

HAMILTON COUNTY, TENNESSEE
OFFICE OF THE COUNTY MAYOR
WESTON WAMP

For Immediate Release

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**County Commission Approves Budget Without Property Tax Increase;
Historic Funding for Public Education, First Responders**

Expands property tax relief for more than 4,000 low-income seniors and disabled veterans, significant increases in the road paving budget, and funding to open McDonald Farm as a public park.

Hamilton County Commissioners today unanimously approved a \$995 million balanced budget for fiscal year 2024. With emphasis on the county's youngest to oldest citizens, Hamilton County Mayor Weston Wamp's first budget includes historic funding for public education and the county's recreational facilities and provides tax relief to thousands of seniors while funding the county's first senior center.

"When we began working on the budget in January, our goal was to be fiscally responsible and provide continuity of services while prioritizing long-term investments in workforce development and first responder pay," said Hamilton County Mayor Weston Wamp. "I appreciate the County Commission for working alongside my office and the county's finance staff as we created a balanced budget that will enable Hamilton County government to serve our growing community over the next 12 months."

As County Government continues to pursue bold investments in public education, the FY2024 budget provides for \$7,000 sign-on bonuses and coverage of the cost of certification for new career and technical education instructors. This is part of a broader push to expand CTE opportunities, including an all new downtown campus focused on career and technical training planned at the Gateway site.

Low-income seniors as well as fully disabled veterans and their widows will be eligible to receive more support from the county through the state's Property Tax Relief Program. Hamilton County will offer a 100 percent match of the state's program, up from the 50 percent it currently contributes, impacting more than 4,000 seniors and veterans county-wide.

The balanced budget has funding mechanisms in place to address some of the county's most pressing needs, including funding for a drug prosecutor to hold dealers of deadly drugs accountable, a 13 percent average pay increase for EMS workers, and investments into the Highway Department to increase the paving budget and enhance safety on our local roadways. Funding has also been allocated to transform the old Harrison Elementary School into the county's first senior center and to convert the homestead portion of McDonald Farm into the county's newest park.

"This is a balanced budget that prioritizes taxpayers' needs by thoughtfully allocating funds to departments and services throughout the county," said Hamilton County Commission Chairman Chip Baker. "The County

Commission and Mayor's office have worked hand-in-hand throughout this process to ensure all citizens are served well."

The new fiscal year begins on July 1, 2023 and runs through June 30, 2024.

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