

Minutes
Historic Courthouse, Board Chambers, 3rd Floor
225 North Board Street
March 25, 2025

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:

Mark NeSmith, Chairman Dist. 4

Rev. Jeremy G. Rich, Dist. 1

Kenneth E. Hickey, District 3

Phillip V. Brown, Dist. 7

Donnie L. Baggett, Vice-Chair Dist. 5

Moses Gross, Dist. 2

Wiley Grady, Dist. 6

Zippy T. Vonier, Dist. 8

Staff present was County Manager Michael J. Stephenson, County Attorney Bruce Warren, Public Works Director Jay Knight, Planning Director Ken Gay, Zoning Administrator Donna Holbert, and County Clerk Celeste Tyler

Others present:

News/Media present: none

Chairman NeSmith called the meeting to order, and Bro. Markeith McCarthy, New Jerusalem Baptist Church pastor gave the invocation.

Chairman NeSmith recognized Commissioner Baggett who made a motion to approve the minutes of the March 11, 2025 Board Meeting. Commissioner Brown seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with Chairman NeSmith, Commissioners Baggett, Brown, Grady, Gross, Hickey, Rich, and Vonier voting aye.

Chairman NeSmith recognized Commissioner Baggett who made a motion to approve the agenda for the March 25, 2025 Board Meeting. Commissioner Grady seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with Chairman NeSmith, Commissioners Baggett, Brown, Grady, Gross, Hickey, Rich, and Vonier voting aye.

Chairman NeSmith recognized Elections and Registration Supervisor Frank Scoggins, who was the recipient of the prestigious Eagle Award on March 17, 2025. Hand delivered by Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger, the award honors the innovations, achievements, and best practices of county election offices to ensure safe, secure, accessible, and accurate elections provided transparently to Georgia's voters. Mr. Scoggins took the opportunity to thank the Board of Commissioners and to recognize his staff and board members who were present. County Manager Stephenson expressed his appreciation for a job well done, and Chairman NeSmith shared the same sentiments.

Chairman NeSmith called a Public Hearing to order. He recognized Planning Director Ken Gay who introduced Application #25-3-1. The applicant is Thomas County who hopes to amend the Land Use Standards Ordinance for lot size requirements in the R-1, R-2, and R-3 Land Use Districts so that the lot sizes align with the State of Georgia regulations. The request was also made to amend the

minimum size of the rezoning sign that is required to be posted on the property. Hearing no opposition to the request, Chairman NeSmith closed the Public Hearing.

Chairman NeSmith recognized Commissioner Hickey who made a motion to approve Application #25-3-1 as presented. Commissioner Brown seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with Chairman NeSmith, Commissioners Baggett, Brown, Grady, Gross, Hickey, Rich, and Vonier voting aye.

Chairman NeSmith recognized Commissioner Baggett who made a motion to approve a proclamation recognizing April 6th – 12th, 2025 as National Crime Victims' Rights Week. Commissioner Grady seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with Chairman NeSmith, Commissioners Baggett, Brown, Grady, Gross, Hickey, Rich, and Vonier voting aye.

Open Meeting to Citizens: Chairman NeSmith recognized Mr. Tommy Patel who asked the Board to allow the citizens of Thomas County to vote on the approval/disapproval of Sunday beer sales. He stated that all surrounding areas have this. He will provide studies/data if the Commissioners wish.

Committee Reports

Chairman NeSmith recognized County Manager Stephenson who stated that after consulting with County Attorney Warren, he recommends approving the optional stipend of \$200 per month to Chief Magistrate Judge Matt Shiner. As a full-time magistrate, Judge Shiner is eligible for the stipend.

Chairman NeSmith recognized Commissioner Grady who made a motion to approve a \$200 month stipend to Chief Magistrate Judge Matt Shiner. Commissioner Baggett seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with Chairman NeSmith, Commissioners Baggett, Brown, Grady, Gross, Hickey, Rich, and Vonier voting aye.

Chairman NeSmith recognized Commissioner Grady who made a motion to approve the authorization to apply for the Hazard Mitigation Grant to replace a 2007 generator at Sunset Station (approx. \$8,000.00); 25% match requirement. Commissioner Vonier seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with Chairman NeSmith, Commissioners Baggett, Brown, Grady, Gross, Hickey, Rich, and Vonier voting aye.

Chairman NeSmith recognized Commissioner Hickey who made a motion to ratify the purchase of major replacements/repair parts for the rifle range from Mr. Target (sole vendor) for \$24,732.65. Commissioner Baggett seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with Chairman NeSmith, Commissioners Baggett, Brown, Grady, Gross, Hickey, Rich, and Vonier voting aye.

Commissioner Hickey made a motion to accept a new lease agreement with Trailhead Media for \$2000 per year for six-years for the billboard on the Northside Fire Station property. Commissioner Rich seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with Chairman NeSmith, Commissioners Baggett, Brown, Grady, Gross, Hickey, Rich, and Vonier voting aye.

Commissioner Hickey made a motion to ratify the purchase of a Data Collector from Carlson for \$25,694.00 (Public Works). Commissioner Baggett seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with Chairman NeSmith, Commissioners Baggett, Brown, Grady, Gross, Hickey, Rich, and Vonier voting aye.

Commissioner Hickey made a motion to approve the 2025 Budget Amendment 25-3-1 for a Data Collector purchase for \$25,694.00 / 2017 SPLOST CPF (329). Commissioner Rich seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with Chairman NeSmith, Commissioners Baggett, Brown, Grady, Gross, Hickey, Rich, and Vonier voting aye.

Commissioner Hickey made a motion to approve the appropriation of \$418,764.18 from the 2025 LMIG surplus to the Colonial Square Project with a 30% match requirement. Commissioner Vonier seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with Chairman NeSmith, Commissioners Baggett, Brown, Grady, Gross, Hickey, Rich, and Vonier voting aye.

Commissioner Hickey made a motion to declare the vehicles as surplus as presented and authorize its sale on GovDeals online auction. Commissioner Baggett seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with Chairman NeSmith, Commissioners Baggett, Brown, Grady, Gross, Hickey, Rich, and Vonier voting aye.

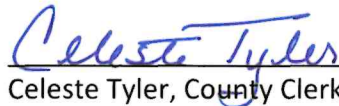
In Other Business, Chairman NeSmith recognized Public Works Director Jay Knight who reported that an additional LMIG grant of \$925,000 has been awarded to Thomas County with a zero percent match.

Chairman NeSmith recognized Commissioner Brown who made a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Rich seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with Chairman NeSmith, Commissioners Baggett, Brown, Grady, Gross, Hickey, Rich, and Vonier voting aye. The meeting adjourned at 6:32 p.m.



Mark NeSmith, Chairman

ATTEST:



Celeste Tyler, County Clerk