

**BOROUGH OF FRANKLIN PARK
BOROUGH COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 3, 2025**

A special meeting of the Borough Council of the Borough of Franklin Park was held on Wednesday, December 3, 2025 at 7:00 p.m. at the Municipal Building, 2344 West Ingomar Road, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15237. The meeting was also held virtually via remote audio and video conferencing.

Council President Uday Palled called the meeting to order.

Pledge of Allegiance

Cathy Krummert called the roll:

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Laura E. Czekaj, Second Vice Presidentpresent
Jiang Li, Vice President.....present
Brian S. Malkinpresent
Lucas R. Myslinski.....present
Uday Palled, President.....present
Thomas C. Schwartzmier.....present
Junior Councilperson Ishani Aruguvellipresent
Mayor Dennis E. O'Keefepresent

BOROUGH ENGINEER:

Shawn Wingrove, LSSE Civil Engineers and Surveyorspresent

SOLICITOR:

Robert Max Junker, Babst Callandpresent

STAFF:

Zach Brower, Recreation Program Directorpresent
Gary Bucuren, Superintendent of Public Works.....absent
Rege Ebner, Finance Director/Treasurerpresent
Zach Filous, Borough Managerpresent
Jim Huff, Manager of Golf Course & Parks Facilities.....present
Cathy Krummert, Borough Secretarypresent
Aron Leach, Police Chief.....present
Andy Nock, Assist. Bldg. Insp./Fire & Tech Official.....present
Tim Phillips, Building Inspector/Zoning Officer.....absent
Sam Snyder, Police Lieutenant.....present

PRELIMINARY MATTERS

None

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

OLD BUSINESS

None

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NEW BUSINESS

2026 BUDGET – Mr. Malkin moved the annual budget for the year 2026 be approved and made available to the public in the general office during normal business hours and on the Borough website, seconded by Dr. Li and carried.

ORDINANCE NO. 694-2025 ESTABLISHING THE 2026 MILLAGE RATE – Mr. Junker summarized Ordinance No. 694-2025. Mr. Malkin moved to enact Ordinance No. 694-2025 establishing the 2026 millage rate as 2.590 mills and continuing all other existing taxes and rates for the year 2026, seconded by Dr. Li. A roll call vote was then taken.

Ms. Czekaj.	Yes
Dr. Li	Yes
Mr. Malkin	Yes
Mr. Myslinski	No
Mr. Palled	Yes
Mr. Schwartzmier	No

The motion carried.

Ms. Czekaj commented that at the October budget hearing, it became clear that this tax increase or some serious budget cuts would be necessary. We are all familiar with the budget situation and knew that it has been going on for a couple of years. We knew that no more band aids were going to be available, and we had to make some serious cuts. This would include staffing cuts, selling property that residents told us they wanted in the Comprehensive Plan, police regionalization, continuing to cut paving and public works. We have had at least six meetings, and we have discussed possible alternatives. She finds the "No" votes frustrating and counter to her experience on Council so far. Council has had open discussions, deliberations, and disagreements and have offered alternatives. To vote "No" is within everyone's right and responsibility if they don't think it is the right thing to do. She finds it frustrating to vote "No" without having offered alternatives and having every opportunity to do so. The issue is the "No" votes coupled with the lack of alternatives offered at the previous six meetings.

Mr. Myslinski stated that it is not really his decision to make. He thinks this is a vote that should happen in January, but for logistical reasons, it can't. So, he voted "No."

Dr. Li commented that our financial situation does not look as good as some have pictured. If we don't do anything soon, we will be in big trouble. He agrees with Ms. Czekaj and does not know why Mr. Myslinski and Mr. Schwartzmier voted "No" since we have looked at all options and there is nothing else we can do to help our financial situation. This is a very difficult decision to make, but we cannot kick the can down the road as we have done for the last six years. The financial situation is getting worse and worse each year, and if we don't take any action, the state could take control of the Borough finances and services would be cut. He is glad we can take some action to help to make sure that the Borough remains the best community in this area and that is why he voted for the increase.

Mr. Schwartzmier noted that he voted in favor of the budget because it is made up of stuff that is crucial to the Borough, but he is concerned about this type of an increase and how we could have transitioned into it in a year or two. Could we have used some short-term financing for something? This is almost doubling the millage in two years. He commended Ms. Czekaj for being a wonderful Council woman, but he is concerned about the magnitude of this increase. Our budget is very tight, and we have been scrounging on the road paving over the last 2-3 years, and we have been trying to pinch pennies. The budget has no fluff. One of the things we suffer with is very little building or construction going on. Over prior years, we had a lot more development that brought in money. However, it still costs us money to maintain in the future. It is a good budget, and this was a tough decision. He is concerned about hitting the taxpayers with that much of an increase all at one time.

Mr. Malkin was surprised that there were "No" votes at this juncture. We put on the November ballot other ways to fund the Borough including a Home Rule Charter that would have doubled the realty transfer tax not to the detriment of existing residents. There were other solutions we tried to explore and offer to the residents. It is very frustrating to be in the situation where you need to fix the budget and the only method you have is to do a tax increase.

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The budget rises or falls on whether or not it is funded, and this millage rate of 2.590 funds the budget that was voted for and approved. Without the tax increase, the budget would have failed. He wants everyone to understand exactly how the budget works and how it is balanced. Mr. Myslinski's "No" vote is just him saying that he is going to sit on the side and not vote on this at all because he doesn't feel that he has a basis for doing so.

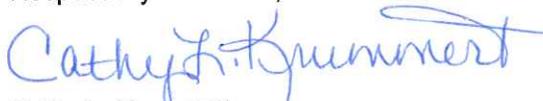
Mr. Palled commented that no one wants to go through this, but we are here to fund our services. Based on our budget, we spend approximately \$943 per resident. Marshall Township spends \$1,022 per resident, and Ohio Township spends \$1,582 per resident. We are pretty efficient and have maximized the budget as far as we could. There is only so far that you can defer expenses, and we have done that and exhausted the reserves. We have used reserves five of the last seven years. Unfortunately, in order to fund an adequate budget, we do need to go this route.

RESOLUTION NO. 1406-2025 FOR THE REVISED SUBMISSION OF A STATEWIDE LOCAL SHARE ASSESSMENT GRANT – Mr. Junker summarized Resolution No. 1406-2025. Dr. Li moved to adopt Resolution No. 1406-2025 for the revised submission of a Statewide Local Share Assessment Grant in the amount of \$269,784.00 from the Commonwealth Financing Authority to be used for the Blueberry Hill Accessible Playground Update Project, seconded by Ms. Czekaj and carried.

MOTION TO ADJOURN – Mr. Malkin moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:17 p.m.

Mr. Junker announced that the special meeting was adjourned, and Council would now reconvene in the conference room for the monthly work session that is open to the public.

Respectfully submitted,



Cathy L. Krummert
Borough Secretary

Audience Present - 10