

Minutes
Historic Courthouse, Board Chambers, 3rd Floor
225 North Board Street
May 14, 2024

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:

Wiley Grady, Chairman Dist. 6

Rev. Jeremy G. Rich, Dist. 1

Kenneth E. Hickey, District 3

Phillip V. Brown, Dist. 7

Donnie L. Baggett, Vice-Chair Dist. 5

Moses Gross, Dist. 2

Mark NeSmith, Dist. 4

Zippy T. Vonier, Dist. 8

Staff present was County Manager Michael J. Stephenson, Attorney Drew Tuggle, Planning Director Ken Gay, Zoning Administrator Donna Holbert, Finance Director Laura Nichols, Facilities & Maintenance Director Johnnie Clark, E-911 Director Whitney Hopkins, Emergency Services Director Derrick Ogletree, Capt. Steve Jones, Capt. Tim Watkins, Sheriff Carlton Powell, and County Clerk Celeste Tyler.

Others present: Lyndall Knight, representing VFW Post 4995
Spencer Bowen, Manager of Environment Health
Wade Krueger, Public Defender's Office

News/Media present: Jill Holloway, Thomasville Times Enterprise

Chairman Grady called the meeting to order, and Commissioner NeSmith gave the invocation.

Chairman Grady recognized Commissioner Vonier who made a motion to approve the minutes of the April 23, 2024 Board Meeting. 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 recognized Commissioner NeSmith who made a motion to approve the agenda for the May 14, 2024 Board Meeting. 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 recognized Mr. Lyndall Knight, who on behalf of the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Post 4995 presented E-911, EMT, Fire, and Law Enforcement awards and challenge coins to Cherish Baillargeon, Clint Chastain, Chris Wynn, and Capt. Jerome Burgess, respectively. Every year the VFW presents awards to individuals in Public Service who protect life and property and who exemplifies personal courage. They are also recognized by their colleagues as individuals who are dedicated and consistently demonstrate excellence in their duties and profession.

New Business: Chairman Grady recognized County Manager Stephenson who made a recommendation to approve Budget Amendment 24-5-1 which reimburses the General Fund for SPLOST 17 eligible purchases.

Chairman Grady recognized Commissioner Hickey who made a motion to approve the 2024 Budget Amendment 24-5-1 as presented. Commissioner Brown seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with Chairman Grady, Commissioners Baggett, Brown, Gross, Hickey, NeSmith, Rich, and Vonier voting aye.

**2024 BUDGET AMENDMENT 24-5-1
SPLOST CPF (329)
May 14, 2024**

| Account | Description | Original 2024 Budget | Amended Budget | Budget Difference |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|----------------|-------------------|
| Expenses | | | | |
| 329-3300-542200-350 | 2023-Sheriff Equip | 0 | 754,945 | 754,945 |
| 329-3600-542200-350 | 2023-Emergency Serv Equip | 0 | 482,492 | 482,492 |
| 329-4100-542200-350 | 2023-Public Works Equip | 0 | 600,683 | 600,683 |
| 329-9010-579000-000 | Contingencies | 3,886,594 | 2,048,474 | -1,838,120 |
| | Total | | | 0 |
| Net Increase to Expenses | | | | \$0 |

**2024 BUDGET AMENDMENT 24-5-1
CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT FUND (350)
May 14, 2024**

| Account | Description | Original 2024 Budget | Amended Budget | Budget Difference |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|----------------------|----------------|--------------------|
| Revenues | | | | |
| 350-39-1013 | Transfer In-CPF | 0 | 1,838,120 | 1,838,120 |
| | Total | | | 1,838,120 |
| Net Increase to Revenues | | | | \$1,838,120 |

| Account | Description | Original 2024 Budget | Amended Budget | Budget Difference |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|----------------|--------------------|
| Expenses | | | | |
| 350-9010-611012-100 | Transfer Out-General Fund | 0 | 1,838,120 | 1,838,120 |
| | Total | | | 1,838,120 |
| Net Increase to Expenses | | | | \$1,838,120 |

**2024 BUDGET AMENDMENT 24-5-1
GENERAL FUND (100)
May 14, 2024**

Account Description Original 2024 Budget Amended Budget Difference

Revenues

| | | | | |
|-------------|------------------------------|---|-----------|------------------|
| 100-39-1011 | Transfer In-Capital Imp Fund | 0 | 1,838,120 | 1,838,120 |
| | | | | |
| | Total | | | 1,838,120 |

Net Increase to Revenues **\$1,838,120**

Account Description Original 2024 Budget Amended Budget Difference

Expenses

| | | | | |
|------------------|-------------------|---------|-----------|------------------|
| 100-9010-61-2005 | Rainy Day Account | 510,619 | 2,348,739 | 1,838,120 |
| | | | | |
| | Total | | | 1,838,120 |

Net Increase to Expenses **\$1,838,120**



County Manager Stephenson made a recommendation to distribute a total of \$70,000 from the Drug Education Fund to Thomas County Schools (69% - \$48,300) and Thomasville City Schools (31% - \$21,700). The distribution formula is based on the average school attendance.

Chairman Grady recognized Commissioner Baggett who made a motion to approve the distribution of \$70,000 from the Drug Education Fund to Thomas County School (\$48,300) and Thomasville City Schools (\$21,700). Commissioner Rich seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with Chairman Grady, Commissioners Baggett, Brown, Gross, Hickey, NeSmith, Rich, and Vonier voting aye.

Chairman Grady recognized Spencer Bowen, Manager of Environmental Health Services within the Thomas County Health Department. Mr. Bowen is asking for the Board to approve an increase in certain fees as presented on the scheduled fee chart. In his presentation Mr. Bowen pointed out that while there is a recommendation for certain increases, others will remain the same, and a few services are still provided at no cost. The last review and fee adjustment of Thomas County Environmental Health Services occurred in 2015. Compared to counties of similar size and population in South Georgia, our current fee schedule is lower. A District Environmental Health Fee Committee has researched and determined that many of our fees are undervalued considering the time, effort, and work load involved.

Chairman Grady made a motion to approve the fee increases as presented (pending action of the other counties in the district. Commissioner Baggett seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with Chairman Grady, Commissioners Baggett, Brown, Gross, Hickey, NeSmith, Rich, and Vonier voting aye. County Manager Stephenson also applauded the contribution Mr. Bowen has provided as a vital member of the Animal Services Transitional Team.

Chairman Grady recognized Public Defender Wade Krueger of the Southern Judicial Circuit who asked the Board to revisit the 2024 Public Defender Contract. He would like the County to

reconsider amending the contract to include the clause “the continued rollover of the county’s surplus funds, if any, from the previous calendar year budgets to be retained on behalf of the Public Defender Program for FY 2024-2025”. Mr. Krueger presented many examples of the need for additional funding including first and foremost the shortfalls of staffing. County Manager Stephenson stated that he wasn’t questioning their need for money but merely the request to implement an accounting practice (rollover funds) that is not done for any other department or organization. He concluded by adding that the Public Defender’s office just needs to submit the additional fund requests for individual line items in the budget. The County Clerk can assist with any scheduling needs when the requests are ready to be presented.

Open Meeting to Citizens: Chairman Grady recognized Nathaniel Tyler, President of the local NAACP, who requested a proclamation for the upcoming Juneteenth Celebration. Chairman Grady recognized William Whitesell who introduced himself to the Board as a candidate campaigning in the upcoming election for Superior Court Judge in the Southern Judicial Circuit.

Reports: Chairman Grady recognized County Manager Stephenson who acknowledged the Planning and Zoning Department staff. Zoning Administrator Donna Holbert introduced rezoning application #24-5-1 that has been filed by Centerville Partners, LLC, Gordon D. Hardy, Managing Member, agent for property owner, Elizabeth Powell Flowers. The subject property is located on South Pinetree Boulevard and is located on Thomas County Map 046, Parcel 119 consisting of 14.12 acres, more or less. The applicant is requesting to rezone the property from AG (Agricultural) to R-4 (Residential, Single Family) for the development of a residential subdivision consisting of approximately 31 lots. The Planning Staff does not recommend approval of this rezoning application. The proposed lot sizes do not meet the requirements of the Estate Residential Boundary District that this parcel is located in. County Manager Stephenson recommended sending a letter to the applicant(s) informing them of the Staff’s recommendation.

Under **Committee Reports** Chairman Grady recognized Commissioner Rich who made a motion to ratify the diesel fuel purchase to Petroleum Products for \$2.6874 per/gal on April 23, 2024. Commissioner Brown seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with Chairman Grady, Commissioners Baggett, Brown, Gross, Hickey, NeSmith, Rich, and Vonier voting aye.

Commissioner Rich made a motion to approve the bid of \$23,625.00 from Green’s Backhoe for paving Five Forks Volunteer Station. Commissioner Baggett seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with Chairman Grady, Commissioners Baggett, Brown, Gross, Hickey, NeSmith, Rich, and Vonier voting aye.

Commissioner Rich made a motion to approve the bid of \$34,091.00 from Green’s Backhoe for paving Five Forks and Old Quitman Intersection. Commissioner Baggett seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with Chairman Grady, Commissioners Baggett, Brown, Gross, Hickey, NeSmith, Rich, and Vonier voting aye.


Commissioner Rich made a motion to approve the bid of \$25,126.20 from Industrial Chemicals for clay targets for the Ranges at Oakfield. Commissioner Vonier seconded the motion. The

motion passed unanimously with Chairman Grady, Commissioners Baggett, Brown, Gross, Hickey, NeSmith, Rich, and Vonier voting aye.

Commissioner Rich made a motion to approve the bid from sole vendor, S&L Integrated (\$109,497.37) for an audiovisual upgrade for Courtroom 2 at the Judicial Center. Commissioner Brown seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with Chairman Grady, Commissioners Baggett, Brown, Gross, Hickey, NeSmith, Rich, and Vonier voting aye.

Commissioner Rich made a motion to approve the bid from sole vendor, NTS (\$73,833.22) for an IT upgrade for portions of the Historic Courthouse, Judicial Center, Elections and Registration, and Public Works. 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 recognized Commissioner Hickey who made a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Brown 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 10:01 a.m.



Wiley Grady, Chairman

ATTEST:



Celeste C. Tyler, County Clerk