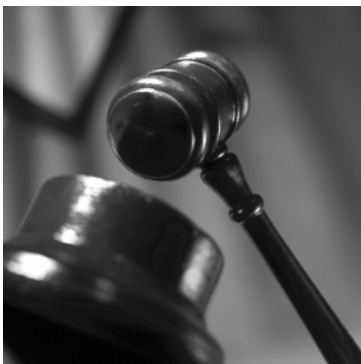




*“The City is constantly reviewing opportunities to save taxpayers money.”*



# A Focus on Franklin

## What Does Court Consolidation Mean to Me?

Many Franklin residents have asked why the City is exploring the transfer of the Franklin Municipal Court to Warren County. The residents also wanted to know the impact the Franklin Municipal Court has on the City Budget.

**Funding Gap:** The Franklin Municipal Court, on an annual basis, has a “funding gap” between their expenditures, what they spend on staff and other items, and the revenues they collect from fines and court costs. The money that is needed to make up this “gap” for the Court comes from the City’s General Fund. Any money that comes from the General Fund for the Court is money the City does not have to pay for other needs, such as police, parks and street paving.

In 2007, the funding gap for the Court was \$563,589. The 2008 funding gap is estimated to be even larger; therefore, in just a two-year period, over \$1,000,000 that could have been allocated elsewhere will be needed for the Franklin Court to balance their budget. Due in part to General Fund moneys going to this funding gap, the City has had to cancel several needed community-wide infrastructure projects.

**Uncollected Fines, Costs and Fees:** Currently, the Municipal Court is owed over \$800,000 in fines, costs and fees that the Court has not collected. As the expenditures of the Court grow yearly, revenues have lagged behind, partly due to these uncollected moneys. Any fines, costs and fees that are not collected from convicted defendants results in decreased revenues, which in turn leads to a larger funding gap. Thus, if moneys are not being col-

lected, it is the taxpayers’ dollars in the General Fund that must go to support the Court.

**Tax Implications:** Franklin residents, with property taxes, income taxes, and sales taxes, currently pay to support **both** the Franklin Municipal Court and the Warren County Court. The residents of Springboro and Carlisle, which do not have Municipal Courts, do not pay for two courts which, in essence, serve the same function. Further, although Carlisle and Franklin Township use the Franklin Court, they do not financially support it – any funding gap is paid solely by Franklin residents through their tax dollars in the form of the General Fund. To put the funding gap in perspective, as of the last census, the City had 11,396 residents; therefore, for the 2007 funding gap of \$563,589, the equivalent of \$49.45 for each man, woman and child in Franklin was needed to balance the Court budget – this is from all residents, not just those that utilize the Franklin Municipal Court.



**Warren County Court Expansion:** The State of Ohio is currently asking governmental entities to pursue partnerships in an effort to save overall taxpayer money. Warren County is contemplating spending over \$20 million on a County Court expansion project. This expansion would allow for an opportunity to partner with the County in a regional approach to government and decrease the level of duplication that exists regarding court systems. Because of the County’s project, it was felt that the timing was perfect to explore an opportunity to save the residents of Franklin money.