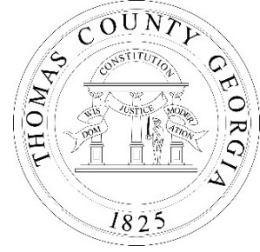


FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



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Thomas County Receives ARPA Grant Funds

Thomasville, Georgia, 12 June 2021 - On Monday, 7 June 2021, Thomas County received \$4.3 million, the first installment of \$8.6 million of America Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) grant funds. The balance of the grant will be received in June 2022. On Tuesday, 8 June, at its regular meeting, the Board of Commissioners approved a tentative plan for spending the \$8.6 million, Thomas County is scheduled to receive.

ARPA authorizes payment for expenses to county governments in four areas:

1. To respond to the public health emergency, or its negative economic impacts. Assistance may be provided to households, small business, non-profits or industries such as tourism, travel or hospitality.
2. To respond to County workers performing essential work during the COVID-19 emergency by providing premium pay to eligible workers.
3. To reimburse County Government for reductions in revenues due to the COVID-19 public health emergency.
4. To make necessary investments in water, sewer, or broadband infrastructure.

The tentative plan approved by the Board of Commissioners is as follows:

1. \$500,000 for Thomas County non-profits and \$500,00 to Thomas County Area Transit Service. Grant awards are contingent on entities documenting negative economic impacts caused by the COVID-19 public health emergency.
2. \$6.0 million for premium pay to Thomas County government workers performing essential work during the COVID-19 public health emergency. First responders include communications officers, deputies, EMT's, firefighters, detention officers, paramedics, public works, transit workers, and essential support County personnel. All Thomas County workers have been certified essential based on guidelines of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and Governor Kemp's Executive Order of 2 April 2020.
3. No grant funds to reimburse Thomas County for reductions in lost revenue. Thomas County does not qualify for reimbursement based on U.S. Treasury Department rules for implementing ARPA.
4. \$500,000 to make necessary investments in rural broadband infrastructure for unserved or underserved areas.

The County Commission also elected to set aside a reserve of \$1.1 million as future needs are identified.

County Manager Mike Stephenson noted, "It is Thomas County's intent to comply with the letter as well as the spirit of this new federal law. The County Commission's plan clearly prioritizes premium pay to essential first responders and support workers. Commissioners also will address other community needs as the final rules from the US Treasury Department are developed."

For more information, contact County Manager Mike Stephenson at 229-225-6056.