Time Code
Position

# HAMILTON COUNTY COMMISSION
# AGENDA PREPARATION SESSION
# MARCH 11, 2026

**STATE OF TENNESSEE** )
**COUNTY OF HAMILTON** )

Agenda Preparation Session
March 11, 2026

**BE IT REMEMBERED,** that on this 11th day of March 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:--

Present and presiding was the Honorable Ken Smith, Chairman. Chief Deputy County Clerk Brooke Weaver called the roll of the County Commission, and the
0:26
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 Varnell, and County Auditor Chris McCollough.

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# AGENDA PREPARATION SESSION
# MARCH 11, 2026

## COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS

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

- A Report reappointing Paul Parker to the Eastside Utility District Board of Commissioners would be submitted for the record
- A Report reappointing Chris Mabee to the Chattanooga-Hamilton County Regional Planning Commission Board would be submitted for the record.
- Procurement Purchase Orders Report $20k - $50k for February 2026 would be submitted for the record.
- Resolution No. 326-12 was the usual County Clerk item regarding notaries, etc. This required no committee assignment.
- Resolution Nos. 326-17 and 326-18 were assigned to the Building and Economic Development Committee, chaired by Commissioner Shipley.
- Resolution No. 326-19 was assigned to the Rules and Legislative Committee, chaired by Commissioner Helton.
- Resolution Nos. 326-20 through 326-24 were assigned to the Public Safety Committee, chaired by Commissioner Beck.
- Resolution Nos. 326-25 through 326-28 were assigned to the Public Works and Zoning Committee, chaired by Commissioner Highlander.
- Resolution Nos. 326-13 through 326-16 were heard by a Committee of the Whole.

**RESOLUTION NO. 326-12 A RESOLUTION TO APPROVE AND ACCEPT APPLICATIONS FOR NOTARY PUBLIC POSITIONS, THE BONDS AND OATHS OF**

0:53

**NOTARIES PREVIOUSLY ELECTED, THE OATH OF OFFICE OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE NORTH WEST UTILITY DISTRICT, AND THE OATH OF MEMBER FOR THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS FOR THE HAMILTON COUNTY RAILROAD AUTHORITY.**

# HAMILTON COUNTY COMMISSION
# AGENDA PREPARATION SESSION
# MARCH 11, 2026

There were no questions from Commissioners.

**RESOLUTION NO. 326-13 A RESOLUTION MAKING AN APPROPRIATION TO**

1:16 **HURRICANE DUGOUT CLUB IN THE AMOUNT OF ONE THOUSAND DOLLARS ($1,000.00) FROM GENERAL FUND TRAVEL DISCRETIONARY MONIES, AS ALLOTTED TO DISTRICT SEVEN.**

There were no questions from the Commissioners.

**RESOLUTION NO. 326-14 A RESOLUTION TO REVERT THE TIME OF THE**

1:35 **WEEKLY MEETINGS OF THE HAMILTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS TO 9:30 A.M. ON WEDNESDAYS.**

1:52 At this time, a lengthy conversation took place. Several Commissioners expressed support for the resolution, noting there had been no significant increase in attendance during the 4:00 PM Commission meetings and citing concerns about additional staffing costs and staff safety associated with evening meeting times. Other Commissioners expressed opposition to returning to morning meetings and supported maintaining or moving to later meeting times to encourage greater public participation.

# HAMILTON COUNTY COMMISSION
# AGENDA PREPARATION SESSION
# MARCH 11, 2026

22:00 In response to Commissioner Eversole, Attorney Varnell confirmed that if no action is taken during the March 18, 2026, Regular Meeting, meetings would automatically revert to 9:30 AM as specified in the Rules of Order.

**RESOLUTION NO. 326-15 A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE COUNTY MAYOR TO TERMINATE THE INTERLOCAL AGREEMENT WITH THE CITY OF**

30:40 **CHATTANOOGA FOR THE FUNDING OF THE CHATTANOOGA-HAMILTON COUNTY REGIONAL PLANNING AGENCY.**

31:02 At this time, a lengthy discussion took place. Several Commissioners and Mayor Wamp expressed support for the resolution, citing the need for greater County oversight and focus on planning in unincorporated areas. Other Commissioners expressed opposition, citing concerns regarding regional coordination, representation of all districts, and the potential impact on City of Chattanooga taxpayers.

38:58 In response to Commissioner Eversole's question, Director of Development Services Nathan Janeway stated the transition could be accomplished in a budget-neutral manner with a four- to five-person department. He noted the county already has staff working toward AICP certifications and has the infrastructure in place to process applications. Mr. Janeway also acknowledged the work of the County Attorney's Office in preparing the proposal and expressed appreciation to Chattanooga-Hamilton County

# HAMILTON COUNTY COMMISSION
# AGENDA PREPARATION SESSION
# MARCH 11, 2026

Regional Planning Agency Executive Director Karen Rennich and RPA Director of Development Services Bryan Shults for their cooperation during the process.

1:27:47 In response to Commissioner Mackey's question, Chief Financial Officer Lee Brouner stated over 50% of property tax revenue is generated from Chattanooga residents.

**RESOLUTION NO. 326-16 A RESOLUTION ACCEPTING THE PROPOSAL FROM HUBER & LAMB APPRAISAL GROUP, INC. FOR PROFESSIONAL APPRAISAL**

1:31:41 **SERVICES FOR COMMERCIAL PROPERTY INSURANCE VALUATION SERVICES FOR THE RISK MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT AND AUTHORIZING THE COUNTY MAYOR TO SIGN ANY CONTRACTS NECESSARY TO IMPLEMENT THIS RESOLUTION.**

There were no questions from the Commissioners.

1:32:15 Commissioner Shipley, Chairman of the Building and Economic Development Committee, stated the Building and Economic Development Committee would meet in the Commission Room immediately following today's Agenda Preparation Session adjournment.

# HAMILTON COUNTY COMMISSION
# AGENDA PREPARATION SESSION
# MARCH 11, 2026

Commissioner Helton, Chairman of the Rules and Legislative Committee, stated the Rules and Legislative Committee would meet in the Commission Room immediately following today's Building and Economic Development Committee.

Commissioner Beck, Chairman of the Public Safety Committee, stated the Public Safety Committee would meet in the Commission Room immediately following today's Rules and Legislative 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 Public Safety Committee.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Chairman Smith asked for announcements from members of the Commission.

1:33:02 Commissioner Highlander thanked members of the audience for their patience during the meeting.

# HAMILTON COUNTY COMMISSION
# AGENDA PREPARATION SESSION
# MARCH 11, 2026

1:33:06 Commissioner Eversole announced the next budget hearing will be held on March 18, 2026, from 3:00 PM to 4:00 PM, with the Humane Society and volunteer service organizations presenting their budgets.

1:33:44 Commissioner Graham encouraged residents to volunteer at local recreation centers as spring sports seasons begin.

## DELEGATIONS

Chairman Smith asked for delegations on matters other than zoning.

1:34:12 Vice Mayor of Collegedale, Tonya Sadler, and David Bartow of the Collegedale Tomorrow Foundation spoke about a proposed green space project in Collegedale and requested guidance on applying for the County's "Leaning into Communities" matching grant.

1:41:29 Jeff Meldahl, residing at 109 Ochs Highway, Nathan Shew, residing in District 3, Noah Johnston, residing at 666 Charbell Street, and Michaela Winter, residing in District 8, expressed concerns regarding the proposed Jailhouse Studios project, including transparency of the lease agreement, potential economic impacts, and the use of local or union labor.

# HAMILTON COUNTY COMMISSION
# AGENDA PREPARATION SESSION
# MARCH 11, 2026

County Attorney Varnell stated the proposed Jailhouse Studios lease agreement is available for public review on the County Attorney's website. A copy of the lease and parking agreement has been filed with the Clerk's Office.

1:54:13 Jennifer Duvall, residing at 1825 Coulterville Road, spoke regarding *Resolution No. 326-15* and expressed concerns related to growth, development planning, and the role of the Chattanooga-Hamilton County Regional Planning Agency.

1:57:24 Jared Steinman, residing at 3109 East 31st Street, and Jessica Alexander, residing at 733 Battery Place, expressed concerns regarding trust between immigrant communities and local law enforcement and the Sheriff's Office's participation in the federal 287(g) immigration enforcement program.

2:04:45 Former Chattanooga City Councilwoman Demetrus Gladden, residing in District 9, spoke regarding public health concerns in Hamilton County and encouraged expanding access to health services through community centers.

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# HAMILTON COUNTY COMMISSION
# AGENDA PREPARATION SESSION
# MARCH 11, 2026

There being no further business, Chairman Smith adjourned the meeting to Wednesday, March 18, 2026, at 4:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted:

William F. (Bill) Knowles, County Clerk

Approved:

04-01-26 W.F.K

Date Clerk's Initials