

**HAMILTON COUNTY COMMISSION
AGENDA PREPARATION SESSION
AUGUST 28, 2019**

COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS

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

- The Trustee's Revised Monthly and Excess Fee Reports for June 2019 would be submitted for the record.
- The Trustee's Unaudited Financial Report ending June 2019 would be submitted for the record.
- Resolution No. 919-1 was the usual County Clerk item regarding notaries, etc. This required no committee assignment.
- Resolution Nos. 919-7 through 919-15 were assigned to the Finance Committee, chaired by Commissioner Fairbanks.
- Resolution Nos. 919-2 through 919-6 and 919-16 were heard by a Committee of the Whole.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE – RESOLUTION NO. 919-2

0:46

Hamilton County Trustee Bill Hullander spoke regarding this item, which approves the Trustee's proposal to consolidate Hamilton County and City of Chattanooga delinquent tax litigation and collection. He explained negotiations with the City have been ongoing for the past two years. He stated when the City asked him to collect the business improvement district (BID) fees; he was willing to accept only if he could also collect the city's delinquent property tax. The city approved of his counter offer.

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He reiterated that delinquent property tax collection was part two of a package deal with the City of Chattanooga that would allow his office to collect and administer litigation for both county and city delinquent property taxes. It was noted part one of the package was the collection of the BID fees by the Trustee's Office, which the Commission initially approved but later reconsidered and rejected on August 21, 2019 (*Resolution No. 819-15A*).

Trustee Hullander reported city residents who owe delinquent property taxes are currently paying redundant fines levied by both the county and city. He stated this agreement would allow a single fine to be levied, which would include late fees, mailing fees, title search costs, and other fees. It was noted according to TCA 67-5-2410 upon the filing of suits to enforce the tax lien against real or personal property, an additional penalty of 10% upon all delinquent taxes shall accrue. He reported under this proposed agreement the city and county would split the 10% fee 7-3, with the city receiving 7% and the county receiving 3%, which he stated would save property owners hundreds of dollars and provide approximately \$60,000 to the county for collection expenses. Trustee Hullander reported Clerk and Master Robin Miller was present and in support of this proposal.

In response to Commissioner Boyd's question, Trustee Hullander stated his negotiations have taken place with the City Treasurer and the City Attorney.

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7:23

In response to Commissioner Martin's question, Trustee Hullander explained a similar agreement has been negotiated over the last two years and all parties settled on the proposed 7-3 split.

In response to Chairman Smedley's question, Trustee Hullander confirmed Resolution No. 919-2 only deals with collection of city property and personality taxes.

11:24

Commissioner Bankston thanked Trustee Hullander for his ongoing efforts to work out an agreement with the City to benefit delinquent taxpayers.

Trustee Hullander distributed a Resolution considered by the City Council on August 13, 2019 and voiced concern over the city upholding their end of the agreement since part of the package dealing with BID fee collection was ultimately rejected by the County on August 21, 2019 (*Resolution No. 819-15A*). A copy of the City's Resolution (*No. 30029*) was filed in the Clerk's Office. Trustee Hullander offered to sponsor a joint luncheon between the city and county to continue discussions. Attorney Taylor added a meeting could be arranged.

Mayor Coppinger voiced support for the agreement and noted the Trustee's Office already collects delinquent tax for several municipalities.

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In response to Commissioner Fairbanks' question, Trustee Hullander stated most delinquent tax cases are due to financial hardships. He shared the story of a 90-year old woman whose annual income is \$9,600 and does not qualify for the tax relief program because she owes delinquent taxes. He noted she would be subject to redundant litigation fees and penalties once suit is filed in the Clerk and Master's Office.

18:51 Commissioner Sharpe referenced Resolution No. 619-46 approved on June 19, 2019, which authorized Hamilton County to match at 100% the state contributions to the tax relief program, contingent upon a real property tax increase. He questioned how the person Trustee Hullander mentioned would be impacted had Commissioners had approved a tax increase in the budget. Trustee Hullander responded that it would have reduced her property tax bill.

In response to Chairman Smedley's question, Trustee Hullander stated no one with delinquent property taxes qualifies for the tax relief program.

Chairman Smedley thanked Trustee Hullander for attending today's meeting.

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COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE – RESOLUTION NO. 919-3

23:40

Mayor Coppinger spoke regarding this item, which confirms the reappointments of James Walker and C. Alan Roderick and the appointment of Mark Mathews to the Hamilton County Board of Electrical Examiners for a term ending September 7, 2023.

There were no questions from Commissioners.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE – RESOLUTION NO. 919-4

24:44

Administrator of Human Resources Sandra Ellis spoke regarding this item, which accepts the proposal of Symetra Life Insurance Company to provide Basic Life, Accidental Death and Dismemberment (AD&D), Supplemental Life, and Voluntary Long Term Disability Insurance for Hamilton County Employees. She reported the proposed rates for Basic Life, AD&D, and Voluntary Long Term Disability Insurance have decreased, which will generate savings for both the county and county employees. She stated proposed rates on Supplemental Life Insurance, including Dependent Life Insurance, were matched to the current rates and provided enhanced coverage.

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In response to Commissioner Boyd's question, Ms. Ellis stated the provider was well vetted during the procurement process. She confirmed she would send a link to Symetra's website to Commissioners.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE – RESOLUTION NO. 919-5

28:26 Development Director Dan Saieed spoke regarding this item, which authorizes the County Mayor to continue grant contracts beginning October 1, 2019 and ending September 30, 2020 between Hamilton County and the Tennessee Department of Human Services for \$299,094.00 in Title XX Social Services Block Grants (SSBG) to provide adult daycare and adult homemaker services to eligible individuals and families. Additionally, this Resolution amends the revenue and expense budgets by adding \$16,994.00. He noted Pam Ladd, CEO at Partnership for Families, Children, and Adults, Angela Hester, CFO at Signal Centers, and Courtney Chandler, Director of Adult Services at Signal Centers were present to answer any questions.

29:51 Commissioner Martin suggested Resolutions involving grants and contracts be sent to a committee for review and vetting instead of Committee of the Whole.

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COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE – RESOLUTION NO. 919-6

30:44

Purchasing Director Gail Roppo spoke regarding this item, which authorizes the county to continue to lease vehicles under the contract with Enterprise Fleet Management, Inc. for fiscal year 2020 in an amount not to exceed \$291,000 for said newly leased vehicles. She stated currently 64 vehicles are under contract and some significant savings have been realized since utilizing this program. She added the current Resolution would allow the addition of approximately 75 more vehicles, with 216 that need to ultimately be transitioned to the lease contract.

In response to Commissioner Fairbanks' question, Director Roppo clarified while the process is still in the initial stages; a savings of approximately \$1300 per vehicle per year is being realized. She added Sheriff's Office vehicles are not currently being leased.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE – RESOLUTION NO. 919-16

35:35

Administrator of Finance Al Kiser spoke regarding this item, which approves an update to the Investment Policy of Hamilton County, Tennessee. He noted the last update was in 1983 (*Resolution No. 1083-9*).

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There were no questions from Commissioners.

Commissioner Fairbanks, Chairman of the Finance Committee, stated the Finance Committee would meet in the Commission Room immediately following today's Agenda Session.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chairman Smedley asked for announcements from members of the Commission.

36:50

Commissioner Martin provided an update regarding this morning's Legal and Legislative Committee Meeting, which met to discuss the convening of evening recessed meetings for consideration of matters of major interest to the general public (*Resolution No. 819-22*). It was noted the Resolution was presented by Commissioner Geter and deferred to the Legal Committee on August 21, 2019 with a recommendation to be made by November 30, 2019. Commissioner Martin stated the Committee does not currently have a recommendation however, he explained the Commission's current Rules of Order (*Resolution No. 717-28*) do allow for the convening of meetings at times other than Wednesday mornings. In reference to the cost for staff to attend evening meetings, Commissioner Martin stated the Sheriff's Office submitted a document stating it would cost approximately \$1,632.00 per meeting. A copy of the document was filed in

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the Clerk's Office. He added the Mayor's Office determined it would cost approximately \$1,500.00 per meeting.

Commissioner Martin also commented on a recent request to place television screens in the hallway outside of the Commission Room in order to accommodate overflow crowds. He voiced concern over the noise level this could create and suggested overflow crowds be accommodated in another room.

Chairman Smedley stated it was her understanding the infrastructure to place televisions in the hallway does not exist. She noted the IT Department has discussed increasing the bandwidth to accommodate citizens who wish to livestream in the building.

43:49

Commissioner Sharpe commended the work and leadership of Superintendent of Schools Dr. Bryan Johnson in light of recent test results, which showed drastic improvement across the school district. He stated he plans to donate his 2.5 percent pay raise, approved for all Hamilton County Employees in the fiscal year 2019-2020 budget (*Resolution No. 819-13*) to Dr. Johnson's recently established scholarship fund. He challenged other Commissioners to do the same. It was noted Dr. Johnson donated his \$15,000 bonus to the scholarship fund.

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- 46:16 Commissioner Boyd commended the school system and the leadership of Dr. Johnson for achieving results without the necessity of a tax increase to provide additional funding.
- 49:21 Commissioner Mackey disagreed that the school system has adequate funding.
- 50:33 Commissioner Geter thanked Dr. Johnson for his leadership and accomplishments and commended his decision to donate his bonus to the scholarship fund. She stated the issues brought to light throughout the recent budget discussions would continue to come up until they are adequately addressed.
- 52:34 Mayor Coppinger congratulated the school system, teachers, faculty, and staff for the improvement in test scores. He commended the leadership of Dr. Johnson and spoke about his compassion for students in Hamilton County. He encouraged everyone to work together to achieve results and cautioned about the level of misinformation circulating.

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DELEGATIONS

Chairman Smedley asked for delegations on matters other than zoning.

1:00:21

Rick Carpenter, residing at 1548 North Concord Road Chattanooga, TN 37421, addressed Commissioners regarding student test scores and access to Commission Meetings.

Being no further business, Chairman Smedley declared the meeting adjourned until Wednesday, September 4th, 2019 at 9:30 AM.

Respectfully submitted:



William F. (Bill) Knowles, County Clerk

Approved:

09-18-19
Date

W.F.K
Clerk's Initials