

County Officials Orientation Program 2026

Hosted by University of Tennessee County Technical Assistance Service
*in coordination with the Tennessee County Services Association and the
County Officials Association of Tennessee*



COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Tuesday, August 25th, 2026

Embassy Suites, Murfreesboro, TN



COUNTY OFFICIALS ORIENTATION PROGRAM 2026

BEFORE WE BEGIN

Ground rules:

- Please silence your devices
- Please be respectful of others and keep talking to a minimum – in settings this large, hearing is difficult



WELCOME



YOUR ROLE



- **Constitutional Framework**
- **Legislative**
- **No-Implied-Powers Rule**

NO IMPLIED POWERS

AUTHORITY MUST BE GRANTED BY LAW

In order for county legislative bodies, or commissioners, to have a particular power, it would have to be granted to them statutorily, by the legislature.

MEMBERSHIP & QUALIFICATIONS

COMPOSITION

- 9 to 25 members
- Maximum of 3 per district
- Districts reapportioned every 10 years

QUALIFICATIONS

- Meet age, citizenship, and residency requirements
- Who can serve
- Who CANNOT serve

GETTING STARTED

TAKING OFFICE

- Constitutional and fidelity oaths
- Commissioners are not bonded
- Authority to require bonds above minimum for other officials

REQUIRED TRAINING

- Must complete orientation within 120 days
- 8 hours continuing education annually
- Exempt after 8 continuous years of service

COMPENSATION

County Class (by population)	Minimum Daily Pay
Third (50,000–150,000)	\$35
Fourth (23,300–50,000)	\$30
Fifth (12,000–23,300)	\$25
Sixth through Eighth (under 12,000)	\$20

PAY STRUCTURE

- Established by resolution
- May be based on attendance, a base salary, or a combination of both
- Committee meeting pays $\frac{1}{2}$ of regular session rate
- Does not take effect until new term
- Chair and Pro Tempore fixed by CLB



LEADERSHIP

THE CHAIR AND CHAIR PRO TEMPORE



- Elected at the first session on or after September 1 each year
- Elect a member or county mayor
- Mayor may decline

CHAIR DIFFERENCE

	Member	Mayor
Voting	Votes on all issues as a regular member; can't vote again to break a tie	Votes only to break ties; cannot make or second motions
Veto Power	Mayor retains veto over legislative resolutions	Mayor gives up veto power

DUTIES OF THE CHAIR



- Call to order
- Announce business
- State and put questions to vote
- Announce results
- Keep Order

MEETINGS

The Basics

REGULAR MEETINGS



- Meet minimum 4 times annually
- Place/Time set by resolution
- Attendance required for all members
- All meetings are open
- Requires adequate public notice
- All votes are public

SPECIAL MEETINGS

Called by:

- Mayor
- CLB chair

Requires minimum of 5 days notice

- Published in newspaper or personal notice
- May use alternative notice posting
- Must specify the purpose

Only transact business of special called purpose



ELECTRONIC PARTICIPATION

- Not automatic
- Under limited circumstances
- Only 2 per year/member
- Sunsets July 1, 2028



THE AGENDA

- Availability is statutorily required
- Must be available 48 hours prior
- Must post on county's website
- Determining content differs



PUBLIC PARTICIPATION



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- Opportunity for input required
- Reasonable restrictions are allowed
- Notice of meeting must indicate how one participates

MEETINGS

Procedure & Voting

RULES OF PROCEDURE

- Must adopt within 90 days
- Default to Robert's Rules of Order
- Statutes always take precedence



HOW VOTING WORKS

- Majority of the ENTIRE membership
- Majority reduced in certain situations
- Abstention does not change the majority
- Two-thirds may be required by statute

Calculating the Majority

Body Size	Majority Required	Two-Thirds Required
9	5	6
11	6	8
13	7	9
15	8	10
17	9	12
19	10	13
21	11	14
25	13	17

VOTING METHODS

VALID

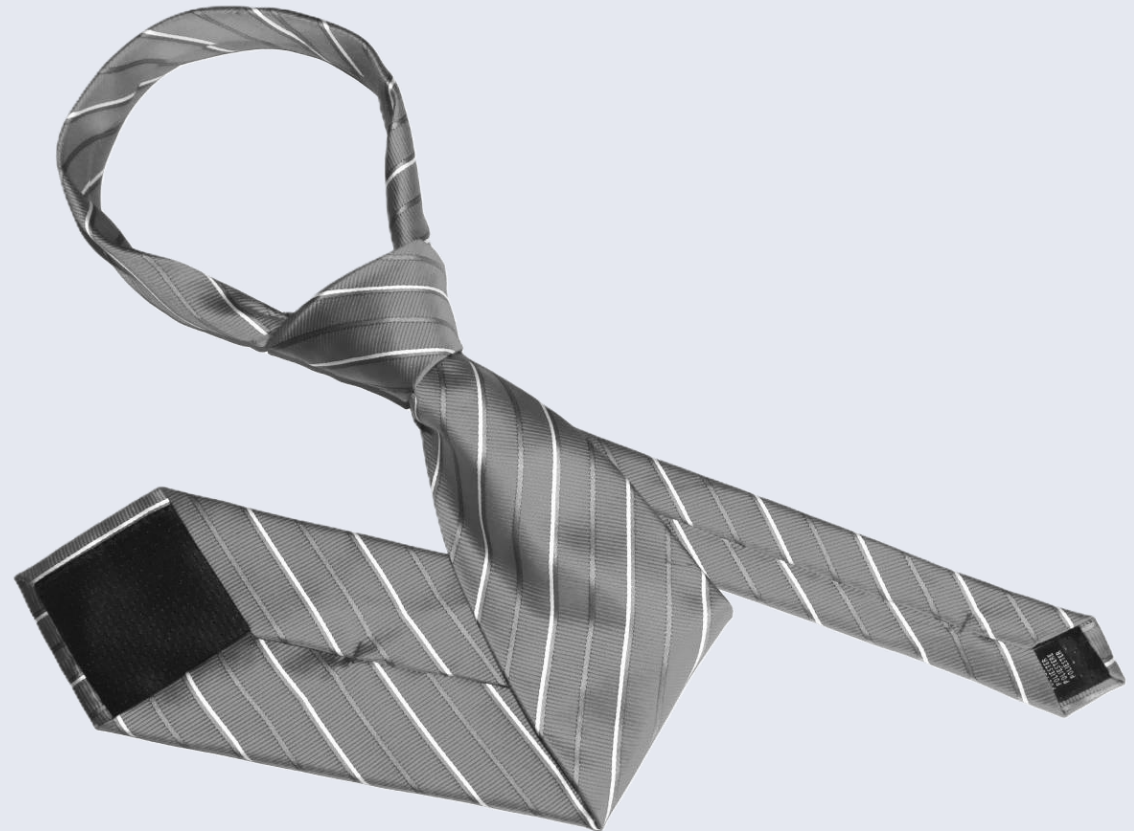
- Voice
- Show of hands
- Rising
- Roll Call

NOTED PROHIBITIONS

- Secret ballots
- Proxy voting

TIE VOTES

Only the Mayor
serving as chair may
cast the deciding
vote



COMMON MOTIONS AT A GLANCE

Motion	Second?	Debatable?	Amendable?	Vote Required
Main motion	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority (unless statutory 2/3)
Amend	Yes	Yes (confined to amendment)	Yes, once	Majority
Table	Yes	No	No	Majority
Motion to refer committee	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Previous question	Yes	No	No	Two-thirds
Postpone to certain time	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Adjourn	Yes	No	No	Majority
Reconsider	Yes	Yes	No	Majority

COMMITTEES

INTERNAL

- Created by the CLB
- Standing committees operate year-round
- Special are temporary

STATUTORY

- Created by general law or private act
- Some have limited authority
 - Determined by enabling statute

POWERS AND DUTIES



POWERS AND DUTIES ACTS, VACANCIES, AND APPOINTMENTS

PRIVATE ACTS

- CLB request of General Assembly delegation
- Must act to ratify

VACANCIES AND APPOINTMENTS

- Responsible for filling vacancies
- Elects or confirms appointments



POWERS AND DUTIES

OTHER DUTIES

- Accept county roads; approve of the county roads
- Approval of county debt
- Providing courthouse space
- Adopting comprehensive zoning



POWERS AND DUTIES

OTHER RECURRING DUTIES

- Adopt a countywide personnel policy
- Determine liability risk management approach
- Adopt nuisance regulations (two-thirds vote)
- Establish hours and distance rules for beer sales.

End of CLB Overview

