

Minutes
Historic Courthouse, Board Chambers, 3rd Floor
225 North Board Street
May 27, 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, District 4, Chairman	Donnie Baggett, Vice-Chair, District 5
Rev. Jeremy G. Rich, District 1	Moses Gross, District 2
Kenneth E. Hickey, District 3	Wiley Grady, District 6
Phillip V. Brown, District 7	Zippy Vonier, District 8

Staff present: County Manager Mike Stephenson, Planning Director Ken Gay, Zoning Administrator Donna Holbert, Public Works Director Jay Knight, Sheriff Tim Watkins, and County Clerk Tracy Dukes.

News/Media present: None

Chairman NeSmith called the meeting to order. Dough Silvis gave the invocation.

Chairman NeSmith recognized Commissioner Vonier who made a motion to approve the minutes of the May 13, 2025, Board Meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Baggett. The motion was approved unanimously with Chairman NeSmith, and Commissioners Baggett, Brown, Grady, Gross, Hickey, Vonier, and Rich voting aye.

Chairman NeSmith recognized Commissioner Brown who made a motion to approve the May 27, 2025 agenda. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Grady. The motion was approved unanimously with Chairman NeSmith and Commissioners Baggett, Brown, Grady, Gross, Hickey, Vonier, and Rich voting aye.

Chairman NeSmith declared a Public Hearing at 6:04 p.m. and recognized Donna Holbert, Zoning Administrator who introduced conditional use application #25-5-1 from Alicia Nicholson, Cambridge Assisted Living and Residential Care, Owner/Operator and Agent for the property owner, Witherspoon Properties, LLC, has applied for a conditional use zoning for property located at 464 Old Cassidy Road, Thomasville, Georgia. This property is located on Thomas County Map 055D, Parcel 038 and is classified as R-2 (Single Family Residential.) The request is for a conditional use zoning to allow the property to be used as a family personal care home for 2-6 people. If the application is approved, the zoning of the property will be R-2 C.U. (Conditional Use, Family Personal Care Home 2-6 people.) The Planning and Zoning staff recommend approval of the application.

Chairman NeSmith recognized petitioner, Ms. Nicholson of 919 Remington Avenue, Thomasville, GA. Ms. Nicholson shared that she currently owns another personal care home in Thomasville and has been operating personal care homes for 25 years. She stated that her homes are quiet and well-managed; most people wouldn't even realize they are personal care homes. Residents typically stay indoors, except when getting the mail or coming and going. During the day, residents attend a daycare program. She explained that the home is staffed 24 hours a day, with staff responsible for

assisting residents with medications and activities of daily living (ADLs). Nurses visit twice a week, and both residents and employees undergo Level II background checks. Residents typically range in age from their 50s to 70s.

Chairman NeSmith recognized Ms. Lady Cox of 571 Old Cassidy Road, Thomasville, GA. Ms. Cox spoke in support of the personal care home and shared that she operated one herself for 48 years. She noted that individuals who move into personal care homes typically don't qualify for nursing home care but still need support. Chairman NeSmith then recognized Mr. Eugene Witherspoon of 112 Sweetwater Drive, Thomasville, GA. Mr. Witherspoon, the property owner, stated that he made an unannounced visit to Ms. Nicholson's other personal care home and was pleased with what he saw. He fully supports renting his property to Ms. Nicholson for the operation of a personal care home.

Chairman NeSmith recognized Udi Artzi of 1623 New Legend Ct., Tallahassee, FL. Mr. Artzi said he understands the need for personal care homes but pointed out that, in the end, they are businesses. He expressed concern about what might happen if the owner decides to sell the business later and questioned whether approving this application could lead to more similar requests in the future. As the developer of Bloomfield Estates, he emphasized his responsibility to advocate for the interests of its residents. Chairman NeSmith then recognized Lori Helms of 119 Bloomfield Drive, Thomasville, GA. Ms. Helms said she supports personal care homes in general but believes this location is not the right place for one. Chairman NeSmith recognized Michael McKay of 140 Bloomfield Drive, Thomasville, GA. Mr. McKay asked who is responsible for monitoring personal care homes and whether they are subject to ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) requirements.

Chairman NeSmith again recognized Ms. Nicholson for closing comments. Ms. Nicholson states if zoning is changed to conditional use, family personal care home 2-6 people, the personal care home opening is contingent upon the State of Georgia inspecting and issuing a license for a personal care home and meeting the requirements of the Thomas County Health Department for water quality and sewage disposal. She stated that funding for the residents comes from VA, Medicare, Medicaid, and state funded.

Chairman NeSmith closed the Public Hearing at 6:39 p.m. and asked for action from the Board.

Chairman NeSmith recognized Commissioner Rich, who made a motion to approve Application 25-5-1. Commissioner Gross seconded the motion. The motion failed by a vote of 3-5. Commissioners Brown, Gross, and Rich voted aye. Chairman NeSmith and Commissioners Hickey, Baggett, Vonier, and Grady voted nay. Application was denied.

Open Meeting to Citizens: None

Committee Reports

Chairman NeSmith recognized Commissioner Grady who made a motion to approve replacing the motor in the 2016 International Ambulance by Rush Truck Center LLC for \$34,139.97. 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 Vonier who made a motion to approve the award bid to Scruggs Concrete Company for Ready Mix Portland Cement Concrete to purchase as needed. 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 Commissioner Hickey made a motion to ratify the declaration of surplus as presented and authorize the sale on GovDeals.com auction site. Commissioner Baggett seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously with Chairman NeSmith and Commissioners Baggett, Brown, Grady, Gross, Hickey, Rich, and Vonier voting aye.

Auction surplus list: 2002 Ford Goshen Pacer 11 Shuttle 13 Pas - 259,786 - Unit# 08-19, 2009 Ford 350 Cutaway Van - 182,288 - Unit # 14-293, 2015 Dodge 1500 - 179,390 - Unit# 15-320, MI 2015 International Terra Star - 128,025 - Unit# 15-322, 2000 Ford F-150 - ?? - Unit H 119, Miller Roughneck generator (portable welder) JK68728 l - Unit# 615, Miller Bobcat generator (welder #225) KC30335 l - Unit# 630, 48' x 60" concrete pipe & (4) 60" flares (from Rocky Ford), Horne Made Motor Lift, Misc parts from shop for unit #'s that have been sold previously, Glass display case (l), Old TV stands on wheels (2), Wooden storage boxes (21), Kid stool/ottoman (2), 5 door locker unit (1), Round coffee table (1), Metal office desk (3), General Electric stove (l), Metal hand sanitizer stations (3), Metal book cart on wheels (3), Two drawer metal filing cabinet (l), Wooden twin headboard (1), Metal twin bed frames (3), Miscellaneous printers (27), Metal device charging station (l), Wooden China cabinet (1), Rotating book shelves (2), Recliners (3).

Chairman NeSmith recognized Commissioner Vonier who announced that the next Purchasing meeting will be held on Tuesday, June 3, 2025 at 4:00 p.m.

Chairman NeSmith recognized Commissioner Baggett who announced that the next Public Property meeting on June 5, 2025 at 8:30 a.m.

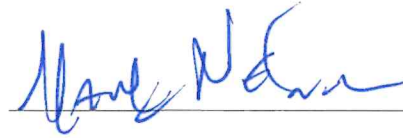
Chairman NeSmith recognized Commissioner Rich, who announced that a Finance Committee meeting will be held in June, with the date to be determined.

Chairman NeSmith recognized Commissioner Brown, who announced that a Personnel Committee meeting will be held in June, with the date to be determined.

Chairman NeSmith recognized Commissioner Baggett who made a motion to go into closed session to discuss a real estate matter O.C.G.A. § 50-14-3(4). Commissioner Grady seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with Chairman NeSmith, Commissioners Baggett, Brown, Grady, Gross, Hickey, Rich, and Vonier voting aye. (6:46 p.m.)

The Board of Commissioners returned to the Regular Board Meeting at 7:18 p.m. No action was taken.

Chairman NeSmith recognized Commissioner Baggett who made a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Brown 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 7:23 p.m.



Mark NeSmith, Chairman

ATTEST:



Tracy Dukes, County Clerk