

The FY 2021 budget I am submitting is a “Pause” budget. Due to the uncertainty of COVID, this budget is the most conservative I have ever submitted. I am recommending a budget that reflects the FY 2020 budget expenditures and revenue levels, with minor changes within that financial structure. The changes within this budget are important to maintain the momentum of a City moving forward, without obligating us to budget setbacks in these uncertain times.

My first priority was to protect the budget from mid-year cuts in FY 2021. I wanted “options vs. obligations”, allowing the City to increase its spending - when possible - while not cutting back and losing ground. Towards that end, this General Fund (GF) budget reduces anticipated revenue by

\$250,000 to account for COVID. If revenues remain flat, we are prepared. If revenues go up, we can reevaluate the budget at a later date, and take appropriate actions.

The City was allocated \$590,609 by the Legislature to cover expenses due to COVID. The first deadline for submission was August 3 and the City submitted \$400,766. There will be a second round of submissions in the fall.

The \$400,766 figure was determined by the Department Heads based on salaries paid when employees were sent home in the spring. Also included were the various expenses incurred due to the virus, and the needed expenditures caused by the virus.

My thoughts are to deal with those funds when received. I suggest any money approved from our request go to the “rainy day” fund. If the BoA determines a need to spend this money, it must be spent for one-time expenditures – not re-occurring expenditures and will require five votes. This will provide an additional “line of fiscal defense” in the event of total disaster next year.

I believe these steps are responsible and sufficient to protect the fiscal position of our City.

This budget keeps a promise made four years ago – to eliminate the tax increase for street paving. Recall this BoA passed a tax increase in FY 2017 of 3 mils or \$631,000 specifically for street paving. Despite this

loss, FY 2021 street paving will continue at similar budgeted levels to FY 2020.

Let me explain how that is possible. We are in the second year of the State's Four-Year Infrastructure Program adding \$177,000 to the City's budget each year. This budget includes the two-year total of \$354,000 ($\$177,000 \times 2$ – FY 2020 and FY 2021).

Adding this to the \$100,000 budgeted each year by the Board, gives us a street paving budget of \$923,000 in FY2021. This budget plans a swap to achieve the \$1,000,000 level. More on that later.

Let's look into the future of paving for a moment. Over the next two FY's (FY 2022 and FY 2023) the City will receive an additional \$354,000 from the State achieving the total allotment of \$708,000

(\$177,000 X 4 years) from the Legislature for infrastructure. I hope the next BoA will continue to add \$100,000 per year so that by the end of FY 2025 the City paving budget will total \$1,677,000.

Speaker Gunn's efforts should be recognized, as he opened the doors and wrote the legislation leading to success in this statewide effort. His leadership makes the infrastructure in every municipality and by extension the entire State, much better.

Other FY 2021 budget points are:

1. The GF budget keeps all employee positions in all Departments – no position cuts and no new positions. This is not a freeze in hiring, we will replace

personnel as per the FY 2020 budget slotting.

2. Unfortunately, the FY 2021 GF budget does not include employee raises, equipment, or cars. If things pick up, we can change the budget to address these areas.
3. This GF budget reduces the Mayor's fund from \$50,000 to \$18,000 and uses the \$32,000 difference to continue a one-mile section of the I-20 wildflower program. City appearance remains a priority and we need to send a positive message of our commitment to continue the beautification of our community despite COVID.
4. This GF budget includes \$50,000 for the Spring elections.
5. This GF budget includes the MS Municipal League convention expenses

(\$7,300) allowing Board members, especially any new members from the spring elections, to attend.

6. This GF budget includes \$5,000 for bricks at the end of Jefferson Street. That area desperately needs repair. More on that later.
7. This GF budget includes \$5,000 for alarm systems at Robinson Park, Northside Park, and Traceway Park. We need the security measures to protect the investment in new bathrooms and gathering areas made over the last two years.
8. This GF budget increases the salary of the Economic Development Director based on his performance as agreed upon when hiring. Decisions on Project Piggy, Project Halleluiah, and Project Baseball are near, despite COVID. Win or

lose these projects, Clinton would not have been considered without Gabriel's work.

Using a Mississippi Company, Lobaki, his efforts in Virtual Reality established Clinton as a leader in this emerging field. He used this new technology to sell our community nationwide as opposed to numerous airline trips, saving the City money in tickets, hotels, and other expenses. While other cities, counties, and states slowed or stopped economic development, Clinton was able to maintain a presence in their offices.

Some of the most innovative sections of America are behind Clinton in this field. When it comes to Virtual Reality, the

City of Clinton is the “point of the spear”.

9. This budget brings a major management restructure to Parks & Recreation. We are dividing the department into two sections, both answering to Adam Wade. Responsibility of the Parks will fall under Colby Berry and responsibility of Recreation will fall under Courtney Hobbs. This GF budget increases Courtney’s salary to put her salary level in line with Colby’s since she will share in the same levels of responsibility.

We are doing this because our park side is growing and I do not want to neglect the maintenance and appearance of our Parks. Traditional we have put so much focus on the recreation side, now we

must up our game on the non-sports side of our City. The usage at Kids Towne, Lion's Club, Towne Springs, Brighton Park, Robinson Park, and future walking trails demand we focus our attention there. The Parks side of Parks and Recreation is serving a growing need in our City requiring specific emphasis if we are to take full advantage of the opportunities offered.

While this arrangement will increase efforts on both the Park side and the Recreation side, it will also allow the Director to focus on growth and additional tournaments. For example, a play up tournament to the Little League World Series and college level tournaments on our soccer fields.

Also important is the training of people to take Director responsibilities in Clinton or other communities. I believe every City should prepare the next generation of leadership in municipality departments and we are now doing that in Parks & Recreation, as we are in our other Departments.

It is vital to advertise/promote the City and develop/improve parks despite COVID. To do this, the FY 2021 GF Budget begins a new strategy shifting the funding of the Visitor Center from the Tourism Tax (Hotel Tax) to the GF. I plan to accomplish this transfer over a four-year period and this year represents the initial 25% or \$48,083. The four-year goal is to free the 3% Tourism Tax revenue and use those funds to:

1. To promote the City (from the 2% portion of the hotel tax) via the Communications Department in coordination with other City Department Heads.
2. To budget yearly maintenance improvements in P&R (the remaining 1%). We need to allow for P&R improvements without taking from other areas to keep up with our competition and maintain/promote recreational activity for future growth.

As these funds grow, the City will benefit from additional promotional opportunities and P&R improvements.

The Speaker allotted the City \$1,000,000 from the Legislature and it will be used it as a force multiplier focusing on bridge repair,

paving, and park growth. Swapping the budgeted paving funds (\$923,000) with the Legislative money (\$1,000,000) will be required for this. So, as mentioned above, the \$1,000,000 will be used to pave streets and the \$923,000 will be used on the following projects.

1. We will need \$400,532 for the City match towards the following projects;
 - A. The first phase of the 15.2-mile multi-use trail (\$188,786), running from the Natchez Trace Bridge, down Arrow Drive, to Traceway Park, set to begin in March 2021.
 - B. Kickapoo Road Bridge replacement (\$73,558).
 - C. Midway Bridge replacement (\$138,188).

These three projects were previously agreed upon by BoA action and FY 2021 is the year construction was designated to begin.

2. The construction of a walking trail behind the schools on Arrow Drive (\$200,000) as phase 2 of the 15.2-mile multi-use trail mentioned above.
3. The Caldwell Trail (\$20,000).
Beginning at the Riot of 1875 Historic Sign, the Caldwell Trail, currently under design, will trace the important events of that seminal event. Points along this linear trail will house explanations of the Riot, as well as the City Civil Rights marker, and parts of the (soon to be developed) Blues Trail. The Caldwell Trail will be added to the State Civil Rights Trail and the Blues

Marker added to the State Blues Trail becoming a community focal point and drawing visitors to Clinton.

4. A City match for the reinvigorated Robinson Park of \$280,000. We will need to show the City has “skin in the game” as I seek grant money and other funding sources to complete the \$1,000,000 in improvements at this park. Because the plans are already complete, the search for funding will move forward quickly.
5. Adding two potential City neighborhood park sites (\$22,472 total). These sites are not yet determined.

As you can see, we are protecting the financial structure of the City by operating within the frame work of the FY 2020

budget. At the same time, we are reallocating monies to make upgrades in our City's appearance, operating framework, infrastructure, and park security.

In addition, we will pave at the \$1,000,000 level, replace two bridges, and continue to improve recreational opportunities for the community. All this during a time other cities are forced to cut back due to COVID. We will not stand still; we will move forward.

Let me end by asking you to remember our small businesses and do as much of your shopping in Clinton as possible. They need the support and the future viability of our City depends on it.

Our COVID numbers continue to drop and that is a credit to your responsible actions during this difficult time. Let us continue to protect ourselves and those we love by wearing facemasks and maintaining social distances.

Together We Can Do Anything

Phil