Minutes
Historic Courthouse, Board Chambers, 3rd Floor
225 North Board Street
July 22, 2014

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:

Moses Gross, Chairman, Dist. 2	Kenneth E. Hickey, Vice-Chairman, Dist. 3, (Absent)
Merrill E. Baker, Jr., Dist. 1	Mark NeSmith, Dist. 4
Hershel P. Ansley, Dist. 5	Wiley E. Grady, Dist. 6
Phillip V. Brown, Dist. 7	J. Elaine Mays, Dist. 8

Staff present was Michael Stephenson, County Manager, Bruce Warren, County Attorney, Twink Monahan, County Clerk and Toyna Allen-Brooks, Secretary. Media present was Chris Hurst with WPAX Radio.

Chairman Gross called the meeting to order.

Chairman Gross recognized Commissioner Brown who gave the invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Chairman Gross recognized Commissioner Grady who made a motion to approve the minutes of the July 8, 2014 board meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Ansley. Motion carried unanimously; Chairman Gross, Commissioners Baker, NeSmith, Ansley, Grady, Brown, and Mays voting aye.

Chris Howard, IHOP Sunshine Restaurant Partners presented to the board a PowerPoint presentation describing the type restaurant that will be built here in Thomas County and IHOP's history. At the end of the presentation Mr. Howard asked the board for consideration to waive the impact fees.

Commissioner NeSmith discussed the Impact Fees. He state since the recession, sales tax revenue declined to $3.5 million in 2012. Thomas County's unemployment reached a high of 10.1% (higher only during the Great Depression) in 2009. Though the unemployment rate has since dropped to 7.3% in May of 2014 it remains far above pre-recession levels. In order to promote development of the local economy, Thomas County is considering the exemption of non-residential development from the impact fee for an indefinite period of time.

Chairman Gross recognized Commissioner NeSmith who made a motion to move that the Impact Fee Ordinance of Thomas County be amended by adding a section 6.02 to allow for the impact fee exemption of all non-residential developments due to high unemployment rate and low sales tax revenue for an indefinite period of time. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Brown.

Chairman called for discussion. Commissioner Mays said that since the time period is indefinite, if the economy recovers and unemployment reduces the board will be able to readdress at that time.

Chairman Gross called for a vote. Motion carried unanimously; Chairman Gross, and Commissioners Baker, Ansley, NeSmith, Grady, Brown and Mays voting aye.

Chairman Gross recognized Commissioner NeSmith who made a motion to ratify the gas and diesel purchase on 7/16/2014; Plantation Petroleum, gas at $2.9118 per gallon and diesel at $2.9445 per gallon. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Mays. Motion carried unanimously; Chairman Gross, and Commissioners Baker, Ansley, NeSmith, Grady, Brown and Mays voting aye.

Michael Stephenson, County Manager reported that the 911 Consultant / Needs Assessment proposals are still being evaluated by the User Board.

Chairman Gross recognized Darlene Taylor, State Representative for District 173. Representative Taylor explained that Southwest Georgia Technical College and Moultrie Technical Colleges are merging. She asked the board to consider submitting a letter to the state offices to encourage the selection of Dr. Wentworth, the current president of Southwest Georgia Technical College, to be selected as the president of the merged colleges. The board agreed to submit a letter.

Chairman Gross recognized Dennis Smith, Jr., Thomas County Foster Parents Association. Mr. Smith stated that he is asking the board to waive the insurance requirements for a Special Events Permit. Mr. Smith is wanting to have a fund raiser, yard sale, at the Hancock Center on September 6. After discussion, the board asked Mr. Smith to find out what the cost of the insurance.

Chairman Gross recognized Commissioner NeSmith who made a motion to ratify the poll taken on July 14, 2014 to declare surplus Unit 248 a Prowler camper trailer to be sold at the August 18, 2014 auction. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Grady. Motion carried unanimously; Chairman Gross and Commissioners Baker, Ansley, NeSmith, Grady, Brown and Mays voting aye.

Chairman Gross recognized Commissioner Mays who made a motion to set the Tentative 2014 Millage rate by reducing the Millage Rate in all 6 taxing districts from the 2013 rates; Incorporated at 9.312, Unincorporated at 8.053, Emergency Services at 1.799, Fire District 1 at 3.284, Fire District 2 at 3.290, and Fire District 3 at 2.390. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Ansley. Motion carried unanimously; Chairman Gross and Commissioners Baker, Ansley, NeSmith, Grady, Brown and Mays voting aye.

2014 Millage Rates – Recommended (at or below the roll-back rate)

	Digest by District	Millage Rate	Net Taxes
Incorporated	722,512,832	9.312	6,728,039
	Less insurance premium rollback	*1.259*	
Unincorporated	817,993,256	8.053	6,587,300
Emer. Services	1,564,704,343	1.799	2,814,903
Fire District 1	159,822,264	3.284	524,856
Fire District 2	192,398,723	3.290	632,992
Fire District 3	473,199,652	2.390	1,130,947

Chairman Gross recognized Toyna Allen-Brooks and glad to have her back in the office after an extended illness.

Chairman Gross recognize Commissioner Brown who made a motion to go into executive closed session to discuss personnel as provided in O.C.G.A. §50-14-3-(6). The motion was seconded by Commissioner NeSmith. Motion carried unanimously; Chairman Gross and Commissioners Baker, Ansley, NeSmith, Grady, Brown and Mays voting aye.

Chairman Gross recognize Commissioner Brown who made a motion to return to open session and reported that there is no action to be taken. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Grady. Motion carried unanimously; Chairman Gross and Commissioners Baker, Ansley, NeSmith, Grady, Brown and Mays voting aye.

Chairman Gross recognized Commissioner NeSmith who made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Ansley. Motion carried unanimously; Chairman Gross and Commissioners Baker, Ansley, NeSmith, Grady, Brown and Mays voting aye.

Moses L. Gross

Moses L. Gross, Chairman

M. Twink Monahan

M. Twink Monahan, County Clerk