

REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING, PIERCE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS, THURSDAY, AUGUST 06, 2009 AT 6:30 PM

Board Members Present:

James Dennison, Chairman
K. Neal Bennett, District 1
Mike Streat, District 2
Randy Dixon, District 3
Aldeen Davis, District 4

News Media Present:

The Blackshear Times
Pierce County Press

CALL MEETING TO ORDER: Chairman Dennison called the regular monthly meeting to order at 6:32 PM.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE/INVOCATION: Edward Cady gave the invocation and led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF JULY 2009 MINUTES: Commissioners Mike Streat made a motion to approve the July 2009 minutes. Commissioner Aldeen Davis seconded the motion. Chairman Dennison voted aye. All commissioners voted aye. Motion carried.

RUSTY MCCALL-Update on MPC/NFC/Library-Rusty McCall informed the board that the GA Department of Corrections has issued a stop work order on the MPF/NFC/Library project. Mr. McCall said that the DOC is saying the library is a separate project from the renovation work currently underway at the NFC and the MPC buildings. Mr. McCall told the commissioners that he has researched all the documentation and contracts the county signed and there is no mention of a separation of projects. Mr. McCall stated that the DOC has said that when the NFC/MPC is completed, the county can apply for another work crew to finish the library. This will create a huge problem as the construction material for all three buildings has been ordered and also that the complex will share the air conditioning system. Mr. McCall suggested that Chairman Dennison ask the DOC commissioner to reconsider the decision.

July Invoices-Invoices for July 2009-\$9,970.20 for the NFC/MPC and \$5,915.43 for the Library for a total of \$15,885.63. Commissioner Mike Streat made a motion to approve the July invoices for \$15,885.63. Commissioner Randy Dixon seconded the motion. Chairman Dennison voted aye. All commissioners voted aye. Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENTS-Okefenokee Area Development Authority

Dana Bowen asked the board to consider all the facts and make an informed decision. Mrs. Bowen stated that "I think that the decision to withdraw from OADA was a random decision

made too quickly.” Mrs. Bowen made the comment that the decision should be made on facts not personalities. She said that OADA had generated 190 jobs in Pierce County with a payroll of \$5.7 million.

Joe Cone, owner of Cone Wood Products, told the commissioners that he had chosen to locate in the Pierce County Industrial Park as a result of OADA’s efforts. Mr. Cone asked Chairman Dennison how much Pierce County would have to spend to fund economic development on its own.

Chairman Dennison replied that he would guess it would take \$200,000-\$250,000 at first and then would be a little less after that.

Fred Barber admitted that he had been skeptical of OADA and Pierce County’s benefit from it, but he feels the county should remain in the authority.

Paul Davis said “Don’t mess with OADA, there is no accountability. They won’t provide us with minutes or audits and they are all the time trying to steal everything and take it to Waycross.” Mr. Davis referred to two business he claims OADA took from Pierce County- MRCX, a railroad cleaner company now located in Waycross and another business now located in Pearson. “It’s the best decision you ever made,” he said. “We are better off without them.”

Tommy Lowman told the commissioners not to reconsider. He stated that Pierce County will get more bang for our buck if we tackle economic development locally.

Commissioner Mike Streat called for a point of order.

Commissioner Neal Bennett said that he feels the issue has been mishandled. He stated that “I don’t think it was fair for it to have been an off-the-cuff decision.

Commissioner Aldeen Davis suggested a work session to hear input about the issue.

Commissioner Mike Streat replied that the board had already called a meeting about a month ago to hear all the input from the citizens and OADA.

Commissioners Aldeen Davis and Randy Dixon and Chairman Dennison agreed to hold the work session.

DEPARTMENT HEADS

Randy Bass, Recreation Director-Requesting permission to accept bids for a truck to be purchased from SPLOST funds. County Clerk Mollie Howard stated that this had been discussed in the budget work session and that the money would be taken from the recreation department part of the 2003/2008 SPLOST fund. Commissioner Randy Dixon made a motion to grant Recreation Director Randy Bass permission to accept bids for a truck to be purchased from SPLOST funds. Commissioner Neal Bennett seconded the motion. Chairman Dennison voted aye. All commissioners voted aye. Motion carried.

PLANNING & ZONING

Rezoning Request-J.C. Wilson-Requesting 1.329 acres located at 1021 Sandy Bottom Road be rezoned from MF to NC (neighborhood commercial) to allow for a convenience store. No opposition present for the public hearing, planning commission recommends approval.

Brandy Bowers told the commissioners that Mr. Wilson intends to sell the land to her and her husband. Mrs. Bowers stated that a 12x24 building already exist on the site and they plan to place a cooler on the back of the building. The store will not have gas pumps. Commissioner Neal Bennett wanted to know if a site plan for the store had been drawn up. Community Development Director Marty Clifton stated that no plan had been drawn up yet, but if the board would like to request one they could. Mrs. Bowens stated that the store would be a great help to the residents of the Sandy Bottom area, so they would not have to go into the Jamestown area in Ware County for supplies.

Commissioner Randy Dixon made a motion to approve the request from J.C. Wilson to rezone 1.329 acres located at 1021 Sandy Bottom Road from MF to NC (neighborhood commercial) to allow for a convenience store. Commissioner Aldeen Davis seconded the motion. Chairman Dennison voted aye. All commissioners voted aye. Motion carried.

Road closing-Jordan Road-Jay Davis is requesting the abandonment and closing of an unpaved portion of Jordan Road. Community Development Director Marty Clifton stated that a Public hearing was held August 04, 2009 at 6:00 PM. E-911 and Board of Education have deemed no problem with closing the road. Commissioner Aldeen Davis made a motion to approve Jay Davis' request for abandonment and closing an unpaved portion of Jordan Road. Commissioner Neal Bennett seconded the motion. Chairman Dennison voted aye. All commissioners voted aye. Motion carried.

EXECUTIVE SESSION-Chairman Dennison called for a motion to adjourn into executive session to discuss real estate. Commission Randy Dixon made a motion to adjourn into executive session at 7:31 PM. Commissioner Aldeen Davis seconded the motion.

Commission Mike Streat made a motion to reconvene the August regular board meeting at 8:08 PM with a second from Commissioner Randy Dixon. Chairman Dennison announced that no action had been taken.

BIDS

Alvin Walker Road Bridge at Alabaha River Tributary-Pre-bad bridge-County Clerk Mollie Howard stated that three (3) bids had been received. Underground Excavating bid \$238,014; Southern Concrete bid \$157,331.50; and Batir Bridge Company bid \$134,644.50. Commissioner Neal Bennett made a motion to reject all bids and to rebid the project. Commissioner Randy Dixon seconded the motion. Chairman Dennison voted aye. All commissioners voted aye. Motion carried.

Striping and Pavement Markings-21.31 miles on six (6) county roads-County Clerk Mollie Howard stated that two (2) bids had been received. D.T.S. bid \$66,942 and Peek Paving & Marking Company bid \$73,863.50. Commissioner Aldeen Davis made a motion to reject all bids and to rebid the project. Commissioners Randy Dixon seconded the motion. Chairman Dennison voted aye. All Commissioners voted aye. Motion carried.

Code and Planning Development Department-2009 Truck bid-County Clerk Mollie Howard stated the two (2) bids had been received. Walker-Jones bid \$29,485.18 with the vehicle in stock and Brannen Motors bid \$26,152.00 with a 10-12 week delivery date. Commissioner Aldeen Davis asked Community Development Director Marty Clifton if he could wait the 10-12 weeks and Mr. Clifton agreed that he could. Commissioner Aldeen Davis made a motion to accept the bid from Brannen Motors for \$26,152.00. Commissioner Randy Dixon seconded the motion. Chairman Dennison voted aye. All commissioners voted aye. Motion carried.

Note: Commissioner Randy Dixon called Walker-Jones to see if he could get the price lowered. Walker-Jones stated that the price of the 2009 truck would be \$27,185.69 and since this was only \$1,033.69 more than the bid from Brannen Motors and could be delivered immediately Chairman Dennison, Commissioners Mike Streat and Randy Dixon agreed to purchase the truck from Walker-Jones.

ELECTED OFFICIALS

Authorization to accept payment-Per O.C.G.A. 48-8-146, elected officials must be authorized by the Pierce County Commissioners to accept checks for all taxes, fees and licenses due to the respective offices. Commissioner Randy Dixon made a motion to allow all elected officials to accept checks for all taxes, fees and licenses due to the respective offices. Commissioner Neal Bennett seconded the motion. Chairman Dennison voted aye. All Commissioners voted aye. Motion carried.

FIRE DEPARTMENT

Kenneth Justice, Fire Coordinator-Request for pager and to modify 2009 fire department budget- Mr. Justice came before the board requesting the purchase of 52 pagers for \$20,300. Mr. Justice stated that \$7,460 was left from a \$100,000 federal grant and that his 2009 fire department budget had \$3,000 budgeted for pagers. He also stated that he would like to move the \$10,000 listed in uniforms to the pager budget. Commissioner Neal Bennett made a motion to modify the 2009 fire department budget by moving line item-uniforms to line item-pagers and to allow Kenneth Justice to purchase 52 pagers for the fire department. Commissioner Aldeen Davis seconded the motion. Chairman Dennison voted aye. All commissioners voted aye. Motion carried.

Having no further county business, Commissioner Neal Bennett made a motion to adjourn the August 04, 2009 monthly meeting. Commissioner Aldeen Davis seconded the motion. Motion carried.

James Dennison, Chairman

K. Neal Bennett, District 1

Mike Streat, District 2

Randy Dixon, District 3

Aldeen Davis, District 4

**PUBLIC HEARING, PIERCE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS, THURSDAY,
AUGUST 20, 2009 AT 11:30 AM.**

The purpose of this Public Hearing is to receive input from the citizens of Pierce County regarding the 2009 millage rate.

Board Member Present James Dennison, Chairman

News Media Present Pierce County Press

Citizens Present Edward Morris
Wilton Dixon
Louis P. Altine

Chairman Dennison called the public hearing to order at 11:30 AM.

Louis Altine spoke on a new building for the road department. He stated that he knows the road department wants a new maintenance building, but they have been managing for years without it, and this is not the right time with this economy. Mr. Altine also said that he had a lot of ideas to save taxpayers money and Chairman Dennison asked him to submit these ideas in writing.

Having no further comments, Chairman Dennison closed the public hearing at 11:50AM

**PUBLIC HEARING, PIERCE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS, THURSDAY,
AUGUST 20, 2009 AT 6:00 PM.**

The purpose of this Public Hearing is to receive input from the citizens of Pierce County regarding the 2009 millage rate.

Board members present: James Dennison, Chairman
K. Neal Bennett, District 1
Mike Streat, District 2
Randy Dixon, District 3
Aldeen Davis, District 4

News media present: The Blackshear Times
Pierce County Press

Citizens present: Johnny Jacobs
Sarah Moore
Morris Pate
Paul Davis

Gene Dixon
Wilton Dixon
Bob Courson
Tommy Lowman
William Cselle

Mr. Johnny Jacobs spoke out against the 2009 millage rate increase. Mr. Jacobs offered several observations to the board. He suggested that when the county runs out of money, they need to quit spending. Mr. Jacobs also stated that if the board keeps raising the taxes you are going to starve out the businesses and the citizens. Mr. Jacobs also suggested that the county could cut some employees and lay off some more.

Commissioner Mike Streat told those present that economic conditions make the increase necessary. He stated that with Atlanta and Washington making cuts, it is passed down to us and that the $\frac{3}{4}$ percent increase in the millage rate may not cover it.

Rev. Morris Pate asked the commissioners what kind of cuts they had made to balance the budget and what had Atlanta cut from the county's budget.

Commissioner Neal Bennett explained that within the last three weeks, they have cut about \$600,000. Commissioner Mike Streat stated that Atlanta had cut out the homestead exemption tax relief.

Rev. Pate wanted to know where the bulk of the increase in the budget is coming from.

Commissioner Bennett stated that health care costs are the main reason. Commissioner Bennett stated that he wasn't interested in any new spending. "In fact, he said, by the time we are finished I hope to cut more and be back at last year's figure."

Having no further comments from the audience, Chairman Dennison closed the public hearing.

James Dennison, Chairman

K. Neal Bennett, District 2

Mike Streat, District 2

Randy Dixon, District 3

Aldeen Davis, District 4

CALLED MEETING, PIERCE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS, THURSDAY, AUGUST 20, 2009 AT 6:30 PM.

The purpose of this called meeting is to discuss personnel, real estate and take care of other county business.

Board members present: James Dennison, Chairman

K. Neal Bennett, District 1

Mike Streat, District 2

Randy Dixon, District 3

Aldeen Davis, District 4

News media present: The Blackshear Times
Pierce County Press

CALL TO ORDER: Chairman Dennison called the called meeting to order at 6:32 PM.

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

RUSTY MCCALL-Update on NFC/MFC/Library-Mr. McCall explained that Pierce County now has a contract with the GA Department of Corrections for the use of the inmate work detail to work on all three projects and to stay for the length of the project. Mr. McCall also said that the HAVC bids are in the process of being bid out. He stated that twelve inmates are now working at the project.

Mr. McCall also reported that he now has a contract with J.C. Wallace to replace Ronnie Hilton as the job supervisor. Mr. McCall stated that Glen Samples, area manager for DOC has recommended Mr. Wallace and that he is certificated to handle the work detail. Mr. Wallace will receive \$55,000 yearly salary, \$250.00 monthly for wear and tear on vehicle, \$44.5 for mileage and \$28.00 per day food allowance. Commissioner Mike Streat made a motion to approve the contract with Mr. J.C. Wallace as project supervisor on the NFC/MFC/Library project. Commissioner Randy Dixon seconded the motion. Chairman Dennison voted aye. All Commissioners voted aye. Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Curtis Jarrard, owner of MRCX, addressed the board stating that he “wanted to set the record straight” on the truth about why he left Pierce County. He stated that he was tired of hearing accusations that OADA “stole his business from Pierce County” and took it to Waycross. Mr. Jarrard stated “I’m here to tell you it is a lie. OADA and Regina Morgan had nothing to do with my leaving Pierce County.” “Paul Davis was the reason I left Pierce County.” Mr. Jarrard said he had offered to buy Mr. Davis’ rail spur just off Main Street for \$100,000, but was rebuffed. He stated that Mr. Davis wanted \$250,000 for his property.

Mr. Paul Davis then took the podium to rebut Mr. Jarrard's remarks. Mr. Davis said Mr. Jarrard had repeatedly told him OADA was "recruiting" him to leave Blackshear. Mr. Davis stated that Mr. Jarrard told him over and over that Regina Morgan and OADA was offering him so-and so. Mr. Davis said that Mr. Jarrard was in default on lease payments and that's why MRCX was asked to leave.

OADA-Chairman Dennison announced that Dana Bowen had to cancel the presentation on OADA and he received this information too late to cancel the item on the agenda. Tommy Lowman wanted to know if the OADA presentation would be on the September regular monthly meeting. Chairman Dennison stated that it would.

2009 Millage Rate-Bob Courson-Mr. Courson asked the commissioners "How do you know the taxpayers can afford the increase?" Commissioner Mike Streat stated that the commissioners had no way of asking if every taxpayer could afford the increase, but they just had to make the best decision possible. Mr. Courson replied "Ridiculous, you are just trying to force the taxpayers into paying more taxes." Mr. Courson said to let the taxpayers keep their money, and the commissioners need to cut salaries and/or employees.

Executive Session-Personnel and Real Estate

Chairman James Dennison called for a motion to adjourn into executive session. Commissioner Aldeen Davis made a motion to adjourn into executive session at 7:08 PM with a second from Commissioner Neal Bennett. Chairman Dennison voted aye. All Commissioners voted aye. Motion carried.

The called meeting was reconvened at 7:43 PM by a motion from Commissioner Randy Dixon and a second by Commissioner Neal Bennett. Chairman Dennison voted aye. All Commissioners voted aye. Motion carried.

Chairman Dennison stated that no action had been taken on personnel issues.

Commissioner Aldeen Davis made a motion to approve the acquisition of right-of-way for Guest Road and to pay Gloria Guest \$21,700, Waycross Bank & Trust-\$870, William Grants-\$6,630 and Kenneth Farley-\$2,000. Commissioner Neal Bennett seconded the motion. Chairman Dennison voted aye. All Commissioners voted aye. Motion carried.

Having no further county business, Chairman Dennison called for a motion to adjourn the called meeting. Commissioner Randy Dixon made a motion to adjourn the called meeting at 7:45 PM. Commissioner Aldeen Davis seconded the motion. Chairman Dennison voted aye. All Commissioners voted aye. Motion carried.

James Dennison, Chairman

K. Neal Bennett, District 1

Mike Streat, District 2

Randy Dixon, District 3

Aldeen Davis, District 4

**CALLED MEETING, PIERCE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS, THURSDAY,
AUGUST 27, 2009 AT 6:40 PM.**

Board Member Present

K. Neal Bennett, District 1
Mike Streat, District 2
Randy Dixon, District 3
Aldeen Davis, District 4

News Media Present

The Blackshear Times
Pierce County Press

Commissioner Neal Bennett stated that he would like to have a motion that the board wait until the regular monthly meeting on September 10, 2009 to set the 2009 millage rate so that all board members will be present.

Commissioner Mike Streat made a motion to wait until the regular monthly meeting on September 10, 2009 to set the 2009 millage rate so that all board members will be present. Commissioner Randy Dixon seconded the motion. All Commissioners voted aye. Motion carried.

EXECUTIVE SESSION-LITIGATION

Commissioner Neal Bennett called for a motion to adjourn into executive session to discuss possible litigation. Commissioner Aldeen Davis made a motion that the board adjourn into executive session at 6:43 PM. Commissioner Randy Dixon seconded the motion. All Commissioners voted aye. Motion carried.

The board reconvened at 6:55 PM with a motion from Commissioner Mike Streat and a second from Commissioner Randy Dixon. Commissioner Neal Bennett announced that no action had been taken.

Having no further business, Commissioner Randy Dixon made a motion to adjourn the called meeting at 6:57 PM. Commissioner Mike Streat seconded the motion. All Commissioners voted aye. Motion carried.

K. Neal Bennett, District 1

Mike Streat, District 2

Randy Dixon, District 3

Aldeen Davis, District 4

