



**HAMILTON COUNTY COMMISSION  
AGENDA PREPARATION SESSION  
JUNE 12, 2019**

**COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS**

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

- An Order of Designation to the Planning Commission would be submitted as a matter of record.
- Resolution No. 619-16 was the usual County Clerk item regarding notaries, etc. This required no committee assignment.
- Resolution Nos. 619-25A, 619-25B, 619-26, and 619-45 were assigned to the Zoning Committee, chaired by Commissioner Bankston.
- Resolution Nos. 619-27 through 619-44 were assigned to the Finance Committee, chaired by Commissioner Fairbanks.
- Resolution Nos. 619-14, 619-15, 619-17 through 619-23, 619-24A, 619-24B, 619-46, and 619-47 were heard by a Committee of the Whole.

0:21

**PRESENTATION – HIXSON HIGH SCHOOL AIR FORCE JUNIOR RESERVE OFFICE  
TRAINING CORPS**

Commissioner Martin presented a Certificate of Congratulations to the Hixson High School Air Force Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (JROTC) for receiving the 2018-2019 Air Force Distinguished Unit with Merit Award and the Silver Star Community Service with Excellence Award. He introduced Hixson High School Air Force JROTC instructors Major Jim Carbone and Master Sergeant John Burhans as well as several cadets. Commissioner Martin explained the Air Force JROTC Distinguished Unit with Merit Award recognizes units that have performed above standards, and that have

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distinguished themselves through outstanding service to their schools and communities while meeting the Air Force JROTC citizen development mission for America. He added the Silver Star Community Service with Excellence Award recognizes the top 5% of 900 Air Force JRTOC units worldwide based on community service in support of schools and their communities. Units with the most community service hours per cadet, with each cadet averaging 40 hours, earn the award.

4:34

Major Carbone and Master Sergeant Burhans thanked Commissioner Martin for recognizing the hard work and dedication of the cadets. At this time, a round of applause was given and the cadets, Major Carbone, and Master Sergeant Burhans shook hands with members of the Commission, Attorney Taylor, and Mayor Coppinger.

8:02

**COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE – RESOLUTION NO. 619-46**

Commissioner Sharpe spoke regarding this item, which amends Resolution No. 917-16, contingent upon a real property tax increase, by authorizing Hamilton County to match at 100% the state contributions to the tax relief program, as authorized by Tennessee Code Annotated (TCA) 67-5-701-704. He explained the intent of this Resolution is to help alleviate any additional tax burden on elderly or disabled residents who might be living on a fixed income.

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10:05

At the request of Chairman Smedley County Trustee Bill Hullander presented information regarding the tax relief program, which started over 40 years ago to assist elderly and disabled residents, as well as disabled veterans and widows of disabled veterans. The program provides tax benefits to qualifying homeowners who pay real property taxes within the county, whose age is 65 or older, or disabled taxpayers at any age, and/or disabled veterans and widows of disabled veterans at any age whose income does not exceed \$29,270.00. Trustee Hullander stated the maximum gross household income level for elderly and disabled homeowners is set by the state and increases annually. He noted the income level is set to increase from \$29,270.00 to \$29,860.00 in the coming year. He added the maximum market value on which tax relief is calculated is set to increase from \$27,600.00 to \$28,300.00.

Trustee Hullander stated there is no maximum gross household income level for homeowners who are disabled veterans and/or widows of disabled veterans to qualify for the tax relief program. He noted the maximum market value on which tax relief is calculated is \$175,000.00.

Trustee Hullander reported 27 of the 95 counties in Tennessee provide a 100% match to the state's contribution to the tax relief program. Per Resolution No. 917-16, Hamilton County currently matches 50% of the state's contribution. He added there are

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approximately 200 new applicants to the program each year. A copy of the statistics provided by Trustee Hullander was filed in the Clerk's Office.

18:26

In response to Chairman Smedley's question, Trustee Hullander reported the anticipated cost to the county to provide a 100% match would be approximately \$800,000.00 total, which is \$400,000.00 more than the current cost. He also explained the program is promoted through word of mouth and details of the program are printed on property tax bills.

Commissioner Fairbanks emphasized the importance of making the program known to all qualifying homeowners.

22:07

In response to Commissioner Mackey's question, Administrator of Finance Al Kiser stated the cost of increasing the county's match this year would come from the fund balance. Mayor Coppinger added the cost could be budgeted in the future.

In response to Commissioner Boyd's question, Trustee Hullander explained the difference in the tax freeze program and the tax relief program and confirmed the tax relief program is a more cost effective option for the county.

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30:17 **COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE – RESOLUTION NO. 619-47**

Commissioner Sharpe spoke regarding this item, which requests the Tennessee General Assembly to amend TCA 67-5-701-704 by increasing to \$40,000.00 the maximum household income allowed for senior citizens, disabled veterans, and the widows of disabled veterans for eligibility under the tax relief program. He explained he intended for this Resolution to request a private act for Hamilton County.

Commissioner Martin requested a study on the financial impact in order to determine the exact cost to the county.

34:20

In response to Chairman Smedley's question, Administrator of Finance Al Kiser reported adopting a private act to increase the maximum income level for Hamilton County would require additional staff to verify income as the state currently provides that service. Attorney Taylor confirmed the legislation delegation typically requires six votes to consider this type of change.

Mayor Coppinger reiterated that income verification would require additional staff. He agreed with a financial impact study to determine cost.

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In response to Commissioner Fairbanks' question, Mr. Kiser noted the state utilizes a third party to verify income.

Chairman Smedley thanked Trustee Hullander for the information he presented at today's meeting.

39:33

Commissioner Sharpe voiced his willingness to move forward with the Resolution as written, which would not request a private act.

40:45

**COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE – RESOLUTION NO. 619-14**

This Resolution adopts a budget for fiscal year 2019-2020 and sets the tax levy for the year 2019 for Hamilton County, Tennessee. It was noted this Resolution was presented for discussion only and will not be voted on until June 26, 2019.

There were no questions from Commissioners.

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**COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE – RESOLUTION NO. 619-15**

This Resolution approves making appropriations to nonprofit charitable and civic organizations of Hamilton County, Tennessee, for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2019 and ending June 30, 2020. It was noted this Resolution was presented for discussion only and will not be voted on until June 26, 2019.

There were no questions from Commissioners.

42:30 **COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE – RESOLUTION NO. 619-17**

This Resolution confirms the reappointment on Mary K. Roberts and Rob Lyons to the Hamilton County Community Corrections Advisory Board for a term ending June 30, 2021.

There were no questions from Commissioners.



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42:46 **COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE – RESOLUTION NO. 619-18**

This Resolution confirms the reappointment of Gary W. Neil to the Hamilton County Board of Electrical Examiners for a term ending June 20, 2023.

There were no questions from Commissioners.

43:01 **COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE – RESOLUTION NO. 619-19**

Administrator of Human Resources Sandra Ellis spoke regarding this item, which accepts the proposal of Cigna Health and Life Insurance Company to provide Medical Reinsurance for Hamilton County's Group Medical Plan and authorizes the County Mayor to sign any contracts necessary to implement this Resolution. She noted this is for stop-loss coverage, which would reimburse the county for healthcare claims that exceed \$275,000.00.

In response to Commissioner Fairbanks' question, Ms. Ellis stated this is not related to employee healthcare coverage.

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45:21 **COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE – RESOLUTION NO. 619-20**

Director of General Services Lee Norris spoke regarding this item, which authorizes the Hamilton County Mayor to accept an \$850,000.00 anonymous donation for infrastructure improvements at Enterprise South Nature Park and increases the revenue and expenditure budgets for the Parks and Recreation Department accordingly. He explained the funds were donated for construction of a road bike lane at the park.

46:48 In response to Commissioner Fairbanks' question, Mr. Norris confirmed the project would require the entire \$850,000.00.

In response to Commissioner Boyd's question, Mr. Norris stated the project would not require any additional expenditures.

48:52 In response to Commissioner Martin's question, Director of Parks and Recreation Tom Lamb reported the bike lane would be approximately 5 miles in length with significant terrain challenges. Commissioner Martin expressed appreciation to those who use their own resources to invest in the community.

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50:39

**COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE – RESOLUTION NO. 619-21**

Development Director Dan Saieed spoke regarding this Resolution, which authorizes the County Mayor to sign an agreement in the amount of \$50,000.00 with the Urban League of Greater Chattanooga to provide certain contract compliance services for a contract period beginning July 1, 2019 and ending June 30, 2020. He explained this is annual contract and is subject to adoption of the budget. He added James McKissic, Vice President and Chief Operating Officer of the Urban League of Greater Chattanooga, was present to answer any questions.

In response to Commissioner Martin's question, Mayor Coppinger stated the Hamilton County Equal Opportunity Office (EEO) investigates charges of unlawful discrimination or harassment brought by Hamilton County employees or citizens while the Urban League manages minority contract compliance.

In response to Commissioner Martin's question, Mr. McKissic clarified minority is defined as African American, Latino, Asian, or Pacific Islander; it also includes women vendors and contract owners.

In response to Commissioner Fairbanks' question, Mr. Kiser stated the \$50,000.00 allocation is included in the budget.

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54:22

In response to Commissioner Geter's question, Mr. McKissic provided information on the work the Urban League does to provide economic opportunities to minority business owners including workshops, job fairs, classes, etc. Commissioner Geter noted the importance of a collaborative relationship between the county and the Urban League.

59:06

**COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE – RESOLUTION NO. 619-22**

Development Director Dan Saieed spoke regarding this item, which authorizes the County Mayor to sign a grant agreement with a term beginning July 1, 2019 and ending June 30, 2020 with the Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services. He stated the grant is for \$425,000.00 to support the Hamilton County Felony Drug Recovery Court Program. He noted Recovery Court Coordinator Dr. Elaine Kelly was present to answer any questions.

In response to Commissioner Fairbanks' question, Mr. Saieed confirmed there is no county match.

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Commissioner Martin spoke about attending the recent Recovery Court graduation ceremony and commended the work those involved are doing for the community. Dr. Kelly introduced Katie, a recent Recovery Court graduate, who spoke highly of the positive impact the program has made on her life.

1:02:14 In response to Commissioner Mackey's question, Dr. Kelly stated the program is for repeat felony offenders. She reported that within two years of graduation from the program, employment is at 100% and recidivism is at 0%. She added 100% of those enrolled obtain a high school diploma or the equivalent prior to graduating the program. Dr. Kelly distributed a handout detailing the statistics she provided. A copy of the handout was filed in the Clerk's Office.

In response to Commissioner Geter's question, Dr. Kelly noted this is not a first time grant. Commissioner Geter congratulated all of the recent recovery court graduates.

Commissioner Fairbanks thanked Katie for sharing her story.

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1:07:14 **COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE – RESOLUTION NO. 619-23**

Juvenile Court Administrator Sam Mairs spoke regarding this item, which authorizes the County Mayor to enter into and execute a contract for \$45,000.00 with the State of Tennessee Department of Children's Services (DCS) to receive \$9,000.00 per year for five years from the State Supplement Fund. The funds would be used for the Vocational Education Program within the Detention Center of the Hamilton County Juvenile Court. He noted this requires not county match.

There were no questions from Commissioners.

1:08:18 **COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE – RESOLUTION NOS. 619-24A AND 619-24B**

Chairman Smedley stated at the request of Commissioner Bankston, Chairman of the Zoning Committee, Resolution Nos. 619-24A and 619-24B would be heard as a Committee of the Whole. Commissioner Bankston stated the Commission would be considering Resolution No. 619-24B, which includes certain conditions as recommended by the Regional Planning Agency and no action would be taken on Resolution No. 619-24A.

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John Bridger, Executive Director of the Regional Planning Agency, presented details regarding Resolution No. 619-24B, which would rezone from A-1 Agricultural District and R-1 Single Family Residential District to R-1 Single Family Residential District, properties located in the 6600 block of Snow Hill Road. It was noted both the applicant and opposition were present at today's meeting. Mr. Bridger explained the applicant petitioned the RPA to rezone the property in order to build a multi-use residential development. He stated the RPA approved the petition subject to density being limited to 2.27 units per acre and entrance onto Snow Hill Road and secondary entrance onto Mountain View Road only. It was noted RPA staff recommended denial of the petition citing the previously adopted Wolftever Creek Area Plan (*Resolution No. 607-36*). A copy of Mr. Bridger's presentation was filed in the Clerk's Office.

In response to Commissioner Fairbanks' question, Mr. Bridger clarified the difference in zoning districts is the number of units allowed per acre.

1:14:28 In response to Commissioner Martin's question, Commissioner Bankston stated the applicant would have seven minutes to make his presentation. He added any opposition would be given nine minutes to comment, and the applicant would then be allowed two minutes to respond.

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In response to Commissioner Boyd's question, Mr. Bridger stated the building restrictions require the property setback to be 25 feet in the front and 5 feet on the side.

1:16:07

Kelli Richardson, LDA Engineering, spoke on behalf of the applicant, Billy McCoy, who submitted an application to rezone property to construct single-family residential developments. She explained the initial application was changed to request a rezone to R-1 because of opposition at the Planning Commission meeting. She noted sewer reservation forms were submitted to the Water and Wastewater Treatment Authority (WWTA) and have been approved.

1:18:57

Sam Hudson, an attorney in Dunlap, TN, addressed Commissioners on behalf of Josh and Melissa Cain, who own a wedding venue near the proposed development. He referenced the Wolftever Creek Land Area Plan, which addressed the limited capacity of Snow Hill Road. He voiced concerns about increasing traffic without increasing capacity of the road.

Several property owners in the area addressed Commissioners in opposition of the proposed development. Reasons for their opposition included increased traffic, concern over traffic accidents, limited road capacity, and preservation of scenic farmland.



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1:27:35

In response to Chairman Smedley's question, Administrator of Public Works and County Engineer Todd Leamon reported a traffic study was conducted in the area and Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT) is working on a safety study of Snow Hill Road. A copy of the study was filed in the Clerk's Office.

In response to Chairman Smedley's question, Mr. Bridger stated updating the land use plan for the area is a priority.

In response to Commissioner Martin's question, Mr. Leamon explained additional turning lanes would be addressed during the permitting process rather than the rezoning process.

1:30:34

In response to Commissioner Boyd's question, Mr. Bridger stated if the property is rezoned it would allow 453 units to be developed. Mr. Leamon added the traffic impact study provides additional requirements for ingress and egress.

1:34:18

Mr. McCoy, the applicant, emphasized the importance of providing housing to address the growing workforce in Hamilton County. He stated traffic and speed studies have been completed and he will comply with any conditions necessary.

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In response to Commissioner Martin's question, Mr. Bridger confirmed the zoning restrictions would apply even if the property is sold.

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

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.

1:40:19 Commissioner Martin thanked Mayor Coppinger for attending a community meeting in District 3 last week regarding the budget. He explained that while the 5% pay raise for teachers would not be possible without the proposed 34-cent property tax increase, it was announced during the community meeting that the Department of Education and local teachers union agreed on a 3% raise for teachers during their annual negotiations.

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1:41:23 Commissioner Sharpe announced two community meetings to discuss the proposed budget would take place on Monday, June 17<sup>th</sup> at the Frances B. Wyatt Recreation Center at 6:30 PM and Tuesday, June 18<sup>th</sup> at the John A. Patten Recreation Center at 6:30 PM. Commissioner Sharpe requested clarification on the 3% pay raise for teachers.

1:42:57 Brent Goldberg, Chief Business Officer for Hamilton County Schools, clarified the 3% pay raise was agreed upon during collaborative conferencing between teachers unions and the Department of Education but is contingent on available funding under state law. He explained while the school system will receive additional state BEP funding under Governor Bill Lee's plan to provide teacher raises, at least 550 teachers in the Hamilton County school system are not funded by BEP.

In response to Chairman Smedley's question, Mr. Goldberg stated no alternate budgets to the one submitted exist at this time.

1:46:07 In response to Commissioner Baker's question, Mr. Goldberg stated if the proposed budget is not approved the Department of Education would have to reassess the budget.

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1:48:26

Commissioner Boyd announced a community meeting to discuss the proposed budget would take place tomorrow at 6:30 PM at the Missionary Ridge Neighborhood Association.

Commissioner Geter announced Brainerd High School is hosting the “Brainerd Together” initiative June 17<sup>th</sup> through June 21<sup>st</sup> to rally community support for improvements at the school. She thanked those who have already signed up to help.

Chairman Smedley recognized members of the Chattanooga chapter of the Delta Sigma Theta Sorority present at today’s meeting.

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1:50:51

**DELEGATIONS**

Chairman Smedley asked for delegations on matters other than zoning.

David Steele, residing at 224 Shady Ridge Lane Chattanooga, TN 37405, Robert Alford, Principal at Hunter Middle School residing at 102 Hemphill Avenue Chattanooga, TN 37411, Sharon Dodds, Principal at Wallace A. Smith Elementary School residing at 8332 Wexford Lane Chattanooga, TN 37421, Laura Becker, residing at 508 Wells Street Chattanooga, TN 37405, Jim Boles, Principal at Chattanooga School for the Arts and Sciences residing at 4612 Tarpon Trail Chattanooga, TN 37416, Sueann West, residing at 12911 Emerald Creek Circle Soddy Daisy, TN 37379, Wilhemenia Hogg, residing at 1931 Central Avenue Chattanooga, TN 37408, addressed Commissioners in support of the 2019-2020 proposed budget.

Commissioner Martin thanked the educators and school administrators who spoke at today's meeting. In response to Commissioner Martin's question, Mr. Boles stated Chattanooga School for the Arts and Sciences does not currently have a school resource officer assigned to them. Hamilton County Sheriff Jim Hammond added that the training process to become a school resource officer is lengthy.

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Christopher Dahl, residing at 2020 East 12<sup>th</sup> Street Chattanooga, TN 37404, Jerald Peterson, residing at 1019 Central Drive Hixson, TN 37343, Elgin Gray, residing at 8435 Igou Gap Road Chattanooga, TN 37421, addressed Commissioners in opposition to the 2019-2020 proposed budget.

Commissioner Sharpe emphasized that all citizens in Hamilton County who are not homeless pay property taxes.

In response to Commissioner Mackey's question, Mr. Gray identified certain ways government could save money.

Nicole Bates, Regional Director of the Mental Health Cooperative, Osha Thomas, Care Manager at the Mental Health Cooperative, and Melody Shekari, residing at 622 Georgia Avenue Chattanooga, TN 37402, Fisher Wise, residing at 3809 South Quail Lane Chattanooga, TN 37415, addressed Commissioners in support of additional funding for the Mental Health Court.

In response to Commissioner Sharpe's question, Hamilton County Mental Health Court Director Anna Protano-Biggs confirmed addressing mental health issues at a young age is critically needed in the community.

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Being no further business, Chairman Smedley declared the meeting adjourned until Wednesday, June 19<sup>th</sup>, 2019 at 9:30 AM.

Respectfully submitted:



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William F. (Bill) Knowles, County Clerk

Approved:

07-03-19  
Date

W.F.K.  
Clerk's Initials