

Board of Commissioners Minutes
Historic Courthouse, Board Chambers, 3rd Floor
225 North Broad St
September 9, 2025

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:

Mark NeSmith, District 4, Chairman	Donnie Baggett, Vice-Chair, District 5
Rev. Jeremy G. Rich, District 1	Moses Gross, District 2 - Absent
Kenneth E. Hickey, District 3	Wiley Grady, District 6
Phillip V. Brown, District 7	Zippy Vonier, District 8

Staff Present: County Manager Mike Stephenson, Tax Commissioner Alicia Hester, Chief Assessor Daniel Stokes, Sheriff's Office Chuck McDonald and Chaplain Kevin Lamb, Finance Director Laura Nichols, Public Works Director Jay Knight.

Chairman NeSmith called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

Chairman NeSmith offered the invocation.

Chairman NeSmith called for a motion to approve the minutes of the August 26, 2025, Board of Commissioners Meeting. Commissioner Baggett made the motion, and Commissioner Brown seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Chairman NeSmith called for a motion to approve the agenda for the September 9, 2025, meeting. Commissioner Brown made the motion, and Commissioner Hickey seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Chairman NeSmith recognized County Manager Stephenson who recommended the 2025 Property Tax Levy with tentative millage rates tax district as follows:

Incorporated	6.272
Unincorporated	4.630
Emergency Services	1.239
Fire District # 1	2.117
Fire District # 2	2.076
Fire District # 3	1.818

The recommended millage rates are at or below the roll-back rate allowing for final approval without three public hearings and mandated advertisements. The tentative millage rates will receive final approval at the Board meeting of 23 September 2025, pending public notice.

Chairman NeSmith recognized Commissioner Baggett who made a motion to set the Tentative 2025 Millage Rate as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Brown. The motion was approved unanimously.

Chairman NeSmith recognized County Manager Mike Stephenson, who discussed the upcoming 2026 budget process. County departments and offices are preparing budget recommendations and will submit September 9, 2025

them for the Manager's review by the end of September. County finances are tighter with sales tax and property tax revenues leveling off. Operating expenses, especially health benefit costs, continue to increase. There are fewer funds available for capital expenses than in previous years, limiting recommendations to the most critical equipment needs.

The County Manager will complete the review of budget requests by the end of October and present 2026 Budget Recommendations to the Board by early November. The Board will review budget recommendations, conduct a public hearing, and make final 2026 Budget approval at the first regular meeting in December.

Committees

Purchasing:

Chairman of the Purchasing Committee Commissioner Vonier made a motion to approve the bid award to Gracie Gray Contractors, Inc. for bridge guardrail installation and repair at Airport Road and Lower Meigs Road in the amount of \$38,540 and \$47,243 respectively. Commissioner Hickey seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Chairman of the Purchasing Committee Commissioner Vonier made a motion to approve the bid award to Lewis Steel for 10 Roll-Off Containers in the amount of \$43,950. Commissioner Brown seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Chairman of the Purchasing Committee Commissioner Vonier made a motion to approve the bid award to Ag-Pro for a zero-turn mower in the amount of \$18,721.03. Commissioner Grady seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Chairman of the Purchasing Committee Commissioner Vonier made a motion to approve the bid award to The Scruggs Company for the 2025 Colonial Square Round-a-bout, sidewalks and resurfacing in the amount of \$1,506,864.63, with a start date of October 12, 2025. Commissioner Rich seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Chairman of the Purchasing Committee Commissioner Vonier made a motion to approve the bid award to Phoenix Contracting for a gooseneck equipment tilt trailer in the amount of \$28,999.00. Commissioner Baggett seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Chairman of the Purchasing Committee Commissioner Vonier made a motion to approve the bid award to Foley Product Company for concrete drainage pipe in the amount of \$66,645.05. Commissioner Hickey seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Chairman of the Purchasing Committee Commissioner Vonier made a motion to ratify the bid award to Four Star Freightliner for a 2026 Dump Truck in the amount of \$201,316.00. Commissioner Baggett seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Hickey announced the next Public Works meeting will be September 10, 2025 at 8:30 a.m.

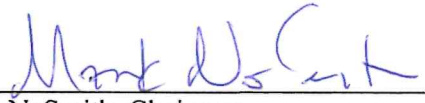
Commissioner Grady announced the next Emergency Services meeting will be September 16, 2025, at 8:30 a.m.

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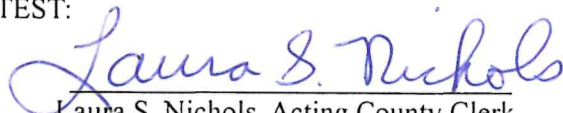
Adjournment

Commissioner Rich made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:25 a.m. Commissioner Brown seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.



Mark NeSmith, Chairman

ATTEST:



Laura S. Nichols, Acting County Clerk