

REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING, PIERCE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS, TUESDAY, JUNE 05, 2007 AT 6:30 P.M.

Commissioners Present:

James Dennison, Chairman
K. Neal Bennett, Board Member
Mike Streat, Board Member
Randy Dixon, Board Member
Aldeen Davis, Board Member

News Media Present:

The Blackshear Times
Pierce County Press

CALL TO ORDER: Chairman Dennison called the regular monthly meeting to order at 6:31 P.M.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE AND INVOCATION: Commissioner Neal Bennett gave the invocation and led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF MAY 2007 MINUTES: Chairman Dennison called for the approval of the May 2007 minutes. Commissioner Randy Dixon made a motion to approve the May 2007 minutes. Commissioners Mike Streat seconded the motion. All Commissioners voted aye. Chairman Dennison voted aye. Motion carried.

PRESENTATION:

Verdia White: Chairman James Dennison and County Extension Agent James Jacobs present to retiring Pierce County-Georgia Cooperative Extension Service secretary, Verdia White a plaque for her twenty years of service.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Regina Morgan-Okefenokee Area Development Authority-Discussing on how the OADA is working for Pierce County. Regina Morgan, Executive Director, started her discussion on the on the Okefenokee Area Development Authority (OADA) by asking “what has OADA done for Pierce County lately?” She answered her own question by stating “more than you might think.” Ms. Morgan said that she “markets Pierce County every chance that I get.” The director says that a more cooperative county commission and the newly revamped Pierce County Industrial Development Authority have developed a good relationship in the past several months. She also stated that Pierce County still has some major roadblocks that must be overcome.

Chairman Jim Dennison acknowledged that Pierce County needs wetlands delineated and sewer service in the industrial park.

Ms. Morgan stated that the sewer service and the wetland delineation are the two major issues to large companies looking at the industrial park. She said that right now it is a stopping point for every potential industrial prospect. Ms. Morgan stated that these prospects are looking for something right now, not years down the road.

Commissioner Neal Bennett said that he feels the Pierce County IDA will have these issues addressed in coming months. He said that businesses cannot stop at the county line; that Ware and Pierce County must work together and continue to move forward. Commissioner Bennett said that in twenty years Highway 84 between the Satilla River and Lairsey's intersection will not look the same, it will all be commercial.

Ms. Morgan stated that despite the lack of the sewer service, she currently has a prospect for the industrial park. She described the company as producing a biofuel product marketed in Europe. She said that it is small company using wood products and will need to be close to Cone Wood Products for the material used in its operation.

Commission Mike Streat compared infrastructure to a stocked toolbox for development. He stated the area is going to grow with or without us and we must be ready for that growth.

Ms. Morgan also informed the board that she and members of OADA had taken a trip to Atlanta to meet with the Electric Membership Corporation. She said that the Electric Membership Corporation and Georgia Tech will provide economic development planning to local governments. She said that they can help the county come up with a plan for the park and help to prepare for the future.

Industrial Park-Water/Sewer Line-Discuss avenues to fund completion of the Industrial Park. Chairman Dennison stated that he would like for the county to find a way to help the City of Blackshear fund the water and sewer line for the industrial park. Commissioner Dennison endorsed the idea recommended by Commissioner Aldeen Davis that maybe the Pierce County IDA can sell timber from the industrial park to finance the wetland delineation and the sewer service. Commissioner Neal Bennett and Commissioner Mike Streat both stated that they wanted more information.

Commissioner Bennett said as vital as sewer service is to the park, proper planning is just as important. Commissioner Bennett wants the board to consider a scenario where Blackshear's wastewater capabilities were exceeded, such as the proposed new elementary school. Commissioner Bennett asked Dr. Joy Williams about the new school. He wanted to know what kind of capacity the new school would require and what kind of time frame.

Dr. Joy Williams replied that the new school would require half the volume of the high school and the middle school, which has city water and sewer. The school is presently scheduled to be ready by 2010.

Commissioner Mike Streat asked community development director Mary Clifton to give the board information on Blackshear's wastewater capacity.

Mr. Clifton said the city currently has 100,000 gallons of capacity on the south plant, but added that the city would eventually have to expand for new growth. He said the capacity could be increased by using the north plant, something that could be accomplished by boring under the railroad for another sewer line.

All the commissioners stated that they would help the City of Blackshear with funding, but the county did not need to be in the sewer and water business right now.

Commissioner Aldeen Davis made a motion to ask the Pierce County Industrial Development Authority to research a number of development issues for the sewer extension to the industrial park. Commissioner Neal Bennett seconded the motion. All Commissioners voted aye. Chairman Dennison voted aye. Motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS:

Pierce County Board of Education-Discuss the land swap between Pierce County and the Pierce County Board of Education-School Superintendent-Dr. Joy Williams- Dr. Williams came before the board requesting that the land swap between the Pierce County Board of Commissioners and the Pierce county Board of Education be finalized. Chairman Dennison stated that the land swap would be the right thing to do to get this situation settled. He stated that "we're dealing with taxpayers' property on both sides." Commissioner Aldeen Davis said that he was to meet with the Board of Education Chairman Mark Dixon, to go over the land swap, but Mr. Dixon never got back to him with a meeting time or date. Commissioner Neal Bennett wanted to know what the county was giving up. Commissioner Alden Davis wanted to know the value of the land on College Ave. Chairman Dennison stated that an appraisal conducted by Chief Appraiser Bill Rozier found the two properties will be valued at about \$25,000 each. Commissioner Neal Bennett asked school superintendent Joy Williams what the school board plans were for the property. Dr. Joy Williams replied that the property will be used for parking for ballgames and graduation.

Commissioner Randy Dixon made a motion to give the Pierce County Board of Education eight (8) acres located on County Farm Road in exchange for 1.6 acres on College Avenue. Chairman Jim Dennison seconded the motion. All Commissioners voted aye. Chairman Dennison voted aye. Motion carried.

Library/NFC Project-Discussing on Governor Purdue's 1.29 million cut in bond projects throughout the state, Pierce County's library being on of them. Chairman Dennison stated that the board had three (3) options open to them.

1. Process with the USDA loan at 5%; 2. Start on the NFC/Gym and wait for next year funding and 3. Stop all projects. Chairman Dennison stated that the Department of Correction is waiting on us to decide so they can schedule the inmate work detail. Chairman Dennison said that several things must be done before the inmate work detail could start-all departments must be moved, the asbestos removal must be done and the wire fence must be up.

Commissioner Neal Bennett stated that he felt that the county would have time to wait for state funding since the work is being done with inmate labor. Commissioner Bennett said that the work would probably take three or four years and we can always come back to the library later. Commissioner Bennett said if the state did not fund the library next year; the county will proceed with funding the entire three part project with the USDA loan.

Commissioners Neal Bennett and Commissioner Aldeen Davis voiced their opinions that the county should start on the NFC/Gym project now.

Commissioner Aldeen Davis made a motion to table the NFC/Gym/Library project off the table from the May meeting. Commissioner Mike Streat seconded the motion. All Commissioners voted aye. Chairman Dennison voted aye. Motion carried.

Commissioner Neal Bennett made a motion to give Rusty McCall permission to proceed with the NFC/Gym project and use the USDA Loan. Commissioner Aldeen Davis seconded the motion. All Commissioners voted aye. Chairman Dennison voted aye. Motion carried.

Southern Systems of GA- Commissioner Mike Streat made a motion to take the motion off the table from the May 2007 meeting. Commissioner Randy Dixon seconded the motion. All Commissioners voted aye. Chairman Dennison voted aye. Motion carried.

The Revolving Loan Fund Committee has recommended that David Boyette be released from his guaranty for the Southern Systems of GA loan. The partnership has been dissolved and a release agreement has been prepared and must be signed by the board. This release involves only David Boyette. County Attorney Franklin has seen and approved all changes. Commissioner Mike Streat made a motion to release David Boyette from his guaranty for the loan made by Southern Systems of GA. Commissioner Randy Dixon seconded the motion. All Commissioners voted aye. Chairman Dennison voted aye. Motion carried.

ELECTED OFFICIALS:

City of Blackshear-Request for 2003 SPLOST funds-\$856.46 requested to pay an invoice from Statewide Engineering, Inc. for GA DOT TE Streetscape Project Phase II. Commissioner Mike Streat made a motion to approve the invoice from Statewide

Engineering, Inc. for the amount of \$856.46. Commissioner Aldeen Davis seconded the motion. All Commissioners voted aye. Chairman Dennison voted aye. Motion carried.

City of Blackshear-Request for 2003 SPLOST funds-\$19,795.86 requested to pay a portion of DOT contract for resurfacing three (3) streets in Blackshear with cash match of \$19,795.86. Commissioner Randy Dixon made a motion to approve the invoice from the City of Blackshear in the amount of \$19,795.86. Commissioner Aldeen Davis seconded the motion. All Commissioners voted aye. Chairman Dennison voted aye. Motion carried.

City of Patterson-Request for SPLOST funds-\$28,571.00 requested to buy one (1) International Dump Truck and \$9,323.07 requested for the City of Patterson's share for resurfacing Tyre Bridge Road. Commissioner Mike Street made a motion to approve the two invoices from the City of Patterson for \$19,795.86 and \$9, 32.07. Commissioner Randy Dixon seconded the motion. All Commissioners voted aye. Chairman Dennison voted aye. Motion carried.

CONTRACTS, INVOICES & REQUISITIONS:

Courthouse Renovation Project-May 2007 invoices for the courthouse totaled \$38,323.14. Commissioner Aldeen Davis made a motion to approve the May 2007 invoices. Commissioner Randy Dixon seconded the motion. All Commissioners voted aye. Chairman Dennison voted aye. Motion carried.

Southland Waste Systems of GA-Discuss possibility of mandatory county wide participation in solid waste pickup and rate increase. Chairman Dennison stated that he had received a letter from Sam Sullivan, General Manager of Southland Waste Systems. Mr. Sullivan is proposing a rate increase of \$2.00 per month per cart. Mr. Sullivan also wants the county to look into making garbage pick-up service mandatory for all county residents. The letter stated that only about 60% of the residents of Pierce County are currently using the service and this led to illegal dumping, illegal burning, stolen cars, and higher rates. Commissioner Neal Bennett made a motion to table this discuss and the have Mr. Sullivan and Richard Lee address the board at the July 2007 meeting. Commissioner Mike Streat seconded the motion. All Commissioners voted aye. Chairman Dennison voted aye. Motion carried.

APPOINTMENTS:

Pierce County Department of Family and Children Services-Tabled from May 2007 meeting-Commissioner Aldeen Davis made a motion to remove this discuss from May 2007 meeting where it was tabled. Commissioner Randy Dixon seconded the motion. All Commissioners voted aye. Chairman Dennison voted aye. Motion carried. Alvin Ratliff has agreed to serve another term on the board. His term will run from July 01, 2007 to June 30, 2012. Commissioner Aldeen Davis made a motion to approve Alvin Ratliff to serve on the Pierce County Department of Family and Children Service Board.

Commissioner Neal Bennett seconded the motion. All Commissioners voted aye. Chairman Dennison voted aye. Motion carried.

BIDS:

Motor grader Bids: County Clerk Mollie Howard presented two (2) bids for a new motor grader with a sloper for the Road Department. The two bids are as follows:

Industrial Tractor Company: John Deere 770D-Remco Sloper: Base price-\$198,225.00 with 60 monthly payments of \$2,321.46 or 5 annual payments of \$27,199.77 and a balloon payment of \$98,000.00.

Yancey Brothers Company: Caterpillar 140H BR-Rome Sloper: Base price-\$211,942.00 with 60 monthly payments of \$2,194.00 or 5 annual payments of \$24,934.00 with a balloon payment of \$116,900.00 and a 5 yr/7500 hrs buyback of \$116,900.00.

After a discussion by both company representatives, Chairman Jim Dennison made a motion to accept the bid from Yancey Brothers Company for a Caterpillar 140H BR motor grader with a Rome Sloper to be paid from the 2003 SPLOST funds with five (5) annual payments of \$24,934.00. Commissioner Mike Streat seconded the motion. All Commissioners voted aye. Chairman Dennison voted aye. Motion carried.

CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS:

Chairman Dennison stated that the 2008 budget process is to start in two weeks and he wanted to remain the department heads to be looking at needs vs. wants. Chairman Dennison stated "that this is the taxpayer's hard earner money, lets use it with responsibility."

Also Mr. Dennison also stressed the important of water consummation at this time and stated that the fires in the adjourning counties had taken a toll on the water supply. He also stated that the county should take a moment to thank any firefighters that they may see.

Chairman Dennison thanked everyone involved with the moving of the courts into the new renovated courthouse, including the employees of the Road Department, Bill Dixon, Leonard Roberts, Amy Hitt and Marty Clifton. Also he wanted to thank Linda Gail Dennison for all the work that she did for Judge Stephen Jackson every day to get the courtroom ready for the first trial. He encouraged everyone to go by and see the new courthouse, especially the furniture made by Custom Cabinets.

Commissioner Mike Streat wanted to inform the citizens of the county's website and the commissioner's contact information. He also commended the baseball team and apologized for leaving out the soccer team's accomplished at the last board meeting. Mr. Streat also announced that work is underway on the courthouse fountain.

Having no further business, Commissioner Neal Bennett made a motion to adjourn the June 2007 regular monthly meeting at 8:10 P.M. Commissioner Mike Streat seconded the motion. All Commissioners voted aye. Chairman Dennison voted aye. Motion carried.

James Dennison, Chairman

K. Neal Bennett, Board Member

Mike Streat, Board Member

Randy Dixon, Board Member

Aldeen Davis, Board Member