

What is the relative voting power of WWTA board members?

What is the relative voting power of the five WWTA county appointed members and the seven municipal appointed members? The Tennessee provision for the voting provisions for the WWTA is Section 68-221-605. This section is the one that provides that the county mayor appointed members of the WWTA each have a vote reflecting 1/5 of the area of the county. If this means that the five county members represent 87,000 citizens in the unincorporated part of Hamilton County then each county appointed commissioner represents about 17,000 people. If this means that the five county members represent all the 307,000 county citizens then each county appointed commissioner represents 61,000 citizens. The seven cities in aggregate population have 56,251 citizens.

Seventy-one percent of the WWTA's operating revenue comes from the seven municipal members of the WWTA. Only 29% comes from the customers in the unincorporated area of Hamilton County.

It seems to be more reasonable to use the population of the service area in the county (the unincorporated area of the county) that the entire population of the county which is either represented by one of the seven cities in the WWTA or which does not receive WWTA service (such as Chattanooga, Collegedale, or Walden). It would seem had the statute meant the population of the entire county then the statute would not have referenced the "area" of the county.

Population as of 2000:

Hamilton County (total) 307,898
Hamilton County (unincorporated) 87,617
East Ridge 20,640
Lakesite 1,845
Lookout Mountain 2,000
Red Bank 12,418
Ridgeside 389
Signal Mountain 7,429
Soddy-Daisy 11,530

Richard Casavant
Hamilton County Commissioner – District Two