Minutes
Historic Courthouse, Board Chambers, 3rd Floor
225 North Broad St, Thomasville, GA 31792
October 27, 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
Kenneth E. Hickey, District 3 Absent	Zippy Vonier, District 8
Phillip V. Brown, District 7	

Staff Present: County Manager Shawn Boatright, County Attorney Bruce Warren, County Clerk Tracy Dukes, Purchasing Agent/Deputy Clerk Nisha Thurman, Public Works Director Jay Knight, Planning Director Ken Gay, Zoning Administrator Donna Holbert, Insurance/Benefits Jessie Winkleman

Media Present: Jill Holloway, Thomasville Times Enterprise

Others Present: Taylor Benefits John Taylor and Brittany Stanaland, Bill Twomey, ACCG; Paul Fryer Deputy District Director Congressman Sanford Bishop's Office.

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

Chairman NeSmith recognized Commissioner Baggett who made a motion to approve the minutes of the October 13, 2026, Board of Commissioners Meeting. Commissioner Vonier seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

Chairman NeSmith recognized Commissioner Rich who made a motion to approve the October 27, 2026, Agenda. Commissioner Brown seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

Open Meeting to Citizens:
Chairman NeSmith recognized Candee Henderson, 1453 Egg & Butter Road South, Thomasville, Georgia, who addressed the Board. Ms. Henderson noted the City of Thomasville has stopped their recycling program and requested consideration of establishing a recycling program in Thomas County in partnership with the City of Thomasville.

Special Presentation:
Chairman NeSmith recognized Commissioner Rich who read and presented a Proclamation designating November 1, 2026, as Georgia Retired Educators Day. Members of the Retired Teachers Association were present and were thanked for their ongoing contributions to the Thomas County Community.

Public Hearing:

Chairman NeSmith declared a public hearing at 6:08 p.m. on rezoning application 26-10-01 submitted by property owner Brook J Parrish requesting 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). Chairman NeSmith recognized Zoning Administrator who stated staff recommends approval of rezoning application 26-10-01.

Chairman NeSmith recognized property owner Brook Parrish, who stated that she is a retired special needs teacher and has witnessed the joy animals bring to children. She explained that this inspired her desire to open a petting zoo and noted that local schools would also be welcome to visit.

Chairman NeSmith then recognized Joseph Cone, of 10217 Salem Road, Thomasville, GA 31778, who stated that his property is adjacent to the proposed petting zoo. He expressed his support for the project and stated that he and other neighboring property owners were in favor of the petting zoo.

Chairman NeSmith asked if there were any additional comments regarding the rezoning application. Hearing none, he closed the public hearing at 6:13 p.m.

Chairman NeSmith recognized Commissioner Baggett, who commented that he had visited the property and felt the proposed use blended well with the surrounding area. Commissioner Baggett made a motion to approve Rezoning Application 26-10-01. Commissioner Rich seconded the motion, and the motion was approved unanimously.

Chairman NeSmith recognized Planning Director Ken Gay who reported the final plat for Jordan Oaks Subdivision Phase 3 has been inspected by the Planning Department as well as Public Works and recommended approval. Commissioner Rich made a motion to approve the final plat for Jordan Oaks Subdivision Phase 3. Commissioner Vonier seconded the motion, and the motion was approved unanimously.

Chairman NeSmith recognized John Taylor of Taylor Benefit Resource, who presented the County's Health Plan summary to the Board. John reported that since the introduction of the SHARx Program in 2025, the County has experienced a significant reduction in medication-related costs.

John recommended the HCC Plan option, noting that all coverage provisions and employee contributions would remain unchanged. The overall maximum liability would increase by 1%, and overall fixed costs would increase by 5%. The annual cost increase would be approximately $345 per employee, based on 298 employees.

Chairman NeSmith thanked John and Brittany Stanaland for keeping the Board of Commissioners informed of pertinent information and providing recommendations regarding the County's Health Plan.

Chairman NeSmith then recognized Commissioner Brown, who made a motion to approve the annual renewal with Taylor Benefit Resource as the County's health plan provider and to select the

HCC Plan option as presented. Commissioner Rich seconded the motion, and the motion was approved unanimously.
Chairman NeSmith recognized Safety Coordinator Ron Kelly, who requested authorization to submit an application for the 2026 Employee ACCG Safety Grant. The grant is reimbursable, with a requested amount of $8,727.76 to cover various safety items for Thomas County employees. Commissioner Baggett made a motion to approve submission of the 2026 ACCG Employee Safety Grant. Commissioner Brown seconded the motion, and the motion was approved unanimously.

Chairman NeSmith recognized Commissioner Vonier who made a motion to approve a one-day Special Event Alcohol Permit to include beer and wine only for Hands and Hearts for Horses fundraiser on Saturday November 14, 2026, from 5:30 p.m. to 10:30 p.m. Commissioner Baggett seconded the motion, and the motion was approved unanimously.

Chairman NeSmith recognized Paul Fryer, representing Congressman Sanford Bishop's office, and Bill Twomey, ACCG Representative. He expressed appreciation to both for their representation and continued support of Thomas County.

Chairman NeSmith recognized Commissioner Vonier who made a motion to ratify the purchase of diesel fuel from Petroleum Products for $5.16 per gallon on October 14, 2026. Commissioner Rich seconded the motion, and the motion was approved unanimously.

Commissioner Vonier made a motion to ratify the purchase of regular unleaded gasoline from Petroleum Products for $3.66 per gallon on October 14, 2026. Commissioner Baggett seconded the motion, and the motion was approved unanimously.

Chairman NeSmith recognized County Manager Shawn Boatright, who provided the following updates:

- Early Voting: Approximately 8,724 individuals have voted in person during the early voting period.
- GEMA Grant: The GEMA Grant application has been successfully submitted.
- Hotel Groundbreaking: Mr. Boatright attended the hotel groundbreaking ceremony along with Commissioner Brown. The hotel will be a joint development featuring TownePlace Suites and Fairfield Inn.

Mr. Boatright reported that the contract with SWGRC to provide transit services for the Scott Senior Center will expire on October 31, 2026. SWGRC has proposed increasing the trip rate from $1.50, stating that the current cost to provide the service is approximately $40 round trip, per person. He advised that Thomas County could either cancel the contract or renegotiate the terms.

He recommended extending the contract for 30 days at the new rate of $40 round trip while the contract is being renegotiated. Commissioner Baggett made a motion to extend the contract for 30 days at the rate of $40 round trip. Commissioner Rich seconded the motion, and the motion was approved unanimously.

Commissioner Baggett announced the next Public Property Meeting will be November 5, 2026, at 8:30 a.m. and the Veteran's Day Program will be held on November 11, 2026.

With there being no further business, Commissioner Brown made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Rich seconded the motion, and the motion was approved unanimously.

Adjourned at 6:47 p.m.

Mark NeSmith, Chairman

ATTEST:

Tracy Dukes, County Clerk