

Minutes  
Historic Courthouse, Board Chambers, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
225 North Board Street  
August 13, 2024

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:

**Wiley Grady, Chairman Dist. 6**

Rev. Jeremy G. Rich, Dist. 1 (absent)

Kenneth E. Hickey, District 3

Phillip V. Brown, Dist. 7

**Donnie L. Baggett, Vice-Chair Dist. 5**

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, Zoning Administrator Donna Holbert, Public Works Director Tony Bodiford, Transit Director Corey McGee, Sheriff Carlton Powell, Tax Commissioner Alicia Hester, Tax Assessor Daniel Stokes, and County Clerk Celeste Tyler.

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

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

Chairman Grady recognized Commissioner Brown who made a motion to approve the minutes of the July 23, 2024 Board Meeting. Commissioner Hickey seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with Chairman Grady, Commissioners Baggett, Brown, Gross, Hickey, NeSmith, and Vonier voting aye.

Chairman Grady recognized Commissioner Baggett who made a motion to approve the agenda for the August 13, 2024 Board Meeting. Commissioner NeSmith seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with Chairman Grady, Commissioners Baggett, Brown, Gross, Hickey, NeSmith, and Vonier voting aye.

Chairman Grady recognized Mark Stanley of 105 Mary's Court, Ochlocknee, Georgia who presented his concerns over the Thomas County School tax. According to Mr. Stanley, a group of concerned citizens has filed a formal complaint with the State of Georgia against the Thomas County School Board citing a violation of the Open Meeting Act for its August 7, 2024 meeting. On said date, a Public Hearing was scheduled at 5:00 p.m. and was held with no elected school board members present. Mr. Stanley had several questions regarding the 12.6 million grant that the school could receive by raising the millage rate. The goal of the group is to require Thomas County Schools to re-conduct 3 public meetings with a quorum of school board members to appropriately allow community involvement in the process.

**New Business:** Chairman Grady recognized Commissioner Baggett who made a motion to adopt the Resolution and approve the 2024 millage rates for Thomas County and Thomas County Board of Education with a set due date of November 15, 2024. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Brown. The motion passed unanimously with Chairman Grady, Commissioners Baggett, Brown, Gross, Hickey, NeSmith, and Vonier voting aye.

**RESOLUTION**  
**THOMAS COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**  
P.O. BOX 920  
THOMASVILLE, GEORGIA 31799  
August 13, 2024

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Board of Commissioners of Thomas County, Georgia, sitting for County purposes in a special called meeting and for the purpose of setting millage and levying a tax for 2024, that it be and is hereby ordered that six and four hundred twenty thousandths (6.420) mills on each one dollar of all taxable property in the incorporated areas of said Thomas County, and that it be and is hereby ordered that six and four hundred twenty thousandths (6.420) mills with a roll back of Insurance Premium Tax of one and five hundred eighty five thousandths (1.585) mills leaving four and eight hundred thirty five thousandths (4.835) mills on each one dollar of all taxable property in the unincorporated area in said Thomas County, be and the same is hereby levied for Thomas County purposes, said rate to be apportioned for legal purposes of said Thomas County under constitutional limitations of the State of Georgia; and that the Tax Commissioner of Thomas County be, and is hereby instructed to collect the same for said Thomas County purposes, as provided by law; and,

WHEREAS: The proper Legislation was enacted and a referendum was held there under as provided therein on June 16, 1965, at which time the voters of Fire District Number 1 and 2, as described in said Legislation approved said Act creating fire districts in Thomas County and authorizing the Board of Commissioners of Thomas County, Georgia, to levy upon the taxable value of all property within such fire districts for fire protection purposes in said districts.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Board of Commissioners of Thomas County, Georgia, sitting in regular meeting for County purposes, that it be and it is hereby ordered that two and one hundred sixty eight thousandths (2.168) mills upon the taxable value of each one dollar of all property located in said County Fire District 1, and two and one hundred twelve thousandths (2.112) mills upon taxable value of each one dollar of all property located in said Fire District 2, as described in said act creating Fire Districts in Thomas County, be and the same is hereby levied for the purpose of said County furnishing fire protection services within such district; and that the Tax Commissioner of Thomas County be, and is hereby instructed to collect the same for said purposes by law; and,

WHEREAS: The Board of Commissioners of Thomas County have adopted Resolution dated December 9, 1986, that there is created within Thomas County, Georgia, pursuant to the authority of Article IX, Section II, paragraph VI, of the Constitution of the State of Georgia, of 1983, a special service district to be known as Fire District No. 3 of Thomas County, Georgia.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Board of Commissioners of Thomas County, Georgia, sitting in regular meeting for County purposes, that it be and it is hereby ordered that one and eight hundred sixty two thousandths (1.862) mills upon the taxable value of each one dollar of all property located in said County Fire District 3, be and the same is hereby levied for the purpose of said County furnishing fire protection services within such district; and that the Tax Commissioner of Thomas County be and is hereby instructed to collect the same for said purpose by law; and,

WHEREAS: The Board of Commissioners of Thomas County have adopted a Resolution dated February 11, 2003 that there is created in Thomas County, pursuant to the authority of Article IX, Section II Paragraph VI of the Constitution of the State of Georgia of 1983, a special service district to be known as Emergency Service District of Thomas County, Georgia.

\*\*\*\*\*

Chairman Grady referenced the contract renewal for the Transportation Service Provider Contract between the Department of Human Services (Southwest Georgia Regional Commission) and Thomas County Board of Commissioners. Chairman Grady recognized Commissioner Baggett who concluded that there are no changes from last year, and it is a continuation of the service that is already provided. He made a motion to approve the TCAT DHS Transportation Service Provider Contract FY2025. Commissioner Hickey seconded the motion. The motion approved unanimously with Chairman Grady, Commissioners Baggett, Brown, Gross, Hickey, NeSmith, and Vonier voting aye.

Chairman Grady referenced the Package Beer & Wine license request on page 26 of the agenda packet. Jayminkumar P. Patel, Yug Shakti, LLC is the applicant for a Package Beer & Wine License for Gas and Grill located at 12216 US Hwy 84 East, Thomasville, GA. According to Finance Director Laura Nichols, Mr. Patel passed all requirements according to the Thomas County ordinance. Chairman Grady recognized Commissioner Baggett who made a motion to approve the application. Commissioner Vonier seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously with Chairman Grady and Commissioners Baggett, Brown, Gross, Hickey, NeSmith, and Vonier voting aye.

Chairman Grady recognized Public Works Director Tony Bodiford to speak on the final plat for Bloomfield Lakes Subdivision Phase I. He reminded everyone that a portion of Phase I was held back from approval due to a wet area. A new drain, new base, and new pavement have been added since then and approval for the final plat is recommended.

Chairman Grady recognized Commissioner Hickey who made a motion to approve the final plat for Bloomfield Lakes Subdivision Phase I. Commissioner Baggett seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with Chairman Grady, Commissioners Baggett, Brown, Gross, Hickey, NeSmith, and Vonier voting aye.

**Open Meeting to Citizens:** Chairman Grady recognized Jodie Tyson of 215 Crowley Spur Road, Thomasville, Georgia, and her mother LaJaun Ansley of 211 Crowley Spur Road. Both ladies attended the August 7, 2024 school board Public Hearing and expressed concern with a millage rate increase-- especially for citizens on a fixed income and while the economy is in shambles. They were the only citizens there and noted that none of the school board members were present. Chairman Grady recognized Shirley Jackson of 727 Crowley Road, Thomasville, Georgia who inquired as to where in Georgia law does it state that the county approves the school board millage rate. Chairman Grady recognized Angie Durham of 155 Avalon Way, Thomasville, Georgia who also spoke of concern of the "illegal" August 7, 2024 School Board meeting and thanked the Board for listening and educating her on some things in the overall process.

Chairman Grady recognized County Manager Stephenson who gave an informative overview of how the County millage rate is set. The county follows the standard guidelines set forth from the State of Georgia. The conservative format is one of the most regulated processes by the State of Georgia Department of Revenue. Tax Commissioner, Alicia Hester is authorized to collect taxes.

**Committee Reports** County Manager Stephenson recognized Zoning Administrator who introduced Application #24-8-1 Jim Rech, Blue Sky Towers IV, LLC, agent for the property owner, The Ray and Jeanette Luke Family Trust, has applied for a conditional use zoning. The property is located on Ga. Hwy. 202, (Map 042, Parcel 024) consisting of 452.85 acres, more or less, and is zoned AG (Agricultural.) The request is for a conditional use to allow for the installation of a cell tower 199 feet in height to be located on a 100'

x 100' leased area portion of the subject property. The Planning Department staff recommends approval of the application.

Donna also introduced Application #24-8-2 Sydney Poe, Gen 7 Engineering, LLC, agent for the property owners, Johnny Jean Johnson, D. Joiner, and R.T. Godfrey has applied for a conditional use zoning. The property is located on N. Pinetree Blvd., known as Gemini Mobile Home Park (Map 055, Parcel 040) consisting of 10.82 acres, more or less, and is zoned MHP (Manufactured Home Park.) The request is for a conditional use to allow for the installation of a cell tower 112 feet in height to be located on a 75' x 75' leased area portion of the subject property. The Planning Department staff recommends approval of the application.

Both applications will have a Public Hearing at the next Board of Commissioners' meeting on August 23, 2024 at 6:00 p.m.

Chairman Grady made a motion to ratify the purchase of diesel fuel purchase from Petroleum Products for \$2.4891/gal on 7/31/24. Commissioner Baggett seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with Chairman Grady, Commissioners Baggett, Brown, Gross, Hickey, NeSmith, and Vonier voting aye.

Chairman Grady made a motion to ratify the bid award for 18 sets of Turn-out Gear for a total of \$82,008 (several vendors). The motion was seconded by Commissioner Vonier. The motion passed unanimously with Chairman Grady, Commissioners Baggett, Brown, Gross, Hickey, NeSmith, and Vonier voting aye.

Chairman Grady made a motion to approve the 2024 Budget Amendment 24-8-1 / Unincorporated Fund. Commissioner Brown seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with Chairman Grady, Commissioners Baggett, Brown, Gross, Hickey, NeSmith, and Vonier voting aye.

**2024 BUDGET AMENDMENT 24-8-1  
Unincorporated Fund (200)  
August 13, 2024**

Account	Description	Original 2024 Budget	Amended Budget	Budget Difference
<b>Revenues</b>				
200-39-9060	Carryover of Funds	661,954	743,962	82,008
	<b>Total</b>			<b>82,008</b>
<b>Net Increase to Revenues</b>				<b>\$82,008</b>

Account	Description	Original 2024 Budget	Amended Budget	Budget Difference
<b>Expenses</b>				
200-3575-53-1600	Small Equipment	0	82,008	82,008
	<b>Total</b>			<b>82,008</b>
<b>Net Increase to Expenses</b>				<b>\$82,008</b>

\*\*\*\*\*

Chairman Grady made a motion to ratify the bid award to NACARATO Truck Center for a 2024 Commercial Roll-off Refuse Truck (\$208,945.00). Commissioner Hickey seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with Chairman Grady, Commissioners Baggett, Brown, Gross, Hickey, NeSmith, and Vonier voting aye.

Chairman Grady made a motion to ratify the bid award to Norton Timber for Timber Sale on Boat Ramp Rd. Commissioner NeSmith seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with Chairman Grady, Commissioners Baggett, Brown, Gross, Hickey, NeSmith, and Vonier voting aye.

Chairman Grady made a motion to ratify the bid award to Peek Pavement for Traffic Striping for \$247,250.00. Commissioner Baggett seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with Chairman Grady, Commissioners Baggett, Brown, Gross, Hickey, NeSmith, and Vonier voting aye.


Chairman Grady made a motion to ratify the bid award to Stallings Motors for a 2024 Ram 1500 4x4 Crew cab V8 for \$43,676.00 – Code Enforcement. Commissioner Vonier seconded the motion. The motion passed 6-0-1 with Chairman Grady and Commissioners Baggett, Gross, Hickey, NeSmith, and Vonier voting aye. Commissioner Brown abstained.

Chairman Grady made a motion to ratify the bid award to Lang Mechanical for a Heating-HVAC unit for the Five Forks Volunteer Fire Station (\$8,750.00). Commissioner Baggett seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with Chairman Grady, Commissioners Baggett, Brown, Gross, Hickey, NeSmith, and Vonier voting aye.


Chairman Grady recognized Commissioner NeSmith who made a motion to go into Executive Closed Session (O.C.G.A. § 50-14-3(4)). Commissioner Baggett seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with Chairman Grady, Commissioners Baggett, Brown, Gross, Hickey, NeSmith, and Vonier voting aye. (9:45 a.m.)

The Board of Commissioners returned to the Regular Board Meeting at 10:26 a.m. No action was taken.

Chairman Grady made a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Baggett seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with Chairman Grady, Commissioners Baggett, Brown, Gross, Hickey, NeSmith, and Vonier voting aye. The meeting adjourned at 10:27 a.m.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Wiley Grady, Chairman

ATTEST:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Celeste C. Tyler, County Clerk