

**HAMILTON COUNTY COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING  
NOVEMBER 19, 2025**

**STATE OF TENNESSEE**            )            Regular Meeting  
**COUNTY OF HAMILTON**        )            November 19, 2025

**BE IT REMEMBERED** that on this 19<sup>th</sup> day of November 2025 at 4:00 PM, 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: --

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 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. Commissioner Greg Beck was absent. Total present – 10. Total absent – 1.

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

Chairman Smith introduced Brian Cosby, Wayside Presbyterian Church, to offer the invocation. Chairman Smith led the pledge to the flag.

Chairman Smith announced the Armelia J. Williams “Outstanding Community Servant” presentation will be postponed to a future meeting.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**ON MOTION** of Commissioner Highlander, seconded by Commissioner Eversole, that the minutes of the Recessed Meeting of October 29, 2025, the Agenda Preparation Session of October 29, 2025, and the Regular Meeting of November 5, 2025, 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 Chauncey, “Aye,” Commissioner Eversole, “Aye,” Commissioner Graham, “Aye,” Commissioner Helton, “Aye,” Commissioner Highlander, “Aye,” Commissioner Mackey, “Aye,” Commissioner Sharpe, “Aye,” Commissioner Shipley, “Aye,” and Chairman Smith, “Aye.” Commissioner Beck was absent. Total present – 10. Total absent – 1. Total “Aye” votes – 10. Total “Nay” votes – 0.

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**PROCUREMENT PURCHASE ORDER REPORT**

Procurement's reports detailing purchase orders between \$20k and \$50k for October 2025 were submitted and made a matter of record.

**RESOLUTION NO. 1125-16 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.**

**ON MOTION** of Commissioner Eversole, seconded by Commissioner Graham, to adopt Resolution No. 1125-16.

There were no questions from the Commissioners or the audience.

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 Chauncey, "Aye," Commissioner Eversole, "Aye," Commissioner Graham, "Aye," Commissioner Helton, "Aye," Commissioner Highlander, "Aye," Commissioner Mackey, "Aye," Commissioner Sharpe, "Aye," Commissioner Shipley, "Aye," and Chairman Smith, "Aye." Commissioner Beck was absent. Total present – 10. Total absent – 1. Total "Aye" votes – 10. Total "Nay" votes – 0.

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**RESOLUTION NO. 1125-17 A RESOLUTION MAKING AN APPROPRIATION TO  
FOCUS POINT CHILDREN ACADEMY IN THE AMOUNT OF ONE THOUSAND  
DOLLARS (\$1,000.00) FROM GENERAL FUND TRAVEL DISCRETIONARY  
MONIES, AS ALLOTTED TO DISTRICT ONE.**

**ON MOTION** of Commissioner Graham, seconded by Commissioner Shipley, to adopt Resolution No. 1125-17.

There were no questions from the Commissioners or the audience.

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 Chauncey, "Aye," Commissioner Eversole, "Aye," Commissioner Graham, "Aye," Commissioner Helton, "Aye," Commissioner Highlander, "Aye," Commissioner Mackey, "Aye," Commissioner Sharpe, "Aye," Commissioner Shipley, "Aye," and Chairman Smith, "Aye." Commissioner Beck was absent. Total present – 10. Total absent – 1. Total "Aye" votes – 10. Total "Nay" votes – 0.

Without objection, Chairman Smith asked for Resolution Nos. 1125-18 and 1125-19 to be read together.

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**RESOLUTION NO. 1125-18 A RESOLUTION TO APPOINT ONE (1) MEMBER TO  
THE HAMILTON COUNTY REGIONAL HEALTH COUNCIL FOR A FOUR (4) YEAR  
TERM BEGINNING NOVEMBER 19, 2025, AND ENDING NOVEMBER 19, 2029.**

This resolution will appoint Amy Eldridge.

**RESOLUTION NO. 1125-19 A RESOLUTION TO REAPPOINT ONE (1) MEMBER TO  
THE HAMILTON COUNTY REGIONAL HEALTH COUNCIL FOR A FOUR (4) YEAR  
TERM BEGINNING NOVEMBER 19, 2025, AND ENDING NOVEMBER 19, 2029.**

This resolution will reappoint Erika Ballard.

**ON MOTION** of Commissioner Chauncey, seconded by Commissioner Highlander, to  
adopt Resolution Nos. 1125-18 and 1125-19.

There were no questions from the Commissioners or the audience.

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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 Chauncey, "Aye," Commissioner Eversole, "Aye," Commissioner Graham, "Aye," Commissioner Helton, "Aye," Commissioner Highlander, "Aye," Commissioner Mackey, "Aye," Commissioner Sharpe, "Aye," Commissioner Shipley, "Aye," and Chairman Smith, "Aye." Commissioner Beck was absent. Total present – 10. Total absent – 1. Total "Aye" votes – 10. Total "Nay" votes – 0.

**RESOLUTION NO. 1125-20 A RESOLUTION TO CONFIRM THE APPOINTMENT BY THE COUNTY MAYOR OF SHAWN JOHNSON AS THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CIVIL AND CRIMINAL COURTS FOR HAMILTON COUNTY.**

**ON MOTION** of Commissioner Highlander, seconded by Commissioner Helton, to adopt Resolution No. 1125-20.

There were no questions from Commissioners or the audience.

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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 Chauncey, "Aye," Commissioner Eversole, "Aye," Commissioner Graham, "Aye," Commissioner Helton, "Aye," Commissioner Highlander, "Aye," Commissioner Mackey, "Aye," Commissioner Sharpe, "Aye," Commissioner Shipley, "Aye," and Chairman Smith, "Aye." Commissioner Beck was absent. Total present – 10. Total absent – 1. Total "Aye" votes – 10. Total "Nay" votes – 0.

Chairman Smith congratulated Executive Director of Civil and Criminal Courts Shawn Johnson on his appointment.

**RESOLUTION NO. 1125-21 A RESOLUTION APPROVING THE PURCHASE OF FOUR (4) AMBULANCES AND ASSOCIATED EQUIPMENT, AMOUNTING TO A TOTAL OF \$1,342,479.72 FOR THE EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT AND AUTHORIZING THE COUNTY MAYOR TO SIGN ANY CONTRACTS NECESSARY TO IMPLEMENT THIS RESOLUTION.**

Chairman Smith, member of the Public Safety Committee, provided details regarding Resolution No. 1125-21 and stated the Public Safety Committee reviewed and recommended approval.

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**ON MOTION** of Commissioner Eversole, seconded by Commissioner Shipley, to adopt Resolution No. 1125-21.

There were no questions from the Commissioners or the audience.

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 Chauncey, "Aye," Commissioner Eversole, "Aye," Commissioner Graham, "Aye," Commissioner Helton, "Aye," Commissioner Highlander, "Aye," Commissioner Mackey, "Aye," Commissioner Sharpe, "Aye," Commissioner Shipley, "Aye," and Chairman Smith, "Aye." Commissioner Beck was absent. Total present – 10. Total absent – 1. Total "Aye" votes – 10. Total "Nay" votes – 0.

**RESOLUTION NO. 1125-22 A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE COUNTY MAYOR ON BEHALF OF HAMILTON COUNTY, TENNESSEE, THE HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES DIVISION, OPERATING AS THE HAMILTON COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT TO SIGN A CONTRACT WITH THE TENNESSEE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH IN THE AMOUNT OF \$12,000,000.00 FOR THE PROVISION OF DENTAL CARE AND PRIMARY CARE SERVICES TO UNINSURED ADULTS 19-64 YEARS**

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**OF AGE AT THE HOMELESS HEALTH CARE CENTER FOR THE TIME PERIOD OF  
JULY 1, 2025 THROUGH JUNE 30, 2028.**

Commissioner Baker, Chairman of the Health and Human Services Committee, provided details regarding Resolution No. 1125-22 and stated the Health and Human Services Committee reviewed and recommended approval.

**ON MOTION** of Commissioner Baker, seconded by Commissioner Graham, to adopt Resolution No. 1125-22.

In response to Commissioner Mackey's question, Hamilton County Health and Social Services Division Administrator Rebekah Bohannon stated SNAP is administered through the Department of Agriculture. She noted WIC continues to operate as usual within her division.

There were no questions from the audience.

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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 Chauncey, "Aye," Commissioner Eversole, "Aye," Commissioner Graham, "Aye," Commissioner Helton, "Aye," Commissioner Highlander, "Aye," Commissioner Mackey, "Aye," Commissioner Sharpe, "Aye," Commissioner Shipley, "Aye," and Chairman Smith, "Aye." Commissioner Beck was absent. Total present – 10. Total absent – 1. Total "Aye" votes – 10. Total "Nay" votes – 0.

**RESOLUTION NO. 1125-23 A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE COUNTY MAYOR ON BEHALF OF HAMILTON COUNTY, TENNESSEE, THE HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES DIVISION, OPERATING AS THE HAMILTON COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT TO SIGN A CONTRACT AGREEMENT WITH THE TENNESSEE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH IN THE AMOUNT OF \$12,000,000.00 FOR THE PROVISION OF PRIMARY CARE SERVICES TO UNINSURED ADULTS 19-64 YEARS OF AGE AT THE BIRCHWOOD HEALTH CLINIC.**

Commissioner Baker, Chairman of the Health and Human Services Committee, provided details regarding Resolution No. 1125-23 and stated the Health and Human Services Committee reviewed and recommended approval.

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**ON MOTION** of Commissioner Baker, seconded by Commissioner Highlander, to adopt Resolution No. 1125-23.

There were no questions from the Commissioners or the audience.

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 Chauncey, "Aye," Commissioner Eversole, "Aye," Commissioner Graham, "Aye," Commissioner Helton, "Aye," Commissioner Highlander, "Aye," Commissioner Mackey, "Aye," Commissioner Sharpe, "Aye," Commissioner Shipley, "Aye," and Chairman Smith, "Aye." Commissioner Beck was absent. Total present – 10. Total absent – 1. Total "Aye" votes – 10. Total "Nay" votes – 0.

**RESOLUTION NO. 1125-24 A RESOLUTION TO AMEND THE "MASTER LIST OF ROADS AND SPEED LIMITS" SO AS TO ACCEPT THE FOLLOWING DISTRICT ROADS AND TO ESTABLISH SPEED LIMITS THEREFORE: CANOPY CIRCLE AND LONGLEAF COURT.**

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Commissioner Highlander, Chairman of the Public Works and Zoning Committee, provided details regarding Resolution No. 1125-24 and stated the Public Works and Zoning Committee reviewed and recommended approval.

**ON MOTION** of Commissioner Highlander, seconded by Commissioner Chauncey, to adopt Resolution No. 1125-24.

There were no questions from the Commissioners or the audience.

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 Chauncey, "Aye," Commissioner Eversole, "Aye," Commissioner Graham, "Aye," Commissioner Helton, "Aye," Commissioner Highlander, "Aye," Commissioner Mackey, "Aye," Commissioner Sharpe, "Aye," Commissioner Shipley, "Aye," and Chairman Smith, "Aye." Commissioner Beck was absent. Total present – 10. Total absent – 1. Total "Aye" votes – 10. Total "Nay" votes – 0.

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**RESOLUTION NO. 1125-25 A RESOLUTION TO AUTHORIZE THE COUNTY MAYOR TO ENTER INTO AND EXECUTE A CONTRACT WITH FRANKLIN ASSOCIATES ARCHITECTS, INC. FOR DESIGN OF THE HOWARD SCHOOL INDOOR SPORTS PRACTICE FACILITY INCLUDING HVAC, THEATER, AND FENCING IMPROVEMENTS FOR AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$803,475.00.**

Commissioner Shipley, Chairman of the Building and Economic Development Committee, provided details regarding Resolution No. 1125-25 and stated the Building and Economic Development Committee reviewed and recommended approval.

**ON MOTION** of Commissioner Graham, seconded by Commissioner Shipley, to adopt Resolution No. 1125-25.

In response to Commissioner Sharpe's question, Administrator of Public Works and County Engineer Todd Leamon stated the design contract is based on the State fee curve used for all architectural and engineering contracts and reflects the overall project budget. He noted the project includes multiple components for the indoor practice facility, currently estimated at approximately \$5 million, and stated the final cost will be refined as the design process continues.

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Commissioner Graham noted the resolution also includes funding for the theater project. He stated Commissioner Mackey has been involved in discussions regarding theater improvements and wanted to ensure he was aware.

There were no questions from the audience.

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 Chauncey, "Aye," Commissioner Eversole, "Aye," Commissioner Graham, "Aye," Commissioner Helton, "Aye," Commissioner Highlander, "Aye," Commissioner Mackey, "Aye," Commissioner Sharpe, "Aye," Commissioner Shipley, "Aye," and Chairman Smith, "Aye." Commissioner Beck was absent. Total present – 10. Total absent – 1. Total "Aye" votes – 10. Total "Nay" votes – 0.

**RESOLUTION NO. 1125-26 A RESOLUTION TO AMEND RESOLUTION 425-9 TO  
ADD A ROAD CUT FEE UNDER SECTION 3(B) OF THE HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT  
FEES.**

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Commissioner Shipley, Chairman of the Building and Economic Development Committee, provided details regarding Resolution No. 1125-26 and stated the Building and Economic Development Committee reviewed and recommended approval.

**ON MOTION** of Commissioner Shipley, seconded by Commissioner Graham, to adopt Resolution No. 1125-26.

In response to Commissioner Highlander's question, Administrator of Public Works and County Engineer Todd Leamon stated the road cut fee applies primarily to construction and utility companies cutting into County roads. He noted developers or builders may occasionally need to cut into a road for utility connections, but homeowners would not be involved. He stated the fee serves as the permit mechanism for utility work or repairs within County roads.

There were no questions from the audience.

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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 Chauncey, "Aye," Commissioner Eversole, "Aye," Commissioner Graham, "Aye," Commissioner Helton, "Aye," Commissioner Highlander, "Aye," Commissioner Mackey, "Aye," Commissioner Sharpe, "Aye," Commissioner Shipley, "Aye," and Chairman Smith, "Aye." Commissioner Beck was absent. Total present – 10. Total absent – 1. Total "Aye" votes – 10. Total "Nay" votes – 0.

**RESOLUTION NO. 1125-27 A RESOLUTION AMENDING BY REFERENCE THE  
INTERNATIONAL BUILDING CODE (IBC), 2018 EDITION, PUBLISHED BY THE  
INTERNATIONAL CODE COUNCIL (ICC) FOR HAMILTON COUNTY.**

Commissioner Shipley, Chairman of the Building and Economic Development Committee, provided details regarding Resolution No. 1125-27 and stated the Building and Economic Development Committee reviewed and recommended approval.

**ON MOTION** of Commissioner Shipley, seconded by Commissioner Baker, to adopt Resolution No. 1125-27.

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There were no questions from the Commissioners or the audience.

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 Chauncey, "Aye," Commissioner Eversole, "Aye," Commissioner Graham, "Aye," Commissioner Helton, "Aye," Commissioner Highlander, "Aye," Commissioner Mackey, "Aye," Commissioner Sharpe, "Aye," Commissioner Shipley, "Aye," and Chairman Smith, "Aye." Commissioner Beck was absent. Total present – 10. Total absent – 1. Total "Aye" votes – 10. Total "Nay" votes – 0.

**RESOLUTION NO. 1125-28 A RESOLUTION TO RELINQUISH HAMILTON COUNTY'S INTEREST IN A 2010 FORD EXPEDITION WITH 123,610 MILES, CO-TILTED WITH HAMILTON COUNTY STARS.**

Commissioner Eversole, Chairman of the Finance and Budget Committee, provided details regarding Resolution No. 1125-28 and stated the Finance and Budget Committee reviewed and recommended approval.

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**ON MOTION** of Commissioner Eversole, seconded by Commissioner Shipley, to adopt Resolution No. 1125-28.

There were no questions from the Commissioners or the audience.

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 Chauncey, "Aye," Commissioner Eversole, "Aye," Commissioner Graham, "Aye," Commissioner Helton, "Aye," Commissioner Highlander, "Aye," Commissioner Mackey, "Aye," Commissioner Sharpe, "Aye," Commissioner Shipley, "Aye," and Chairman Smith, "Aye." Commissioner Beck was absent. Total present – 10. Total absent – 1. Total "Aye" votes – 10. Total "Nay" votes – 0.

**RESOLUTION NO. 1125-29 A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE HIGHWAY  
DEPARTMENT TO APPLY FOR A TRANSPORTATION PLANNING GRANT FROM  
THE TENNESSEE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (TDOT).**

Commissioner Eversole, Chairman of the Finance and Budget Committee, provided details regarding Resolution No. 1125-29 and stated the Finance and Budget Committee reviewed and recommended approval.

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**ON MOTION** of Commissioner Eversole, seconded by Commissioner Highlander, to adopt Resolution No. 1125-29.

There were no questions from the Commissioners or the audience.

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 Chauncey, "Aye," Commissioner Eversole, "Aye," Commissioner Graham, "Aye," Commissioner Helton, "Aye," Commissioner Highlander, "Aye," Commissioner Mackey, "Aye," Commissioner Sharpe, "Aye," Commissioner Shipley, "Aye," and Chairman Smith, "Aye." Commissioner Beck was absent. Total present – 10. Total absent – 1. Total "Aye" votes – 10. Total "Nay" votes – 0.

**RESOLUTION NO. 1125-30 A RESOLUTION TO REALLOCATE THE REMAINING ALLOWANCE BALANCE OF \$134,500 FROM THE COURTS BUILDING ROOF REPLACEMENT PROJECT APPROVED IN RESOLUTION 1124-22 TO BE USED FOR OTHER ROOF REPAIRS AT COUNTY OWNED BUILDINGS USING 2021 BOND FUNDS.**

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Commissioner Eversole, Chairman of the Finance and Budget Committee, provided details regarding Resolution No. 1125-30 and stated the Finance and Budget Committee reviewed and recommended approval.

**ON MOTION** of Commissioner Eversole, seconded by Commissioner Helton, to adopt Resolution No. 1125-30.

There were no questions from the Commissioners or the audience.

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 Chauncey, "Aye," Commissioner Eversole, "Aye," Commissioner Graham, "Aye," Commissioner Helton, "Aye," Commissioner Highlander, "Aye," Commissioner Mackey, "Aye," Commissioner Sharpe, "Aye," Commissioner Shipley, "Aye," and Chairman Smith, "Aye." Commissioner Beck was absent. Total present – 10. Total absent – 1. Total "Aye" votes – 10. Total "Nay" votes – 0.

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**RESOLUTION NO. 1125-31 A RESOLUTION APPROVING THE EXPENDITURE OF HOTEL-MOTEL FUNDS IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$75,000 IN SUPPORT OF THE JULY 2026 250TH INDEPENDENCE DAY CELEBRATION FOR THE HAMILTON COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT, AND AUTHORIZING THE COUNTY MAYOR TO SIGN ANY CONTRACTS NECESSARY TO IMPLEMENT THIS RESOLUTION.**

Commissioner Eversole, Chairman of the Finance and Budget Committee, provided details regarding Resolution No. 1125-31 and stated the Finance and Budget Committee reviewed and recommended approval.

**ON MOTION** of Commissioner Eversole, seconded by Commissioner Graham, to adopt Resolution No. 1125-31.

There were no questions from the Commissioners or the audience.

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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 Chauncey, "Aye," Commissioner Eversole, "Aye," Commissioner Graham, "Aye," Commissioner Helton, "Aye," Commissioner Highlander, "Aye," Commissioner Mackey, "Aye," Commissioner Sharpe, "Aye," Commissioner Shipley, "Aye," and Chairman Smith, "Aye." Commissioner Beck was absent. Total present – 10. Total absent – 1. Total "Aye" votes – 10. Total "Nay" votes – 0.

**RESOLUTION NO. 1125-32 RESOLUTION TO ADOPT THE PROPERTY TAX FREEZE PROGRAM WITH A LOCAL OPTION INCOME LIMIT USING CENSUS DATA WHICH ADJUSTS THE LIMIT IN ALL SUBSEQUENT YEARS BY THE ANNUAL COST-OF-LIVING ADJUSTMENT (COLA) FOR SOCIAL SECURITY RECIPIENTS ON ALL APPLICATIONS FOR THE SENIOR TAX FREEZE PROGRAM AND EACH YEAR GOING FORWARD.**

Commissioner Eversole, Chairman of the Finance and Budget Committee, provided details regarding Resolution No. 1125-32 and stated the Finance and Budget Committee reviewed and recommended approval.

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**ON MOTION** of Commissioner Sharpe, seconded by Commissioner Graham, to adopt Resolution No. 1125-32.

Commissioner Graham stated they are not likely to raise taxes next year and noted it will be a couple of years before the next assessment.

**ON MOTION** of Commissioner Graham, seconded by Commissioner Sharpe, to amend Resolution No. 1125-32, changing the effective date of the Property Tax Freeze Program to January 1, 2027.

In response to Commissioner Highlander's questions, Chief Financial Officer Lee Brouner stated the tax freeze program must be approved by December 31<sup>st</sup> of the preceding year and cannot be adopted during a year with a property tax increase. He noted the number of eligible taxpayers is difficult to estimate because the data is limited and the income threshold in the resolution exceeds prior benchmarks. He also stated there is no need to implement the program this year if no tax increase is anticipated and confirmed the program applies only to property owners.

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Commissioner Highlander stated he wants to fully understand the program's impact before making a decision.

In response to Commissioner Eversole's question, Mr. Brouner stated he sees no benefit to adopting the tax freeze program this year, given the expectation that there will be no property tax increase next year. He explained adopting the program now would incur administrative costs without providing additional benefits and stated it would be reasonable to consider the program next year when more information is available. He also noted the amendment delaying the effective date to January 1, 2027, would avoid costs in the current fiscal year.

In response to Commissioner Baker's questions, Mr. Brouner stated increasing the income limit for the property tax relief program from \$37,530 to \$48,250 would require a private act through the state delegation. He noted the City of Chattanooga data showed 154 taxpayers within that income range qualified for the tax freeze, suggesting the cost of raising the limit would likely be minimal. He also stated implementing the tax freeze program would require an estimated startup cost of approximately \$350,000 and an annual cost of about \$250,000.

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In response to Commissioner Baker's question, County Attorney Varnell stated increasing the income limit would require its own private act and would not affect any existing private acts.

Commissioner Highlander stated he agrees the County should protect its most vulnerable seniors and emphasized the importance of implementing any program in an equitable and fiscally responsible manner. He also stated he does not plan to support a property tax increase next year and noted the Commission has a full year to continue working on the matter.

In response to Chairman Smith's question, Mr. Brouner clarified the previously referenced figure of 154 represented only taxpayers within a specific income range and was in addition to the total number of individuals eligible for tax relief or tax freeze in the City of Chattanooga.

Commissioner Sharpe stated he was glad the Commission was having a public discussion about the tax freeze program, noting many seniors have expressed concern about rising property assessments. He stated it is important for the County to help residents age in place and emphasized the amendment carries no cost this year. He noted some initial opposition stemmed from a misunderstanding of the income

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requirements and stated he believes the program would provide meaningful peace of mind for seniors on fixed incomes. He also noted he would support the resolution and the amendment.

In response to Commissioner Sharpe's question, Mr. Brouner stated he believed information about registering for the tax relief and tax freeze programs is included on the tax bills.

Commissioner Helton stated he appreciated the discussion and noted several Commissioners have expressed that no property tax increase is anticipated in the near future.

In response to Commissioner Helton's question, Commissioner Sharpe stated he would be open to deferring the resolution to a specific future date while also preparing a separate resolution for the state delegation to review that increases the income threshold for the tax relief program.

In response to Commissioner Helton's question, Commissioner Graham stated he would withdraw his amendment, noting the Commission is still moving toward a

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solution. He stated additional time will provide better information for making the best decision for the County and its seniors.

At this time, Commissioner Sharpe withdrew his motion, and Commissioner Graham withdrew his second to change the effective date of the Property Tax Freeze Program to January 1, 2027.

Commissioner Helton stated a deferment until July would allow time to gather additional research and observe Chattanooga's progress with its program.

In response to Commissioner Sharpe's question, County Attorney Varnell stated the suggested timing was appropriate. She noted the deferment would allow time for tax bills to be issued and for Mr. Brouner to obtain more data.

Mr. Brouner stated a deferment until the second meeting in July would provide sufficient time to evaluate tax bill payments and compile further information.

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**ON MOTION** of Commissioner Helton, seconded by Commissioner Mackey, to defer Resolution No. 1125-32 until July 15, 2026.

In response to Commissioner Baker's question, Commissioner Helton confirmed he would also like to recommend that the state delegation increase the income limit for the property tax relief program. County Attorney Varnell stated she would prepare a resolution for the Commission requesting that the state delegation consider increasing the income limit.

There were no questions from the audience.

The foregoing Motion to defer 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 Chauncey, "Aye," Commissioner Eversole, "Aye," Commissioner Graham, "Aye," Commissioner Helton, "Aye," Commissioner Highlander, "Aye," Commissioner Mackey, "Aye," Commissioner Sharpe, "Aye," Commissioner Shipley, "Aye," and Chairman Smith, "Aye." Commissioner Beck was absent. Total present – 10. Total absent – 1. Total "Aye" votes – 10. Total "Nay" votes – 0.

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**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Chairman Smith asked for announcements from members of the Commission.

At this time, several commissioners wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving.

Commissioner Baker stated the Health and Human Services Committee reviewed the employee handbook and will bring a recommendation forward at the December 3, 2025, Commission meeting. He also announced an Audit Committee meeting will take place tomorrow at 10:00 AM at the McDaniel Building.

Commissioner Mackey stated he appreciated the collaborative discussion among Commissioners earlier in the meeting and expressed hope for continued cooperation.

Commissioner Helton announced the Heritage Park Christmas tree lighting event will be held on December 5, 2025, at 4:30 PM. He invited everyone to attend, noting the event will include student performances and refreshments.

Commissioner Eversole echoed Commissioner Mackey's comment about the importance of working together and emphasized the need to support senior citizens. He also stated he would like the Commission to review the rule prohibiting Commissioners

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from offering the invocation prayer and suggested it be considered during future rule updates.

Commissioner Graham encouraged safe travel during the holiday. He announced Lookout Valley will hold its Christmas parade on December 13, 2025, followed by a festival at the John A. Patten Center. He stated Lookout Valley's first annual tree-lighting event will take place that evening at 4:00 PM and thanked Hamilton County Director of Parks and Recreation Matt Folz for his assistance in obtaining the tree. He invited everyone to attend.

Commissioner Chauncey announced the City of East Ridge will hold its annual Christmas parade this Saturday at 6:30 PM.

Commissioner Highlander expressed support for Commissioner Eversole's request to review the rule prohibiting Commissioners from offering the invocation prayer. He noted prayer is an essential part of many individuals' lives.

Chief Deputy County Clerk Brooke Weaver announced the County Clerk's Office has installed three additional kiosks, bringing the total to four in Hamilton County. She stated the kiosks are in the Food City stores located on 5604 Hixson Pike, 3901 Dayton Boulevard, 8634 Highway 58, and 6043 Relocation Way in Ooltewah. She noted this will

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allow residents to renew their vehicle registrations seven days a week from 7:00 AM to 11:00 PM.

Mayor Wamp announced the County's Christmas tree-lighting event will take place on November 25, 2025, and invited everyone to attend with their families. He stated the festivities will begin at 4:30 PM, with the tree lighting to follow at sunset.

Chairman Smith reminded the audience there will be no meeting on November 26, 2025.

**DELEGATIONS**

Chairman Smith asked for delegations on matters other than zoning.

Hadrien Turner, residing at 4006 Deermont Court, stated he is a co-founder of Save Enterprise South Nature Park and spoke in opposition to removing the deed restriction at Enterprise South Nature Park. He noted the land was placed under permanent protection through the National Park Service's Lands to Parks program. He stated lifting those protections would set a harmful precedent and undermine long-term conservation efforts.

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Kelly Sullivan, residing at 2300 Talking Leaves Drive, stated she is opposed to removing the deed protections for Enterprise South Nature Park and constructing the Hilltop Drive extension through the park. She urged the Commissioners to fully consider these projects and allow adequate time for the public to provide feedback.

Ellen Aebig, residing at 2529 Alpine Bluff Trail, spoke about Enterprise South Nature Park and asked whether any public studies had been conducted on the impacts to the park's landscape and the County's ecosystem. She also wished the Commissioners a happy Thanksgiving.

Curtis Lancaster, residing at 2236 Tunnel Boulevard, expressed appreciation to the Commissioners for the temporary meeting time change and wished them a happy Thanksgiving.

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There being no further business, Chairman Smith declared the meeting in recess until Wednesday, December 3, 2025, at 4:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted:



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William F. (Bill) Knowles, County Clerk

Approved:

12-03-25

WJK

Date

Clerk's Initials

\*\*\* Time code indexing is not available for this set of minutes. \*\*\*