

Minutes
Historic Courthouse, Board Chambers, 3rd Floor
225 North Board Street
September 27, 2022

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 (absent)
Phillip V. Brown, District 7

Wiley E. Grady, Vice-Chair, Dist. 6

Moses Gross, District 2
Donnie L. Baggett, District 5
Zippy T. Vonier, District 8

Staff present: County Manager Mike Stephenson, Attorney Joe Cargile, Fleet Services Director Jamie Parrott, Transit Director Corey McGee and County Clerk Celeste Tyler.

News/Media present: Chris Hurst, WPAX Radio

Chairman NeSmith called the meeting to order and Transit Director Corey McGee gave the invocation.

Chairman NeSmith recognized Commissioner Grady who made a motion to approve the minutes of the September 13, 2022 Board Meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Baggett. The motion was approved unanimously with Chairman NeSmith and Commissioners Baggett, Brown, Grady, Gross, Rich, and Vonier voting aye.

Chairman NeSmith welcomed the crowd and expressed appreciation for their attendance.

Chairman NeSmith declared a Public Hearing for Thomas County and the Cities of Boston, Coolidge, Meigs, and Ochlocknee to update the Thomas County 5-yr, Comprehensive Plan. The current plan will expire on June 30, 2023. Chairman NeSmith recognized Olukayode "Kay" Olubowale, Planner for Southwest Georgia Regional Commission who explained the process and described tonight's event as the kickoff for updating the plan. The new plan will be derived from a steering committee that will review capital elements, demographics, accomplishments, postponements, unexpected delays, problems and issues, contributions, and new project execution within the next 5 years. The plan will then be submitted to the Georgia Department of Community Affairs for approval. With no comments, Chairman NeSmith closed the Public Hearing. (6:11 p.m.)

Chairman NeSmith declared a Public Hearing for Thomas County and the Cities of Boston, Coolidge, Meigs, and Ochlocknee to amend the 5yr- Comprehensive Plan to include a Broadband Element. The current plan will expire on June 30, 2023. Chairman NeSmith recognized Olukayode "Kay" Olubowale, Planner for Southwest Georgia Regional Commission who explained that the purpose of the 2nd Public Hearing is to amend the current 5yr-Comprehensive Plan to include a Broadband Element.

When asked for questions or comments, Candee Henderson of 1453 Egg and Butter Road, Thomasville, Georgia commented that this is an ideal time for the county to include a "green energy" element in the new Comprehensive Plan. Gloria Glass of 225 Pig Sauls Road, Boston, Georgia asked for a copy of the draft for the 5yr-Comprehensive Plan. With no additional comments, Chairman NeSmith closed the Public Hearing. (6:18 p.m.)

Open Meeting to the Citizens: Chairman NeSmith recognized Candee Henderson of 1453 Egg and Butter Road South, Thomasville, Georgia who reemphasized her quest for Thomas County to have 100% renewable energy by 2035. She also spoke on eliminating the use of fossil fuels, climate change, and the sea level rising in Pakistan.

Chairman Nesmith recognized Aaron Pulcifer who is retiring from the Air Force and is “transplanting” himself to Thomasville. He commented that the pitch on climate change is based on emotion and not factual information.

Chairman NeSmith recognized Alfred Carver of 1806 Parramore Road, Coolidge, Georgia who expressed his thanks to the Commissioners for the appointment to the Library Board and assured the audience that their recent concerns will not be taken lightly. He also expressed the importance of adhering to policy and procedure.

Chairman NeSmith recognized Angie Durham of 155 Avalon Way, Thomasville, Georgia; Mark Stanley of 105 Marys Court, Ochlocknee, Georgia; and Rick Bradner of 377 Madison Grove, Thomasville, Georgia who requested the Board to consider discontinuing the use of electronic voting machines in Thomas County and secure free and fair elections by using paper ballots. Ms. Durham also stated that a formal complaint has been filed with the State of Georgia regarding voting machines that have not been properly certified. Mr. Stanley commented that information is available that contradicts what Elections and Registration Director Frank Scoggins states regarding the capabilities of computers with an on-line and off-line presence. He also stated that domestic interference was prevalent with the use of an algorithm used in computers, and manipulation and missing ballots were revealed during a forensic audit. Mr. Bradner commented on the arguments of the interpretation of the law and emphasized the need for hard copy ballots during a recount.

Chairman NeSmith recognized Shirley Jackson of 727 Crowley Road, Thomasville, Georgia who expressed concern with the library and stated that the books have been vetted and approved by qualified staff and a “public” library includes everyone. Chairman NeSmith recognized Gloria Glass of 225 Pig Sauls Road, Boston, Georgia who spoke on personal preference for books offered at the library and warned of a fire storm with book removal.

Chairman NeSmith recognized Mary Beth Huber of 115 Junius Street, Thomasville, Georgia and Carla Defnall of 1022 East Washington Street, Thomasville, Georgia who expressed concern over the inappropriate books in the library system that are specifically available to children with sexual content that is considered pornographic. Ms. Huber added that she wanted to bring awareness to this issue, but also would like to work together for a resolution. Ms. Defnall stated that the books in question do not have a redeeming storyline. The content is being used to program our children, and they simply do not have the capability to process the information that is being thrown at them without any parental consent. She also read verbatim Georgia law that prohibits the drawing of sexual content as it pertains to literature and is satisfied the only conclusion that can be drawn is the material being presented is pornographic.

Chairman NeSmith concluded by stating that the library is funded by LOST (Local Option Sales Tax) dollars. The tax is collected and then distributed by the State of Georgia. The Board of Commissioners approves the Budget. The county owns the building and is responsible for general oversight but does not deal with the day-to-day operation. The library board sets policy and is responsible for the staff. He expressed confidence that the issues can be resolved and thanked everyone for their continued interest in the library and our community.

Under New Business, Chairman NeSmith recognized Commissioner Baggett who introduced and made a motion to approve the request from the City of Coolidge Police Department to renew the speed detection device permit. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Vonier. The motion was approved unanimously with Chairman NeSmith and Commissioners Baggett, Brown, Grady, Gross, Rich, and Vonier voting aye.

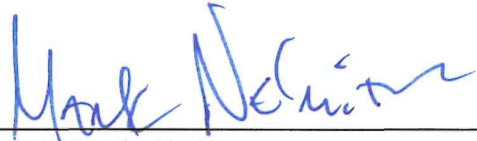
Reports:

Chairman NeSmith recognized Commissioner Vonier who made a motion to ratify the purchase of diesel fuel for \$3.4806/gal on September 21, 2022 from Petroleum Products. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Brown. The motion was approved unanimously with Chairman NeSmith and Commissioners Baggett, Brown, Grady, Gross, Rich, and Vonier voting aye.

Chairman NeSmith recognized Commissioner Grady who made a motion to ratify approval to renew the contract for Probation Supervision Services with CSRA Probation Services, Inc. as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Baggett. The motion was approved unanimously with Chairman NeSmith and Commissioners Baggett, Brown, Grady, Gross, Rich, and Vonier voting aye.


Chairman NeSmith recognized Commissioner Baggett who made a motion to ratify the lease agreement with Flint Equipment for three 2023 Motor Graders with a total annual payment of \$136,500. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Grady. The motion was approved unanimously with Chairman NeSmith and Commissioners Baggett, Brown, Grady, Gross, Rich, and Vonier voting aye. Commissioner Baggett also announced that the Public Property Committee Meeting has been moved to Monday, October 3, 2022 at 8:30 a.m. at the Historic Courthouse.

Chairman NeSmith recognized Commissioner Grady who made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Baggett. The motion was approved unanimously with Chairman NeSmith and Commissioners Baggett, Brown, Grady, Gross, Rich, and Vonier voting aye. The meeting adjourned at 7:15 p.m.



Mark NeSmith, Chairman

ATTEST:



Celeste C. Tyler, County Clerk