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From the Mayor

Happy 2018!

A new year is time to reflect and set goals. I've been your Mayor for 7 years. I would like to reflect on some of the highlights of the last few years. In an effort to maintain a transparent government I want you to know where your local tax dollars are being spent. The staff of the City of Franklin works each day to make Franklin a better place to live, work and raise a family. On behalf of your City Commissioners, Jamie Powell, Larry Dixon, Mason Barnes and Wendell Stewart, I hope you have a prosperous and fulfilling year!



Certified City of Ethics

A City of Ethics was bestowed upon the City of Franklin by the Kentucky League of Cities in 2015. Franklin is one of eighteen cities across the Commonwealth, which has 410 cities, that has achieved this status. In order to obtain the certification, city officials, managers and department heads attended training to establish standards of conduct and provide clear guidance to help promote public confidence, enhance accountability, and to maintain a fair and effective administration. The City Commission adopted principles and procedures that offer guidance on ethical issues and a mechanism to resolve complaints at the local level.



RISING WATERS

In growing cities like Franklin, problems often arise from uncontrolled storm water runoff. Development and inadequate drainage systems compound problems associated with moderate to significant rainfall. Stormwater runoff from these rainfall events accumulate in

many areas of our city, causing nuisance flooding and possible threats to public health and safety. There is a total of 14.8 miles of underground structures and ditches that carry stormwater through our city. The majority of the system was put in place over 40 years ago, is made up of 10 different types of pipes and concrete structures, and is deteriorating. In 2015, the City Commission passed an ordinance allowing for a Stormwater Management Fee. This fee is charged to city water and sewer accounts and provides funding to repair and replace the aging drainage system. It also provides the funding for a Professional Engineer to review the stormwater retention plans for new developments, which ensures adequate stormwater controls are in place.



Stormwater System Collapse on Court Street in 2014

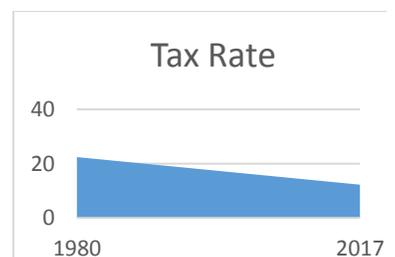
3 Major Failures from 2012 to 2015 costing \$164,899

75% of Main Stormwater System is 40+ years old

City Property Tax Rates

In 1980 the tax rate was 22.4 cents per \$100 of assessed value. In 2017 the tax rate was 12.3 cents per \$100 of assessed value.

Using 2016 data obtained from the Commonwealth of Kentucky's Office of Property Valuation, the City's Real and Personal Property Tax Rates are some of the lowest rates in the State of Kentucky. Even with a rate change in 2017 to 12.3 cents per \$100, the City maintains one of the lowest Municipal Property Tax Rates in the State - remaining within the bottom 15% of Municipal Taxing Jurisdictions (66th lowest property tax rate out of a total of 410 Cities in the state).



ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP

Over the last 7 years, under the leadership of the Franklin Simpson Industrial Authority, working with the City and the County, our community has seen:

21 new industries locate in our community
2,160 new jobs created

19 industries expand
\$428,000,000 invested



Employees work to repair a water main break.

Getting Water to You

80 miles of water lines carry water from the treatment plant to your tap. As with most infrastructure, time and environmental conditions take its toll on distribution lines. Freezing temperatures, ground movement, erosion and other factors can cause leaks and/or breaks. When lines are replaced or upgrades are made it increases the volume of water that can go through the line, allows for better fire protection and decreases the amount of leaks and water loss. Since 2012, 8.5 miles of water line has been replaced. Prior to the replacement of those lines, the city was losing approximately 46% of water produced due to deteriorated lines. The water loss is now at 29%. Plans are to continue to invest in this infrastructure.

Clean-Up

Each year City crews collect:

- an average of 1,813 cubic yards of brush
- an average of 966 cubic yards of leaves



Protecting our Community

1,915,220 pounds of material has been recycled since Scott Waste began the City Recycling Partnership in 2013. That's 30 football fields 3 feet deep of trash that has been kept out of landfills. The City recycling program began when several community members approached the City Commission with a concern and desire to have recycling in our community. The Commission made the decision to include recycling as part of the sanitation contract when it was up for renewal. Scott Waste currently picks up all trash and recycling in the City of Franklin. The recycling efforts have taken trash out of our landfills and put it back in to use. Thank you for placing cardboard, plastic and aluminum in the cart to be recycled and helping protect our earth!

To Swim or Not to Swim

To build or not to build? That was the topic of numerous conversations during 2017. "When I took office as Mayor, I began getting calls and requests from people that wanted a pool. For several years, I listened. Then I decided to explore the options." said Mayor Ronnie Clark. With private funding, a team was formed to put together a proposal. Clark said, "You've got to start somewhere, so we started with the very best facility because our community deserves the best." The proposal for a \$20 million aquatic center was presented to the public in March. In the months that followed several smaller versions of a facility were discussed, a survey was conducted by a professional firm and comments were received. Because of several unknowns with the city budget and state budget requirements, the commission decided the timing of the project was not good and made the decision not to move forward.

Property Re-Use

Putting vacant properties back in to productive use is the goal of the City Surplus Property Program. In 2016 a program was developed to aid in the redevelopment of vacant lots.



BEFORE



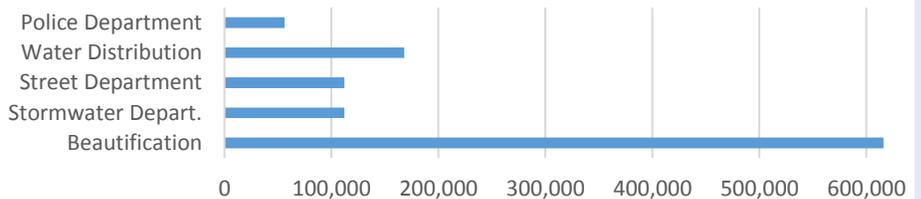
AFTER

A need became apparent that the use of city resources could be reduced and a tax base reestablished if citizens could use the properties to construct a house for home ownership, development purposes, or as rental property. A program was developed, by city staff, to put these properties back in productive use. Essentially vacant, city owned lots are advertised, proposals are received, and properties are given to new owners at no cost. Since the program was approved by ordinance in September 2016, five properties have been awarded to citizens for development. "We hope to continue the program and see properties that once held a dilapidated, unsafe structure transformed into vibrant homes that families can enjoy", said Community Development Director Tammie Carey.

Working Together

Inmate labor is used to expand the city workforce with minimal financial investment. One employee oversees a crew of two to three inmates, saving the city an average of over \$1 million in labor each year. Jailer Eric Vaughn said, "The inmate work program benefits our community by providing consistent labor to accomplish tasks that make our community better. The program benefits the inmates by allowing them to work and develop skills."

Savings to City from Inmate Work Program



Aging Infrastructure

Each year the Mayor and Commissioners work together to identify needs in our city. They put together a budget and give the staff direction on where time and resources should be spent. Our aging infrastructure is something that we don't see and often take for granted until a water line break or sewage back-up occurs. However, this has been a focus of the current commission. They have given the repair and replacement of our infrastructure a priority and plan to continue that work. Some of the lines in the ground are close to 100 years old and are deteriorating. The Commission has also taken a proactive approach to the issue of water loss working with staff to identify issues with distribution lines and meters. Over \$3.6 million has been invested by the City in the replacement of aging infrastructure since 2010.



Water Treatment Plant Operator Lee Anglea performs one of 110 daily tests.

Safe and clean water is a passion at the Franklin Water Treatment Plant.



The plant has been recognized for its Area Wide Optimization Program (AWOP) for the last 15 years. The purpose of the program is to encourage drinking water plants and distributors to surpass state and federal goals and standards. The program focuses on improving the operation of existing facilities without making capital improvements. In particular, the program is focused on lowering turbidity in drinking water. Turbidity, or cloudiness, is a measurement of particles in water including soil, algae, bacteria, viruses and other substances.

In order to achieve Optimization the Franklin Plant does 39,696 tests each year. They also work with the distribution department to ensure the distribution system is flushed at least twice a year. There are 61 systems among the 149 public and private water treatment plants in the state that participated in the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Area-Wide Optimization Program.

We are proud that the Franklin staff has the desire to exceed the requirements of the Safe Drinking Water Act and go above and beyond what is required to give us the cleanest, safest drinking water possible.

K9 Aids Officers

"Shadow" became a part of the Franklin Police force in 2017. Funding for "Shadow" was made possible by donations and funds generated through the regulatory fee on alcohol sales. Police Chief Roger Solomon said, "The Police Department has needed a police canine for a long time and Shadow has already been very beneficial for us. Having a canine dog as part of our agency gives us an advantage when we need drug detection on a vehicle, house or on school grounds. She also can be utilized in tracking of suspects or missing children and adults. For example, she can search for weapons and other articles in the school system."

Police Become Accredited Agency

18 months of evaluation, 91 policies and procedure development proved worthy when a unanimous vote awarded the Franklin Police Department its first ever Kentucky Association Chiefs of Police Accreditation. "The accreditation means we have proven that we are following commonly accepted practices in law enforcement that meet a standard of excellence. It means that our agency has withstood a process involving outside assessors, evaluating our agency from top to bottom and inside out, to come out standing tall.

Cleaning Up our City

70 Dilapidated Structures have been removed in the city within the last 5 years. The City has removed them due to condemnation or by property owners after code violation action.

In an effort to enforce the Property Maintenance Code and ensure the value of properties within the city, the City Commission hired a full time Code Enforcement Officer in 2013. The Officer works daily to inspect properties and work with property owners to ensure compliance. During the summer months, a large amount of time is spent enforcing the tall grass and weeds ordinance. He also works to remove unlicensed, inoperative vehicles, remove rubbish and clutter from porches and yards and other property violations. Dilapidated and unsafe structures is another area of focus. Many may remember the old hospital property at the corner of Main and Madison that extended to College Street. Five properties, owned by different owners were all connected through a series of catwalks. The center structure was in a complete state of disrepair. The City began communication with the property owner, however, the owner failed to respond or make any needed repairs to make the structure safe. A fire started in the center structure which caused damage to adjacent structures. The end result was all the structures being removed.

Until 2015, the old Wal-Mart building on North Main Street sat empty and abandoned. It had been vandalized and illegal entry was occurring on a regular basis. The Code Enforcement Officer began citing the owner for the dilapidated state and fines began to amass. The owners sold the building which now houses Stark Truss that employs 25 people.



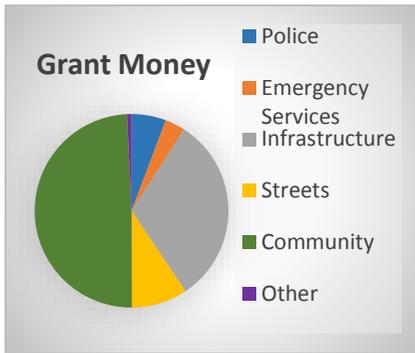
Best Tasting Water Awarded in Washington D.C.

Water Plant Superintendent Jerry Farmer and Operator Greg Duke stand in front of the nation's capital before the national contest.

Franklin has the Best Tasting Water in Kentucky, according to the Kentucky Rural Water Association. In 2016 the Franklin Municipal Water Plant won the prestigious award and was named the *Best Tasting Water in Kentucky*. The state win sent them to the national competition in Washington, D.C. in 2017 where they placed third. The judging at each event was done by blind taste test by a panel of five people that are not directly involved with the treatment of drinking water. Judging was based on clarity, bouquet and taste. "It was an honor to receive this award. It is rare that a surface water plant receives this distinction because ground water is filtered naturally and generally has a better taste. We work hard to clean the water that comes from Drakes Creek and make it safe for our community," said Water Treatment Plant Superintendent Jerry Farmer. Winning the taste tests validates the efforts of the water treatment operators to exceed government water quality regulations.

We strived, as an Agency, to achieve and maintain excellence and professionalism, and we succeeded," said Police Chief Roger Solomon.

The eighteen month process was a collaborative team effort of everyone in the agency. The KACP accreditation is a high honor. The Commonwealth of Kentucky is renowned across the nation for its excellence in law enforcement and the Franklin Police Department now stands amongst the best.



Dollars & Sense

Developing and sticking to a budget can be a challenge. The City Commission works to develop and maintain a balanced budget. Each spring, the commission holds special sessions to discuss needs and projects with city departments and community leaders. The City operates on a fiscal year budget calendar but they review the budget and expenditures monthly, making revisions when necessary.

When local dollars can be leveraged with grant funds or allocations, the commission makes that a priority. Over the last seven years, over \$3 million in grant funds have been utilized on city projects. This funding ranges from small grants of \$2,000 to purchase Tasers for police officers to \$1,000,000 projects to construct a fiber optic system. City Manager Kenton Powell said, “Our Commission identifies a need and then our staff takes that need and researches possible funding mechanisms. They work on the project from conception to completion, no matter how big or small. Some projects take years to complete and boxes of paperwork will be done on projects. It’s all done to make our community better and to stretch the tax dollars as far as possible.”



A community partnership allows Franklin-Simpson High School students the opportunity to earn college credits for FREE! In 2013, the City saw the need to form a stronger partnership between the Southern Kentucky Community and Technical College (SKYCTC) and the community. A scholarship program was developed to give high school students the opportunity to take college courses and receive dual credit. Now there are, on average, 60 to 80 FSHS students that participate in the program each semester. “The program at SKYCTC gives students the confidence that they can do college,” said City Manager Kenton Powell. Dr. James B. McCaslin, SKYCTC Vice President of Outreach and Community Development added, “It is a great community partnership that exposes young people to college life in a non-threatening environment.” McCaslin also noted, “We are the only community in the Commonwealth that has a scholarship program like this. The scholarship is funded equally by the City of Franklin, Simpson County Fiscal Court, the Franklin-Simpson Industrial Authority, Franklin Bank & Trust Company, and Kentucky Downs. This level of commitment is an investment in our young people, as well as an investment in the future of our community. It is also an investment that SKYCTC matches two-to-one. The On Track Scholarship pays one-third of the students’ tuition, and the College provides a scholarship of the remaining two-thirds.”

High Speed Internet – Fiber Optic Project

Technology. A word that has become as much a part of our daily lives as a vehicle. Ten years ago, City leaders determined that if we were going to be competitive in attracting new businesses and industries to our community, we had to step up and ensure high speed, reliable internet service was available. The City took the lead on a \$2.18 million project to construct a 32 mile fiber optic backbone around the city and to each of the industrial parks.

A long, detailed grant process provided \$1,000,000 of funds for the project. The remaining funds were secured through a bond and the general fund.

In 2016, ownership of the fiber network was sold to the Franklin Electric Plant Board. EPB added staff and took the project to the next level. They now provide internet and phone service to residential customers as well as businesses and industries. EPB Business Development Manager Wayne Goodrum said, “We appreciate the City’s vision and leadership in launching an all fiber network. EPB Fiber has now moved to the next phase by launching residential fiber service to provide our customers local, fast, reliable and affordable internet service.”

Alcohol Sales Approved = Police Department Enhancements

Over \$1.37 million has been generated in revenue from the regulatory fee on package liquor sales since 2012. State law regulates how the City is permitted to spend these funds. These regulatory fees may be used for policing and regulation and administration of the sale of alcoholic beverages within the city. The City Commission has chosen to use the majority of the funds generated to enhance our police department. The department has:

- Purchased body cameras for all officers (Franklin was one of the first agencies in the region to implement body cams)
- Purchased tablets for in-car use by officers to do reports and acquire information.
- Purchased updated Tasers.
- Purchased rifles.
- Purchased new ballistic helmets for the officers.
- Purchased ballistic vests that are armored and have the ability to stop rifle rounds.
- Increased officer salaries, allowing Franklin to be competitive regionally with salaries.

Financial Report Card

The 2017 financial review brought good news to the City. Each year Moody’s Investment Services conducts random, comprehensive financial reviews on municipal governments. After reviewing, Moody’s gives a bond credit rating which represents the credit worthiness of government bonds. In 2017, after a rigorous review, Moody’s upgraded the City’s General Obligation Rating to an Aa3, which is a three notch increase from the previous rating of A3. This upgrade reflects a significantly improved

risk profile. The City’s rating has not been this high in the past. City leadership has worked hard to make strategic funding decisions, all while putting in place an efficient annual operating budget.



City of Franklin
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