

MINUTES OF THE THOMASVILLE CITY COUNCIL MEETING ON MONDAY, MARCH 18, 2024 AT 6:00 PM AT 20 STADIUM DRIVE, THOMASVILLE, NC.

Elected officials in attendance: Mayor Raleigh York, Jr.; Mayor *Pro Tempore* Doug Hunt; and Council Members Ron Bratton, Neal Grimes, JacQuez Johnson, Lisa Shell, Hunter Thrift and Payton Williams.

1. Call to Order – Mayor York called the meeting of the Thomasville City Council to order and welcomed everyone in attendance in person and online.
2. Additions and Deletions to the Agenda – There were no additions or deletions to the agenda. Council Member Thrift moved to approve the agenda as presented. Council Member Hunt seconded. Motion unanimously approved 7 – 0.
3. Public Forum – Nobody came forward to speak.
4. Recognitions and Presentations

A. Proclamation – National Developmental Disability Awareness Month (March)

Mayor *Pro Tem* Hunt presented this Proclamation to Teresa McKeon, Executive Director of Arc Davidson County, and two self-advocates Rachel and Mandy.

Ms. McKeon thanked Mayor York and the Council members for their continued support in recognizing people of all abilities.

B. Proclamation – Women's History Month (March)

Council Member Williams read this Proclamation to the audience.

C. Proclamation – Brighter Vision Day (April 13, 2024)

Mayor York presented this Proclamation to David Smoot, Lisa Shell & David Yemm.

Mr. Smoot spoke on behalf of the Fairgrove, Hasty, Pilot and Thomasville Lions Clubs. He said the Lions help with vision and hearing issues, as well as diabetes education, disaster relief, environmental protection, and food banks.

He said the Lions Club will use Brighter Vision Day to help raise the funds to provide these services to the community. He added, "100% of every dollar we raise goes for services. We keep nothing."

5. Public Hearings

A. Request for Rezoning (Z-24-01)

Applicant/Owner: Faisal Alazzawi
 Location: 606 Old Raleigh Road
 Parcel Number: 1633600000035A
 Existing Zoning: C-2 Highway Commercial
 Requested Zoning: M-2CU Heavy Industrial Highway Commercial
 Conditional Use: The property will be used exclusively for operation as a garage for semi-trucks, trailers, parking, small office space.

Mayor York opened the public hearing.

Planning Director Chuck George said no one opposed this rezoning at the Planning Board meeting.

He advised Council that they would need to affirm the following five conditions to move forward with this rezoning:

- a) The use requested is among those listed as an eligible special use in the district in which the subject property is located or to be located;
- b) The special use will not materially endanger the public health or safety if located where proposed and developed according to the plan as proposed;
- c) The special use meets all required conditions and specifications;
- d) The special use will not substantially injure the value of adjoining or abutting property, or that the use is a public necessity; and
- e) The location and character of the special use if developed according to the plan as proposed, will be in harmony with the area in which it is to be located and in general conformity with the plan of development of Thomasville and its environs.

Faisal Alazzawi's daughter Xena Alazzawi spoke in favor of this rezoning. She said he purchased this land to hold a garage for semi-trucks and trailers. They may also build a small office space in the future.

Nobody spoke against it. Mayor York closed the hearing.

Council Member Grimes moved to approve this Ordinance for the conditional use based on the findings of the Planning Board and because this zoning amendment is reasonable and in the public's interest due to its consistency with the comprehensive plan and, as a result, its furtherance of the goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan.

Council Member Hunt seconded. Motion unanimously approved 7 – 0.

B. Request for Rezoning (Z-24-03)

Applicant/Owner: 4 Amigos Investing, Inc.
 Location: 404 Davidson Street
 Parcel Number: 1037000H0001A
 Existing Zoning: C-1CU Neighborhood Commercial
 Conditional Use: Agriculture
 Requested Zoning: R-8 Medium Density Residential

Mayor York opened the public hearing.

Planning Director Chuck George said nobody opposed this rezoning request at the Planning Board hearing.

He said the Board found that the proposed rezoning:

- a) would bring the property back in line with the adjoining properties;
- b) is consistent with the 2035 Land Use Plan; and
- c) would cause no harm to the adjacent property values or the public in general.

Randall Schuler, building contractor for the applicant, spoke in favor of this rezoning. He said they want to put a single-family residential home on the property.

Nobody else spoke for or against the rezoning. Mayor York closed the hearing.

Council Member Thrift moved to approve this Rezoning based on the findings of the Planning Board and because this zoning amendment is reasonable and in the public's interest due to its consistency with the comprehensive plan and, as a result, its furtherance of the goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan.

Council Member Hunt seconded. Motion unanimously approved 7 – 0.

6. Consent Agenda – Assistant City Manager Eddie Bowling spoke briefly about each of these items:

- A. Consideration of Approval of Minutes – Briefing Meeting on February 12, 2024
- B. Consideration of Approval of Minutes – Council Meeting on February 19, 2024
- C. Consideration of Resolution Awarding Badge and Service Weapon to Retiring Police Officer Tracy Pierce

This Resolution states that Thomasville City Council will award retiring police officer Tracy Pierce his badge and side arm at the time of his retirement, pursuant to NCGS §20-187.2.

- D. Consideration of Grant Project Ordinance – 2022 TPD: Byrne Justice Assistance Grant (JAG)

The Thomasville Police Department was awarded a 2022 JAG Grant totaling \$24,049 to purchase Power DMS software that will be used to aid the Department in obtaining North Carolina Law Enforcement Accreditation.

The funds are passed through the NC Department of Public Safety Governor's Crime Commission from the US DOJ's Bureau of Justice Assistance.

The grant covers the cost of the first two years of the software agreement, with the last three years to be paid by the City from the PD's budget at a cost of about \$12,954 per year, starting in FY 2026.

- E. Consideration of Grant Project Ordinance – 2023 TPD: Byrne Justice Assistance Grant (JAG)

The Thomasville Police Department was also awarded a 2023 JAG Grant totaling \$29,400 (84 at \$350 each) for the purchase of body armor rifle plates for patrol officers. The grant is 100% federally funded. No City contribution is required.

- F. Consideration of Amended Davidson County Economic Development Commission By-Laws

The new bylaws establish that the members of the Commission be appointed from the elected members of each municipality and the County. Each jurisdiction appoints a regular member and an alternate.

- G. Consideration of Artificial Intelligence Use Policy for City Employees

With the increased availability and usage of Artificial Intelligence capabilities in the workplace, there are benefits and concerns raised by its usage by City employees. The proposed policy addresses some of these concerns and appropriate usage of AI systems.

Council Member Hunt moved to approve all the items on the Consent Agenda. Council Member Shell seconded. Motion unanimously approved 7 – 0.

7. Regular Agenda

- A. Consideration of Budget Amendment 2024-P9-01

City Manager Michael Brandt explained that this budget amendment appropriates the following:

- i. Excess school supplement tax revenue and increases in the School Fund;
- ii. The full annual cost of County-contracted tax assessment billing from the General Fund Contingency;

- iii. Surplus interest revenue of \$408,000 to cover the first economic development incentive grant payment for the Unilin/Project Tower grant;
- iv. Surplus sales tax revenue of \$379,680 to cover the 3rd payment for the Unilin/Project Titan grant; and
- v. Funding to comply with GASB 96 requirements recognizing the full 3-year lease of Debtbook Management Software and the 5-year cost of Power DMS software.

In addition, this amendment transfers the ending fund balance in the Golf Course Fund to the General Fund to properly close out the Golf Course Fund by 6/30/2024, as required.

Council Member Thrift moved to approve this Budget Amendment. Council Member Hunt seconded. Motion unanimously approved 7 – 0.

B. Consideration of Resolution to Adopt the Thomasville Downtown Streetscape Master Plan

City Manager Brandt explained that this Resolution adopts the *conceptual* plan for improvements to the downtown area. It was designed by WithersRavenel with City, Tourism and community input. It will be used to develop future capital improvements and provide guidance for future Council and staff over the next 5-10 years.

Council Member Johnson moved to approve this Resolution. Council Member Thrift seconded and requested a roll-call vote.

Council Members Grimes and Shell said they were not opposed to this Plan, but they have reservations about the angled parking and removal of turn lanes on Main Street.

Mayor York confirmed that, "Everything in the Plan has to come back before Council to be approved before it's implemented."

Council Member Thrift also clarified that, "None of this Plan is set in stone. It's conceptual. It is a master plan for us to look at and address each item. We have not decided how any parking is going to be. Nobody has said we're going to lose parking or gain parking either way. This is something that will be a working document for many years. This is just one step in the process to keep our status with the North Carolina Main Street Program."

Council Member Williams thanked the Tourism Commission for helping fund this project. She said, "It was a really big investment, and it's super nice to have partners in the City to make things like this happen."

Motion approved 6 – 1. Council Member Shell voted no, saying that was "for parking only." All other Council Members voted yes.

C. Consideration of Amendment to Appendix A of the Thomasville Personnel Policy – Fire Trainee

Fire Chief Jason Myers explained that this Fire Trainee position was needed because there is a diminishing hiring pool within fire and law enforcement.

He said adding this position as a paid, full-time position would give TFD an opportunity to recruit trainees - maybe straight out of high school. Not only would the trainees get paid while attending the Fire Fighter Recruit Academy, but they would also receive the added incentive of getting started in the State Retirement program while they are still in training.

City Attorney Misti Whitman, ACM Eddie Bowling, Fire Chief Jason Myers and Police Chief Dustin Carter set the Service Agreement amount at \$5,000, instead

of \$3,000. They hoped the increase would deter new trainees from leaving Thomasville to pursue other avenues once they get certified.

They also removed the Proration Clause. Chief Myers added, "So, if they leave us any time in that 18 months, they would pay back the full \$5,000."

He added, "There are clauses in there, as you saw, for reasons they would not have to pay it back. If we determined that we needed to cut ties with them, and their service was no longer needed, or if they were injured in the training, or they failed to complete the training, they would not be required to pay that back."

Council Member Johnson moved to approve this Personnel Policy Amendment. Council Member Shell seconded.

Council Member Johnson thanked Chief Myers for "being proactive to insure that we not only find qualified candidates for these positions, but we are also finding candidates that represent our community."

Motion unanimously approved 7 – 0.

D. Consideration of Resolution to Adopt and Allocate Funds for an Outdoor Fitness Court as Part of the 2024 National Fitness Campaign

Recreation Director Cory Tobin advised that this Resolution is for a \$30,000 in-kind grant that is "the key to start the cycle for the Outdoor Fitness Court initiative." He said this grant would assist the City in adding outdoor, accessible fitness upgrades at the Central Recreation campus. He added that it falls in line with Thomasville Parks and Recreation's Master Plan.

He hopes to be able to combine these funds with funding from another grant opportunity to move this initiative forward. He will find out if the City will receive the other grant in October.

Council Member Thrift moved to approve this Resolution. Council Member Johnson seconded.

Council Member Thrift said, "This is something I'm really excited for. We're headed in the right direction. Cory, good job to you and your staff."

Council Member Grimes remarked that this also ties in with the Downtown Redevelopment Plan.

Council Member Johnson added, "It promotes folks to get outside and get active, so we're super excited about that."

Motion unanimously approved 7 – 0.

E. Consideration of Settlement Agreement with Midnight Enterprises, LLC (f/k/a John & Jeff Schwarz, LLC)

City Attorney Misti Whitman explained that this proposed settlement agreement between the City of Thomasville and Midnight Enterprises would resolve both a utility bill for services that were undiscovered, as well as the usage of private property for public parking for many years without charge. She said, "This is an Agreement that renders both of those issues resolved."

Council Member Hunt moved to approve this Settlement Agreement. Council Member Shell seconded. Motion approved 5 – 2. Council Members Johnson and Williams voted against it.

F. Consideration of Re-approval of Personnel Agreements:

- i. City Manager Michael Brandt
- ii. City Attorney Misti Whitman

City Attorney Whitman asked Council to re-approve the City Manager's and City Attorney's current contracts, so that they could include a pre-audit stamp by the Finance Department. She explained that a recent court decision requires this stamp on the contracts in order for them to be enforceable.

Council Member Grimes moved to re-approve these Personnel Agreements so that Finance Director Thomas Avant could apply pre-audit stamp to the signature pages, in accordance with North Carolina State law. Council Member Hunt seconded. Motion unanimously approved 7 – 0.

G. Consideration of Resolution to Conduct a Public Hearing on April 15, 2024 at 6:00 PM at 20 Stadium Drive regarding a Petition for Closure of Alley on Clay Street

Planning Director George asked Council to approve this Resolution and call for a public hearing. He said, "Mr. Milton Pena owns the property on each side of it. He has signed the Petition. The property owner to the north of it has not signed the Petition."

Council Member Grimes asked if Council could act on the closure without the other property owner's signature. Mr. George verified that they can proceed with the Petition.

Council Member Thrift moved to approve this Resolution and call for public hearing on April 15, 2024 at 6:00 PM at 20 Stadium Drive regarding a Petition for Closure of Alley on Clay Street. Council Member Hunt seconded. Motion unanimously approved 7 – 0.

H. Consideration of Road Closure Ordinances:

- i. Spring Daze (by PACE) (May 4th)
- ii. Parade of Excellence (May 24th)
- iii. Memorial Day Parade (May 27th)

Council Member Thrift moved to approve these Road Closure Ordinances. Council Member Grimes seconded. Motion unanimously approved 7 – 0.

8. Committee Reports and Appointments, Mayor's Report and Appointments, City Manager's Report, City Attorney's Report

Council Member Shell reported that she enjoyed the Main Street Conference. She said it was very educational.

Council Member Bratton thanked everyone for their concern during his absence.

Council Member Thrift moved on behalf of the Personnel Committee to appoint the following board members:

Maddie Thrift to the Historic Preservation Commission; and

JJ Ring to the Tourism Commission

Council Member Hunt seconded. Motion unanimously approved 7 – 0.

Council Member Thrift also thanked everyone who supported the pancake breakfast fundraiser for the NC Memorial Day Parade and Ceremony.

He also learned a lot at the NC Main Street Conference. He said, "It makes me really excited for where Thomasville's headed in the future."

Council Member Grimes reported that he joined Council Members Johnson and Shell for a tour of several Thomasville City Schools. He said, "It was very informative. I thank the schools for putting that on for us."

Council Member Williams was thankful for the opportunity to go to the NC Main Street Conference to learn what other municipalities are doing.

She interviewed Thomasville High School seniors for the SECU scholarship, and they were incredible. She said, "It's really, really affirming to meet these kids and see that they've come through our community. So many of them have the intention to one day give back."

She gave a shout out to the City streets guys who were working on her street this morning. "They were very communicative. They helped me understand what was happening. They worked with us for our trucks... I want to thank our employees for making it as painless as possible and being very, very kind and helpful. And it looks great!"

Council Member Johnson wished everyone a happy National Women's History Month. He said, "Throughout history, women have shattered barriers, challenged norms, and paved the way for progress. Women's History Month is a time to honor the fearless trailblazers who have refused to be confined by life's limitations." Some of those amazing women include Council Members Shell and Williams (Thomasville's youngest elected female Council person in our city's history) and Shell and unsung heroes such as his grandmother "whose unwavering love and determination and support left an undeniable mark on my life." He encouraged everyone to cherish the remarkable women in their lives.

He reported that he joined Council Members Shell and Grimes for the tour of all four of the City's schools. He said they were able to see first-hand the amazing things happening in Thomasville City Schools, as well as some of the major issues facing our schools.

He congratulated the varsity basketball team, which advanced to the fourth round of the playoffs. He said, "I'm so proud of these young men and their head coach Diane Ferguson, who was named All Conference Coach of the year for the third consecutive time."

He also attended the 2024 Main Street Conference in Goldsboro, NC. He said, "Seeing the creative ways cities across North Carolina have helped to make downtown areas revitalized is not only inspiring, but it shows what is possible when you have a vision and support our community and its entrepreneurs. I'm excited to bring some of those ideas back to our community."

Mayor York reported that there were three ribbon cuttings over the past month at Sisters of Hope (community assistance outreach on Lexington Avenue), Firestone Complete Auto Care (Southgate Shopping Center), and the Love Cathedral (church on East Sunrise.)

He also attended a Veteran's coffee at the Library and was pleased to be a part of the group of veterans. He said the Library is going to host this regularly, and he thanked them for that.

It was his pleasure to be a server at the Empty Bowls fundraiser that raised money for needy/homeless children.

He also served as a greeter and emcee at the High School Hall of Fame for their induction ceremony. They recognized 3 teams and 31 individuals. One of the individuals who accepted induction into the Hall of Fame was Warren King, the "number one Bull Dog fan of all time." Warren has contributed a lot and has been the number one ambassador for Thomasville and the schools and local sports in every respect. "It did my heart good to see Warren accept that recognition."

He ended by saying, "Great things are happening here in Thomasville!"

City Manager Michael Brandt asked drivers to watch out for children and others who are getting outside on the sidewalks and in our parks. He said, "It seems as if every weekend we have car wrecks around the area. Please be careful driving. Pay attention to the drive, not your phone."

He reported that the City is paving 5.5 Miles of streets for \$1,010,831.0, which is almost \$200,000 per street mile. The City pays for that using the 1-cent property tax, Powell Bill Funds, and Car Tag fees.

All or portions of the following streets will be paved: Cox Street; Winston Street; Birch Tree Lane; Howard Circle; Country Manor Drive; Deerfield Court; Redbud Lane; Chrisswood Avenue; College Street; White Street; Bell Drive; Lowery Drive; Lanford Drive; Linda Drive; Gail Street; Council Street; Griffith Street; Hawthorne Lane; Poplar Lane; and Lines Street.

He also advised that the City purchased property on Trade Street, which will be paved for a public parking lot. They also purchased 52 East Main Street. The small car wash structure will be removed. The property will be used temporarily as public parking while plans are made to connect Main Street with PACE Park.

He thanked Leadership Davidson County for inviting him to speak to the class. He was able to share with them what the local government role is in the community.

He and Council Member Williams participated in the children's cooking program through Parks and Recreation.

City Attorney Whitman thanked Council and the Parks and Rec staff for everything they have done to make sure that Thomasville has nice facilities.

Assistant City Manager Eddie Bowling recognized MIS Director Justin Trogon for his work with the Police Department to save the City and taxpayers nearly \$50,000 by adapting the current in-car and body camera system to work with some other sources of internet.

ACM Bowling also recognized Police Captain Brad Saintsing and staff who handled 34 calls for service in a single 8-hour period while Police Chief Carter was away.

He said, "We are thankful for both of their leadership in our organization!"

9. Closed Session - Personnel


Council Member Thrift moved to go into closed session for Personnel matters. Council Member Hunt seconded. Motion unanimously approved 7 – 0.

Council returned to open session. No action was taken in closed session.

Council Member Bratton left the meeting.

10. Additional Items – N/A.

11. Adjournment – Council Member Williams moved to adjourn. Council Member Shell seconded. Motion unanimously approved 7 – 0.


Raleigh York, Jr., Mayor


Wendy S. Martin, City Clerk