

**HAMILTON COUNTY COMMISSION  
AGENDA PREPARATION SESSION  
APRIL 8, 2015**

**STATE OF TENNESSEE            )**            Agenda Preparation Session  
**COUNTY OF HAMILTON         )**            April 8, 2015

**BE IT REMEMBERED**, that on this 8<sup>th</sup> day of April, 2015, 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 Jim Fields, 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 Beck, Commissioner Boyd, Commissioner Fairbanks, Commissioner Graham, Commissioner Haynes, Commissioner Mackey, Commissioner Smedley, and Chairman Fields. Total present – 9. Total absent -0.

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

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0:40 **COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS**

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

- A Three Star Compliance Report would be submitted and made a matter of record.
- An Order of Designation to the Planning Commission would be submitted as a matter of record.
- Resolution No. 415-13 was the usual County Clerk item regarding notaries, etc. This required no committee assignment.
- Resolutions No. 415-17 through 415-19, 415-22 through 415-27, 415-29, and 415-30 were assigned to the Finance Committee, chaired by Commissioner Graham.
- Resolution No. 415-28 was assigned to the Legal Committee, chaired by Commissioner Bankston.
- Resolutions No. 415-14 through 415-16, 415-20, and 415-21 were heard by a Committee of the Whole.

Chairman Fields stated that Resolutions No. 415-14 through 415-16, 415-20, and 415-21 would now be heard by the Committee of the Whole.

0:49 **COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE – RESOLUTION NO. 415-14**

This item appoints Joseph G. DeGaetano as one regular member, and Commissioner Marty Haynes and Melinda Volker as two associate members to the Hamilton County Board of Zoning Appeals. There were no questions regarding this Resolution.

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1:20 **COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE – RESOLUTION NO. 415-15**

Mayor Coppinger spoke regarding the Resolution, which would confirm the appointment of Thomas Lamb as Director of the Parks and Recreation Department effective with the retirement of Ron Priddy. Mayor Coppinger introduced Mr. Lamb and asked that he stand. He complimented Mr. Lamb for his work during his 14 years of employment with Hamilton County. It was noted that Mr. Lamb was highly recommended by Mr. Priddy for this position.

2:26 Mayor Coppinger and several members of the Commission also thanked Mr. Priddy for his service to Hamilton County.

6:33 **COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE – RESOLUTION NO. 415-16**

Mayor Coppinger spoke regarding this Resolution, which would reappoint Jack Studer to the Chattanooga-Hamilton County Hospital Authority Board of Trustees for a term ending April 18, 2019.

In response to Commissioner Boyd's question, Mayor Coppinger noted that he had always found Mr. Studer to be accessible. Commissioner Boyd added he was interested in reaching Mr. Studer for a personal interview.

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9:05

Mayor Coppinger emphasized that board members do not receive compensation for their services. He made it known that he has never attempted to influence a board member on how they should vote. In closing, he noted that Mr. Studer stays informed and manages his duties as a board member very efficiently.

10:56

**COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE – RESOLUTION NO. 415-20**

Mayor Coppinger spoke regarding this Resolution which authorizes the County Mayor to enter into an agreement with WTCI to produce a best practices video series. The series will be designed to help meet the needs of Hamilton County educators, parents, and students. The total cost is to be \$100,000, and the Resolution authorizes an immediate expenditure of \$30,000 to be paid from current fiscal year funds. The Mayor said the balance would be provided in the new budget. He highly praised the program.

11:22

Mayor Coppinger introduced Shaun Townley, Vice President of Content and Digital Strategy at WTCI, and Paul Grove, General Manager of WTCI. Mr. Townley presented a video for members of the Commission and audience to view. He explained that the goal of the program is to give teachers an additional opportunity for professional development. He added that WTCI would film teachers at the direction of school

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authorities who have exceptional programs or teaching methods, and other teachers would have the opportunity to view the methods captured by video. He added that some of the funding would be used to build awareness for PBS learning media, which contains at home training videos at no charge for topics that may be more challenging for students. It was noted that Superintendent Rick Smith issued a letter in support of the program.

In response to Commissioner Boyd's question, Mr. Townley added that the request for funding has not been presented to the school board.

Commissioner Boyd suggested that the project be funded using the growth funds from the increase in the school board's budget.

19:13

In response to Commissioner Fairbanks question, Mr. Townley explained that Superintendent Smith and his team would be responsible for the content of the videos.

Mayor Coppinger voiced his support for the program and explained the necessity for providing funds for the program before the end of the current school year. The Mayor added that Superintendent Smith was supportive of this program, and he was confident the school board would be in support too.

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Commissioner Graham stated that he would be supporting this program, but he would prefer to get approval from the school board before voting.

27:48

In response to Commissioner Boyd's comments, Mayor Coppinger clarified that this approval is a time sensitive item because of the production component. He stated that the goal is to have the program operating by the beginning of the next school year.

Superintendent Smith's letter of support was distributed to members of the Commission and the County Clerk's office.

In response to Commissioner Mackey's question, Chairman Fields explained that the Commission could ask Superintendent Smith to attend next week's meeting.

In response to Commissioner Graham's question, Chairman Fields clarified that Resolution No. 215-20 would be voted on next week unless a request to pull the resolution was made before then.

30:35

**COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE – RESOLUTION NO. 415-21**

Attorney Taylor spoke regarding this item, which would authorize the payment of \$200,000 in settlement of an alleged wrongful death claim against Hamilton County

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brought by the parents and next friends of Austin Dakota Wallace. Attorney Taylor explained that this figure was a result of mediation.

32:05

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Chairman Fields asked for announcements from members of the Commission.

32:07

Mayor Coppinger announced that Hamilton County has retained its AAA bond rating from the three big rating agencies. He added that this news is beneficial because the Commission would be issuing bonds later in the month.

Mayor Coppinger and several members of the Commissioner praised Finance Administrator Albert Kiser and his staff for their work.

33:20

Attorney Taylor requested that Commissioners and the Mayor meet with him in the adjacent conference room following today's Agenda Session for a brief legal meeting.

33:33

Commissioner Smedley spoke about the tour she took of the new East Brainerd School. She praised the design of the facility for being able to accommodate more

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students. Commissioner Smedley spoke highly of fellow Commissioners for being pro-education.

34:13 Commissioner Fairbanks announced that AT&T would be hosting 30 students from Sequoyah High School to allow them to job shadow and educate them on being out in the work force. He praised the company for allowing students to come visit their facility.

35:52 Commissioner Bankston, Chairman of the Legal Committee, stated the Legal Committee would meet in the adjacent conference room after today's Agenda Session.

35:52 Commissioner Bankston announced that the Audit Committee meeting was rescheduled for April 29<sup>th</sup> following the Agenda Session.

In response to a request made at last week's meeting, Commissioner Bankston spoke about property tax relief programs currently in place for elderly or disabled homeowners, and disabled veteran homeowners. Elderly homeowners must be 65 or older and have a combined annual income that cannot exceed \$28,270. Disabled homeowners must be rated totally and permanently disabled by the Social Security Administration and have a combined annual income that cannot exceed \$28,270. Determination of eligibility for Disabled veteran homeowners or widow(er) of a disabled



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veteran will be made based on information provided by the VA through use of consent forms available at the County Trustee's office. The deadline to apply is April 5th. He added that currently 2500 people in Hamilton County are participating in the tax relief program.

38:50            Commissioner Graham asked for a copy of the documents regarding tax relief in Hamilton County.

Commissioner Graham, Chairman of the Finance Committee announced that the Finance Committee would be meeting in the Commission Room immediately after the Agenda Session. Commissioner Graham added that he had an idea regarding school funding to discuss with the Finance Committee and invited any Commissioner who wished to attend.

41:24            Commissioner Mackey spoke about the importance of a property tax freeze program for senior citizens and veterans.

42:10            Commissioner Haynes spoke about attending the Superintendent's Honors Banquet, which honored the top 10 percent of each graduating class at Hamilton County's 17 high schools. He added that the opportunity for those students to stay and become employed in Hamilton County has grown significantly. He also spoke about his

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concern over the dwindling number of young men included in the top 10 percent of students, and the effort he has made in his district to improve that number.

45:45            Commissioner Beck added that brochures about the current property tax relief programs are available in the County Trustee's office.

46:26            Commissioner Graham announced that there would be a meeting with Superintendent Smith in District 6 at the John A. Patten Recreation Center tomorrow night at 7:00 pm. He added that the school board member for District 6 would be present at the meeting as well.

47:44            In response to Commissioner Mackey's question, Mayor Coppinger and Mr. Kiser provided standards involved for the government to meet before receiving a AAA bond rating.

Chairman Fields recognized school board member Donna Horn in the audience.

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50:46      **DELEGATIONS**

Chairman Fields asked for delegations on matters other than zoning.

55:00      Jim Snuggs residing at 9854 Leslie Sandidge Dr. Ooltewah, TN 37363 addressed the Commission regarding funding for schools. He urged the Commission to support Superintendent Smith's plan to obtain additional funding for education.

56:34      Commissioner Graham responded to Mr. Snuggs comments by explaining that due to economic development and growth, the school budget has increased significantly each year with only one property tax increase.

Mr. Snuggs added that having the best teachers and the right resources are an important part in improving schools in Hamilton County.

58:04      Commissioner Smedley thanked Mr. Snuggs for attending today's meeting and emphasized the importance the Commissioners place on education.

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Being no further business, Chairman Fields declared the meeting adjourned until  
Wednesday, April 15<sup>th</sup> at 9:30 AM.

Respectfully submitted:



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William F. (Bill) Knowles, County Clerk

Approved:

05-06-15  
Date



Clerk's Initials