

Minutes  
Historic Courthouse, Board Chambers, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
225 North Board Street  
January 11, 2024

The Thomas County Board of Commissioners met on the above date in a regular scheduled meeting at 4:00 p.m. at the Historic Courthouse, Commission Chambers, with the following board members present:

**Zippy T. Vonier, Chairman Dist. 8**

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

**Donnie L. Baggett, Vice-Chair Dist. 5**

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

Staff present was County Manager Michael J. Stephenson, County Attorney Bruce Warren, County Clerk Celeste Tyler, Public Works Director Tony Bodiford, Planning Director Ken Gay, Zoning Administrator Donna Holbert, Fleet Services Director Jamie Parrott, Sheriff Carlton Powell, Capt. Steve Jones, Tax Assessor Daniel Stokes, and Emergency Services Director Derrick Ogletree

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

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

Chairman Vonier recognized Commissioner Baggett who made a motion to approve the minutes of the December 12, 2023 Board Meeting. Commissioner Brown seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with Chairman Vonier, Commissioners Baggett, Brown, Grady, Gross, Hickey, NeSmith, and Rich voting aye.

Chairman Vonier recognized Commissioner Grady who made a motion to approve the agenda for the January 11, 2024 Board Meeting. Commissioner Brown seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with Chairman Vonier, Commissioners Baggett, Brown, Grady, Gross, Hickey, NeSmith, and Rich voting aye.

Chairman Vonier welcomed all those in attendance and then turned the meeting over to County Attorney Bruce Warren who asked for nominations for 2024 Chairman of the Board. Commissioner Baggett made the nomination to elect Commissioner Wiley Grady. With no other nominations forthcoming, County Attorney Warren ceased the nominating period. Upon voting, Commissioner Grady was unanimously selected to be the 2024 Chairman. County Attorney Bruce Warren asked for nominations for 2024 Vice-Chairman of the Board. Commissioner Vonier made the nomination to elect Commissioner Donnie Baggett. With no other nominations forthcoming, County Attorney Warren ceased the nominating period. Upon voting, Commissioner Baggett was unanimously selected to be the 2024 Vice-Chairman.

Newly elected Chairman Grady recognized Commissioner NeSmith who made a motion to re-appoint Bruce Warren as the County Attorney. Commissioner Baggett seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with Chairman Grady, Commissioners Baggett, Brown, Gross, Hickey, NeSmith, Rich, and Vonier voting aye.

Chairman Grady thanked the Board for having the confidence in him to serve as Chairman and commended Commissioner Vonier on a job well done serving the citizens of Thomas County as Chairman in 2023.

Chairman Grady recognized Commissioner Brown who made a motion to set the 2024 Qualifying Fees as presented. Commissioner Baggett seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with Chairman Grady, and Commissioner Baggett, Brown, Gross, Hickey, NeSmith, Rich, and Vonier voting aye.

Board Appointments: Chairman Grady recognized Commissioner Baggett who spoke on the Southwest Georgia Commission and commended Elaine Mays and Jason Giddens for their commitment to serving on the Council in 2023. Chairman Grady recognized Commissioner Vonier who made a motion to re-appoint Donnie Baggett, Elaine Mays, and Jason Giddens to the Southwest Georgia Regional Commission Council. Commissioner Brown seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with Chairman Grady, Commissioners Baggett, Brown, Gross, Hickey, NeSmith, Rich, and Vonier voting aye.

Open Meeting to Citizens: Chairman Grady recognized Candee Henderson of 1453 Egg and Butter Road, Thomasville, Georgia who continued to ask the Board to consider committing to the goal of 100% renewable energy by 2035. She gave an overview of the information that she provided during the last two years to the Board including: an adoptable resolution, multiple articles and resources, motivational reasons (grandchildren), and a plea to stop burning fossil fuel. Tonight, she gave a faith-based message highlighting our true purpose of helping one another.

Reports: Chairman Grady recognized County Manager Stephenson who distributed the 2023 Government Management Indicators report. This annual document is completed for the Georgia Department of Community Affairs.

County Manager Stephenson recognized Zoning Administrator Donna Holbert who introduce rezoning application #24-1-1. Robert Hopkins, CFO of Askay Enterprises, Inc., property owner, has applied for a rezoning for property located at 156 and 174 Myrick Road (Map 053, Parcels 114A and 114B) with each parcel consisting of one acre, more or less. The request is to rezone the subject parcels from Ag (Agricultural) to CG C.U. Storage (Commercial General, Conditional Use, Storage) to allow for the expansion of the existing storage business located at 96 Myrick Road. If approved, Mr. Hopkins will combine all 3 parcels into 1.

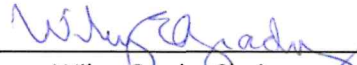
Donna Holbert introduced rezoning application #24-1-2 that was filed by Lee Hendrix, agent for property owner, Joey Collins d/d/a J.C. Farms. The request is to rezone property located on Springhill Road and U.S. 319 South (Map 068, Parcel 017) consisting of 64.36 acres, more or less, from R-1 (Residential, Single Family) to R-2 (Residential, Single Family) to allow for the development of a residential subdivision consisting of approximately 79 lots. This application reflects a 25% increase in lot size. According to Planning Director Ken Gay, the developer has offered a buffer which could be handled in Conditional Use.

Commissioner NeSmith expressed concern over the project and referenced a previous project where the owner sold the property, and the new developer challenged the stipulations placed on the new zoning. County Attorney Warren clarified that the issue with that case was due to the lack of follow through in including the new stipulations in the county atlas. County Manager Stephenson went over the rezoning process and reminded the Board they were only approving the zoning. The Commissioners would still have discretion over the plat.

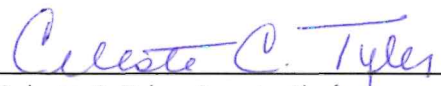
Chairman Grady recognized Commissioner NeSmith who made a motion to ratify the purchase of diesel fuel from Petroleum Products for \$2.7205/ gal approved on 12/27/2023. Commissioner Vonier seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with Chairman Grady, Commissioners Baggett, Brown, Gross, Hickey, NeSmith, Rich, and Vonier voting aye.

Chairman Grady recognized Commissioner Baggett who made a motion to ratify the declaration of 14 tires as surplus and/or scrap and authorize the sell of such items on GovDeals online auction. Commissioner Vonier seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with Chairman Grady, Commissioners Baggett, Brown, Gross, Hickey, NeSmith, Rich, and Vonier voting aye.

Chairman Grady recognized Commissioner Brown who made a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Baggett seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with Chairman Grady, Commissioners Baggett, Brown, Gross, Hickey, NeSmith, Rich, and Vonier voting aye. The meeting adjourned at 4:31 p.m.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Wiley Grady, Chairman

ATTEST:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Celeste C. Tyler, County Clerk