

HAMILTON COUNTY COMMISSION AGENDA PREPARATION SESSION APRIL 24, 2019

COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS

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

- The Trustee's Monthly and Excess Fee Reports for March 2019 would be submitted for the record.
- A Report of Investment Activity for the quarter ending March 31, 2019 was submitted for the record.
- Fee Office reports for the quarter ending March 31, 2019 would be submitted for the record.
- Resolution No. 519-1 was the usual County Clerk item regarding notaries, etc. This required no committee assignment.
- Resolution Nos. 519-6 through 519-9 were assigned to the Finance Committee, chaired by Commissioner Fairbanks.
- Resolution Nos. 519-2 through 519-5 were heard by a Committee of the Whole.

0:42

PRESENTATION – HAMILTON COUNTY TRUSTEE BILL HULLANDER

Hamilton County Trustee Bill Hullander reported his office has turned in \$8.8 million in excess fees to the county general fund for this fiscal year, which is an all-time high for the office. He noted the excess fee report has been submitted for the record.

Chairman Smedley thanked Trustee Hullander for his report.

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PRESENTATION – DR. LE ANDREA WARE – PRINCIPAL OF THE YEAR

Commissioner Mackey invited Howard High School Principal Dr. Le Andrea Ware, District 4 School Board Member Tiffanie Robinson, and District 2 School Board Member Kathy Lennon to the podium as he presented a Certificate of Congratulations to Dr. Ware for being chosen as the 2019-2020 Principal of the Year. He read a list of Dr. Ware's many accomplishments and awards during her tenure with the Hamilton County Department of Education and thanked her for the enthusiasm she brought to Howard High School. He also applauded Dr. Ware's commitment to her students and the public education system. A copy of the certificate was filed in the Clerk's Office.

Ms. Robinson spoke highly of Dr. Ware's dedication to her students and thanked Commissioner Mackey for honoring her today.

Dr. Ware thanked Commissioner Mackey for the recognition. She spoke about her passion for her students and the faculty at Howard, which is also her alma mater. Dr. Ware encouraged Commissioners to visit the school anytime.

In response to Commissioner Mackey's question, Dr. Ware reported Howard has recently seen a significant demographic shift from 98% to 99% African American to approximately 48% Latino, 50% African American, and 2% other. She stated this shift

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requires additional support and resources as there are currently over 330 non-English speaking students attending the school. She stated the school has collaborated with the City of Chattanooga to provide transitional courses for those students as well as for students who may be financial providers in their homes and therefore cannot attend traditional classes. She added teen pregnancy is on the rise and the school offers an onsite daycare to accommodate students with families. Dr. Ware called the challenges the school faces “complex opportunities” and emphasized the faculty is constantly working to find ways to keep students in school.

Commissioner Geter thanked Dr. Ware for her passion and leadership. She stated she looks forward to visiting Howard.

Commissioner Boyd spoke about Dr. Ware’s energy and enthusiasm as well as her ability to transform the schools in which she has been involved. He applauded Superintendent of Schools Dr. Bryan Johnson for his decision to place Dr. Ware at Howard.

Commissioner Sharpe spoke about his visit to Howard in which Dr. Ware welcomed and gave him a tour of the entire complex. He called it a mistake to paint public education with a broad brush and thanked Dr. Ware for recognizing and striving to meet the unique needs of students at her school.

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In response to Commissioner Martin's question, Dr. Ware reported the current enrollment at Howard is currently 1,038 students. She reiterated some of the challenges the school faces with a large population of non-English speaking students. She added the administration expects the Latino population to continue to grow. Commissioner Martin thanked Dr. Ware for her dedication and enthusiasm.

Commissioner Baker congratulated Dr. Ware on being awarded Principal of the Year and spoke about the high achievements of her former student.

At this time, Dr. Ware shook hands with members of the Commissioner, Attorney Taylor, and Mayor Coppinger.

26:31 **PRESENTATION – HUMANE EDUCATIONAL SOCIETY**

Bob Citrullo, Executive Director of the Humane Educational Society, introduced members of the shelter building committee and asked Bob Franklin, President of Franklin Architects, to come forward to present an update on the new animal shelter. It was noted Commissioners approved \$10 million in funding for the new shelter on November 21, 2018 (Resolution No. 1118-33). Mr. Franklin encouraged Commissioners to appoint a member to join the building committee, as the project will soon enter the design phase with construction to begin soon after. He stated the shelter would be a

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state of the art facility designed with infection and odor control systems in place and will accommodate 138 dogs and 138 cats. Mr. Franklin showed several images to illustrate the site plan and design concept. He explained the facility will have separate entrances for the public and for animal control services, and will include an area for education. He emphasized the design places the comfort of the animals as the top priority as well as creating a warm and inviting environment to encourage adoption. A copy of his presentation was filed in the Clerk's Office.

Commissioner Mackey applauded the decision to utilize Franklin Architects for design of the shelter.

In response to Commissioner Boyd's question, Mr. Franklin reported the shelter would be 31,550 square-feet. He added the total budget is between \$10.5 million and \$12.5 million. He stated the team would work to bring down costs, but noted the mechanical systems for sanitization to prevent disease tie up a large portion of the budget. Commissioner Boyd agreed that a Commissioner should be involved with the building committee.

In response to Commissioner Martin's question, Mr. Franklin stated the shelter will be constructed on just under 8-acres of land.

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Commissioner Sharpe volunteered to serve on the building committee. He announced the Humane Society Drives for Lives Golf Tournament on June 25th and encouraged everyone to attend.

In response to Chairman Smedley's question, Attorney Taylor stated he would research the process to appoint a Commissioner to the building committee and report back with the information.

In response to Commissioner Baker's question, Mr. Franklin reported the shelter should open approximately 12-months after construction begins.

In response to Commissioner Baker's question, Mr. Citrullo stated the shelter is currently housing approximately 325 animals; he added the new shelter will provide a significant expansion in capacity. Commissioner Baker encouraged negotiations with the City of Red Bank to keep them within the Humane Society's service area. It was noted Red Bank officials recently opted out of the shelter's service area because of the higher costs.

Mayor Coppinger applauded Mr. Franklin for this project and stated this was an example of a public-private partnership helping the community. He also commended the building committee members for helping make the project a reality.

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Mayor Coppinger congratulated Bill Kilbride for being appointed by President Donald Trump to the TVA Board of Directors.

50:34 **PRESENTATION – RON LITTLEFIELD – HOMELESS INITIATIVE**

Former City of Chattanooga Mayor Ron Littlefield presented information regarding a new low barrier homeless shelter he is proposing to be funded by a portion of the city and county hotel-motel occupancy tax. He explained that as the tourism industry continues to grow the homeless population in downtown Chattanooga remains visibly and inadequately addressed. He reported after researching how the issue was being addressed in other cities he recommended the construction and operation of a permanent “low barrier” facility to provide a safe and warm place for those who may have no other options. He added this becomes a more dire issue during times of inclement weather.

Mr. Littlefield proposed the county and city each set aside \$1 million annually from the hotel-motel tax to provide a reliable financial base to operate and manage the proposed shelter as well as other housing/materials necessary for support services for the homeless population. He noted raising funds to build the shelter would be less difficult than covering ongoing operating expenses.

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Chairman Smedley thanked Mr. Littlefield for his many years of service to the community. In response to Chairman Smedley's question, Mr. Littlefield stated he would be making a similar proposal to the City Council.

1:04:09 Commissioner Baker requested a business plan for the proposal. Mr. Littlefield noted that City of Chattanooga Mayor Andy Berke recently stated it would take approximately \$7 million annually to operate such a shelter, however Mr. Littlefield emphasized his belief that it could be managed for much less.

Commissioner Sharpe voiced his support for addressing the lack of support for the homeless population. He encouraged all entities to work together to develop a business plan. Commissioner Sharpe reminded Commissioners of the cost of not addressing the issue including increased medical and incarceration costs. Mr. Littlefield echoed Commissioner Sharpe's comments.

Commissioner Martin voiced concerns that such a facility could attract homeless populations from other areas.

Commissioner Boyd stated the City of Chattanooga has committed almost 100% of its allotment of hotel-motel tax to debt service on capital projects for many years to come. He added Tennessee House Bill 0890 allocates revenue from the hotel-motel

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occupancy tax imposed by Hamilton County on short-term vacation rental units in the City of Chattanooga to the City to be used solely for improvements to certain city-owned youth and community facilities.

Commissioner Geter agreed the matter should be addressed immediately. She agreed with Commissioner Sharpe's comments regarding the cost of doing nothing.

Chairman Smedley thanked Mr. Littlefield for his presentation.

1:26:54

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE – RESOLUTION NO. 519-2

This Resolution confirms the reappointments by the County Mayor of Michael Kirk and Dawson Wheeler to the Hamilton County Citizens Advisory Board for Recreation for terms ending May 1, 2021.

There were no questions from Commissioners.

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1:27:12 **COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE – RESOLUTION NO. 519-3**

Commissioner Sharpe spoke regarding this item, which expresses Hamilton County's disapproval of legislation being considered by the Tennessee General Assembly relative to education savings accounts ("vouchers") being allowed in support of non-public education in the State of Tennessee. It was noted this item was initially presented to Commissioners on March 27, 2019 (*Resolution No. 319-26*) however; no action was taken at the time. Commissioner Sharpe reported Senator Bo Watson and Senator Todd Gardenhire opposed the bill as originally presented resulting in the omission of Hamilton County schools from the Senate version. It was noted the House version of the bill still includes Hamilton County.

In response to Commissioner Martin's question, Attorney Taylor reported no action was taken when the item was initially presented therefore bringing the item back before Commissioners at this time is procedurally appropriate.

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1:29:18 **COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE – RESOLUTION NO. 519-4**

Administrator of Public Works and County Engineer Todd Leamon spoke regarding this item, which authorizes slope stabilization repairs of Cash Canyon Road by Geostabilization International on the state contract for soil nailing for various counties.

In response to Commissioner Martin's question, Mr. Leamon reported the road was formerly owned by the City of Chattanooga. He added several repairs have taken place on this road.

1:33:17 **COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE – RESOLUTION NO. 519-5**

Criminal Court Clerk Vince Dean spoke regarding this item, which appropriates an additional \$350,000 to the Criminal Court Clerk fund to assist the office in funding its operations and to amend the general fund-operating budget by adding \$350,000 to expenditures from previously unbudgeted funds. Mr. Dean reported a July 2018 federal court ruling, which prohibited the state of Tennessee from revoking driver's licenses for non-payment of fines and fees has resulted in his office collecting 20% less over the past year. It was noted the ruling is being appealed. Mr. Dean detailed how the office budget works, which includes a separate budget for salaries and operating expenses.

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He stated the additional appropriation would cover salaries that are partly funded by fee collections.

In response to Chairman Smedley's question, Mr. Dean reported he has 55 full time employees.

In response to Commissioner Baker's question, Mr. Dean explained the office is in charge of collecting court costs and fines from defendants in criminal cases and often times has to split the collections with various state and county agencies.

1:43:27 Commissioner Geter voiced concern over the ripple effect that might take place by revoking the driver's license of individuals who are indigent or on a limited income. She questioned the percentage of individuals who were paying their fees prior to the court ruling.

In response to Commissioner Geter's question regarding alternatives to license revocation, Mr. Dean stated alternatives are being explored but are difficult to identify. He welcomed suggestions from members of the Commission.

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In response to Commissioner Martin's question, Administrator of Finance Al Kiser stated the shortage was a structural deficit and the additional appropriation would prevent a fund balance deficit.

1:54:12 **COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE – RESOLUTION NO. 519-10**

Commissioner Boyd spoke regarding this item, which amends Resolution No. 207-27 which appropriates certain funds received by Hamilton County through its receipt of revenues received from the hotel-motel occupancy privilege tax, and authorizing the re-allocation of said funds as received being divided between the Chattanooga Area Convention and Visitor's Bureau (CVB) and the to be created Community Re-Investment Fund. Commissioner Boyd presented background information on the history of the hotel-motel tax legislation, which resulted in the passage of Resolution No. 207-27 on February 21, 2007 allocating 100% of all funds received pursuant to the hotel-motel tax to the CVB. He explained based on current data provided by the County Trustee's Office the hotel-motel tax is projected to reach \$10 million annually in the next three to four years, and proposed the creation of the Community Re-Investment Fund to expand the impact of the tax. A copy of his presentation was filed in the Clerk's Office.

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Commissioner Boyd's proposal would maintain the existing level of funding for CVB operations for the next three years based on tax receipts at the end of fiscal year 2019, which is estimated to be \$8.5 million; any additional growth in hotel-motel tax revenue above that level would be allocated to the Community Re-Investment Fund. Beginning in fiscal year 2023 the CVB would receive 86% of hotel-motel tax revenue with 14% going to the Community Re-Investment Fund. Commissioner Boyd recommended the Community Re-Investment Fund fall under the purview of the Health, Human Services, Personnel, Arts, Recreation, and Public Relations Committee, who would take project proposals and make recommendations to the full Commission. He emphasized the Community Re-Investment Fund captures the original intent of the hotel-motel tax legislation and expands the reach of the tax to support arts and culture organizations in Hamilton County.

2:12:52 In response to Commissioner Baker's question, Commissioner Boyd stated he has not reviewed this proposal with the CVB.

In response to Commissioner Mackey's question, Commissioner Boyd stated economic development had a larger impact on the growth in hotel-motel tax than tourism.

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In response to Chairman Smedley's question, Commissioner Boyd noted the CVB, under the leadership of President and CEO Barry White, is working harder for private contributions although the proposal would not cause a deduction to their budget.

At this time, a lengthy discussion took place regarding management of the Community Re-Investment Fund. Commissioner Boyd reported state legislation defines how hotel-motel tax funds can be allocated and highlighted a range of projects for which the fund could be used. He detailed how the fund would be managed and emphasized the purpose of the fund must be for the promotion of tourism. He encouraged allowing the Health and Human Services Committee to develop criteria regarding use of the fund.

Mayor Coppinger reported prior to the 100% allocation to the CVB the Tourist Development Agency was in charge of overseeing use of the hotel-motel tax. He added that agency was dissolved after it was realized many of the projects were not necessarily being used to advance tourism. He cautioned Commissioners could be overrun with funding requests and emphasized the importance of the check and balance provided by including the executive branch. Mayor Coppinger agreed with examining the allocation of the rising hotel-motel tax revenue.

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COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE – RESOLUTION NO. 519-11

Commissioner Mackey spoke regarding this item, which authorizes the negotiating and purchasing of a parcel of real property located at the corner of Wilcox Boulevard and North Orchard Knob Avenue (with a vacated building thereon) for demolition of the existing structure. Additionally, this item authorizes the construction of a parking lot to accommodate the new City of Chattanooga Recreation Center at the corner of Wilcox Boulevard and Dodson Avenue.

In response to Chairman Smedley's question, Commissioner Mackey stated Real Property Manager Paul Parker would bring the final cost to Commissioners after negotiations are complete. Administrator of Public Works and County Engineer Todd Leamon added the assessed value of the property is approximately \$139,000; additional funds would be required to demolish the 28,000 square-foot existing structure.

In response to Chairman Smedley's question, Attorney Taylor stated the property purchase would come back before Commissioners. Mr. Leamon added some funds would be expended during the due diligence process prior to approval of the property purchase.

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In response to Commissioner Martin's question, Attorney Taylor reported the parking lot would most likely not be a tourism related project.

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Commissioner Geter thanked everyone for the thoughts and prayers after the passing of a member of her family.

Mayor Coppinger introduced the new Deputy Director of the Hamilton County Office of Emergency Management and Homeland Security Marc Ericson. He reported Mr. Ericson is a retired United States Air Force Chief Master Sergeant with 30 years of service and multiple combat tours. He has worked for the Office of Emergency Management as a Fixed Nuclear Facility Planner since 2014.

Chairman Smedley thanked fellow Commissioners for attending the groundbreaking ceremony at the new East Hamilton Middle School.

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Chairman Smedley announced Hamilton County Sheriff Jim Hammond would be presenting his budget to Commissioners following next week's Commission Meeting.

Attorney Taylor announced the first of the joint meetings regarding wastewater consolidation would take place on May 2nd and noted Commissioners needed to designate a representative to attend. Without objection, Chairman Smedley was designated to represent the Commission at the meeting. Attorney Taylor stated the meeting would not fall under the Open Meetings Act.

Mayor Coppinger announced the Budget Workshops will take place on May 7th and May 14th at 9:00 AM at the McDaniel Building. He added the third workshop would be announced at a later date.

DELEGATIONS

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, May 1st, 2019 at 9:30 AM.

Respectfully submitted:



William F. (Bill) Knowles, County Clerk

Approved:

05-15-19
Date

W.F.K
Clerk's Initials