

**To the Mayor and Members of the City Council****August 4, 2020**

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SUBJECT: DEPARTMENT UPDATE – MUNICIPAL COURT SERVICES

The purpose of this report is to provide an update to the Mayor and City Council on the most current data on Municipal Court case filings, total collections, revenue, expenditures, and staffing. There is also a brief summary of additional impacts and considerations.

Overview

From FY2015 to FY2019 the Municipal Court has continued to experience the state and nationwide trend of declining criminal case filings at 38%, general fund revenue at 34%, and special purpose fund revenue at 32%. In total, Municipal Court expenditures have reduced by 11% from a combined total of \$16.7 million down to \$14.9 million.

During this same timeframe, the Municipal Court has decreased staffing by 36 positions, and is continuing to meet with staff and stakeholders to understand the workloads tied to cases being filed. We have included information below on state legislative changes over the last three sessions because some of the changes have required courts to spend more time handling cases both pre and post filing.

State Legislation changes over the last three sessions has:

- Increased steps for the court to follow related to defendants failing to appear and failing to comply with court orders to pay
- Required judges to ensure ability to pay is considered for every person at every hearing
- Increased by \$42 the mandated state court costs on traffic case judgments and \$22 on ordinance, state law, and penal code cases.

To further review, the City Manager's Office has convened a Criminal Justice working group to methodically review and analyze the filing impacts on revenues and staffing. The working group consists of representatives from City Attorney's Office, City Prosecutor, Judicial, Code Enforcement, TPW Parking, Police Department, Planning & Data Analytics filing impacts. We will provide updates on their progress at upcoming council meetings.

Community Outreach

The Court has taken a strong approach over the last four years to change direction on proactively engaging the community through multiple approaches such as:

- Court in the Community Events
- Warrant Forgiveness Month
- Educational Opportunities through local schools and universities
- Participation in Community Events
- Goodwill Summer Earn and Learn Program

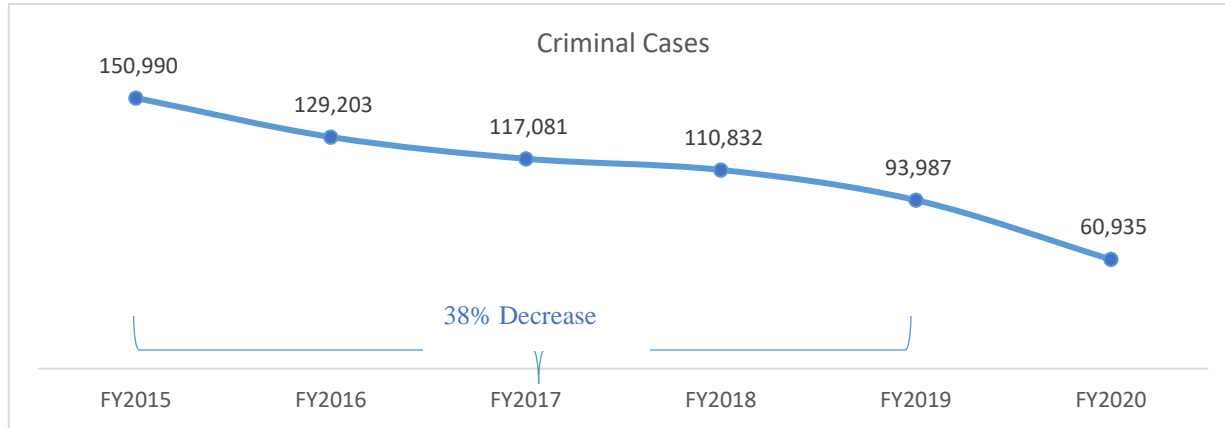
The graphic data provided below is actual data by physical year. It is important to note that the numerical values for FY2020 are reflective of activity through the end of June 2020 (months April through June have been severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic). The court is working to determine when prior regular activity levels by issuing departments and external agencies, regular court hearings, and community outreach programs can resume.



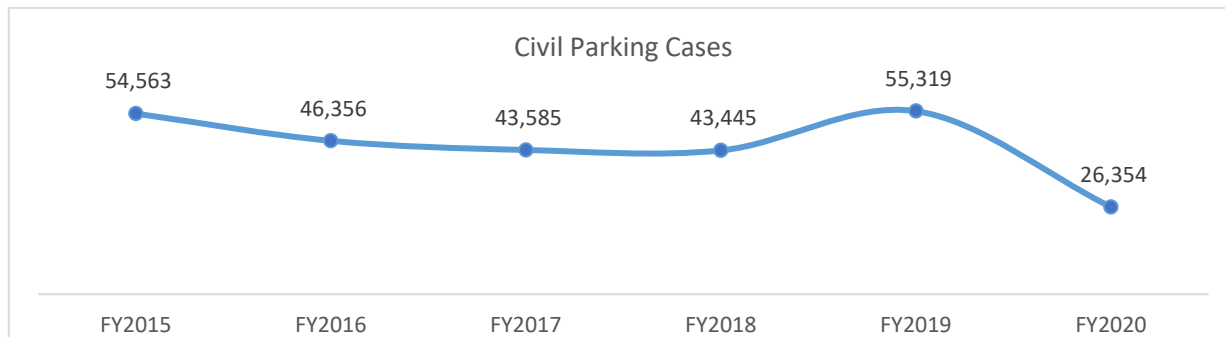
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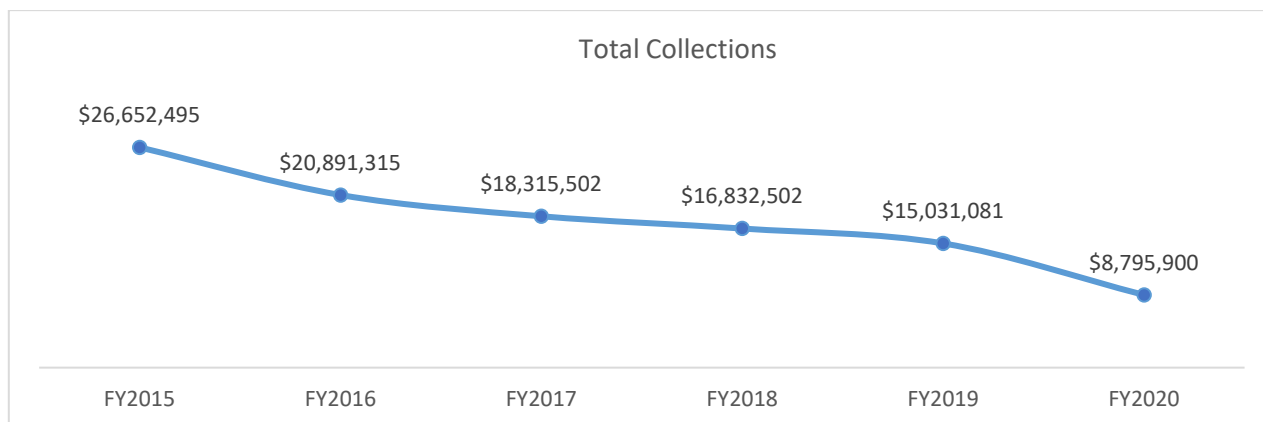
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*Note: 2020 are dates October 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020



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Total Collections

*Note: 2020 are dates October 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020

Total Collections amounts include all receipts on fines, fees, court costs, bonds, dismissal fees, escrow, and non-case receipts, which may or may not result as state or city revenue based on judgements and hearing officer decisions.



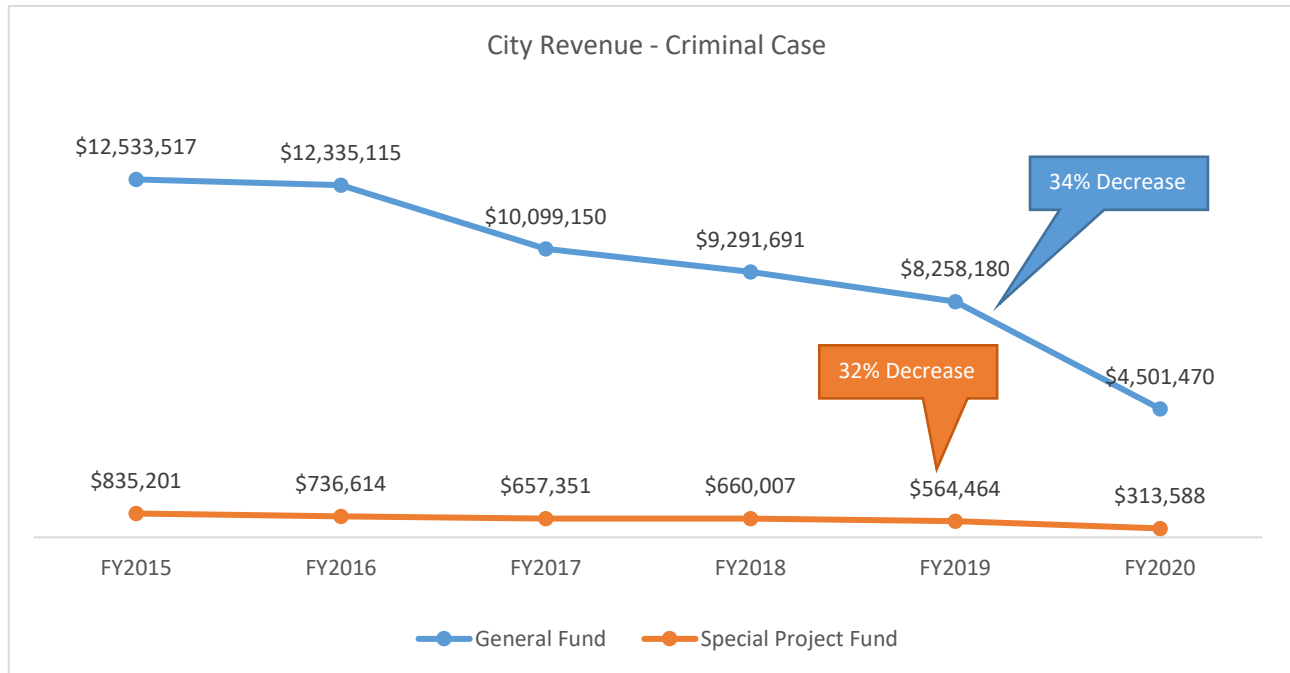
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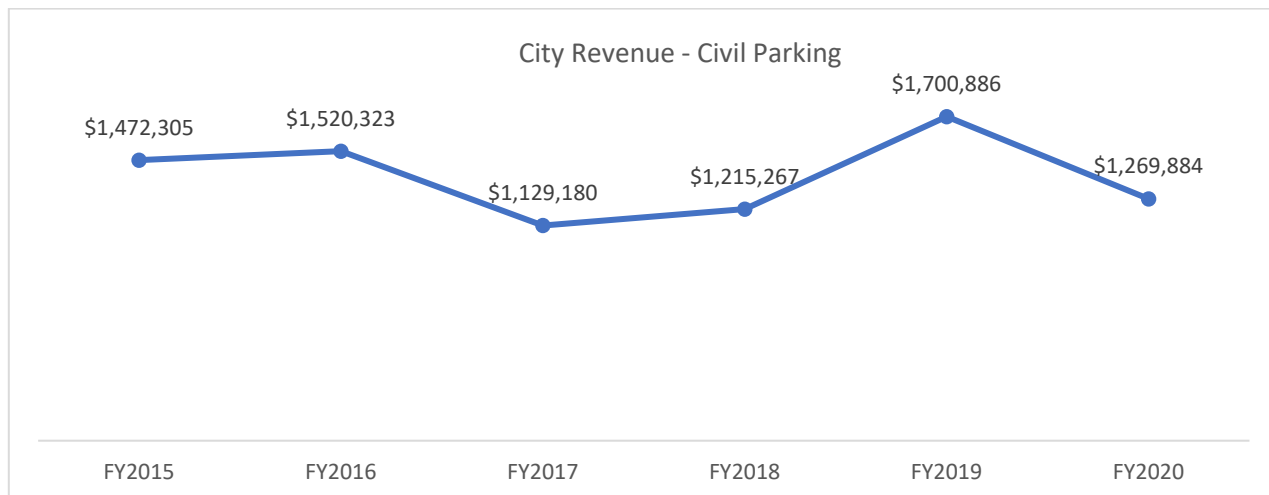
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Revenue



*Note: 2020 are dates October 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020; FY2020 Special Project 7/27/2020
Specialty fund revenue refers to Court Security, Court Technology, Juvenile Case Manager, & Truancy Prevention Funds



*Note: 2020 are dates October 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020
\$5 child safety fee \$5 added/effective October 1, 2015

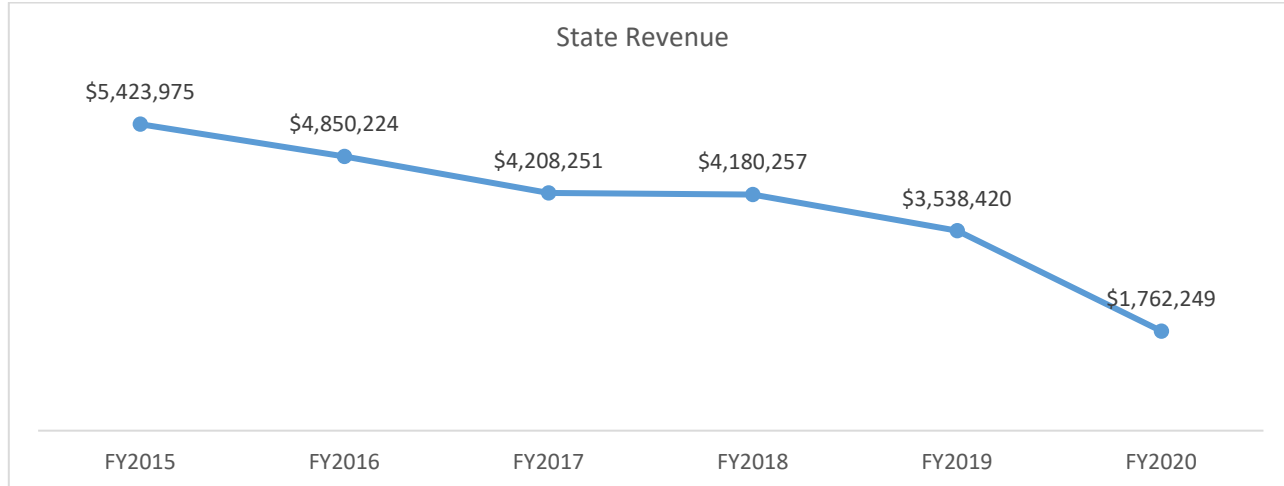


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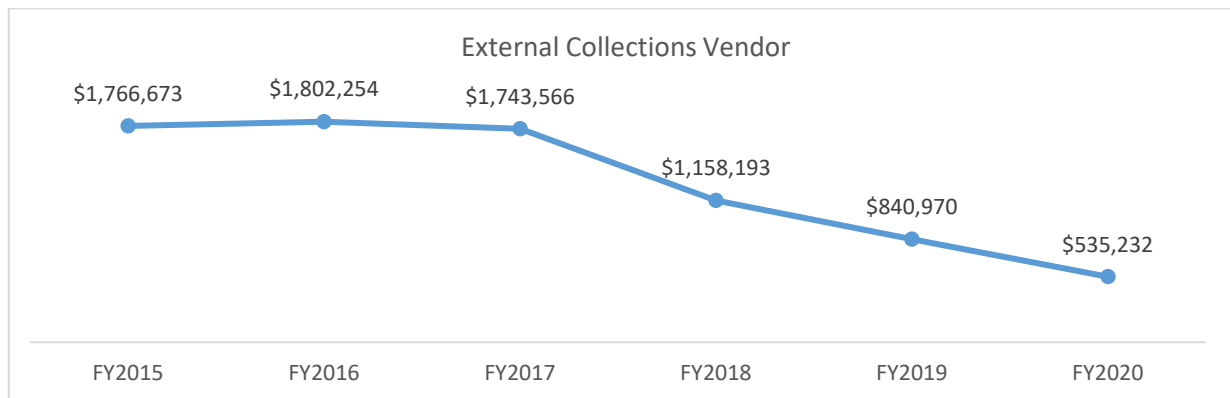
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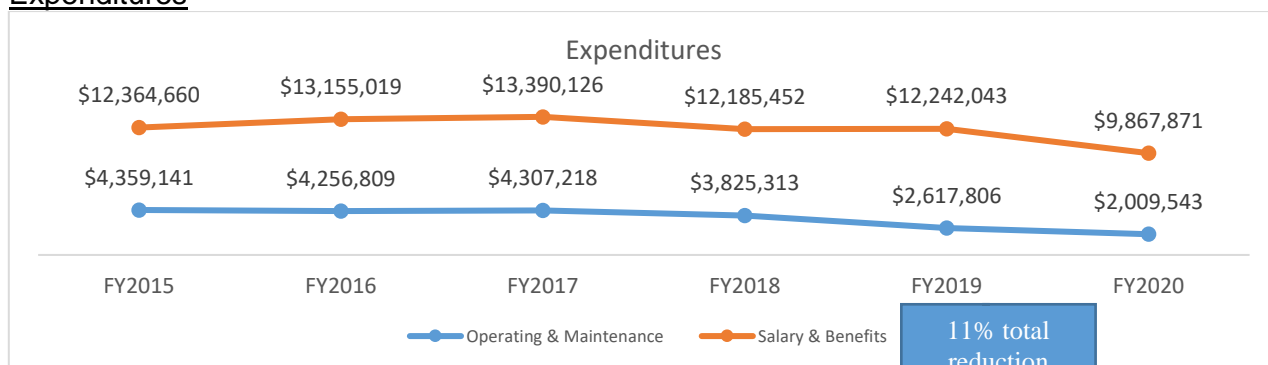


**Note: FY2020 are dates October 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020
State mandated court costs paid to State Comptroller on quarterly and/or annual basis*



**Note: 2020 are dates October 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020
30% External Collection fee is paid by the defendant and remitted to the vendor on a quarterly basis.*

Expenditures



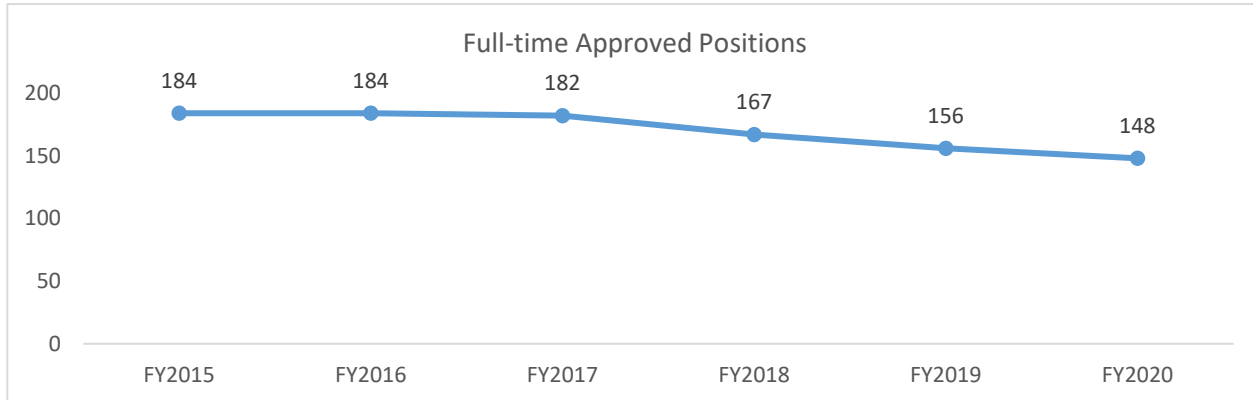
**Note: 2020 are dates October 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020*



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SUBJECT: DEPARTMENT UPDATE – MUNICIPAL COURT SERVICESStaffing

*Note: 2020 are dates October 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020
Staffing dropped by 20% to a 20 year low of 148 employees

Budget Summaries FY2015 to FY2020

- FY2015: The adopted budget decreases by the reduction of (\$288K) due to the elimination of 5.5 authorized positions implemented as part of City-wide reductions and (\$103K) in salary savings budgeted due to anticipated savings. Reductions were offset by the addition of \$539K in salaries associated to the 4 percent across-the-board salary increase and 1% increase to address specific classifications with recruitment and retention challenges. Other increases include \$178K in IT allocations for computer, radio and telephone services, \$132K for vehicle replacement and \$89K for court interpreter contractual services, which was offset by the elimination of one court interpreter position.
- FY2016: The adopted budget decreases by (\$266,301) due to the transfer of four City Marshal positions to the Building Security project of the Special Trust Fund and by (\$214,313) the transfer of three authorized positions to the Juvenile Case Management project of the Special Trust Fund. In FY2015 the cost of these positions was reimbursed by a transfer from the Special Trust Fund to the General Fund.
- FY2017: The adopted budget decreased by (\$307,318) and two Deputy City Marshal authorized positions as a result of the approval of the reduction package for the elimination of a dedicated truancy court. This reduction included \$132,356 in funding for scheduled temporaries.
- FY2018: The adopted budget included the reduction of 8 approved positions due to the reduction of the number of cases filed and workload. The adopted budget includes the transfer of two technology-focused positions to the IT Solutions Department. The reduction of personnel costs were offset with an increase in the IT allocation charged to the department.

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- FY2019: The FY2019 Adopted Budget includes an adjustment to the FY2018 AP and FTE counts.
 - The counts decrease by 2 APs and 2.00 FTEs due to the reduction of two municipal court judge positions, influenced by the decision of Tarrant County to process class A and B misdemeanors and felonies under specific circumstances.
 - The FY2019 Adopted Budget includes a decrease of 7 APs and 7.00 FTEs from the FY2018 budget including four customer services representative II, one senior customer service representative, one senior account technician and one municipal court clerk due to lower court activity.
 - The reduction in the nine authorized positions is directly related to decreases in various fines, deferred dispositions and penalty fees. Recent State legislation has strongly influenced Municipal Court's emphasis for fine payment alternatives statewide.
 - Compliance, in conjunction with ability to pay assessments, is resulting in increases in the number of cases resolved by means other than full payment, such as community service. While the 2018 Warrant Forgiveness program impacted revenue, the total of all declining revenue is partially attributable to the continued drop in filings with the court.
- FY2020: The FY2020 Adopted Budget includes a decrease of:
 - 4 APs funded out of special projects in the Special Purpose Fund from the FY2019 budget including two Deputy City Marshals, one Sr. Customer Service Representative, and one Sr. Human Services Specialist.
 - 4 APs funded out of the General Fund including two Deputy City Marshals, one Customer Service Representative and one Sr. Municipal Court clerk as part of the citywide 2% reduction exercise.
 - 2 APs funded out of the General Fund, after the reclassification of three positions into two training specialist positions and the reclassification of 2 Sr. Customer Service Representative positions into one Customer Solutions Analyst.
 - During the course of the FY2020 an Assistant Director position was reassigned from the Court to the City Manager's Office.
 - Two Customer Service Rep II positions were reassigned to the City Attorney's office, resulting in a reduction of 3 APs funded out of the General Fund.
 - Eight (8) APs funded out of the General Fund have been recommend by the department to be eliminated for FY2021.
 - A reclassification plan which will eliminate another 5 APs is pending completion in FY2020.
 - On May 1, 2020, the Court permanently withdrew its services from the Southwest Municipal Court. The lease will be paid off in June of 2021.
 - On August 18, 2020, the Court will open a new satellite joint service location at the Golden Triangle Library.

If you have any questions, please call Valerie Washington, Assistant City Manager at 817-392-6192 or William F. Rumuly, Municipal Court Services Director at 817-392-6711.

David Cooke
City Manager