

**REGULAR MONTHLY  
MEETING**

The Franklin Township Committee held their regular scheduled monthly meeting at the hour of approximately 7:00 p.m. on Monday, May 4, 2026. Deputy Mayor Bonnie Butler opened the meeting in accordance with the "Open Public Meeting Act" Chapter 231, P.L. 1975, having been electronically advertised on the municipal website and a copy posted in the office of the Municipal Clerk and mailing to The Daily Record.

Following the flag salute, **Roll Call of Committeepersons present:** Bonnie Butler, David Guth, Rich Herzer, Mike Toretta,

**Absent:** Sarah Payne, Mayor

**Present:** Kevin Benbrook, Attorney, Margaret Pasqua, CFO, Joe Biel, DPW Foreman, Jim Onembo, Zoning/Code Enforcement, Shawna Taber, OEM/911, Denise L. Becton, Municipal Clerk

**Absent:** Wayne Ingram, Engineer

**PUBLIC HEARING/ADOPTION OF THE 2026 MUNICIPAL BUDGET**

**Introduction/Adoption of Res. 2026-43 Authorizing the Budget to be read by title**

**RESOLUTION 2026-43  
Authorizing the Budget to be read by Title**

**WHEREAS**, NJSA 40A:4-8 provides that the budget be read by title only, and the time of public hearing if a resolution is passed by not less than a majority of the full governing body, providing that at least one week prior to the date of the hearing a complete copy of the approved budget as advertised has been posted in the Municipal Building, and copies have been made available by the Clerk to persons requesting them; and

**WHEREAS**, the Township Committee does advise that these conditions have been met.

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** by the Township Committee of the Township of Franklin, in the County of Warren, State of New Jersey, that the budget shall be read by title only.

The within Resolution 2026-43 was moved by Committeeperson Guth and seconded by Committeeperson Herzer and upon roll call vote was passed.

<b>Roll Call Vote:</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Absent/Abstained</b>
Bonnie Butler	X		
David Guth	X		
Rich Herzer	X		
Mike Toretta	X		
Mayor Sarah Payne			X (4) Yes (0) No (1) Absent

**Motion Carried**

**-Motion to open the 2026 Municipal Budget Public Hearing**

On motion by Committeeperson Guth seconded by Committeeperson Herzer, Unanimous vote. An approximate increase annually of \$28.26 for a \$300,000 home per the Deputy Mayor Butler.

**-Public Comments – none heard**

**-Motion to CLOSE/ADOPT the 2026 Municipal Budget**

On motion by Committeeperson Guth and seconded by Committeeperson Toretta the 2026 Municipal Budget be adopted.

<b>Roll Call Vote:</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Absent/Abstained</b>
Bonnie Butler	X		
David Guth	X		
Rich Herzer	X		
Mike Toretta	X		
Mayor Sarah Payne			X (4) Yes (0) No (1) Absent

**Motion Carried**

**NEW BUSINESS**

**CFO’s Ordinance 2026-3 and Ordinance 2026-4 (Introduction of)  
Chapter 159 Resolution (Intro/Adoption):**

**Ordinance 2026-3**

**AN ORDINANCE APPROPRIATING \$130,000.00 FROM CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS FOR THE PURCHASE OF A DPW VEHICLE IN THE TOWNSHIP OF FRANKLIN, WARREN COUNTY, STATE OF NEW JERSEY IN THE AMOUNT OF \$130,000.00**

BE IT ORDAINED, by the Township Committee of Franklin, in the County of Warren, State of New Jersey, as follows:

SECTION ONE: The sum \$130,000.00 is hereby appropriated from Capital Improvements in the General Capital Account for the purpose of purchasing a vehicle for the DPW.

SECTION TWO: The period of usefulness of the equipment as defined by NJSA 40A:2-22, is at least 5 years.

SECTION THREE: The capital budget of the Township is hereby amended to conform with the provisions of this Ordinance to the extent of any inconsistency herewith. The resolution in the form promulgated by the Local Finance Board showing full detail of the amended capital budget and capital program as approved by the Director, Division of Local Government Services, Department of Community Affairs, State of New Jersey is on file with the Township Clerk and is available for public inspection.

SECTION FOUR: The gross debt of the Township of Franklin, as defined by NJSA 4A:20-43 will not be increased by this ordinance.

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED that this Ordinance shall take effect 10 days after publication, following final adoption, as provided by law.

On motion by Committeeperson Toretta and seconded by Committeeperson Herzer the aforementioned Ordinance 2026-3 be adopted as read. Final reading and adoption to take place on June 1, 2026, at 7:00 p.m. on or near that hour.

<b>Roll Call Vote</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Absent/Abstain</b>
Bonnie Butler	X		
Rich Herzer	X		
David Guth	X		
Mike Toretta	X		
Sarah Payne, Mayor			X
			(4) Yes (0) No (1) Absent
			<b>Motion Carried</b>

**Ordinance 2026-4**

**AN ORDINANCE APPROPRIATING \$75,000.00 FROM THE RESERVE FOR ROAD IMPROVEMENTS FOR ROAD IMPROVEMENTS TO VARIOUS ROADS IN THE TOWNSHIP OF FRANKLIN, WARREN COUNTY, STATE OF NEW JERSEY IN THE AMOUNT OF \$75,000.00**

BE IT ORDAINED, by the Township Committee of Franklin, in the County of Warren, State of New Jersey, as follows:

SECTION ONE: The sum \$75,000.00 is hereby appropriated from the Reserve for Road Improvements in the General Capital Account, for the purpose of road improvements to various township roads.

SECTION TWO: The period of usefulness of the Road Improvement as defined by NJSA 40A:2-22, is at least 5 years.

SECTION THREE: The Capital Budget of the Township is hereby amended to conform with the provisions of this Ordinance to the extent of any inconsistency herewith. The resolution in the form promulgated by the Local Finance Board showing full detail of the amended capital budget and capital program as approved by the Director, Division of Local Government Services, Department of Community Affairs, State of New Jersey is on file with the Township Clerk and is available for public inspection.

SECTION FOUR: The gross debt of the Township of Franklin, as defined by NJSA 4A:20-43 will not be increased by this ordinance.

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED that this Ordinance shall take effect 10 days after publication, following final adoption, as provided by law.

On motion by Committeeperson Guth and seconded by Committeeperson Toretta the aforementioned Ordinance 2026-4 be adopted as read. Final reading and adoption to take place on June 1, 2026, at 7:00 p.m. on or near that hour.

<b>Roll Call Vote</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Absent/Abstain</b>
Bonnie Butler	X		
Rich Herzer	X		
David Guth	X		
Mike Toretta	X		
Sarah Payne, Mayor			X (4) Yes (0) No (1) Absent

**Motion Carried**

**RESOLUTION 2026-44  
CHAPTER 159**

**RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR THE INCERTION OF A SPECIAL ITEM OF REVENUE IN THE 2026 BUDGET OF THE TOWNSHIP OF FRANKLIN, WARREN COUNTY PURSUANT TO NJSA 40:A4-87 (CHAPTER 159, PL 1948)**

**WHEREAS**, NJS 40A:4-87 provides that the Director of the Division of Local Government Services may approve the insertion of any special item of revenue in the budget of any county or municipality when such item shall have been made available by law and the amount thereof was not determined at the time of adoption of the budget, and

**WHEREAS**, said Director may also approve the insertion of an item of appropriation for an equal amount, and

**WHEREAS**, the Township of Franklin has received an award in the amount of \$67,700.00 from the State of New Jersey, Department of Community Affairs, for the 2026 Local Recreation Improvement Grant and wishes to amend the 2026 Budget to include as a revenue.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the Township Committee of the Township of Franklin, in the County of Warren, State of New Jersey, hereby requests the Director of the Division of Local Government Services to approve the insertion of an item of revenue in the budget of the year 2026 in the sum of..... \$67,700.00

Which is now available as a revenue from:

- Miscellaneous Revenues:
  - Special Item of General Revenue Anticipated
  - With Prior Written Consent of the Director of the
  - Division of Local Government Services:
    - State and Federal Revenues Offset with
    - Appropriations:
      - Department of Community Affairs
      - 2026 Local Recreation Improvement Grant

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the sum of .....\$67,700.00

Be and the same is hereby appropriated under the caption of:

- General Appropriation
  - (a) Operations Excluded from CAPS

State and Federal Programs offset by Revenues:

State of New Jersey  
Department of Community Affairs  
2026 Local Recreation Improvement Grant

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Municipal Clerk forwards two certified copies of this resolution to the Director of the Division of Local Government Services for approval.

On motion by Committeeperson Guth and seconded by Deputy Mayor Butler the aforementioned **Resolution 2026-44** be adopted as read.

<b>Roll Call Vote</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Absent/Abstained</b>
Bonnie Butler	X		
David Guth	X		
Rich Herzer	X		
Mike Toretta	X		
Sarah Payne, Mayor			X (4)Yes (0) No (1) Absent

**Motion carried**

**CONSENT AGENDA:**

(One Roll Call to approve the following agenda items a. – d.)

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <p>4. <b>APPROVAL OF</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Meeting minutes</li> <li>b. Proclamation</li> <li>c. Social Affair Permit</li> <li>d. Signers</li> </ul> | <p><b>RE: April 6, 2026</b><br/> <b>RE: Older Americans Month – May 2026</b><br/> <b>RE: 3 Wolverton Road/The Ridge at Riverview – June 13, 2026, 8am-9pm</b><br/> <b>RE: Unity Bank Account (Denise L. Becton, Margaret Pasqua, Kelley D. Smith, Mike Toretta, Bonnie Butler, Sarah Payne, Eddy Patient)</b></p> |
|---|---|

On motion by Committeeperson Toretta and seconded by Committeeperson Herzer approving the meeting minutes of April 6<sup>th</sup>, 2026, the Proclamation the Social Affair Permit, Unity Bank signers.

<b>Roll Call Vote:</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Absent/Abstained</b>
Bonnie Butler	X		
David Guth	X		
Rich Herzer	X		
Mike Toretta	X		
Mayor Sarah Payne			X (4) Yes (0) No (1) Absent

**Motion Carried**

**Older Americans Month 2026**

**A Proclamation**

**Whereas**, May is Older Americans Month, a time for us to recognize and honor Franklin Township’s older adults and their immense influence on every facet of American society; and

**Whereas**, through their wealth of life experience and wisdom, older adults guide our younger generations and carry forward abundant cultural and historical knowledge; and

**Whereas**, older Americans improve our communities through intergenerational relationships, community service, civic engagement, and many other activities; and

**Whereas**, communities benefit when people of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds have the opportunity to participate and live independently; and

**Whereas**, Franklin Township must ensure that older Americans have the resources and support needed to stay involved in their communities reflecting our commitment to inclusivity and connectedness; and

**Now, Therefore, I, Sarah Payne, Mayor of Franklin Township and the Franklin Township Committee** do hereby proclaim May 2026 as Older Americans Month. This year's theme, *Champion Your Health*, focuses on prevention, wellness, and personal responsibility as cornerstones of healthy aging. It encourages taking an active role in managing your own health, advocating for yourself, accessing preventive care, and making informed decisions that support independence.

We call upon all residents to join us in recognizing the contributions of our older citizens and promoting programs and activities that foster connection, inclusion, and support for older adults.

Sarah Payne, Mayor  
Dated: May 4, 2026

Attest: Denise L. Becton  
Municipal Clerk

**PRESENTATION - Cell Tower**

Tom Wanewski presented this evening on behalf of Diamond Communications, based out of Springfield NJ, and has been in the power development business for 20 years. They build cell towers for Verizon, T-Mobile and AT&T. They got their start with First Energy, and they are the second largest provider for cell tower service in the nation. They are offering the township with an opportunity along Rt. 57, possibly at the municipal building, to erect a new cell tower of 120 ft. monopole, not lit, with a 50' x 50' fence compound to cover most equipment. This tower will fill the hole per sei and allow other carriers to rent space on this pole, with the lack of coverage on Rt. 57. A lot of people are not aware that in case of emergency, anyone can call on any carrier's cell tower. This would be a 50-year lease on municipal property; there are no health risks with a cell tower and would be happy to provide reports to support. With placing a tower on municipal property no site plan approvals are needed per Attorney Benbrook.

**OLD BUSINESS**

Public Hearing - Adoption of:

**ORDINANCE 2026-2**

**SALARY ORDINANCE  
TOWNSHIP OF FRANKLIN  
WARREN COUNTY, NEW JERSEY**

- Motion to open Public Hearing Committeeperson Guth seconded by Committeeperson Herzer, unanimous vote.
- Public Comments – none heard
- Motion to close the Public Hearing Committeeperson Guth seconded by Committeeperson Herzer, unanimous vote.

On motion by Committeeperson Guth and seconded by Deputy Mayor Butler to adopt the aforementioned Ordinance 2026-2 as read.

<b>Roll Call Vote</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Absent/Abstain</b>
Bonnie Butler	X		
Rich Herzer	X		
David Guth	X		
Mike Toretta	X		
Sarah Payne, Mayor			X (4) Yes (0) No (1) Absent

**Motion carried**

**Garage Door Replacement – additional quotes**

Elite Overhead Door, LLC provided an additional quote to replace the garage door in the Community Center in the amount of \$3,960.00

On motion by Deputy Mayor Butler and seconded by Committeeperson Herzer to move forward with the quote from Elite.

<b>Roll Call Vote</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Absent/Abstain</b>
Bonnie Butler	X		
Rich Herzer	X		
David Guth	X		
Mike Toretta	X		
Sarah Payne, Mayor			X (4) Yes (0) No (1) Absent

**Motion carried**

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Discussions/Approvals/Presentations**

**NJSP – No trooper present tonight**

**Historical Commission: Happenings –**

Brenda Higgins, Amy Perkins and Marsha Colaluce, presented to the committee projects they have been working on. America 250 Projects, twelve former school sites in the township have been marked with Historical Signage with the help of our DPW. The creation of a brochure featuring an article, “I Have Touched the Liberty Bell”. Permission was granted by the Smith Family to host an educational field trip for the 4<sup>th</sup> grades, of the Franklin Elementary, at the site of the stone building along Bryan Road. They will reference Midwife Peggy Warne and the use of herbal medicines. If this is successful, this may become open to the public. Purposed Projects consist of moving their display case to the front foyer to gain more viewing of the public. Relocate the remembrance garden across the east driveway to the lawn area and remove a panel from the wall outside the community room.

**Approval/New Village Walking Path –**

On motion by Committeeperson Herzer and seconded by Committeeperson Toretta to authorize Wayne Ingram of French & Parrello to survey and set corners on Third Street on the Open Space property.

<b>Roll Call Vote</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Absent/Abstain</b>
Bonnie Butler	X		
Rich Herzer	X		
David Guth	X		
Mike Toretta	X		
Sarah Payne, Mayor			X (4) Yes (0) No (1) Absent

**Motion carried**

**REPORTS/UPDATES:**

**Wayne Ingram, Municipal Engineer –**

**May 4, 2026 Engineer Report**

**MS4 Permit**

UTRS will be completing the 2025 yearly report as they were in charge for the calendar year. The report is due May 1.

**14 Dioxane GW Contamination**

The contractor has indicated that the water main installations are complete on the local roads. They have submitted a large change order request for addressing possible “contaminated” fill material on Edison Road. We are consulting with our LSRP on the performed testing and legitimacy of the request. We are attempting to determine which owners are abandoning their wells versus re-permitting so the contractor can prepare a change order for that as well.

**2023 NJDOT Local Aid- Millbrook Section 3**

This project will need to be re-awarded and should be bid with the 2025 Local Aid project for Section 4. Updated pricing has been provided for award under the current Morris Co-op contracts. The project will be submitted to the co-op contractor based upon the resolution and we will advise of the provided date for the work.

**2024 NJDOT Local Aid- Good Springs & Willow Grove Road Resurfacing**

The intention was to perform the paving after completion of the Dioxane project. The project will need to be re-awarded under the current co-op contracts.

**2025 NJDOT Local Aid- Millbrook Section 4**

The design plans were obtained through NJDOT. The project requires a significant amount of guiderail that somewhat limits the extent of paving. We believe the guiderail can be altered on the plan to produce a significant savings such that paving can be extended. With the changes in costs from the co-op as well as anticipated asphalt and fuel adjustments, we anticipate the project will exceed the grant budget by over \$10,000. We wish to confirm whether this is acceptable or if the plans should be amended to reduce costs. It would appear plan revisions would be required regardless in order to rebid the project with the co-op.

**2026 NJDOT Local Aid- Copperfield Development Resurfacing**

We would need authorization to design this project based upon the award. There is ample time in this grant and this project can be deferred until next year if necessary.

**2027 NJDOT Local Aid**

The grant application is open, and applications can be submitted through July. We can discuss grant applications with DPW or take any other suggestions on roads to submit for. We understand additional funding in the Copperfield development may be required. Up to 2 roads may be submitted.

**School Street Stop**

We have reached out to the County on a status of the review of a 3-way stop. No response received to date.

**Park & Recreation Grants**

A grant has been awarded in the amount of \$67,700. The installation of fencing and parking appear to be two priorities for the project. We recommend that a boundary and topographic survey be prepared followed by the site layout plan and a parking lot grading plan. We estimate a cost of \$8,500 for preparation of these items.

**Kevin Benbrook, Municipal Attorney –**

Attorney Benbrook will attend a Tax Appeal hearing with Tax Assessor, Craig Brotons in court tomorrow. A letter received from Attorney Mark Peck regarding a Conservation Easement located at 2035-2043 Route 57, Block 16.01 Lots 10 & 10.09 & 10.10. In 2019 Broadway Energy obtained a minor site plan and use variance approvals for a community solar project through our Land Use Board. Part of the condition of approval was the dedication of a conservation easement to the Township along a shared property line with Warren County Vo-Tech. Due to this project taking so much time, Broadway Energy lost the tenant and instead has entered into a contract of sale with the County of Warren. They intend to join this parcel with the Vo-Tech and this will require termination of the easement.

On motion by Deputy Mayor Butler and seconded by Committeeperson Herzer, with favorable recommendation by our Land Use Board, to authorize the mayor and clerk to execute the termination of easement.

<b>Roll Call Vote</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Absent/Abstain</b>
Bonnie Butler	X		
Rich Herzer	X		
David Guth	X		
Mike Toretta	X		
Sarah Payne, Mayor			X (4) Yes (0) No (1) Absent

**Motion carried**

Attorney addressed the DPW to move forward with placing on our website, Temple Gates, for sale. They should be advertised for at least 10 days. It would be more beneficial for the township to sell this equipment in lieu of scraping.

**Jim Onembo, Zoning Officer – Report submitted and on file.**

**Joe Biel, DPW Foreman – Report submitted and on file**

There is a Highlands Grant available to help fund our stormwater mapping and compliance. Engineer and Attorney will work on this and bring additional information back to the committee.

**Franklin Township Fire/EMS – Chief Tom Schaefer**

**Chief reported April 2026 numbers: 8 Fire Calls, 41 Year to Date.**

The annual hose/ladder testing is complete with only two hose lengths that still need to pass. The fishermen’s breakfast was a success and a reminder of the Car Show to be held at the Asbury Fire Station which includes vendors.

**EMS - Chief Karen Chiu**

**Chief reported the March 2026 numbers:**

EMS was dispatched to 76 calls this month, 26 of those calls were in Franklin Township and 17 calls were answered. 50 of those calls were dispatched into Phillipsburg/Lopatcong, due to manpower were unable to respond. Yesterday they covered the MWA run 4 the river, a standby at OK 4WD, Trucks and Coffee, and a road-side fund drive is scheduled for May 16<sup>th</sup>.

**Shawna Tabert – OEM – report submitted and on file – not present**

**Open Space/Ag Advisory Commissions – no meeting held**

**Committee Reports:**

**Mike Toretta –** The waterline going in on Anderson Road, will this continue into Franklin. Per Fire Chief it is going into the Pace Setters Development located in Washington Township and stops. How do we solve the Dioxane Project? Engineer Ingram is trying to piece this together and a change order is holding us up currently. Attorney and Engineer will coordinate efforts.

**Rich Herzer- nothing further to report.**

**David Guth** – We need to address why our DPW is still lining the soccer fields behind the Asbury Fire Station as we are not obligated to do this. Foreman Biel will guestimate time spent to maintain the fields for further discussion.

**Bonnie Butler** – Mayor Payne met with County representatives as to the speeding issue on Old Main Street in Asbury and options were addressed. This Thursday, MWA will be hosting a Micro Soft Teams meeting with representatives from the DEP and Fish and Wildlife addressing PFAS. You may sign up on the MWA website. This Thursday is a general Land Use Board meeting at 7:00 p.m. and a Special “Warehouse” Meeting will be held on May 27<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m. at the Franklin Township School.

**Mayor, Sarah Payne** – absent

**OPEN PUBLIC SESSION:**

At approximately 8:22 p.m. Deputy Mayor Butler opened the floor to the Public. Unanimous vote.

Dave Leary – Mr. Leary gave additional information to the committee pertaining to the cell tower presentation touching base on backup generators and the theft of and copper in them. As to the Dioxane project anyone signing off on the use of their personal well goes to the DEP.

Ruth Schutzbank – Litter is lining Stewartsville Road underneath the railroad overpass. Excess traffic and speed are apparent on this road and doesn’t see troopers patrolling.

Karen Somers – As to the Master Plan will there be any public input. Attorney informed us this is done normally every 10 years and is a Land Use Board process.

Karen Chiu – Stewartsville and Montana Road are dangerous for motorist to make R/L turns onto Rt. 57. With Rt. 57 being a state road, we have no control over this per our municipal attorney.

Jackie Martinson – Informed the Special Meeting for the warehouse will be held at the Franklin Township School at 7:00 p.m.

Wayne Ferguson – Inquired about Bob Santini offering donated land for an alternate road for Stewartsville Road. This fell on deaf ears and was a very expensive venture.

Hearing nothing further from the public, the Open Public Session was closed at 8:39 p.m. Unanimous vote.

On motion by Committeeperson Guth and seconded by Committeeperson Toretta to approve the bills to be paid received by the CFO as submitted.

<b>Roll Call Vote</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Absent/Abstain</b>	
Bonnie Butler	X			
David Guth	X			
Rich Herzer	X			
Mike Toretta	X			
Sarah Payne, Mayor			X (4)	Yes (0) No (1) Absent Motion carried

On motion by Committeeperson Herzer and seconded by Committeeperson Toretta hearing no objection, the meeting stands adjourned at approximately 8:41 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*Denise L. Becton*  
Denise L. Becton, RMC/CMR  
Municipal Clerk