

Minutes
Historic Courthouse, Board Chambers, 3rd Floor
225 North Board Street
January 24, 2023

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:

Zippy Vonier, Chairman, Dist. 8

Rev. Jeremy G. Rich, Dist. 1
Kenneth E. Hickey, District 3
Wiley Grady, District 6

Donnie Baggett, Vice-Chair, Dist. 5

Moses Gross, District 2
Mark NeSmith, District 4
Phillip V. Brown, District 7

Staff present was County Manager Michael J. Stephenson, County Attorney Bruce Warren, Planning Director Ken Gay, Zoning Administrator Donna Holbert, Finance Director Laura Nichols, and County Clerk Celeste Tyler.

News/Media present: Chris Hurst, WPAX Radio and Jill Holloway Thomasville Times Enterprise

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

Chairman Vonier recognized Commissioner Rich who made a motion to approve the minutes of the January 10, 2023 Board Meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Baggett. The motion was approved unanimously with Chairman Vonier and Commissioners Baggett, Brown, Grady, Gross, Hickey, NeSmith, and Rich voting aye.

Chairman Vonier declared a Public Hearing at 6:02 p.m., and Donna Holbert, Zoning Administrator, introduced Application 23-1-1. The conditional use zoning application was filed by applicant Alicia Nicholson, spouse of property owner. She has applied for a conditional use zoning for property located at 101 Paces Lane, Map 015A, Parcel 001 (.52 of an acre, more or less.) This property is currently zoned R-3 (Residential, Mixed Use.) The request is for a conditional use zoning to allow the property to be used as a family personal care home for up to six (6) people. If approved, the zoning of the property will be R-3 C.U. (Conditional Use, Family Personal Care Home up to six people.) The Planning Staff recommends approval that the conditional use be granted 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.

Chairman Vonier recognized Roger King of 17452 Eason Crossing Road, Boston, Georgia who spoke against having a Personal Care Home. He asked several questions including zoning changes with conditional use, emergency vehicle access with dirt roads, and ages and mental stability of clients. He has lived there for 27 years.

In rebuttal, Chairman Vonier recognized applicant Alicia Nicholson of 101 Paces Lane who explained that she has been fostering children for years and doubts that the neighbors even know this. She has seen a need to continue providing services for some individuals after the age of 18.

Chairman Vonier recognized Robert King of 17441 Eason Crossing Road, Boston, Georgia. He has been a resident there since 2007. By trade, he is a carpenter and instructor for Job Corp in Albany, Georgia and

explains that it has been an eye-opening experience dealing with mental illness. He is opposed to the conditional use, stating that kids don't need to be out there with loud music and lots of weekend riders on the dirt road.

In rebuttal, Chairman Vonier again recognized Alicia Nicholson who reiterated that she has had a foster home there for four years with no complaints. She plans on no changes to the home.

With no more questions or comments, Chairman Vonier continued the Public Hearing and recognized Chuck Stafford, attorney, representing petitioners John and Nancy Phipps and Jack and Suzanne Howell for the road closure of Winterpast Way. The Public Works Department spoke in favor of the road closure at the November 16, 2022 Public Works Committee Meeting.

With no opposition present, Chairman Vonier closed the Public Hearing at 6:13 p.m.

Chairman Vonier recognized Commissioner Rich who made a motion to approve Application 23-1-1, for Conditional Use zoning 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. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gross. The motion was approved 5-3 with Chairman Vonier and Commissioners Baggett, Brown, Gross, and Rich voting aye, and Commissioners Grady, Hickey, and NeSmith voting nay.

Chairman Vonier recognized Commissioner Hickey who made a motion to approve the petition for the road closure of Winterpast Way commencing on the eastern margin of the right-of-way of Metcalfe Road, Thomas County Georgia and ending at the western right-of-way of Norias Road, Thomas County, Georgia. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Grady. The motion was approved 7-1 with Chairman Vonier and Commissioners Brown, Grady, Gross, Hickey, NeSmith, and Rich voting aye. Commissioner Baggett voted nay.

Open Meeting to the Citizens: Chairman Vonier recognized Jeanette Dixon of 148 Cindy Dr. Thomasville, Georgia who commented that she has had good conversations since the last meeting with a Commissioner and Chief Pettus. She also stated that with the help of neighbors, she now has a 10' x 20' chicken coop and that her chickens are safe. In regards to animal control, she also requested that the Commissioners let the community know how they can help. Chairman Vonier recognized Dr. Beckey Malphus of 138 Brentwood Drive, Thomasville, Georgia who spoke in favor of a continued relationship between the Humane Society and the County and favors pooling valuable resources from both parties. She also emphasized the importance of working with a no-kill shelter and provided statistics for a dramatic decline (50%) of animal in-take since 2012. Chairman Vonier recognized Audrey Linder of 144 Highland Street, Thomasville, Georgia representing the NAACP, who distributed material and spoke on the value of a skilled Human Resources Manager. She also highlighted an employee relations checklist and the 7 core Human Resource functions.

Under **New Business** Chairman Vonier recognized County Manager Stephenson who stated that annually when leadership and roles change within the Board of Commissioners an updated Financial Authorization Resolution becomes necessary to do business.

Chairman Vonier recognized Commissioner Hickey who made a motion to adopt the Financial Authorization Resolution. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Phillip Brown. The motion was

approved unanimously with Chairman Vonier and Commissions Baggett, Brown, Grady, Gross, Hickey, NeSmith, and Rich voting aye.

Chairman Vonier recognized Commissioner Grady who made a motion to approve the 2022 End of Year Budget Amendment 23-1-1 as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Baggett. The motion was approved unanimously with Chairman Vonier and Commissioners Baggett, Brown, Grady, Gross, Hickey, NeSmith, and Rich voting aye.

**2022 BUDGET AMENDMENT 23-1-1 - 2022 End of Year
January 24, 2023**

GENERAL FUND (100)

	Increase/Revenues	Increase/Expenses
Revenues		
LOST	500,000	
1st Resp Grant (1,000.00) Cert Off- Transfer In	185,000	
State Court Fines	80,380	
Expenses		
Department		
Facilities Management		94,000
Building Custodial		15,000
Judicial Center Services		33,000
District Attorney		4,000
State Court		14,000
Sheriff's Office		340,000
Courthouse Security		39,000
Drug Squad		26,000
Jail		160,000
Humane Society		75,000
Public Works		10,000
Sanitation		190,000
Fleet Services		25,000
1st Responder Grant-Payroll		185,000
Rainy Day Account		(444,620)
TOTAL	765,380	765,380

DRUG EDUCATION FUND (230)

	Increase/Revenues	Increase/Expenses
Revenues		
Drug Fines	30,000	

Expenses		
Drug Education		30,000
TOTAL	30,000	30,000

**EMERGENCY SERVICES FUND
(273)**

	Increase/Revenues	Increase/Expenses
Revenues		
FY22 Ground Ambulance Grant	199,000	
1st Resp Grant (1,000.00) Cert Off	185,000	
Ambulance Fees	236,000	
Expenses		
Department		
Emergency Rescue		320,000
ES Administration		115,000
1st Resp Grant (1,000.00)-Transfer		
Out-GF		185,000
TOTAL	620,000	620,000

Chairman Vonier recognized County Manager Stephenson who requested the designation of doubtful accounts in Emergency Services totaling \$519,769.37 and the approval to transfer those accounts from Accounts Receivable to Doubtful Accounts. Working with Collection Bureau Associates (CBA), our current collections vendor and Emergency Billing, our current billing company, these inactive EMS accounts have been identified as those which may have become non-collectible in full or in part.

Chairman Vonier recognized Commissioner Baggett who made a motion to approve the designation of doubtful accounts and transfer the accounts from Accounts Receivable to Doubtful Accounts. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Rich. The motion was approved unanimously with Chairman Vonier and Commissioners Baggett, Brown, Grady, Gross, Hickey, NeSmith, and Rich voting aye.

Board Appointments:

Chairman Vonier recognized Commissioner Grady who made a motion to re-appoint Commissioner Donnie Baggett and Elaine Mays to the Southwest Georgia Regional Commission Board for 2023. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Rich. The motion was approved unanimously with Chairman Vonier and Commissioners Baggett, brown, Grady, Gross, Hickey, NeSmith, and Rich voting aye.

Chairman Vonier recognized Commissioner NeSmith who made a motion to appoint Joan Kautz Ellis to the Thomas County Animal Control Board. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Baggett. The motion was approved unanimously with Chairman Vonier and Commissioners Baggett, Brown, Grady, Gross, Hickey, NeSmith, and Rich voting aye.

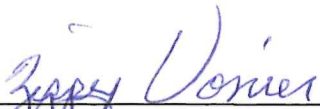
Reports:

Chairman Vonier recognized Commissioner Grady who made a motion to ratify the purchase of diesel fuel from Petroleum Products for \$3.3780/gal on January 11, 2023 and unleaded fuel from Petroleum Products

for \$2.7281/gal on January 12, 2023. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Baggett. The motion was approved unanimously with Chairman Vonier and Commissioners Baggett, Brown, Grady, Gross, Hickey, NeSmith, and Rich voting aye.

Chairman Vonier recognized Commissioner Baggett who announced that the Public Property Committee meeting will be held on February 3, 2023 at 8:30 a.m. in the Historic Courthouse.

Chairman Vonier recognized Commissioner Rich who made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Baggett. The motion was approved unanimously with Chairman Vonier and Commissioners Baggett, Brown, Grady, Gross, Hickey, NeSmith, and Rich voting aye. The meeting adjourned at 6:33 p.m.



Zippy Vonier, Chairman

ATTEST: 

Celeste C. Tyler, County Clerk