



## **FRANKLIN COUNTY GOVERNMENT COURTHOUSE CONSTRUCTION PROJECT UPDATE 9/24/2019**

'Slow but sure' might be the best way to describe the meticulous manner that the Franklin County Board has proceeded during the past few months with the mammoth task of moving forward with the construction of a proposed 50,000 square-foot courthouse in the middle of the Benton Public Square.

Voters overwhelmingly approved a one-cent sales tax referendum in the April 2, 2019 Consolidated Election, setting the wheels in motion to move step-by-step through the process.

**Below is a list of items that have been covered and approved by the board:**

- Approved dates for additional 2019 county board meetings. The board will now meet twice monthly instead of the one monthly meeting that was previously held. The dates for the additional meetings for the remainder of 2019 will be: October 7, November 4 and December 2. These meetings will begin at 5:30 p.m. The county board's regular meetings will be held on October 22, November 19 and December 17. These meetings will begin at 6 p.m. The additional meeting near the first of the month will be held primarily to handle the increased workload created by construction of the new courthouse.
- Approved an ordinance authorizing the board to borrow \$9.9 million from Southern Illinois Bank at 4% interest. While Southern Illinois Bank is the lead lending institution the loan will be shared among all Franklin County banks. The loan proceeds will be used to provide financing for the Franklin County Courthouse/Campbell Building project.

- Approved a resolution that will allow the county to be reimbursed for any expenditures that the county has incurred prior to sales tax revenue being collected. The state started collecting the additional 1-cent sales tax on July 1, 2019, however the county will not begin receiving the additional revenue until approximately October 1, 2019.
- Hired Navigate Building Solutions, of St. Louis, as project manager for the construction of the new courthouse. Navigate will oversee all aspects of the project and work closely with architects on every phase of the courthouse construction. Navigate was the low bidder at \$210,059.
- Hired White & Borgognoni Architects, P.C., of Carbondale, as architects for construction of the new courthouse. White & Borgognoni was the successful firm from five companies that made presentations to a county committee that included board members Larry Miller, Alan Price, Kevin Westin, County Engineer Mike Rolla and Circuit Clerk Jim Muir. White & Borgognoni will be paid \$1.2 million.
- Hired Kelly Architecture & Consulting, of Sesser, to oversee all the plans for the renovation of the Campbell Building (located on the south side of the Public Square). Plans call for the construction of offices that will house the county clerk's office and the county treasurer's office that will be located on the ground floor of the Campbell building.

Drilling will take place on the public square in early October with four 30-foot deep bore holes drilled at the corners of the property to ensure that the area is adequate to support the new three-story facility.

The County Board had considered moving the court system and circuit clerk's offices to a now-closed antique store on the east side of the Public Square but later decided to move the offices and courtrooms to the 10,000-square-foot basement area of the Campbell Building. A 30-foot by 24-foot addition will be built on the east side of the Campbell building and will house security and an elevator and stairs to the basement area. The main entrance to the building will be on the east side and after completion the current entrance off the Public Square will be used as an exit only.

After the new courthouse is completed and the court system and circuit clerk's office moves out of the Campbell Building as many as three county offices, currently located at various locations in the county, will be housed in the basement area, saving the county a substantial amount of revenue that is currently being paid in monthly rent.

Bids were let on September 6, 2019 for renovation work on the Campbell Building and two construction companies submitted bids on September 20, 2019. River City Construction Company, of Benton, was the successful bidder with a low bid of \$1,415,000. Work is scheduled to start on September 30, 2019 with a completion date of December 20, 2019 projected.

Franklin County Emergency Management Director Ryan M. Buckingham wrote and then spearheaded an effort through the United States Department of Agriculture & Greater Egypt Planning Commission to obtain a grant that would be used for additional parking near the Campbell Building. The county received notice in August that they were the recipient of \$99,999 through the USDA grant. The board has made an offer on the now-closed Benton Evening News building that would be used for additional parking and have also had preliminary discussion with the owners of R & R Motorsports about leasing parking space on the south side of East Church Street, adjacent to the Campbell Building.

Tentative dates have also been scheduled for the transition to move offices from the courthouse to the Campbell Building. Barring any unforeseen issues all equipment and furniture will be removed from the courthouse beginning on Friday, January 17, 2020 and will conclude on Monday, January 20, 2019.

Demolition of the Franklin County Courthouse is scheduled for early February 2020 with construction on the new courthouse slated to begin in July 2020 with a completion date set for November 2021.

If any public group or organization would like to have a Representative of Franklin County Government attend a local community meeting and answer any questions about the ongoing status of the Courthouse Project or future plans please contact the Franklin County Board Office (Gayla Sink-Prather) at 618-439-3743.