

# Council opposes bills on property tax increase limits

The Dickson City Council has voted to oppose state legislation to limit local control of property tax rates.

At a special session Monday, March 16, 2026, the council unanimously approved Resolution #2026-24 expressing the council's opposition to two bills that would restrict counties' and cities' authority to determine property tax increases.

House Bill 1873 by Rep. Jason Zachary, R.-Knoxville, and Senate Bill 2064 by Sen. Bo Watson, R.-Hixson, has been amended in subcommittee to limit increases in county and city property tax rates to inflation plus three percent above the previous year's revenue annually or inflation plus 12 percent above revenue for a four-year period. Counties and cities would be allowed to exceed those limits for increases necessary to secure bonds or make bond payments. Any other tax increase above the limits or in excess of the certified tax rate in a reappraisal year would have to be approved in a referendum. Under current law, property tax rates are not subject to referenda.

House Bill 2607 by Rep. Bud Hulsey, R.-Kingsport, and Senate Bill 2002 by Sen. Joey Hensley, R.-Hohenwald, proposes to limit increases in county and city property tax rates to two percent annually over the previous year's revenue for four consecutive years. Counties and cities would be allowed to exceed that limit or exceed the certified property tax rate in a reappraisal year only if approved by 60 percent of the voters in a referendum.

"It would make it harder to raise revenue if there was a case that it needed to be raised, if we needed police, fire protection, infrastructure," said City Administrator David Travis.

Mayor Don L. Weiss Jr. pointed out the second bill would require more than a majority of voters to approve increases above the limits with 60 percent needed to pass. He said Dickson historically has not raised property taxes "on a whim."

"We're very sales tax-oriented," Mayor Weiss said of the city, which receives 43 percent of its revenue from sales taxes and 18.5 percent from property taxes. "The city's only raised property taxes five times since 1976... I think the last time we had a property tax increase was 2014 and it was a nickel. This council has never had a propensity to increase the property tax rate unless it was a much-needed increase. We just feel like this hamstrings us if we need to and it may even make us have to do it every year by the two percent just to keep up, in case we needed to."

In the last 50 years, the Dickson City Council has increased the property tax rate:

- 29 cents in 1976 from \$2.48 to \$2.77;
- 15 cents in 1983 from \$1.65 to \$1.80;
- 10 cents in 1987 from \$1.80 to \$1.90;
- 9 cents in 2005 from \$1.01 to \$1.10; and
- 5 cents in 2014 from 92.9 cents to 97.9 cents.

The city's current property tax rate is 71 cents, a 74.4 percent reduction in the rate over the last 50 years made possible by the city's growth, increased property values and growing sales tax collections.

Mayor Weiss repeated the opinion he expressed at the March 2 council meeting about a bill regarding municipal elections amounting to the legislature inserting itself in the operation of local government.

"A lot of this goes back to my comment at the last meeting about the presumptive interference from the legislature in trying to manage local government," Mayor Weiss said. "We've had more

bills this year of the legislators trying to step in and tell local government what we can and we cannot do... We just think it should be up to this Council to decide when and how much of a property tax increase is needed and for this Council to do that and not be limited by legislation from the state, if more than that were needed at a particular time.”

Mayor Weiss said the council’s history has been to keep property taxes at a reasonable rate “and I think if you look at it now in the City of Dickson for the services provided the property taxes are very low for a city our size.”

The council unanimously approved the resolution opposing the bills and it was forwarded to Rep. Mary Littleton, R.-Dickson, Rep. Jody Barrett, R.-Dickson, Sen. Kerry Roberts, R.-Springfield, and the members of the House and Senate State and Local Government committees.

HB1873/SB2064 is scheduled for committee consideration in the Senate March 24 and House March 25. HB2607/SB2002 was taken off notice in the House and is scheduled for committee consideration in the Senate March 24.