



MEDIA RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: June 30, 2020

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Circuit Court Clerk Requests \$1.5 million Loan from Rainy-day Fund

KNOXVILLE, Tenn.—Knox County Circuit Court Clerk Charlie Susano requested a \$1.5 million loan his office could draw down as needed to help offset lost revenue and cover expenses as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The request is expected to be on the Knox County Commission agenda in July. If approved, between this request and the Knox County Sheriff’s Office bonuses, the County Commission will have—in just under four weeks—committed to allocating \$3 million of the reserve fund, all of which was unplanned.

In response to the request, Knox County Mayor Glenn Jacobs made the following statement:

“In early June, I proposed what I felt was a fiscally responsible budget that carefully protected not only our services but also our rapidly depleting financial resources due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Along with my finance director, I explained several times to the Knox County Commission that we are in uncharted territory and that revenues and shortfalls will be hard to predict in the coming months and quite possibly for the rest of the year.

We also told Commissioners that some of the county’s independent Fee Officers were concerned that the departments they oversee would not make payroll.

This situation—an unexpected expense due to the pandemic--is exactly what we cautioned against during last week’s budget hearings. My overall concern is that this may be the first of many disruptions to Knox County’s financial standing.”

In addition to the Circuit Court, Susano oversees Civil Sessions, also known as small claims court. These courts operate on fees and not on taxpayer dollars. The office continues to pay out just over \$2 million per year in litigation taxes to help fund Knox County Schools, the Knox County Sheriff’s Office as well as other county entities.

“This loan will allow us to continue fulfilling our constitutional obligation to service the courts of Knox County,” Susano said. “We’re okay right now, but we want to be prepared if the COVID-19 pandemic continues to negatively impact our new case filings. We will utilize this loan only on an as-needed basis to help offset any future monthly shortfalls. Once new case filings return to their pre-pandemic levels, we will begin the process of repaying the loan.”

The Mayor and Mr. Susano can be available to media by appointment.

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