

HAMILTON COUNTY, TENNESSEE

OFFICE OF THE COUNTY MAYOR

WESTON WAMP

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County Mayor Proposes Transition Plan for County Attorney's Office, Nominates Janie Parks Varnell as Next County Attorney

Today, Hamilton County Mayor Weston Wamp announced a one-year transition plan for the County Attorney's Office, including the nomination of accomplished local attorney, **Janie Parks Varnell**, to assume the role of County Attorney, effective July 1, 2025. The proposal comes after weeks of one-on-one meetings with county commissioners about how to facilitate a smooth transition leading up to the end of Rheubin Taylor's contract on June 30, 2025.

"This thoughtful transition plan, along with the unique track record of our appointee, will create an opportunity for partnership between my office and the County Commission," said Mayor Wamp. "Throughout her career, Janie Parks Varnell has developed a reputation for her legal expertise and professionalism, most notably as the attorney of choice for law enforcement officers throughout our community."

Varnell, an attorney with Davis & Hoss, PC, serves as managing attorney for both the local chapter of the Fraternal Order of Police (FOP) and the Police Benevolent Association (PBA). Her extensive experience spans civil litigation and criminal law in local, state, and federal courts. Varnell's family has a long legacy of service in Hamilton County: her father, Steve Parks, served as Chattanooga's Police Chief, and her mother, Diane Parks, was a longtime leader at the Chattanooga Chamber of Commerce.

Since taking office, Mayor Wamp's administration has focused on bringing fresh perspectives to county government, appointing new directors to lead key departments such as Highway, Parks, Development Services, Accounting, Technology Services, Economic Development, EMS, and Auditing. Each of these appointees has been unanimously approved by the County Commission and received praise from county commissioners for their leadership within county government.

The proposed transition plan, which calls for Varnell to join county government in January to begin building relationships, reflects the administration's commitment to collaboration with the County Commission and other key stakeholders, like Sheriff Austin Garrett.

"During the transition, it is most important that trust is developed and that the county's ongoing legal cases are handled appropriately," said Mayor Wamp. "Our goal is to strengthen and modernize the County Attorney's office as we work together to serve the people of Hamilton County."

Varnell's professional affiliations include: Federal Bar Association, Tennessee Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers, Chattanooga Bar Association, National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers, and President of the Leadership Chattanooga Alumni Association. From 2015-2021, she served as Pro Bono Defense Counsel for the Hamilton County Drug Recovery Court.

The proposed transition plan will be discussed during the December 11th agenda session of the County Commission. Pursuant to the chairman's recommended use of the County Commission's standing committees, the item will be placed under the Legal Committee.

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