

Minutes  
Historic Courthouse, Board Chambers, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
225 North Board Street  
August 24, 2021

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:

**Phillip V. Brown, Chairman, Dist. 7**

Rev. Jeremy G. Rich, Dist.  
Kenneth E. Hickey, District 3  
Donnie L. Baggett, Dist. 5

**Wiley E. Grady, Vice-Chair, Dist. 6 (absent)**

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, Planning Director Ken Gay, Zoning Administrator Donna Holbert, Public Works Director Tony Bodiford, Sheriff Carlton Powell, and County Clerk Celeste Tyler.

News/Media present: none

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

Chairman Brown recognized Commissioner NeSmith who made a motion to approve the minutes of the August 10, 2021 Board Meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Vonier. The motion was approved unanimously with Chairman Brown and Commissioners Baggett, Gross, Hickey, NeSmith, Rich, and Vonier voting aye.

Chairman Brown declared a Public Hearing and recognized Donna Holbert, Zoning Administrator. Donna Holbert introduced application #21-8-1 from Nathan Outlaw, agent for property owner, Sunburst, Inc., to rezone property located on Brentwood Drive which is located on Thomas County Map 45, Parcels 236 and 204, consisting of 52.33 acres, more or less from Ag and R-1 to R-4 (Single Family Residential) to allow for the development of a single-family residential subdivision with approximately 60 homes. Having met 9 out of the 10 zoning criteria, the planning staff recommends approval of the application.

Mr. Nathan Outlaw, agent for property owner Sunburst Inc. and Mr. Gary Harrell, engineer, of 606 Central Avenue, Tifton, Georgia were recognized by Chairman Brown. A conceptual plan for the proposed subdivision was referenced and described as a 60- lot subdivision with curbed streets and water, sewer, and gas utilities provided by the City of Thomasville. A rendering of a 1600 – 1800 square foot ranch style home was also distributed, demonstrating continuity of the Brentwood Dr. Subdivision and the one proposed.

In opposition, Chairman Brown recognized Mrs. Jennifer Plymel-Sterzoy of 244 Brentwood Dr., Thomasville, Georgia, Mrs. Dale Graham of 325 Brentwood Dr., Thomasville, Georgia, and Mrs. Jeanette Haire of 113 Brentwood Dr., Thomasville, Georgia. They described Brentwood Drive as a hidden gem and a great community where residents enjoy walking and abundant wildlife. The primary concern expressed was the substantial increase of traffic flow thru the subdivision and a greater potential for accidents. A blind-spot was also noted. They asked for the following: zoning to stay at R-1, an 8 ft. – 10 ft. fence behind the connecting parcels be erected, and a subdivision that has a similar setting to theirs.

In rebuttal, Mr. Harrell stated that they would be willing to include the fence and per Commissioner Rich's request would consider meeting with the Brentwood Community.

With no further questions or comments, Chairman Brown closed the Public Hearing.

Chairman Brown recognized Commissioner Rich who made a motion to postpone a decision for application 21-8-1 until the developers meet with the Brentwood Drive Community. The motion died on the floor with the lack of a second motion.

Chairman Brown recognized Commissioner Vonier who made a motion to reject application 21-8-1 based on the request to change the zoning classification from R-1 to R-4. The motion was seconded by Commissioner NeSmith. The motion was approved 6-1-0 with Chairman Brown and Commissioners Baggett, Hickey, NeSmith, Rich, and Vonier voting aye and Commissioner Gross voting nay.

Chairman Brown recognized Planning Director Ken Gay who presented the preliminary plat for Mt. Sinai Apostolic Church Phase 1. Mr. Gay recommended the approval of the plat stating that the Thomas County Planning Department, Thomas County Public Works, and City of Thomasville had signed-off on the plat with everything being in order with the present infrastructure.

Chairman Brown recognized Commissioner Baggett who made a motion to approve the preliminary plat for Mt. Sinai Apostolic Church. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Rich. The motion was approved unanimously with Chairman Brown and Commissioners Baggett, Gross, Hickey, NeSmith, Rich, and Vonier voting aye.

Under Unfinished Business Chairman Brown recognized Commissioner NeSmith who made a motion to ratify the purchase of a 2000 E-One GMC Commercial Pumper for \$46,000.00 from Brindlee Mountain Fire Apparatus. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Baggett. The motion was approved unanimously with Chairman Brown and Commissioners Baggett, Gross, Hickey, NeSmith, Rich, and Vonier voting aye. Commissioner Hickey expressed appreciation to Commissioner Baggett for traveling to Alabama and assisting with the assessment and selection of the truck.

Under New Business Chairman Brown recognized Melissa Smith of 2054 E. Main Street, Barwick, Georgia who requested a one-day special event alcohol beverage permit for September 11, 2021. The music festival (BlessJess) will be held at the Deep South Fair Ground and will serve as a fundraiser for a cancer patient.

Chairman Brown recognized Commissioner Hickey who made a motion to approve the applicant's request for a one-day special event alcohol beverage permit for September 11, 2021. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Baggett. The motion was approved unanimously with Chairman Brown and Commissioners Baggett, Gross, Hickey, NeSmith, Rich, and Vonier voting aye.

Chairman Brown recognized Public Works Director Tony Bodiford who sought approval to request 400 tons of leveling from the Scruggs' contract for Enon Road (\$33,200.00). Mickey McSwain from Scruggs' has been a part of the discussions and is satisfied with the arrangement.

Chairman Brown recognized Commissioner NeSmith who made a motion to reduce the Scruggs' contract by \$33,200.00 and authorize a PO for the 400 tons of leveling. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Baggett. The motion was approved unanimously with Chairman Brown and Commissioners Baggett, Gross, Hickey, NeSmith, Rich, and Vonier voting aye.

Chairman Brown recognized Commissioner Baggett who made a motion to amend the 2021 Budget 21-8-1 for \$105,300.00 to include Harrell Road, Russell Road, and Vicky Lane resurfacing in the SPLOST 2017 budget. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Hickey. The motion was approved unanimously with Chairman Brown and Commissioners Baggett, Gross, Hickey, NeSmith, Rich, and Vonier voting aye.

2021 BUDGET AMENDMENT 21-8-1				
PROJECT TO DATE BUDGET - SPLOST 2017-CPF (329)				
August 24, 2021				
Account	Description	Original 2021 Budget	Amended Budget	Difference
<b>Expenses</b>				
329-4188-54-1405	Harrell Road	0	17,550	17,550
329-4189-54-1405	Russell Road	0	70,200	70,200
329-4190-54-1405	Vicky Lane	0	17,550	17,550
329-9010-57-9000	Contingencies	2,472,750	2,367,450	-105,300
	<b>Total</b>			<b>0</b>
<b>Net Increase to Expenses</b>				<b>\$0</b>

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 Chairman Brown recognized Commissioner Baggett who made a motion to set the 2021 Millage Rate as recommended by the County Manager and staff. The motion was seconded by Commissioner NeSmith. The motion was approved unanimously with Chairman Brown, and Commissioners Baggett, Gross, Hickey, NeSmith, Rich, and Vonier voting aye.

**RESOLUTION**  
**THOMAS COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**  
**P.O. BOX 920**  
**THOMASVILLE, GEORGIA 31799**  
**August 24, 2021**

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 2021, that it be and is hereby ordered that eight and six hundred thirty three thousandths (8.633) 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 eight and six hundred thirty three thousandths (8.633) mills with a roll back of Insurance Premium Tax of one and nine hundred three thousandths (1.903) mills leaving six and seven hundred thirty thousandths (6.730) 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 nine hundred thirty

nine thousandths (2.939) mills upon the taxable value of each one dollar of all property located in said County Fire District 1, and two and nine hundred one thousandths (2.901) 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 11, 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 two and two hundred eighty five thousandths (2.285) 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.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, by the board of Commissioners of Thomas County, Georgia, sitting in a regular meeting for County Purposes, that it be and it is hereby ordered that one and six hundred sixty nine thousandths (1.669) mills upon the taxable value of each one dollar of all property located in said county Emergency Services District, be and the same is hereby levied for the purpose of said County furnishing emergency 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,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Board of Commissioners of Thomas County, Georgia, that it be and is hereby ordered that said mills above be assessed for State purposes and that the Tax Commissioner of said Thomas County, be instructed to collect the same as provided by law; and,

WHEREAS: the Board of Education of Thomas County, Georgia, having recommended a levy of thirteen and eight hundred four thousandths (13.804) mills on all taxable property in said Thomas County, not embraced within the present corporate limits of the City of Thomasville, Georgia, for the support and maintenance of education for County-wide schools, as provided by law for the taxable year of 2021.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Board of Commissioners of Thomas County, Georgia, sitting in regular meeting that the taxable year 2021 a tax of thirteen and eight hundred four thousandths (13.804) mills for the support and maintenance for County-wide schools be levied on each one dollar of all the taxable property in said Thomas County not embraced within the present corporate limits of the City of Thomasville, Georgia, and that the Tax Commissioner of Thomas County, Georgia, be and is hereby instructed to collect the same for the support and maintenance for County-wide schools for the taxable year of 2021 as provided by law.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Tax Commissioner is hereby instructed to set a due date of November 15, 2021 for 2021 taxes.

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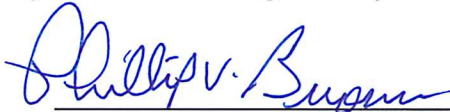
**Open Meeting to the Citizens:** Chairman Brown recognized Ms. Shirley Jackson of 727 Crowley Road, Thomasville, Georgia who thanked the County Manager for answering her submitted questions regarding the Cares Act funding for first responders but asked for clarification on his answers. She also asked for better promotion, preferably through social media, of the two Community Meetings scheduled for September 7th and September 21, 2021 that will allow citizens and organizations the opportunity to request future American Rescue Plan funding.

**Reports:** Chairman Brown recognized County Manager Stephenson who presented information on a Broadband Initiative with a time-sensitive competitive grant process. His recommendation is to submit two applications for grant funding from the Georgia Fiscal Recovery Fund. These grants will be used in partnership with Windstream and AT&T to improve broadband internet capability in the two company's respective territories. Thomas County and the two companies will be requesting approximately \$22.6 million in State funding. The broadband internet project calls for running fiber optic cable to unserved or underserved homes in the unincorporated county. With the looming August 31<sup>st</sup> deadline imposed by the State of Georgia, County Manager Stephenson is requesting approval for the application process and the authority for the Chairman of the Board to sign commitment letters to Windstream and AT&T solidifying the partnership.

Chairman Brown recognized Commissioner Baggett who made a motion to approve the grant applications to the Georgia Fiscal Recovery Fund and authorize the Chairman to sign commitment letters to Windstream and AT&T as presented by the County Manager. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Rich. The motion was approved unanimously with Chairman Brown and Commissioners Baggett, Gross, Hickey, NeSmith, Rich, and Vonier voting aye.

Chairman Brown recognized Commissioner Hickey who made a motion to ratify the approval to add Harrell Road, Russell Road, and Vicky Lane to the Resurfacing 2017 SPLOST Budget. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Baggett. The motion was approved unanimously with Chairman Brown and Commissioners Baggett, Gross, Hickey, NeSmith, Rich, and Vonier voting aye.

With no other business to discuss, Chairman Brown adjourned the meeting at 7:18 p.m.



Phillip V. Brown Chairman

ATTEST:

  
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Celeste C. Tyler, County Clerk