

Franklin Favorite

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Franklin city manager seeks support with new assistant role

BY BEVERLY BRAGG
FRANKLIN FAVORITE

The Franklin City Commission voted 3-2 on Sept. 22 to move forward with a proposal to hire an assistant city manager, a move proponents say is essential for managing the city's growth and establishing a formal succession plan.

City Manager Kenton Powell presented the proposal, arguing the position would provide senior-level support to himself, city employees, and departments, while also overseeing human resources.

Franklin Mayor Larry Dixon, and Commissioners Jamie Powell and Wendell Stewart voted in favor, while Commissioners Dale McCreary and Kelly Bush both voted no.

Commissioners Powell and Stewart did not respond to requests for comment.

Prior to voting, McCreary said he believes the city needs a full-time HR director dedicated to the city's 80 employees, not an assistant city manager that oversees human resources along with other responsibilities.

Bush referenced unfinished projects and associated costs as the reason for voting no. "I think it's pretty clear we know that I'm not a fan of the city manager, so I don't want to hire an assistant manager and have the current city manager train that assistant city manager when the city manager we have currently is not doing a great job," Bush said.

According to a handout provided by Powell, a city manager in Kentucky for a population range of 8,000 to 19,999 makes a minimum of \$70,000 a year and a maximum of \$160,368 a year. An assistant city manager for the same population range makes a minimum

of \$89,557 a year and a maximum of \$130,000 a year.

Powell's current annual salary and benefits were requested by the Franklin Favorite via an open records request on Oct. 1 and were submitted to the city clerk but were not received as of press time on the morning of Oct. 7.

Powell said the city is going through growing pains and he needs help. He said his intent at the Sept. 22 meeting was to throw the idea out there and ask for help. "I hate to say I need help," said Powell. "I just try to work more."

Powell said different commissioners, as well as the mayor, have come to city hall and said they all recognize he needs help. "The commission has a general idea of what my job is, but they don't know what my job is; that's my job to do," Powell said. "They've hired me to do a job, and that's what

I'm doing. They have a general idea, but they do not know the details of what I get into; they do not. They don't need to know. They need to know they have somebody to trust do it."

Powell was hired as city manager of Franklin in 2011, then left in July 2014 for an engineering job in Indiana. He was rehired as city manager for Franklin in October 2014.

Under his current contract of employment, Powell is responsible for functions of government for the City of Franklin, including budget preparation, supervising all departments of city government, the conduct of all city officers and employees under his jurisdiction, and maintaining a liaison with related units of local government respecting interlocal contracting and joint activities.

According to Powell, the hiring of an assistant city manager will not

only help him manage more tasks and projects, but it will also allow for a smooth transition in the event that he leaves the office. "The smart thing to do right now is succession planning," Powell said.

In addition to an assistant city manager, Powell also confirmed the city still plans to hire a human resources director to fill the vacancy recently left by Tammie Carey.

Dixon said he is in the office daily and sees the added responsibilities placed on Powell due to the exceeding growth in the community, and he is in support of the assistant city manager position due to the importance of planning for the city's future growth and the impact that it will continue to have on Franklin. "With our growth comes added walk-in traffic, which means our city

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Homecoming Parade & Crowned Queen



Beverly Bragg/Franklin Favorite

Sitting above the crowd last Friday, Ken Tavious waits for the Franklin-Simpson Homecoming parade to begin in downtown Franklin.



Kelly Phillips/Franklin Favorite

Abbey Cook was crowned Franklin-Simpson's 2025 Homecoming Queen, escorted by Wildcat football player Killian Thompson. More on the game against Calloway County on Page 6.

Commissioner files open meetings complaint over zoning vote

BY BEVERLY BRAGG
FRANKLIN FAVORITE

complaint.

A city commissioner has filed a formal complaint against the City of Franklin, alleging officials misused a closed-door executive session to finalize a significant zone change, effectively conducting public policy out of public view.

Commissioner Kelly Bush filed the complaint with Mayor Larry Dixon on Oct. 2, specifically citing a discussion held during an executive session at the City Commission's regular meeting on Aug. 25, 2025. Bush asserts the session was used to formulate public policy behind closed doors.

Dixon and city attorney Scott Crabtree did not respond to separate requests for comments regarding Bush's complaint.

The formal written complaint alleges violations of the Kentucky Open Meetings Act.

"As a member of the Commission, I have firsthand knowledge of the events and am exercising my right under KRS 61.846(1) to bring this matter to your attention for resolution," states Bush in the

complaint. According to Bush, the commission entered a closed executive session where it reviewed and discussed proposed text amendments to the Planning and Zoning regulations for the I-2 Heavy Industrial Zoning District.

The proposed text amendment states the purpose of the heavy industrial (I-2) zoning district is to encourage the development of major manufacturing, processing, warehousing, advanced technology centers, data centers, power generation, and other business establishments.

The proposed amendment is broad, allowing for the development of major manufacturing, warehousing, and, critically, advanced technology centers—including data centers and extensive on-site power generation systems, such as gas turbine arrays and battery energy storage.

The complaint claims the executive session discussion involved substantive public policy changes with potential impacts

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Franklin-Simpson chamber director Thurmond receives Tim Lee Carter Award

BEVERLY BRAGG
FRANKLIN FAVORITE

Steve Thurmond, executive director of the Franklin-Simpson Chamber of Commerce, was named a 2025 recipient of the Tim Lee Carter award last week for his contributions to the local community and economy.

Thurmond received the award on Sept. 30 at the Barren River Area Development District 57th annual meeting in Hart County, KY.

Thurmond has been with the chamber for 18 years, and is continually involved in community events such as the annual Garden Spot 5-K run and walk, the community health fair, and ribbon cuttings for local businesses and industry.

He has served over 33 years on the BRADD's board of directors and chaired the board from 2019 - 2022, the second longest term in ADD history as chairman. He also chaired the statewide Kentucky Council of Area Development Districts from 2023 to 2024.

Thurmond said over the

years, he has watched the Tim Lee Carter award presented to many outstanding people. "To have my name associated with that list is truly humbling and such an honor," said Thurmond. "This really is an honor and one I am very proud of."

The Tim Lee Carter award was created in 1980 to honor the Monroe County physician who served 16 years in Congress and was known for his contributions in health legislation. Carter worked to secure federal funds to build hospitals, vocational schools, pure water systems, and sewage disposal systems in his district.

According to a media release from BRADD, Thurmond was selected for the award for helping guide tremendous growth and quality of life improvement initiatives in the Franklin-Simpson community.

City of Franklin Mayor Larry Dixon said he and city manager Kenton Powell attended the

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Submitted

Warren County attorney Amy Hale Chandler (left) presented Steve Thurmond, executive director of the Franklin-Simpson Chamber of Commerce (right), with the Tim Lee Carter award on Sept. 30 at the Barren River Area Development District's 57th annual meeting held at the Hart County fairgrounds. Thurmond received the award for honoring superior achievement towards the goals of BRADD by helping guide tremendous growth and quality of life improvement initiatives in his community.

Magistrates handle financial business in special called meeting

BY BEVERLY BRAGG
FRANKLIN FAVORITE

It took the Simpson County Fiscal Court less than 20 minutes to address the financial business of the county government last week at a special called meeting.

Fiscal court usually meets the first and third Tuesday of each month; however, the court agreed on Sept. 16 to cancel their Oct. 6 regular meeting due to both the county treasurer and the county attorney being out of their respective offices for fall break, pushing the next regular meeting date to Oct. 20.

Judge-Executive Mason Barnes explained the need for the special called meeting when the fiscal court met in regular session on Sept. 16.

"Through our cycle of regular meetings, we typically have two weeks from meeting to meeting; sometimes we have three," Barnes said. "So, the proposal is because it would be three weeks if we waited till our next regular meeting, which would be Oct. 6. We're three weeks away from that. If we can't get the financial business together or transacted because the county treasurer is out, it will be two more weeks. We can't go five weeks without transacting the financial business."

Barnes was unable to attend the special called meeting on Sept. 30, and Magistrate Marty Chandler presided as pro tem in his absence.

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Weather Forecast



THURSDAY
Sunny
high 72°
low 46°



FRIDAY
Sunny
high 76°
low 48°



SATURDAY
Sunny
high 78°
low 50°

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