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Did the Pension Board violate Sunshine Law?

By Mike Steely
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The steps for going into an executive session, as outlined by Roberts Rules of Order, were not followed during the September Knoxville Retirement and Pension Board meeting and may have violated state and local Sunshine Laws as well. Normally an executive session can be

requested by a board chair and a motion made by the members with the majority choosing to close its door for some business under most procedural rules.

However, the pension board's attorney, John Owings, requested the executive session himself and no vote was apparently taken. The press and public had to leave during the near hour-long executive

session.

Owings is not a voting member or member of the board.

When the board resumed business and the media was allowed back in, Owings, not Chris Caldwell who had been chairing the public meeting, continued to lead the meeting and said the pension board desires to "have its own counsel" regarding a

lawsuit filed against Knox County. He then asked for a motion that he be allowed to represent the pension board in the county's lawsuit, and Commissioner Brad Anders moved to authorize him to enter the case. The vote was unanimous, without a discussion.

Whether the Chancery Judge will permit such entry in the case by Owings

may be a decision based on how the outside attorney feels about it or whether or not the executive session was legally called by a motion.

If Owings called the executive session, then any decision of the pension board during or after the secret meeting could be void. The executive session was not on the agenda for the September meeting.

Only members of the board including four Knox County Commissioners, the pension staff, the attorney, and briefly Mayor Glenn Jacobs were present in the closed session.

It is against the Sunshine Law for two or more commissioners to discuss commission business items outside a public meeting of the commission.

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Former Knoxville mayor and Tennessee governor Bill Haslam catches up with mayoral candidate Eddie Mannix, left, and David Wright, right, at Wright's Cafeteria, a popular spot in Knoxville known for homemade lunches.

Only 11% voters take advantage of early voting

By Mike Steely
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There are 92,993 registered voters in Knoxville but only 10,878 voters, about 11%, were cast in early voting. That's better than in past years but much less than what it may have been if the election was held during a state or federal election.

Absentee vote totals in the early balloting was 992, bringing the entire early vote totals to 11,868. What does the election commission forecast for the turnout in Tuesday's Election Day totals?

Chris Davis, deputy director of the election commission, said Friday that they are expecting anywhere from 13,000 to 15,000 more voters Tuesday, bringing the total to somewhere between 25,000 and 27,000.

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Carson Dailey Launches Reelection Campaign

By Focus Staff

Carson Dailey, the popular County Commissioner representing South Knoxville, launched his reelection campaign for 2020 at "Love That BBQ" on Maryville Pike. Through most of the evening South Knoxvilleans mixed with elected officials, all of whom were there to support Carson Dailey.

Dailey, his wife Tammy by his side, greeted Charlie Susano Jr., the Clerk of the Circuit, Civil Sessions and Juvenile Courts, Register of Deeds Nick McBride, and Law Director Bud

Armstrong, who had just left an event for his Chief Deputy, David Buuck, who is running to succeed him.

State Senator Becky Duncan Massey dropped by to visit, as she represents South Knoxville in Nashville. Dailey also attracted a solid gathering of former officials who all represented South Knoxville at one time or another. Nick Pavlis, who represented South Knoxville on the city council, was busy greeting old friends. Pavlis is almost single-handedly responsible for the revitalization of South Knoxville inside the

City. Pavlis and Carson Dailey worked closely together. Former County Commissioner Mike Brown came to see friends, support Dailey and enjoy some tasty barbecue. Former county commissioner and state representative and Focus columnist Ray Hill made his way through the crowd before leaving with a sampling of barbecue and Walter Love's special banana pudding.

John King, a lawyer and high ranking official in several Republican

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County hires new lobbying firm

By Mike Steely
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Mayor Glenn Jacobs has hired a new lobbying company to represent the county in the Nashville.

Bryan Hair spoke for the county mayor during last week's Knox County Commission meeting, announcing the hiring of Stones River Group on a one-year contract. He said the new government relations contract with the firm he called "a public policy advocate" calls for a weekly legislative wrap-up to be sent.

The \$60,000 contract agreement, he says, includes \$2,500 to cover registration of the contract, lodging fees and travel to and from Knox County. Hair said

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Open house allows residents to voice East Knoxville traffic concerns

By Ken Lay

Residents, business owners and other citizens received the opportunity to voice their concerns about East Knoxville traffic patterns at an open house Wednesday night at Honey Rock Victorious Church International.

The City of Knoxville, in conjunction with the Tennessee Department of Transportation and Graham Smith Construction, conducted a preliminary road study to discuss possible renovations to Magnolia Ave., Rutledge Pike and Asheville Highway

to make that area of East Knoxville safer and more accessible to pedestrians, bike riders, drivers and those who take public transit in the area.

The open house was attended by City Council members George Wallace and Finbar Saunders. The open house was hosted by Dawn Michelle Foster, City of Knoxville Director in for the Office of Redevelopment.

"We want this area to be more efficient and safe for all who use the roadway," Foster said. "We're

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City of Knoxville Redevelopment Director Dawn Michelle Foster discusses possible changes to East Knoxville traffic patterns at an open house at Honey Rock Victorious Church International Wednesday. Photo by Ken Lay.

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