



**Franklin City Council Agenda
March 24, 2025
Council Chambers
207 West Second Avenue
Franklin, Virginia 23851**

6:00 P.M. Work Session

**CALL TO ORDER.....MAYOR PAUL KAPLAN
ROLL CALL.....MAYOR PAUL KAPLAN**

- 1. Presentation:** Legislative Updates
Honorable Emily Jordan, State Senator, 17th Senate District
- 2. Presentation:** Franklin Southampton Economic Development, Inc. Update
Mr. Karl Heck, President & CEO
- 3. Closed Session:** Pursuant to Virginia Code Section 2.2-3711 (A)(5):
 - a. Discussion concerning a prospective business or industry or the expansion of an existing business or industry where no previous announcement has been made of the business' or industry's interest in locating or expanding its facilities in the community.
- 4. Reconvene Open Meeting**
- 5. Certification of Closed Meeting**
- 6. Adjournment**



COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA

VIRGINIA SENATE

RICHMOND

EMILY M. JORDAN
POST OFFICE BOX 5
SMITHFIELD VIRGINIA 23431
SEVENTEENTH DISTRICT

COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS:
GENERAL LAWS AND TECHNOLOGY
REHABILITATION AND SOCIAL
SERVICES
COURTS OF JUSTICES

March 16, 2025

The Honorable Paul Kaplan
Mayor
City of Franklin
207 W. 2nd Ave.
Franklin, VA 23851

Dear Mayor Kaplan,

I hope your year is off to a healthy and prosperous start! As we move into 2025, I wanted to take some time to meet with you and City Council members to provide an update on key highlights from the recent Virginia General Assembly session.

1. **Legislative Review:** The 2025 session was productive for our region, especially in advancing rural Virginia priorities. I'd be glad to meet and discuss these accomplishments and future opportunities for collaboration.
2. **Request for Feedback:** As your Senator, it's important for me to stay informed about local concerns. Are there any state or local issues that need further attention? Your feedback will be invaluable as we plan for the future.
3. **Upcoming Visit to Franklin:** I would like to speak briefly at the City Council meeting on **Monday, March 24th** to summarize legislative wins, discuss local challenges, and highlight new opportunities. Please let me know if I can be added to the agenda.

Thank you for your leadership and dedication to our community. I look forward to hearing from you. My office can be reached at 757-239-1213 or senatorjordan@senate.virginia.gov.

Warmest Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Emily M. Jordan".

Emily M. Jordan
State Senator, 17th Senate District

To: Paul Kaplan, Mayor of Franklin
Members of City Council
Rosylen Oglesby, City Manager

From: Karl Heck, President & CEO

Date: March 19, 2025

Re: FSEDI Update

I have a brief update of items that FSEDI is working on in the City of Franklin.

- 1) The Franklin Business Center occupancy is at 78%. We are marketing the former Sylvamo space (1600 SF) as a separate space for an "anchor tenant" at market rates. The Business Center Board met on Thursday, though no new tenants were approved. We are working on adding a fingerprinting service, weather camera and improving the Wi-Fi so our clients can be properly served.
- 2) FSEDI continues to work with the engineering team to get the Global Concentrate plans to a place where they can be approved by the City. We remain hopeful for a possible summer groundbreaking, though a considerable amount of work remains to reach that goal. Getting Global's project underway and moving dirt in Franklin is our highest priority.
- 3) Our office continues to work with the real estate agent and owner on possibilities for the former Rite Aid building. While the national chain retail expansion space is generally slow at the present time, we work on any potential expansion candidates that could potentially fit the space.
- 4) We continue to work on hotel recruitment and development possibilities. Blake Blythe's proposal for a mixed-use development around the Walgreen's site has been moving very slowly. We have other possibilities to reactivate regarding potential incentives and sites in the City that potentially could accommodate a midscale/upper midscale hotel.
- 5) Our office is performing a variety of tourism marketing initiatives. We look forward to a closer relationship with the City to promote our area and develop lodging to meet future tourism needs.
- 6) The Franklin Southampton Community Visioning process, administered by FSEDI, had a public meeting on February 4. We are currently developing a forward-facing outreach piece and working on potential projects for our "pitch deck." Pitch deck projects will be marketed to a variety of investors and funders to facilitate implementation.
- 7) The STARTUP Awards and Expo will be held on Wednesday, April 16 at the Hubs Vine from 5:30 to 7 p.m. We invite Council and members of the public to attend.
- 8) Our 2025 National Small Business Week event will be held on Friday, May 2 from 7:30 to 8:45 a.m. at the Franklin Business Center. Bryan Stephens of the Hampton Roads Chamber will once again be our keynote speaker.

- 9) The STARTUP Franklin Southampton Awards and Expo will be held on Wednesday, April 16 from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at the Hubs Vine. Three award winners will be crowned. There will be exhibits from current and previous participants in the STARTUP program. STARTUP is having its seventh competition in 2025.
- 10) The Franklin Business Center hosted the January FSA Chamber Brewing Up Business event. The event attracted approximately 25 people to the Business Center.
- 11) FSEDI is part of the Western Tidewater Mechatronics Project. The group received GO Virginia funding to support a curriculum at Camp Community College that will allow more people in our communities to be trained in the mechatronics and logistics industry.
- 12) Home sales remain strong in Franklin. Currently there are 32 homes sold in the Summit. Riverwood only has a couple remaining homes to sell.
- 13) Marmiro Stones, a landscaping and natural stone company headquartered in New Jersey, has purchased and moved into the former Tinder Transfer warehouse on Sachs Avenue. They anticipate having eight employees when they are fully operational. The former electrical supply warehouse in Commerce Park Drive is for sale. We are actively marketing that property.
- 14) FSEDI also markets active retail, commercial and industrial sites in the City.