



**HAMILTON COUNTY COMMISSION  
AGENDA PREPARATION SESSION  
FEBRUARY 27, 2019**

**COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS**

Chairman Smedley indicated the upcoming agenda items would be considered as follows:

- The Trustee's Monthly and Excess Fee Reports for January 2018 would be submitted for the record.
- An Order of Designation to the Planning Commission would be submitted as a matter of record.
- Resolution No. 319-1 was the usual County Clerk item regarding notaries, etc. This required no committee assignment.
- Resolution No. 319-7 was assigned to the Finance Committee, chaired by Commissioner Fairbanks.
- Resolution Nos. 319-2 through 319-6 were heard by a Committee of the Whole.

**PRESENTATION – CERTIFICATE OF CONGRATULATIONS – KRISTIN**

**ROBERTSON**

Commissioner Baker presented a Certificate of Congratulations to Signal Mountain Middle/High School teacher Kristen Robertson for winning the Hamilton County Teacher of the Year Award. He commended her for her hard work and dedication to the students of Hamilton County and thanked her for the positive impact she is making in the public school system.

At this time, the Certificate of Congratulations was read into the record and presented to Ms. Robertson.

1:14

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Ms. Robertson thanked Commissioner Baker for the honor and recognition. She emphasized her love of teaching and working with the students at Signal Mountain Middle/High School every day.

4:07

**PRESENTATION – CERTIFICATE OF CONGRATULATIONS – MICHELE JONES**

Commissioner Martin presented a Certificate of Congratulations to Middle Valley Elementary School teacher Michele Jones for winning the Hamilton County Teacher of the Year Award. He emphasized the importance of recognizing the teachers in our community who work so hard to make a positive impact on students in Hamilton County. He spoke about visiting Ms. Jones' classroom several years ago and recognized the way she connected with her students and her commitment to education.

At this time, the Certificate of Congratulations was read into the record and presented to Ms. Jones.

Ms. Jones thanked Commissioner Martin for the honor and recognition. She spoke about her love of teaching and her delight in working with and educating students in Hamilton County.

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7:57 **PRESENTATION – CERTIFICATE OF CONGRATULATIONS – SARA PRATT**

Chairman Smedley presented a Certificate of Congratulations to Apison Elementary School teacher Sara Pratt for winning the Hamilton County Teacher of the Year Award. She thanked Ms. Pratt for her dedication to her students and spoke about the important work Hamilton County educators do to shape the lives of young people in the community.

At this time, the Certificate of Congratulations was read into the record and presented to Ms. Pratt.

Ms. Pratt thanked Chairman Smedley for the honor and recognition. She also thanked Apison Elementary School Principal Ron Hughes and Assistant Principal Callie Steward for taking a chance on a new graduate and giving her the opportunity to teach.

Ms. Stewart expressed her gratitude to have Ms. Pratt at Apison Elementary School and thanked her for the work she does in and out of the classroom to make an impact on students in Hamilton County.

Mayor Coppinger congratulated all three recipients of the Teacher of the Year Award and spoke about the teachers that have influenced his life. He asked all

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educators present at today's meeting to stand. At this time, a round of applause was given.

Chairman Smedley recognized Superintendent of Schools Dr. Bryan Johnson and School Board Member Kathy Lennon in the audience.

Commissioner Geter thanked Mr. Robertson, Ms. Jones, and Ms. Pratt for their dedication and emphasized the importance of education and the role that teachers play in influencing the future for children in Hamilton County. She also thanked Dr. Johnson for his leadership.

At this time, the teachers and administrators shook hands with members of the Commissioner, Attorney Taylor, and Mayor Copping.

18:11

**PRESENTATION – THE HONORABLE JUDGE CLARENCE SHATTUCK**

The Honorable Judge Clarence Shattuck, Judge of the III Division of the Hamilton County General Sessions Court, informed the Commission that after much thought, prayer, and discussion with family and friends he planned to retire effective April 1, 2019. He expressed his appreciation for the Commission appointment in 1982, and to the citizens who elected him on five separate occasions since that appointment.

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He spoke about the positive changes he has seen over the 36 years he has served and expressed gratitude for having the opportunity to be involved in the improvements.

Judge Shattuck recognized several colleagues and friends present at today's meeting including General Sessions Court Judge of the II Division Alexander McVeagh, Circuit Court Clerk Larry Henry, Court Officer Dennis Gertz, Executive Director of the Chattanooga Bar Association Lynda Hood, and several court clerks. He also recognized longtime friend Charles "Burr" Elliott.

Judge Shattuck thanked Commissioners and Mayor Coppinger for the support he has received over the years. He submitted a letter formally announcing his retirement. A copy of the letter was filed in the Clerk's Office.

Several Commissioners and Mayor Coppinger thanked Judge Shattuck for his years of service and for making his important announcement in person. Several Commissioners told stories of Judge Shattuck's service both in the court and in the community and expressed how much he will be missed. At this time, a round of applause was given.

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33:12

**PRESENTATION – HEALTH DEPARTMENT – HAMILTON COUNTY COMMUNITY  
HEALTH PROFILE**

Health Department Director Becky Barnes gave a brief introduction to the “Picture of Our Health” report published every four years by the Health Department. She explained the report helps guide efforts to improve the health of the community. Copies of the report were distributed to Commissioners; a copy of the report was also filed in the Clerk’s Office. Ms. Barnes introduced Ione Farrar, Community Health Planner, to give a brief overview of the report. She noted the full report will be presented to the Regional Health Council on Monday at 12:00 PM at the Health Department and invited everyone to attend.

Ms. Farrar presented information regarding the report, which includes over 100 health indicators and covers 11 topic areas. Most of the report contains county-level data with state and national comparisons. She began by speaking about bright spots of the report, including a 34% drop in teen birth rates from 2010 to 2016, a 33% drop in pregnancy smoking from 2010-2016, and a 15% drop in opioid prescriptions over the last three years. She added that 91% of Hamilton County residents had health insurance in 2017.

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Ms. Farrar went on to talk about some areas of concern included in the report. She explained that while opioid prescriptions have dropped both fatal and non-fatal opioid overdoses continues to rise. She also spoke about the Hamilton County violent crime rate, which was 75% higher than the national violent crime in 2016. Other areas of concern included 32,303 uninsured Hamilton County residents in 2017, a rise in STD rates, and health disparities in the African-American population.

In response to Commissioner Mackey's question, Ms. Farrar explained the report helps to identify areas of focus for specific community outreach programs and funding. Ms. Barnes added state and federal funding is less flexible as they typically target specific areas based on their own data, however this report does help identify areas of need.

Commissioner Mackey called for intervention in addressing health disparities, violent crime rates, and education.

51:40 Commissioner Geter thanked Mr. Farrar for her presentation. She asked for information regarding any decline in the area of deaths related to strokes and hypertension. Mr. Farrar stated she would report back to Commissioners with that information. Commissioner Geter asked for focus to be placed on addressing health disparities in the community.

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Commissioner Geter reminded everyone of the work Cempa Community Care does to combat rising STD rates in Hamilton County. It was noted Cempa recently presented information regarding their community health initiative to Commissioners. In response to Commissioner Geter's question, Ms. Farrar stated HIV is included in their statistics. She noted there is an average of 40-50 new diagnosis of HIV each year.

56:25

Commissioner Sharpe thanked Ms. Farrar for her presentation. In response to Commissioner Sharpe's question, Ms. Farrar pointed out the teen pregnancy rate is 45% higher among African-American teens. She noted that overall teen pregnancy rates dropped across the entire population. Ms. Barnes added that the Health Department's role is to educate the public, physicians, and hospital groups of these concerns and disparities.

Commissioner Baker questioned the breakdown of the violent crime rate in Hamilton County. Ms. Farrar explained that of the 2,413 violent crimes reported in 2016 75% were reported to the Chattanooga Police Department. He also questioned if the community was experiencing a push back to vaccines since the recently reported measles outbreak in the northwest. Ms. Barnes reported they have seen some push back, but not to level that other communities are experiencing. Commissioner Baker requested a plan of action to address the concerns within the report.

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In response to Commissioner Boyd's question, Ms. Barnes reported the accessibility of the morning after pill and the county's acceptance of family planning options has most likely contributed to the decline in teen birth rates.

1:05:50

**COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE – RESOLUTION NO. 319-2**

Mayor Coppinger spoke regarding this item, which confirms the appointment of Dr. Randel Philip Burns to the Chattanooga-Hamilton County Hospital Authority Board of Trustees for a term ending April 18, 2023. He noted Hamilton County is very fortunate that Dr. Burns is willing to serve on this board. He also thanked Jack Studer, whom Dr. Burns will be replacing, for his service.

Commissioner Baker voiced his support for this appointment and the experience Dr. Burns brings to the board.

1:07:34

**COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE – RESOLUTION NO. 319-3**

Mayor Coppinger spoke regarding this item, which appropriates \$100,000 from bond funds to the Community Foundation of Greater Chattanooga to assist with the Ed Johnson Memorial Fund Project. He noted this project has been underway since 2017 and several members of the local committee leading efforts to fund a permanent

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memorial were present. Mayor Coppinger explained funding for the project will come from existing bond funds.

Commissioner Geter thanked the committee and all the community supporters for their work on this project. She spoke about seeing the Ed Johnson documentary and presentation and publicly thanked those who organized the event. Commissioner Geter voiced her support for the project.

1:10:43

Commissioner Boyd stated that while the project is worthy of support, he stood firmly against using unbudgeted general fund tax dollars to fund the memorial. Instead, he suggested that revenue from the hotel-motel occupancy tax, 100% of which is designated to the Convention and Visitor's Bureau (CVB), should be used to fund projects of this nature. He distributed a handout outlining his statement, which included a plan to make an amendment at next week's meeting directing County Trustee Bill Hullander to withhold \$25,000 a month of hotel-motel tax revenue from the CVB for the next four months to cover the County's portion of this project. A copy of the handout was filed in the Clerk's Office.

Commissioner Boyd stated that this project will enhance tourism and called it shameful that the CVB has not stepped up to fund the memorial. He noted he will not be supporting this project until a funding avenue by the CVB exists.

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Commissioner Martin spoke about the Ed Johnson documentary and presentation and provided background information on Mr. Johnson, a Chattanooga resident who was lynched on the Walnut Street Bridge in 1906 and the subsequent Supreme Court case that set a precedent for civil rights laws in America. He explained that he is struggling with the decision to use taxpayer dollars to fund the memorial. He stated historically the Commission has not funded monuments and memorials, but rather community organizations often foot the bills. Commissioner Martin noted that he would be discussing this with his constituents in order to make an informed decision.

1:23:18

Commissioner Baker commended the local committee for educating Commissioners and the community on the need for this project. He voiced his support for the memorial.

Commissioner Geter responded to comments by fellow Commissioners. She explained that this project is not about tourism, but about addressing injustices in the community. Commissioner Mackey echoed Commissioner Geter's comments and added the memorial is important to bridge gaps and address racial disparities in the community.

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Commissioner Sharpe also voiced support for the project. He stated the past actions of Hamilton County government were responsible for the death of Mr. Johnson and this is an opportunity to do what is right.

Commissioner Fairbanks noted his support for the project as well. He pointed out that erecting this memorial might not right a wrong that was done, but sends a message to citizens that Hamilton County government recognizes the injustice and stands with those who have worked so hard on the project.

1:33:27

**COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE – RESOLUTION NO. 319-4**

Chris Adams, Director of Emergency Management, spoke regarding this item, which adopts the Hamilton County Disaster Debris Management Plan. He noted the plan allows them to remove debris quicker in the event of an emergency or natural disaster, and allows for quicker reimbursement from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

There were no questions from Commissioners.

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1:34:33 **COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE – RESOLUTION NO. 319-5**

Administrator of Finance Al Kiser spoke regarding this item, which authorizes the County Mayor to renew the agreement with the State of Tennessee on behalf of the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation for Hamilton County Information Technology and Hamilton County Geographic Systems. The agreement provides professional services for the period March 1, 2019 through August 31, 2020 in support and development of software for the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation not to exceed \$135,000 and amends the general fund revenue and expenditure budgets by \$135,000.

There were no questions from Commissioners.

1:35:30 **COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE – RESOLUTION NO. 319-6**

Mayor Coppinger spoke regarding this item, which approves and authorizes the issuance of up to \$25 million in additional funding for a wastewater treatment plant through a forthcoming bond issue. He reminded Commissioners that on September 6, 2017 \$45 million in a forthcoming bond issue was included in the fiscal year 2017-2018 budget for the design, property acquisition, construct, and operation of a wastewater treatment plant in the northeastern portion of Hamilton County. Mayor Coppinger went on to explain the Water and Wastewater Treatment Authority (WWTA) initially identified

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a site at 7800 Mahan Gap Road as the preferred location for the treatment plant, however in response to community opposition the permit that would have allowed the plant to be constructed was rejected by Commissioners on December 19, 2018 (*Resolution No. 1218-33*). He pointed out WWTA officials revealed during those discussions that identifying, assessing, and constructing the plant at another site would require additional funding at an estimated cost of up to \$25 million.

Several Commissioners voiced their opposition to approving additional funding before another site is selected. Mayor Coppinger noted that the initial funding of \$45 million was approved before a site was identified and encouraged Commissioners not to delay this issue.

1:38:10 In response to Commissioner Mackey's question, Mike Patrick, Interim Executive Director of the WWTA, explained there are a number of sites under consideration, all of which involve additional infrastructure at an additional cost. He added the approximate additional cost is \$16 million to \$20 million however because a site has not been selected the exact additional cost is difficult to estimate. Mr. Patrick confirmed the Mahan Gap Road site remains the best location from an economical and technical standpoint.

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1:40:12 Commissioner Boyd spoke strongly against additional funding for the treatment plant and instead encouraged Commissioners to reconsider the Mahan Gap Road location. He added that growth has consequences and decisions need to be made for the 357,000-plus residents of Hamilton County rather than the 200 families that spoke in opposition to the initial site selection. He cautioned that additional funding could cause a future tax increase.

Chairman Smedley voiced concerns about the flooding at the Mahan Gap Road site. She also questioned if the additional funding is time sensitive. Mayor Coppinger noted that without approved funding WWTA cannot develop an appropriate long term plan.

Mr. Patrick responded to Chairman Smedley's concerns about flooding. He noted the portion of the property WWTA planned to construct the treatment plant on was above the flood zone and was not affected.

1:58:00 In response to Commissioner Baker's question, Mayor Coppinger noted a meeting occurred at Central High School with approximately 200 people in attendance. He stated the general outcome was residents in that area are not interested in growth in that portion of the county. He added additional funding must be available before the discussions about moving the site can take place.

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Mayor Coppinger reminded Commissioners that WWTA warned moving the site from Mahan Gap would require more funding. He stated WWTA officials would be negotiating the consent decree with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) on March 6<sup>th</sup> and will be required to provide a plan of action, which includes funding.

2:03:07

In response to Commissioner Sharpe's question, Mayor Coppinger stated a tax increase would be required in the next three to five years in order to fund this project.

In response to Commissioner Sharpe's question, Mr. Patrick stated pump stations are at the most risk for failure as they are not manned 24/7 the way a treatment plant would be. He added a pump station will be required in the general area of Mahan Gap Road in order to pump sewage further north if the treatment plant is not placed there.

2:11:17

In response to Commissioner Martin's question, Mayor Coppinger confirmed WWTA officials are meeting with the EPA next week in order to address spills and overflows and provide short and long-term plans. He echoed earlier statements that a treatment plant has always been a long-term plan, and additional funding required to move the site to a location other than Mahan Gap Road must be approved in order to develop that plan.

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Commissioner Boyd agreed with Mayor Coppinger's statements, but emphasized he will not be supporting additional funding when the Mahan Gap Road site is the most economical and technologically appropriate. He encouraged Commissioners to reconsider and approve the Mahan Gap Road site.

2:19:45

In response to Commissioner Mackey's question, Mayor Coppinger stated residents of the community do not want the plant on Mahan Gap Road or anywhere in that area of the county. Mayor Coppinger added the long-term goal is to minimize the impact to the community.

Commissioner Geter stated she was not aware of last week's meeting with WWTA officials. She requested Commissioners be notified of all meetings going forward.

2:30:59

Commissioner Bankston stated the community in District 9 is not against growth and several new options are being discussed.

Chairman Smedley emphasized the need for complete and accurate information before making a decision on this issue. In response to Chairman Smedley's question, Mr. Patrick stated a short-term plan to present to the EPA has been negotiated. She requested detailed comparisons and cost analysis in order to make the best decision.

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Mayor Coppinger encouraged Commissioners to attend WWTA board meetings for more information.

Commissioner Baker stated the Finance Committee will meet in the Commission Room immediately following today's Agenda Session.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Chairman Smedley asked for announcements from members of the Commission.

Several Commissioners sent their condolences to the families of two Chattanooga Police Officers who died last week. It was reported Nick Galinger was struck and killed by a vehicle while on duty and Sgt. John Monroe died of a heart attack at his home. They encouraged everyone to thank and pray for first responders.

2:43:27            Commissioner Martin requested discussion regarding filling the vacancy created by Judge Shattuck's retirement announcement. Chairman Smedley stated discussion will take place at a later date.

2:46:01            Commissioner Baker announced the joint School Board meeting will be rescheduled to a later date.

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2:46:56 Attorney Taylor stated he would be adding a Resolution to the agenda, to be voted on next week, regarding pending litigation that was discussed in last week's legal meeting.

2:47:30 Chairman Smedley announced a community forum will take place tomorrow evening at 6:00 PM at East Brainerd Church of Christ with City Councilman Darin Ledford. She noted Chief Deputy Austin Garrett will be the guest speaker.

**DELEGATIONS**

2:48:11 Chairman Smedley asked for delegations on matters other than zoning. There were none.

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Being no further business, Chairman Smedley declared the meeting adjourned.

The next regularly scheduled meeting will be Wednesday, March 6<sup>th</sup> at 9:30 AM.

Respectfully submitted:



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William F. (Bill) Knowles, County Clerk

Approved:

03-20-19  
Date

W.F.K.  
Clerk's Initials