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Private Acts of 1939 Chapter 424

Dear Reader:

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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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Private Acts of 1939 Chapter 424

SECTION 1. That there is hereby created and established a Court in and for Williamson County, Tennessee, which shall be designated Court of General Sessions of Williamson County, Tennessee.

Said County shall provide a court room at Franklin, dockets, furnishings and necessary supplies for the equipment and maintenance of said court, and pay for same out of the ordinary funds of said county.

SECTION 2. That the Court of General Sessions is hereby vested with all the jurisdiction and shall exercise the authority conferred by the legislature upon Justices of the Peace in Civil and Criminal cases, suits and actions; and the Justices of the Peace of said county are hereby divested of all such jurisdiction and authority, but any Justice of the Peace was elected for any district, except the district in which Franklin is situated, may issue criminal and search warrants against and accept appearance bonds from any person charged with an offense committed in the district for which such Justice of the Peace was elected, and may issue civil process on any cause of action heretofore triable in his district, such warrants and process to be returnable to and triable by said Court of General Sessions. The authority of said Justices of the Peace in their capacity as members of the Quarterly Court, or in the performance of the rites of matrimony is in no wise affected by this Act.

SECTION 3. That before the issuance of any warrant in a civil case, the plaintiff shall secure the costs by executing a cost bond with good security in the sum of \$25.00, or by making a cash cost deposit of not less than \$2.50 or more than \$25.00, or shall take the oath prescribed for poor persons, and on motion, the Court may increase the amount of such bond or deposit.

SECTION 4. That the rules of pleading and practice, form of writs and process and stay of and appeals from judgments in civil cases of said Court shall be the same as of Justices of the Peace. Except, that all cases set for trial in said court shall be set for a time certain, and the one hour grace period allowed in the Justice of Peace Court is hereby eliminated.

As amended by: Private Acts of 1957, Chapter 186.

SECTION 5. That in all matters the costs and fees of said Court of General Sessions shall be the same as those provided by law for Justices of the Peace. The fees and other compensation of the sheriff, his deputies, constables, Game Warden and State Highway Patrolmen for the execution of writs and process of said Court, and the attendance and mileage of witnesses shall be the same in said Court as those provided by law for the Courts of Justices of the Peace.

The fees and compensation due for services rendered by said Court of General Sessions shall be paid to the clerk of said court and by him accounted for as hereinafter provided. Said costs, fees and mileage of witnesses the fees, commissions and emoluments of the Sheriff, his deputies, constables, State Highway Patrolmen, Game Wardens and other officers, for services to said court, and the fines and forfeitures adjudged by is shall be handled, accounted for and disbursed as required by law.

SECTION 6. That separate dockets shall be kept in said court for civil and criminal cases. Upon the civil docket shall be entered the style of each case, the date of issuance of the warrant or process, and the return of the process, in brief form, action of the court on the case, both interlocutory and final orders, judgments, executions, garnishments, lists of the fees of the court, the sheriff, his deputies, constables, game wardens and state highway patrolmen for their services, fees of witnesses for attendance et cetera and credits for payments upon the judgment and upon the costs. All cases shall be indexed and the dockets shall be substantially in the form of those of Justices of the Peace.

The Criminal Docket shall be kept in like manner.

SECTION 7. Beginning upon the appointment by the Williamson County Board of Commissioners of a second General Sessions Court Judge in 1995, the General Sessions Court shall be divided into Part I and Part II, and there shall be a judge for each part of the court. Each judge shall have all the qualifications as prescribed by law for general session judges, shall take the oath prescribed for general session judges, whether by general law or private act. The present judge of the court shall become the judge of Part I of the court. In 1995, the Williamson County Board of Commissioners, shall appoint a judge of Part II to serve until the 1996 regular August election, when the judge of Part II of the court shall be popularly elected to an initial two (2) year term, and to eight (8) year terms thereafter, and shall take office on September 1, 1996, after the popular election. Beginning with the appointment of the Judge of Part II of the Court, and continuing through until September 1, 1997, the judge for Part I shall be the senior judge, who shall be vested with the authority to assign for trial and disposition all matters, suits and cases which may be filed with the Court. At the end of one (1) year, from September 1, 1996, the judge of Part II shall be designated senior judge, with all the above authority and responsibility. The judges shall rotate the position of senior judge each year thereafter on September 1.

As amended by: Private Acts of 1957, Chapter 186
Private Acts of 1976, Chapter 261
Private Acts of 1995, Chapter 9

SECTION 8. That the compensation of said Judge shall be Four Thousand Eight Hundred (\$4,800) Dollars per annum, payable in equal monthly installments. It shall be paid out of the ordinary funds of the county, and shall not be increased or diminished during the time for which said Judge is elected. Such compensation shall be in lieu of all other compensation, secretarial allowances or other emoluments of such office.

As amended by: Private Acts of 1949, Chapter 900
Private Acts of 1957, Chapter 186

SECTION 9. That the Governor shall appoint the first judge of said court, who shall serve until the first day of September, 1940, and until his successor has been elected and qualified.

His successor shall be elected by the qualified voters of the county at the election for judicial and other civil officers on the first Thursday of August, 1940, and shall hold said office from the 1st day of September, 1940, until the first day of September, 1948, or until his successor is qualified.

His successor shall be elected every eight years at such election for the term provided by law for Judges of inferior courts.

SECTION 10. That if the judge of said court fails to attend, cannot preside in a pending cause, or for any reason hold court, a majority of the attorneys present in such court may elect one of their number, who has the qualifications of such a judge, and when elected shall have the same authority as a regular judge to hold the court for the occasion.

SECTION 11. That in the case of a vacancy for any cause the Governor shall have the power to appoint some qualified person to fill such vacancy.

SECTION 12. That the Clerk of the Circuit and Criminal Courts of said county shall be the Clerk of said Court of General Sessions, and when acting as such shall be designated "Clerk of Court of General Sessions of Williamson County." The Clerk of said Court shall be compensated for his services as provided under Chapter 24, Tennessee Code, 1956, as amended, same being Sections 8-2403, et seq.

That the Clerk of the General Sessions Court of Williamson County, Tennessee shall be subject to the provisions of Chapter 22, Tennessee Code, 1956, as amended, same being Sections 8-2201, et seq., just as the Clerks of any other courts therein enumerated. The Clerk of the said Court of General Sessions and the Clerk of the Circuit and Criminal Courts of Williamson County shall have concurrent authority with the Judge to issue warrants and other processes and writs, other than those which the law requires shall be issued only by a judicial officer.

As amended by: Private Acts of 1941, Chapter 204
Private Acts of 1949, Chapter 899
Private Acts of 1959, Chapter 127

SECTION 13. That the Sheriff of said county, or any deputy sheriff or constable thereof, shall serve legal processes, writs and papers issued by said court with the same authority as provided by law in the other inferior courts.

SECTION 14. That this Act shall in no wise impair the right, title or interest of any Justice of the Peace of said county to any unpaid fees, or funds in which he had a right or interest in any proceedings, judgment or suit, whether said cause is disposed of or pending when this Act becomes effective.

SECTION 15. That all of the official dockets, records and papers in cases that are undisposed of or pending in the offices of Justices of the Peace of said county at the time this Act becomes effective shall be delivered to said Court of General Sessions. The official dockets, records and papers in possession of Justices of the Peace of said county in cases which have been completed shall be turned over to said county, as provided by law.

SECTION 16. That said court shall have authority to hear and determine all undisposed of cases arising in the Courts of Justices of the Peace of said county as if such cases had originated in said Court of General Sessions.

SECTION 17. That the Legislature expressly declare that each section, subsection, paragraph and provision of this Act is several and that should any portion of this Act be held unconstitutional or invalid, the same shall not affect the remainder of this Act, but such unconstitutional or invalid portion shall be elided, and the Legislature declares that it would have enacted this Act with such unconstitutional or invalid portions elided therefrom.

SECTION 18. That this Act shall take effect thirty days after its passage, the public welfare requiring it.

Passed: March 1, 1939.

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