

**HAMILTON COUNTY COMMISSION  
AGENDA PREPARATION SESSION  
FEBRUARY 26, 2020**

**STATE OF TENNESSEE                    )**                    Agenda Preparation Session  
**COUNTY OF HAMILTON                 )**                    February 26, 2020

**BE IT REMEMBERED**, that on this 26<sup>th</sup> day of February, 2020, an Agenda Preparation Session of the Hamilton County Board of Commissioners was begun and held at the Courthouse, in the City of Chattanooga, in the County Commission Room, when the following proceedings were held, to wit:--

0:14                    Present and presiding was the Honorable Randy Fairbanks, Chairman. County Clerk Bill Knowles called the roll of the County Commission and the following, constituting a quorum, answered to their names: Commissioner Bankston, Commissioner Boyd, Commissioner Geter, Commissioner Martin, Commissioner Sharpe, Commissioner Smedley, and Chairman Fairbanks. Commissioner Baker and Commissioner Mackey were absent. . Total present – 7. Total absent – 2.

Also in attendance were County Mayor Jim Coppinger, members of his administrative staff, County Attorney Rheubin Taylor, and County Auditor Jenneth Randall.

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### COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS

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

- The Trustee's Monthly and Excess Fee Reports for January 2020 would be submitted for the record.
- Resolution No. 320-1 was the usual County Clerk item regarding notaries, etc. This required no committee assignment.
- Resolution Nos. 320-9 through 320-13 were assigned to the Finance Committee, chaired by Commissioner Smedley.
- Resolution Nos. 320-14 through 320-16 were assigned to the Zoning Committee, chaired by Commissioner Bankston.
- Resolution No. 320-3 was not used.
- Resolution Nos. 320-2 and 320-4 through 320-8 were heard by a Committee of the Whole.

### 0:53 COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE – RESOLUTION NO. 320-2

Administrator of Finance Al Kiser spoke regarding this item, which requests the Commission's approval to begin appropriating sufficient funds in the fiscal year 2021 general fund budget to pay the respective clerk and all deputy salaries of the Circuit Court Clerk and Criminal Court Clerk offices. Additionally, sufficient funds to pay the operating expenses of both offices would be appropriated, irrespective of the fees earned by those offices. He noted salaries of both offices would be added to the general fund budget and all fees earned by each office would be transferred over to County General at least monthly.

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In response to Commissioner Boyd's question, Mr. Kiser confirmed this would prevent budget amendments to cover salaries for those offices.

3:33

In response to Commissioner Boyd's question, Circuit Court Clerk Larry Henry stated because of cross training staff his office has able to eliminate one position. Criminal Court Clerk Vince Dean detailed how his office has been able to reduce the budget for salaries and operating expenses in recent years. Commissioner Boyd commended constitutional officers for running such efficient offices.

13:18

In response to Commissioner Fairbanks' question, Mr. Dean and Mr. Henry confirmed that they do not request an increase in their budgets after turning in excess fees. Mr. Henry noted his office has not requested an increase in their operating budget since 2002.

16:40

Mayor Coppinger spoke highly of Hamilton County's constitutional offices and noted those offices do not budget more than their expected needs.

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18:26 **COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE – RESOLUTION NO. 320-4**

Commissioner Geter spoke regarding this item, which amends the protocol (expense allowance policy) for the members of the Hamilton County Board of Commissioners as previously amended by Resolution No. 220-4. She explained this item would broaden the use of Commissioner's expense allowance funds to include discretionary purposes.

Commissioner Boyd spoke in support of the Resolution.

Commissioner Martin spoke in opposition. He stated for transparency purposes discretionary funds should be listed as a line item in the budget and not combined with Commissioner's business expenses.

20:52 **COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE – RESOLUTION NO. 320-5**

Juvenile Court Administrator Sam Mairs spoke regarding this Resolution, which authorizes the County Mayor to sign a contract amendment (amendment 4) with the State of Tennessee Department of Human Services and the Hamilton County Juvenile Court IV-D child support division.

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There were no questions from Commissioners.

22:01 **COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE – RESOLUTION NO. 320-6**

Development Director Dan Saieed spoke regarding this item, which authorizes the County Mayor to submit a FastTrack Economic Development Fund grant application to the Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development in an amount not to exceed \$870,000 to assist with construction costs for an undisclosed company's expansion in Hamilton County. He reported the company would invest \$225 million to expand its operations, as well as add 87 jobs with an average wage of \$23.08 per hour. He noted Director of Existing Business Development for the Chattanooga Chamber of Commerce Steve Hiatt was present to answer any questions.

There were no questions from Commissioners.

23:11 **COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE – RESOLUTION NO. 320-7**

Administrator of Public Works and County Engineer Todd Leamon spoke regarding this item, which authorizes the County Mayor to increase the contract with Tricon, Inc. for construction of the new Walden's Ridge Fire Hall for an amount not to

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exceed \$205,936.83. He noted that construction is complete and this would be the final change order for this project.

In response to Commissioner Boyd's question, Mr. Leamon stated certain issues with a retaining wall, communications upgrades, unsuitable soil, etc. contributed to the additional contract amount. He reported the total construction cost was \$4,775,936.83.

26:04

**COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE – RESOLUTION NO. 320-8**

Hamilton County Sheriff Jim Hammond explained the purpose of the grant, which authorizes the County Mayor to accept the award from the U.S. Department of Justice for \$2.2 million to implement an outcomes-based contract with permanent supportive housing providers to improve recidivism, housing, and related outcomes for formerly incarcerated people. Additionally, this grant would amend the Sheriff's Office budget by an additional \$200,000 in revenues and \$200,000 in expenditures to be used for project administration and associated expenses. He noted this grant was in support of the Frequent User Initiative (FUSE). Sheriff Hammond recognized the private partners his office has been working with on the project, including Blue Cross Blue Shield of Tennessee (BCBST), CHI Memorial, Hamilton County Government, Erlanger, City of Chattanooga, Chattanooga Housing Authority, Moccasin Bend Mental Health Institute,

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State Department of Mental Health's Creating Home Initiative, and the Peer Advisory Council.

Sheriff Hammond reminded Commissioners and the public that the county spends \$100,000 per day on incarceration. He noted these partnerships and the grant funds would help support the goal of the FUSE program, which is to reduce the number of people with mental illness in the county jail. He asked Chief of Staff for the Sheriff's Office Geno Bennett to come forward to introduce members of the FUSE Executive Committee.

Chief Bennett began by thanking FUSE Project Director Janna Jahn, Development Director Dan Saieed, and Purchasing Director Gail Roppo. He asked members of the committee to come forward as he introduced them. Members of the FUSE Executive Committee include Janice Maurizio, Vice President of Behavioral Health for BCBST, Robin Cruise, Behavioral Project Manager for BCBST, Chief of Police for the Chattanooga Housing Authority Felix Vess, City of Chattanooga Director of Special Projects Tyler Yount, and Director of Veterans and Corporate Affairs for Erlanger Molly Cooper.

Chairman Fairbanks emphasized the private partners are not only providing financial assistance but employee time as well.

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31:30 Commissioner Sharpe spoke highly of the FUSE program and its impact on reducing the population of those with mental illness in the county jail, as well as hospitals. He thanked Chief Bennett and the committee members for addressing such a complex problem.

Chief Bennett noted the grant was formerly announced weeks ago and more information would be available in the coming weeks.

Several Commissioners spoke about the positive impact of the FUSE program on individuals and their families. They thanked the team for their innovation in tackling such a huge and complex problem. It was noted the savings is not just financial, but an improvement in quality of life.

47:20 Mayor Coppinger congratulated the team and grant writers. He noted public/private partnerships are what make Hamilton County a great place to live. At this time, members of the FUSE Executive Committee shook hands with members of the Commission, Attorney Taylor, and Mayor Coppinger.

52:50 Sheriff Hammond asked to introduce some guests at today's meeting who were present in regards to Resolution No. 320-9, which was assigned to the Finance Committee. He introduced Mrs. Janet Davey, the widow of pilot Frank Davey whose



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plane went down in Chickamauga Lake in January 2019. Mrs. Davey appeared before Commissioners to thank the divers who recovered the plane by donating several pieces of diving equipment to the Sheriff's Office diving team. Detective Ed Merritt and Lieutenant Elliott Mahaffey, the two divers who recovered the plane, thanked Mrs. Davey for her donation. Mrs. Davey, Detective Merritt, and Lieutenant Mahaffey shook hands with members of the Commission, Attorney Taylor, and Mayor Coppinger.

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

58:25            Commissioner Bankston, Chairman of the Zoning Committee, reported the items assigned to the Zoning Committee were Resolutions to accept district roads. He asked Administrator of Public Works and County Engineer Todd Leamon if the roads met county standards. Mr. Leamon confirmed the roads were inspected and met all county standards.

58:41            Commissioner Martin asked for additional information regarding standards for accepting roads as county roads. Mr. Leamon stated recommendations are typically only made for new roads, but citizens can petition for existing roads to be accepted as

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Commissioners make the final decision. He added there is no required number of parcels for a road to qualify.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Chairman Fairbanks asked for announcements from members of the Commission.

1:02:34 Several Commissioners spoke about an email they received requesting public records from the County Attorney's Office and voiced concern about the accusations that the request was not being responded to properly. County Attorney Rheubin Taylor reported his office has responded to the requestor within the time required by state statute, and is working to fulfill the request as expeditiously as possible.

1:11:59 Commissioner Sharpe announced the Legal and Legislative Committee would be meeting in the Commission Conference Room following today's Finance Committee meeting.

1:13:02 Mayor Coppinger announced the Parks and Recreation Department would be presenting their Master Plan on March 9<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 AM at the McDaniel Building. He encouraged everyone to attend.

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**DELEGATIONS**

Chairman Fairbanks asked for delegations on matters other than zoning. There were none.

Being no further business, Chairman Fairbanks declared the meeting adjourned until Wednesday, March 4, 2020 at 9:30 AM.

Respectfully submitted:



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William F. (Bill) Knowles, County Clerk

Approved:

03-18-20



Date

Clerk's Initials