

Sevier County Board of Commissioners

Regular Called Meeting

August 18, 2025 at 6:00 PM

I. CALL TO ORDER

II. ROLL CALL

Quorum Present (24 Present, 2 Absent)

Present: Mayor Larry Waters, Ronnie Allen, Bryan Delius, Scott Catlett, Mike Chambers, Aaron Foster, Greg Haggard, Brandon Headrick, Dale Hill, Mike Hillard, Todd Humble, Warren Hurst, Michael Maddron, Don McGill, Chad Ogle, Ray Ogle, Jack Parton, Harold Pitner, Carrol Rauhuff, Tommy Watts, Dustin Weaver, Ronnie Whaley, Kent Woods, Rick Valentine

Absent: Gary Cole, Barbara Parton

III. CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES FROM THE PREVIOUS COMMISSION MEETING

A motion was made by A. Foster, and duly seconded by C. Ogle. Vote criteria of majority vote of members present. Passed by Roll call vote taken 23 Yes, 0 No, 2 Absent.

IV. CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS FROM COMMISSION COMMITTEES

A motion was made by R. Valentine, and duly seconded by M. Chambers. Voting criteria of majority vote of members present. Passed by Roll call vote 23 Yes, 0 No, 2 Absent.

V. CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS OF OFFICIALS, DIVISIONS, AND DEPARTMENTS

Commissioner Warren Hurst asked if the Director of Tourism Mrs. Atchley if she would give the board a report on this year activity on small business.

Director Atchley informed the board that as of the end of fiscal year on June 30th the lodging tax is down from last year of about four-point two percent (4.2%). However, the county was above the national average. The department is working on advertisements to make more people aware of our destination as an option, and to get newer people back into the market.

Commissioner Hurst asked how much down the county was.

Director Atchley stated the report was just finished that day, but from brief read over, that for the year the county was down maybe a percent. Not as much as it has been in years past.

Questions were asked about what is the national average.

Director Atchley responded the average is based on the location area, the tourism office was reading that day that the Vegas area was down as much as eleven percent (11%). Other locations were up five to six percent (5-6%) on the average. So, our office thinks we're doing well compared to a lot of other areas.

Commission Rick Valentine asked if Chairman Waters would give the board an update on the closure US 411/Newfound Gap Road.

Chairman Waters informed the board that the County officials, City of Pigeon Forge, Gatlinburg, Sevierville, and Pittman Center, along with the Chief of Cherokee Nation met with National Park officials recently. Officials discussed the road closure and the impact that it could possibly have on Sevier County being down to one lane on I-40 and now US 411/Newfound Gap Road being closed. The mayor's office is concern with the timetable of when it will reopen. National Park Interim Superintendent Charles Sellars informed officials due to permitting and paperwork the road ideally would be open around October 1st. Our office and the city office offered resources to speed up the process. Mr. Sellars informed the officials that due to certain

permits from the Army Corps and EPA in order to move to the next step. So subsequent to that City of Gatlinburg Mayor Werner on behalf of the area contacted Senator Blackburn and Secretary of Interior Doug Burgum to work on speeding up the process, the county office heard back from Blackburn's office and stated that she would work on helping along the project. The hope is that it will be completed before October 1st because the closure will certainly impact the tourism.

A motion was made by R. Ogle, and duly seconded by G. Haggard. Voting criteria of majority vote of members present. Passed by Roll call vote 23 Yes, 0 No, 2 Absent.

VI. PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS/PUBLIC HEARING ON REZONING REQUESTS

A. PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS

- No comments made

B. PUBLIC HEARING ON REZONING ITEMS

- No comments made

VII. CONSIDERATION OF RESOLUTION 2025-08-01: AMENDA THE ZONING RESOLUTION FOR SEVIER COUNTY, TENNESSEE BY REZONING TAX MAP 25 PARCELS 33.00 AND 33.03 FROM R-1, RURAL RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT TO C-1, RURAL COMMERCIAL DISTRICT

- ADDRESS: 2507 BOYDS CREEK HIGHWAY
- REQUESTED BY: JOHN GILLIAM AND DENNIS KERN
- SEVIER COUNTY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
RECOMMENDATION: FOR

A motion was made by H. Pitner, and duly seconded by R. Ogle. Voting criteria of two-third of full membership. Passed by Roll call vote 23 Yes, 0 No, 2 Absent.

VIII. CONSIDERATION OF RESOLUTION 2025-08-02: AMEND THE ZONING RESOLUTION FOR SEVIER COUNTY, TENNESSEE BY REZONING TAX MAP 30 PARCEL 65.00 FROM R-2 HIGH DENSITY RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT AND C-2, GENERAL COMMERCIAL TO C-2, GENERAL COMMERCIAL DISTRICT

- ADDRESS: 2456 NEWPORT HIGHWAY
- REQUESTED BY: SANDRA MENDIZABAL
- SEVIER COUNTY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION: FOR

A motion was made by C. Rauhuff, and duly seconded by S. Catlett. Voting criteria of two-third of full membership. Passed by Roll call vote 23 Yes, 0 No, 2 Absent.

IX. CONSIDERATION OF RESOLUTION 2025-08-03: APPOINT JUDICIAL COMMISSIONERS FOR SEVIER COUNTY

A motion was made by T. Watts, and duly seconded by K. Woods. Voting criteria of majority vote of members present. Passed by Roll call vote 23 Yes, 0 No, 2 Absent.

Magistrate Albert Snyder and Commissioner Delius had a brief discussion.

X. CONSIDERATION OF RESOLUTION 2025-08-04: AUTHORIZE A TWELVE DOLLARD AND FIFTY CENT (\$12.50) CHARGE BY THE CLERK OF EVERY COURT IN SEVIER COUNTY HAVING JURISDICTION OF STATE MISDEMEANORS AND FELONIES FOR THE PURPOSE AUTHORIZED AND SET OUT IN T.C.A. 40-3-106 FOR THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

Chairman Waters asked District Attorney General for the Fourth Judicial District Jimmy Dunn to come forth to give the board a brief synopsis of this resolution.

District Attorney Jimmy Dunn informed the board the State Governor signed this bill after it was pass by the legislature on May 7th this year. It is only

TCA 40-3-106 which comes to law after two-third of full legislative body says that it should become effective immediately. The money is set to put on the back of warrants for criminal except non-moving violations involving automobiles. In accordance to the statute that was passed, it is sent to the district attorney general's conference and the clerk will enter it in the appropriate place on the criminal warrants and then the money if paid will be sent to the Tennessee District Attorney General's Congress and it'll be set aside just for the Fourth Judicial District. Our office talked to the budget officer regarding how this will work, the officer informed his office that the funds will be place in one account for any county within the fourth judicial district passes this resolution. Any funds not spent will not be moved into a general funds account, it will stay in that account. The clerks have set up to keep track of funds coming and going from the account, so it can be determined how funds should be spent being spent among the counties.

A motion was made by T. Watts, and duly seconded by R. Valentine. Voting criteria of two-third of full membership. Passed by Roll call vote 23 Yes, 0 No, 2 Absent.

XI. CONSIDERATION OF RESOLUTION 2025-08-05: ACCEPT THE RESIGNATION OF JONAS SMELCER, SEVIER COUNTY ROAD SUPERINTENDENT

Chairman Waters spoke on this bittersweet moment for this county; Jonas has been out highway superintendent for some forty-three (43) years. He has done a tremendous job as highway superintendent and made a lot of progress in our highway system over the years. His assistant Donnie Adams will be stepping into that role and the commission will go through the process of filling the vacancy. The commission will have one hundred and twenty days (120) to fill the position and will be up for election in next year's electoral process. The state committee has to certify candidates for highway superintendent before the candidates are eligible to run. The commission will take names beforehand and the candidates will have to be certified in order to eligible to be appointed. On behalf of the county our office would like to thank Jonas for all the work and improvements he has made to the infrastructure.

Commissioner Hurst stated it has been a pleasure to work with Mr. Smelcer, respected his bluntness, and work ethics.

Commissioner Parton spoke of working with Mr. Smelcer for thirty-four (34) years as director of Sevier County School System. His department was very integral in helping the school bus system, keeping roads clear on snowy mornings to cutting down trees or limbs.

A motion was made by D. McGill, and duly seconded by D. Weaver. Voting criteria of majority vote of members present. Passed by Roll call vote 23 Yes, 0 No, 2 Absent.

XII. NOTARIES

Forty-eight (48) notary public applications are up for approval.

A motion was made by G. Haggard, and duly seconded by B. Headrick. Voting criteria of majority vote of members present. Passed by Roll call vote 23 Yes, 0 No, 2 Absent.

XIII. OTHER BUSINESS

XIV. PUBLIC COMMENT ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Debbie Baudean resident of Highland View subdivision moved in during the first phase of building the subdivision. State that international fire code section D requires two entrance or water sprinklers if you have more than 30 homes on a road. Presented a petition with forty-nine (49) signatures to address concerns. With only one entrance with fire trucks, ambulances coming in, homeowners are trapped if there is a wreck at the entrance. Suggested adding a second entrance on Hatcher Road which is 3/10 of a mile past the turn in the development which would lie in phase three of the development of this subdivision.

XV. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by R. Ogle, and duly seconded by R. Valentine. Passed by Voice vote 23 Yes, 0 No, 2 Absent.