



March 31, 2025

Historical Commission

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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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Historical Commission

Private Acts of 1953 Chapter 522

SECTION 1. That there is hereby created and established the Chattanooga-Hamilton County Historical Commission which is hereby vested with power and authority to acquire by lease, purchase, gift or otherwise, real estate and any and all other forms of property to carry out the purposes of this Act. The Commission is hereby vested with the authority and power to own and operate a historical museum, to collect, exhibit, and otherwise preserve, publish and disseminate the historical lore of Chattanooga and Hamilton County, Tennessee; to prepare records, exhibits, and to distribute all appropriate historical data; to conduct research programs and educational programs, and use all recognized methods in collecting and preserving the history of the people who founded Hamilton County and Chattanooga, who have lived in the area since it was founded, furnished it leadership and performed noteworthy human deeds in business, commerce, education, military adventure, and in all other fields of human endeavor; to collect data concerning the institutions said people have established and to set up a central place or headquarters from which said programs will be operated and said exhibits will be placed on public display.

SECTION 2. That the Chattanooga-Hamilton County Historical Commission shall be composed of a board of seven members who shall have terms of seven years. The terms of the members of the first Commission shall be staggered so that the term of one member shall expire on April 15, of each year. Each succeeding Commissioner shall have a term of seven years, starting on April 15 of the year of his or her election. The Governor of Tennessee, the Comptroller of the State Treasury, the County Judge of Hamilton County, and the Mayor of the City of Chattanooga, will serve as ex officio members of the Commission, each having one vote on all matters brought before the Commission for consideration. The Governor, Comptroller, Mayor and County Judge shall hold a seat on the Commission by virtue of their office and their terms will coincide with their terms as Governor, Comptroller, Mayor and County Judge. It is the intent of this Act to create seven Commissioners in addition to the Governor, Comptroller, Mayor and County Judge.

SECTION 3. That the members of the first Commission, in addition to the Governor, Comptroller, Mayor and County Judge, shall be Miss Zella Armstrong, Hugh P. Wasson, Fred Hixson, Paul Mathes, Roy McDonald, Scott Brown, and Col. Van Dyke Ochs. The term of Miss Armstrong shall be from April 15, 1953 until April 15, 1960; the term of Hugh P. Wasson shall be from April 15, 1953 until April 15, 1959; the term of Fred Hixson shall be from April 15, 1953 until April 15, 1958; the term of Paul Mathes shall be from April 15, 1953 until April 15, 1957; the term of Roy McDonald shall be from April 15, 1953 until April 15, 1956; the term of Scott Brown shall be from April 15, 1953 until April 15, 1955; the term of Col. Van Dyke Ochs shall be from April 15, 1953 until April 15, 1954. All vacancies on the Commission shall be filled by a majority vote of the members of the Commission.

SECTION 4. That the Commission shall elect from its membership a chairman, vice-chairman, secretary and treasurer. It shall be the duty of the chairman to preside over all meetings of the Commission and during his absence the vice-chairman shall act as chairman and exercise all the authority and power vested in the chairman. The secretary shall keep or cause to be kept a well bound record of all proceedings, transactions, accounts, et cetera, and shall have general supervision over all records, research and educational programs of the Commission. The Treasurer shall be the custodian of all funds of the Commission which shall be disbursed only upon warrants signed by the Treasurer and chairman. He shall be required to give bond for the faithful performance of his duties of not less than \$5,000 and such additional amount or amounts as the Commission may from time to time determine is advisable.

SECTION 5. That the Commission shall have authority, from time to time, to hire such personnel as shall be deemed necessary to carry out the purposes of this Act. The Commission shall have the authority to fix the wages and salaries of such personnel and determine the terms of employment and the duties of said personnel.

SECTION 6. That all property acquired by the Commission under this Act shall be held in the name of the Chattanooga and Hamilton County Historical Commission, which shall have and is hereby vested with power and authority to exercise the power of eminent domain to acquire any land or lands deemed essential by the Commission to carry out the purposes of this Act.

SECTION 7. That all laws or parts of laws in conflict with this Act are hereby repealed, and this Act shall take effect from and after its passage, the public welfare requiring it.

Passed: April 9, 1953.

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