

**HAMILTON COUNTY COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
JANUARY 15, 2025**

STATE OF TENNESSEE) Regular Meeting
COUNTY OF HAMILTON) January 15, 2025

BE IT REMEMBERED that on this 15th day of January 2025, a Regular Meeting 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: --

0:16 Present and presiding was the Honorable Jeff Eversole, Chairman. County Clerk Bill Knowles 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 Joe Graham, Commissioner Lee Helton, Commissioner Steve Highlander, Commissioner Warren Mackey, Commissioner David Sharpe, Commissioner Gene-o Shipley, Commissioner Ken Smith, and Chairman Jeff Eversole. Total present - 11. Total absent -0.

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

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Attached hereto is a copy of the Public Notice of this meeting, which was published in a local newspaper and made a matter of record of this meeting.

0:37 Commissioner Smith introduced Pastor Brent Baughman, Stanley Heights Baptist Church, to offer the invocation. Commissioner Smith led in the pledge to the flag.

1:56 Commissioner Graham recognized Dr. Alan Johnston in the audience. He stated Dr. Johnston was the officiant at his wedding.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

2:26 **ON MOTION** of Commissioner Highlander, seconded by Commissioner Graham, that the minutes of the Recessed Meeting of December 11, 2024, the Agenda Preparation Session of December 11, 2024, and the Regular Meeting of December 18, 2024, be approved, treated the same as read, made a matter of record, and filed. The foregoing Motion was unanimously adopted on a Roll Call vote, with the following members of the County Commission being present and voting as follows:
Commissioner Baker, "Aye," Commissioner Beck, "Aye," Commissioner Chauncey, "Aye," Commissioner Graham, "Aye," Commissioner Helton, "Aye," Commissioner Highlander, "Aye," Commissioner Mackey, "Aye," Commissioner Sharpe, "Aye," Commissioner Shipley, "Aye," Commissioner Smith, "Aye," and Chairman Eversole,

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“Aye.” Total present – 11. Total absent – 0. Total “Aye” votes – 11. Total “Nay” votes – 0.

TRUSTEE REPORT

3:04 The Trustee’s Monthly and Excess Fee Report for November 2024 was submitted and made a matter of record.

3:13 **RESOLUTION NO. 125-1 A RESOLUTION TO APPROVE AND ACCEPT APPLICATIONS FOR NOTARY PUBLIC POSITIONS AND THE BONDS AND OATHS OF NOTARIES PREVIOUSLY ELECTED.**

ON MOTION of Commissioner Mackey, seconded by Commissioner Highlander, to adopt Resolution No.125-1

There were no questions from the Commissioners or the audience.

The foregoing Motion was adopted on a Roll Call vote, with the following members of the County Commission being present and voting as follows:
Commissioner Baker, “Aye,” Commissioner Beck, “Aye,” Commissioner Chauncey,

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“Aye,” Commissioner Graham, “Aye,” Commissioner Helton, “Aye,” Commissioner Highlander, “Aye,” Commissioner Mackey, “Aye,” Commissioner Sharpe, “Aye,” Commissioner Shipley, “Aye,” Commissioner Smith, “Aye,” and Chairman Eversole, “Aye.” Total present – 11. Total absent – 0. Total “Aye” votes – 11. Total “Nay” votes – 0.

Chairman Eversole stated Resolution Nos. 1224-31 and 1224-32, which were deferred to today, will be replaced with Resolution No. 125-20A.

4:11

RESOLUTION NO. 125-20A A RESOLUTION AFFIRMING ENGAGING JANIE PARKS VARNELL AS A SPECIAL ADVISOR BEGINNING FEBRUARY 1, 2025, AND TERMINATING JUNE 30, 2025.

ON MOTION of Commissioner Graham, seconded by Commissioner Baker, to adopt Resolution No.125-20A.

4:48

In response to Commissioner Highlander’s question, Chief Financial Officer Lee Brouner stated the position will not have funding attached. He noted vacant positions within the County Government could be used to fund this position. He stated the funds will come from the Unassigned Division Budget. He noted the accumulation of several

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divisions or departments within the unassigned division should have enough money available to cover this position.

7:05

Commissioner Sharpe stated he hoped the resolution would be read today, the various aspects and merits deliberated on, and then allow time for the community to give feedback before voting on the resolution.

ON MOTION of Commissioner Sharpe, seconded by Mackey, to postpone Resolution No. 125-20A to the January 29, 2025, Recessed Meeting.

11:42

Commissioner Sharpe stated the intent is to deliberate before voting on the resolution. He noted the commission is a deliberative body that has not had the opportunity to deliberate on this item.

12:03

Commissioner Graham stated this has been a challenging process for everyone, and it has been deliberated for some time now. He noted Mayor Wamp was asked to give a transition process and bring a person forward for the commission to vote on. He stated he would like to vote and be done with this resolution, so he will not support the motion to postpone.

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13:19 Commissioner Sharpe stated the role of Commissioners is to deliberate publicly from the dias. He noted everyone has a job to do, and deliberating is the commission's job.

14:09 Commissioner Shipley stated this matter has been before the Commission for a month, and everyone has had time to study and prepare for this day. He noted it is a transition period everyone knew was coming, and he will not support the motion to postpone.

15:04 Commissioner Graham stated this issue has been deliberated. He noted the county is asking Ms. Varnell to give up her job so she can come to work for the county on short notice.

16:51 Commissioner Mackey stated an excellent candidate has been brought forward, but the issue is the lack of communication between the two branches the County Attorney represents. He noted the commission's lack of input on the candidate has been an issue, and the mayor needs to be more inclusive.

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The foregoing Motion to postpone failed on a Roll Call vote, with the following members of the County Commission being present and voting as follows:

Commissioner Baker, "Nay," Commissioner Beck, "Nay," Commissioner Chauncey, "Nay," Commissioner Graham, "Nay," Commissioner Helton, "Nay," Commissioner Highlander, "Nay," Commissioner Mackey, "Aye," Commissioner Sharpe, "Aye," Commissioner Shipley, "Nay," Commissioner Smith, "Nay," and Chairman Eversole, "Nay." Total present – 11. Total absent – 0. Total "Aye" votes – 2. Total "Nay" votes – 9.

18:50 Commissioner Graham called for the question on the main motion, seconded by Commissioner Shipley. The foregoing Motion to Move the Previous Question was adopted on a Roll Call vote, with the following members of the County Commission being present and voting as follows: Commissioner Baker, "Aye," Commissioner Beck, "Aye," Commissioner Chauncey, "Aye," Commissioner Graham, "Aye," Commissioner Helton, "Aye," Commissioner Highlander, "Aye," Commissioner Mackey, "Aye," Commissioner Sharpe, "Nay," Commissioner Shipley, "Aye," Commissioner Smith, "Aye," and Chairman Eversole, "Aye." Total present – 11. Total absent – 0. Total "Aye" votes – 10. Total "Nay" votes – 1.

20:50 Gary Boles, residing at 5812 Mountain Pass Drive, stated his comments have nothing to do with the qualifications of the candidate or the performance of the current

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County Attorney. He noted he was there to speak for the constituents who continue to see the County Government waste money when infrastructure and many schools with below-average or failing evaluations need help. He stated hiring someone to have in place when the County Attorney's contract runs out in June will have a five-month overlap, costing approximately \$66,666.66. He noted these funds need to be spent on roads or schools and not the satisfaction of someone's political appetite. A shorter transition period makes more sense.

In response to Commissioner Graham's question, Attorney Taylor stated when someone calls for the question, the citizens of Hamilton County are still allowed to express themselves on a matter the commission votes. A new law adopted recently by the Legislature was cited, too.

23:48

Monty Bell, a homeless journalist for the Grey Haired Foxx, questioned if candidate for County Attorney Janie Parks Varnell is the same person listed on his Open Records Request he made to the county.

The foregoing Motion was adopted on a Roll Call vote, with the following members of the County Commission being present and voting as follows:
Commissioner Baker, "Aye," Commissioner Beck, "Aye," Commissioner Chauncey,

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“Aye,” Commissioner Graham, “Aye,” Commissioner Helton, “Aye,” Commissioner Highlander, “Aye,” Commissioner Mackey, “Aye,” Commissioner Sharpe, “Nay,” Commissioner Shipley, “Aye,” Commissioner Smith, “Aye,” and Chairman Eversole, “Aye.” Total present – 11. Total absent – 0. Total “Aye” votes – 10. Total “Nay” votes – 1.

25:18

Commissioner Sharpe stated with no objection he would like to attach a series of documents pulled from Attorney General Opinions, Supreme Court rules, etc., to Resolution No. 125-20A. There was no objection. It was stated a copy of the documents will be forwarded to the Clerk’s office.

**RESOLUTION NO. 125-2A A RESOLUTION TO REZONE FROM A-1
AGRICULTURAL DISTRICT TO R-1 SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT FOR
THE UNADDRESSED PROPERTY LOCATED IN THE 400 BLOCK OF WHITE ROAD.**

No action was taken.

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26:12

RESOLUTION NO. 125-2B A RESOLUTION TO REZONE FROM A-1 AGRICULTURAL DISTRICT TO R-1 SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT WITH CONDITIONS FOR THE UNADDRESSED PROPERTY LOCATED IN THE 400 BLOCK OF WHITE ROAD.

Commissioner Chauncey, Chairman of the Zoning Committee, stated the applicant wanted to defer Resolution No. 125-2B to the February 19, 2025, Regular Meeting.

26:17

RESOLUTION NO. 125-3 A RESOLUTION TO REZONE FROM A-1 AGRICULTURAL DISTRICT TO R-5 SINGLE-WIDE MANUFACTURED HOME DISTRICT FOR THE PROPERTY LOCATED AT 8110 PINE RIDGE ROAD.

Commissioner Chauncey, Chairman of the Zoning Committee, provided details regarding Resolution No. 125-3 and stated the Zoning Committee reviewed and recommended approval.

ON MOTION of Commissioner Chauncey, seconded by Commissioner Mackey, to adopt Resolution No. 125-3.

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27:24

Terry Yoder, residing at 6865 Villa Terrace, questioned if this resolution was in the proposed Area 9 Plan. Chairman Eversole stated the Area 9 Plan has been deferred for 30 days by the mayor. He noted this was an individual case.

There were no questions from the Commissioners.

The foregoing Motion was adopted on a Roll Call vote, with the following members of the County Commission being present and voting as follows:
Commissioner Beck, "Aye," Commissioner Chauncey, "Aye," Commissioner Graham, "Aye," Commissioner Helton, "Aye," Commissioner Highlander, "Aye," Commissioner Mackey, "Aye," Commissioner Sharpe, "Aye," Commissioner Shipley, "Aye," Commissioner Smith, "Aye," and Chairman Eversole, "Aye." Commissioner Baker stepped away during the vote. Total present – 10. Total absent – 1. Total "Aye" votes – 10. Total "Nay" votes – 0.

29:16

RESOLUTION NO. 125-4 A RESOLUTION TO REZONE FROM R-1 SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT TO A-1 AGRICULTURAL DISTRICT FOR THE PROPERTY LOCATED AT 1926 HIXSON MARINA ROAD.

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Commissioner Chauncey, Chairman of the Zoning Committee, provided details regarding Resolution No. 125-4 and stated the Zoning Committee reviewed and recommended approval.

ON MOTION of Commissioner Chauncey, seconded by Commissioner Smith, to adopt Resolution No. 125-4.

There were no questions from the Commissioners or the audience.

The foregoing Motion was adopted on a Roll Call vote, with the following members of the County Commission being present and voting as follows: Commissioner Beck, "Aye," Commissioner Chauncey, "Aye," Commissioner Graham, "Aye," Commissioner Helton, "Aye," Commissioner Highlander, "Aye," Commissioner Mackey, "Aye," Commissioner Sharpe, "Aye," Commissioner Shipley, "Aye," Commissioner Smith, "Aye," and Chairman Eversole, "Aye." Commissioner Baker stepped away during the vote. Total present – 10. Total absent – 1. Total "Aye" votes – 10. Total "Nay" votes – 0.

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30:19

RESOLUTION NO. 125-5 A RESOLUTION TO REZONE FROM A-1 AGRICULTURAL DISTRICT TO R-3 MULTI-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT FOR THE PROPERTY LOCATED AT 2610 FOLKNER ROAD.

Commissioner Chauncey, Chairman of the Zoning Committee, stated Resolution No. 125-5 was deferred for 30 days during last week's Zoning Committee.

RESOLUTION NO. 125-6A A RESOLUTION TO REZONE FROM A-1 AGRICULTURAL DISTRICT TO R-1 SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT FOR PART OF THE PROPERTY LOCATED AT 1401 LOVELADY LEWIS ROAD.

No action was taken.

30:24

RESOLUTION NO. 125-6B A RESOLUTION TO REZONE FROM A-1 AGRICULTURAL DISTRICT TO R-1 SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT WITH CONDITIONS FOR PART OF THE PROPERTY LOCATED AT 1401 LOVELADY LEWIS ROAD.

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Commissioner Chauncey, Chairman of the Zoning Committee, provided details regarding Resolution No. 125-6B and stated the Zoning Committee reviewed and recommended approval.

ON MOTION of Commissioner Chauncey, seconded by Commissioner Mackey, to adopt Resolution No. 125-6B.

31:11

In response to Commissioner Shipley's question, Development Services Director Nathan Janeway stated until the applicant plats the property and goes through the platting and subdivision regulations, there is no way to know if they will be county roads. He noted the applicant intends to have county roads and not private roads.

32:23

In response to Commissioner Highlander's question, Director of Development Services for the Regional Planning Agency Bryan Shults stated he would have to build at county standards if he wanted to do private roads. Mr. Janeway noted they can not make the applicant build a public road, but the subdivision regulations require them to build at least to a public standard if they want to develop at this density and frontage.

There were no questions from the audience.

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The foregoing Motion was adopted on a Roll Call vote, with the following members of the County Commission being present and voting as follows:
Commissioner Baker, "Aye," Commissioner Beck, "Aye," Commissioner Chauncey, "Aye," Commissioner Graham, "Aye," Commissioner Helton, "Aye," Commissioner Highlander, "Aye," Commissioner Mackey, "Aye," Commissioner Sharpe, "Aye," Commissioner Shipley, "Aye," Commissioner Smith, "Aye," and Chairman Eversole, "Aye." Total present – 11. Total absent – 0. Total "Aye" votes – 11. Total "Nay" votes – 0.

34:35

RESOLUTION NO. 125-7 A RESOLUTION ACCEPTING THE BID OF TYSON & ASSOCIATES CONSTRUCTION COMPANY INC. FOR THE NEW FORENSIC CENTER PROJECT AMOUNTING TO \$7,385,000.00 AND AUTHORIZING THE COUNTY MAYOR TO SIGN ANY CONTRACTS NECESSARY TO IMPLEMENT THIS RESOLUTION.

Commissioner Helton, Chairman of the Building and Economic Development Committee, provided details regarding Resolution No. 125-7 and stated the Building and Economic Development Committee reviewed and recommended approval.

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ON MOTION of Commissioner Helton, seconded by Commissioner Smith, to adopt Resolution No. 125-7.

There were no questions from the Commissioners or the audience.

The foregoing Motion was adopted on a Roll Call vote, with the following members of the County Commission being present and voting as follows: Commissioner Baker, "Aye," Commissioner Beck, "Aye," Commissioner Chauncey, "Aye," Commissioner Graham, "Aye," Commissioner Helton, "Aye," Commissioner Highlander, "Aye," Commissioner Mackey, "Aye," Commissioner Sharpe, "Aye," Commissioner Shipley, "Aye," Commissioner Smith, "Aye," and Chairman Eversole, "Aye." Total present – 11. Total absent – 0. Total "Aye" votes – 11. Total "Nay" votes – 0.

35:26

RESOLUTION NO. 125-8 A RESOLUTION TO MAKE CERTAIN FINDINGS RELATING TO THE NOVONIX ENTERPRISE SOUTH LLC PROJECT, TO AUTHORIZE THE COUNTY MAYOR TO ENTER INTO AND EXECUTE A "REAL ESTATE PURCHASE AND SALE AGREEMENT" RELATIVE TO THE SALE OF APPROXIMATELY 182.39 ACRES KNOWN AS THE SPECIAL LEGISLATIVE AREA, MAIN MANUFACTURING AREA, PARCEL 1.02, 182.39 ACRES, OF THE

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**ENTERPRISE SOUTH INDUSTRIAL PARK AND AUTHORIZING THE COUNTY
MAYOR TO EXECUTE A DEED AND OTHER NECESSARY CLOSING DOCUMENTS
CONVEYING SAID PROPERTY TO THE PURCHASER IDENTIFIED IN THE SALE
AGREEMENT DEFINED BELOW UPON THE SALE PRICE BY THE PURCHASER,
TO DELEGATE CERTAIN AUTHORITY TO THE INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT
BOARD OF THE CITY OF CHATTANOOGA, AND TO AUTHORIZE THE COUNTY
MAYOR TO ENTER INTO AND EXECUTE AN AGREEMENT FOR PAYMENTS IN
LIEU OF AD VALOREM TAXES.**

Commissioner Helton, Chairman of the Building and Economic Development Committee, provided details regarding Resolution No. 125-8 and stated the Building and Economic Development Committee reviewed and recommended deferring to January 29, 2025.

ON MOTION of Commissioner Helton, seconded by Commissioner Smith, to adopt Resolution No. 125-8.

36:55 Commissioner Helton stated the Chattanooga City Council has not acted due to some extenuating circumstances.

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37:02 Commissioner Smith stated the City Council should take action next week and he completely supports the deferral.

37:57 Chief Financial Officer of Novonix, Robert Long, apologized to the commission for any confusion or concern from laying off 19 employees on January 6, 2025. He stated it was a misstep on their part and not their intent to cause any concern about the issues around the pilot. He noted the 19 employees laid off were in the area of engineering technicians and operations. He stated the key issue they were working to manage related to the delays in receiving specific production equipment and installation. He noted this is extremely untimely considering the nature of the pilot and expects to restore the positions laid off during 2025. He stated the impacted employees are receiving severance and will receive priority rehiring.

39:36 Commissioner Smith stated he appreciates Mr. Long's willingness to come before the commission and admit what was done. He noted it was 100% bad timing, taste, and faith to request a job pilot while laying people off. He stated this has bought him a bigger magnifying glass moving forward and is incredibly hopeful that everything will pan out going forward, and he has his support. He noted he will be watching closely because these types of pilots should not go without a significant amount of scrutiny.

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42:02

In response to Commissioner Gramham's question, Deputy Mayor for Economic and Community Development Corey Gearrin stated there are reversionary rights and timelines where development has to be made. If there is a fallout with the project, the county can purchase the property back with the first right of refusal at the same rate, so they can not profit.

45:02

Chairman Eversole stated on Monday of last week, Novonix decided to eliminate 19 employees, and two days later, CFO Long came before the commission asking for assistance. He challenged Mr. Long to examine their internal communication structure because the county expects full transparency. He noted he feels they have been let down.

48:04

Commissioner Mackey stated he gave robust support for this resolution last week because the Chinese were producing 98% of this product, and seeing Hamilton County open a company that would begin to compete was amazing.

In response to Commissioner Mackey's question, Mr. Long stated they fell short, which was their mistake. Commissioner Mackey stated he was happy to hear him taking ownership.

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49:33 In response to Commissioner Highlander’s question, Mr. Long stated this was at the board level during a budgetary discussion in December.

There were no questions from the audience.

The foregoing Motion was deferred on a Roll Call vote, with the following members of the County Commission being present and voting as follows:
Commissioner Baker, “Aye,” Commissioner Beck, “Aye,” Commissioner Chauncey, “Aye,” Commissioner Graham, “Aye,” Commissioner Helton, “Aye,” Commissioner Highlander, “Aye,” Commissioner Mackey, “Aye,” Commissioner Sharpe, “Aye,” Commissioner Shipley, “Aye,” Commissioner Smith, “Aye,” and Chairman Eversole, “Aye.” Total present – 11. Total absent – 0. Total “Aye” votes – 11. Total “Nay” votes – 0.

51:52 **RESOLUTION NO. 125-9 A RESOLUTION (1) ESTABLISHING THE MINIMUM BID AMOUNT FOR CERTAIN PARCELS OF PROPERTY ACQUIRED BY HAMILTON COUNTY THROUGH PREVIOUS DELINQUENT TAX SALES, (2) AUTHORIZING THE OFFER OF SAID PARCELS FOR SALE AT THAT MINIMUM BID AMOUNT, AND (3) AUTHORIZING CERTAIN SAID PARCELS TO BE OFFERED FOR SALE FOR AN**

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AMOUNT LESS THAN THE TOTAL AMOUNT OF TAXES, PENALTY, COST AND INTEREST ACCUMULATED AGAINST THE PROPERTY.

Commissioner Helton, Chairman of the Delinquent Tax Property Committee, provided details regarding Resolution No. 125-9 and stated the Delinquent Tax Property Committee reviewed and recommended approval.

ON MOTION of Commissioner Mackey, seconded by Commissioner Graham, to adopt Resolution No. 125-9.

There were no questions from the Commissioners or the audience.

The foregoing Motion was adopted on a Roll Call vote, with the following members of the County Commission being present and voting as follows:
Commissioner Baker, "Aye," Commissioner Beck, "Aye," Commissioner Chauncey, "Aye," Commissioner Graham, "Aye," Commissioner Helton, "Aye," Commissioner Highlander, "Aye," Commissioner Mackey, "Aye," Commissioner Sharpe, "Aye," Commissioner Shipley, "Aye," Commissioner Smith, "Aye," and Chairman Eversole, "Aye." Total present – 11. Total absent – 0. Total "Aye" votes – 11. Total "Nay" votes – 0.

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53:03 **RESOLUTION NO. 125-10 A RESOLUTION TO APPROPRIATE UP TO \$31,348,000 IN BOND FUNDS TO THE HAMILTON COUNTY SCHOOLS FOR INVESTMENTS IN MAJOR DEFERRED MAINTENANCE PROJECTS AS APPROVED BY THE HAMILTON COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION AND TO APPROPRIATE UP TO AN ADDITIONAL \$500,000 IN BOND FUNDS TO THE HAMILTON COUNTY SCHOOLS FOR AN ADDITIONAL INVESTMENT IN MAJOR DEFERRED MAINTENANCE PROJECTS PENDING APPROVAL BY THE HAMILTON COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION.**

Commissioner Smith, Chairman of the Finance Committee, provided details regarding Resolution No. 125-10 and stated the Finance Committee reviewed and recommended approval.

ON MOTION of Commissioner Smith, seconded by Commissioner Baker, to adopt Resolution No. 125-10.

53:50 Commissioner Mackey stated there was an article in the paper that gave Hamilton County Schools low grades. He noted the county has given Hamilton County Schools a ton of money and continues to support them. He stated there has to be some accountability for why students in Hamilton County continue to have low test scores. He noted there has to be a report somewhere showing why schools continue operating on an F and D level.

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54:42 Commissioner Highlander stated the legislature is considering banning cell phones in schools. He noted he believes young people are proficient at staying on the phone in class instead of staying on their lesson. Commissioner Beck stated students' education starts at home.

58:06 Commissioner Sharpe stated this is a resolution for almost \$32 million in improvements for deferred maintenance for Hamilton County Schools. He noted he is excited about this and many of the long-overdue projects.

58:46 In response to Commissioner Sharpe's question, Mayor Wamp stated the collaboration was with an emphasis on a countywide impact, not dollar for dollar. He noted they are trying to balance so it would affect all districts and schoolboard districts but also address the most imminent needs. He stated this represents a balanced investment across the system. Commissioner Sharpe noted this is an excellent resolution that affects everyone on the dias and children's families in their districts.

1:00:27 Commissioner Mackey stated if the county continues to do what it is doing, someone is going to come and seek charter school funding, which will hurt public schools. He noted schools need to function at a higher level; otherwise, parents will find another way to ensure their children's success.

There were no questions from the audience.

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The foregoing Motion was adopted on a Roll Call vote, with the following members of the County Commission being present and voting as follows:
Commissioner Baker, "Aye," Commissioner Beck, "Aye," Commissioner Chauncey, "Aye," Commissioner Graham, "Aye," Commissioner Helton, "Aye," Commissioner Highlander, "Aye," Commissioner Mackey, "Aye," Commissioner Sharpe, "Aye," Commissioner Shipley, "Aye," Commissioner Smith, "Aye," and Chairman Eversole, "Aye." Total present – 11. Total absent – 0. Total "Aye" votes – 11. Total "Nay" votes – 0.

1:01:00 **RESOLUTION NO. 125-11 A RESOLUTION TO AUTHORIZE THE COUNTY MAYOR TO EXECUTE A QUITCLAIM DEED AND SIGN ANY CLOSING DOCUMENTS NECESSARY TO CONVEY CERTAIN PROPERTY TO WEST END PROPERTY, LLC FOR PAYMENT OF \$179,000.**

Commissioner Smith, Chairman of the Finance Committee, provided details regarding Resolution No. 125-11 and stated the Finance Committee reviewed and recommended approval.

ON MOTION of Commissioner Smith, seconded by Commissioner Graham, to adopt Resolution No. 125-11.

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There were no questions from the Commissioners or the audience.

The foregoing Motion was adopted on a Roll Call vote, with the following members of the County Commission being present and voting as follows:
Commissioner Baker, "Aye," Commissioner Beck, "Aye," Commissioner Chauncey, "Aye," Commissioner Graham, "Aye," Commissioner Helton, "Aye," Commissioner Highlander, "Aye," Commissioner Mackey, "Aye," Commissioner Sharpe, "Aye," Commissioner Shipley, "Aye," Commissioner Smith, "Aye," and Chairman Eversole, "Aye." Total present – 11. Total absent – 0. Total "Aye" votes – 11. Total "Nay" votes – 0.

1:01:46 **RESOLUTION NO. 125-12 A RESOLUTION TO RELINQUISH HAMILTON COUNTY'S INTEREST IN A 2011 FORD F-350 CO-TITLED WITH DALLAS BAY VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT.**

Commissioner Smith, Chairman of the Finance Committee, provided details regarding Resolution No. 125-12 and stated the Finance Committee reviewed and recommended approval.

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ON MOTION of Commissioner Smith, seconded by Commissioner Mackey, to adopt Resolution No. 125-12.

There were no questions from the Commissioners or the audience.

The foregoing Motion was adopted on a Roll Call vote, with the following members of the County Commission being present and voting as follows: Commissioner Baker, "Aye," Commissioner Beck, "Aye," Commissioner Chauncey, "Aye," Commissioner Graham, "Aye," Commissioner Highlander, "Aye," Commissioner Mackey, "Aye," Commissioner Sharpe, "Aye," Commissioner Shipley, "Aye," Commissioner Smith, "Aye," and Chairman Eversole, "Aye." Commissioner Helton stepped away during the vote. Total present – 10. Total absent – 1. Total "Aye" votes – 10. Total "Nay" votes – 0.

1:02:33

RESOLUTION NO. 125-13 A RESOLUTION TO AUTHORIZE THE COUNTY MAYOR TO EXECUTE A CONTRACT BETWEEN THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND THE HAMILTON COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT ACCEPTING \$144,000.00 FOR THE RAPE PREVENTION EDUCATION PROGRAM NOT TO EXCEED \$144,000.00 FOR THE PERIOD BEGINNING FEBRUARY 1, 2025, ENDING JANUARY 31, 2027.

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Commissioner Smith, Chairman of the Finance Committee, provided details regarding Resolution No. 125-13 and stated the Finance Committee reviewed and recommended approval.

ON MOTION of Commissioner Smith, seconded by Commissioner Highlander, to adopt Resolution No. 125-13.

1:03:18

In response to Commissioner Highlander's question, Interim Administrator for the Health Department, Sonia Calvin, stated in the contract there are specific deliverables and states to increase community engagement efforts for sexual violence prevention and collaboration with others. Commissioner Highlander stated he hopes they collaborate with the Rape Crisis Center to improve the education piece.

There were no questions from the audience.

The foregoing Motion was adopted on a Roll Call vote, with the following members of the County Commission being present and voting as follows:
Commissioner Baker, "Aye," Commissioner Beck, "Aye," Commissioner Chauncey, "Aye," Commissioner Graham, "Aye," Commissioner Helton, "Aye," Commissioner Highlander, "Aye," Commissioner Mackey, "Aye," Commissioner Sharpe, "Aye,"

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Commissioner Shipley, “Aye,” Commissioner Smith, “Aye,” and Chairman Eversole, “Aye.” Total present – 11. Total absent – 0. Total “Aye” votes – 11. Total “Nay” votes – 0.

1:05:13 **RESOLUTION NO. 125-14 A RESOLUTION APPROVING THE PURCHASE OF DATA STORAGE HARDWARE, INSTALLATION, AND SUPPORT SERVICES AMOUNTING TO \$268,016.99 FROM INSIGHT PUBLIC SECTOR FROM THE OMNIA PARTNERS PURCHASING COOPERATIVE FOR THE INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY DEPARTMENT, AND AUTHORIZING THE COUNTY MAYOR TO SIGN ANY CONTRACTS NECESSARY TO IMPLEMENT THIS RESOLUTION.**

Commissioner Smith, Chairman of the Finance Committee, provided details regarding Resolution No. 125-14 and stated the Finance Committee reviewed and recommended approval.

ON MOTION of Commissioner Smith, seconded by Commissioner Highlander, to adopt Resolution No. 125-14.

There were no questions from the Commissioners or the audience.

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The foregoing Motion was adopted on a Roll Call vote, with the following members of the County Commission being present and voting as follows:
Commissioner Baker, "Aye," Commissioner Beck, "Aye," Commissioner Chauncey, "Aye," Commissioner Graham, "Aye," Commissioner Helton, "Aye," Commissioner Highlander, "Aye," Commissioner Mackey, "Aye," Commissioner Sharpe, "Aye," Commissioner Shipley, "Aye," Commissioner Smith, "Aye," and Chairman Eversole, "Aye." Total present – 11. Total absent – 0. Total "Aye" votes – 11. Total "Nay" votes – 0.

1:06:10 **RESOLUTION NO. 125-15 A RESOLUTION TO INCREASE LITIGATION TAXES FOR GENERAL SESSIONS COURT IN HAMILTON COUNTY.**

Commissioner Smith, Chairman of the Finance Committee, provided details regarding Resolution No. 125-15 and stated the Finance Committee reviewed and recommended approval.

ON MOTION of Commissioner Smith, seconded by Commissioner Shipley, to adopt Resolution No. 125-15.

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1:06:55 Commissioner Baker and Commissioner Sharpe thanked Chief Financial Officer Lee Brouner for all the information provided during last week's Finance Committee on this resolution.

1:07:34 Circuit Court Clerk Larry Henry stated this tax affects the county's most vulnerable. He asked the commission to tread carefully in adding this tax. He noted there have been more pro-se cases, which will affect the civil sessions office. He recommended deferring this resolution and getting better educated on it before voting.

1:12:04 In response to Clerk and Master Robin Miller's question, Mr. Brouner stated the funds would go directly to the county's General Fund to reimburse expenses the courts are already paying.

1:14:19 In response to Commissioner Mackey's question, Mr. Henry stated he would need more information regarding this tax before giving it his approval.

1:15:55 Commissioner Sharpe thanked Mr. Henry and Ms. Miller for attending today's meeting and addressing the Commission on this issue. He stated that people's voices are often silenced, and they tend to hesitate to talk as much. He also spoke about how

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tough it was for the Finance Department to get through last year's budget and how it will be the same way this year. He stated revenue for the county has to increase to provide vital services to the community and retain talent in county government. He noted these additional revenues would allow a bit of wiggle room in the coming budget to increase the cost of living for first responders and county government.

1:19:30 Monty Bell, a homeless journalist for the Grey Haired Foxx, stated he resides at 727 East 11th Street. He opposed any extra funding going to the courts. He noted the courts have no respect for pro-se litigants.

The foregoing Motion was adopted on a Roll Call vote, with the following members of the County Commission being present and voting as follows:
Commissioner Baker, "Aye," Commissioner Beck, "Aye," Commissioner Chauncey, "Aye," Commissioner Graham, "Aye," Commissioner Helton, "Aye," Commissioner Highlander, "Aye," Commissioner Mackey, "Nay," Commissioner Sharpe, "Aye," Commissioner Shipley, "Aye," Commissioner Smith, "Aye," and Chairman Eversole, "Aye." Total present – 11. Total absent – 0. Total "Aye" votes – 10. Total "Nay" votes – 1.

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**RESOLUTION NO. 125-16 A RESOLUTION TO ADJUST LOCAL LITIGATION
PRIVILEGE TAXES FOR HAMILTON COUNTY.**

1:21:06

Commissioner Smith, Chairman of the Finance Committee, provided details regarding Resolution No. 125-16 and stated the Finance Committee reviewed and recommended approval.

ON MOTION of Commissioner Smith, seconded by Commissioner Baker, to adopt Resolution No. 125-16.

In response to Clerk and Master Robin Miller's question, Mr. Brouner stated these funds would cover all costs related to courthouse security, including the contracted fees we have for entering the courthouse court's building and court officers. He also noted the Attorney General's opinion would be attached to this resolution.

There were no questions from the Commissioners or the audience.

The foregoing Motion was adopted on a Roll Call vote, with the following members of the County Commission being present and voting as follows:

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Commissioner Baker, “Aye,” Commissioner Beck, “Aye,” Commissioner Chauncey, “Aye,” Commissioner Graham, “Aye,” Commissioner Helton, “Aye,” Commissioner Highlander, “Aye,” Commissioner Mackey, “Nay,” Commissioner Shipley, “Aye,” Commissioner Smith, “Aye,” and Chairman Eversole, “Aye.” Commissioner Sharpe stepped away during the vote. Total present – 10. Total absent – 1. Total “Aye” votes – 9. Total “Nay” votes – 1.

1:21:54 **RESOLUTION NO. 125-17 A RESOLUTION TO LEVY A LITIGATION TAX TO HELP FUND A LOCAL VICTIM-OFFENDER MEDIATION CENTER.**

Commissioner Smith, Chairman of the Finance Committee, provided details regarding Resolution No. 125-17 and stated the Finance Committee reviewed and recommended approval.

ON MOTION of Commissioner Smith, seconded by Commissioner Baker, to adopt Resolution No. 125-17.

There were no questions from the Commissioners or the audience.

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The foregoing Motion was adopted on a Roll Call vote, with the following members of the County Commission being present and voting as follows:
Commissioner Baker, "Aye," Commissioner Beck, "Aye," Commissioner Chauncey, "Aye," Commissioner Graham, "Aye," Commissioner Helton, "Aye," Commissioner Highlander, "Aye," Commissioner Mackey, "Nay," Commissioner Sharpe, "Aye," Commissioner Shipley, "Aye," Commissioner Smith, "Aye," and Chairman Eversole, "Aye." Total present – 11. Total absent – 0. Total "Aye" votes – 10. Total "Nay" votes – 1.

1:22:37 **RESOLUTION NO. 125-18 A RESOLUTION TO ESTABLISH AND COLLECT AN ARCHIVES AND RECORDS MANAGEMENT FEE.**

Commissioner Smith, Chairman of the Finance Committee, provided details regarding Resolution No. 125-18 and stated the Finance Committee reviewed and recommended approval.

ON MOTION of Commissioner Smith, seconded by Commissioner Highlander, to adopt Resolution No. 125-18.

There were no questions from the Commissioners or the audience.

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The foregoing Motion was adopted on a Roll Call vote, with the following members of the County Commission being present and voting as follows:
Commissioner Baker, "Aye," Commissioner Beck, "Aye," Commissioner Chauncey, "Aye," Commissioner Graham, "Aye," Commissioner Helton, "Aye," Commissioner Highlander, "Aye," Commissioner Mackey, "Aye," Commissioner Sharpe, "Aye," Commissioner Shipley, "Aye," Commissioner Smith, "Aye," and Chairman Eversole, "Aye." Total present – 11. Total absent – 0. Total "Aye" votes – 11. Total "Nay" votes – 0.

1:23:25 **RESOLUTION NO. 125-19 A RESOLUTION APPROVING AN APPROPRIATION TO THE HUMANE EDUCATIONAL SOCIETY OF CHATTANOOGA, TENNESSEE IN THE AMOUNT OF \$263,921.71 TO SUPPORT THE CONTINUED SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE HUMANE EDUCATIONAL SOCIETY, AND TO AMEND THE FISCAL YEAR 2025 GENERAL FUND EXPENDITURES BUDGET ACCORDINGLY.**

Commissioner Smith, Chairman of the Finance Committee, provided details regarding Resolution No. 125-19 and stated the Finance Committee reviewed and recommended approval.

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ON MOTION of Commissioner Smith, seconded by Commissioner Highlander, to adopt Resolution No. 125-19.

1:24:11 Commissioner Beck stated the county has no programs that house human beings other than the jail or juvenile, so he will not support this resolution.

1:27:38 Commissioner Graham stated the Humane Society was in a tax bind when it got its new building. They are three years behind on their taxes because they did not file with the state to be tax-exempt at the new address. He noted this resolution allows the county to give the Humane Society the funds they need to pay their County taxes, and they turn around and pay it back to us. It is a net gain of zero for them and the county. He noted the city is looking to see how this resolution is voted on, and the City Administrator and Chief of Staff agreed to present this to the City Council to see if they will follow suit. He also stated going forward, the county needs to renegotiate the services provided by the Humane Society. He noted a reversionary clause needs to be added to the contract for the \$10 million building.

1:32:37 Commissioner Highlander stated the county needs to rectify this situation since no tax dollars will be lost. He noted the county appreciates and needs their services.

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1:34:10 In response to Commissioner Mackey’s statement, Volunteer Board President for the Humane Education Society, Jim Kennedy, stated he wanted to clarify the Executive Director resigned from her position; she was not removed.

There were no questions from the audience.

The foregoing Motion was adopted on a Roll Call vote, with the following members of the County Commission being present and voting as follows:
Commissioner Baker, “Aye,” Commissioner Beck, “Nay,” Commissioner Chauncey, “Aye,” Commissioner Graham, “Aye,” Commissioner Helton, “Aye,” Commissioner Highlander, “Aye,” Commissioner Mackey, “Aye,” Commissioner Sharpe, “Aye,” Commissioner Shipley, “Aye,” Commissioner Smith, “Aye,” and Chairman Eversole, “Aye.” Commissioner Shipley stepped away during the roll call but wanted to update his vote to “Yes.” Total present – 11. Total absent – 0. Total “Aye” votes – 11. Total “Nay” votes – 1.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chairman Eversole asked for announcements from members of the Commission.

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1:35:44 At this time, several commissioners thanked Director of Highway Maintenance Brandon Mauracher and Mayor Wamp for working with the mayor of Signal Mountain on snow removal.

1:37:03 Commissioner Mackey stated the Commission has a job to do and are not to be a rubber stamp. He spoke of when the new administration would not allow Chief Financial Officer Lee Brouner to ask questions on financial matters. He noted good decisions can not be made without information provided by him.

1:38:26 Commissioner Sharpe stated since he was not allowed to ask questions related to *Resolution No. 125-20A* he will submit his questions via email.

1:39:04 Commissioner Chauncey congratulated Janie Parks Varnell on her appointment.

1:40:10 Commissioner Graham stated today was a challenging and exciting day. He noted he was excited for Ms. Varnell and appreciated the process she went through. He also stated it was difficult because he can see the end of an era and thanked Attorney Taylor for his many wonderful years of service to Hamilton County. He thanked him for helping him become a better commissioner and person.

1:41:21 Attorney Taylor reported he has reviewed and approved the Criminal Court Clerk's Employee Handbook, which contains its Personnel Policies on Parental Leave

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as required by law. He submitted a copy of the policy and his approval letter to the Clerk's Office for the record. He also thanked Commissioner Graham for his kind comments.

1:41:56 Mayor Wamp stated he and his staff would be committed to answering any questions submitted by Commissioner Sharpe in a timely manner. He spoke of the excellent job of the Director of Highway Maintenance, Brandon Mauracher, the staff, the First Responders, and Chris Adams and Winston Shield's role in Emergency management. He also spoke of communication and how it may never get to the perfect place, but it goes on more than many realize.

1:46:29 Commissioner Beck announced the City of Chattanooga had refurbished Claude Ramsey Parkway and wanted the Commission to send a formal letter to the city thanking them for finishing the project.

1:48:37 Commissioner Graham stated county government has the best staff in Tennessee and the best Financial Leader. He noted Mr. Brouner has done an exceptional job for the county and should never have a jab thrown at him.

1:49:41 Commissioner Mackey stated he wants the Mayor to be as successful as possible and believes the Mayor wants the Commission to be legislative.

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1:50:44 Commissioner Highlander stated Claude Ramsaey's widow appreciated the refurbished road named after her late husband. He also thanked Attorney Taylor for everything he has done for the county and said he looks forward to working with Ms. Varnell.

1:51:50 Commissioner Smith thanked everyone on behalf of the city, and those who made sure to get Claude Ramsey Parkway completed.

Chairman Eversole announced there will be no Commission Meeting on January 22, 2025. He reminded everyone on January 23, 2025, the Commission will have CTAS training at the McDaniel Building from 4:00 to 8:00 PM.

DELEGATIONS

Chairman Eversole asked for delegations on matters other than zoning.

1:53:56 Monty Bell, a homeless journalist for the Grey Haired Foxx, stated he resides at 727 East 11th Street. He spoke about today being Martin Luther King Jr's birthday and how a lot of black people do not have fathers in their homes.

1:57:28 Governmental Affairs Director for the Real Estate Association Josh Branum, with offices at 2963 Amnicola Highway, provided the Commission with the 2024 housing

Time Code
Position

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update for Hamilton County. He stated there has been a 6.5% increase in median sales price, and home prices are stabilizing with increased housing inventory. A copy has been filed with the Clerk's Office.

There being no further business, Chairman Eversole declared the meeting in recess until Wednesday, January 29th, 2025, at 9:30 AM.

Respectfully submitted:



William F. (Bill) Knowles, County Clerk

Approved:

02-05-25

WJK

Date

Clerk's Initials