

Thomas County Board of Commissioners
Historic Courthouse, Board Chambers, 3rd Floor
225 North Broad St
April 28, 2026

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:

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, County Attorney Bruce Warren, County Clerk Tracy Dukes, Public Works Director Jay Knight, Planning Director Ken Gay, Purchasing Agent/Deputy Clerk Nisha Thurman

Chairman NeSmith called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and Commissioner Rich offered the invocation.

Chairman NeSmith recognized Commissioner Brown who made a motion to approve the minutes of the April 14, 2026, Board of Commissioners Meeting as presented. Commissioner Vonier seconded the motion, and the motion was approved unanimously with Chairman NeSmith and Commissioners, Baggett, Brown, Hickey, Gross, Vonier and Rich voting aye.

Chairman NeSmith called for a motion to approve the agenda, noting an amendment under New Business to add the following items: (1) authorization for the Chairman to sign the Professional Services Agreement between Reddish Executive Search Associates LLC d/b/a Mercer Group Associates and Thomas County and to adopt the work schedule; and (2) authorization for the Chairman to sign the 2026 National Day of Prayer Proclamation recognizing May 7, 2026, as National Day of Prayer in Thomas County. Commissioner Hickey made a motion to approve the agenda as amended. Commissioner Baggett seconded the motion, and the motion was approved unanimously with Chairman NeSmith and Commissioners, Baggett, Brown, Hickey, Gross, Vonier and Rich voting aye.

Chairman NeSmith recognized George R. Lilly, II who addressed the Board regarding the Thomas County School District Educational Sales Tax and the need for a Resolution by Thomas County Commissioners to provide sufficient ad valorem taxation. Mr. Lilly stated that this was the sixth sales tax approved by the voters (18 million dollars validated on April 21, 2026). Georgia law requires the approval from the County Commissioners in case there would be a deficiency. The proposed Resolution was reviewed by County Attorney Warren.

Chairman NeSmith recognized Commissioner Baggett who made a motion to adopt the Resolution as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Hickey. The motion was approved 6-0-1 with Chairman NeSmith and Commissioners Baggett, Gross, Hickey, Brown, and Vonier voting aye. Commissioner Rich abstained as a current employee of the Thomas County School System.

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A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THOMAS COUNTY TO ASSURE COMPLIANCE WITH THE CONSTITUTION OF THE STATE OF GEORGIA BY ASSESSING AND PROVIDING FOR THE COLLECTION OF A DIRECT ANNUAL TAX SUFFICIENT TO PAY THE PRINCIPAL OF AND INTEREST ON GENERAL OBLIGATION SALES TAX BONDS TO BE ISSUED BY THE THOMAS COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT IN THE AGGREGATE PRINCIPAL AMOUNT OF \$18,125,000, AS AUTHORIZED AT AN ELECTION HELD FOR THAT PURPOSE ON NOVEMBER 4, 2025, PURSUANT TO AND IN CONFORMITY WITH THE CONSTITUTION AND STATUTES OF THE STATE OF GEORGIA, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

WHEREAS, at an election duly called and held in Thomas County on November 4, 2025 (the "**Election**"), after notice thereof had been given to the qualified voters of Thomas County for the time and in the manner required by law, a majority of the qualified voters of Thomas County and the Thomas County School District (the "**School District**"), a political subdivision of the State of Georgia, voting in the Election voted in favor of (i) the reimposition in Thomas County of a one percent sales and use tax for educational purposes (the "**Educational Sales Tax**") for a period of time not to exceed 20 consecutive calendar quarters, which tax shall be distributed between the School District and the City of Thomasville School District, and (ii) the issuance of general obligation debt by the School District for the purposes set forth in a resolution adopted by the Board of Education of Thomas County (the "**Board of Education**"), as the controlling and managing body of the School District, on August 25, 2025; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to the results of the Election and the provisions of a bond resolution adopted on April 21, 2026 (the "**Bond Resolution**"), the Board of Education has authorized the issuance of \$18,125,000 in aggregate principal amount of THOMAS COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT GENERAL OBLIGATION SALES TAX BONDS, SERIES 2026 (the "**Bonds**"); and

WHEREAS, the Board of Education has determined that the Educational Sales Tax received by the School District in each year will be sufficient to pay fully all principal of and interest on the Bonds coming due in each year; and

WHEREAS, payment of the principal of and interest on the Bonds will be secured by and payable first from the Educational Sales Tax and then, if and to the extent necessary, from *ad valorem* taxes to be levied in the School District; and

WHEREAS, the Bonds shall constitute debt of the School District within the meaning of Article IX, Section V, Paragraph I of the Constitution of the State of Georgia; and

WHEREAS, Article IX, Section V, Paragraph VI of the Constitution of the State of Georgia provides that, at or before the time of incurring bonded indebtedness, provision must be made for the assessment and collection of an annual tax in an amount sufficient to pay the principal of and interest on said debt within 30 years from incurring such bonded indebtedness; and

Section 3. PUBLICATION OF TAX RATE. The Board of Commissioners, as levying authority, together with the Board of Education, as recommending authority, shall comply with the provisions of O.C.G.A. § 48-5-32, and all other statutory requirements as may exist from time to time relating to the publication of any

reports or notices required prior to establishing millage rates each year for educational purposes, and shall take such other actions as may be required for the assessment and collection of taxes to provide funds in the years and amounts set forth in this resolution, to the extent the proceeds of the Educational Sales Tax received by the School District are not sufficient for that purpose. The Board of Commissioners and the Board of Education shall cause a report to be published in a newspaper of general circulation throughout Thomas County at least two weeks prior to the establishment of the millage rates for ad valorem taxes for educational purposes during the current calendar year, in accordance with O.C.G.A. § 48-5-32.

Section 4. COMPLIANCE WITH CONSTITUTION. This resolution is adopted in order to assure compliance with Article IX, Section V, Paragraph VI of the Constitution of the State of Georgia. The Board of Education has determined that the Educational Sales Tax received by the School District in each year will be sufficient to pay fully all principal of and interest on the Bonds coming due in each year. The Board of Commissioners will take no action to establish a millage levy for the payment of any portion of the principal of and interest on the Bonds from *ad valorem* taxes until the Board of Education certifies to it any millage required for such purposes.

Section 5. CONFLICTING PROVISIONS REPEALED. Any and all resolutions or parts of resolutions, if any, in conflict herewith shall be and the same are repealed by the passage of this resolution.

RESOLUTION APPROVED AND ADOPTED, April 28, 2026.

Chairman NeSmith recognized Commissioner Rich who made a motion to authorize the chairman to sign the 2026 National Day of Prayer Proclamation recognizing May 7, 2026, as National Day of Prayer in Thomas County. Commissioner Rich seconded the motion, and the motion was approved unanimously with Chairman NeSmith and Commissioners, Baggett, Brown, Hickey, Gross, Vonier and Rich voting aye.

**THOMAS COUNTY
2026 NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER PROCLAMATION**

WHEREAS, the President of the United States has designated Thursday, May 7, 2026, as the **75th annual National Day of Prayer** with the theme "**Glorify God Among the Nations, Seeking Him in All Generations**"; and

WHEREAS, the benefits and rewards of prayer to Almighty God have been recognized by our Founding Fathers and by this governing body; and

WHEREAS, our local, state, national and military leaders are confronted daily with difficult decisions affecting the future of our community, our state, our troops, and country; and

WHEREAS, many Christians on a local, state, and national level and others who express faith in Almighty God have chosen **Thursday, May 7, 2026**, as a day to observe as a "National Day of Prayer"; and

WHEREAS, Community Transformation, Inc. and the pastors involved in various ministerial associations of Thomasville and Thomas County have requested that the County Government of Thomasville join them in recognizing Thursday, May 7, 2026 as a Day of Prayer in Thomasville Georgia; and

WHEREAS, the observance of the National Day of Prayer will renew the faith of those participating and will serve as a catalyst to encourage many persons to unite in prayer to Almighty God, to offer thanks for His goodness, to request His longsuffering, mercy, and forgiveness, and invoke His wisdom and blessing for this governing body, this community, and for our state, our troops and our nation; and

WHEREAS, the pastors and citizens have chosen to hold a special assembly of prayer and devotion in the auditorium of the **Thomasville First Methodist Church**, to commence at 12:00 noon on the 7th of May 2026; and

WHEREAS, members of this body and other government officials have been invited to participate in this **Thirty Fifth (35th) Annual Observance** of the National Day of Prayer in our community;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the County Commission of the County of Thomas, that Thursday, May 7, 2026, be recognized as the **National Day of Prayer** in Thomas County, Georgia and all interested citizens of like faith are invited to participate and encouraged to pray.

SO DONE, this 7th day of May 2026.

Open Meeting to Citizens:

Chairman NeSmith recognized Jeanette Dixon of 148 Cindy Drive, Thomasville, GA who spoke on concerns of animal control/services. Topics included roaming dogs, ordinances, dogs running in packs. Chairman NeSmith reminded Ms. Dixon Sheriff Watkins is responsible for Animal Services and recommended she address her animal issues as well as proposed County Code amendments to the Sheriff for his consideration and future action.

Chairman NeSmith recognized Chip Bragg of 10350 Springfield Rd, Thomasville, GA; Hank Crane 130 Remington Ave, Thomasville, GA; Rob Clyatt 9163 Springhill Rd, Thomasville, GA. All speakers expressed opposition to the proposed ingress and egress for Pecan Farms Phase III being located on Springhill Road, noting the original plat approved by the Board provided ingress/egress for the subdivision via Highway 319. Concerns were raised regarding the potential increase in traffic along Springhill Road, that additional factors, including commuter traffic, service vehicles, school-related traffic, and utility and maintenance vehicles, may contribute to increased congestion on Springhill Road as well as a concern for speeding vehicles.

Chairman NeSmith recognized Steve Sykes, 132 Pheasant Ridge, Thomasville, GA, and Attorney Gary Hunter, 119 S. Monroe St., Tallahassee, FL. Both spoke in favor of locating ingress and egress for Pecan Farms Phase III on Springhill Road. They stated that the amended Preliminary Plat for Phase III of Pecan Farms complies with county ordinances and land use regulations. They further noted that the (GDOT) told the developer it would be safe for traffic to enter and exit via Springhill Road, although

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an application was never submitted to GDOT for a permit to allow ingress/egress from the subdivision to Highway 319. Mr. Hunter emphasized that the request is based solely on safety considerations and that the developer is therefore seeking access from Springhill Road. He also asked the Board to consider evaluating the current speed limits on Springhill Road.

Chairman NeSmith called for a motion to approve the Preliminary Plat for Phase III of Pecan Farms Subdivision. No motion was made. He called for a motion a second time; again, no motion was made. The Preliminary Plat for Phase III of Pecan Farms Subdivision failed for lack of a motion.

Committees:

Purchasing: Commissioner Vonier made a motion to ratify the purchase of Diesel fuel from Petroleum Products for \$3.715 per gallon on April 20, 2026. Commissioner Brown seconded the motion, and the motion was approved unanimously with Chairman NeSmith and Commissioners, Baggett, Brown, Hickey, Gross, Vonier and Rich voting aye.

Public Works: Commissioner Hickey made a motion to ratify the authorization to proceed with procurement for the centerline striping project, consisting of approximately 33.11 miles, at an estimated cost of \$198,660, to be funded through supplemental 2017 SPLOST funds. Commissioner Hickey seconded the motion and was approved unanimously with Chairman NeSmith and Commissioners, Baggett, Brown, Hickey, Gross, Vonier and Rich voting aye.

Commissioner Hickey made a motion to ratify the authorization to proceed with procurement for paving Ozell Road to the Brooks County Line for an estimated total of \$1,152,500 using the 2026 LRA grant with no local match. Commissioner Brown seconded the motion, and the motion was approved unanimously with Chairman NeSmith and Commissioners, Baggett, Brown, Hickey, Gross, Vonier and Rich voting aye.

Commissioner Hickey made a motion to ratify the approval to resume Tire Amnesty Day twice per year with Thomas County being solely responsible for the event. Commissioner Baggett seconded the motion, and the motion was approved unanimously with Chairman NeSmith and Commissioners, Baggett, Brown, Hickey, Gross, Vonier and Rich voting aye.

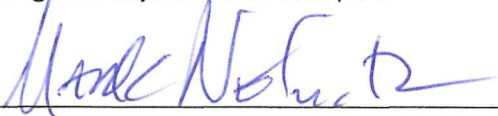
Commissioner Hickey inquired regarding the condemnation letter to the homeowner on Hendry Cemetery Road. County Attorney Bruce Warren stated the letter has been sent and the homeowner has 10 days to respond.

Chairman NeSmith recognized Commissioner Rich who made a motion to give authorization to the Chairman to sign a letter of support for Thomas University. Commissioner Brown seconded the motion, and the motion was approved unanimously with Chairman NeSmith and Commissioners, Baggett, Brown, Hickey, Gross, Vonier and Rich voting aye.

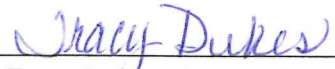
Chairman NeSmith recognized Commissioner Brown who announced the Personnel Committee met on April 28, 2026, at 8:30 a.m. and there will be a Personnel Committee Meeting in May with date to be determined.

Chairman NeSmith recognized Commissioner Baggett who announced the Public Property Meeting has been changed to May 6, 2026, at 8:30 a.m.

With there being no further business, Commissioner Brown made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Baggett seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 6:42 p.m.



Mark NeSmith, Chairman

ATTEST: _____
Tracy Dukes, County Clerk