

2012 Budget Message

Commission President Marilyn Brown

Tuesday, 12/20

Next on our agenda is Resolution # 940-11, which would authorize the annual appropriation measure for Fiscal Year 2012.

Over the past 12 months, with the support of my colleagues – John and Paula, it has been my honor to lead the Commission. We accomplished so much including the opening a new state of the art, highly functional, green courthouse, which has already received many awards.

We invested strategically on the County's North Side to spur economic growth and bring jobs to the area by opening the new Dog Shelter and relocating our Job and Family Services operations to Morse Road. And, we reached an historic deal with the City of Columbus to bring clean drinking water to hundreds of County residents in Mon E Bak, Leonard Park and 23 other subdivisions. These are significant major accomplishments.

As this year ends, I want to take a moment and thank the talented team of individuals employed with the County that help to make Franklin County a thriving and wonderful place.

Employees like Monika Tally. Monika works as the Paternity Coordinator for our Child Support Enforcement agency. Her service to our community helps connect families with the critical resources they need – whether it is through the Court, Children's Services, the Prosecutor's office or even the Central Paternity Registry. Monika is considered by her colleagues to be the most knowledgeable person in the area of paternity, not only within the agency but throughout the county. We are so glad that she is a member of our Franklin County team.

Franklin County's residents are fortunate to have someone like Denise Hensley on their side. Denise has the challenging job of case manager at Job and Family Services. She is also the agency's point of contact for the Ohio Benefit Bank, an organization that makes sure no one in our community goes without. When a parent is struggling to make ends meet or they are at risk of going hungry, or a senior in our community is not able to keep her heat on, Denise is there to connect them with the resources offered through the Benefit Bank. She makes her hard work appear effortless - processing approximately 300 applications each

month while maintaining an overall accuracy rate of over 98% last year!

Denise and Monika, you set the bar high and give us a model of excellence in public service to replicate. Thank you!

These women are just two fine examples of the many, many talented staff here at the County. I want to thank them, along with their peers throughout the thirteen Commissioner agencies as well as all of our supervisors and managers. You are the lifeline to this community!

We must appreciate the service of our elected officials, county administration and agency directors Without their cooperation and support, we would not be able to present to the residents of Franklin County this morning a balanced 2012 budget that continues to provide resources for the high quality of services Monika, Denise and their peers deliver. The 2012 budget continues our priorities. It places an emphasis on job creation/retention and economic development, community safety, health and human services, stewardship of natural resources and the environment, and assuring fiscally sustainable government operations.

Formulating a balanced budget for 2012 was difficult. Revenues for the General Fund are forecasted to decline 2.2-percent compared with the 2011 Approved Budget.

We asked all county agencies to absorb over \$33 Million dollars in funding reductions because of the financial cuts and policy changes contained in the current State operating budget.

No matter the challenges, the county must maintain a prudent and sustainable long-range budgeting strategy in order to stay among the

best-managed counties in the Nation. I can proudly report that we are currently within the top 2-percent!

The 2012 budget aligns with the current conditions of the regional economy. Fully understanding that the county must live within its means, the 2012 General Fund Budget is 2.4% less than last year's approved budget.

Excluding reserves and debt, the 2012 General Fund Budget will decrease by \$7 million or 2.7% below the approved 2011 General Fund budget.

Our budget numbers are as follows:

- The 2012 Total All-Funds Budget is \$1.3 billion.
- The 2012 General Fund Budget totals \$300.7 million.

As I mentioned, Franklin County continues to be recognized for sound financial planning, good administration and effective response to community needs. Franklin County is one of just 54 counties in the Nation with a double triple A bond rating.

Because of this rating, the county is able to minimize the expenses paid to finance our capital projects, like the new Common Pleas

courthouse and the new animal shelter, which employed hundreds of individuals during construction and after, and improve our overall quality of life.

With that said, our number one priority remains jobs and economic development. The 2012 budget continues to make significant economic investments to encourage the development of good jobs and private business growth.

Excluding reserves and debt, nearly 68-percent of the County's General Fund budget will continue to be spent on providing public safety,

justice, and security for Franklin County residents.

2012 will certainly bring new challenges. Each of us should be very proud of what we have accomplished. I look forward to working with you as we head into another difficult year. I know my colleagues share many of my sentiments but I would like to invite them to make additional remarks.