

Minutes
Historic Courthouse, Board Chambers, 3rd Floor
225 North Board Street
May 26, 2020

The Thomas County Board of Commissioners met on the above date in a regular scheduled meeting at 6:00 p.m. at the Historic Courthouse, Commission Chambers, with the following board members present:

Phillip V. Brown, Chairman, Dist. 7

Rev. Jeremy G. Rich, Dist. 1

Kenneth E. Hickey, District 3

Donnie L. Baggett, Dist. 5

Wiley E. Grady, Vice-Chair, Dist. 6

Moses Gross, Dist. 2 (absent)

Mark NeSmith, Dist. 4

Zippy T. Vonier, Dist. 8

Staff present was County Manager Michael J. Stephenson, Planning Director Ken Gay, Zoning Administrator Donna Holbert, and County Clerk Celeste Tyler.

News/Media present: none

Chairman Brown called the meeting to order, and Commissioner Rich gave the invocation.

Chairman Brown recognized Commissioner Baggett who made a motion to approve the minutes of the May 12, 2020 Board Meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Grady. The motion was approved unanimously with Chairman Brown and Commissioners Baggett, Grady, Hickey, NeSmith, Rich, and Vonier voting aye.

Chairman Brown declared a Public Hearing in regards to Application 20-4-1, applicant Verizon Wireless of the East LP, Brian Devine, agent for property owners Rita Lucas and Sonia Minors for AG to AG Conditional Use for the installation of a mono pole telecommunications tower 164 feet in height on Smith Road (Map 74, Parcel 48).

Chairman Brown recognized Planning Director Ken Gay who presented Application 20-4-1 and recommended to the Board approval of the Agriculture land use classification to Agriculture Conditional Use for the purpose of installing a cell tower at Smith Road.

Chairman Brown recognized Brian Devine, agent for the applicant (235 Hembee Park Road, Suite 100, Roswell, Georgia) who stated that the proposed tower would improve coverage for Thomas County residents thereby improving access to emergency services. Addressing several questions from the Board, Mr. Devine stated that all towers are approximately 2 1/2 to 3 miles apart, would offer 4G coverage from a technology standpoint, and was designed to fill in the gap with existing towers with inadequate coverage. The tower would also accommodate up to three other carriers.

Chairman Brown recognized Cheryl Robison of 1387 Smith Road, Ochlocknee, Georgia who opposes the tower and submitted a petition of names to Commissioner Hickey of residents who are also opposed. She also fears the effects of radiation. Chairman Brown recognized Amy Rogers of 1157 Smith Road, Ochlocknee, Georgia who opposes the tower stating that she is concerned about her organic chicken farm and doesn't want another eye sore. Chairman Brown recognized Dixie Hedrington of 1570 Smith Road, Ochlocknee, Georgia who also opposes the tower and expressed concern with her business which serves a special needs population.

Chairman Brown closed the Public Meeting at 6:3 p.m.

Chairman Brown recognized Commissioner Hickey who made a motion to table Application 20-4-1 until the June 23, 2020 Board of Commissioners meeting. The motion was seconded by Chairman Phillip Brown. The motion was approved unanimously with Chairman Brown and Commissioners Baggett, Grady, Hickey, NeSmith, Rich, and Vonier voting aye.

In the Open Meeting to Citizens, Chairman Brown recognized Gloria Glass of 225 Pigs Saul Road, Boston, Georgia who requested live streaming of Board of Commissioners' Meetings and better accessibility to agendas, minutes, etc.

Chairman Brown recognized County Manager Stephenson who reported that Georgia Pines was entertaining proposals to lease new office space. There is uncertainty of the effects of the 14% budget cut required by Governor Kemp. A 25,000 sq. ft. space would provide an opportunity to combine a lot of their services under one roof. Chairman Brown recognized Commissioner Baggett who made a motion to approve the authorization for County Manager Stephenson to work with Karl Weckwert in an advisory capacity to develop a proposal for Georgia Pines. Commissioner Grady seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously with Chairman Brown, and Commissioners Baggett, Grady, Hickey, NeSmith, Rich, and Vonier voting aye.

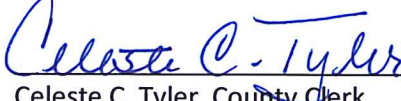
Chairman Brown recognized Commissioner Vonier who made a motion to ratify the fuel purchase from Petroleum Products for \$1.115/gal. on May 19, 2020. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Rich. The motion was approved by unanimously with Chairman Brown and Commissioners Baggett, Grady, Hickey, NeSmith, Rich, and Vonier voting aye.

The upcoming committee meetings were announced. The Personnel Committee will meet at the Historic Courthouse on May 27, 2020 at 8:30 a.m. The Finance Committee will meet at the Historic Courthouse on May 28, 2020 at 9:00 a.m., and the Fleet Services Committee will meet at the Historic Courthouse on June 1, 2020 at 8:30 a.m.

Chairman Brown recognized Commissioner Grady who made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Commissioner NeSmith. The motion was approved unanimously with Chairman Brown and Commissioners Baggett, Grady Hickey, NeSmith, Rich, and Vonier voting aye.


Phillip V. Brown, Chairman

ATTEST:


Celeste C. Tyler, County Clerk