

Minutes
Historic Courthouse, Board Chambers, 3rd Floor
225 North Board Street
October 12, 2021

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:

Phillip V. Brown, Chairman, Dist. 7
Rev. Jeremy G. Rich, Dist. 1 (absent)
Kenneth E. Hickey, District 3 (absent)
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, Public Works Director Tony Bodiford, Facilities and Maintenance Director Lyndall Knight, Insurance/Benefits Jessie Winkelmann, and County Clerk Celeste Tyler

Others present: Ranger Todd Milam and Ranger Trey Ezell, Georgia Forestry Commission, John Taylor and Brittany Stephenson, Taylor Benefit Resource, and Donna Newberry

News/Media present: Chris Hurst, WPAX radio

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

Chairman Brown recognized Commissioner NeSmith who made a motion to approve the minutes of the September 28, 2021 Board Meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Grady. The motion was approved unanimously with Chairman Brown and Commissioners Baggett, Grady, Gross, NeSmith, and Vonier voting aye.

Chairman Brown recognized Ranger Todd Milam who presented the 2021 Georgia Forestry Commission Annual Report for Thomas County to the Commissioners. Thomas County contributed \$7464.00 to the Georgia Forestry Commission during the 2021 fiscal year toward the cost of protecting the forest land in the County. There were 5 wildfires, a substantial reduction from the 27 wildfires in 2020. There were 7,555 burn permits issued, a decrease of approximately 43% from 2020. Burning hand piles of natural vegetation no longer requires a permit.

Chairman Brown recognized Mrs. Donna Newberry who requested a one -day special event permit for Saturday, October 30, 2021. The festival will be held at the Deep South Fair Grounds and proceeds will go toward the Devyn Newberry DN9 Scholarship Fund. All required licensure for vendors providing alcohol have been submitted to the County Clerk, and two deputies from the Sheriff's Office are scheduled to work the event.

Chairman Brown recognized Commissioner Grady who made a motion to approve the one-day special event permit request. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Baggett. The motion was approved unanimously with Chairman Brown and Commissioners Baggett, Grady, Gross, NeSmith, and Vonier voting aye.

Chairman Brown recognized Tony Bodiford who updated the Board on the Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Program Pre-Application. Grant submission is due no later than October 15th. Tony recommends a 37.5%

match over the 25% minimum required match in order to have a more competitive application. County Manager Stephenson agreed. The match includes in-kind services.

Chairman Brown recognized Commissioner Baggett who made a motion to authorize Tony Bodiford and/or Jay Knight to submit the Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Program Pre-Application. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Grady. The motion was approved unanimously with Chairman Brown and Commissioners Baggett, Grady, Gross, NeSmith, and Vonier voting aye.

Commissioner Baggett made a motion to approve a Resolution for the Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Program. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Grady. The motion was approved unanimously with Chairman Brown, and Commissioners Baggett, Grady, Gross, NeSmith, and Vonier voting aye.

**RESOLUTION FOR THE GEORGIA OUTDOOR STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM PRE-APPLICATION
THOMAS COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

STATE OF GEORGIA

COUNTY OF: THOMAS

Whereas, at the Thomas County Board of Commissioners’ regular meeting held on October 12, 2021 a motion was made and duly seconded that Thomas County agrees to submit a pre-application for funding from the Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Program (GOSP). The Thomas County Board of Commissioners further agree that in the event that the pre-application is recommended for funding by the Board of Trustees and Department of Natural Resources, the Thomas County Board of Commissioners certifies and assures that it has the ability and intention to finance all project elements that will be submitted for reimbursement, as well as the 37.5% total project match as submitted, and will move forward with due diligence to prepare, or have prepared, appropriate documentation required for a second-level GOSP application. Additionally, the Thomas County Board of Commissioners recognize and commit to the on-going, long- term maintenance of the project.



Chairman Brown recognized John Taylor of Taylor Benefit Resource who went over the Benefit Changes beginning January 1, 2022. The Wellness and Annual Health Screening once performed by Archbold Medical Hospital will now be conducted by the employee’s primary care physician. The Annual Health Screening must be held in September or October in order to qualify for discounted premiums. Also, effective January 1, 2022, ALL premiums will be increased. The new rates are as follows:

| Enrollment Coverage Level | Without Screening | With Screening |
|---------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Single | \$115.00 bi-weekly | \$40.00 bi-weekly |
| Family | \$425.00 bi-weekly | \$140.00 bi-weekly |

Chairman Brown recognized County Manager Stephenson who went over the proposed Residential Moratorium. The purpose of the moratorium is to allow the Thomas County Board of Commissioners sufficient time to review residential land use standards districts, and to propose amendments to those land use standards districts, as necessary, to accommodate current land development conditions and trends in the unincorporated county.

Chairman Brown recognized Commissioner Grady who made a motion to enact a moratorium on accepting rezoning applications in the following land use standards districts in unincorporated Thomas County:

- R-1 Residential, Single Family
- R-2 Residential, Single Family
- R-3 Residential, Mixed Use
- R-4 Residential, Single Family, Attached
- RM-11 Residential, Multiple-Family
- R-87 Residential, Single Family
- MHP, Manufactured Home

The motion was seconded by Commissioner Baggett. The motion was approved unanimously with Chairman Brown, and Commissioners Baggett, Grady, Gross, NeSmith, and Vonier voting aye.

Chairman Brown recognized County Manager Stephenson who reported on a meeting he had with Judge Prine who is interested in setting up an Accountability Court for eligible individuals who struggle with substance abuse and mental health issues. This program serves as an alternative to incarceration and has proven successful for some in other counties. Currently the Thomas County Superior Court is the only court in the Southern Judicial Circuit without an Accountability Court. County Manager Stephenson recommends amending the budget in order to give Judge Prine immediate resources. The requested amount would satisfy the program until the end of December. Meanwhile the Program Director will give a presentation at the November Budget Workshop seeking annual funding for 2022. The current annual cost to operate an Accountability Court is approximately \$200,000.00. The cost to the County would be 10% or approximately \$20,000.00.

Chairman Brown recognized Commissioner Baggett who made a motion to amend the 2021 Budget 21-10-1 as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner NeSmith. The motion was approved unanimously with Chairman Brown and Commissioners Baggett, Grady, Gross, NeSmith, and Vonier voting aye.

**2021 BUDGET AMENDMENT 21-10-1
GENERAL FUND (100)
October 12, 2021**

| Account | Description | Original 2021 Budget | Amended Budget | Difference |
|-----------------|----------------------------|----------------------|----------------|------------|
| Revenues | | | | |
| 100-34-6510 | Accountability Court Grant | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | | | | |
| | Total | | | 0 |

Net Increase to Revenues \$0

| Account | Description | Original 2021 Budget | Amended Budget | Difference |
|------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|----------------|------------|
| Expenses | | | | |
| 100-2160-52-1212 | Court Coordinator | 0 | 3,000 | 3,000 |
| 100-2160-52-1214 | Case Manager | 0 | 1,500 | 1,500 |
| 100-2160-52-1216 | Field Supervision Officer | 0 | 1,000 | 1,000 |

| | | | | |
|------------------|-------------------------------|---------|---------|----------|
| 100-2160-52-1218 | Treatment Provider | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 100-2160-52-3500 | Travel | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 100-2160-52-3700 | Training & Education | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 100-2160-53-1151 | Accountability Court Expenses | 0 | 500 | 500 |
| 100-9010-61-2005 | Contingencies | 302,853 | 296,853 | -6,000 |
| | | | | |
| | Total | | | 0 |

Net Increase to Expenses

\$0

County Manager Stephenson distributed a revised plan for the American Rescue Plan – Act of 2021 which reflects an increase in broadband infrastructure for consideration.

Commissioner Grady announced that the Public Works Committee will meet at the Historic Courthouse on October 14, 2021, 8:30 a.m.

Chairman Brown recognized Commissioner Baggett 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, Gross, NeSmith, and Vonier voting aye. The meeting adjourned at 9:23 a.m.

Phillip V. Brown, Chairman

ATTEST:

Celeste C. Tyler, County Clerk