 33:4762, and finding the owner of the building(s) to be absent from the state of Louisiana and/or unrepresented therein, the appointment of Joseph Tabb, attorney at law to represent the owner(s) in connection with all actions and proceedings conducted to demolish the building(s) situated at the relative address in Franklin, Louisiana, pursuant to La. R. S. 33:4761, et seq.

A motion was made by Councilman Autin to appoint Joseph Tabb to represent the owner(s) in connection with all actions and proceedings conducted to demolish the building(s) situated at 406 Robertson Street. Second by Councilman Robison and carried. Roll call is as follows:

YEAS: Councilmembers Autin, Garrison, Levine, and Robison

NAYS: None.

ABSENT: Councilman Guilbeau

A motion was made by Councilman Garrison to appoint Joseph Tabb to represent the owner(s) in connection with all actions and proceedings conducted to demolish the building(s) situated at 1018 West Third Street. Second by Councilman Levine and carried. Roll call is as follows:

YEAS: Councilmembers Autin, Garrison, Levine, and Robison

NAYS: None.

ABSENT: Councilman Guilbeau

A motion was made by Councilman Autin to appoint Joseph Tabb to represent the owner(s) in connection with all actions and proceedings conducted to demolish the building(s) situated at 408 Jacobs Street. Second by Councilman Robison and carried. Roll call is as follows:

YEAS: Councilmembers Autin, Garrison, Levine, and Robison

NAYS: None.

ABSENT: Councilman Guilbeau

CONDEMNATION HEARINGS

Mr. Cremaldi held Condemnation Hearing pursuant to Louisiana Revised Statute Sections 33:3761-4763, relative to the properties submitted by Glenn Todd, Chief Building Official. Mr. Cremaldi asked if there was anyone present on behalf of any of the properties listed. Only a representative of 623 Iberia Street was present. He stated that Damage Building Reports and photographs for each property were submitted and are part of this hearing.

A motion was made by Councilman Autin to make an order for condemnation and the demolition of 802 Abbirene Street within zero (0) days. Second by Councilman Garrison and carried. Roll call is as follows:

YEAS: Councilmembers Autin, Garrison, Levine, and Robison

NAYS: None.

ABSENT: Councilman Guilbeau

A motion was made by Councilman Garrison to make an order for condemnation and the demolition of 701 Willow Street within zero (0) days. Second by Councilman Robison and carried. Roll call is as follows:

YEAS: Councilmembers Autin, Garrison, Levine, and Robison

NAYS: None.

ABSENT: Councilman Guilbeau

A motion was made by Councilman Robison to make an order for condemnation and the demolition of 1014 Weber Street within zero (0) days. Second by Councilman Autin and carried. Roll call is as follows:
YEAS: Councilmembers Autin, Garrison, Levine, and Robison
NAYS: None.
ABSENT: Councilman Guilbeau

A motion was made by Councilman Garrison to make an order for condemnation and the demolition of 1014 Eagle Street within zero (0) days. Second by Councilman Robison and carried. Roll call is as follows:
YEAS: Councilmembers Autin, Garrison, Levine, and Robison
NAYS: None.
ABSENT: Councilman Guilbeau

Angela Reed, daughter of owner Mary L. Jack, represented the property located at 623 Iberia Street. She stated that she has begun removing the add-ons on the main building; which is the problem. The main building will remain. She asked for more time to complete the demolition of the add-ons and clean up.

A motion was made by Councilman Garrison to make an order for condemnation and the demolition of 623 Iberia Street within ninety (90) days. Second by Councilman Levine and carried. Roll call is as follows:
YEAS: Councilmembers Autin, Garrison, Levine, and Robison
NAYS: None.
ABSENT: Councilman Guilbeau

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Mayor Foulcard made announcements for upcoming events: Franklin City-Wide Clean-Up, “Love the Boot” Community Clean-Up Day, Franklin Merchants Association’s “Dinner Under the Lampposts”, Teche Theatre for the Performing Arts presents August Wilson’s “Fences”, Heart of Hospice Butterfly Release, Arc of St. Mary/Center of Hope Prom, Bayou Teche Black Bear Festival, Crohn’s Awareness Day, and the Soul Food Festival.

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

CITY OF FRANKLIN, LOUISIANA

ATTEST:

Karen LeBlanc
Clerk of the Council

EUGENE P. FOULCARD, MAYOR