

**HAMILTON COUNTY COMMISSION
AGENDA PREPARATION SESSION
OCTOBER 28, 2015**

0:54 **PRESENTATION-ARTSBUILD**

Lee Davis, Chairman of the ArtsBuild Board of Directors, gave a presentation regarding additional funding for the non-profit organization. It was noted that Dan Bowers, President of ArtsBuild, was also present to answer any questions from Commissioners. Mr. Davis described how he became involved with the organization through the Chattanooga Boys Choir. He explained that many organizations in the community receive grants through ArtsBuild to assist in promoting arts, culture, and education. Mr. Davis added that the grants will not continue to be possible without additional funding.

Mr. Davis distributed a draft of a Resolution for Commissioners to consider. A copy was also distributed to the Clerk's office. The proposal includes Commissioners meeting with their state delegates in order to levy a countywide cigarette tax that would be placed on the August 2016 ballot. The proceeds from the tax would be dedicated to arts and culture in Hamilton County. It was noted that the County Commission would be in charge of how the funds are distributed. Mr. Davis reported numbers from a poll taken by ArtsBuild in August. Out of 503 residents likely to vote in August 2016, 63 percent support and 43 percent oppose a cigarette tax to fund arts and culture.

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11:44 In response to Commissioner Beck's question, Mr. Davis reported that the expected revenue from the tax would be around 3 to 4 million dollars annually. It was noted that the expected revenue was calculated based on a tax on cigarettes only. He added that ArtsBuild is open to a tax on all tobacco products.

In response to Mr. Davis' comments, Commissioner Beck noted that one day marijuana will be legalized in Tennessee and he encouraged the context of the proposed legislation to levy the tax on all tobacco products.

13:30 In response to Commissioner Smedley's question, Mr. Davis confirmed that only the cigarette tax rather than all tobacco products determined the calculated expected revenue.

13:51 Commissioner Mackey commented that he supported this proposal for referendum, as it would allow the voters in Hamilton County to decide if they want to approve the tax.

14:22 In response to Commissioner Haynes question regarding e-cigarettes and vapor products, Mr. Davis explained that the organization would need assistance in determining how to include those products under the proposed tax. He noted that

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because of vapor products, the fastest growing demographic of tobacco users are young girls between ages 18 and 25.

15:32

Commissioner Boyd made comments about the necessity of funding arts and culture in Chattanooga. He reported some independent findings in District 6: \$1.1 million was spent promoting art events; there were \$57,500 attendees of art events, and \$1.3 million in revenue from those attendees in restaurants and shops downtown. He added that art in the community is an economic driver, and he will be supporting efforts for legislators to allow the tax on the ballot for voters to decide.

Commissioner Graham added that he will not be supporting a tobacco tax in Hamilton County. He explained the potential ripple effect that could take place if the tax is implemented, and the negative impact it would have on the poor. He added that while he does support the arts, he would not support a tax that could potentially penalize the poor.

Commissioner Boyd and Commissioner Mackey responded to Commissioner Graham's comments adding that the tax could be beneficial by encouraging poor people to consume fewer tobacco products.

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Commissioner Graham explained that he is granting the wishes of his constituents by not supporting the proposed tax.

COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS

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

- This Trustee's Monthly Report and Excess Fee Report for September 2015 would be submitted and made a matter of record.
- Resolution No. 1115-1 was the usual County Clerk item regarding notaries, etc. This required no committee assignment.
- Resolution Nos. 1115-7 through 1115-9 and 1115-11 through 1115-14 were assigned to the Finance Committee, chaired by Commissioner Boyd.
- Resolution No. 1115-10 was not used.
- Resolution Nos. 1115-2 through 1115-6 were heard by a Committee of the Whole.

Chairman Bankston stated that Resolution Nos. 1115-2 through 1115-6 would now be heard by the Committee of the Whole.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE – RESOLUTION NO. 1115-2

This Resolution reappoints William Raines to the Carter Street Corporation Board of Directors for a term ending November 8, 2019.

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There were no questions from Commissioners.

31:09 **COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE – RESOLUTION NO. 1115-3**

Commissioner Fields spoke regarding this Resolution, which appropriates \$25,000.00 to the Pumpkin Patch from general fund discretionary monies as allotted to District 2. It was noted that the funds will assist with rebuilding the playground area used by residents of Hamilton County.

In response to Commissioner Smedley's question, Commission Fields reported that the current estimate of the total cost of renovations is \$250,000.00.

32:40 **COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE – RESOLUTION NO. 1115-4**

Chairman Bankston spoke regarding this item, which appropriates \$5,000.00 to Harrison Ruritan Foundation, Inc. from general fund discretionary monies as allotted to District 9. The funds will assist the non-profit with the purchase of a refrigerator and replacement lighting.

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In response to Commissioner Mackey's comments, Chairman Bankston added that the Harrison Ruritan Foundation does great work for the schools and community in Hamilton County.

33:37 **COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE – RESOLUTION NO. 1115-5**

Alecia Poe, Human Resource Director, spoke regarding this Resolution, which accepts the proposal of Kelly Services, Inc. for temporary employment agency services beginning January 1, 2016 through December 31, 2017, with the option to renew for four additional one-year periods. It was noted Kelly was low bid and that HR currently contracts with Kelly for the same services.

There were no questions from Commissioners.

34:24 **COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE – RESOLUTION NO. 1115-6**

Alecia Poe, Human Resources Director, spoke regarding Resolution, which accepts the proposal of Application Software, Inc. dba Asiflex for flexible benefits plan administration services beginning January 1, 2016 through December 31, 2018, with the option to renew for three additional one-year periods. She added that the new vendor

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will save the Human Resources Department approximately .96 cents per participant per month.

There were no questions from Commissioners.

Commissioner Boyd, Chairman of the Finance Committee announced that the Finance Committee would be meeting in the Commission Room immediately following the Agenda Session.

36:04 **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Chairman Bankston asked for announcements from members of the Commission.

36:27 Commissioner Boyd spoke about meeting with Debbie Smith, Principal of Chattanooga High Center for Creative Arts (CCA). He reported that CCA was one of 17 schools recognized by an organization in Seattle, Washington for their involvement in the creative arts.

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38:07 Commissioner Smedley congratulated the East Hamilton Girl's Cross Country Team for advancing to the state tournament. She also announced that she would be holding her 4th community update meeting with City Councilman Larry Grohn on Thursday, November 4th at Hawkinsville Baptist Church on Pinewood Drive to address infrastructure needs.

Chairman Bankston wished his wife a happy birthday.

DELEGATIONS

Chairman Bankston asked for delegations on matters other than zoning.

39:02 Monty Bell, a homeless resident of Hamilton County for 17 years, addressed the Commission regarding racial disparity and education in the criminal justice system.

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

Respectfully submitted:



William F. (Bill) Knowles, County Clerk

Approved:

11-18-15
Date

W.F.K.
Clerk's Initials