

PUBLIC HEARING, PIERCE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS, OCTOBER 05, 2006 AT 6:30 P.M.

The purpose of this meeting is to receive input from the citizens of Pierce County pertaining to setting the 2006 Millage rate.

Board members present: Mitch Bowen, Chairman
K. Neal Bennett, Commissioner
Noah Strickland, Commissioner
Aldeen Davis, Commissioner

News Media present: The Blackshear Times
Pierce County Press

The Public Hearing was called to order at 6:35 P.M. by Chairman Mitch Bowen.

Those in attendance included:

Nicole Wood
Lynn Altman
Mittie Vaughn
Wayne Hardy
David N. Whitted
Franklin Rozier
Bob Courson
Jim Dennison

Mr. Whitted wanted to know where the increase in the property taxes would be used. Chairman Mitch Bowen stated that the money would be used county wide. Mr. Whitted stated that he was concerned about the increase in the property taxes and wanted to know if the millage rate was going to be increased. The commissioners explained that the millage rate was not going to be increased, only an increase based on the growth of the digest.

Having no further questions the public hearing was adjourned at 6:38 P.M.

Mitch Bowen, Chairman

K. Neal Bennett, Board Member

Noah Strickland, Board Member

Aldeen Davis, Board Member

PUBLIC HEARING, PIERCE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS, OCTOBER 05, 2006 AT 6:30 P.M.

The purpose of this Public Hearing is to discuss the FY 2007 Budget.

Board members present: Mitch Bowen, Chairman
K. Neal Bennett, Commissioner
Noah Strickland, Commissioner
Aldeen Davis, Commissioner

News Media present: The Blackshear Times
Pierce County Press

Those in attendance included:

Nicole Wood

Lynn Altman
Mittie Vaughn
Wayne Hardy
David N. Whitted
Franklin Rozier
Bob Courson
Jim Dennison

Mr. Bob Courson wanted to know why the tax burden fell on just on property owners and not all citizens who use services of the County. Commissioner Aldeen Davis stated that a delegation from Pierce County had met with state officials to ask the same question. Mr. Davis said that a change in the law is required to place more of the tax burden on the general population.

Jim Dennison stated that he had heard from the citizens that they wouldn't mind an addition one cent increase in the sales tax.

Commissioner Neal Bennett pointed out that if Pierce County had a 7% sales tax and Ware County had a 6% sales tax; people would travel to Ware County to purchase major items rather than spend an extra 1% in sales taxes in Pierce County.

Mr. Bob Courson pointed out that the city taxpayers are paying more than their share for the Blackshear/Pierce County Recreation Department. Mr. Courson stated that the city taxpayer pay \$24.00 per child, while the county taxpayer are only paying \$6.00 per child.

Chairman Mitch Bowen pointed out to Mr. Courson that under Service Delivery Strategy Act that recreation services was one of the services that the City of Blackshear agreed to provide.

County Attorney Franklin Rozier stated the City has always taken the lead on the Recreation Department and that the City of Blackshear owned the bulk of the assets around the Recreation Department.

County Administrative Supervisor Nicole Wood gave a presentation on the 2007 Budget to the Board. Mrs. Wood stated that the General Government Revenues for the FY 2007 is set at \$7,828,915.

General Government Expenditures: Includes Commissioners-Governing Body, Chairman, County Administrative Supervisor/Clerk, Elections, Financial-Accounting, Financial-Budget, Financial-Purchasing, Debt Administration, Legal Council, IT support, Tax Commissioner, Tax Assessor, Risk Management, Buildings-Courthouse, Strickland Ave Annex, Nichols St Annex, and General Administration Fees FY 2007 Budget - 1,286,917.

Judicial: Includes Superior, State, Magistrate, Probate and Juvenile Courts, Clerk of Court, District Attorney, Solicitor General and the Public Defender's Office. FY 2007 Budget-\$845,559

Public Safety: Includes Sheriff Administration, Criminal Investigation, Vice Control-Drug Task Force, Deputies, Jail Operations, Sheriff Training, Fire Department, EMS, EMS Station 2, Coroner, Animal Control, EMA and the Emergency Services Building. FY 2007 Budget-\$3,230,599

Public Works: Includes Road Department-Administration, Paved and Unpaved Streets, Road Maintenance and Shop, Solid Waste Disposal and Closure/Post closure Landfill. FY 2007 Budget \$1,160,900

Health & Welfare: Includes Health Department Administration and Building, Welfare-DFACS, Senior Citizens Center, Pierce Transit and the NFC Building. FY 2007 Budget-\$443,207

Culture & Recreation: Includes Recreation Commission and Library Administration. FY 2007 Budget-\$119,000

Housing & Development: Includes Conservation Administration, County Agent, Forest Resources, Fish & Game Resources, Agriculture Building, Planning & Zoning and Economic Development. FY 2007 Budget-\$374,602

Other Financing Uses: Includes Other Financing uses and Contingency. FY 2007 Budget- \$368,132

E 911 Budget Summary: Total charges for Services- \$198,000
Total Investment Income- \$ 125
Total Other Financial Sources- \$151,026

Total E 911 Revenue: \$349,151

Expenditures:

Total Public Safety: \$349,151

Commissioner Neal Bennett stated that the County has to subsidize the 911 because the \$1.50 phone charge is not enough the support the 911 budget.

Commissioner Aldeen Davis wanted to know if the cell phone charges have started. Commissioner Neal Bennett stated that they have and the extra monies will help 911 with their budget figures.

Mr. Bob Courson wanted to know how the County knows how much the taxpayer can afford to fund the 911.

Commissioner Neal Bennett said to look at the demand on services that the citizens wanted and if they want these services, they must pay for them.

Mr. Jim Dennison stated that may local residents use the Pierce County EMS for services other that emergencies. He said that many resident calls the EMS to come out and just check their blood pressure and that the citizens are not charged for this service.

Commissioner Neal Bennett pointed out that the EMS and the E-911 services account for nearly 3 mills of the county's 11.50 mills of taxation.

Having no further discussion, the Public Hearing on the discussion of the FY 2007 Budget was adjourned at 7:05 P.M.

Mitch Bowen, Chairman

K. Neal Bennett, Board Member

Noah Strickland, Board Member

Aldeen Davis, Board Member

CALLED MEETING, PIERCE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS, THURSDAY, OCTOBER 05, 2005.

The purpose of this called meeting is the set the 2006 Millage Rate and the 2007 Budget and approve the millage rate for the Board of Education.

Board members present:

Mitch Bowen, Chairman
K. Neal Bennett, Commissioner
Noah Strickland, Commissioner
Aldeen Davis, Commissioner

News Media Present:

The Pierce County Press
The Blackshear Times

Commissioner Aldeen Davis gave the invocation and led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Consider approval of the 2006 Millage Rate: Nicole Wood, County Administrative Supervisor, stated that the Pierce County Board of Commissioners has set the Millage rate at 11.50 mills. The roll back for the unincorporated area of the County is 4.990 mills so the net millage for the unincorporated areas of the County is 6.510 mills. The roll back for the incorporated areas of the County is 3.070 mills, so the net millage for the incorporated areas of the County is 8.430 mills.

Commissioner Aldeen Davis made a motion to set the 2006 Millage rate at 11.5 mills. Commissioner Neal Bennett seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Consider approval of the FY 2007 Budget: Nicole Wood, County Administrative Supervisor, stated that the Pierce County Board of Commissioners has set the FY 2007 General Fund Budget at \$7,828,915 and the E 911 Budget at \$349,151.

Commissioner Neal Bennett made a motion to adopt the General Fund Budget at \$7,828,915 and the E 911 Budget at \$349,151. Commissioner Aldeen Davis seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Consider approval of the Board of Education Millage Rate: Chairman Mitch Bowen read a letter from the Board of Education stating that at a called meeting on August 17, 2006, the Pierce County Board of Education set the following Millage rate for 2006-2007.

For maintenance and operation of schools-15.87 mills, based on a tentative net tax digest of \$338,875,271.

Commissioner Neal Bennett voiced the opinion that the school board Millage rate should be issued on a separate tax bill.

Commissioner Neal Bennett made a motion to adopt the Pierce County Board of Education's Millage rate of 15.78 mills. Commissioner Aldeen Davis seconded the motion. Motion carried.

COUNTY AGENT'S POSITION - Commissioner Aldeen Davis wanted to know if the Board had heard any thing on the County Agent's position.

Chairman Mitch Bowen stated that he had talked to Lanny Lanier and he said that the position is being advertised on the University of Georgia's web site.

Having no further business, the Called Meeting was adjourned at 7:15 P.M.

Mitch Bowen, Chairman

K. Neal Bennett, Board Member

Noah Strickland, Board Member

Aldeen Davis, Board Member

**REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING, PIERCE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS,
OCTOBER 10, 2006 AT 6:30 P.M.**

Board Members Present:

Mitch Bowen, Chairman
Noah Strickland, Board Member
Aldeen Davis, Board Member

News Media Present:

The Pierce County Press
The Blackshear Times

Chairman Mitch Bowen called the regular monthly meeting to order at 6:33 P.M.

Commissioner Aldeen Davis gave the invocation and led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Chairman Mitch Bowen called for the approval of the September 2006 minutes. Commissioner Aldeen Davis made a motion to approve the September 2006 minutes. Commissioner Noah Strickland seconded the motion. Motion carried.

DISCUSSION ON COURTHOUSE RENOVATION PROJECT AND MONTHLY INVOICES: The Courthouse renovation project invoices for the month of September totaled \$33,366.55. Commissioner Aldeen Davis made a motion to approve the September 2006 invoices totaling \$33,366.55. Commissioner Noah Strickland seconded the motion. Motion carried.

COURTHOUSE RENOVATION PROJECTS:

Wright's Landscaping and Irrigation - Nicole Wood, County Administrative Supervisor, reported to the board that they need to approve the final proposal of \$73,741.85 from Wright Landscaping and Irrigation for the landscaping and the brick pavers. Mrs. Wood said that Rusty McCall had met with Mr. Wright to formalize the final plans and she showed the board the pavers to be used. Commissioner Aldeen Davis made a motion to accept the bid of \$73,741.85 from Wright's Landscaping and Irrigation for landscaping and brick pavers at the courthouse. Commissioner Noah Strickland seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Discussion on Balcony Rail: Nicole Wood, County Administrative Supervisor, presented a bid of \$5,416 from Classic Brasswork, Inc. for a brass railing for the courthouse balcony. Mrs. Wood noted that Rusty McCall had said that a double rail was needed due to the balcony's height. Commissioner Noah Strickland made a motion to accept the bid of \$5,416 from Classic Brasswork, Inc for the rail around the courthouse balcony. Commissioner Aldeen Davis seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Metro Services-Change order: Nicole Wood, County Administrative Supervisor, presented the change order from Metro Services for \$1,900. She said that the change order called for a fire monitoring module and to tie the sprinkler system into the alarm system.

Chairman Mitch Bowen stated that the vault in the courthouse was not hooked up to the alarm system.

Commissioner Aldeen Davis made a motion to approve the change order from Metro Services in the amount of \$1,900. Commissioner Noah Strickland seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Hardwood Floors: Nicole Wood, County Administrative Supervisor, stated to the board that she had received one bid on repairing and refinishing the hardwood floors. The sole bid was from Traditions of Excellence for \$21,198. This will include three coats of finish, filling cracks, repairing the stairs, adding sand strips, and refinishing the floors. Commissioner Noah Strickland made a motion to accept the bid of \$21,198 from Traditions of Excellence to refinish the hardwood floors in the courthouse. Commissioner Aldeen Davis seconded the Motion. Motion carried.

DISCUSSION ON COURTHOUSE FOUNTAIN: Jamie Broome to discuss the proposed fountain for the Courthouse-Janie Broome, Chairman of the Fountain Committee, addressed the board stating that the committee was representing the community's concerns about the courthouse fountain. Mrs. Broome stated that the committee had no intentions of interfering with the County Commission's business. She stated that the community was pleased with the landscaping plans, but, if the fountain was taken out, the very heart of the landscaping plans would be taken out. Mrs. Broome introduced the committee members: Billy Cochran, Co-Chairman, Joey Walker, Co-Chairman, Helen Brantley, Secretary, Billy Cochran and Serge Strickland, Public Relations.

Mrs. Marilyn Waters told the board that she had toured the courthouse and she stated that not a lot of people will be going through the courthouse, but a lot will see the outside of it. Mrs. Waters urged the board to please finish the landscaping plans by placing a fountain in front. Mrs. Waters presented a picture of a fountain that is similar to the one proposed by the architect.

Chairman Bowen stated that the board never really said that we weren't going to have a fountain, just not one at \$60,000-\$70,000.

Mr. Billy Cochran stated that he was in total agreement with the board that the price was way too high. Mr. Cochran stated that the committee had gotten together with Mr. Bobby Wright to look at a

fountain costing between \$20,000 and \$25,000. Mr. Cochran said that he would like for the board to consider a change order for the fountain.

Mr. Bobby Wright said that he could change the fountain plans from a round fountain to an octagon design. The fountain could still have the 2 foot thick wall and the brick cap on top for seating.

Chairman Mitch Bowen noted that the water lines are already in place. Chairman Bowen said that he would like to be in the courthouse by December 01, 2006 and wanted to know if Mr. Wright thought he could have the fountain finished by then.

Mr. Wright stated that he didn't see a problem with that since they will already be on site working on the landscaping. Mr. Wright said that the fountain pad must be poured before the paving begins. Mr. Wright said that the design of the water pump would be changed from a submersible pump to a pump installed in the courthouse basement. Stock items could then be used instead of specialized ones. Mr. Wright stated that he can see no mechanical problem that would interfere with the pump being placed in the basement.

Commissioner Aldeen Davis wanted to know if the committee was still going to raise money by selling memorial pavers.

Mrs. Marilyn Waters stated that the committee had a plan in place to sell memorial bricks engraved with the name and date of the purchaser's choice. The pavers will be four inches by eight inches and will be placed around the fountain area. The committee will start to sell the pavers as soon as they receive board approval. The committee will be meeting again on October 25 and will set the prices of the pavers and where order forms can be located.

Mr. Bobby Wright stated that the pavers for the fountain area had already been approved, but the pavers can be lifted up and replaced with the memorial pavers. He also stated that there would be a three step process with sealing the fountain and he would welcome having someone else look at the fountain drawings.

Commissioner Aldeen Davis wanted to know if the county architect needs to sign off on the new design.

Chairman Mitch Bowen stated that maybe Mr. Rusty McCall should review the plans with Mr. Wright and the project engineers.

Commissioner Aldeen Davis made a motion to reinstate the courthouse fountain with the new design subject to approval from the county architect, Rusty McCall and to accept the funds raised by the Fountain Committee by the selling of memorial pavers. Commissioner Noah Strickland seconded the motion. Motion carried.

REVOLVING LOAN FUND-REQUEST FOR FUNDING: Genie Lee, Southeast GA RDC, to discuss approval of an EIP-Revolving Loan-Genie Lee presented the Pierce County Revolving Loan Committee's recommendation that the Pierce County Board of Commissioners approve a loan of \$22,700 for 15 years at 5% interest per annum in participation with Atlantic Coast Federal Bank. Sandra Strickland and Harvey Strickland submitted a loan proposal to expand the Garden View Retirement/Assisted Living, Inc located at 6134 College Avenue. Ms. Lee stated that collateral will be 2.031 acres of land and a 3,932 square foot building. Four (4) jobs will be retained and three (3) new jobs will be created within 2 years. Commissioner Aldeen Davis made a motion to grant the EIP-Revolving Loan to Garden View Retirement/Assisted Living, Inc. Commissioner Noah Strickland seconded the motion. Motion carried.

PIERCE COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY & CHILDREN SERVICES: Paige Ferrell & Board Members to discuss space need for Pierce County DFACS-Paige Ferrell, Pierce County DFACS Director, came before the board requesting help with constructing a new facility and leasing it to the State of Georgia. Ms. Ferrell stated that at the present time the building that they have now is too small for their staff. She stated that the State of Georgia could help with the construction of the new facility and the County would own it when it was paid for.

Chairman Mitch Bowen said that he had talked with the State and they could not finance any new building at the present time.

Ms. Ferrell said that she could get the information on whom to speak to about working with counties on building specifications and financing.

Mr. Alvin Ratliff, Board Member, stated that the Pierce County DFACS had twenty-five (25) employees and that they had no space for the employees and their clients to meet in privacy. He also stated that they were using a bathroom for their file room. Mr. Ratliff said that it was impossible situations and they needed another building with at least 10,000 square feet. Mr. Radliff said that the County would have a good deal on the building when it was paid for as they would collect about \$4,000 in rent.

Commissioner Aldeen Davis said that this was a good plan, but the County needs to look at the long term investment in the upkeep of the facility.

CITY OF PATTERSON: Request funds from 2003 SPLOST for Fire Department equipment- The City of Patterson is requesting reimbursement for SCBAs' and aluminum cylinders in the amount of \$3,730.65. Commissioner Noah Strickland made a motion to reimburse the City of Patterson in the amount of \$3,730.65 from their portion of the 2003 SPLOST. Commissioner Aldeen Davis seconded the motion. Motion carried.

E-MAIL POLICY: Consider approval of the e-mail policy for Pierce County employees e-mail accounts- Wendy Strickland, Pierce County IT Support, addressed the Board on the proposed e-mail policy. Ms. Strickland stated that the e-mail policy would protect the county from employee misuse of e-mail accounts and instead hold the user liable. Ms. Strickland pointed out to the Board that e-mail accounts are subject to the Open Records Act. The policy will outline how the employees should send and handle e-mails with the county offices. She also said that each employee with an e-mail address will have to sign off on the policy.

Commissioner Aldeen Davis wanted to know what guidelines were in place if an employee abused the policy.

County Administrative Supervisor Nicole Wood said that the misuse would be covered under the county's personnel policy.

Commissioner Aldeen Davis made a motion to approve the E-mail Policy for Pierce County employees. Commissioner Noah Strickland seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned for a 5 minute recess at 7:40 P.M.

Meeting reconvened at 7:45 P.M.

Wendy Strickland continued her presentation by showing the Board all the website's department information. She also pointed out that the website had a Public Information link where the public could get information on job openings, events, phone directory, and bids. Also various forms can be filled out on the website, such as business licenses, request to be on the agenda, employment application, Open Records Request and permits from the Planning Commission. She said that the county's official website, www.piercecountyga.org, is now live.

Nicole Wood, County Administrative Supervisor, announced that the November 07, 2006 board meeting has been changed to November 14 due to the elections.

Having no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:00 P.M.

Mitch Bowen, Chairman

K. Neal Bennett, Board Member

Noah Strickland, Board Member

Aldeen Davis, Board Member