

Minutes
Historic Courthouse, Board Chambers, 3rd Floor
225 North Board Street
June 24, 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 (absent)	Zippy Vonier, District 8

Staff present: County Manager Mike Stephenson, County Attorney Bruce Warren, Planning Director Ken Gay, Zoning Administrator Donna Holbert, Public Works Director Jay Knight, Purchasing Agent/Deputy Clerk Nisha Thurman, and County Clerk Tracy Dukes.

Others Present: Jackie Leatherman, Discover Thomasville President/CEO, Jennifer Fabbri, JD Director Thomas County Accountability Court.

News/Media present: None

Chairman NeSmith called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. Commissioner Jeremy Rich gave the invocation.

Chairman NeSmith recognized Commissioner Grady who made a motion to approve the minutes of the June 10, 2025, Board Meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Vonier. The motion was approved unanimously with Chairman NeSmith, and Commissioners Baggett, Grady, Gross, Hickey, Vonier, and Rich voting aye.

Chairman NeSmith recognized Commissioner Baggett who made a motion to approve the June 24, 2025, agenda. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Hickey. The motion was approved unanimously with Chairman NeSmith and Commissioners Baggett, Grady, Gross, Hickey, Vonier, and Rich voting aye.

Board Appointment(s): Forrest Sumner requested reappointment to the Recreation Board. Chairman NeSmith recognized Commissioner Grady, who made a motion to reappoint Mr. Sumner. Commissioner Grady noted that Mr. Sumner has served on the board for some time and recommended his continued service. Commissioner Baggett seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously with Chairman NeSmith, Commissioners Baggett, Grady, Vonier, Rich, Hickey and Gross voting aye.

Public Hearing: Chairman NeSmith declared a Public Hearing at 6:04 p.m. and recognized Donna Holbert, Zoning Administrator who introduced application #25-6-1. Britt Stephens, Jet Development LLC, Owner/Manager, has applied to rezone property located on Patterson Still Road. This property is owned by Jet Development, LLC consisting of 37.96 acres, more or less, and is located on Thomas County Map 045, Parcel 259B. The request is to rezone the subject property from R-4 (CSD) Conservation Subdivision Development to R-1 (Single Family Residential) to allow for the subdivision

of the property into three single family residential lots. Donna Holbert, Zoning Administrator, noted that the property was originally zoned R1 and was successfully rezoned to R4 following approval of a rezoning application on June 21, 2021. She recommends approval of the current rezoning application.

Chairman NeSmith asked if anyone wished to speak in favor of the rezoning application; no one came forward. He then asked if anyone wished to speak in opposition; again, no one came forward.

Donna Holbert, Zoning Administrator, introduced application #25-6-2. Hunter Neel, Neel & Sons Tree Service, LLC, Owner, has applied for a conditional use zoning for property located at 1994 County Line Road. This property is owned by Neel and Sons, LLC and is located on Thomas County Map 055, Parcel 013 consisting of 5.13 acres, more or less. A 1.85 acre, more or less, portion of the parcel is zoned CL (Commercial Limited.) The request is for a conditional use on the 1.85 acre, more or less, portion of the property to allow for a tree service. If approved, the 1.85 acre, more or less, portion of the property will be classified as CL (Commercial Limited) C.U. (Conditional Use, Tree Service.)

Chairman NeSmith recognized Sean Neel and Hunter Neel, owners of Neel & Sons Tree Service LLC. Sean Neel stated that while they understand the concerns of the neighboring housing development, he has operated a well-run business for 48 years. Since purchasing the property, they've cleaned it up, invested \$3,000 in road improvements, and installed a portable toilet for workers. He is committed to doing whatever is necessary to maintain good relations with nearby residents.

Commissioner Grady noted that while a fence already exists between the properties, a buffer is needed to help reduce noise and block the view between the properties. Commissioner Rich recognized Donna Holbert who recommended a landscape buffer.

Chairman NeSmith asked if anyone wished to speak in favor of the rezoning application; no one came forward. He then asked if anyone wished to speak in opposition. Stan Golden, 117 Kenley Lane, Thomasville, GA 31757 expressed concerns about the 80-foot right-of-way between the building and Kenley Oaks. Chairman NeSmith explained that the area in question is zoned residential, and if Mr. Golden wished to rezone it, he would need to submit a rezoning application.

During further discussion, it was noted that if the 1.85 acres are approved for Commercial Limited Conditional Use, additional conditions would include prohibiting wood storage and debris on the property, as well as requiring annual zoning renewal.

With no further discussion, Chairman NeSmith closed the Public Hearing at 6:21 p.m. and asked for action from the Board.

Chairman NeSmith recognized Commissioner Grady who made a motion to approve application #25-6-1. Commissioner Rich seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously with Chairman NeSmith, Commissioners Baggett, Grady, Vonier, Rich, Hickey and Gross voting aye.

Chairman NeSmith recognized Commissioner Baggett who made a motion to approve application #25-6-2. Commissioner Vonier seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously with Chairman NeSmith, Commissioners Baggett, Grady, Vonier, Rich, Hickey and Gross voting aye.

New Business: Chairman NeSmith recognized Jennifer Fabbri, Program Director for the Thomas County Accountability Court. Ms. Fabbri gave the annual update on the program. There are currently 47 active participants in the program, with 14 set to graduate at the July 8, 2025, ceremony. Two individuals will be leaving the program, including one who will be living independently for the first time. Ms. Fabbri requested \$17,648 as the County's FY2026 budget match which is slight increase from the previous year due to rising participation. She emphasized the significant need for the program in Thomas County. It was also noted that the State of Georgia operates on a fiscal year (July 1–June 30), while the County follows a calendar year (January 1–December 31).

Chairman NeSmith recognized Commissioner Hickey who made a motion to approve the County match funds of \$17,648. Commissioner Baggett seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously with Chairman NeSmith, Commissioners Baggett, Grady, Vonier, Rich, Hickey and Gross voting aye.

Open meeting: Commissioner Rich introduced Jackie Leatherman, President | CEO for Discover Thomasville, the official tourism organization for the county. Ms. Leatherman introduced herself and mentioned that she has been meeting with the small towns and she has a scheduled meeting with the County Manager on June 25, 2025.

Reports – County Attorney: Chairman NeSmith recognized County Attorney Bruce Warren provided an update on the property condemnation for the roundabout at Constitution and Liberty, aimed at addressing traffic issues. He reported having signed deeds from two of the three property owners and is still awaiting the deed from the third. Jay Knight, Director of Public Works, has been in contact with property owner Shiva Shiva, who confirmed the agreement on the purchase, with the exception of one dollar less. Mr. Warren requested adoption of the Order Condemning Property and Declaration of Taking, so that the necessary paperwork will be ready to file if the agreement falls through.

Chairman NeSmith recognized Commissioner Baggett who made a motion to adopt the Order Condemning Property. Commissioner Vonier seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously with Chairman NeSmith, Commissioners Baggett, Grady, Vonier, Rich, Hickey and Gross voting aye.

Chairman NeSmith recognized Commissioner Hickey who made a motion to adopt the Declaration of Taking. Commissioner Baggett seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously with Chairman NeSmith, Commissioners Baggett, Grady, Vonier, Rich, Hickey and Gross voting aye.

Committee Reports

Finance: Chairman NeSmith recognized Commissioner Rich who made a motion to approve the 2024 Financial Report as presented by Lanigan & Associates and to pay the 2024 Financial Audit final invoice to Lanigan & Associates for \$17,500. Commissioner Baggett seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously with Chairman NeSmith, Commissioners Baggett, Grady, Vonier, Rich, Hickey and Gross voting aye.

Public Works: Chairman NeSmith recognized Commissioner Hickey who made a motion to ratify solicitation of bids to complete the 10' x 70' Archery Pavilion. Commissioner Vonier seconded the

motion. The motion carried unanimously with Chairman NeSmith, Commissioners Baggett, Grady, Vonier, Rich, Hickey and Gross voting aye.

Commissioner Hickey made a motion to ratify solicitation of bids to complete the County Pond which includes a 24' x 48' concrete pad, two 12' x 12' buildings, one metal building, water and electrical installation, archery building construction, tables, trash receptacles. Commissioner Rich seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously with Chairman NeSmith, Commissioners Baggett, Grady, Vonier, Rich, Hickey and Gross voting aye.

Commissioner Hickey made a motion to ratify solicitation of bids to complete the sidewalk from the shooting range pavilion to the archery pavilion. Commissioner Baggett seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously with Chairman NeSmith, Commissioners Baggett, Grady, Vonier, Rich, Hickey and Gross voting aye.

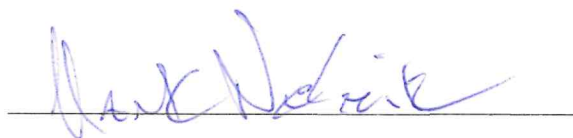
Commissioner Hickey made a motion to ratify solicitation of bids to complete the kennels at Animal Control. Commissioner Baggett seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously with Chairman NeSmith, Commissioners Baggett, Grady, Vonier, Rich, Hickey and Gross voting aye.

Purchasing: Chairman NeSmith recognized Commissioner Vonier who made a motion to ratify the purchase of fuel from Petroleum Products for \$2.3887 per gallon on June 12, 2025. Commissioner Rich seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously with Chairman NeSmith, Commissioners Baggett, Grady, Vonier, Rich, Hickey and Gross voting aye.

Chairman NeSmith recognized Commissioner Vonier who announced the next Purchasing Meeting will be on July 1, 2025 at 4:00 p.m.


Chairman NeSmith recognized Commissioner Baggett who announced the next Public Property meeting will be on July 7, 2025 at 8:30 a.m.

Chairman NeSmith recognized Commissioner Grady who made a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Baggett seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously with Chairman NeSmith, Commissioners Baggett, Grady, Vonier, Rich, Hickey and Gross voting aye. The meeting adjourned at 6:39 p.m.



Mark NeSmith, Chairman

ATTEST:



Tracy Dukes, County Clerk