



Metropolitan Nashville and Davidson County, TN

Legislation Text

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An ordinance adding a new section 2.128.070 to the Metropolitan Code of Laws establishing the office of county historian, the appointment process and necessary credentials, as well as the county historian's duties and appointments within the Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County.

WHEREAS, Tennessee Code Annotated section 5-18-101 provides for each county to appoint a county historian, whose duties are to include, but not be limited to, "collecting and preserving local and state history" as well as working with the state historian, state library and archives, and the state historical commission; and

WHEREAS, the Metropolitan Code of Laws currently refers to the county historian in terms of the historian's work with the Historical Commission in section 2.128.060(J) and the historian's function as an ex-officio member of the Davidson County Public Records Commission in section 2.140.030(B); and

WHEREAS, the county historian is a scholar and authority on the history of Nashville and Davidson County; and

WHEREAS, the current county historian advises the Historical Commission on a range of history-related projects including nominations to the National Register of Historic Places, publications, interpretive signage, historical markers, as well as historic and cultural tours, among other topics and activities;

WHEREAS, the current county historian serves as an ex-officio, non-voting member on the Metropolitan Historical Commission and Public Records Commission; and

WHEREAS, the current county historian also works with the public library, Metropolitan Archives, and Metropolitan Clerk to provide guidance regarding county history as necessary; and

WHEREAS, it is in the Metropolitan Government's best interests to establish more specific criteria for future county historians, better delineating the appointment process as well as the necessary qualifications and duties.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ENACTED BY THE METROPOLITAN GOVERNMENT OF NASHVILLE & DAVIDSON COUNTY:

Section 1. That the Metropolitan Code of Laws shall be amended by adding a new section, 2.128.070, County Historian, Qualifications and Duties, as follows:

- A. There shall be created the position of county historian for Davidson County. The historian shall serve for a five-year term, subject to reappointment for one additional term. The position shall be appointed by the Mayor, the appointee selected from a list of candidates to be provided by the Historical Commission, and the Mayor's appointee shall be subject to confirmation by the Metropolitan Council. The county historian shall have a master's degree in the history of the United States, public history, or closely related field involving the study of the history of the United States. The position shall be uncompensated, but the county historian may be compensated for incidental expenses related to the position's duties.

- B. The county historian's duties shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

1. To serve all functions referred to in Tennessee Code Annotated § 5-18-101 in order to help collect and preserve local and state history;
 2. To serve on the Historical Commission as an ex-officio, non-voting member and work with the Commission and its staff, as well as with all other interested entities within the Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County, to document and share with the public the county's history; and
 3. To serve on the Davidson County Public Records Commission as an ex-officio, non-voting member.
- C. Notwithstanding subsection (A), the current county historian, previously appointed pursuant to Tennessee Code Annotated section 5-18-101, shall continue to serve until retirement or through June 30, 2026.

Section 2. That this ordinance shall take effect from and after its adoption, the welfare of The Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County requiring it.

Analysis

This ordinance adds a new section to the Metropolitan Code of Laws to formally establish the office of county historian as provided in Tennessee Code Annotated section 5-18-101. While a county historian is currently appointed by the Mayor, this legislation codifies the historian's role, qualifications, and responsibilities.

Under the new code provision, the Mayor would appoint the county historian from a list of candidates provided by the Metropolitan Historical Commission. Upon confirmation by the Metropolitan Council, the historian would serve a five-year term and be subject to reappointment for an additional term. The county historian must possess a master's degree in the history of the United States, public history, or a closely related field and would document and share the county's history with the public. The historian would continue to serve as an ex officio, non-voting member of the Historical Commission and the Davidson County Public Records Commission. The position will remain uncompensated, though compensation for incidental expenses related to the position's duties would be allowed.

As part of this legislation, the current county historian shall continue to serve until her retirement or through June 30, 2026.

Fiscal Note: The county historian position will not receive compensation but may receive compensation for incidental expenses.