

**MINUTES OF THE
REGULAR FRANKLIN CITY COUNCIL MEETING
Monday, April 8, 2024**

A Regular Meeting of the Franklin City Council was held on Monday, April 8, 2024, at 7:00 p.m. in the Franklin Community Center. Council members present were: C. Gruendemann, W. Lund, D. Schneider, R. Kokesch and M. Mumme. Staff Department Heads present were: Radermacher, K. Kokesch and D. Menk. Guests present were: R. Handy, S. Traulich, D. Menk, J. Vogel, B. Ortloff, S. Groux, F. Krawczel.

At 7:00 p.m., Mayor Gruendemann called the meeting to order. Roll called showed R. Kokesch to arrive late. The pledge of allegiance was recited.

Mayor Gruendemann called for approval of the minutes of the regular council meeting on March 11, 2024. Mumme motioned to approve the minutes as presented, Second by Lund, RCV-5 Yes, 0 No.

Mayor Gruendemann called for approval of the consent agenda: bills were presented in the amount of \$77,612.65, Cash receipts for February were \$29198.13; there were 5 past due utility accounts; no new zoning permit issued. **Lund motioned to approve the consent agenda as presented, second by Mumme, RCV-5 Yes, 0 No.**

J. Vogel addressed the council first asking to view the plans for the 2nd ave project to share with contractors in hopes of helping find the lowest price to get the work completed. R. Kokesch informed Vogel of their ability to place a bid on the project once the bidding process becomes open. Vogel asked questions about details of the project and input his opinions on looping the water mains as he stated that the water quality would not be improved due to connecting new pipes with old pipes. S. Traulich with Bolton and Menk shared information on why it would not decrease water quality and how it is looked at from a different perspective. Water is always being tested and treated to ensure it is safe to drink. The plans to loop the dead end water mains on 2nd and 3rd Ave will allow for increased water pressure, better water quality as well as providing individual water shut off valves for each property. Vogel talked about some of the plans he has for his property located west of 2nd and 3rd Ave- including walking trails, butterfly sanctuary, shade trees, wild flowers, community garden, etc. Due to the extent of his plans for his property and the fact that there is a platted street and alley for the city going through it, he hopes to have the city vacate those to allow him ease of achieving his vision. The council suggest he make a formal request and the planning and zoning committee be called together for review.

Groux and Krawczel from AES energy presented plans for a large solar garden to be located north of town. A small portion of the solar garden is proposed to be within the city limits with the rest to be mostly north and east of the city limits. Groux stated that there are no plans to have battery storage facilities and they plan to begin construction in 2027 and to be ready to distribute energy in in 2028. Land owners in the proposed area have been in contact with AES and are on board with the plans; land agreements are still to be negotiated with apx. 768 acres anticipated to be committed to the project. R. Kokesch asked if they plan to address the residents of the area that are not on board with the plans and are moving because of it. Groux stated that AES strives to better the community, but it is not always possible to please everyone. AES will hold public hearings in the permitting process but are being proactive by keeping communication open. Council asked questions about other things that may be affected including county field tiling, affects on the City water supply. AES has no plans to affect the field tiling or the area where the city water supply is. AES stated that the southern most parcel of land is planned to be a staging and set up area during the construction phase and will be restored as close to its original state as possible. AES addressed the fact that the staging area is not necessarily always pretty to look at for folks driving through the city and they will be asking for feedback from the city council as well as other members of the community for how they would like to improve the aesthetics of this area for better visuals when driving by. AES also plans to have permanent staging areas set up for future maintenance. Woven wire fencing with mid-level cover vegetation within the solar garden is proposed. There are no plans to plant trees as landowners do not want the burden of cleaning up sticks withing the fenced solar garden area. Land agreement contracts with property owners are proposed to be 35-year contracts. AES touched on tax benefits and that the city will benefit since the parcel within city limits will be taxed as commercial property and will increase the tax capacity, which is being reported as a benefit to the city taxpayers. During the construction phase, it is expected that there will be approximately 300 workers that will be brought to the area staying in hotels and campgrounds as well as bringing in business to the locals bars and restaurants. AES strives to keep communications open and transparent and will strive to be beneficial to the community.

Traulich with Bolton and Menk reported on the various things they are assisting Franklin with; he anticipates word on the small cities grant in June; work on the PFA loans are wrapping up and will soon be submitted; another public hearing will need to held in July so the council will need to pass a Resolution in June; the grant for the ravine project will soon be submitted; the lead and copper inventory project will be completed in the beginning of May-the GIS mapping program is set up and ready. Traulich has met with Radermacher and K. Kokesch to plan the appointments and details out for completion of the inventory. Traulich reported communication with the county of future plans to improve CR 5; as there is still an old city water main from 1920 between 5th Ave and 3rd Ave, he asked if council would plan to replace the old water main with new during this time that the county improves the road, making note that the county is not planning this in the near future and will be down the road. Council would like to plan to make city improvements at the same time but are not yet ready to put a cost estimate together.

Deputy Ortloff spoke with the council about the city blight process and suggested beginning the process earlier than in the past. Plans to identify blighted properties and send out an initial letter once identified and hand out violations after city wide cleanup week to allow property owners a method to rid their properties of garbage. The council is completely on board and prefers to Radermacher as the person of contact with the sheriffs department for these properties. The Sheriff's department will be holding an ATV safety and training class in May at the Franklin Community Center and the County Public works shop in Franklin. Council reminded Ortloff of the councils request to enforce all ATVs and golf carts be permitted through the county as well as ensuring that no children under 16 years of age or younger are not using golf carts and ATVs as a means of transportation around the city all summer.

Department heads reported: Menk reported a recent grass fire call. The Fire Department will be hosting a natural disaster training in May and invite and city council members or city staff to attend so that all will know their rolls in the chance of a natural disaster. Council held a discussion with Menk on well checks and screenings for Fire Department and first responders. K. Kokesch reported the tree at the Lions park was removed. The individual that used his equipment originally planned to provide this service for free but is asking for \$575 due to the process taking longer than expected, council approved. Kokesch will be flushing hydrants soon. Kokesch request that the council assist in helping inform residents the importance of pulling their garbage and recycle bins back to their house after getting emptied as it hinders street cleaning throughout the year. Kokesch reported a recent lift station pump failure over the weekend and a replacement will need to be purchased. Kokesch reported getting awarded by the MPCA for Franklin's treatment of the City's wastewater. Radermacher reported getting accepted into the Clerk's institute with a discount on

tuition and will be gone for the entire week of May 6-10. R. Kokesch requested the website be updated or removed. Radermacher reported having it updated; with quick review of the website during the meeting it showed that the newsletter updates did not take.

Lund motioned to accept the resignation of K. Joehnck from the MRU department, Second by Mummer, RCV- 5 Yes, 0 No.

The public safety aid given to the City in December of 2023 was discussed \$21,443 was given to the City of Franklin. Menk made a wish list for the fire department, Radermacher reported that park cameras (\$4088.75) are a qualified expense, and other departments have safety needs but did not bring a fourth a wish list. The fire departments needs included: turn out gear for a member who was recently on military leave but is back in town(\$4473), a gas/O2 sensor replacement (\$1519), washer(\$7950) and dryer (\$9899), and more lockers (\$3759). **R. Kokesch motioned to approve the expenses of the Lion's park cameras, turn out gear of one fire dept. member, and the gas monitoring sensor replacement, Second by Mumme, RCV- 5 Yes, 0 No.**

Council discussed setting up the park equipment and expressed they want it to be up by graduation for utilization to begin before school is out for the season. There was discussion on who will be able to head the project; Mayor Gruendemann is willing to assist in leading the project however, stated he will not be available until mid-May at the earliest. The council plans to ask for volunteers from the community to help in construction. R. Kokesch will help in making plans and finding helpers.

Discussion was held on 2024 summer mowing and spring/fall park clean up. McGown submitted a quote to mow all the areas that are currently being maintained by the city. The council also looked at a quote for a new mower. Discussion included talk about hiring a part-time public works assistant in anticipation of K. Kokesch's eventual retirement. The council requested that the job description be sent to them for the public works assistant. Once the job description is set, the part time summer help job will be posted. **R. Kokesch motioned to approve spring park clean up, Second by Mumme, RCV- 4 Yes, 0 No.** Mower quote was looked at. With trade in of the old mower, the new John Deer mower will cost \$17,063. Other mowers were demoed over the last year or two but K. Kokesch expressed that the John Deer mower meets all of the needs of the city mowing. **R. Kokesch motioned to approve the purchase of a new mower, Second by Mumme, RCV- 4 Yes, 0 No.**

R. Kokesch motioned to approve mosquito spraying for 8 Biweekly treatments for \$399 per treatment, Second by Mumme, RCV- 4 Yes, 0 No.

Two dust control bids were received: SW Dust control and SW Transfer. Bids were identical with their pricing and coverage. Council discussed changing from their previous treatment company of SW Dust and switch to SW Transfer as it is a local company from Franklin beginning this service. **R. Kokesch motioned to approve dust treatment for the 2024 season to be completed by South West Transfer, Second by Mumme, RCV- 4 Yes, 0 No.**

R. Kokesch motioned to approve the liquor license renewals for the Longbranch and the Depot, Second by Mumme, RCV- 4 Yes, 0 No.

Mumme motioned to approve port-a-potty rental for the boat landing for the 2024 season, Second by R. Kokesch, RCV- 4 Yes, 0 No.

Council approved purchasing paint to have the inside of the community center. Painting is to be completed by Cedar Mountain.

At 9:15 P.M., Gruendemann motioned for adjournment, Second by R. Kokesch, RCV-4 Yes, 0 No. The next regular meeting will be June 10, 2024, at 7:00 p.m. at City Hall.

Respectfully Submitted by
Trista Radermacher, City Clerk/Treasurer