

**PIERCE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS, REGULAR  
MONTHLY MEETING, OCTOBER 09, 2007 AT 6:30 P.M.**

Board Members Present:

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

New Media Present:

The Blackshear Times  
The Pierce County Press

**CALL TO ORDER:** Chairman James Dennison called the regular monthly meeting to order at 6:32 P.M.

**INVOCATION & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Commissioner Aldeen Davis gave the invocation and led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**APPROVAL OF SEPTEMBER 2007 MINUTES:** Commissioner Randy Dixon made a motion to approve the September 2007 minutes. Commissioner Mike Streat seconded the motion. All Commissioners voted aye. Chairman Dennison voted aye. Motion carried.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

**Representative Mark Williams-House Resolution 900-**Representative Mark Williams addressed the Pierce County Board of Commissioners and the audience on the status of House Resolution 900. Mr. Williams explained that House Resolution 900 proposes an amendment to the state constitution to abolish most state and local taxes and replace them with a comprehensive flat tax. Mr. Williams stated that “the 51 page HR 900 proposes to replace the present tax structure with a 4% sales tax and a 4% service tax.” Mr. Williams also stated that he was not sure about HR 900 yet; the pros are that it spreads out the tax base, eliminates property taxes on homes and vehicles and allows the counties/cities to use SPLOST funds for county/city maintenance and operational expenses. On the other hand, Mr. Williams listed several cons, such as “smaller counties cannot collect enough local taxes to survive, a special allocation formula will have to be developed to provide funding to counties with a smaller economic bases.” Mr. Williams said that all monies will go to Atlanta and then be redistributed to the counties and cities. He then stated that “the threshold to pass the SPLOST tax would be increased to 60% and year-to year tax revenues will be dependent on the economic activity.” Mr. Williams stated that he thinks the new tax should be done in steps rather than all at once.

Mr. Williams then explained to the audience that the final resolution must be approved by 2/3rds of the House and Senate and an amendment revising the state’s constitution must be approved by a majority of Georgia voters. If the resolution is passed by the House and the Senate, the resolution will be placed on the November 2008 ballot and if passed the amendment will take effect after January 2009.

**INSURANCE BROKERS: Decision to be made for broker to furnish insurance coverage-**Chairman James Dennison stated that a large number of employees were present and that the board wanted to do what was right for the employees.

County Commission Office employee, Crystal Boyett, spoke on the high co-pays, out of pocket expenses and the high deductible. She stated that the employee just can not afford the insurance that we have now.

Deputy Tax Commissioner Teresa Davis said that the county's family insurance coverage has become unaffordable for most employees. She said that in the 20 years that she has been working here the family coverage has gone for \$18.00 monthly to \$600.00 monthly. Ms. Davis stated' that if the county went with a high rate, one of her employee would ne paying the county to work here."

Road Department employee, Neal Sikes, stated that he did not want to work half a month just to pay for insurance.

Ms. Ann Marie Hess, wife of County Deputy Morgan Hess, told the board that the current vendor's customer service was hard to get in touch with. Ms. Hess said that both the agency and the insurance company they represent are unresponsive when it comes to customer service. Ms. Hess also stated that some vital medical equipment is not covered by the county's current insurance company.

Chairman James Dennison stated that the local agency had recently put the county's prescription card on hold.

Commissioner Neal Bennett wanted to know if the employees' problems are with the vendor or with the insurance. Commissioner Bennett said that insurance is just high, no matter what company you go with or what you do.

Commissioner Mike Streat made a motion to bring the issue of voting on an insurance broker off the table. Chairman James Dennison seconded the motion. Commissioner Neal Bennett, Commissioner Randy Davis and Commissioner Aldeen Davis voted nay. Commissioner Mike Streat and Chairman James Dennison vote aye. Motion failed.

Commissioner Aldeen Davis agreed that the county needs changes in the current policy, but he would like to allow the current vendor to show what they can do.

Carrie McQuaig of Management South stated that she did not know that the county employees had a problem with their service or a problem with Principal Insurance Company. She stated that she would welcome meeting with the employees at any time.

**Recess at 7:40 P.M.**

**Chairman Dennison called the meeting back to order at 7:50 P.M.**

Commissioner Mike Streat stated that County Clerk Mollie Howard had sent out Request for Proposals for insurance brokers. Commissioner Streat stated that four (4) broker had responded to the RFP. He said that the brokers would then; get bids from the insurance companies and present them to the board.

Commissioner Neal Bennett stated "when did the board vote to accept bids on insurance brokerage firms?"

County Clerk Mollie Howard explained that she had advertised seeking insurance brokers after discussion at a budget work session in August.

Chairman Dennison said that he had instructed Ms. Howard to advertise for the bids. Chairman Dennison said that he thought that the board had agreed to advertise for brokerage services.

County Attorney Franklin Rozier stated that the board needs to make a motion to accept brokers or just accept bids for insurance companies and to rescind the broker bids.

Commissioner Neal Bennett made a motion to table the discussion on insurance brokers. Commissioner Randy Dixon seconded the motion. Commissioner Mike Streat voted nay. Chairman James Dennison voted nay. Commissioners Neal Bennett, Randy Dixon and Aldeen Davis voted aye. Motion carried to table the discussion on insurance broker bids.

Commissioner Neal Bennett made a motion to continue with Management South as Pierce County's insurance broker. Commissioner Aldeen Davis seconded the motion with a question to legal council. Commissioner Davis wanted to know since Management South had not submitted a RFP to Pierce County what would happen if the board awarded Management South the bid.

County Attorney Franklin Rozier explained that the four companies who though they had submitted a bid could sue if they were passed over. He pointed out also that Management South could sue for not being included in the bid process.

The motion died on the floor from a lack of a second to the motion.

Commissioner Aldeen Davis then stated that if fit was voted on to take insurance broker bids and Management South did not submit a bid then they can not be in the running for insurance broker.

Commissioner Aldeen Davis made a motion to table the discussion on insurance brokerage bids and to take discussion on insurance companies. Commissioner Neal Bennett seconded the motion. Commissioner Mike Streat voted nay. Chairman James Dennison voted nay. Commissioner Neal Bennett, Randy Dixon and Aldeen Davis voted aye. Motion carried.

**M. Lavon Keadle-Whitney Estates-Requesting Pierce County recognizes Whitney Lake Road as a county owned road and to make necessary repairs:** Mr. Keadle came before the board requesting that the board do something about the poor condition of Whitney Lake Road. Mr. Keadle stated that the road was paved on November 01, 2001 and on November 12, 2003 a motion was made by Neal Bennett to accept the paved road in the Whitney Lake subdivision. Mr. Keadle said that no work has been done on the road since that time and that in 2002 and 2003 109 inches of rainfall was recorded in Pierce County contributing to the deterioration of Whitney Lake Road. Commissioner Neal Bennett stated that the board has not received a deed on the road. Prior owner, Joey Walker stated that he will have deed for the board by the end of next week. Mr. Walker stated that the whole road would not have to be repaired, just certain areas. Chairman Dennison said that he will have an engineer look at the road as soon as the deed is received.

**Recess at 8:45 P.M.**

**Chairman Dennison called the meeting back to order at 8:50 P.M.**

### **OLD BUSINESS**

**Animal Control-Okefenokee Humane Society-Animal Disposal Contract/Agreement for review.** Chairman Dennison stated that the board had received an agreement from the Okefenokee Humane Society stating that the Okefenokee Humane Society will accept stray dogs and cats from Pierce County for a charge of \$25.00 per grown animal and \$25.00 per every two kittens or puppies. Under the terms of the contract, the county will have to provide a drop-off and collection spot for the animals or provide someone to transport the animals to Waycross. Chairman Dennison stated that he was to meet with Mayor Tom Davis on October 10<sup>th</sup> and they will discuss the joint Blackshear-Pierce County animal shelter.

Mrs. Julie Wilson, a resident of the Sandy Bottom area, stated that she would be back to every meeting until some decision was made on what to do about the stray animal problem in Pierce County. Mrs. Wilson encouraged all residents of Pierce County that was having a problem with stray animals to let their county commissioner know about the problem.

### **APPOINTMENTS**

**Pierce County Industrial Development Authority-Brenda Denison** has resigned as Chairman and member of the PCIDA Board. Jim Waters have assumed the Chairman position and the Pierce County Board of Commissioners needs to appoint another member to

the Board. Chairman Dennison stated the Joe Cone is willing to serve on the board and that Kennett Bennett, a member of the Okefenokee Area Development Authority, is willing to serve. Commissioner Aldeen Davis stated that he felt that the idea of the IDA was to keep it independent of the Okefenokee Area Development Authority. County Attorney Franklin Rozier stated the Mr. Cone might not be able to serve due to the fact that he has a business located in the Industrial Park. Chairman Dennison said that the members of the board may know someone who is willing to serve. County Attorney Franklin Rozier suggested that the county take applications for the position. Commissioner Aldeen Davis made a motion to run an ad for the Pierce County Industrial Development Authority position. Commissioner Randy Dixon seconded the motion. All Commissioners voted aye. Chairman Dennison voted aye. Motion carried.

### **ELECTED OFFICIALS**

**City of Blackshear-Request for \$1,712.92 from the 2003 SPLOST fund for an invoice from Statewide Engineering, Inc. for services associated with the construction of GDOT TE Streetscape Project, Phase II.** Commissioner Aldeen Davis made a motion to pay the invoice from Statewide Engineering, Inc. for services associated with the construction of GDOT TE Streetscape Project, Phase II. Commissioner Neal Bennett seconded the motion. All Commissioners voted aye. Chairman Dennison voted aye. Motion carried.

### **DEPARTMENT HEADS**

**Leonard Roberts-911-Requesting \$43,540 from SPOST funds-1999 and 2003-to purchase a mapping and address locating system.** Leonard Roberts, 911 Director, stated that he, Ken Justice, EMA Director and Marty Clifton, Code Enforcement Director has looked at the system in operation. He stated that this system will print maps, map books and will bring the map of a 911 call location, with directions, up on the 911 dispatcher's computer screen. County Clerk Mollie Howard stated that \$39,661.97 will come from the 1999 SPLOST funds and \$3,878.03 will come from the 2003 SPLOST funds. Commissioner Aldeen Davis made a motion to purchase a digital mapping and 911 address locator system. Commissioner Randy Dixon seconded the motion. All Commissioners voted aye. Chairman Dennison voted aye. Motion carried.

**Mollie Howard-Requesting \$108,018.65 in 1999 SPLOST funds to reimburse general funds for post closure landfill monitoring fees.** Mrs. Howard explained that \$150,000.00 had been set aside from the 1999 SPLOST funds to cover this expense, but was never reimbursed to the general fund. Commissioner Aldeen Davis made a motion to reimburse the general fund for \$108,018.65 for post closure landfill fees. Commissioner Randy Dixon seconded the motion. All Commissioners voted aye. Chairman Dennison voted aye. Motion carried.

### **ORDINANCES & RESOLUTIONS**

**Noise Ordinance-**Chairman James Dennison stated that County Attorney Franklin Rozier had looked over the Noise Control Ordinance and had deleted certain section and refined certain sections.

Mr. Wayne Sasser addressed the board restating that all he wanted the county to do was have a simple, common sense noise ordinance that the Sheriff's Office could enforce. Mr. Sasser stated that he wanted the Sheriff's Office to be able to enforce the use of ATV, especially their use by children and the time that they could be driven on county roads.

Commissioner Neal Bennett stated that the ordinance should be simple enough that the Sheriff could enforce it.

Commissioner Mike Streat asked the Code Department if a subdivision's covenant could cover a noise ordinance. Mary Clifton, Community Development Director, stated that covenants in subdivision can not be enforced by the county.

County Attorney Franklin Rozier stated that he would refine the Noise Control Ordinance and present it at the next board meeting.

**PLANNING & ZONING**

**Rezoning request-Lavone Herrin-Request 6.655 acres on Bob Bowen Road be rezoned from Agriculture/Forestry to Single Family.** Code Inspector Amy Hitt stated that all specifications had been met by Mr. Herrin and that the Planning Commission recommended approval of the rezoning request. Commissioner Randy Dixon made a motion to approval Lavon Herrin’s request that 6.655 acres on Bob Bowen Road be rezoned from Agriculture/Forestry to Single Family. Commissioner Neal Bennett seconded the motion. All Commissioners voted aye. Chairman Dennison voted aye. Motion carried.

**Variance request-Laura Owens-Request variance to place two (2) homes on 1.01 acres on Alabaha Drive and request to allow three (3) homes on 2.25 acres on Jacobs Drive.** Code Inspector Amy Hitt informed the board that at the last meeting of the Planning Commission they had a tremendous turn out of citizens that live in the Alabaha Drive and Jacobs Drive area. Mrs. Hitt told the board that permits were issued to Mrs. Owens in good faith, but later she learned that there was not enough land for the mobile homes and she told Mrs. Owens to stop all plans for the land. According to the Code Enforcement Department, only one mobile home is allowed on each one acre of land. Mrs. Hitt stated that the Planning Commission recommends denial of the variance requests. Commissioner Randy Dixon made a motion to denial the two variance request from Laura Owens. The two requests were for a variance on Alabaha Drive to allow two (2) homes on 1.01 acres and a variance on Jacobs Drive to allow three (3) homes on 2.25 acres. Commissioner Aldeen Davis seconded the motion. All Commissioners voted aye. Chairman Dennison voted aye. Motion carried.

**Rezoning request-Carol W. Strickland-Request 38.64 acres on Owens Road be rezoned from Agriculture/Forestry to Single Family.** Code Inspector Amy Hitt stated that all specifications had been met by Mr. Strickland and the Planning Commission recommends approval of the rezoning request. Commissioner Randy Dixon made a motion to approve Carol W. Strickland’s request that 38.64 acres on Owens Road be rezoned from Agriculture/Forestry to Single Family. Commissioner Neal Bennett seconded the motion. All Commissioners voted aye. Chairman Dennison voted aye. Motion carried.

**CHAIRMAN’S COMMENTS**

Chairman Dennison stated that he had some questions from the public regarding employee evaluations. Chairman Dennison said that the evaluation will be conducted by the department heads.

Marty Clifton, Community Development Director, stated that he had implemented a new policy requiring those applying for permits to stop at the Tax Assessor’s office to check the acreage and the pay for any past due taxes.

Franklin Rozier, Jr., County Attorney, informed the board that the 2003 SPLOST will end in September 2008 and at the first of the year the county should start the process for the 2008 SPLOST to be on the July 2008 election.

Having no further business, Commissioner Randy Dixon made a motion to adjourn the regular monthly meeting at 10:00 P.M. Commissioner Mike Streat seconded the motion.

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James Dennison, Chairman

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K. Neal Bennett, Board Member

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Mike Streat, Board Member

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Randy Dixon, Board Member

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Aldeen Davis, Board Meeting

**PIERCE COUNTY BOARD OF MEETING, CALLED MEETING,  
OCTOBER 23, 2007 AT 6:30 P.M.**

Board Members Present:

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

News Media Present:

**CALL TO ORDER:** Chairman Dennison called the meeting to order at 6:40 P.M.

**INVOCATION & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE** Commissioner Mike Streat gave the invocation and lead the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**OLD BUSINESS**

**Insurance: Vote on insurance carrier to provide coverage for county employees-**

Chairman Dennison stated that Principal Insurance had gone up so much, that our insurance broker has presented five (5) options from United Healthcare. Mr. Dennison stated that option 2 would put it close to what the county currently has now, but at a lower cost. United Healthcare Option 2 would have a \$30.00 co pay for doctor visits, the deductible would be \$1,000 for individual and \$2,000 for family, coinsurance would be at 80% and the pharmacy levels would be \$10/35/60. Commissioner Aldeen Davis made a motion to accept United Healthcare Option 2 as Pierce County's insurance policy. Commissioner Neal Bennett seconded the motion. All Commissioners voted aye. Chairman Dennison voted aye. Motion carried.

Having no further business, Commissioner Randy Dixon made a motion to adjourn the called meeting at 6:55 P.M. Commissioner Aldeen Davis seconded the motion. Motion carried.

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James Dennison, Chairman

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K. Neal Bennett, Board Member

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Mike Streat, Board Member

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Randy Dixon, Board Member

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Aldeen Davis, Board Member

