



## **FRANKLIN COUNTY GOVERNMENT COURTHOUSE CONSTRUCTION PROJECT UPDATE**

**1/31/2020**

Update on Franklin County Courthouse/Campbell Building - January 31, 2020

Two more Franklin County offices have moved to the Campbell Building, located on the south side of the Benton Public Square, and the court system and circuit clerk's office will be following suit very quickly.

The Franklin County Clerk and Franklin County Treasurer's offices have relocated to the south end of the Campbell Building and were opened for business on January 22, 2020. Both offices will permanently remain at their new location after the new courthouse is constructed.

The Franklin County Circuit Clerk's office is still open at the old courthouse and will remain open through Feb. 7, 2020. There are no court dates scheduled for Feb. 3 through Feb. 7, 2020 (except for emergencies). The first scheduled court hearings are slated to be held at the Campbell Building on Feb. 10, 2020. The circuit clerk's office, women's advocate office, three court rooms and court reporters' office and judges chambers are located on the lower level of the Campbell Building. The entrance to go to the lower level is located on the east side of the Campbell Building through the newly-constructed 40-foot-by-24 feet addition. Security will be located in the new addition along with an elevator and stairs to gain access to the lower level.

A new automated phone system was installed at the Campbell Building that will allow callers to access nine different county offices including, treasurer, county clerk, circuit clerk, supervisor of assessments, domestic abuse advocate, regional superintendent of schools, election office, court security, court reporters. The new number is 618-435-9800.

On January 21, 2020 the county board voted unanimously to adopt a budget of \$20.8 million for the funding package that will include the cost of the new 46,000 square feet courthouse that is scheduled for construction later this year. The \$20.8 million cost is approximately \$3 million less than the original proposal submitted. It is very important to note that the \$20.8 million budget also includes the \$1.6 million to renovate the 21,000-square-foot Campbell Building and another \$1.6 million in construction contingency added to offset any cost overrides.

Navigate Building Solutions, of St. Louis, is serving as project manager for the construction phase of the new courthouse. Todd Sweeney, owner of Navigate, was at the meeting and told board members that he fully believes the \$1.6 million in construction contingency can be returned to the county. Sweeney said his company recently completed a large project in St. Charles, MO that had a \$25 million budget and a construction contingency of \$2.5 million. He said all the construction bids in St. Charles came in within the proposed budget and the entire \$2.5 million was not used. Subtracting the cost of the Campbell Building renovation (\$1.6 million) and the construction contingency (\$1.6 million) the cost of the construction (including all professional, architect and other costs) the cost of the actual construction of the new courthouse is projected to be in the range of \$17.5 million to \$18 million.

Demolition on the Benton Evening News office began on Thursday, January 30 and was expected to be completed in short order. McVicker Excavating & Demolition, the lower bidder on the demolition, projected that it will take only two days to raze the building and then work will begin on making a parking lot for much-needed parking space.

Concerned business owners from the Benton Public Square area have attended recent meetings expressing concerns and seeking input from the county board regarding potential parking problems on the square. The county board has secured permission for the use of the part of the parking at First Baptist Church, located on South Main Street. The parking lot west of the church will be available along with parking at the Benton Evening News. The board also recently sent a letter to all employees asking them to refrain from parking on the Public Square and said the part of the bid process for construction of the new courthouse will have a provision that no construction workers will be allowed to park on the public square.

Additionally, the city of Benton, as a means to help businesses, is also looking at modifying an ordinance that would prohibit any employee or business owner that works on the square from parking.