

The Mayor and Council of the City of Franklin met in Regular Session on Tuesday, February 20, 2024, 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, and Lester Levine, and City Clerk Karen LeBlanc. Absent were Councilmembers Larry Guilbeau and Jaime Robison, and City Attorney Russel J. Cremaldi.

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

GUESTS:

See "Announcements."

PUBLIC COMMENT (for items on the agenda):

MINUTES:

A motion was made by Councilman Garrison to accept the January 16, 2024 Regular Meeting minutes. Second by Councilman Levine and carried. Roll call is as follows:
YEAS: Councilmembers Autin, Garrison, and Levine
NAYS: None.
ABSENT: Councilmembers Guilbeau and Robison

MAYOR'S EXECUTIVE REPORT:

Mayor Foulcard presented his report. He thanked the Franklin Carnival Association for a great All Krewes Parade this year, the citizens of Franklin and our many guests for showing their appreciation, Chief Cedric Handy and Franklin Police Department along with all partnering agencies that helped with the security and logistics of our parade, Chief Chuck Bourgeois and the Franklin Fire Department and partnering agencies for helping to lead the parade, the Public Works Department on their hard work in placing barricades as well as the massive clean-up effort the day after the parade, Tammy Rogers, his executive assistant, for helping to register parade riders for the parade and distributing the Franklin Carnival Association packet to each person entering the parade.

Mayor Foulcard stated that it came to his attention that many citizens have complained in regards to receiving throws such as contraceptive paraphernalia. After a thorough investigation it was determined that one individual riding at the very top of a float that contained many seniors as well as young children threw these items throughout the parade. This information was then given to the Franklin Carnival Association as well as discussed with that float captain who was unaware this was happening. Every year Franklin's All Krewes parade is marketed as a family friendly parade unlike many of the parades in New Orleans and surrounding areas. However, this year's parade was the largest and one of the better parades in our area. He stated that he refuses to allow an act by one person diminish the positivity and joy that was experienced by all on Mardi Gras Day. As with human nature we tend to focus on the small percentage of the negative as opposed to looking at the whole picture. Although the Franklin Carnival Association float rider packet contains all pertinent language regarding parade conduct regarding throws and music for many years we will reiterate and stress with all float captains the importance of stressing to all riders of those conditions they sign off on to become a rider in the parade. Increase in participant fees are not foreseen as the parade is intended to remain affordable to all. Issuing float numbers that must be displayed has been discussed in case any issue would arise. There were considerable differing opinions of what float or truck that became in question from the citizens that made reports. After viewing hundreds of photos from those leads it led us to the culprit. See something, say something works. Many people will feel entitled to know the disposition of this young individual which resolution was handled by the Franklin Carnival Association. As we continue to ensure that our city remains in a strong Revitalization Movement we must also be vigilant of our words. He stated that so many times social media can be used for good but many times all it takes is a single phone call to resolve an issue. Every call is handled by my office and 99.9% of the time we can resolve the issue rather quickly. Some are happy with the results however some will dislike what the law or ordinance will allow us to do as a

municipality. He thanked everyone for loving our beautiful city and creating a great atmosphere for all to enjoy.

Mayor Foulcard read aloud the budget messages presented to the Council with the budget ordinances.

DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS:

Mayor Foulcard stated that the December 2023 Financial Statement was presented to the Council.

Mr. Ed Hay, Director of Finance, discussed the amended and proposed budgets presented to the Council for introduction. He stated that he met with the various department managers and discussed current and expected expenditures in light of the current and projected revenue stream.

Mr. Hay started with the General Fund and progressed thru the major and minor funds. He stated that with regard to the general fund and the amended 2023-2024 budget total revenues were higher than originally budgeted by about \$500,000. This was due to transferring the fire training facility cost out of Capital Outlay and into the General Fund as it becomes a capital asset. Individual line items were fairly consistent with amount originally budgeted. The proposed budget for the next year reflects total revenues \$2 million dollars lower. That is because the one time projects in FY 2023-24 Budget that were funded by federal and state grants were completed so those revenues do not reoccur in 2024-25. The only federal grant that will carry over into 2024-25 is \$1.2 million associated with the HVAC at the civic centers.

Projected sales tax revenues are slightly higher. It is assumed that those will increase by approximately 3% which is relatively conservative. This will be monitored each month and may be amended in the future. Public Works expenditures are consistent from year to year at about \$840,000. Recreation expenditures are consistent in ordinary expense at about \$310,000 but the budget for 2023-24 is amended for the cost of playground equipment which was installed under a LCDBG grant. The budget for 2024-25 reflects installation of the HVAC systems which is also under a LCDBG grant. So the amended budget is \$710,000 and proposed is \$2,070,000. Expenditures in Community Development, Permits and Licensing, General Administration, Finance, City Court and other funding are relatively consistent from year to year and only minor adjustments were made in the amended budget for 2023-24 and the corresponding amounts are used in the 2024-2025 Budget.

In regard to the Police Department there is an amended amount in salaries, overtime and other related payroll costs due to increased manning. Also, the amount expended on leases was amended from a total of \$66,000 to 95,000 for 2023-2024 and the amount proposed for 2024-2025 is \$95,000.

The amended budget also reflects an increase of \$62,000 in Capital Assets which reflects the cost to equip the new vehicles with lights and cameras \$52,000 and approximately \$10,000 in hardened computers for patrol (secured with a private grant). Fire Department numbers are relatively consistent year to year with the exception of Capital Outlay which was initially budgeted at \$45,000. That amount was amended to \$625,000 to account for the purchase of a used pumper from another fire department for \$25,000, computer systems in support of the new parish wide C.A.D. system (\$24,000) and the construction of a Fire Training Facility for \$580,000.

The overall total budget for the General Fund for 2024-2025 when compared to the previous budget is reduced by approximately \$2 million dollars due to projected reduction in federal funding.

Mr. Hay discussed the Utility Fund. He stated that water revenues were projected in 2023-2024 to be \$2,400,000 based on getting all meter systems problems corrected. That has not happened due to the amount of time it is taking to identify problems and to correct them. The amended 2023-2024 amount is reduced to \$2,200,000. In the proposed budget anticipated water revenues will reach \$2,400,000 assuming the meter system problems are completely

corrected. Water Plant operations requires only minor adjustments in the amended budget, approximately \$5,000. While there is a project to change the filters in the plant and to do some modifications (75% cover by state grant) it is anticipated that cost of operating the plant will remain approximately the same due to the aging infrastructure and frequency of major leaks. Those leaks have driven up the need to amend the 2023- 2024 budget for Water Distribution from \$224,000 to \$320,000. The projected 2024-2025 budget for Water Distribution is approximately \$330,000. Other departmental budgets for the Utility Fund are relatively consistent with prior years.

Mr. Hay discussed the Liquid and Solid Waste Fund. The revenue stream is amended by about \$100,000 from \$2,700,000 to \$2,600,000 in the amended budget. Sales tax revenue is expected to be lower than projected as is sewer revenue but those are offset with increase garbage assessment. That revenue short fall is projected to rebound in the 2024-2025 fiscal year. There is a slight uptick (approximately \$26,000) in administrative expense due to increase insurance cost and audit fees. Metering expense shows a slight reduction mostly due to zeroing out meter replacement costs. We are removing meters initially placed on vacant properties by the installation contractor and using them to correct issue. Sewer plant expenditures show a \$20,000 deduction in both the amended and proposed compared to the original 2023-2024 budget due to reduced electrical costs, and as by-product of the newer plant design. Sewer Collection costs are amended slightly from \$470,000 to \$481,000. Estimated repairs and maintenance is reduced by \$90,000 in the amended budget but is offset by a capital assets expenditure of \$83,000 to repair and replace collapsed sewer station on Barrow Street. The proposed budget 2024-2025 eliminates capital assets and leaves repair and maintenance at projected total of \$60,000.

Garbage rates charged by Pelican Waste increased by 2% over projected and is amended to \$714,000 for 2023-2024. Accordingly, by contract Pelican will probably pass an increase in 2024-2025 of about 2% which brings the budgeted amount for that year to \$731,000.

The Capital Outlay budget amended 2023-2024 and proposed 2024-2025 shows completion of most projects in 2023-2024 and carryover of the HVAC project into 2024-2025. Accordingly the funds flowing into the fund show a decline in funding in 2023-2024 as amended.

The Police Narcotics Fund is difficult to provide any real estimation of funding. Expenditures are mostly for dog food for the drug canines. The Summer Feeding Program budget is mostly consistent with prior years. Funding is from federal source administered by the state and is dependent on the number of our young citizens serviced by the program.

INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES:

A motion was made by Councilman Garrison to introduce Ordinance No. 3448 – An Ordinance amending the Operating Budget of Revenues and Expenditures for the Fiscal Year beginning May First (1st), 2023 and ending April Thirtieth (30th), 2024.

A motion was made by Councilman Garrison to introduce Ordinance No. 3449 – An Ordinance amending the Capital Outlay Budget of Revenues and Expenditures for the Fiscal Year beginning May First (1st), 2023 and ending April Thirtieth (30th), 2024.

A motion was made by Councilman Garrison to introduce Ordinance No. 3450 – An Ordinance adopting the Operating Budget of Revenues and Expenditures for the Fiscal Year beginning May First (1st), 2024 and ending April Thirtieth (30th), 2025.

A motion was made by Councilman Garrison to introduce Ordinance No. 3451 – An Ordinance adopting the Capital Outlay Budget for the Fiscal Years beginning May First (1st), 2024 and ending April Thirtieth (30th), 2029.

RESOLUTIONS:

A motion was made by Councilman Garrison 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 2024 Special Waves Grant program, and

authorizing all actions necessary to implement and complete the activities outlined in said application. Second by Councilman Levine and carried. Roll call is as follows:

YEAS: Councilmembers Autin, Garrison, and Levine

NAYS: None.

ABSENT: Councilmembers Guilbeau and Robison

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Mayor Foulcard made announcements for the upcoming City-Wide Clean Up.

Mr. Ricky Herndon announced plans for Hot Rod Fest at 100 Main Street on October 18-20, 2024.

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