



**Pierce County Board of Commissioners**

**Regular Meeting**

705 College Avenue, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Blackshear, GA 31516

August 4, 2026, 6:00 p.m.

Commissioners in attendance

Neal Bennett, Chairman

Troy Mattox, District 1

Graham Raley, District 2

Randy Dixon, District 3

David Lowman, District 4

Staff in attendance

Thomas Sauls, County Manager

Adam Craft, County Attorney

Donna Golding, County Clerk

1. Call to order-Chairman Neal Bennett called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.
2. Invocation Leader- James Lightsey, Offerman Baptist Church
3. Pledge of Allegiance Leader -Retired Navy Petty Officer First Class (Surface Warfare), Dwain Pippin
4. Approval of August 4, 2026, Agenda-Commissioner Randy Dixon made a motion to approve the August 4, 2026, Agenda. Commissioner David Lowman seconded the motion. The motion carried.
5. Approval of July 7, 2026, Public Hearing and Regular Meeting minutes and July 10, 2026, Called Meeting Minutes-Commissioner David Lowman made a motion to approve July 7, 2026, Public Hearing and Regular Meeting minutes and July 10, 2026, Called Meeting minutes. Commissioner Randy Dixon seconded the motion. The motion carried.
6. Congratulations to the Boys 8U District Golf Winner- Luke Russell  
8U Girls and Boys Golf State Champions  
1<sup>st</sup> Place Winner, Lucille Schmitz  
3<sup>rd</sup> Place, Audrey Craft  
3<sup>rd</sup> Place Tie, Miller Schmitz and Jud Foreman
7. Fire Chief Chris Todd recognizes newly certified Firefighter One Class and State Volunteer firefighters; Tyler Stokes, Griffin Thrift, Ethan Gardener, Gabion Copeland, Terry Griffis, Nicholas Strickland, and Rhiannon Strickland
8. Fire Chief Chris Todd welcomes new Assistant Fire/EMA Director Chief Kelly Ruble
9. Action to approve the transfer of a 4.401-acre lot, parcel # 066A 062 to the City of Patterson-County Manager Thomas Sauls presented this transfer of property to the Board of Commissioners. County Manager Sauls stated that Mayor Thomas of Patterson has a passion for improving the city of Patterson and this property will help bring back the life of the old landing strip. Commissioner David Lowman made

a motion to approve the transfer of a 4.401-acre lot, parcel # 066A 062 to the City of Patterson. Commissioner Graham Raley seconded the motion. The motion carried.

10. Discussion and action of the 2026 CDBG-DR Potential Conflict of Interest-  
Chairman Neal Bennett presented the 2026 CDBG-DR Potential Conflict of Interest information to the Commissioners. Chairman Neal Bennett asked the Commissioners if anyone has any conflict with this 2026 CDBG-DR project. Commissioners David Lowman, Graham Raley, Troy Mattox, and Randy Dixon unanimously stated there is no conflict with the 2026 CDBG-DR.

1937 Carlton Adams Drive,  
Valdosta, GA 31601  
Phone (229) 333-5277  
Fax (229) 333-5312



# Memo

**To:** Local Governments Applying for 2026 CDBG-DR Funding  
**From:** SGRC – Community Development Division  
Tonia Hendricks  
**Date:** July 20, 2026  
**Re:** Conflict of Interest Requirements

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## PLEASE BE ADVISED:

Local governments submitting 2026 CDBG-DR applications must comply with Federal “Conflict of Interest” regulations. Any person who is an employee, agent, consultant, officer, or elected official or appointed official of the state, or of a unit of general local government, or of any designated public agencies, or subrecipients which are applying for CDBG-DR funding must pay strict attention to the following information:

If an employee, agent, consultant, officer, or elected official or appointed official of the state, or of a unit of general local government, or of any designated public agencies, or subrecipients could be affected (in any way) by CDBG-DR funding, a FULL DISCLOSURE must be submitted to the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) as part of the 2026 CDBG-DR application. Additionally, the person(s) affected must not participate in project discussion, planning, or voting. Please notify the SGRC Community Development Division IMMEDIATELY if a conflict of interest is identified.

The Conflict-of-Interest provision in the “Common Rule”, (24 CFR 85.36 and 24 CFR 84.42) are applicable when a local government CDBG-DR Recipient contracts for the procurement of goods and services AS WELL AS to all CDBG-DR grants and activities. The following summarizes this regulation:

- A. **Conflicts Prohibited:** No persons described in paragraph B. below who exercise or have exercised any functions or responsibilities with respect to activities assisted with CDBG-DR funds or who are in a position to participate in a decision making process or gain inside information with regard to these activities, may obtain a financial interest OR benefit from a CDBG-DR-assisted activity, or have an interest in any contract, subcontract or agreement with respect hereto, or in the proceeds thereunder, either for themselves or those with whom they have family or business ties, during their tenure or for one year thereafter.
- B. **Persons Covered.** The conflict-of-interest provisions of paragraph A. above applies to ANY person who is an employee, agent, consultant, officer, or elected official or appointed official of the state, or of a unit of general local government, or of any designated public agencies, or subrecipients which are receiving or administering CDBG-DR funds.
- C. **Definition of Family or Business Ties.** DCA defines the meaning of the term “family or business ties” as follows:
  - Family: “A group of people related by ancestry or marriage; relatives.”

- Business: “The buying and selling of commodities and services; commerce, trade.”
- Ties: “Something that connects, binds or joins; bond; link.”

D. **Exceptions:** Upon written request, DCA may grant an exception to the provisions of paragraph A above, on a case-by-case basis, before federal funds are expended. Exceptions can only be granted when DCA determines that the exception will serve to further the purpose of the CDBG-DR Program and the effective and efficient administration of the CDBG-DR program or project. To seek an exception, a written request for an exception must be submitted by the unit of local government to DCA which:

- Fully discloses the conflict or potential conflict of interest, prior to the unit of government undertaking any action which results or may result in a conflict of interest, real or apparent; and
- Describes how the conflict of interest was publicly disclosed; and
- Includes a written opinion of the local government’s attorney that the interest for which the exception is sought would not violate state or local law.

Please find enclosed a sample attorney’s letter and a sample certified meeting minutes document concerning possible conflicts of interest regarding CDBG-DR applications and/or grants.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this Federal law, please call me as soon as possible. Please contact me immediately if there is the possibility of a conflict-of-interest issue.

#### 11. Action to approve Architect for 2026 CDBG-DR project.

##### SCORES

McCall & Associates-22, 23, 21, 23, 23

Roberts Civil Engineering- 5, 1, 5, 5, 11

Commissioner David Lowman made a motion to approve the highest scorer McCall and Associates. Commissioner Troy Mattox seconded the motion. The motion carried.

#### 12. Discussion and action to adopt 2026 CDBG-DR Submittal Resolution for an emergency relief distribution center-Chairman Neal Bennett present the 2026 CDBG-DR Submittal Resolution to the commissioners for adoption. Commissioner Troy Mattox made a motion to adopt the resolution to submit the FY 2026 Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) Funds for An Emergency Relief Distribution Center. Commissioner David Lowman seconded the motion. The motion carried.

##### **RESOLUTION**

##### **OF THE PIERCE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

##### **TO SUBMIT AN APPLICATION TO OBTAIN**

##### **FY 2026 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT DISASTER RECOVERY**

##### **(CDBG-DR) FUNDS**

##### **FOR AN EMERGENCY RELIEF DISTRIBUTION CENTER**

**WHEREAS**, the Pierce County Board of Commissioners has identified a lack of sufficient funds to address the need for adequate facilities distributing food, water, hygiene kits, and other relief supplies during disasters in Pierce County.

**WHEREAS**, Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) funds are sufficient to address this need; and

**WHEREAS**, the Pierce County Board of Commissioners has requested the staff of the Southern Georgia Regional Commission to assist in the preparation and administration of the FY 2026 Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) application; and

**WHEREAS**, the Pierce County Board of Commissioners has chosen McCall & Associates, Inc. to provide pre- and post-award services as the project architect for the FY 2026 Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) application; and

**WHEREAS**, the Pierce County Board of Commissioners has agreed to provide sufficient matching funds and in-kind services to complete this project;

**THEREFORE**, be it resolved that the Pierce County Board of Commissioners will submit a FY 2026 Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) application to address the identified needs.

**SO RESOLVED** this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2026.

\_\_\_\_\_  
K. Neal Bennett, Chairman

\_\_\_\_\_  
Donna Golding, County Clerk

(SEAL)

13. Action to approve Tiger Field Bidder R.H. Tyson Construction, INC. 6155 Sundance Road Blackshear, Ga. 31516. Bid amount \$1,377,819.30 minus \$18,700 for the county to haul off the excess fill from site bringing the total bid amount to \$1,359,119.30-Commissioner Randy Dixon made a motion to award R.H. Tyson for the Tiger Field Project in the amount of \$1,359,119.30. Commissioner David Lowman seconded the motion. Chairman Bennett asked if there were any objections and the Commissioners stated, “No.”

R.H. Tyson-\$1,377,819.30

Lavender-\$1,444,444.13

Pope-\$1,502,777.39

SEC-\$1,668,979.60

Popco-\$1,969,230.40

14. Action to approve bathroom updates at the EOC

Eric Johnson-\$12,400.00

Dixon Repairs-\$14,800.00

Commissioner David Lowman made a motion to approve Eric Johnson the lowest Bidder for \$12,400.00 for bathroom updates at the EOC. Commissioner Troy Mattox Seconded the motion. The motion carried.

15. Action to approve the Fiscal Year 2025 Audit-Commissioner Graham Raley made a motion to approve the FY 2025 Audit. Commissioner Randy Dixon seconded the motion. The motion carried.
16. Discussion and action to approve sending PCIDBA MOU for a BESS project parcel # 065 015 to the Pierce County Board of Assessors-Chairman Neal Bennett asked for a motion to approve sending PCIDBA MOU for a BESS project parcel # 065 015 to the Pierce County Board of Assessors for discussion of tax abatement. Commissioner David Lowman made a motion to approve sending PCIDBA MOU for a BESS project parcel # 065 015 to the Pierce County Board of Assessors. Chairman Neal Bennett asked for a seconded. Commissioner Graham Raley seconded the motion to approve sending PCIDBA MOU for a BESS project parcel # 065 015 to the Pierce County Board of Assessors. Chairman Neal Bennett asked the board if there were any questions, there were no questions. Ms. Ann Williams from the audience spoke out, stating she has some questions. Ms. Williams asked the Commission if they could explain what BESS is. Chairman Neal Bennett asked Mr. Ian Evans a consultant for Grenergy to explain. Mr. Ian Evans stated BESS is a Battery Energy Storage System. Meaning batteries store electricity supplied by a substation. In the event of a power outage, they supply power back into the substation to feed the electrical grid. Think of it as a back up generator. Chairman Neal Bennett stated a motion has been made by Commissioner David Lowman and seconded by Commissioner Graham Raley. Chairman Neal Bennett asked if anyone else had question, there were none, the motion carried.
17. Action to accept the resignation of PCIDBA member Mr. James Weathersby-Commissioner Randy Dixon made a motion to approve the resignation of Mr. James Weathersby from the PCIDBA. Commissioner David Lowman seconded the motion. The motion carried.
18. Action to appoint Sarah Gove to the PCIDBA based on the recommendation from the IDA Board-Commissioner Randy Dixon made a motion to accept the recommendation to appoint Sarah Gove to the PCIDBA. Commissioner David Lowman seconded the motion. The motion carried.
19. County Manager's Report- County Manager Thomas Sauls presented the July report.



County Manager's Report for July 2026  
Presented on August 4, 2026  
Pierce County Board of Commissioners Meeting

COUNTY MANAGER'S MONTHLY HIGHLIGHT ACTIVIY FOR JULY 2026

- Attended the IDA meeting and provided an update on county activities.
- Presented copies of a warranty deed and plat documentation dated June 26, 2006, to Mayor R.D. Thomas of the City of Patterson to facilitate preparation of a new warranty deed for the transfer of approximately 4.401 acres from Pierce County to the City.
- Met with Daniel Royal to discuss repairs needed at the Emergency Operations Center (EOC).
- Met with Road Superintendent Bruce Carter and Bryan Cheeser of Hydro X.
- Attended Road Department safety meetings. On July 13, 2026, the topics included heat safety, speed awareness, and following supervisory instructions. On July 20, 2026, Stevey Moody presented a training session on equipment respect and proper operation.
- Attended the Joint Planning Advisory Board meeting.
- Participated in the Hazard Mitigation pre-update meeting with the Southern Georgia Regional Commission (SGRC) on July 21, 2026.
- Met with Chairman Bennett, the Road Superintendent, and representatives from Tri Scapes to review the county's right-of-way mowing contract, which covers approximately 152.13 miles.
- Prepared bid advertisements for Recreation Department lawn maintenance services. A mandatory pre-bid conference will be held on August 20, 2026, at 10:00 a.m. at 728 Ware Street. Bid opening is scheduled for August 28, 2026, at 10:00 a.m.
- Attended the 911 Advisory Board meeting on July 22, 2026.
- A new 3-ton Goodman packaged HVAC unit has been installed at the 911 facility.
- Work continues on development of the Fiscal Year 2027 county budget.
- Three orange aerial marker balls have been installed on the power lines near the Otter Creek Fire Station through the assistance of the REA, improving visibility and safety.
- County Clerk Donna Golding has been working closely with the Southern Georgia Regional Commission to provide documentation and information supporting the 2026 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Food Pantry Project.
- The temporary Recreation Office Building is scheduled to be moved August 8th.
- The City of Blackshear began issuing its own building permits, inspections, and code enforcement services effective August 3, 2026.

#### CHRIS BOND, PLANNING AND FACILITIES DIRECTOR'S REPORT

##### **Planning & Codes:**

9 new home permits issued  
 88 inspections performed  
 3 code violations abated  
 Planning Commission approved Dean Still Rd subdivision and  
 variance request on Christie Circle.  
 Fees collected: \$21,470.49

##### **Facilities:**

Received estimates from Hendrix HVAC and A&W; approved A&W  
 Heating and Cooling to replace 3 ton AC unit at 911 Dispatch building.  
 Repaired water damage and fixed roof leak at Courthouse.  
 Installed outlet for new door at Sunset Fire Station.  
 Replaced sump pump at Road Department.

#### MAINTENANCE AND FACILITY REPORT, ZACH COX

On demand work orders: 41  
 Preventative and routine maintenance task completed: 30  
 Larger projects: A/C upgrade in progress for fire chief's office; plumbing renovation at  
 EMS 1; Package unit installed for 911 dispatch (completed)

#### PIERCE COUNTY ROAD SUPERINTENDENT, BRUCE CARTER

- Culverts Cleaned – 25
- Roads built up – 7 / 2.99 Miles
- Ditches dug – 260
- Potholes Patched – 60, Major – 24
- Shoulders Patched – 20, Major - 9

- Signs replaced – 29
- New signs put up – 10
- Total Road miles Graded 592.93 Miles
- Total Road Grader Miles – 2,916.93 Miles.
- Loads of dirt hauled – 472
- Yards of Dirt Moved – 8,416 CuYds
- Approx. Road miles mowed – 5.22

Special Projects:  
 New School Rd Repaving – Paving is complete. Waiting on one shoulder correction and thermoplastic permanent striping.  
 Gilman Rd Drainage Improvement Project – Culverts have been installed on the North side of Trudie Rd at the Aspinwall Trailer Park. The remainder of the project is on hold until CSX provides a flagman. This should take place in August.

DEBRA TANNER, PIERCE COUNTY E911

911 CALL REPORT BY AGENCY

PCSO 383, BPD 577, PPD 36, GSP 3, DNR 1, STA1 226, STA2 43, MUTUAL AIDE REQUEST 3, MUTUAL AIDE RESPONSE 0, AVAC 3, CORONER 2, PATTERSON FIRE MED. ASSIST 1, BLACKSHEAR FIRE MED. ASSIST 6, PIERCE COUNTY FIRE MED. ASSIST 14, FIRE CALLS PCFD 47, GDOT 4, GFC 5, BSFD 26, PFD 9, NSFD 4, WFD 27, BVFD 3, OFFFD 9, OTTFD 14, SSFD 15, SUNSET 9, HACKFD 31, ROAD DEPT 0, BPW 6, PPW 1  
 TOTAL CALLS FOR JULY:1,508    TOTAL 911 CALLS FOR THE YEAR: 10,306

OFFICE OF THE SHERIFF, SHERIFF RAMSEY BENNETT

During the month of July The Office of the Sheriff Dispatched 538 calls for service to deputies in addition to any calls dispatched by the 911 center. There are 118 inmates in the Pierce County Jail.

PIERCE COUNTY MAGISTRATE JUDGE, SHELLY HERNDON

**Warrants Issued July 2026 (Total = 101)**

| Agency | Count | Percentage |
|--------|-------|------------|
| BPD    | 32    | 31.68%     |
| PCSO   | 69    | 68.32%     |
| GBI    | 0     | 0.00%      |
| GSP    | 0     | 0.00%      |

**Warrants YTD (Total = 610)**

| Agency            | Count | Percentage        |
|-------------------|-------|-------------------|
| BPD               | 160   | 26.23%            |
| PCSO              | 432   | 70.82%            |
| GBI               | 17    | 2.79%             |
| GSP               | 1     | 0.16%             |
| Civil Cases Filed | 18    | (\$900.00 SS Fee) |
| Dispo’s Filed     | 16    | (\$400.00 SS Fee) |
| AMV’s Filed       | 7     | (\$0.00 SS Fee)   |
| Garnishment’s     | 2     | (\$100.00 SS Fee) |
| Foreclosure’s     | 0     | (\$00.00 SS Fee)  |

PIERCE COUNTY SUPERIOR COURT CLERK, MELISSA HOWARD

Superior Civil 13 total year 150  
 State Civil 11 total year 69  
 Superior Crm 56 total year 126

|      |    |          |
|------|----|----------|
| GSP  | 23 | 4262.00  |
| PCSO | 42 | 11586.00 |
| MCCD | 2  | 613.00   |
| DNR  | 1  | 337.00   |

July was 62 calls

YTD we are at 633 calls

- July we responded to:
- 1 - Public Education
  - 3 - Trees Down
  - 6 - Lift Assist
  - 4 - Smoke Alarms
  - 3 - Authorized Control Burns
  - 2 - False Alarm Activations
  - 2 - Setting up Landing Zones for Air EVAC
  - 2 - Medical Trama Falls
  - 3 - Medical Breathing Problems
  - 2 - Medical Altered Mental Status
  - 5 - Smoke Investigations
  - 1 - Gas Leak / Gas Odor
  - 8 - Motor Vehicle Collisions
  - 2 - Power / Cable Lines Down
  - 1 - Vehicle Fire
  - 2 - Structure Room and Contents Fires
  - 9 - Grass and Brush Fires
  - 2 - Trash / Rubbish Fires
  - 1 - Outdoor Grill fire with a flammable cylinder fire
  - 1 - Unclassified Outdoor Fire
  - 2 - Woods / Tree Fires

Fire:

Fire 1 offered 10 hours of training to all Fire Personnel

Fire 1 attended an 8-hour Train the Trainer Course in Waycross to teach how to safely manage traffic on all roadways

Randall Brackett Fire Repair Certified all fire ground ladders for another year after performing service testing. This is a yearly certification that is done for safety for all responders and for compliance standards.

EMA:

Fire 1 attended an 8-hour training course on Operating an Emergency Operations Center in a Rural Community

Fire 1 attended an After-Action Review of the Highway 82 fire that occurred in Brantley County

Local Department heads from cities and county met to discuss the opening of the Hazard Mitigation Plan

PIERCE COUNTY EMS DIRECTOR AAS, NRP, NPQ-FOII, GA-CEM, DANIEL ROYAL

Total calls      269

Transports      175

Non Transports 92

Response from dispatch      269

Chute Time

Mutual Aid/Request to

|           |   |
|-----------|---|
| Responded | 2 |
| Cancelled | 1 |

|                         |     |        |
|-------------------------|-----|--------|
| Mutual Aid/Request From | 0   |        |
| EMS ZONE 1              | 226 | 84.01% |
| EMS ZONE 2              | 43  | 15.99% |

Collections were almost \$65,000 and we hope to see a better increase next month.

PIERCE COUNTY RECREATION DIRECTOR, COACH MO

|                                                                              |                                    |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 8U Coach Pitch Boys -District Champions – Pierce Co.                         | State – Pierce Co. 4 <sup>th</sup> |
| 8U Machine Pitch Boys – In District Pierce Co. placed 7 <sup>th</sup>        |                                    |
| 8U Girls Machine Pitch Girls – In District Pierce Co. placed 4 <sup>th</sup> |                                    |
| 10U Boys Machine Pitch – In District Pierce Co. placed 5 <sup>th</sup>       |                                    |
| 10U Girls Machine Pitch – District Champions - Pierce Co.                    | State – Pierce Co.                 |
| Runner Up                                                                    |                                    |
| 14U Girls Live Pitch – In District placed 3 <sup>rd</sup>                    |                                    |
| Forfeits – 12U & 14U Boys                                                    |                                    |

**\*Financials for 8U Coach & Machine Pitch District Tournament**

|                                 |            |                    |
|---------------------------------|------------|--------------------|
| Total District Fees Collected   | \$2700.00  |                    |
| Total Cash Gate Collected       | \$5761.00  |                    |
| Total Cash Concession Collected | \$4,091.00 |                    |
| Commission on Pictures          | \$234.00   | (Grit Photography) |

**Summer Camps**

Volleyball - \$50 registration fee, held during the month of June, twice a week for a total of 8 sessions focusing on skills, drills, conditioning and live play at Rec Gym. Camp instructors were Sarah Coggin, Heather Fandrich and Tristan Jenkins. This was a co-ed camp, most were girls, but we did have 2 boys. Each participant received a T-shirt.

Basketball – Free, July 27 thru 30, 9am until Noon, co-ed for ages 6 thru 14 with Coach Drew and Coach Moore, at Rec Gym.

Football Camp with Adrian Peterson – Free, July 21<sup>st</sup>, 5:30p until 7:30p, co-ed for ages 7 thru 17, at Tiger Field.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED

THOMAS W. SAULS  
INTERIM, PIERCE COUNTY MANAGER

1. Adjournment-Commissioner David Lowman made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:00 p.m. Commissioner Graham Raley seconded the motion. The motion carried.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Neal Bennett  
Commission Chairman

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Troy Mattox  
Commissioner, District 1

\_\_\_\_\_  
David Lowman  
Commissioner, District 4

\_\_\_\_\_  
Graham Raley  
Commissioner, District 2

\_\_\_\_\_  
Donna Golding  
County Clerk

