

Minutes
Historic Courthouse, Board Chambers, 3rd Floor
225 North Board Street
June 22, 2021

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
Mark NeSmith, Dist. 4
Zippy T. Vonier, Dist. 8

Staff present was County Manager Michael J. Stephenson, County Attorney Bruce Warren, Planning Director Ken Gay, Zoning Administrator Donna Holbert, Public Works Director Tony Bodiford, Fleet Services Director Jamie Parrott, Sheriff Carlton Powell, and County Clerk Celeste Tyler.

News/Media present: Chris Hurst, WPAX and Pat Donahue, Thomasville Times Enterprise

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

Chairman Brown recognized Commissioner Grady who made a motion to approve the minutes of the June 8, 2021 Board Meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Baggett. The motion was approved unanimously with Chairman Brown and Commissioners Baggett, Grady, Gross, Hickey, NeSmith, Rich, and Vonier voting aye.

Chairman Brown declared a public hearing and recognized Donna Holbert, Zoning Administrator. Donna Holbert introduced application 21-6-1 from Gerald Pionessa, Jr., agent for property owner, RCA, LLC for rezoning the property located on U.S. Hwy. 19 South. This property consists of 12.91 acres, more or less, and the request is to rezone a 6.8 acre, more or less, portion of this parcel from Industrial to MHP for the expansion for 31 proposed lots of the existing Manufactured Home Park known as Pinetree Place MHP located on Pinetree Boulevard. The portion of the subject parcel that is requesting to be rezoned adjoins the existing Manufactured Home Park that is located on Pinetree Boulevard. The Planning Staff recommends approval of this application.

Donna Holbert introduced application 21-6-2. The applicant is Thomas Asbury, Jr., agent for the property owners, James R. Clanton, Jr., and Beverly Clanton Wilford for property located on Patterson Still Road (Map 45, Parcel 259) consisting of 44 acres, more or less. The request is to rezone this property from R-1 (Single Family Residential) to R-4 (Single Family Residential) CSD (Conservation Subdivision Development) which will allow for the development of a conservation subdivision development for single family residential detached homes. This will be a clustered development with reduced lot sizes. The developer is proposing this to be a planned active adult 55+ community. The Planning Staff recommends approval of this application.

Mr. Asbury addressed the Board and referenced the conceptual plan in their packet. He recently met with neighbors in the area and answered their primary concerns. His feedback from the conversations have been positive. Many of them have expressed the desire to partake in the project once the homes are built.

With no further questions, comments, or opposition, Chairman Brown closed the Public Hearing.

Chairman Brown recognized Commissioner Grady who made a motion to approve application 21-6-1. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Rich. The motion was approved unanimously with Chairman Brown and Commissioners Baggett, Grady, Gross, Hickey, NeSmith, Rich, and Vonier voting aye.

Chairman Brown recognized Commissioner NeSmith who made a motion to approve application 21-6-2. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Baggett. The motion was approved unanimously with Chairman Brown and Commissioners Baggett, Grady, Gross, Hickey, NeSmith, Rich, and Vonier voting aye.

Chairman Brown recognized George R. Lilly, II who addressed the Board regarding the Thomas County School District Educational Sales Tax and the need for a Resolution by Thomas County Commissioners to provide sufficient ad valorem taxation. Mr. Lilly stated that this was the fifth sales tax approved by the voters (18 million dollars validated on May 20, 2021). Georgia law requires the approval from the County Commissioners in case there would be a deficiency. The proposed Resolution was reviewed by County Attorney Warren.

Chairman Brown recognized Commissioner Grady who made a motion to adopt the Resolution as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Hickey. The motion was approved 7-0-1 with Chairman Brown and Commissioners Baggett, Grady Gross, Hickey, NeSmith, and Vonier voting aye. Commissioner Rich abstained as a current employee of the Thomas County School System.

A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THOMAS COUNTY TO ASSURE COMPLIANCE WITH THE CONSTITUTION OF THE STATE OF GEORGIA BY ASSESSING AND PROVIDING FOR THE COLLECTION OF A DIRECT ANNUAL TAX SUFFICIENT TO PAY THE PRINCIPAL OF AND INTEREST ON GENERAL OBLIGATION SALES TAX BONDS TO BE ISSUED BY THE THOMAS COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT IN THE AGGREGATE PRINCIPAL AMOUNT OF \$18,000,000, AS AUTHORIZED AT AN ELECTION HELD FOR THAT PURPOSE ON MARCH 16, 2021, PURSUANT TO AND IN CONFORMITY WITH THE CONSTITUTION AND STATUTES OF THE STATE OF GEORGIA, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

WHEREAS, at an election duly called and held in Thomas County on March 16, 2021 (the "**Election**"), after notice thereof had been given to the qualified voters of Thomas County for the time and in the manner required by law, a majority of the qualified voters of Thomas County and the Thomas County School District (the "**School District**"), a political subdivision of the State of Georgia, voting in the Election voted in favor of (i) the reimposition in Thomas County of a one percent sales and use tax for educational purposes (the "**Educational Sales Tax**") for a period of time not to exceed 20 consecutive calendar quarters, which tax shall be distributed between the School District and the City of Thomasville School District, and (ii) the issuance of general obligation debt by the School District for the purposes set forth in a joint resolution adopted by the Board of Education of Thomas County (the "**Board of Education**"), as the controlling and managing body of the School District, and the Board of Education of the City of Thomasville on December 8, 2020, and December 15, 2020, respectively; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to the results of the Election and the provisions of a bond resolution adopted on June 8, 2021 (the "**Bond Resolution**"), the Board of Education has authorized the issuance of \$18,000,000

in aggregate principal amount of THOMAS COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT GENERAL OBLIGATION SALES TAX BONDS, SERIES 2021 (the "Bonds"); and

WHEREAS, the Board of Education has determined that the Educational Sales Tax received by the School District in each year will be sufficient to pay fully all principal of and interest on the Bonds coming due in each year; and

WHEREAS, payment of the principal of and interest on the Bonds will be secured by and payable first from the Educational Sales Tax and then, if and to the extent necessary, from *ad valorem* taxes to be levied in the School District; and

WHEREAS, the Bonds shall constitute debt of the School District within the meaning of Article IX, Section V, Paragraph I of the Constitution of the State of Georgia; and

WHEREAS, Article IX, Section V, Paragraph VI of the Constitution of the State of Georgia provides that, at or before the time of incurring bonded indebtedness, provision must be made for the assessment and collection of an annual tax in an amount sufficient to pay the principal of and interest on said debt within 30 years from incurring such bonded indebtedness; and

WHEREAS, the Bonds and the issuance thereof have been confirmed and validated by judgment of the Superior Court of Thomas County, Georgia, which judgment has ordered and adjudged that the Board of Education was and is authorized and empowered to recommend to the Board of Commissioners of Thomas County (the "Board of Commissioners") the assessment and collection of a continuing direct annual tax to be levied on all the taxable property located within the boundaries of the School District, which comprise all of Thomas County except the area located within the corporate limits of the City of Thomasville (which has its own independent school system), in an amount sufficient to pay the principal of and the interest on the Bonds in accordance with the terms thereof, to the extent the proceeds of the Educational Sales Tax are not sufficient for that purpose; and

WHEREAS, in order to provide for the assessment and collection of a continuing direct annual tax to be levied on all the taxable property subject to taxation for bond purposes located within the boundaries of School District in an amount sufficient to pay the principal of and the interest on the Bonds as the same shall mature and become due, to the extent such principal and interest are not paid from proceeds of the Educational Sales Tax, the Board of Education, by resolution adopted on June 8, 2021, a certified copy of which resolution has been received by the Board of Commissioners, has recommended to the Board of Commissioners that such tax be assessed and collected in the appropriate years, sufficient in amount to produce the sums required to pay the principal of and interest on the Bonds to the extent the proceeds from the Educational Sales Tax received by the School District are not sufficient to make such payments, and that the funds provided by said tax shall be pledged irrevocably to and appropriated for the payment of the principal of and the interest on the Bonds

NOW, THEREFORE, be it resolved by the Board of Commissioners of Thomas County, in meeting assembled, that:

Section 1. TAX ASSESSMENT FOR PAYMENT OF BONDS. For the purpose of providing funds for the payment of the principal of and interest on all of the Bonds on the dates on which such principal and interest shall become due and be payable, to the extent such principal and interest are not paid from the proceeds of the Educational Sales Tax, there shall be and hereby is assessed and collected and there hereafter shall be collected in the appropriate years, beginning in the year 2021, a continuing direct annual tax upon all the taxable property within the boundaries of the School District, sufficient in amount to produce the sums required to pay the principal of the Bonds coming due on March 1 and the interest coming due on the Bonds on March 1 and September 1 in each of the years set forth on Exhibit A attached hereto and incorporated herein, through March 1, 2028, to the extent capitalized interest from the Bonds and proceeds from the Educational Sales Tax received by the School District are not sufficient to make such payments.

Section 2. FUNDS PLEDGED FOR PAYMENT OF BONDS. The funds provided by said tax shall be and hereby are irrevocably pledged to and appropriated for the payment of the principal of and interest on the Bonds, and provisions to meet the requirements hereof shall be made hereafter in due time and manner in the annual appropriation measure in each year, to the extent such principal and interest are not paid from the proceeds of the Educational Sales Tax, so that all of the Bonds, as to principal and interest, shall be fully paid as the same shall mature and become due.

Section 3. PUBLICATION OF TAX RATE. The Board of Commissioners, as levying authority, together with the Board of Education, as recommending authority, shall comply with the provisions of O.C.G.A. § 48-5-32, and all other statutory requirements as may exist from time to time relating to the publication of any reports or notices required prior to establishing millage rates each year for educational purposes, and shall take such other actions as may be required for the assessment and collection of taxes to provide funds in the years and amounts set forth in this resolution, to the extent the proceeds of the Educational Sales Tax received by the School District are not sufficient for that purpose. The Board of Commissioners and the Board of Education shall cause a report to be published in a newspaper of general circulation throughout Thomas County at least two weeks prior to the establishment of the millage rates for ad valorem taxes for educational purposes during the current calendar year, in accordance with O.C.G.A. § 48-5-32.

Section 4. COMPLIANCE WITH CONSTITUTION. This resolution is adopted in order to assure compliance with Article IX, Section V, Paragraph VI of the Constitution of the State of Georgia. The Board of Education has determined that the Educational Sales Tax received by the School District in each year will be sufficient to pay fully all principal of and interest on the Bonds coming due in each year. The Board of Commissioners will take no action to establish a millage levy for the payment of any portion of the principal of and interest on the Bonds from *ad valorem* taxes until the Board of Education certifies to it any millage required for such purposes.

Section 5. CONFLICTING PROVISIONS REPEALED. Any and all resolutions or parts of resolutions, if any, in conflict herewith shall be and the same are repealed by the passage of this resolution.

RESOLUTION APPROVED AND ADOPTED, June 22, 2021.

Chairman Brown recognized Commissioner Baggett who made a motion to approve the petition by Merritt and Rick Scott to name the unnamed lane located at land lot 278 in land district - 17 to Cool Springs Lane. The motion was seconded by Commissioner NeSmith. The motion was approved unanimously with Chairman Brown and Commissioners Baggett, Grady, Gross, Hickey, NeSmith, Rich, and Vonier voting aye.

Open Meeting to the Citizens: Chairman Brown recognized Gloria Glass of Boston, Georgia who referenced her April 7, 2021 letter to Board of Commissioners requesting a resolution to ensure there's a procedural system in place to assist voters who are without the benefit of technology. She also stated fire safety concerns with the new Elections & Registration Building.ⁱ

Chairman Brown recognized Shirley Jackson of Thomasville, Georgia, Audrey Linder of Thomasville, Georgia, and Nate Tyler of Thomasville, Georgia who asked for consideration of ARPA funds (American Rescue Plan Act) to be distributed to underserved populations and people of color who have suffered greatly during the pandemic. Non-profit organizations that focus on these populations were also highlighted. A request for future public meetings where non-traditional funding opportunities can be discussed was made.

Chairman Brown recognized Al Bryan of Meigs, Georgia who updated the Board of Commissioners on the successful volunteer Tax Program that was held again this year (8 years in participation). This program is

a collaborative effort between the IRS, University of Georgia, the Rotary Club, and Envision Credit Union. Three hundred ninety- one tax returns were completed with \$500,000.00 in returns realized.

Reports: Chairman Brown recognized County Manager Stephenson who presented the proposal for Premium Pay for First Responders and Essential Support Workers from the American Rescue Plan – Act of 2021. He presented the Premium Pay Process noting the guidelines and the restrictions.

Chairman Brown recognized Commissioner Rich who made a motion to approve Premium Pay for Thomas County First Responders and Essential Support Workers as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Baggett. The motion was approved unanimously with Chairman Brown and Commissioners Baggett, Grady, Gross, Hickey, NeSmith, Rich, and Vonier voting aye.

Commissioner Rich made a motion to authorize the Chairman of the Board to sign documentation that declares essential worker status according to the guidelines set forth by Homeland Security. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Baggett. The motion was approved unanimously with Chairman Brown and Commissioners Baggett, Grady, Gross, Hickey, NeSmith, Rich, and Vonier voting aye.

Commissioner Hickey commented that he was glad that our employees will be the recipients of hazard pay but stressed the importance of acknowledging that the funds are not perpetual. Commissioner Rich noted that the economic impact for our community will be 27 million dollars with the approval of Premium Pay. County Manager Stephenson commented that Phase 2 of the ARPA funds will be received next year and funding for non-profits is still available.

Chairman Brown recognized Commissioner Hickey who made a motion to ratify the Collier Sand Lease Agreement. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Baggett. The motion was approved unanimously with Chairman Brown and Commissioners Baggett, Grady, Gross, Hickey, NeSmith, Rich, and Vonier voting aye.

Commissioner Hickey made a motion to proceed with a Request for Proposal (RFP) for archery and walking trails at the Ranges at Oakfield. The motion was seconded by Commissioner NeSmith. The motion was approved unanimously with Chairman Brown and Commissioners, Baggett, Grady, Gross, Hickey, NeSmith, Rich, and Vonier voting aye.

Commissioner Hickey also made a motion to amend the 17-SPLOST Budget for \$178,000 to include all roads in the LMIG Project Report. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Vonier. The motion was approved unanimously with Chairman Brown and Commissioners, Baggett, Grady, Gross, Hickey, NeSmith, Rich, and Vonier voting aye.

**2021 BUDGET AMENDMENT 21-6-1
GENERAL FUND (100)
June 22, 2021**

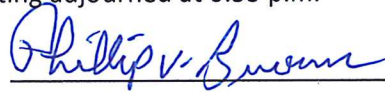
Account	Description	Original 2021 Budget	Amended Budget	Difference
Expenses				
329-4200-52-1310	Cont. Const./Road Striping	230,360	408,360	178,000
329-9010-57-9000	Contingencies	2,650,750	2,472,750	-178,000
	Total			0

Net Increase to Expenses

\$0

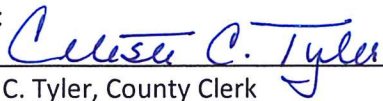
The upcoming committee meetings were announced. The Purchase Committee will meet at the Historic Courthouse on July 6, 2021, the Personnel Committee will meet at the Historic Courthouse on June 23, 2021 at 8:30 a.m., and the Public Property Committee will meet at the Historic Courthouse on July 1, 2021 at 8:30 a.m.

Chairman Brown made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Rich. The motion was approved unanimously with Chairman Brown and Commissioners Baggett, Grady, Gross, Hickey, NeSmith, Rich, and Vonier voting aye. The meeting adjourned at 6:53 p.m.



Phillip V. Brown, Chairman

ATTEST:



Celeste C. Tyler, County Clerk

¹ Document dated 12/11/2019 / Elections Building / Planning Dept.