

**HAMILTON COUNTY COMMISSION
AGENDA PREPARATION SESSION
DECEMBER 9, 2015**

STATE OF TENNESSEE)
COUNTY OF HAMILTON)

Agenda Preparation Session
December 9, 2015

BE IT REMEMBERED, that on this 9th day of December, 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:--

0:13

Present and presiding was the Honorable Chester Bankston, Chairman. County Clerk Bill Knowles called the roll of the County Commission and the following, constituting a quorum, answered to their names: Commissioner Beck, Commissioner Boyd, Commissioner Fairbanks, Commissioner Fields, Commissioner Graham, Commissioner Haynes, Commissioner Mackey, Commissioner Smedley, and Chairman Bankston. 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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COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS

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

- An order appointing John J.Cain and reappointing Bill McGriff and Fred L. Morgan as Commissioners of the Northwest Utility District Board of Commissioners would be submitted for the record.
- The Criminal Court Clerk's Reports for August, September, and October 2015 would be submitted for the record.
- An Order of Designation to the Planning Commission would be submitted as a matter of record.
- Resolution No. 1215-19 was the usual County Clerk item regarding notaries, etc. This required no committee assignment.
- Resolution Nos. 1215-20, 1215-21, 1215-22A, 1215-22B, 1215-23, 1215-24, 1215-38, and 1215-39 were assigned to the Zoning and Roads Committee, chaired by Commissioner Haynes.
- Resolution No. 1215-37 was assigned to the Finance Committee, chaired by Commissioner Graham.
- Resolution Nos. 1215-25 through 1215-36 were heard by a Committee of the Whole.

Chairman Bankston stated that Resolution Nos. 1215-25 through 1215-36 would now be heard by the Committee of the Whole.

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1:09

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE – RESOLUTION NO. 1215-25

Commissioner Haynes spoke regarding this item, which approves the expenditure of up to \$3,195.00 from discretionary bond funds, as allotted to District 3, to purchase a security system for Hixson Middle School.

In response to Commissioner Graham's question, Commissioner Haynes clarified that the money is from the previous year's budget. Commissioner Graham stated he supported the resolution.

In response to Commissioner Mackey's question, Commissioner Graham explained that he was never in support of the \$900,000 taken out of the fund balance to be used for discretionary spending, and going forward he would be opposing items using those funds.

12:33

Commissioner Graham recalled the actions that took place when the FY15 budget, Resolution No. 615-35, was presented to the Commission on June 17, 2015. The resolution was amended to add \$900,000 to the County Commission's budget for discretionary funding. The funds were taken out of the general fund balance, or rainy day fund, and divided equally between all nine districts. Commissioner Graham noted that he voted against the amendment. On June 22, 2015, Mayor Coppinger vetoed the

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amended resolution. Commissioner Graham supported the Mayor's veto. On June 24, 2015 the commission voted to override the County Mayor's veto and the resolution was adopted as amended and renumbered 615-35A. The \$900,000 was added to the County Commission's budget.

Commissioner Mackey responded to Commissioner Graham's comments about discretionary spending. He explained that the Commission has been supporting discretionary spending for many years to aid Commissioners in making improvements in their respective districts. He emphasized that discretionary money is a necessity in District 4.

Commissioner Fairbanks asked that Commissioner Graham vote on items involving discretionary spending, whether he opposes them or not. It was noted by several commissioners that Commissioner Graham left the assembly room while votes were being taken on previous discretionary items.

In response to Commissioner Fairbank's question, Commissioner Haynes clarified that Hixson Middle School was not included in security upgrades paid from proceeds taken from the sale of Ooltewah Elementary School. Commissioner Beck reminded the commission that the Department of Education promised to supply the

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commission with a copy of the list detailing how those proceeds would be spent. He has yet to receive the list.

14:19

Commissioner Haynes clarified that these funds will be used to purchase a buzzer system for the front door of Hixson Middle School, not for security cameras.

At this time, lengthy discussion took place among Commissioners and Mayor Coppinger. Topics included discretionary spending, voting on discretionary items, and county funded 501c3's providing a service to the county. Mayor Coppinger emphasized how critical community service nonprofits are to Hamilton County, especially volunteer fire departments.

32:17

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE – RESOLUTION NO. 1215-26

Commissioner Fields spoke regarding this item, which appropriates \$10,000.00 to Aegis Law Enforcement of Greater Chattanooga, Inc. from general fund discretionary monies as allotted to District 2. It was noted that the funds would assist the non-profit in purchasing firearm simulators for training purposes.

33:13

In response to Commissioner Haynes question, Commissioner Fields clarified that this would be the first purchase of this type of simulator for Aegis.

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33:48

In response to Commissioner Beck's question, Don Gorman, Director of Administration for the Sheriff's Department, explained that Aegis will be purchasing two simulators, one for the City of Chattanooga Police Department, and one for the Hamilton County Sheriff's Department to be used by all local law enforcement agencies. He added that the cost of one simulator is about \$70,000.00, and any additional costs associated with the simulators would be minimal. It was noted that no other municipalities would be contributing to the purchase cost.

In response to Commissioner Beck's question, Mr. Gorman clarified that Aegis is a 501c3 organization made up of law enforcement officials and businessmen in the community. He added that a four-person committee made the decision to purchase the simulators, and began raising the funds to do so. It was noted that Aegis has asked for donations from companies and members of the community to assist with the purchase.

37:26

In response to Commissioner Boyd's question, Mr. Gorman explained that the simulators will be purchased by Aegis and then donated to the Hamilton County Sheriff's Department. He added that the simulators will be placed at the West Annex Training Center for use 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The current staff will coordinate a training schedule for each department to prevent the need for hiring additional personnel.

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In response to Commissioner Graham's question, Commissioner Fields specified that the funds for this purchase came from the current year's budget.

Commissioner Graham spoke about the funds that were allocated to the Sheriff's Office in the current year's budget. He explained that they were given a lot of discretion on how those funds were spent within the department. He also commented that Aegis was created so that money could be raised from within the business community to purchase tools that municipalities may not have been able to afford otherwise. Commissioner Graham noted that because of the source of the money to fund this purchase, he would be voting against this item.

Mr. Gorman reported that Tom Edd Wilson, Chairman of the Aegis Law Enforcement Foundation, would be attending next week's meeting to answer any questions.

44:50

Commissioner Fairbanks spoke about the importance of the firearm simulators for training purposes. He added that he would be supporting this item next week.

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45:52 **COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE – RESOLUTION NO. 1215-36**

Mayor Coppinger spoke regarding this item, which accepts the proposal of Lamp Post Properties for the purchase of the Mayfield Annex, located at 123 East 7th St., for the sale price of \$200,000.00. This item also declares the Mayfield Annex property as surplus. Mayor Coppinger reported that this property was considered for demolition, and after working with RiverCity Company to market the property for sale and redevelopment, three proposals were received for its purchase.

It was noted that Ted Alling and Barry Large, Partners at Lamp Post Group, and RiverCity's President Kim White and Vice President Jim Williamson were present to answer any questions.

Mayor Coppinger reported that Lamp Post Group is purchasing the building for \$200,000.00 which will go directly to the County. He added that the investment will create 70-75 jobs in the private sector, and there was no PILOT agreement involved. He applauded Mr. Large and Mr. Alling for their investments in the community.

49:32 In response to Commissioner Graham's question, Mayor Coppinger reiterated that there is no PILOT agreement involved in this purchase. Commissioner Graham

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thanked representatives from RiverCity and Lamp Post Group and expressed his support for this item.

50:18

Commissioner Boyd thanked Mr. Alling and Mr. Large for their continued investment in the community and expressed his support for this item. He also thanked Ms. White for her work on this project.

51:56

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE – RESOLUTION NO. 1215-27

Commissioner Fairbanks spoke regarding this item, which appropriates \$5,000.00 to Aegis Law Enforcement of Greater Chattanooga, Inc. from general fund discretionary monies as allotted to District 1. It was noted that the funds would assist the non-profit in purchasing firearm simulators for training purposes.

In response to Commissioner Graham's question, Commissioner Fairbanks clarified that the funds are from the current year's budget.

52:49

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE – RESOLUTION NO. 1215-28

Chairman Bankston spoke regarding this item, which appropriates \$5,000.00 to Aegis Law Enforcement of Greater Chattanooga, Inc. from general fund discretionary

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monies as allotted to District 9. It was noted that the funds would assist the non-profit in purchasing firearm simulators for training purposes.

In response to Commissioner Graham's question, Chairman Bankston clarified that the funds are from the current year's budget.

53:31 **COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE – RESOLUTION NO. 1215-29**

Commissioner Smedley spoke regarding this item, which appropriates \$5,000.00 to Aegis Law Enforcement of Greater Chattanooga, Inc. from general fund discretionary monies as allotted to District 7. It was noted that the funds would assist the non-profit in purchasing firearm simulators for training purposes. Commissioner Smedley reported that her son is a corrections officer at the Hamilton County jail. She expressed the importance of having well trained law enforcement officers. She added that the simulators contain 300 different scenarios for training, and there would be no need in the near future to upgrade that equipment.

Commissioner Smedley reported that the funds are from the current year's budget.

There were no questions from Commissioners.

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54:52 **COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE – RESOLUTION NO. 1215-30**

Commissioner Mackey spoke regarding this item, which appropriates \$2,000.00 to Aegis Law Enforcement of Greater Chattanooga, Inc. from general fund discretionary monies as allotted to District 4. It was noted that the funds would assist the non-profit in purchasing firearm simulators for training purposes. He clarified that the City of Chattanooga has a firearm simulator and they are willing to share it with the County. However, the demand for training could not be met by sharing one simulator. He expressed the importance of providing law enforcement officers with the tools and training they need to do their job effectively.

In response to Commissioner Graham's question, Commissioner Mackey clarified that the funds are from the current year's budget.

Commissioner Graham echoed his earlier comments regarding the budget for the Sheriff's Department. He explained that Sheriff Hammond was given the discretion to purchase the tools and equipment they need with the funds allocated to them in the current year's budget.

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54:52

In response to Commissioner Mackey's question, Commissioner Graham clarified that he would support the purchase of the simulators if funds to do so came from a different source.

58:47

Commissioner Smedley reported that Sheriff Jim Hammond and Director of Support Services Geno Bennett arrived at the meeting to answer any questions. She thanked Mr. Bennett for a presentation he gave at a District 7 community meeting regarding the firearm simulators.

1:02:10

In response to Commissioner Smedley's question, Sheriff Hammond clarified that the Sheriff's Office was not allocated money for this type of purchase in the current year's budget. It was noted that the Hamilton County jail is understaffed.

In response to Commissioner Graham's question, Sheriff Hammond explained that he was given some freedom to decide how funds that were allocated to his office are spent, but any purchases would have to be brought before the Commission for approval.

At this time, a lengthy discussion took place between Commissioners and Sheriff Hammond regarding the training equipment, the budget, and discretionary spending. It

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was noted that the Sheriff's Office is currently spending \$6,000.00 per year to rent the training equipment.

1:12:12

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE – RESOLUTION NO. 1215-31

Commissioner Mackey spoke regarding this item, which appropriates \$2,500.00 from general fund discretionary monies to Boy Scouts of America Cherokee Area Council, Inc., as allotted to District 4. It was noted that the funds will assist the non-profit with their BSA ScoutReach Program.

In response to Commissioner Graham's question, Commissioner Mackey clarified that the funds are from the current year's budget.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE – RESOLUTION NO. 1215-32

Commissioner Mackey spoke regarding this item, which appropriates \$1,500.00 from general fund discretionary monies to Churchville Neighborhood Association, Inc., as allotted to District 4. It was noted that the funds will assist the non-profit with their Young Ladies of Power program.

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In response to Commissioner Graham's question, Commissioner Mackey clarified that the funds are from the current year's budget.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE – RESOLUTION NO. 1215-33

Commissioner Mackey spoke regarding this item, which appropriates \$2,000.00 from general fund discretionary monies to A Better Tomorrow, Inc., as allotted to District 4. It was noted that the funds will assist the non-profit with their Project Evolution Program.

In response to Commissioner Graham's question, Commissioner Mackey clarified that the funds are from the current year's budget.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE – RESOLUTION NO. 1215-34

Commissioner Mackey spoke regarding this item, which appropriates \$2,500.00 from general fund discretionary monies to Olivet Church of Chattanooga, Inc., as allotted to District 4. It was noted that the funds will assist with their anti-gang program.

In response to Commissioner Graham's question, Commissioner Mackey clarified that the funds are from the current year's budget.

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1:14:32

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE – RESOLUTION NO. 1215-35

County Clerk Bill Knowles spoke regarding this item, which authorizes the the Mayor and the Clerk to enter into a contract with Business Information Systems (BIS) to provide payment card processing for the County Clerk's motor vehicle titling and registration system. It authorizes the purchase and installation of twenty-seven EMV devices with stands in the amount of \$24,894.00 and to amend the County Clerk's General Fund Operating Budget. Clerk Knowles explained that this is an update to the credit card system that has been used since he started Tennessee's first tags-by-internet option in 2001.

He also noted that BIS is providing tag and title programing to most of the 95 Tennessee County Clerk offices as well as a vital partner with the Department of Revenue's Title and Registration Division.

There were no questions from Commissioners.

Commissioner Haynes, Chairman of the Zoning Committee announced that the Zoning Committee would be meeting in the Commission Room immediately after the Agenda Session.

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Commissioner Boyd, Chairman of the Finance Committee announced that the Finance Committee would be meeting in the adjacent conference room immediately after the Agenda Session.

1:17:37 **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Chairman Bankston asked for announcements from members of the Commission.

Commissioner Haynes wished everyone a Merry Christmas.

1:17:48 Commissioner Mackey spoke regarding discretionary spending. He asked for suggestions on a way to minimize the time spent on the discussion. He added that spending a lengthy amount of time discussing each item involving discretionary funds is counterproductive.

Commissioner Beck agreed with Commissioner Mackey's comments.

1:19:52 Commissioner Graham announced the Lookout Valley Neighborhood Association is having their 25th annual Christmas parade Saturday, December 12th at 11:00 am.

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He also responded to Commissioner Mackey by commenting that Commissioners are elected to represent their districts having discussions regarding County business in a public setting is proper.

Commissioner Graham reported that a letter for Commissioners to consider signing was placed on the table in the Commission conference room. The intent of the letter is to change the present practice that ties salaries of Commissioners with the salary of the Mayor. It was noted that Hamilton County is the only county where the two are tied together. The letter requires six signatures, and then could be forwarded to the state legislative delegation for consideration. Commissioner Graham requested a copy of the letter once it was completed.

1:22:17

Commissioner Boyd announced that the Finance Committee will be having a work session following next week's meeting in the Commission conference room.

1:22:37

Commissioner Fairbanks agreed with Commissioner Mackey's comments about the time spent discussing discretionary spending.

He also invited everyone to attend Daisy Church of God's annual Santa Clause Comes to Town event this weekend. He reported that he would be dressed as Santa this year.

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1:23:41

Commissioner Smedley announced that a Tree Lighting event will be taking place this Friday from 6:00 to 8:00 pm at Heritage Park in East Brainerd. She added that several area schools will be singing Christmas carols at the event. She also recognized John Wolf and Robert Kens, investors from California, present in the audience at today's meeting.

1:28:30

Mayor Coppinger reported that the County would be drawing \$40 million dollars from the line of credit to pay for purchases previously approved by the Commission.

At this time, a lengthy discussion took place among Commissioners and County Attorney Rheubin Taylor regarding the letter addressing Commissioner salary rules. Commissioner Beck noted that he placed the letter on a table in the commission's private chambers for any commissioner to review and sign. He stated that he intended to publicly introduce the letter when it was his turn to speak during today's announcements, but Commissioner Graham preempted his announcement.

Attorney Taylor clarified that the commissioners' salaries are tied to the County Mayor's salary, thus a three percent raise for county employees or the Mayor would also result in a three percent raise for the commissioners. Therefore a three percent raise to the commissioner's salary is far less than a three percent raise for the County

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Mayor. The intent of the letter is not to raise the pay of Commissioners, but to change the law that ties their salary to the Mayor's salary.

DELEGATIONS

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

Being no further business, Chairman Bankston declared the meeting adjourned until Wednesday, December 16th at 9:30 AM.

Respectfully submitted:



William F. (Bill) Knowles, County Clerk

Approved:

01-06-16
Date

W.F.K.
Clerk's Initials