

Franklin Township - 1976 Annual Report

TOWNSHIP DIRECTORY

Municipal Building
475 DeMott Lane
Somerset, New Jersey 08873

Municipal Purposes Building
935 Hamilton Street
Somerset, New Jersey 08873

All municipal offices are open Monday through Friday, 8:30 A.M. to 4:30 P.M. The following departments can be reached during regular office hours at 873-2500.

Manager	Engineering	*Social Services
Clerk	Industrial Coordinator	Parks & Recreation
Finance	Planning Board	Rt. 27
Tax Collection	Board of Adjustment	Phillips School
Tax Assessment	Public Works	Franklin Park, New Jersey
Code Enforcement	(8:00 A.M. to 4:30 P.M.)	297-7330
Fire Inspection	*Health	297-7331

EMERGENCY NUMBER ONLY

873-2300
Fire Department
First Aid
Police Department
24 Hours A Day

BOARD OF EDUCATION

873-2400
8:30 A.M. to 4:30 P.M.

LIBRARY

545-8032
Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, 10:00 A.M. to 8:30 P.M.
Tuesday and Wednesday, 10:00 A.M. to 5:30 P.M.
Friday and Saturday, 10:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M.

SEWERAGE AUTHORITY

828-2121
8:30 A.M. to 4:30 P.M.

HOUSING AUTHORITY

545-9430

The following meetings are open to the public.

TOWNSHIP COUNCIL

2nd and 4th Thursday at 8:00 P.M.

PLANNING BOARD

1st Wednesday at 8:00 P.M.

MUNICIPAL COURT

Monday at 7:30 P.M.
Thursday at 1:30 P.M.

ZONING BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT

1st and 3rd Thursday at 8:00 P.M.

HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION

4th Tuesday at 8:15 P.M.

*Located in Municipal Purposes Building

FOREWARD

"The Municipal Manager shall...at least once a year make an annual report on his work for the benefit of the Council and the public." (NJSA 40:69A-95)

To the Township Council and the Residents of Franklin Township:

The Township Manager's annual report has historically been a brief look at each of the major governmental functions of the town. While such a report has served a useful purpose in the past, perhaps it is time for a different perspective on local government. In a very real sense, running local government is just like running a business. We have stockholders (taxpayers), an elected board of directors (council members), assets, liabilities, income, expense, etc.

The 1976 annual report is in the form of an annual stockholders' report. It will attempt to explain how the business operates, the financial condition and a brief review of the 1976 departmental highlights.

The Township Manager and the professional staff are committed to a business-like approach to government; it is with a great deal of pride that this annual report on municipal operations is submitted.

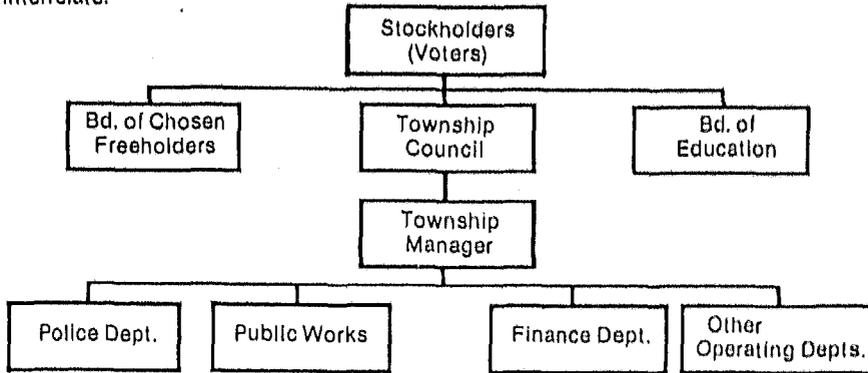
H. G. GERKEN
Township Manager

I. THE CORPORATE STRUCTURE

The municipal government of Franklin Township is quite similar to a relatively small corporation within a major conglomerate. Township government officials must work closely with officials of other companies such as the Board of Education, Sewerage Authority, Somerset County and the State of New Jersey. In the case of the Board of Education and the County of Somerset, the municipal government must collect revenues and forward the cash. While there is a great deal of autonomy in each operation, the corporate relationships are clear. In the final analysis, the board of directors of most of these interrelated companies is elected by the voters.

When an individual or a group of people decide to begin a business venture, some very basic decisions must be made. What will be sold or manufactured? Where will the product be sold? How much capital is necessary to make the venture a success? Looking at Franklin through business eyes, certain decisions have already been made. For example, the market is fixed: 46 square miles, 33,000 residents. The services to be provided to the market are public schools, municipal services, and a portion of services required by Somerset County. The initial investment required to handle these services is the net worth of the land and improvements in the Township. The revenue for operations will be generated through taxes charged to each property owner. The quality and efficiency of the public school system is determined by a company known as the Board of Education; the Board of Chosen Freeholders determines how the county will respond to its market in Franklin; and, finally, the Township Council determines the extent of services its company will offer the residents.

The following chart outlines the organization of each of the companies and how they interrelate.



If the stockholders of any one of the companies feel the board of directors is not responsive to the needs of the stockholders, they may express their individual or collective opinions at regular meetings and, ultimately, the stockholders have the power to vote the incumbents out of office.

In summary, the business of running local government is quite similar to running any business. There are services to sell; financial considerations to be made; a board of directors to set policy; and a responsibility to the stockholders who exercise the ultimate control.

II. FINANCIAL OUTLOOK

Most annual stockholder reports focus on the financial strength of the company. In order to understand the financial condition of Franklin Township, it is important to understand how taxes are computed, the value of real property and the importance of the various sister company budgets. In 1976, the assessed value of all property and improvements in Franklin Township was \$340,061,360. The following table depicts the town's growth during the past five years:

YEAR	ASSESSED VALUE OF PROPERTY
1976	\$340,061,360
1975	336,607,517
1974	321,993,054
1973	303,255,110*
1972	291,514,044*

* Reflects adjustment for 50% valuation to 100% valuation.

A major cause of concern to the Manager and the Township Council was the very modest growth from 1975 to 1976 of only \$3,453,843, an increase of just 1% as compared to an average increase of 6% in previous years.

While the assessed value of property in Franklin grew only modestly, the real or market value increased sharply. The following table reflects the Director, Division of Taxation's value of property in the Township during the past five years:

YEAR	EQUALIZED OR REAL VALUE
1976	\$ 513,748,685
1975	407,352,944
1974	385,700,628
1973	327,809,209
1972	297,809,209

The tables reflect a difference of 66% between the assessed value of property and the actual market price in 1976. As a stockholder in the Township, this means that the value of your property has been steadily increasing but unfortunately, the Township is collecting its revenue (taxes) at a level substantially lower than the value of your property. This factor is extremely important since the Township's school aid and taxes to Somerset County are based on the market value, not the assessed value of real property.

Revenues

Each of the several companies in the corporate structure operates on an annual budget. The revenues required to meet the budget projections are raised through general taxation and other revenue sources. The following chart compares the various units of government during the past two years and their impact on your over-all tax bill:

Gov't Unit	1975 Taxes Required	Rate Per \$100	1976 Taxes Required	Rate Per \$100
School	\$ 8,645,373.97	\$ 2.57	\$ 9,227,851.48	\$ 2.71
Somerset County	1,960,028.86	.58	2,599,163.18	.77
Municipal	2,357,257.11	.71	2,246,859.13	.66
Vol. & Sen. Cit.	136,710.00	.04	134,790.00	.04
	\$13,099,369.94	\$ 3.90	\$14,208,663.79	\$ 4.18

The Franklin Township municipal government must assess and collect all of the above taxes, although its share of the total tax burden in 1976 was only 15.8% of the total burden. As in any business, there are those customers who refuse to pay their bills and reserves for uncollected taxes must be set up each year for this purpose. I am pleased to report that in 1976, the Finance Department collected almost 96% of all outstanding taxes as compared to 92.5% in 1975. The increase in the collection rate enables your company (the Township) to anticipate greater revenues for 1977 while appropriating less reserves. The result is lower costs (taxes) for municipal operations.

III. MUNICIPAL OPERATIONS

So far, this report has examined the corporate structure of government and how your tax money is used to support each of the various units. The real purpose of the Township Manager's annual report is to relate what has occurred in the Township in those areas where he is the Chief Executive Officer. The Manager appoints and directs the activities of all department heads with the exception of the Township Clerk and Township Attorney. Although state statute and local ordinance spell out a large number of duties, one of the key functions of the Manager is preparation of the Municipal Budget. The Manager is held accountable by the Council for meeting budgeted objectives. He must, in turn, manage the various departments and meet certain operational goals.

1976 Budget Highlights

Like most businesses, Franklin Township felt the effects of the recession in its 1976 budget preparation. The 1976 appropriation for municipal purposes was \$4,789,372, down over \$189,000 from 1975's level of \$4,987,483. The Township suffered financial cut-

backs in most areas but despite the severe financial problems, 1976 proved to be a year of outstanding results. Financially, the Finance Department achieved record levels in such areas as tax collections, receipts from delinquent taxes and interest earned on investments. By the end of 1976, almost \$1.9 million in surplus revenues had been generated. All but \$600,000 of this surplus was returned to the taxpayers thereby providing for a reduction of the municipal tax in 1977. Operationally, the Police Department stabilized the crime rate in 1976 while the Department of Public Works embarked on a comprehensive road program to maintain the township-owned streets. In general, despite increased costs and major problems caused by inflation, the municipal government was able to maintain essential services while reducing costs.

Departmental Highlights

Police Department - Russell Pfeiffer, Chief of Police
1976 Budget: \$1,217,207 1977 Budget: \$1,253,703

Although reduced in authorized manpower because of attrition, 1976 proved to be an exceptional year for the Police Department. The N. J. State Police crime report index revealed that crime in the Township had virtually stabilized. Police service calls for the community increased from 10,766 calls in 1975 to 14,414 in 1976. Each of the divisions within the Police Department showed marked increases in productivity. Total police patrol mileage for the year rose from 734,125 miles to 804,286. Special police activity is significantly higher than last year while the detective, juvenile, and traffic bureaus also increased productivity.

The 1977 budget provides for the establishment of a Crime Prevention Bureau with an objective of reducing the number of break and entries in the Township. The department will also be utilizing smaller size vehicles in an effort to improve gasoline efficiency and reduce repair costs.

Municipal Court - Honorable Nicholas Bissell, Municipal Magistrate
Rita Spritzer, Court Clerk
1976 Budget: \$42,746 1977 Budget: \$48,146

The improved productivity in the Police Department also generated more productivity in the Municipal Court. Almost 6500 violations were processed by the court as well as numerous informal conferences on neighborhood and domestic disputes.

Franklin Township will take the lead in 1977 in establishing a Regional Citizen's Dispute Settlement Program. We will be joining with South Bound Brook and Bound Brook in an effort to free up the police officers in handling many of the neighborhood-type disputes. Judge Bissell will serve as the Project Coordinator utilizing State Law Enforcement Administration funds.

Department of Code Enforcement - John Totten, Director
1976 Budget: \$76,135 1977 Budget: \$82,727

The Department of Code Enforcement becomes involved in a number of inspection functions. Any building that is constructed within the Township must first receive a permit and then be inspected by the appropriate inspector (plumbing, electrical, etc.). Additionally, the department is also responsible for the inspection of multi-family dwelling units and the recently enacted Exterior Property Maintenance Code. In 1976, 710 building permits were issued while 963 inspections were being completed. Over 1100 plumbing inspections were made and 422 multiple dwelling units were certified to the state as inspected.

A regular schedule of inspections for Property Maintenance Code violations is being instituted for 1977. New state regulations for building codes have been adopted by the town which will also necessitate some dramatic changes in 1977.

Department of Fire Inspection - Martin McLaughlin, Chief Inspector
1976 Budget: \$31,615 1977 Budget: \$30,941

Like the Department of Code Enforcement, The Fire Inspection Department is heavily involved in safety. In addition to investigating all suspicious fires, regular inspection of commercial buildings insures compliance with the fire codes. Because of the teamwork between the Fire Inspector, Volunteer Firefighters, and the Water Utility, residents of Fire District #3 will receive a higher rating for insurance coverage. The upgrading of District #3 from a Class "D" to a Class "C" during 1976 should reduce insurance premiums for fire purposes in that district.

The Chief Inspector's goals for 1977 include upgrading the other two fire districts so that all residents receive the benefits of a Class "C" rating. Franklin Township is served entirely by volunteers, and yet the Class "C" rating is equal to the rating of many communities with paid fire departments. This is an outstanding tribute to the service we receive from our volunteers.

Department of Public Works - Benjamin Walencyk, Director
1976 Budget: \$705,051 1977 Budget: \$743,911

1976 proved to be an exceptional year for the Department of Public Works. With over 150 miles of roads to maintain, over 7 miles of Township roads were upgraded and overlaid with blacktop, while more than 25 miles of roads received a tar and chip surface. In addition to an aggressive road program, several major drainage problems were eliminated, including Miller Avenue and Phase I of a very serious problem in the Somerset Hills section of the Township. The Public Works Department has attempted to schedule preventative maintenance for 1977, as well as continuation of the overlay program. In addition to the Road Department, the Director is also responsible for the operations of the Central Garage and the operations of the Water Utility. The Water Utility supplies water to over 4200 customers and maintains miles of water pipes and hydrants. Several areas of the Township will have water services upgraded in 1977. Central Garage maintains the fleet of police cars and Township vehicles. In 1976, new inventory control and reporting systems were installed to enable Township vehicles to be serviced more efficiently and economically.

Department of Parks and Recreation - Timothy Tapp, Director
1976 Budget: \$194,295 1977 Budget: \$203,216

With over 125 acres of parkland and an aggressive recreation program, the Department of Parks and Recreation faced 1976 with a 50% budget reduction. Despite limited funds, work continued on both Quarry Park and Castleton Park. Two modern tennis courts were constructed at Castleton Park, while Quarry Park had the lower section seeded and graded, as well as new nature trails constructed. The recreation operations were placed on a self-sustaining basis, and although participation decreased to some degree, after-school enrichment classes, adult enrichment classes, adult athletic leagues, teen center, and other recreational programs operated in an efficient, professional manner. Other activities included several senior citizen programs and swimming lessons.

The 1977 budget saw a restoration of some of the previously cut funds and some ambitious plans for the department. Phillips School will be used as a community center under the jurisdiction of Parks and Recreation. Park development will continue to the extent possible.

Department of Health - John Carlano, Health Officer
1976 Budget: \$82,910 1977 Budget: \$92,625

Dedicated to the prevention of health problems, the Health Department offered a number of highly successful clinics during 1976, in addition to the inspections of various food and commercial establishments. Over 1500 people attended special health screening clinics which tested residents for such medical problems as glaucoma,

diabetes, heart disease and other chronic conditions. Special cancer screening clinics were held as well as special immunization clinics. All of these services were provided free of charge to Township residents.

1977 will continue the ambitious public health programs and hopefully, a new scoliosis screening clinic. In addition, the Health Officer is attempting to establish a program known as Project EAR, in which volunteers will man telephones for residents who might need referral to trained professional help.

Department of Social Services - Eugenia Jo Messner, Director
1976 Budget: \$49,610 1977 Budget: \$58,754

Social Services provides a vehicle for the disbursement of municipal welfare funds, 75% of which are reimbursed by the state. In 1976, the department serviced over 900 persons who are not provided for under the laws of the state. In addition, Social Services arranged for 15 needy youngsters to attend summer camp in cooperation with local merchants and the Salvation Army. Food baskets were distributed to the needy during Thanksgiving and Christmas.

Individuals receiving assistance from Social Services often require not only financial support but also advice and guidance in problems relating to health, legal affairs, domestic crises and budgetary difficulties. This year, the department will continue to pursue its goal of promoting economic independence, as well as positive social and psychological adjustment for the residents of the Township who are in need.

Department of Planning - Miriam Kiss, Director
1976 Budget: \$35,960 1977 Budget: \$38,687

The Department of Planning is headed by a professional planner who is responsible for providing technical assistance and planning recommendations. With the aid of the Township Attorney and Planning Board Attorney, this office prepared the new Zoning and Subdivision Ordinance for the Township, which was necessitated by the Municipal Land Use Law.

The Planning Board is composed of nine members, including the Mayor, a Council representative, a municipal official or employee, and six citizen appointees. The Planning Board, through its power to develop and implement the Master Plan, and its power to review and approve subdivisions and site plans, continually guides the future plans of the Township. In 1976, 30 minor subdivisions and 2 major subdivisions were granted preliminary approval, and 3 were granted final approval. The Board has also continued its review and consideration of two pending PUD applications.

A continuing goal of both the Department and the Board is to insure that applications for development are processed, reviewed and a decision made with the least possible delay, all in accordance with the provisions of the Municipal Land Use Law. The Board and the Planner will also work to review and revise the Township Master Plan.

Department of Economic Development - Julius Varga, Director
1976 Budget: \$27,890 1977 Budget: \$28,650

As discussed in the financial section of the annual report, economic growth is essential to the future of the Township. In 1976, there were over 107,000 square feet of industrial building permits issued. Several firms expanded while new firms expressed an interest in the Township. The New Jersey Business Magazine ran a twelve page feature article of Franklin Township in the June, 1976 issue which stimulated interest in the Township.

Expectations are that 1977 will be a good year for Economic Development. The Township successfully attracted Marriott Corporation for a major hotel project and there is a good deal of interest in those areas of the Township zoned for industry.

Department of Finance - Henrietta Napoar, Director
1976 Budget: \$179,302 1977 Budget: \$187,407

1976 was the year of results and the Finance Department was one of the leaders in this field. As previously mentioned, almost 96% of the tax levy was collected during 1976 as compared to 92.5% in 1975. Through strong financial management, the department amassed a surplus of over \$1.9 million, most of which was used to reduce the tax burden for residents. In addition to the excellent financial results, significant progress was made in the installation of modern computer systems for the management of budgets, capital expenses and cash. Automation of billing procedures for the water utility and tax accounting began in 1976 and will be completed this year.

While it will be difficult for the Finance Department to match last year's performance, every indication is that 1977 will prove to be a successful year financially. Halfway through 1977, it appears as though the level of collections, interest on investments, and control of municipal spending are as strong and successful as last year.

Township Clerk - Mary Duffy, Clerk
1976 Budget: \$37,786 1977 Budget: \$43,540

The work in the Township Clerk's office is perhaps the most varied of all departments. In addition to preparing 346 resolutions and 45 ordinances, preparing official minutes of meetings, issuing numerous licenses, the Clerk is responsible for sale of municipal land and insurance problems. In 1976, almost \$74,000 in municipal property was sold at public auction and returned to the tax rolls. Insurance policies were closely reviewed resulting in substantial savings to the taxpayers of the Township.

1977 will focus on the cooperation of the volunteer fire companies and rescue squads in reducing the number of insured volunteers on the Workman's Compensation policy to those who are on the active list only. This will hopefully level the skyrocketing costs for this kind of insurance which has already increased approximately 35% over last year. This has been offset slightly in February with a token credit of \$1,243.00. Another goal is the formulation, with the aid of our insurance agent, of a report on the overall coverage of the Township, including suggestions for any possible improvements which may be made.

Assistants to the Manager - Louise Colo, Mary Lou Stanton

While the Township Manager must manage all of the departments, the Administrative Assistants perform many of the functions assigned to the Manager. Personnel/Purchasing and keeping the Council informed of administrative matters are just a few of these functions. Selection and recruitment of personnel as well as fringe benefits were professionally handled by the Administrative Assistants. These two employees were instrumental in the administration of a state grant of \$6000 for training of personnel.

1977 will find the contracts with the four municipal unions expiring and prove to be a challenging year. In addition to the personnel problems facing the Township, the state recently enacted a major revision to the Local Public Contracts Law, which requires a vastly increased workload on the purchasing function.

SUMMARY

From the municipal perspective, 1976 was a year of results. The professional staff had to cope with severe budget cuts and reduction of personnel but proved that they are members of a professional team committed to providing the residents of the Township with the best possible services and lowest possible costs. Obviously, we will continue to strive for greater improvement.

There are a number of signs throughout the Township which read, "Franklin Township means Business". The Township Manager and professional staff are attempting to run the municipal government like a business and we want to encourage you, as stockholders, to contact us when services or assistance are needed.

TOWNSHIP COUNCIL

AS OF

JULY 1, 1977

DR. JOSEPH MARTINO First Ward	HELEN REILLY Second Ward	JOHN CULLEN Third Ward
NANCY HENRY Fourth Ward		PHILIP BEACHEM Fifth Ward
CHARLES DURAND At Large	DOROTHY MAKLARY At Large	RICHARD S. MESSNER At Large
ROBERT METTLER At Large		

Correspondence may be addressed to Councilpersons c/o Municipal Building, 475 DeMott Lane, Somerset 08873.

HOW TO GET INFORMATION

If you have a question about a township service, you may get information by calling the Municipal Building, 873-2500, and asking for the extension number shown below next to the department that handles that service.

ANIMAL CONTROL, ext. 240, 240

Animals running at large
Injured animals
Complaints regarding animals

CLERK, ext. 207, 209

Dogs licenses
Assessment searches
Raffle and bingo licenses
Liquor licenses
Taxicab license
Peddler's license
Accident reports (involving Township vehicle, property or employee, only)
Board of Adjustment

Council actions
Voter registration
Councilmen
State Legislators
Voting districts
Election dates

CODE ENFORCEMENT, ext. 219, 222

Zoning information
Zoning complaints
Rent Levelling Information
Building Inspections
Building permits required: commercial or residential construction (new); alterations, additions, renovations, including: fireplaces, porch enclosures, tool sheds, fences, signs, swimming pools (in ground and above ground) and aluminum siding.
House numbering
Block and lot numbers

COLLECTOR OF REVENUE, ext. 214, 215

Tax rate
Taxes -- current
Interest on delinquent taxes
Improvement assessments
Property location and owner
Tax sale
Senior citizens and veterans exemptions
Water billing
Final water meter reading
Water connections

ENGINEERING/PUBLIC WORKS, ext. 223, 224, 226

Road repair, road oiling, paving, grading
Roadside brush and grass
Drainage
Catch basins
Street light installation and outages
Street sweeping
Flood plain information
Township Maps (including street and tax maps)
Water main locations
Street opening information
Large appliance removal

FIRE INSPECTION, ext. 221

Fire districts
Fire companies
Fire Codes
Fire Hydrant locations
Fire Hydrant flow tests
Fire detection systems, fire extinguishers, etc.

HEALTH, ext. 231, 232

Birth, death, marriage
Sanitation complaints
Pollution complaints
Weeds, overgrown properties
Clinic information and appointments

INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT, ext. 229

Developing, marketing and operating planned Industrial Districts & Parks
MANAGER, ext. 201, 208
Mayor and Councilmen
Matter requiring Council action
Use of Township meeting rooms

PERSONNEL, ext. 210

Applications for Employment

PLANNING BOARD, ext. 229, 230

Site plans and subdivisions
Anticipated development
Zoning and regulations

PUBLIC WORKS GARAGE, ext. 235, 236

Potholes Snow Removal Mini Dump

PARKS AND RECREATION 287-7330 -- 287-7331

After school enrichment
Adult evening courses
Softball leagues and tournament
Tennis lessons and tournament
Golf lessons
Swimming lessons
Summer playgrounds
Flag football league
Basketball -- open play and leagues
Permits for use of township parks
Senior citizen programs
Park development and maintenance
Pre-schoolers day
Special recreational activities
Franklin Outing Club
Pop Warner Football
Recreation wrestling program
Thunderbirds Drum and Bugle Corps

SOCIAL SERVICES, ext. 233, 234

Municipal welfare (finance assistance)
Food stamps
Salvation Army emergency assistance
Counseling and guidance
Referrals to other agencies for services

TAX ASSESSOR, ext. 217, 218

Tax assessment information
Farmland assessments
Veteran and Senior Citizen deductions
Note: requests by banks, credit companies, real estate brokers, etc., must be in writing.