

# Sales revenue numbers anxiously awaited by City

By Katherine R. Dougan

A concern shared by Clinton City officials as well as other municipalities throughout the state and United States is the loss of retail tax revenue because of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has resulted in business closings and residents sheltering in place for the past three months.

As the numbers for retail tax revenues start to come in, the City of Clinton has actual revenue figures from March 2020 and projected figures for April 2020.

“Basically, what you receive in May [the retail revenue numbers] is actually two months’ behind [revenue for March],” City Clerk Russell Wall explained to the aldermen and mayor at the June 1 work session. “The one I’m really looking for is April; we’ll get it in in June.”

For March 2020, there is a shortfall of retail tax revenues for the fiscal year of about \$466,385, Wall said.

“That could change when we get [the numbers] in April, but that’s where I think we are right now,” said Wall.

“When the City prepared the FY2020 budget, we projected we would receive \$5,267,900 for the year to date. Since we budgeted for \$5,267,900 and I now project we will receive only \$4,801,515, that is a shortfall of the budgeted amount of \$466,385 for the year,” Wall explained.

“What was March last year versus March this year?” Ward 6 Mike Cashion asked.

“The 420,660 is the March 2020 amount we received [from the Department of Revenue] in May 2020, and the \$429,799 is the March 2019 amount we received in May 2019,” Wall said.

Stores in Clinton send the amount of

tax they collect to the Department of Revenue (DOR) the next month following collection. Then, the following month, the DOR sends that money to the City. As an example, the stores send the March collections to the DOR in April, and then the DOR sends the City the March collections in May, Wall explained.

“One of the other things is that it’s hard getting info out of the Department of Revenue. We do get numbers from their website, but it’s in big chunks, such as for the total number of hotels, motels and restaurants. I can’t sit down and take last year and [compare it to] this year, because they [DOR] won’t give it to us,” Wall said.

Cashion mentioned that some numbers he’s reviewed show that grocery stores were

up, but not dramatically.

“They are up ten to fifteen percent, but the ten to fifteen percent is from a big number. We’re going to be singing praises of Clinton not being a retail mecca. That’s going to be our saving grace, to some degree. Even restaurants that are down forty percent is a significantly smaller number than seventy-five to eighty percent down in retail,” Cashion explained.

“The only thing that bothers me is the hotels; seeing those empty parking lots,” Mayor Phil Fisher said. “But, if rumors are to be believed, Walmart was up fifty percent [this year] compared to last year.”

“We still, at 25,000 residents, have stores: Walmart, Kroger, Walgreens, all these anchor stores that do bookoodles of business, Home Depot and these things. Having those stores might hurt, but not hurt as much,” Ward 4 Alderman Keith Perritt said.



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