Franklin, New Hampshire

Success Story

Historic City Brings its Accounting Software up to Date

The City of Franklin, NH is steeped in the historic roots of the state and the country. It is named after Benjamin Franklin and is the birthplace of Daniel Webster, both among the first order of statesmen in American history. Incorporated as a city in 1895, Franklin is located at the convergence of the Pemigewasset and Winnipesaukee Rivers, and at the headwaters of the Merrimack River -- the economic, cultural, and historical lifeblood of New Hampshire. Named “The Three Rivers City,” Franklin had its economic beginnings in the manufacturing operations that relied upon the rivers for power. These same rivers, along with Webster Lake, help frame the natural landscape that is appreciated by residents and visitors alike.

A Finance Department Focused on the Future

The City of Franklin finance department is proactive when it comes to implementing software and tools that will make accounting and finance-related processes more efficient. Therefore, when they saw that their current accounting software system was becoming dated, they knew it was time to find a more progressive system.

“There was a great deal of manual effort involved with the prior accounting system,” explained Judie Milner, finance director at City of Franklin. “The system wasn’t keeping up with the times and offering any of the new, slick features we needed, such as dynamic reporting.”

City of Franklin looked into several accounting software solutions offered for municipalities, selecting the AccuFund Accounting Suite because of two important factors.

“One of the biggest factors in selecting AccuFund was its dynamic reporting feature, where you can create a report on any field in the system and have a built-in report writer, so you don’t have to learn how to use an external report writer such as Crystal Reports,” said Milner.

“The other factor was cost, as AccuFund offers the most bang for the buck. You can choose the modules you need and don’t have to pay for ones you don’t need. You can also set how many users you need and not have to purchase a block of 50. AccuFund is the way to go for smaller communities like ours.”

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AccuFund’s Accounting Suite Ensures Continued Progress

City of Franklin implemented the AccuFund Accounting Suite in 2007, starting with the core system plus the Fixed Assets and Payroll modules. In 2009, they added the Human Resources module and the Employee Portal with the Time Clocks module. They are currently in the process of evaluating the Work Orders module.

“The Work Orders module could work perfectly for our situation, as we have several different departments that need access to the same work orders,” said Milner. “Our code enforcement, planning and municipal services departments all need to be able to see the status of service requests from citizens because they are all involved. We’re looking forward to bringing the Work Orders module on board and providing the departments with the ability to view work orders on a tablet device while they are on the road.”

City of Franklin has three full-time users of the AccuFund Accounting Suite - Milner and the two other staff members in the finance department. They also have users with access to the system, such as the heads of the departments who need to view their budgets and transactions that have posted.

“I have several department heads who are very much on top of their budget and transactions, such as the fire chief, police chief, municipal services director and recreation director,” said Milner. “They really enjoy being able to drill down on the data, right down to the source document.”

“I’ve worked with three or four other municipal accounting software systems and the drill down feature is what I find most unique about AccuFund,” added Milner. “You can click on an account, then click on a certain dollar amount and see the invoices or the journal entry behind it.

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Another feature I like is being able to export any data to Excel if you need to quickly manipulate it."



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For City of Franklin, Time Is of the Essence

With AccuFund, City of Franklin was able to move to a paperless audit, from generating 12 4-inch D-ring binders of information each year to generating nothing at all. With the old system, pulling all the documentation together would take several people one to two weeks, whereas now, one person can pull the information together in one to two days. Also, the auditors went from spending a week auditing the City to spending only half a day on-site.

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Using the Time Clocks module has saved time spent manually coding the employees' physical time cards with pay codes before loading them into the AccuFund Payroll module. It used to take four to six hours for the department secretary to code the time cards, but now she only needs to take a half hour to go into the Employee Portal, see the times entered for each employee and approve them. AccuFund automatically pulls the employee time information from the Time Clocks module into the Payroll module to begin the payroll processing.

"With the audit and time clocks alone, it's amazing how much we get done in less time than we did before," said Milner. "Then there's time saved having my budget file and accounts update

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automatically because they are linked to AccuFund."

City of Franklin also saves time with year-end processing by using AccuFund's import feature to repost entries for the New Year instead of posting them manually.

"With other software systems I've used, doing the year-end entries that are necessary for bringing your system into GAAP for the audit required that you post all those entries in reverse on the first day of the following year to get back to the budget basis," explained Milner. "With AccuFund, we just export the entries and then import them back in. The import feature is unparalleled because it's flexible and allows you to choose how you want your entries imported. We save all that time posting those entries a second time."

Milner reports that the city's departments are thrilled with the AccuFund Accounting Suite, particularly the Human Resources module. Each department has different information it needs to track on its employees. For example, the fire department needs to keep track of its employees' CPR licenses, and the municipal services department has to keep track of staff commercial driver's licenses. The HR module has allowed the finance department to set it up according to each department's informational needs, while the departments themselves no longer have to maintain paper files on the information.

"I've received tremendous feedback from the departments on AccuFund and they are in love with the HR module," reported Milner. "They can see their employees and get the information they want and how they want it. It's a nice feature for them."

AccuFund's flexibility, ease with setting up and user-friendly interface have made a difference for the City of Franklin in conducting their day-to-day and periodic accounting and financial tasks.

"I want to praise the annual AccuFund user group meetings because I hope they never stop doing them, said Milner. "Having the president of the company, at your disposal for a day is tremendously invaluable. They listen and have actually implemented some of the capabilities we've suggested into the following year's upgrade. Having that kind of interaction with the company president and being involved in the future development of the software from an idea standpoint is huge. I have never before worked with a software company that did that. That's a big deal and goes a long way with us."

Let's Get Started

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