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# Interaction with County Legislative Body

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We hope this information will be useful to you; reference to it will assist you with many of the questions that will arise in your tenure with county government. However, the *Tennessee Code Annotated* and other relevant laws or regulations should always be consulted before any action is taken based upon the contents of this document.

Please feel free to contact us if you have questions or comments regarding this information or any other CTAS website material.

Sincerely,

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# Interaction with County Legislative Body

Reference Number: CTAS-834

County highway officials interact with the county legislative body in several significant ways, including budget approval, classification of county roads, and approval of leases and lease-purchase agreements.

The county legislative body may approve a budget for the highway department as submitted or may reduce the total or vary amounts according to major categories or even by line item (although not to the extent that the legislative body is usurping the CAO's authority to determine job classifications and corresponding salaries). The budget forms are set by the Comptroller. During the year, the county legislative body may amend the current operating budget.

The highway department cannot work on private roads, except to provide routes and turnarounds for postal vehicles and school buses upon written request by the appropriate authorities. T.C.A. § 54-7-202. The county legislative body is mandated to classify the public roads in the county. T.C.A. § 54-10-103. The highway officials need to work closely with the county legislative body to develop an accurate road list so that it will be clear which roads the county highway department is authorized to maintain. The county legislative body must receive a detailed listing of all county roads from the chief administrative officer of the county highway department before making a road classification.

County highway officials cannot execute a lease or lease-purchase agreement for equipment or other property without the approval of the county legislative body. T.C.A. § 7-51-904. As prior approval of the county legislative body is not contemplated by the statute, it is suggested that the lease be bid according to regular purchasing procedures with the clear recital that no bid award is final until approved by the county legislative body. Therefore, lease agreements can be signed if they contain a clause such as: "subject to approval of the county legislative body." The lease or lease-purchase can then be submitted in such a manner that the county legislative body has the full contract and all of its terms before them. If approved, the chairman of the county legislative body can so endorse the agreement and the contract will be binding.

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