



HAMILTON COUNTY, TENNESSEE

OFFICE OF THE COUNTY MAYOR

WESTON WAMP

For Immediate Release

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Hamilton County, East Ridge Establish Joint Sports Authority to Advance Indoor Youth Sports Facility

HAMILTON COUNTY, TN (July 16, 2026) — Hamilton County and the City of East Ridge are taking the next step toward developing a regional indoor youth sports facility by creating a joint Sports Authority. This project has the potential to transform youth sports and strengthen the local economy, building on East Ridge's longstanding reputation as a youth sports destination.

The Hamilton County Commission this week considered a resolution to establish the nine-member authority, which will guide the planning process by evaluating successful facility models, developing governance recommendations, and preparing a financing and operational plan before any construction moves forward.

“Partnering with East Ridge to invest in an indoor youth sports facility would result in tens of thousands of hotel stays and millions in economic impact while delivering game-changing opportunities for local athletes and their families,” said **Hamilton County Mayor Weston Wamp**. “The caliber of people serving on this authority—including former collegiate and professional athletes, business leaders, and hospitality experts—reflects our commitment to making Hamilton County a premier youth sports destination.”

The Chattanooga Tourism Company presented a [KemperSports study](#) earlier this year concluding that a new 10- to 12-court indoor sports complex would address a major gap in the region by increasing competitiveness for regional and national tournaments, while also increasing hotel demand and significantly boosting the tourism economy. A facility of this size in Rock Hill, South Carolina, generates more than 120,000 hotel room nights annually.

“This is the kind of project that can transform youth sports throughout the Southeast,” said **East Ridge Mayor Brian Williams**. “The individuals appointed to this board bring decades of experience in athletics, business, public service, and community leadership. I am confident they will develop a thoughtful, long-term vision that puts local families first while creating a premier sports destination that strengthens our community, drives economic growth, and benefits the entire region.”

The nine-member board will have four directors appointed by Hamilton County, four appointed by the City of East Ridge, and one jointly appointed by both.

“East Ridge has long been a leader in youth sports, and this partnership creates an opportunity to build something that serves families across our region,” said **District 8 Hamilton County Commissioner Mike Chauncey**. “I’ve been proud to work alongside Mayor Wamp, Mayor Williams, and many others to reach this point, and establishing the Sports Authority ensures this project moves forward with the planning and leadership it deserves.”

The County Commission is scheduled to vote on the proposed resolution at its August 5 meeting, with the East Ridge City Council expected to vote at its August 13 meeting.

Hamilton County Appointees

Dane Bradshaw: Former Tennessee Basketball player; Thunder Enterprises

Katie Burrows: UTC Women’s Basketball alumna & coach

Hiren Desai: CEO, 3H Group

Orlando Lightfoot: Former professional basketball player; Boys & Girls Clubs of Chattanooga

East Ridge Appointees

Zach Hutcherson: CPA, Henderson, Hutcherson & McCullough, PLLC (HHM)

Brad Jackson: Lifelong educator, coach, & athletic administrator

Ken Meyer: Entrepreneur, former TN State Rep.

Pragnash “PJ” Patel: Co-founder, Patriot Insurance Solutions Inc.

Joint Appointee

Emerson Russell: Founder & CEO, ERMCC

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