Time Code
Position

HAMILTON COUNTY COMMISSION
AGENDA PREPARATION SESSION
JANUARY 14, 2026

STATE OF TENNESSEE)
COUNTY OF HAMILTON)

Agenda Preparation Session
January 14, 2026

BE IT REMEMBERED, that on this 14th day of January 2026 at 4:00 PM, 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 Ken Smith, Chairman. Chief Deputy County Clerk Brooke Weaver called the roll of the County Commission, and the following, constituting a quorum, answered to their names: Commissioner Chip Baker, Commissioner Greg Beck, Commissioner Mike Chauncey, Commissioner Jeff Eversole, Commissioner Joe Graham, Commissioner Lee Helton, Commissioner Steve Highlander, Commissioner Warren Mackey, Commissioner David Sharpe, Commissioner Gene-O Shipley, and Chairman Ken Smith. Total present – 11. Total absent – 0.

Also in attendance were County Mayor Weston Wamp, members of his administrative staff, County Attorney Janie Varrnell, and County Auditor Chris McCollough.

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COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS

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

- Procurement Purchase Orders Report $20k - $50k for December 2025 would be submitted for the record.
- Resolution No. 126-19 was the usual County Clerk item regarding notaries, etc. This required no committee assignment.
- Resolution Nos. 126-20 through 126-23 were assigned to the Finance and Budget Committee, chaired by Commissioner Eversole.
- Resolution No. 126-24 was assigned to the Education Committee, chaired by Commissioner Graham.
- Resolution No. 126-25 was assigned to the Rules and Legislative Committee, chaired by Commissioner Helton.
- Resolution No. 126-26 was assigned to the Public Works and Zoning Committee, chaired by Commissioner Highlander.
- Resolution Nos. 126-27 and 126-28 were heard by a Committee of the Whole.

0:39 **RESOLUTION NO. 126-19 A RESOLUTION TO APPROVE AND ACCEPT APPLICATIONS FOR NOTARY PUBLIC POSITIONS, THE BONDS AND OATHS OF NOTARIES PREVIOUSLY ELECTED, AND THE OATHS OF DEPUTY SHERIFFS.**

There were no questions from Commissioners or the audience.

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0:57 **RESOLUTION NO. 126-27 A RESOLUTION MAKING AN APPROPRIATION TO SALE CREEK HIGH SCHOOL IN THE AMOUNT OF EIGHT HUNDRED DOLLARS ($800.00) FROM GENERAL FUND TRAVEL DISCRETIONARY MONIES, AS ALLOTTED TO DISTRICT ONE.**

There were no questions from Commissioners or the audience.

RESOLUTION NO. 126-28 A RESOLUTION MAKING AN APPROPRIATION TO SODDY DAISY TROJAN FUND IN THE AMOUNT OF FOUR THOUSAND FIVE HUNDRED DOLLARS ($4,500.00) FROM GENERAL FUND TRAVEL DISCRETIONARY MONIES, AS ALLOTTED TO DISTRICT ONE.

There were no questions from Commissioners or the audience.

Commissioner Helton, Chairman of the Rules and Legislative Committee, stated the Rules and Legislative Committee would meet in the Commission Conference Room immediately following today's Agenda Preparation Session adjournment.

Commissioner Eversole, Chairman of the Finance and Budget Committee, stated the Finance and Budget Committee would meet in the Commission Room immediately following today's Agenda Preparation Session adjournment.

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Commissioner Graham, Chairman of the Education Committee, stated the Education Committee would meet in the Commission Room immediately following today's Finance and Budget Committee.

Commissioner Highlander, Chairman of the Public Works and Zoning Committee, stated the Public Works and Zoning Committee would meet in the Commission Room immediately following today's Education Committee.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chairman Smith asked for announcements from members of the Commission.

Commissioner Beck announced the passing of Annie Sanders, a Hamilton
2:30 County resident who had previously been recognized by the Commission. He noted she was laid to rest on what would have been her 108th birthday and commended the Sheriff's Department for escorting the funeral procession. He also thanked the Commission and County officials for honoring her during her lifetime.

Commissioner Helton announced a community meeting will be held on January
5:30 20, 2026, at East Hamilton High School, with representatives from TDOT, the Hamilton County Highway Department, and the Mayor's Office in attendance.

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6:17 Commissioner Highlander thanked Commissioner Beck for honoring Annie Sanders and expressed appreciation for recognizing county residents and for the Commission's efforts to act in the best interest of Hamilton County citizens.

7:20 Commissioner Eversole reminded the audience of his upcoming "Coffee with the Commish" events in District 10. He stated the first event will be held on January 17, 2026, from 10:00 AM to 11:30 AM at the Highway 58 Volunteer Fire Training Center, with additional events scheduled for January 24, 2026, at the Apison Tri-Community Training Center and January 31, 2026, at Collegedale Chestnut Hall.

8:01 Commissioner Graham announced that Wreaths Across Chattanooga is seeking volunteers to assist with wreath pickup at the Chattanooga National Cemetery at 8:00 AM on Saturday, January 17, 2026, and encouraged community participation.

8:50 County Attorney Varnell, on behalf of her office, extended condolences to Commissioner Eversole and District 10 on the passing of Collegedale City Judge Kevin Wilson, noting that he would be sincerely missed.

9:20 Mayor Wamp provided an update on the Homeward Bound program previously approved by the Commission. He noted the County's $25,000 investment resulted in 107 participants over the last six months, stating this is a 143 percent increase

compared to the same period in 2024. He added 37 of those participants accounted for 184 prior arrests in Hamilton County and stated the program has contributed to reduced arrests and potential taxpayer cost savings.

12:36 Chairman Smith thanked the Commissioners for the discussion held during the recess meeting regarding the Commission meeting time. He noted the importance of the topic to the Commission, staff, and constituents and expressed appreciation for the dialogue as the matter continues to be considered.

DELEGATIONS

Chairman Smith asked for delegations on matters other than zoning.

13:13 Jeff Meldahl, residing at 109 Ochs Highway and president of the Chattanooga Area Labor Council, spoke against what he described as routine anti-union attitudes in local economic development discussions. He emphasized the role of unions in strengthening the middle class and urged the Commission to hold developers accountable for the quality of jobs created as the community expands.

16:26 Jared Story, residing at 4635 Patton Town Road, discussed potential impacts to the Old Summit Cemetery from a proposed road extension related to the Enterprise

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South Nature Park land swap. He noted state officials confirmed burials beyond the fenced area, with historical records indicating up to 200 unmarked graves, and urged due diligence to protect the historic cemetery and respect the community's descendants.

19:19 Jules Armstrong, residing at 728 Market Street, expressed concerns about the proposed Urban Story Ventures data center, citing potential impacts on energy costs, pollution, traffic congestion, and limited job creation. She referenced examples from other cities and suggested consideration of an infrastructure tax to offset impacts on public utilities and resources

22:31 Erica Johnston, residing in District 3, spoke about a petition signed by 612 Hamilton County residents requesting additional public input before any vote to lease the former Hamilton County Jail to Urban Story Ventures. She asked the Commission to provide a separate public meeting or delay the vote to allow additional community engagement, noting concerns about data centers. A copy of the petition has been filed in the Clerk’s Office.

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There being no further business, Chairman Smith adjourned the meeting to Wednesday, January 21st, at 4:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted:

William F. (Bill) Knowles, County Clerk

Approved:

2-04-2026 W.F.K

Date Clerk's Initials