

Minutes  
 Historic Courthouse, Board Chambers, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
 225 North Board Street  
 October 8, 2024

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:

**Wiley Grady, Chairman Dist. 6**  
 Rev. Jeremy G. Rich, Dist. 1  
 Kenneth E. Hickey, District 3 (absent)  
 Phillip V. Brown, Dist. 7

**Donnie L. Baggett, Vice-Chair Dist. 5**  
 Moses Gross, Dist. 2  
 Mark NeSmith, Dist. 4 (call-in)  
 Zippy T. Vonier, Dist. 8

Staff present was County Manager Michael J. Stephenson, County Attorney Bruce Warren, Planning Director Ken Gay, Project Superintendent Jay Knight, Capt. Tim Watkins, Sheriff Carlton Powell, and County Clerk Celeste Tyler

News/Media present: Jill Holloway

Chairman Grady called the meeting to order and gave the invocation.

Chairman Grady recognized Commissioner Brown who made a motion to approve the minutes of the September 24, 2024 Board Meeting. Commissioner Baggett seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with Chairman Grady, Commissioners Baggett, Brown, Gross, NeSmith, Rich, and Vonier voting aye.

Chairman Grady recognized Commissioner Vonier who made a motion to approve the agenda for the October 8, 2024 Board Meeting with the addition of approval for “notice to proceed” letters to begin storm debris clean-up. Commissioner Brown seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with Chairman Grady, Commissioners Baggett, Brown, Gross, NeSmith, Rich, and Vonier voting aye.

Chairman Grady recognized County Manager Stephenson who requested approval for Budget Amendment 24-10-1. The expenditure was for the 5-ton AC unit for the jail. Commissioner Baggett made a motion to approve Budget Amendment 24-10-1. Commissioner Brown seconded the motion. The passed unanimously with Chairman Grady, Commissioners Baggett, Brown, Gross, NeSmith, Rich, and Vonier voting aye.

**2024 BUDGET AMENDMENT 24-10-1  
 GENERAL FUND (100)  
 October 8, 2024**

Account	Description	Original 2024 Budget	Amended Budget	Budget Difference
<b>Expenses</b>				
100-1565-53-1130	Gen Supp & Mat-Jail Justice Ctr	100,000	135,835	35,835
100-9010-61-2005	Rainy Day Account	2,348,739	2,312,904	-35,835
	<b>Total</b>			<b>0</b>
<b>Net Increase to Expenses</b>				<b>\$0</b>

Under Unfinished Business, Chairman Grady recognized Jay Knight who requested approval for the "Notice to Proceed" letters for debris removal and clean-up from Hurricane Helene.

Chairman Grady recognized Commissioner Vonier who made a motion to approve the "Notice to Proceed" letters for debris removal and clean-up. Commissioner Baggett seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously with Chairman Grady, Commissioners Baggett, Brown, Gross, NeSmith, Rich, and Vonier voting aye.

Chairman Grady recognized Ken Gay who made the recommendation to approve the Final Plat for Pecan Farms Phase 1. He stated that all the necessary requirements have been met. This will allow for construction to begin on Phase I. Commissioner Gross inquired with Jay Knight if there has been any resolution to the pond/water issue. Jay stated that water is to be pumped to the retention pond in Phase I. It was delayed last week due to Hurricane Helene.

Chairman Grady recognized Commissioner Baggett who made a motion to approve the final plat for Pecan Farms Phase I. Commissioner Brown seconded the motion. The motion was approved by Chairman Grady and Commissioners Baggett, Brown, Gross, NeSmith, Rich, and Vonier.

**Open Meeting to Citizens:** none

**Committee Reports**

Chairman Grady recognized County Manager Stephenson who distributed and explained information on House Bill 581. There will be a November 5, 2024 referendum listed on the General Election ballot. It is being promoted as a property tax relief bill. The main feature of HB 581 is a Floating Homestead Exemption (FHE). This could provide major tax relief for all property classified as homestead and increases or decreases as the value of a person's homestead property increases. Also discussed was the procedure required for local government to opt out of the program. If HB 581 is approved in November, County Board of Commissioners would be authorized to call a Floating Local Option Sales Tax (FLOST) referendum. However, if the County Board or any one of the small-town City Councils levying a property tax opts out of the Floating Homestead Exemption, the entire County is disqualified from calling the FLOST referendum. The Transportation Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (TSPLOST) was also discussed and the authority to call a referendum remains with the County Commissioners.


Chairman Grady recognized Commissioner Rich who made a motion to approve the bid for a 5-ton split heat pump from Green's Air Conditioning for the Jail Justice Center for \$35,835. Commissioner Baggett seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with Chairman Grady, Commissioners Baggett, Brown, Gross, NeSmith, Rich, and Vonier voting aye.

Commissioner Rich made a motion to approve the bid for Metal Drainage Pipe from Gulf Atlantic Culvert for Public Works Department for \$38,820. Commissioner Brown seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with Chairman Grady, Commissioners Baggett, Brown, Gross, NeSmith, Rich, and Vonier voting aye.

Commissioner Rich made a motion to approve the bid for computer equipment, support, security, and installation from NTS – Network Technology Solutions LLC for Animal Services for \$35,880.46. Commissioner Baggett seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with Chairman Grady, Commissioners Baggett, Brown, Gross, NeSmith, Rich, and Vonier voting aye.

Commissioner Rich stated that he would be attending the ACCG Legislative Conference in Athens this week. Commissioner Brown commented that he would be praying for Florida as they deal with yet another hurricane (Milton).

Chairman Grady recognized Commissioner Rich who made a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Brown seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with Chairman Grady, Commissioners Baggett, Brown, Gross, NeSmith, Rich, and Vonier voting aye. The meeting adjourned at 9:47 a.m.

  
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Wiley Grady, Chairman

ATTEST:

  
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Celeste Tyler, County Clerk