



## WINNSBORO

# Dumas warns of 'rocky roads' ahead

By Joe Curtis  
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Mayor John Dumas told Town Councilmen Winnsboro will have to be cautious financially as the town reaches the fiscal year's halfway mark.

Dumas gave the warning at the Dec. 21 regular Town Council meeting.

Winnsboro's fiscal year ends in June and most town budget items are at 50 percent, Dumas said.

"We got six more months,

and we knew this fiscal year was going to be tight," Dumas said. "Let's be prepared for rocky roads for the next six months because that is the way it is going to be."

According to the budget, Winnsboro's net position was

down 47.6 percent from last year's budget.

"Not going to try to find funds, not going to try to utilize funds that we don't have," Dumas said.

Dumas attributed some of the downturn to equipment

and infrastructure cost such as the multiple sewer pumps malfunctioning. McLemore and Delta Queen pumping stations were two that gave Winnsboro particular trouble.

Problems with the aging pumping stations caused neigh-

borhood streets to be shut down at times and created a financial burden for Winnsboro as they leased pumps for nearly \$3,000 a month.

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## 2020 IN REVIEW



**A YEAR FILLED** with interesting stories were captured by *Franklin Sun* photographers. Some of the top stories were Michael Stephen Couch being sentenced in Fifth Judicial District Court on Sept. 11; COVID-19 precautions taken during voting and public events; 8-year-old Carter Robertson's accident and recovery; Marshall Waters' tragic death; Gladys Edwards being chosen for a Louisiana Ambassador Award; demonstrators on Front Street in Winnsboro; a record number of people voting; and Franklin Parish Catfish Festival coming to an end after nearly 33 years.

## COVID-19 tops busy news year

COVID-19 was the top news story of 2020 both locally and nationally.

The novel coronavirus swept through the United States, Louisiana and Franklin Parish. At year end, approximately 2,000

people in Franklin Parish were affected with COVID-19, and 78 people have succumbed to the virus.

Local schools were shut down and when opened Franklin Parish High

School observed a split schedule. Some businesses felt the pinch of lower sales due to customers fearing the virus which

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## FRANKLIN PARISH

# Property taxes total \$11.6 million

Property taxes collected in Franklin Parish this year totaled approximately \$11.6 million, according to Rod Elrod, tax assessor.

A number Elrod said was steady compared to last year's total.

"Taxes are remarkably stable," Elrod said. "Land and house prices are still firm."

The Police Jury's dedicated funds received the largest amount of property taxes at 37.9 percent or \$4.43 million.

The dedicated fund includes Council on Aging, Courthouse maintenance, drainage, equipment, health unit, library, road and salaries.

Out of the dedicated fund, drainage gets the most at \$1.21 million.

The next highest category was schools with 23.1 percent of the property taxes. The amount the schools receive were \$2.70 million.

The Hospital Service District No. 1 received 12.12 percent or \$1.41 million followed by law enforcement at 8.61 percent or \$1,006 million.

The assessment district received 6.51 percent or \$761,563 of the property taxes and fire districts received a total of 5.76 percent which is broke up into five districts.

Tensas Levee District received \$368,237 or 3.15 percent while the general fund of the Police Jury received 2.68 percent or \$313,926 of property taxes.

Rounding out the property taxes were Louisiana Tax Commission with .11 percent or \$12,688 and the Department of Agriculture and Forestry at .05 percent or \$5,766.

Total number of taxpayers for Franklin Parish amounted

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# Town may not be in breach of airport contract

By Joe Curtis  
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Winnsboro officials may not be in breach of contract for not paying approximately \$60,000 for work on the municipal airport after reviewing a certificate of substantial completion.

Terry Shirley, airport manager, said the certificate does not hold Winnsboro accountable for the remainder of the bill because the work has not been completely finished.

"It is not certificate of completion," Shirley said. "We are not paying the bill because the work has not been finished."

Allegations arose during Winnsboro's regular Town Council meeting Dec. 21 by Bill Holdman, president and CEO of Amethyst Construction, Inc. of West Monroe. According to Holdman,

Winnsboro owed Amethyst Construction, Inc. \$69,737 for the rehabilitation of Winnsboro Municipal Airport's taxiway and aprons.

Holdman's main argument was Amethyst Construction, Inc. possessed a signed "certificate of completion" saying his work was finished excepted for a punch list.

The certificate of substantial completion, obtained by *The Franklin Sun* Dec. 23, was signed by Josh Berrett, engineer for Meyer, Meyer, LaCroix & Hixson, Mayor John Dumas and Benjamin Holdman, vice president of Amethyst Construction, Inc.

The certificate was signed Oct. 21 by Barrett, Oct. 29 by Dumas and Nov. 18 by Ben-

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Volume 165  
Number 11  
Hanna Publishing Co., Inc.



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