

Board of Commissioners Minutes
Historic Courthouse, Board Chambers, 3rd Floor
225 North Broad St
August 12, 2025

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, 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, County Attorney Bruce Warren, Public Works Director Jay Knight, Sheriff Tim Watkins, Chaplain Kevin Lamb, Purchasing Agent/Deputy County Clerk Nisha Thurman, County Clerk Tracy Dukes.

Others Present: Suzanne Angell, Executive Director SWGRC; Michael Erwin RMS General Manager

Chairman NeSmith called the meeting to order at 9:02 a.m.

Chaplain Kevin Lamb offered the invocation.

Chairman NeSmith called for a motion to approve the minutes of the July 22, 2025, Board of Commissioners Meeting. Commissioner Vonier made the motion, and Commissioner Brown seconded. The motion passed unanimously, with Chairman NeSmith and Commissioners Baggett, Brown, Hickey, Grady, Vonier, Gross, and Rich voting aye.

Chairman NeSmith called for a motion to approve the agenda for the August 12, 2025, meeting. Commissioner Baggett made the motion, and Commissioner Grady seconded. The motion passed unanimously, with Chairman NeSmith and Commissioners Baggett, Brown, Hickey, Grady, Vonier, Gross, and Rich voting aye.

Chairman NeSmith called for a motion to approve the revised 2025 Capital Improvements Element Annual Update. Commissioner Hickey made the motion, and Commissioner Brown seconded. The motion passed unanimously, with Chairman NeSmith and Commissioners Baggett, Brown, Hickey, Grady, Vonier, Gross, and Rich voting aye.

Chairman NeSmith called for a motion to approve the Transmittal Resolution for the 2025 Capital Improvements Element Annual Update. Commissioner Grady made the motion, and Commissioner Baggett seconded. The motion passed unanimously, with Chairman NeSmith and Commissioners Baggett, Brown, Hickey, Grady, Vonier, Gross, and Rich voting aye.

Chairman NeSmith called for a motion to ratify the approval of the TCAT DHS Transportation Service Provider Intergovernmental Agreement with Southwest Georgia Regional Commission FY2026. Commissioner Baggett made the motion, and Commissioner Grady seconded. The motion passed unanimously, with Chairman NeSmith and Commissioners Baggett, Brown, Hickey, Grady, Vonier, Gross, and Rich voting aye.

Chairman NeSmith called for a motion to adopt the Resolution authorizing the filing of an application by the Southwest Georgia Regional Commission on behalf of Thomas County with the U.S. Department of Transportation and the Georgia Department of Transportation for a grant under Title 49 U.S.C., Section 5311. Commissioner Hickey made the motion, and Commissioner Vonier seconded. The motion passed, with Chairman NeSmith and Commissioners Baggett, Brown, Hickey, Grady, and Vonier voting aye, and Commissioners Rich and Gross voting nay.

Committees

Purchasing:

Chairman of the Purchasing Committee Commissioner Vonier made a motion to ratify the purchase of regular fuel from Petroleum Products for \$2.2917 per gallon on August 6, 2025. Commissioner Brown seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, with Chairman NeSmith and Commissioners Baggett, Brown, Hickey, Grady, Vonier, Gross, and Rich voting aye.

Chairman of the Purchasing Committee Commissioner Vonier made a motion to ratify the purchase of four (4) Dodge Durango Pursuit Vehicles from Thomasville Chrysler Dodge Jeep Ram for \$43,881 each. Commissioner Rich seconded the motion. The motion passed with Chairman NeSmith and Commissioners Baggett, Hickey, Grady, Vonier, Gross, and Rich voting aye and Commissioner Brown abstaining.

Public Works:

Chairman of the Public Works Committee Commissioner Hickey made a motion to ratify approval of the application for the ACCG Employee Safety Grant for in-house training materials for back safety, slips/trips, chainsaw training kit and flammables safety cabinet for \$4,539. Commissioner Baggett seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, with Chairman NeSmith and Commissioners Baggett, Brown, Hickey, Grady, Vonier, Gross, and Rich voting aye.

Chairman of the Public Works Committee Commissioner Hickey made a motion to ratify the approval of the bond release for Bloomfield Subdivision Phase 1, which was a two-year bond for right of ways, roads and piping. Commissioner Rich seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, with Chairman NeSmith and Commissioners Baggett, Brown, Hickey, Grady, Vonier, Gross, and Rich voting aye.

Chairman of the Public Works Committee Commissioner Hickey made a motion to ratify the bid award to Kennedy Construction LLC for construction of the shelter over the archery station in the amount of \$44,375. Commissioner Baggett seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, with Chairman NeSmith and Commissioners Baggett, Brown, Hickey, Grady, Vonier, Gross, and Rich voting aye.

Chairman NeSmith recognized County Manager Mike Stephenson, who discussed the delay in setting the tentative millage rate. Once Laura Nichols gets the reports from the Tax Commissioner and Tax Assessor, she will summarize the reports and provide them to the board. The board plans to set the tentative millage rate at its next meeting on August 26, 2025, and adopt the final millage rate at the September 9, 2025, meeting.

Commissioner Grady announced the next Emergency Services meeting will be August 19, 2025, at 8:30 a.m.

Commissioner Baggett stated he appreciates the Board Members who came to the Public Property Meeting at the Jail on August 6, 2025.

Closed Session

Chairman NeSmith recognized Commissioner Baggett, who made a motion to enter into closed session. Commissioner Brown seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The Board entered closed session at 9:20 a.m. and reconvened at 9:52 a.m.

Adjournment

Commissioner Rich made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:53 a.m. Commissioner Brown seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.



Mark NeSmith, Chairman

ATTEST:



Tracy Dukes, County Clerk