

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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RECOMMENDED COUNTY BUDGET HELPS PREPARE OUR COMMUNITY FOR FUTURE GROWTH

Franklin County Administrator Kenneth Wilson has presented the county commissioners with the 2017 Recommended Budget, and hearings on the proposal will begin later today. Wilson said that this year's county budget is all about preparing for the future in a responsible way, and about setting the table for rapid growth in Central Ohio.

The 2017 Recommended General Revenue Fund Budget is nearly \$440 million, slightly less than last year's expected totals, and the county's Recommended All Funds Budget is just over \$1.5 billion, an approximately 3% increase over 2016.

Excluding investments made possible by the county's temporary sales tax, a majority of the General Fund recommendation provides for Public Safety, Justice, and Security, with 62.5 % of this year's proposal, or a total of \$238 million set aside for the Courts, Prosecutor, Public Defender, Sheriff's Office, and other county justice and safety agencies.

The largest portion of the Recommended All Funds Budget is reserved for Social and Human Services, amounting to 47%, or \$708 million. This focus, and the ongoing emphasis on Economic Development, represents the commissioners' continued commitment to ensuring that all Franklin County residents are able to share in our community's ongoing success.

Franklin County is home to almost 1.3 million residents, and is the fastest growing county in Ohio, having added more than 140,000 residents since 2006. The next update from the U.S. Census Bureau is expected to show that Franklin County is also now the largest county in Ohio, and the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission expects to add another 500,000 residents to Central Ohio over the next 30 years.

Administrator Wilson said that better than expected sales tax revenues and an increase in investment earnings are strong points in the county's finances this year, and pointed to new or increased investments in the proposed budget to support local veterans and seniors, as well as affordable housing initiatives, and combatting infant mortality. He also said that the proposed budget would add \$5.2 million to the county's strategic reserve funds.

"Our first priorities are always to protect and preserve our residents' tax-dollars while at the same time making sure sufficient resources are allocated to ensure everyone's safety," said

Wilson. “Franklin County is the largest provider of social and safety net services in Central Ohio, from veterans to the homeless, Child Support Enforcement, SNAP, workforce training, and much more.”

Wilson also noted that the county is continuing to go forward with its plan to build a new jail and morgue and using a pay-as-you-go approach instead of financing the construction which is expected to save the taxpayers more than \$100 million in interest. The county also continues to maintain its double triple-A bond ratings, making it one of only 2% of counties nationwide to have such a distinction.

“Budgeting for the future is so important,” said Wilson. “And we never stop looking ahead here at the commissioners’ office. We have a dedicated team of professionals who work on this stuff all year long, so it’s always budget season in Franklin County.”

The commissioners set the yearly budget not only for their own agencies, but for all of county government, and will preside over public budget hearings beginning this morning at 10:00 am in the Commissioners Hearing Room and continuing on December 1st and the 8th. For more information, a copy of the proposed budget, and a schedule of the budget hearings, visit <http://budget.franklincountyohio.gov/budget/2017/>.

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