

**PIERCE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS, REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING,  
TUESDAY, JANUARY 05, 2010 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 TO ORDER:** Chairman Dennison called the January 05, 2010 regular monthly meeting to order at 6:30 PM.

**INVOCATION:** Rev. Andy Velie, pastor of the Abundant Life Christian Center, gave the invocation.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Chairman Dennison led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**APPROVAL OF THE DECEMBER 2009 REGULAR AND CALLED MEETING MINUTES:**

Commissioner Randy Dixon made a motion to approve the December 2009 regular and called minutes. Commissioner Aldeen Davis seconded the motion. All Commissioners voted aye. Chairman Dennison voted aye. Motion carried.

**CONSTITUTIONAL OFFICERS**

**1. SUPERIOR COURT JUDGE MIKE BOGGS-Requesting Drug Abuse Treatment and Education Fund (DATE) for Pierce County-**

Judge Boggs was not present at this time. Chairman Dennison stated that the drug fund had \$33,253.46 in the account. Judge Boggs is requesting \$30,000.00 from the fund. Commissioner Mike Streat made a motion to approve the request from Judge Mike Boggs for \$30,000.00 to help fund a Drug Abuse Treatment and Education Fund (DATE) for Pierce County. Commissioner Randy Dixon seconded the motion. Commissioner Neal Bennett had some discussion. Commissioner Bennett wanted to know if Clerk of Court Thomas Sauls could write the check to the DATE fund each month when he did the other checks. Also Commissioner Bennett wanted to hear from Judge Boggs about the program. After the discussion, all Commissioners voted aye. Chairman Dennison voted aye. Motion carried.

**Judge Mike Boggs- Overview of DATE Program-**Judge Boggs stated that the drug court has been in operation in Brantley, Ware and Coffee counties for the last two years and he has now received permission to expand the program into Pierce County. Judge Boggs stated that expanding into Pierce County will allow the drug court to serve up to 60 more participants. Judge Boggs stated that 85% of every felony case is drug related and that 75% of cases sentenced to jail time are back in the court system within three years. He also stated that of the 70 people in the program now, 30 are females and 40 are males with the average age of the males at 27 years and the females at 33 years. Under the program a first-time offenders is sentenced to 18-24 months in prison, 10 years probation and a \$1,000 fine or they can complete a two year drug court. If they complete the program, they will not have a felony conviction and the case will be dismissed. Judge Boggs said that the program is not easy-the participants must-1. Meet with a substance abuse counselor and complete a regiment of substance abuse

counseling and rehabilitation, 2. Participate in therapy twice per week, 3. Undergo comprehensive drug testing at least once per week, 4. Pay a \$20.00 participation fee, 5. Complete a GED, if they do not have an education, 6. Support their dependents, if they have any, 7. Maintain full time employment, 8. Pay restitution is ordered by court, and 9. Observe a 9 PM to 5Am curfew.

Judge Boggs stated that he has already sentenced two Pierce County offenders to the Drug Court Program.

Defendants eligible for the drug court are first time offenders, have not be accused of a violent crime and are not sex offenders or illegal aliens.

Judge Boggs also stated that the funds will only be used on the DATE program and that no local tax payer money is expended on the program. Judge Boggs stated "There are few other things where we can fix the problem by charging those who caused the problem."

Judge Boggs also requested the board to approve funding 50% of the monies collected to the DATE fund.

Commissioner Mike Streat made a motion to approve the resolution calling for the establishment of a drug court in Pierce County and to authorize the disbursement and use of funds in the account know as the Pierce County Drug Abuse Treatment and Education Fund. The resolution further states that \$30,000.00 of the funds shall be disbursed to Ware County to become a part of the Drug Court account for use in the payment of cost associated with the operation of the Drug Court under the supervision of Judge Michael P. Boggs and that 50% of future funds be disbursed to Ware County to become a part of the Drug Court account for use in the payment of cost associated with the operation of the Drug Court under the supervision of Judge Michael P. Boggs. Commission Mike Streat made a motion to approve the resolution presented by Judge Michael P. Boggs. Commissioner Aldeen Davis seconded the motion. All Commissioners voted aye. Chairman Dennison voted aye. Motion carried.

## **COMMUNITY NEWS**

**A) JOEY WALKER & MATT CARTER-**Joey Walker presented several slides to the Pierce County Board of Commissioners listing various properties and developments by various landowners along Highway 84. Mr. Walker claims that his tax bill has gone up by 1,882 % since he started to develop The Cotton Exchange. Mr. Walker explained to the board that he had come to the meeting as a last ditch effort to get some relief from his tax bill.

Mr. Walker presented slides showing the assessment value of properties owned by William Wall, Bill Wall, J. P Barnard and others and compared them with the assessment of The Cotton Exchange. Mr. Walker also stated that the property located on Highway 84 known as the Town Square is valued at \$36.00 per square foot and his property is valued at \$69.00 per square foot. Mr. Walker stated "There is a major problem with tax fairness in this county." "I have lost tenants because of the cost."

He claims his property is valued at up to three times what similar properties and developments around him are valued at. He stated that his development, The Cotton Exchange, is valued at \$300,000 higher that Wall's Plaza and has only two acres while Wall's Plaza covers six acres.

Mr. Walker then went on to make comparisons on property he owns and a tract owned by county attorney Franklin Rozier. Mr. Walker said that the value on his property increased significantly, the value on Mr. Franklin Rozier's property did not.

Mr. Rozier interrupted the presentation to state that his brother, Bill Rozier, Chief Appraiser for Pierce County, did not assess his property or any property of his family. Mr. Rozier also asked why this was on the agenda. He stated "We have 9,000 parcels in the county and every taxpayer can come up here and complain about their assessments this way."

Mr. Walker stated that he just wanted to show the board what he was taking about and he was just bringing it here for the board to do something about it. He stated that he had been working on this for almost five years and after this presentation he was not going to say anything else about it.

### **PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT**

**B) J.P. BARNARD & ED DRAWDY-Requesting approval of final plat for Johnson Subdivision off Johnson Road consisting of 25.885 acres divided into 9 lots.** Marty Clifton, Community Development Director stated that the Planning Commission had given approval of the final plat, but the roads are not being accepted at this time. Commissioner Randy Dixon made a motion to approve the final plat for Johnson Subdivision off Johnson Road consisting of 25.885 acres divided into 9 lots, but Pierce County will not be accepting the road at this time. Commissioner Aldeen Davis seconded the motion. All Commissioners voted aye. Chairman Dennison voted aye. Motion carried.

**C) HUGH & LISA KICKLIGHTER-Requesting a portion of the property known as map/parcel # 057-017 on Owens Road consisting of 2 acres be rezoned from AF (Agriculture Forestry) to NC (Neighborhood Commercial) for the purpose of operating a business.** Marty Clifton, Community Development Director stated that the Planning Commission had given approval of this request and that a Public Hearing had been held with no opposition from the public. Mr. Clifton stated that the Kicklighter's business is Southeast Bolt Company and they were building a warehouse for the business. Commissioner Randy Dixon made a motion to approve the request from Hugh & Lisa Kicklighter to rezone a portion of the property known as map/parcel # 057-017 on Owens Road consisting of 2 acres be rezoned from AF (Agriculture Forestry) to NC (Neighborhood Commercial) for the purpose of operating a business. Commissioner Neal Bennett seconded the motion. All Commissioners voted aye. Chairman Dennison voted aye. Motion carried.

### **CITY OF BLACKSHEAR**

**D) CITY OF BLACKSHEAR-Requesting \$1,210.00 & \$2,505.00 in SPLOST funds to pay two (2) invoices from EMC Engineering Services, Inc. for drainage.** County Clerk Mollie Howard stated that the funds are available. Commissioner Aldeen Davis made a motion to approve the request from the City of Blackshear requesting \$1,210.00 & \$2,505.00 in SPLOST funds to pay two (2) invoices from EMC Engineering Services, Inc. for drainage. Commissioner Randy Dixon seconded the motion. All Commissioners voted aye. Chairman Dennison voted aye. Motion carried.

### **DEPARTMENT HEADS**

**E) JORDAN SASSER, PIERCE COUNTY ATHLETIC DIRECTOR-Requesting \$10,000.00 in SPLOST funds to pay for capital improvement for the football program.** Mr. Sasser

came before the board to request \$10,000 in SPLOST funds to help pay for football equipment. Mr. Sasser also updated the commissioners on a new numbering system for the control of football equipment that is given to the player. Mr. Sasser stated that this system will help with the inventory on the equipment and to make sure that the coaches have returned all of the equipment. Mr. Sasser gave a report on the football season. He reported that the recreation department had over 200 children playing in the Pee Wee, Mite and Midget divisions and 50/60 children in the flag football. He also reported that the Pee Wee All Star team had won their division with a score of 6 to 0 over Brantley County. Commissioner Mike Streat made a motion to grant Mr. Sasser's request for \$10,000 in SPLOST funds to purchase football equipment. Commissioner Randy Dixon seconded the motion. All Commissioners voted aye. Chairman Dennison voted aye. Motion carried.

**F) ANGIE BOWEN, TRANSIT SUPERVISOR-Requesting permission to offer transit services at no charge to eligible Pierce County residents that want to receive tax preparation and filing services.** Mrs. Bowen stated that this is a free tax preparation and filing service offered by the VITA program. The service will be offered at the Offerman City Hall on Thursday and Saturdays. Mrs. Bowen stated that the Transit service will be offering free rides on three (3) consecutive Thursdays beginning January 21<sup>st</sup>. Commissioner Randy Dixon made a motion to allow Pierce Transit to transport eligible Pierce County residents to Offerman City Hall for free tax preparation and filing services. Commissioner Neal Bennett seconded the motion. All Commissioners voted aye. Chairman Dennison voted aye. Motion carried.

#### **BIDS**

**G) T J SMITH ROAD-Bids will be accepted to repair damage to T J Smith Road done in the March 2009 flood. Funding will come from a FEMA grant.** County Clerk Mollie Howard informed the board that this was general information for the board and the citizens of Pierce County.

#### **ELECTED OFFICIALS**

**H) QUALIFYING FEES-Set qualifying fees for 2010 County Elections-** The following qualifying fees were presented to the board.

##### **PARTISAN:**

County Commissioner (Chairman)	\$1,665.00
County Commissioner (District 2)	\$ 187.56
County Commissioner (District 4)	\$ 187.56
Solicitor General	\$ 857.36

##### **NON-PARTISAN:**

State Court Judge	\$ 857.36
Board of Education (Chairman)	\$ 180.00
Board of Education (District 2)	\$ 126.00
Board of Education (District 4)	\$ 126.00

Commissioner Neal Bennett made a motion to set the Qualifying Fees as presented to the board. Commissioner Aldeen Davis seconded the motion. All Commissioners voted aye. Chairman Dennison voted aye. Motion carried.

Commissioner Mike Streat asked for updates on road projects. He wanted to know the status of the repair on the Mershon Bridge replacement. County clerk Mollie Howard reported the county is still awaiting state permission to proceed on repairs for the

bridge. Ms. Howard stated that the state is currently conducting a bridge foundation investigation.

Commissioner Streat asked Neal Howard, owner of Diversified Traffic Services, Inc. about rumble strips on St. Johns Road. Mr. Howard stated that the rumble strips are built according to state guidelines and must be raised enough and loud enough to protect the safety of drivers. Commissioner Streat also asked Mr. Howard about the striping project on various county roads. Mr. Howard stated the road striping is underway, but has been hampered by cold weather. Mr. Howard stated that if he could get some days above 40 degrees, he will be able to make some progress.

Commissioner Aldeen Davis asked for an update on improvements at the Jot Em Down intersection. Chairman Dennison stated that the start date for the project has not been decided yet.

Having no further county business the January 05, 2010 regular board meeting was adjourned at 7:58 P.M.

---

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, JANUARY 21, 2010 AT 6:30 PM.**

Board Members Present:

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

News Media Present:

The Blackshear Times  
Pierce County Press

**CALL TO ORDER:** Chairman Dennison called the meeting to order at 6:37 P.M.

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

**OLD BUSINESS**

**A.) MERSHON BRIDGE-**Review Bridge Foundation Investigation (BFI) proposals for the Mershon Bridge project. Chairman Dennison announced that three (3) proposals had been received. QORE, Inc.-\$5,800, Ranger Consulting, Inc-\$15,470, and S&ME, Inc.-\$23,057. Chairman Dennison stated that the Georgia Department of Transportation had recommended QORE, Inc. for the project. Commissioner Aldeen Davis made a motion

to accept the proposal from QORE, Inc. for the price of \$5,800. Commissioner Randy Dixon seconded the motion. All Commissioners voted aye. Chairman Dennison voted aye. Motion carried.

**RESOLUTION & CONTRACTS**

**B.) BUDGET RESOLUTION-**Continue operating under the Fiscal Year 2009 budget until the adoption of the Fiscal Year 2010 budget. Commissioner Aldeen Davis made a motion with discussion to approve the budget resolution stating that Pierce County will continue operating under the Fiscal Year 2009 budget until the adoption of the Fiscal Year 2010 budget. Commissioner Neal Bennett seconded the motion. Commissioner Davis stated that it was his understanding that the original vote had not been followed through. Commissioner Davis stated “I think the money should be paid back while we are operating under the 2009 budget resolution.” Commissioner Aldeen Davis modified his motion to read-approval of the budget resolution stating that Pierce County will continue operating under the Fiscal Year 2009 budget until the adoption of the Fiscal Year 2010 budget with the addition of the salary reduction to offset the salary increase from the Pierce County Transit just for this period. Commissioner Neal Bennett seconded this motion. Commissioners Aldeen Davis, Neal Bennett and Randy Dixon voted aye. Chairman Jim Dennison voted nay. Motion carried.

**DEPARTMENT HEAD**

**C.) BLACKSHEAR/PIERCE COUNTY RECREATION DIRECTOR-**Applications and resumes have been accepted for the position of Recreation Director. County Clerk Mollie Howard stated that the board had three (3) finalists for the position of Recreation Director, Scottie Graham, Billy Ray Lee and Franessa Stalter. Commissioner Randy Dixon conducted the interviews. Scottie Graham is a the former Director of Parks and Recreation in Hazlehurst, GA., currently commissioner elect for GRPA District 2 and recently appointed to the GRPA State Board of Trustees. Billy Ray Lee is a former Director of Parks and Recreation in Alma-Bacon County, presently employed with the Appling Pellet Company and has also worked with the Bacon County High School athletic department. Franessa Stalter is currently the assistant to the Director of the Albany Recreation and Parks Department. She has also worked with the Albany Recreation and Parks Department as the recreation general supervisor, the Tift County Recreation special events coordinator, the Berrien County Recreation Department as the Director. Each candidate was asked about their vision for the Blackshear/Pierce County Recreation Department and then was allowed to ask questions of the board. Commissioner Randy Dixon thanked each candidate for their comments and told them they would be in touch.

Having no further county business, Chairman Dennison adjourned the January 21, 2010 called meeting at 7:22 P.M.

Budget Work Session immediately following called meeting.

\_\_\_\_\_  
James Dennison, Chairman

\_\_\_\_\_  
K. Neal Bennett, District 1

\_\_\_\_\_  
Randy Dixon, District 3

\_\_\_\_\_  
Aldeen Davis, District 4

