Minutes
Thomas County Board of Commissioners
Historic Courthouse, Board Chambers, 3rd Floor
225 North Broad St
October 13, 2026

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

Staff Present: County Manager Shawn Boatright, County Clerk Tracy Dukes, Finance Director Laura Nichols, Emergency Services Director Derrick Ogletree, Planning Director Ken Gay, Zoning Administrator Donna Holbert, Mike Tucker Public Works.

Media: None

Others present: Jimmy Hickman, Executive Director Southwest Georgia Regional Commission

Vice-Chairman Baggett called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. and offered the invocation.

Vice-Chairman Baggett called for a motion to approve the minutes of the September 22, 2026, Board Meeting as presented. The motion was made by Commissioner Hickey and seconded by Commissioner Vonier. The motion passed unanimously.

Vice-Chairman Baggett made a motion to amend the agenda of the October 13, 2026, meeting by moving the County Manager's Report to the end of the agenda. Commissioner Gross seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Open Meeting to Citizens

Vice-Chairman Baggett recognized Candee Henderson, 1453 Egg & Butter Road S. who encouraged the Board to commit to the goal of 100% renewable energy by 2025.

New Business:

Vice-Chairman Baggett recognized Trey Ezell with the Georgia Forestry Commission, who presented the annual report for Thomas County. The report included an overview of personnel and equipment, the total number of fires, local burn permits issued, landowners served, firebreaks established, burning assistance, forest management, ranger activities, and other projects completed during the FY2026 reporting period.

Vice-Chairman Baggett discussed Budget Amendment 26-10-1, which amends the current budget to provide funding for the purchase of a replacement fire pumper and a replacement tilt skillet. Commissioner Hickey made a motion to approve Budget Amendment 26-10-1, seconded by Commissioner Vonier. The motion passed unanimously.

Vice-Chaiman Baggett called for a motion to approve the Financial Authorization Resolution removing retired County Manager Michael Stephenson from all applicable county financial accounts and add County Manager Shawn Boatright to those accounts. Commissioner Gross made a motion to approve the Financial Authorization Resolution, seconded by Commissioner Vonier. The motion passed unanimously.

Vice-Chairman Baggett recognized Zoning Director Donna Holbert who introduced rezoning application 26-10-1: Brook J. Parrish, property owner, has applied for a conditional use zoning for property located at 14768 Ga. Hwy. 122 E. , located on Thomas County Map 003, Parcel 087B consisting of 12.28 acres, more or less. The request is for a conditional use to allow for the use of a petting farm. If approved, the property will be classified as Ag C.U. (Agricultural, Conditional Use, Petting Farm). The Planning staff recommends approval of this rezoning application. A Public Hearing will be held at the October 27, 2026, Board of Commissioners' Meeting at 6:00 p.m.

Vice-Chairman Baggett introduced Jimmy Hickman, Executive Director of Southwest Georgia Regional Commission. Mr. Hickman is replacing Suzanne Angell who is retiring in January 2027.

Reports:

Purchasing:
Commissioner Vonier made a motion to ratify the purchase of diesel fuel from Petroleum Products for $4.824 per gallon on September 9, 2026. Commissioner Gross seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Vonier made a motion to ratify the purchase of regular unleaded gasoline from Petroleum Products for $3.7190 per gallon on September 10, 2026. Commissioner Hickey seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Vonier made a motion to ratify the purchase of diesel fuel from Petroleum Products for $4.978 per gallon on September 22, 2026. Commissioner Hickey seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Vonier made a motion to award the three-year right-of-way mowing and trash pickup contract with GM Land Solutions LLC in the amount of $525,000 per year. Commissioner Hickey seconded the motion, and the motion was approved unanimously.

Commissioner Vonier made a motion to award the bid for the replacement of a fire engine pumper from Deep South in the amount of $466,700. Commissioner Baggett seconded the motion, and the motion was approved unanimously.

Commissioner Vonier made a motion to award the bid for a replacement Tilt Skillet for the jail kitchen from Kellwell in the amount of $23,771. Commissioner Hickey seconded the motion, and the motion was approved unanimously.

Commissioner Hickey announced the next Public Works Committee meeting will be on October 21, 2026, at 8:30 a.m.

County Manager:
County Manager Shawn Boatright provided an update to the Commissioners. He commended the Public Safety and Public Works departments for their efforts during the hurricane and noted the effective communication and coordination among departments.

Mr. Boatright reported that he continues to meet with departments to review their budgets and expects to complete the reviews sometime next week. He also noted that early voting began on October 13, 2026.

He noted that an ambulance incident occurred during the early morning hours of October 13, 2026, when the driver missed a turn and drove into a ditch. The ambulance was not transporting a patient at the time. The driver was unharmed, and the ambulance sustained no damage.

With no further business, Commissioner Gross made a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Hickey seconded the motion, and the motion was approved unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 9:28 a.m.

Donnie L. Baggett

Donnie Baggett, Vice-Chairman

ATTEST:

Tracy Dukes

Tracy Dukes, County Clerk