

Minutes  
Historic Courthouse, Board Chambers, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
225 North Board Street  
November 8, 2022

The Thomas County Board of Commissioners met on the above date in a regular scheduled meeting at 9:00 a.m. at the Historic Courthouse, Commission Chambers, with the following board members present:

**Mark NeSmith, Chairman, Dist. 4**

Rev. Jeremy G. Rich, Dist. 1

Kenneth E. Hickey, District 3

Phillip V. Brown, District 7

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

Moses Gross, District 2 (absent)

Donnie L. Baggett, District 5

Zippy T. Vonier, District 8

Staff present was County Manager Michael J. Stephenson, County Attorney Bruce Warren, Planning Director Ken Gay, Zoning Administrator Donna Holbert, Sheriff Carlton Powell, and County Clerk Celeste Tyler.

News/Media present: Jill Holloway, Thomasville Times Enterprise

Chairman NeSmith called the meeting to order and Commissioner Hickey gave the invocation.

Chairman NeSmith recognized Commissioner Brown who made a motion to approve the minutes of the October 25, 2022 Board Meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Grady. The motion was approved unanimously with Chairman NeSmith and Commissioners Baggett, Brown, Grady, Hickey, Rich, and Vonier voting aye.

Open Meeting to the Citizens: Chairman NeSmith recognized Ucher Dent of 408 Pine Street, Ochlocknee, Georgia who asked for support for the local Juneteenth celebration--the observance honoring the end of slavery. As founder and organizer of the local chapter, Ms. Dent stated that the annual event has moved to the Deep South Fairgrounds due to its growth and invites all races to come and celebrate the enslaved people of America. Chairman NeSmith recognized Stephanie Dodson Dougherty, Board of Directors President, and Lauren Warburton, Field Services Director with the Thomasville-Thomas County Humane Society at 180 Big Star Drive, Thomasville, Georgia. Ms. Dougherty expressed her continued support for the partnership between the Humane Society and the Thomas County Board of Commissioners. Ms. Warburton conveyed her appreciation of the Board while working in Thomas County. Her last work day will be on Friday before heading to her new job in Leon County, Florida.

Chairman NeSmith referenced the letters of interest for the Library Board Appointment that were included with the agenda packet and noted that all of the candidates are qualified for the position. He then asks for nominations. Commissioner Rich made a motion to reappoint Erin Rehberg for another term on the Board citing her extensive qualifications and her experience serving on the Board. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Baggett. The motion did not pass (3-4) with Commissioners Baggett, Brown, and Rich voting aye and Chairman NeSmith and Commissioners Grady, Hickey, and Vonier voting nay. Chairman NeSmith asked for other nominations. Commissioner Hickey made a motion to appoint Carla Defnall. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Vonier. The motion was approved (4-3) with Chairman NeSmith and Commissioners Grady, Hickey, and Vonier voting aye and Commissioners Baggett, Brown, and Rich voting nay.

**Reports:**

Chairman NeSmith recognized County Manager Stephenson who in turn recognized Planning Director Ken Gay. Ken introduced rezoning application 22-11-1 from William (Bill) Blackburn, Managing Member of Apache Holdings, LLC, to rezone property located on Liberty Street (Map 46F, Parcel 83 (1.747 acre portion, more or less, of a 7.05 acre, more or less parcel) and Parcel 83Q (5.9 acres, more or less.) The request is to rezone these properties from CG (Commercial General) to RM-APT to allow for an additional phase to the Grand Park apartment complex that is currently under construction. The proposed phase will consist of the construction of two buildings consisting of 80 apartments. After a lengthy discussion, County Manager Stephenson asked Ken Gay to communicate to Apache Holdings that the existing plat needs to be revised and made into one plat. The sensitivity of the project should be understood, and it will be noted that adding 80 units would be the last addition.

Ken also introduced rezoning application 22-11-2 from Chris West, Special Counsel, Teramore Development, LLC, to rezone 5.72 acres, more or less, of property located on Thomas County Map 54, Parcel 130. The request is to rezone a 5.72 acre portion of the property from CG (Commercial General) to AG (Agricultural.) The rezoning request would return this 5.72 acre portion to the original zoning of Ag (Agricultural). This acreage will remain as a buffer as originally planned.

As an update on Evergreen Apartments, Ken stated that he hasn't received any plans.

County Manager Stephenson informed the Commissioners that the Budget Books are in Laura Nichols' office and are ready to be picked up. The 2023 Budget Hearing will be held on Monday, November 14, 2022 at 9:00 a.m.

Chairman NeSmith recognized County Attorney Warren who reported on the National Opioid Settlement. A settlement agreement has been reached, and Thomas County's initial abatement allocation for Year 1 is \$7,236.69. The initial abatement allocation for Year 2 is \$7,357.15. More information will be forthcoming. County Attorney Warren also stated that he is editing the Library Ordinance and should have it available at the next meeting.

Chairman NeSmith recognized Commissioner Vonier who made a motion to ratify the purchase of fuel from Petroleum Products for \$2.9417/gal on October 31, 2022. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Brown. The motion was approved unanimously with Chairman NeSmith and Commissioners Baggett, Brown, Grady, Hickey, Rich, and Vonier voting aye.

Commissioner Vonier made a motion to ratify the purchase of diesel fuel from Petroleum Products for \$4.3887/gal on November 1, 2022. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Brown. The motion was approved unanimously with Chairman NeSmith and Commissioners Baggett, Brown, Grady, Hickey, Rich, and Vonier voting aye.

Commissioner Vonier made a motion to ratify bid approval for Metal Drainage Pipe from Gulf Atlantic Culvert for \$24,531.12. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Hickey. The motion was approved unanimously with Chairman NeSmith and Commissioners Baggett, Brown, Grady, Hickey, Rich, and Vonier voting aye.

Commissioner Vonier made a motion to ratify bid approval for Double Wall Polyethylene Pipe from H&S Supply Co., Inc. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Brown. The motion was approved

unanimously with Chairman NeSmith and Commissioners Baggett, Brown, Grady, Hickey, Rich, and Vonier voting aye.


Chairman NeSmith recognized Commissioner Baggett who made a motion to ratify the approval to re-establish the collection of the impact fee (50%) for all categories beginning January 1, 2023. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Vonier. The motion was approved unanimously with Chairman NeSmith and Commissioners Baggett, Brown, Grady, Hickey, Rich, and Vonier voting aye.

Chairman NeSmith recognized Commissioner Grady who announced that there will not be an Emergency Services Committee meeting in November.

Chairman NeSmith recognized Commissioner Rich who commented that he would like the Commissioners to lend whatever support deemed necessary to prevent the frequency of accidents at the Bypass and GA Hwy 3. Commissioner Hickey and Sheriff Powell both stated that there are more accidents there this time of year and the position of the sun is partially to blame.

Commissioner Hickey announced that the Public Works Committee meeting will be held on November 16, 2022 at 8:30 a.m. in the Historic Courthouse.

With no further business, Chairman NeSmith adjourned the meeting at 9:55 a.m.

  
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Mark NeSmith, Chairman

ATTEST:   
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Celeste C. Tyler, County Clerk