

Minutes
Historic Courthouse, Board Chambers, 3rd Floor
225 North Board Street
January 10, 2023

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

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, Capt. Chuck McDonald, Fleet Services Director Jamie Parrott, and County Clerk Celeste Tyler.

News/Media present: Jill Holloway, Thomasville Times Enterprise; Chris Hurst, WPAX Radio

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

Chairman NeSmith recognized Commissioner Grady who made a motion to approve the minutes of the December 13, 2022 Board Meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Rich. The motion was approved unanimously with Chairman NeSmith and Commissioners Baggett, Brown, Grady, Gross, Hickey, Rich, and Vonier voting aye.

Chairman NeSmith turned the meeting over to County Attorney Bruce Warren who asked for nominations for the 2023 Chairman of the Board. Commissioner Brown nominated Commissioner Mark NeSmith. Commissioner Grady seconded the nomination. Commissioner Gross nominated Commissioner Zippy Vonier. Commissioner Rich seconded the nomination. With no other nominations forthcoming, County Attorney Warren ceased the nominating period. County Attorney Warren asked for a show of hands of who was in favor of Commissioner NeSmith. Commissioners Brown, Grady, Hickey, and NeSmith raised their hands. County Attorney Warren asked for a show of hands of who was in favor of Commissioner Vonier. Commissioners Baggett, Gross, Rich, and Vonier raised their hands. With the vote resulting in a 4-4 tie, County Attorney Warren opened the floor back up for nominations for 2023 Chairman of the Board. Commissioner Hickey nominated Commissioner Phillip Brown. Commissioner Grady seconded the nomination. Commissioner Gross nominated Commissioner Zippy Vonier. Commissioner Rich seconded the nomination. With no other nominations forthcoming, County Attorney Warren ceased the nominating period. County Attorney Warren asked for a show of hands of who was in favor of Commissioner Brown. Commissioners Grady, Hickey, and NeSmith raised their hands. County Attorney Warren asked for a show of hands of who was in favor of Commissioner Vonier. Commissioners Baggett, Gross, Rich, and Vonier raised their hands. With the abstention of Commissioner Brown, Commissioner Zippy Vonier secured the 2023 Chairman

of the Board position with a 4-3 vote. County Attorney Warren asked for nominations for the 2023 Vice-Chairman of the Board. Commissioner Gross nominated Commissioner Donnie Baggett. Commissioner Rich seconded the motion. Commissioner NeSmith nominated Commissioner Wiley Grady. Commissioner Grady asked to have his name withdrawn due to health reasons. With no other nominations forthcoming, County Attorney Warren ceased the nominating period. County Attorney asked for a show of hands of who was in favor of Commissioner Donnie Baggett. Commissioners Baggett, Gross, Rich, and Vonier raised their hands. Commissioner Donnie Baggett secured the 2023 Vice-Chairman of the Board position with a 4-0 vote.

With the changing of the gavel, Chairman Vonier conducted the rest of the meeting.

Chairman Vonier recognized Commissioner NeSmith who made a motion to re-appoint Bruce Warren as the County Attorney. Commissioner Baggett seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with Chairman Vonier and Commissioners Baggett, Brown, Grady, Gross, Hickey, NeSmith and Rich voting aye.

Chairman Vonier recognized Deron Rehberg with the University of Georgia Extension Service. He introduced Olivia Tumlin, the new Family & Consumer Science Agent. Olivia came to us from Lowndes County and is replacing Ashleigh Childs. Chairman Vonier welcomed Olivia to Thomas County.

Chairman Vonier recognized Commissioner Baggett who made a motion to adopt Georgia Official Code 31-19 as a reference for controlling rabies. County Manager Stephenson explained that the Georgia Code is not only a reference but an enforcement mechanism. The motion was seconded by Commissioner NeSmith. The motion was approved unanimously with Chairman Vonier and Commissioners Baggett, Brown, Grady, Gross, Hickey, NeSmith, and Rich voting aye.

Chairman Vonier recognized County Manager Stephenson who recommended appointing Capt. Chuck McDonald with the Sheriff's Office, Spencer Bowen, the Environmental Health Manager with the Department of Public Health, and Chief Joseph Pettus with the Boston Police Department to the Thomas County Animal Control Board.

Chairman Vonier recognized Commissioner Grady who made a motion to approve Capt. Chuck McDonald, Spencer Bowen, and Chief Joseph Pettus to the Thomas County Animal Control Board. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Hickey. The motion was approved unanimously with Chairman Vonier and Commissioners Baggett, Brown, Grady, Gross, Hickey, NeSmith, and Rich voting aye.

Open Meeting to the Citizens: Chairman Vonier recognized Candee Henderson of 1453 Egg and Butter Rd., Thomasville, Georgia who requested a resolution from Thomas County be adopted that would commit to the goal of 100% renewable energy by 2035. Chairman Vonier recognized Jeanette Dixon of 148 Cindy Dr. Thomasville, Georgia who commented that she was delighted with the amended Animal Control Ordinance but disheartened by the separation between the

Humane Society and Thomas County and fears her chickens cannot be protected. Chairman Vonier recognized Judy Bradshaw of 314 Oak Trail, Thomasville, Georgia who spoke in favor of a continued relationship between the Humane Society and the County and referenced the valuable resources that the Humane Society provides. Chairman Vonier recognized James Herbert of 620 Marshall Street, Thomasville, Georgia who expressed his concern with the new level of animal control service and spoke on a Rottweiler that keeps coming in his yard. When calling the Humane Society and E-911 he was told there was nothing they could do until the dog causes harm. Chairman Vonier recognized Shirley Jackson of 727 Crowley Rd., Thomasville, Georgia who asked for procedures that are to be followed in regards to animal control. Chairman Vonier recognized Angela Baggett of 101 Point Rd., Thomasville, Georgia who pleaded with both organizations to get together, have a meeting of the minds and do what's best for the taxpayer and the County. Chairman Vonier recognized Dawn Deleo of 220 Fontaine Dr., Thomasville, Georgia who asked for the Humane Society to be funded. As a volunteer for two years with the organization, she has witnessed first-hand the care and nurturing the Humane Society provides and showed before and after pictures depicting the transformation.

Reports:

Chairman Vonier recognized County Manager Stephenson who in turn recognized Zoning Administrator Donna Holbert. Donna introduced Application 23-1-1. Alicia Nicholson, applicant, spouse of property owner, has applied for a conditional use zoning for property located at 101 Paces Lane, Map 015A, Parcel 001 (.52 of an acre, more or less.) This property is currently zoned R-3 (Residential, Mixed Use.) The request is for a conditional use zoning to allow the property to be used as a family personal care home for up to six (6) people. If approved, the zoning of the property will be R-3 C.U. (Conditional Use, Family Personal Care Home up to six people.) This application will be presented at a Public Hearing on January 24, 2023. Commissioner Baggett asked if they had heard of any opposition. Donna stated that they have received one complaint from a neighbor.

County Manager Stephenson recognized Planning Director Ken Gay. Ken updated the Board on Evergreen Brook Apartments (US Hwy 319 South) and stated that the developer will have a preliminary plat and copy of the layout and design at the next Commissioners' Meeting.

Chairman Vonier recognized Commissioner NeSmith who made a motion to ratify the purchase of diesel fuel from Petroleum Products for \$3.1350/gal on December 14, 2022. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Baggett. The motion was approved unanimously with Chairman Vonier and Commissioners Baggett, Brown, Grady, Gross, Hickey, NeSmith, and Rich voting aye.

Commissioner NeSmith made a motion to ratify approval of low bidder, Consolidated Pipe & Supply for the water line materials for the Southside Station (\$10,576.25). The motion was seconded by Commissioner Rich. The motion was approved unanimously with Chairman Vonier and Commissioners Baggett, Brown, Grady, Gross, Hickey, and Rich voting aye.

Commissioner NeSmith made a motion to ratify bid approval to purchase an engine replacement for 2012 Pierce Engine (Engine 8) from Action of Dothan for \$21,991.13 plus freight and remove

and install the engine by DSI for \$7500.00. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Baggett. The motion was approved unanimously with Chairman Vonier and Commissioners Baggett, Brown, Grady, Gross, Hickey, and Rich voting aye.

Chairman Vonier recognized Commissioner Baggett who made a motion to ratify approval to add curb & gutter and change parking lot to asphalt for the Southside Station. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Rich. The motion was approved unanimously with Chairman Vonier and Commissioners Baggett, Brown, Grady, Gross, Hickey, and Rich voting aye

Chairman Vonier recognized Commissioner Grady who proposed the cancellation of the Emergency Services Committee meeting on January 17th due to his surgery on January 16th.

Chairman Vonier recognized Commissioner Gross who stated that he would like to keep the Emergency Services Committee meeting on the 17th since the Committee hasn't met in a couple of months. Chairman Vonier agreed to keep the meeting scheduled for Tuesday, January 17, 2023 at 8:30 a.m.

Chairman Vonier recognized Commissioner Rich who made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Baggett. The motion was approved unanimously with Chairman Vonier and Commissioners Baggett, Brown, Grady, Gross, Hickey, and Rich voting aye The meeting adjourned at 9:48 a.m.



Zippy Vonier, Chairman

ATTEST:


Celeste C. Tyler, County Clerk