

Resolution No. _____
Requested by Commissioner Beathard

RESOLUTION ADOPTING A PLAN FOR THE CREATION AND USE OF AN INTERNET FORUM FOR THE WILLIAMSON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

WHEREAS, Williamson County, as a Tennessee governmental entity, is subject to *Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 8-44-101 et. seq.*, (“Open Meeting Act”), which requires that meetings of a public governing body are to be conducted in a public setting and provide notice to the public of the meeting; and

WHEREAS, recently the Tennessee General Assembly amended the Open Meeting Act to provide the ability to a public body to create a procedure that would allow an internet forum for which the members of the public body can communicate with one another without violating the Open Meeting Act; and

WHEREAS, *Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 8-44-109*, requires a public body to adopt a plan meeting the requirements set forth in the statute prior to establishing a public forum; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Commissioners desires to adopt the plan to create a public internet forum that would provide commissioners a venue to discuss issues facing the board and to direct the county attorney to send the plan to the Tennessee Comptroller of the Treasury Office of Open Records Counsel:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Williamson County Board of Commissioners, meeting in regular session this the 9th day of May, 2011, by a majority vote adopts the following plan for a public forum:

Section 1.

That the Williamson County Board of Commissioners will host an internet forum on an internal server through the Williamson County Information and Technology Department, (“IT Department”). This server will be available at all times other than that which is necessary for technical maintenance or unforeseen technical limitations. It is estimated that the server will be available over 95 % of the time based on the IT Department’s experience with its present web server. Said server will be replaced as needed.

Section 2.

The IT Department Director shall assign one monitor and an alternate monitor to be responsible for maintaining and monitoring the forum to ensure that it functions properly without deleting or editing any comment posted. The name and work contact information for the monitors shall be included on the forum web page.

Section 3.

A link to the forum will be published on the Williamson County, Tennessee web page located at <http://www.williamsoncounty-tn.gov> with a contact email address and phone number to report problems.

Section 4.

Each Commissioner will be provided a password that will enable the Commissioner to post a comment to the forum through his/her account. Passwords will be changed by the IT Department on a semiannual basis. All passwords will require at least six letters. The IT Department will inform the Commissioners participating in the forum of the new passwords before the passwords are changed.

Section 5.

All communication will remain on the active page for at least one year. At a minimum of once quarterly, the IT Department will archive and remove postings that have been on the forum for over one year. The server shall be backed up no less than on a weekly basis.

Section 6.

The program will consist of 2 types of user accounts. The monitor(s) will be given an administrator account and participating County Commissioners will be given a participant account. Only members of the Williamson County Board of Commissioners shall have access to the forum to post comments. The participating accounts shall provide a County Commissioner with the ability to post new forum topics and to create and post comments to forum topics. County Commissioners shall not have the ability to delete topics or comments from the forum. Administrator accounts will have the capability of modifying, adding, or changing accounts and their passwords. The monitor will have the capability of deleting topics and related comments that have been in existence for more than one year. The monitor shall not delete any topics or the related comments that have had comments posted within one year of the date of termination.

Section 7.

Members of the Board of Commissioners shall be required to first accept the “Terms of Use Agreement” prior to obtaining a password to permit the member to post on the forum. It shall be agreed by each County Commissioner that the forum is for information and to exchange ideas. No votes or other acts of finality shall be taken by any of the participants.

Section 8.

Free public access to the forum will be available at the Williamson County Public Library located in Franklin, Tennessee, as well as a computer located in the IT Department. The Library will provide at least one computer that anyone can use to access the forum without showing a library card. However, users will have to otherwise comply with the Library’s computer use guidelines.

Section 9.

The Williamson County Board of Commissioners acknowledges that the forum cannot be operative until the Office of Open Records Counsel issues a Report of Compliance.

Section 10.

Prior to commencing use of the forum, the Williamson County Board of Commissioners shall conduct a public hearing relative to its intent to utilize the forum. A copy of the public comments shall be kept on record for public inspection.

Section 11.

Public notice shall be provided in a newspaper of general circulation and on the Williamson County Tennessee web page stating that the Williamson County Board of Commissioners intends to use the electronic forum and the link to the forum will be placed in the same source used to notify the public of its public meetings. As long as the Williamson County Board of Commissioners chooses to utilize an internet forum, it will fulfill its statutorily set responsibilities regarding that use. Failure by the Williamson County Board of Commissioners to fulfill its ongoing responsibilities will render the Report of Compliance void. If the Williamson County Board of Commissioners determines that it is no longer going to utilize the forum, notification will be given to both the public in the same manner as was given for its creation and the Tennessee Office of Open Records Counsel.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that upon approval of this resolution and its signing, the Board of Commissioners directs the County Clerk to forward this resolution to the Tennessee Office of Open Records Counsel;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this resolution shall be in force and become effective upon passage and satisfaction of all requirements, the public welfare requiring it.

County Commissioner

COMMITTEES REFERRED TO & ACTION TAKEN:

Budget Committee: For _____ Against _____

Commission Action Taken For _____ Against _____ Pass _____ Out _____

Elaine Anderson, County Clerk

Jack Walton, Commission Chairman

Rogers Anderson, Williamson County Mayor

Date