

## CITY OF FRANKLIN SPRINGS



City of Franklin Springs

### **Council Meeting Minutes**

April 15th, 2025

5:30 pm

#### Members Present:

Mayor Lee Moore

Council Members: Bill Bell, Tommy Pritchett, Josh Walden

City Clerk: Jackie Yearwood

Operation Manager-Daniel Ankerich

Chief of Police-Kevin Thompson

Mayor Moore called the meeting to order.

Bill Bell gave invocation and pledge followed.

Tommy Pritchett made a motion to adopt the agenda. Josh Walden seconded. Motion carried.

Josh Walden made a motion for consent agenda approval. Seconded by Tommy Pritchett. Motion carried.

Next, Mayor Moore gave his official statement. It read as follows:

As stated last month, the City of Franklin Springs has not signed any contracts or agreements with Pilgrim's Pride. The only project the city is aware of is the building of its own wastewater treatment facility on property owned by the city located within the city limits of Franklin Springs. However, the City is aware of some recent social media activity containing categorically false, misleading, inflammatory, and defamatory claims involving the City, the DDA, and City personnel. These statements are not based in fact and are causing confusion and concern in our local community. The constant attack and negative remarks against the Mayor and Council are actually a direct attack on our city and our citizens. We are elected to work for them, and they employed us by voting for us.

We want to be clear that the City of Franklin Springs strongly supports the First Amendment and the right of individuals to engage in open dialogue, express their opinions, and participate in robust public discourse on a wide range of issues. This is a cornerstone of our democracy and our society, and it is something we value deeply. At the same time, it is important to recognize that the right to free speech is not unlimited. The United States Supreme Court has made it clear that certain types of speech, including knowingly false statements that harm the reputation of individuals or organizations, are not protected and may be subject to legal action. False and defamatory claims, particularly those made with reckless disregard for the truth, can have real consequences. Attacks on our law enforcement officers, city employees, and residents are disgusting and reprehensible. Advance Franklin County has brought more division, negativity and harm to this community than any industry could ever bring.

We encourage our residents to remain calm, stay informed, and rely on accurate information. Misinformation and speculation, especially when driven by outside parties with limited knowledge and personal agendas, do a disservice to our community. Should any matter reach a point where official action is taken or disclosure is legally required, the city will provide timely and accurate information through appropriate channels.

The City of Franklin Springs remains committed to transparency, the rule of law, and the best interests of our citizens. We thank the public for their continued trust and engagement.

Thank you.

#### Water/Sewer/Street Report

Brandon Fitzgerald, Wastewater Operator, gave a presentation about what wastewater treatment is here for and what it is here to do. Brandon presented slides with data about the current wastewater facility in Franklin Springs and Broad River. He provided demonstrations and data from samples pulled from the Broad River, the current Franklin Springs wastewater treatment facility, and neighboring wastewater treatment facility. (will attach presentation to website with these minutes)

#### Police Dept

Chief Thompspon thanked everyone for their help tonight. The Chief stated he knows there has been some stuff on social medica and hopes everyone has been given an opportunity to be inside and listen. Chief stated he appreciated everything.

#### Fire Dept

Asst. Chief David Phillips was present. Gave Mayor and Council reports and stated the number of calls and assists. Gave update on vehicle maintenance. Mr. Phillips also stated they had meet about digital mobile radios . Mr. Phillips publicly thanked Chief Thompson for the work with the radios thus far. Thank you to Council for supporting the

volunteers. Mayor Moore concluded with saying thank you for law enforcement, fire department and the sheriff deputies.

Bill Bell made a motion to approve the IGA with Franklin County Tax Commissioner for collection and disbursement of Franklin Springs taxes. Tommy Pritchett seconded. Motion carried.

Mayor Moore read a Resolution for Public Comment Policy. This will allow for only Franklin Springs Residents, Franklin Springs Property Owners and Franklin Springs Business Owners to speak under public comment. Tommy Prichett made a motion to approve the Public Comment Policy Resolution. Josh Waden second. Motion carried. Resolution signed.

Public Comment:

Mayor Moore called names from the list that are Franklin Springs Residents, Franklin Springs Property Qwners, and Franklin Springs Business Owners.

**Bruce Scranton, Franklin Springs** -A lot going on looking forward to getting real information, real factual information to make his mind up about it. Appreciates what the mayor and council were doing.

**Joanne Matheson, 96 Brad Street Ext-** stated she did not want a rendering plant.

Mayor Moore Do you see anything on the agenda about a rendering plant?"

Mrs. Matheson. No.

Mrs. Matheson left the podium.

Mayor Moore stated she could finish her comment

Mrs. Matheson I'm done.

**Bryan Matheson-96 Brad Street Ext.-** stated a lot of this started back in 2022 with the IBA, Tonya Powers with Rock Hill Poultry, the same year the DDA was brought together.

Mayor Moore Mr. Matheson, none of this information is on the agenda

Mr. Matheson it has to do with the water treatment plant.

Mr. Matheson went on to say DDA purchased property then zoned Heavy Industrial Zoning. Under that lawsuit, he stated there was not a water treatment facility needed if there was not a poultry rendering plant.

Mr. Matheson: Do we still need this water treatment plant? Legal counsel was consulted

Mr. Matheson We were told at the IBA meeting we could ask that question

Mayor Moore I answered that question in my statements but asked Mr. Mathson to ask his question.

Mr. Matheson: Do we need a water treatment plant if no rendering plant is coming?

Mayor Moore absolutely we need a water treatment plant.

Mr. Matheson: Why do we need one this size?

Mayor Moore When it first started it was not going to be this size. It's gone back and forth with several different things. With Rock Hill was going to have to be even bigger, but that did not take place. We are building a facility to meet the current needs; 300,000 gallons for Franklin Springs and up to 9000,000 gallons for Franklin County. It is a municipal water plant.

Mayor Moore: had some questions he meant to ask Brandon

Mayor Moore: On our wastewater treatment plant we are looking to build, are we looking at any property going outside the City of Franklin Springs for anything on that plant?

Brandon Fitzgerald: No, sir

Mayor Moore: Are we looking to go anywhere other than the 70 acres we currently have zoned for the wastewater treatment plant?

Brandon Fitzgerald: No sir

Mayor Moore: Are we trying to take anybody's property outside of Franklin Springs for a wastewater treatment plant?

Brandon Fitzgerald, No sir

Mr. Matheson: we can only pull so much water from the Broad River. Where is the rest of the water coming from?

Mayor Moore This is not a question about pulling water. We are not pulling water out of the Broad River. This is a wastewater treatment facility to put the water that is treated from residents or from Franklin County into the river.

### **Christie Busby, 2651 W. Main St**

Lifelong resident of Franklin Springs and sadden for not only our community but for our county and counties downstream. See from people online fear and uncertainty. People have worked the majority of their lives for homes and piece of land . She does have questions about the water treatment facility.

Christie Busby: What is the estimated date for completion of this facility?

Mayor Moore: talked to engineers today, talked to John Phillips who is the engineer for the city. At least a year away from even starting this plant.

Christie Busby: When is the deciding factor going to be about the size?

Mayor Moore: The deciding factor is pretty much here

Christie Busby: I thought it was two different ones, the smaller one or the larger one.

Mayor Moore: 1.5 MGD is where we currently are at

Christie Busby: What is the math behind that for Franklin Springs? Her as a math person, she would like to see the numbers as she doesn't even have a Franklin Springs address because we are not that big. Trying to understand what all is involved.

Mayor Moore: 300,000 plus 900,000 is 1.2 million

Christie Busby: I get that, but for Franklin Springs where is that 300,000 coming from? What is it now?

Clyde Nichols: we are currently 100,000 gallons. We are at  $\frac{3}{4}$  max flow. Close to becoming in violation for maximum flow.

Christie Busby: Why is it going to be 300,000 then?

Clyde Nichols: future population growth

Mayor Moore: and the growth of Emmanuel. We took those two things to the EPD.



Christie Busby: Can I ask how much tax or SPLOST money has gone into the planning of all this? Has tax and SPLOST been used for this?

Jackie Yearwood: It has. I am sorry for not having the exact figure, but it's been over 300,000.

Mayor Moore: It's only been spent on engineering

Christie Busby: Appreciate you all being here and listening to us. We are neighbors here. We voted for y'all and expect you to do the honest and best job.

Anna Busby: Christie said it all

**Donna Bennett, 1550 Main Street-**

Donna Bennett: Just to clarify, what is the actual size? I've seen 1.5, 2 even up to 4.

Clyde Nichols: 1.5 million gallons a day

Donna Bennett: Who and how is the treatment plant being paid for?

Mayor Moore: Going to be paid for by the customers of the wastewater treatment facility. Which is the citizens of Franklin Springs, paid for by the County, paid for by the customers.

Donna Bennett: you've stated you haven't signed any contracts. Are there now and will there be any contracts or anything in the future to bring to Franklin Springs any industry that disposes of or burns organic matter like rendering plants or bio-mass plants?

Mayor Moore: There is not going to be anything that comes to Franklin Springs that is going to do anything detrimental to the environment of the City of Franklin Springs. We've already made that stance very clear.

Donna Bennett: you sent me that email

Mayor Moore: Correct

Donna Bennett: I guess your definition of detrimental is different from mine.

Ms. Bennett went on the state, the reason I am standing here is because I have a grandbaby who was born 24 weeks, at the hospital for over a year on a ventilator and oxygen and have to be careful what he is exposed to as far as clean air. For Magan Crump and my grandbaby, we the citizens demand transparency accountability and genuine consideration for safe and alternative industry that respect the people who already live here and the Broad River. This isn't just about one plant but the precedent you are setting for what kind of future this community deserves.

Mayor Moore: Ms. Bennett, myself and this council feel the same way you do.

**Joe Bryant, 2665 West Main St:**

Franklin Springs needs a new water treatment plant. The current lagoon system is outdated and well documented. Needs to happen, well built and well run treatment facility. Another item to get permission for the elephant in the room, the rendering plant.

Mr. Bryant: You did make a comment about it with Pilgrim's Pride. Does that open it up for allowing to speak?

Moore Moore: Its not on the agenda

Mr. Bryant: I know it's not specifically on the agenda.

Mayor Moore: If it gets on the agenda, we can talk about it.

Mr. Bryant: So, we cannot speak on rendering or Pilgrim's Pride, either one?

Mayor Moore: You can speak, but we will not answer anything.

Mr. Bryant went on to say. As for a rendering plant, I understand no signing has taken place. Everything in the public domain is negative. Unless the council can provide information to the contrary, the public may assume it is true, so a rendering is negative and determinable to Franklin Springs. Each of you pledge at the last meeting not to being something negative and detrimental. Stick to your promise, represent the people who elected you and put an end to the discussion now and all of this goes away. Pilgrims Pride has a poor safety record, a poor environmental record, they should not be allowed to put any type of industry here.

Mayor Moore then called Mr. Plemons to the floor.

Mr Plemons: I am a concerned citizen of Franklin Springs you know where I live

Mayor Moore: Yes sir, that's why I wanted you to speak. You didn't sign up but wanted you to.

Mr. Plemons: I am unable to speak but I would like someone to speak in my place.

Mayor Moore: It has to be a property owner or citizen or business owner.

Mr. Plemons: Do we have a property owner here in Franklin Springs?

Mayor Moore: You are not able to yield like that

Mr Plemons: Why not, That's my first amendment, right.

Mr. Plemons: I want someone to speak on my behalf.

Mayor Moore: You want someone to speak for you? ok that's fine, let this individual speak for you.

Mr. Plemons: This isn't right, I've been here for 40 something years and I've never seen this mess before. What about the loss of Royston when we didn't have water from Royston . Hoe about keeping the river clean, Have you done the research on that? Have you been to Pilgrim's Pride? I have a right to know. I am a citizen.

Mr. Plemons: That's the problem, every time we ask, we get stonewalled.

Someone then came up to speak on Mr. Plemons behalf and between the two of them they stated the concern is with the ecology of the river, the infrastructure, problems with water.

Mayor Moore: I think you may be mixing up water and wastewater.

The person who spoke for Mr. Plemons then asked: As far as the ecology of the river are you guys planning to put any measures in place to help the ecology, the plants? Are you going to have an ecologist?

Mayor Moore: We currently have a wastewater treatment facility.

The person who spoke for Mr. Plemons: Right, are you going to have an environmental scientist to ensure

Mayor Moore: we can look into that to get an answer

**Angelen Brookshire and Ruth Brookshire, 16 Swails St:**

Read from a statement from her mother. First came to Franklin Springs in 1961. I was worried to learn about rendering plant plans. We were not informed of this. I expect honestly about this. I go to church with you. Would you be willing to pause this project? Also, we can't afford to pay for the 32 million wastewater plant, then we shouldn't be building it. Request to be on the record to be against it.

Then Angelen spoke with her statement. After Pilgrims Pride received pushback from communities throughout, they engaged PR consulting to find new messaging. They now refer to the rendering plants as a second generation rendering plant but is the same process. Other talking points that she wanted to make is nothing is signed and no decision has been made. Does this allow for all to be held in secret? Knowing you are not being forthright with us doesn't instill confidence. Multiple times read statements and seems like you are playing schematics. For example, it was said a contract hasn't been signed. Misleading implying you are not engaging in negotiations and contract is not forthcoming. You are not making that promise. Another example last month, EC denied and the recall election that has been already heard about. We don't want a recall election; we don't want a wastewater treatment plant. We want to be able to trust you and not put in a byproduct processing plant in Franklin Springs.

**Lynn Briley-property owner**

Her question is about the DDA and when big companies like Tractor Supply or Walmart try to get business here.

Mrs. Briley: What would be the process to try and get the company here in Franklin Springs?

Mayor Moore: There is all kind of different process, most time when coming to the city, goes through the State.

Mrs. Briley? So as a business owner, I would go to the State and put in an application? How does that work?

Mayor Moore: Get with the State and they would get representative to work with you and then Franklin Springs would work with you on the project.

Lynn Briley: How would I go about buying property if I wanted to put a Tractor Supply or Walmart?

Mayor Moore: seeing if it for sale?

Mrs. Briley: stated she wanted to know what the steps are to know more on the DDA is about.

Mayor Moore: with Franklin Sprigs DDA, currently we only have very limited properties so if someone comes, that's the ones that are zoned Industrial. Weve had the properties bought for the last 3 or 4 years, they've been zoned Industrial. We have been very upfront about wanting Industry here, and since 2018 with wastewater treatment. We have a few designated areas. We worked many years ago with Carl Vincent on zoning with specific area.

Mrs. Briley: On those properties and DDA has ownership of those, does the community get to know what is going in there? Do you vote on it? Do let the community come in and see if your voting on it?

Mayor Moore: Absolutely, If anything came in, they would come and do a presentation with the people.

Mrs. Briley: like the wastewater?

Mayor Moore: Correct

Mayor Moore: If any industry comes in it's not the city's responsibility to sell it. It's the industry's job to sell it to the citizens.



**Jennifer Saddoris: 1071 Franklin Springs St.**

Mrs. Saddoris: Is there a way wastewater treatment plant going in is capped at a certain size it cannot be extended?

Mayor Moore: Absolutely. We cannot ask for 10 million gallons of wastewater. How to explain it it's like going to the bank to build a house, you can't borrow 500,000 for a million dollar house. To answer your question, it can be capped, it can be designed, you can not just build it and hope they come.

Mrs. Saddoris: the documentation received says it will be up to 4 MGD. Where does that come from?

Mayor Moore: we have a discharge with the state, and it depends on the body of water

Clyde Nichols: EPA did a discharge rate for the river of a maximum of 4.5 mil gallons, that doesn't mean we are going to do that or anywhere near that. The only water going into the wastewater from your commodes, your showers, your sinks. It doesn't come from the river and only comes from municipal water systems.

Mrs. Saddoris: Can there be some documentation submitted or brought in that we wont make it big enough for that type of industry...a rendering plant?

Mayor Moore conferred with legal consul and stated he could see and find out.

Mrs Saddoris: That's what it really comes down to. If its not big enough for that industry then there is nothing to worry about

Mayor Moore: If it's not big enough for that industry, that industry is not coming.

Mrs. Saddoris: exactly

Someone from the audience stood up and asked if they could ask a specific question, he didn't want to comment but wanted to ask a question to specific that had Franklin Springs name on it. Mayor Moore stated if hat gentleman didn't mind, after the meeting ask the question.

**Executive Session**

None

**Miscellaneous:**

Chief Thompson with speak about the DDA car show. 2<sup>nd</sup> annual car show coming up April 216<sup>th</sup> 5-8 pm. Ausitn Irby as entertainment. Bring your chairs. It will be a night of good fellowship. We had over 100 cars last year. All will be behind City Hall. It doesn't cost anything. There will be good food and family fun entertainment. There will be 25 awards given out and Tommy Cleveland with Cleaveland Auto parts has been gracious to sponsor and donate his time and first 100 entries receive a t-shirt.

Bill Bell made a motion to adjourn. Josh Walden seconded. Motion carried.



Lee Moore, Mayor



Jackie Yearwood, City Clerk