



Regular Meeting

705 College Avenue, 2nd Floor, Blackshear, GA 31516

September 8, 2026, 6:00 p.m.

Commissioners in attendance

Neal Bennett, Chairman
Troy Mattox, District 1
Randy Dixon, District 3
David Lowman, District 4

Commissioner not in attendance

Graham Raley, District 2

Staff in attendance

Thomas Sauls, County Manager
Donna Golding, County Clerk
Adam Craft, County Attorney

1. Call to order-Chairman Neal Bennett called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.
2. Invocation Leader-Pastor Edmund Thrift, Shady Grove Baptist Church
3. Pledge of Allegiance Leader-Sheriff Ramsey Bennett led the Pledge of Allegiance.
4. Approval of September 8, 2026, Agenda-Commissioner David Lowman made a motion to approve the September 8, 2026, agenda. Commissioner Troy Mattox seconded the motion. The motion carried.
5. Approval of August 4, 2026, regular meeting minutes-Commissioner Randy Dixon made a motion to approve the August 4, 2026, meeting minutes. Commissioner David Lowman seconded the motion. The motion carried.
6. Public Comments

Blake Edwards-1378 Chance Road, Blackshear-Discussion of FLOCK Cameras, and request a resolution by the BOC to discontinue the use of these devices which are violating the privacy and the constitutional rights of our community.

In response to Mr. Blake Edwards, Sheriff Ramsey Bennett responded with the O.C.G.A rules below:

OCGA § 35-1-22 prohibits Georgia law enforcement agencies from retaining license plate data obtained from automated recognition systems beyond 30 months unless used for law enforcement purposes.

Summary:

OCGA § 35-1-22 ensures that automated license plate data is **collected, used, and retained responsibly**, strictly for law enforcement purposes, with clear limits on retention, sharing, and public access, and establishes penalties for misuse. This statute balances law enforcement utility with privacy protections.

Sheriff Ramsey Bennett stated that if any of his officers misuse the FLOCK cameras, the person misusing them would be prosecuted.

Kimberly Lawson- 2458 Jared Road, Patterson-Discussion of animal control

7. Action to approve new Subdivision at parcel # 036-028 from Allen and Griffis Construction on Dean Still Road, Blackshear-Commissioner David Lowman made a motion to approve the new subdivision on Dean Still Road. Commissioner Randy Dixon seconded the motion. The motion carried.
8. Action to approve a variance request for the install of a new mobile home located at Parcel #024A-098, 6603 Christie Circle-Commissioner David Lowman made a motion to approve the variance for Christie Circle. Chairman Neal Bennett made a motion to deny the variance for Christie Circle. Stating we need to follow the County Ordinance we have in place. Commissioner David Lowman then made a motion to table this item until further information was retrieved from Mr. Chris Bond who is over Planning and Zoning. Commissioner Troy Mattox agreed and seconded the motion to table the variance request until the Board received further information about the property. Tabling the variance request carried.
9. Action to approve the annual Resolution Authorizing the filing of an application with the Department of Transportation, United States of America, and Georgia Department of Transportation, for a grant under Title 49 U.S.C., Section 5311-Commissioner David Lowman made a motion to authorize the annual Resolution Authorizing the filing of an application with the Department of Transportation, United States of America, and Georgia Department of Transportation. Commissioner Randy Dixon seconded the motion. The motion carried.
10. Action to approve agreement for technical assistance hourly services between the Pierce County Board of Commissioners and Southern Georgia Regional Commission-Commissioner David Lowman made a motion to approve the agree agreement for technical assistance hourly services between the Pierce County Board of Commissioners and Southern Georgia Regional Commission for the Land and Water Conservation project at the Recreation Department off Ware Street for improvements. Commissioner Randy Dixon seconded the motion. The motion carried.
11. Action to approve a resolution of Pierce County Commission to submit a pre-application to obtain 2026-2027 land and water conservation fund grant monies-Commissioner David Lowman made a motion to approve a resolution of Pierce County Commission to submit a pre-application to obtain 2026-2027 land and water conservation fund grant monies. Commissioner Troy Mattox seconded the motion. The motion carried.
12. Discussion and Action to approve FY 2027 Millage Rate-County Manager Thomas Sauls presented the FY 2027 Millage Rate at 9.784. Stating this is down .613 of a mill. This is

roughly 7% and equals an estimated amount of \$473,000.00 in savings to the Pierce County taxpayer. Commissioner Randy Dixon made a motion to approve FY 2027 at 9.784 mills. Commissioner Troy Mattox seconded the motion. Commissioner David Lowman gave a third. The motion carried.

NOTICE								
The Pierce County Board of Commissioners does hereby announce that the millage rate will be set at a meeting to be held at the NFC Building								
705 College Ave. Blackshear, Ga. 31516 on September 8, 2026 at 6:00 p.m. and pursuant to the requirements of O.C.G.A. § 48-5-32 does hereby								
publish the following presentation of the current year's tax digest and levy, along with the history of the tax digest and levy for the past five years.								
CURRENT PROPERTY TAX DIGEST AND 5 YEAR HISTORY OF LEVY								
U N I N C O R P O R A T E D A R E A	UNINCORPORATED		2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
	V A L U E	Real & Personal	429,409,980	450,830,998	579,132,998	597,311,079	622,151,643	737,848,746
		Motor Vehicles	8,419,500	7,648,470	7,848,820	8,125,850	7,973,780	7,921,270
		Mobile Homes	12,718,860	14,835,211	16,525,598	16,800,863	16,998,362	18,456,550
		Timber - 100%	4,985,896	9,063,551	13,779,615	5,088,590	7,417,044	3,407,019
		Heavy Duty Equipment	51,184		222,537	463,708	436,954	189,470
		Gross Digest	455,585,420	482,378,230	617,509,568	627,790,090	654,977,783	767,823,055
		Less Exemptions	85,691,501	96,469,854	140,268,697	139,578,312	148,775,187	206,092,271
	NET DIGEST VALUE		369,893,919	385,908,376	477,240,871	488,211,778	506,202,596	561,730,784
	R A T E	Gross Maintenance & Operation Millage	16.0000	14.1529	12.0952	12.0778	13.1040	12.5050
		Less Rollbacks (Local Option Sales Tax, Insurance Premium)	5.5655	3.0249	2.6662	2.6808	2.7070	2.7210
		NET M&O MILLAGE RATE		10.4345	11.1280	9.4290	9.3970	10.3970
	TAX	NET M&O TAXES LEVIED		\$3,859,658	\$4,294,388	\$4,499,904	\$4,587,726	\$5,262,988
I N C O R P O R A T E D A R E A	INCORPORATED		2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
	V A L U E	Real & Personal	142,482,819	154,297,769	222,599,719	228,014,831	232,937,143	260,572,408
		Motor Vehicles	1,250,960	1,280,150	1,258,430	1,358,390	1,324,900	1,385,670
		Mobile Homes	336,848	426,770	489,402	762,841	917,971	1,467,615
		Timber - 100%						
		Heavy Duty Equipment	108,918	145,005		216,300	142,746	39,410
		Gross Digest	144,179,545	156,149,694	224,347,551	230,352,362	235,322,760	263,465,103
		Less Exemptions	12,581,805	14,868,791	26,878,695	26,307,704	41,528,053	52,430,859
	NET DIGEST VALUE		131,597,740	141,280,903	197,468,856	204,044,658	193,794,707	211,034,244
	R A T E	Gross Maintenance & Operation Millage	16.0000	14.1529	12.0952	12.0778	13.1040	12.5050
		Less Rollback (Local Option Sales Tax)	2.7603	3.0249	2.6662	2.6808	2.7070	2.7210
		NET M&O MILLAGE RATE		13.2397	11.1280	9.4290	9.3970	10.3970
	TAX	NET M&O TAXES LEVIED		\$1,742,315	\$1,572,174	\$1,861,934	\$1,917,408	\$2,014,884
TOTAL COUNTY	TOTAL COUNTY		2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
	TOTAL DIGEST VALUE		501,491,659	527,189,279	674,709,727	692,256,436	699,997,303	772,765,028
	TOTAL M&O TAXES LEVIED		\$5,601,973	\$5,866,562	\$6,361,838	\$6,505,134	\$7,277,872	\$7,560,733
	Net Tax \$ Increase			\$264,590	\$495,276	\$143,296	\$772,738	\$282,861
	Net Tax % Increase			4.72%	8.44%	2.25%	11.88%	3.89%

13. Action to adopt Resolution to Approve FY 2027 Tax Levy

RESOLUTION 2026.09.08

OF PIERCE COUNTY, GEORGIA

TO APPROVE TAX LEVY FOR THE YEAR 2026

Resolution and Order of the Board of Commissioners of Pierce County Georgia levying

taxes for the year 2026.

WHEREAS the gross M&O millage for the unincorporated will be set at 12.5050 mills less the rollbacks of 2.7210 mills for a net M&O millage of 9.7840 mills for a net tax levied at \$5,495,974 and the gross M&O millage for the incorporated will be set at 12.5050 mills less the rollbacks of 2.7210 mills for a net M&O millage of 9.7840 mills for a net tax levied at \$2,064,759 for a total county tax levied at \$7,560,733 and a total county value for 2026 at \$772,765,028.

WHEREAS it is ordered that the Board of Commissioners adopt the 2026 mill rate of 12.953 mills, for maintenance and operation, as recommended by the Board of Education, in accordance with law.

BE IT RESOLVED by the Pierce County Board of Commissioners as the governing authority of Pierce County is hereby requesting to levy a tax for the year 2026 at the Gross Rate of 12.5050 mills upon the monetary assessed value of all taxable property in Pierce County, for the maintenance and operating of Pierce County for the fiscal year 2027.

Adopted on this 8th day of September 2026.

THE PIERCE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

By: _____

Neal Bennett, Chairman

SEAL

Attest: _____

Donna Golding, County Clerk

14. Action to approve Mowing for the Recreation Department

Wright Outdoors-\$21,915.00

North Florida Lawn Maintenance-\$71,500.00

Commissioner Randy Dixon made a motion to approve the bid with Wright Outdoors in the amount of \$21,915.00. Commissioner Troy Mattox seconded the motion. The motion carried.

15. Action to approve the purchase of Caterpillar Model 309 Hydraulic Excavator and Torrent Mulcher \$178,150.00

16. Chairman Neal Bennett presented the purchase of a Caterpillar Model 309 Hydraulic Excavator and Torrent Mulcher for \$178,150.00 to the Commissioners. It could take 4 to 6 months before the equipment arrives. Commissioner David Lowman suggested having Mr. David Pinter with Yancey to have someone come in and train on how to properly use and maintain the equipment. Stating training could help with lowering the cost of maintaining the equipment and could implement safety. Commissioner David Lowman made a motion to approve the purchase of Caterpillar Model 309 Hydraulic Excavator and Torrent Mulcher in the amount of \$178,150.00. Commissioner Randy Dixon seconded the motion. The motion carried.

17. Action to add the following Road Department items to the Surplus List

2001 International 2554 6x4 Dump Truck, Serial Number 1HTGCADT31H378741-

167,347.9 Miles

1999 International Dump Truck, Serial Number 1HGGADT5YH283905-168,976.9 Miles

2016 John Deere 75D Mini Excavator, Serial Number 1FF075DXKCG014778-3,496.5 Hours

Commissioner David Lowman made a motion to approve adding a 2001 International 2554 6x4 Dump Truck, Serial Number 1HTGCADT31H378741 with 167,349.9 miles, a 1999 International Dump Truck, Serial Number 1HGGADT5YH283905-168,976.9 Miles, and a 2016 John Deere 75D Mini Excavator, Serial Number 1FF075DXKCG014778 with 3,496.5 hours to the county surplus list. Commissioner Randy Dixon seconded the motion. The motion carried.

18. County Manager's Report-County Manager presented the August Monthly Report to the Commissioners and audience.



County Manager's Report for August 2026
Presented on September 8, 2026
Pierce County Board of Commissioners Meeting

COUNTY MANAGER'S MONTHLY HIGHLIGHT ACTIVIY FOR AUGUST 2026

- Met with Mr. John McCall, Engineer, to discuss construction planning for a new food pantry. An inspection was conducted at the existing food pantry, and potential new sites were visited. A plan is currently being developed for the construction of a new food pantry.
- A public hazard mitigation meeting was held on August 11, 2026.
- The Service Delivery Strategy (SDS) is being updated to address land use.
- Met with County Attorney Adam Craft to discuss a plan of action for providing building permits, conducting inspections, and enforcing building codes, as well as discussing the functions and responsibilities of the Planning and Zoning Board.
- On August 20, 2026, a pre-bid meeting was held at the Recreation Department with interested parties who are considering submitting bids for lawn maintenance services.
- On August 20, 2026, County Clerk, Donna Golding met with Statewide engineers on site at the Recreation Department on Ware Street to discuss upgrades with a new Land and Water Conservation Grant.
- Chairman Bennett, County Clerk Donna Golding, and I met with Mayor Denison and Mayor Thomas at Patterson City Hall to discuss the newly updated resolution concerning the Pierce County Planning Commission Agreement. Pierce County, the City of Offerman, and the City of Patterson have agreed to comply with the newly updated resolution.
- On August 28, 2026, bids for lawn maintenance services at the Recreation Department were opened.
- On August 28, 2026, pre-construction engineering discussions were held with Statewide Civil Engineering Group and RHT Construction concerning the Tiger Field Rehabilitation Improvements project. Various project-related topics and construction considerations were discussed. Construction start date of September 21, 2026.

- The Ware Street and Yeomans Street recreation parking lots will be resurfaced beginning September 9. Statewide Civil Engineering and Scruggs Construction Company will oversee and manage the project.
- September 15th at 6pm we will have a called meeting to adopt budget and tax levy resolution at NFC Building.
- Our first Hazard Mitigation meeting will be held on September 16th at 10am at the NFC Building.
- County Clerk, Donna Golding, is scheduled to attend the CDBG summit in Valdosta September 28-30.

DEBRA TANNER, PIERCE COUNTY E911

911 CALL REPORT BY AGENCY

PCSO 392, BPD 531, PPD 36, GSP 9, DNR 1, STA1 231, STA2 46, MUTUAL AIDE REQUEST 5, MUTUAL AIDE RESPONSE 5, AVAC 5, CORONER 8, PATTERSON FIRE MED. ASSIST 2, BLACKSHEAR FIRE MED. ASSIST 3, PIERCE COUNTY FIRE MED. ASSIST 20, FIRE CALLS PCFD 49, GDOT 4, GFC 0, BSFD 48, PFD 12, NSFD 4, WFD 26, BVFD 4, OFFFD 5, OTTFD 4, SSFD 12, SUNSET 7, HACKFD 19, ROAD DEPT 4, BPW 2, PPW 0
TOTAL CALLS FOR AUGUST: 1494 TOTAL 911 CALLS FOR THE YEAR: 11,800

OFFICE OF THE SHERIFF, SHERIFF RAMSEY BENNETT

During the month of August The Office of the Sheriff Dispatched 877 calls for service to deputies in addition to any calls dispatched by the 911 center. There are 123 inmates in the Pierce County Jail.

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

Total calls 277

Transports 179

Non Transports 96

Response from dispatch 277

Chute Time

Mutual Aid/Request to

Responded 2

Cancelled 3

Mutual Aid/Request From 5

EMS ZONE 1 226 83.1%

EMS ZONE 2 46 16.9 %

We billed out \$147,847.50 and collected \$62,200.00

PIERCE COUNTY MAGISTRATE JUDGE, SHELLY HERNDON

Warrants Issued (Current Period) - 98 Total

BPD: 31 (31.6%)

PCSO: 67 (68.4%)

Warrants Issued YTD - 708 Total

Using the stated YTD total of 708:

BPD: 201 (28.4%)

PCSO: 499 (70.5%)

GBI: 17 (2.4%)

GSP: 1 (0.1%)

Civil Cases Filed 35 (\$1,700.00 SS Fee)

Dispo's Filed 9 (\$225.00 SS Fee)

AMV's Filed 0 (\$0.00 SS Fee)
Garnishment's 2 (\$100.00 SS Fee)
Foreclosure's 2 (\$100.00 SS Fee)
Total Civil Cases filed 48 for month of August

PIERCE COUNTY SUPERIOR COURT CLERK, MELISSA HOWARD

Superior Civil 16 total year 167

State Civil 17 total year 86

Superior Crm 29 total year 85

State MM 34 total year 156

State TR 33 total year 543

Adoption 1 total year 9

GSP 108	\$13152.00
PCSO 47	10511.00
MCCD 0	0
DNR 0	0

Leah Ritch, Supervisor of Pierce County Board of Elections and Registration
 Registration, DDS and Felon cleanup for November General
 Regional, State Election Board and SOS meetings and Webinars
 Blackshear, Offerman and Patterson PFDS Ethic filings
 Waiting on Ballot Proofs
 5 weeks until EARLY VOTING-It all begins TODAY

CHRIS BOND, PLANNING AND FACILITIES DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Planning & Codes:

4 new residential home permits
 80 inspections performed
 3 code enforcement cases resolved
 Assisted two contractors in obtaining state licensing
 Fees accrued: \$6,960.74

Facilities:

55 work orders
 24 routine maintenances
 Replaced AC unit at 911 Dispatch
 Installed mini split at EOC
 Completed plumbing renovations at EOC
 Installed dehumidifier at EOC

PIERCE COUNTY ROAD SUPERINTENDENT, BRUCE CARTER

- . Culverts Cleaned – 15 By Hand
- Roads built up – 5 Miles
- Ditches dug – 88
- Culverts installed/Replaced – 16
- Potholes Patched – 45, Major – 5
- Shoulders Patched – 6, Major - 3

- Signs replaced – 60
- New signs put up – 35
- Total Road miles Graded 412.42 Miles
- Total Road Grader Miles – 1,720.06 Miles.
- Loads of dirt hauled – 742
- Yards of Dirt Moved – 11,872 CuYds
- Approx. Road miles mowed – 13.82

PIERCE COUNTY FIRE CHIEF, CHRIS TODD

August Calls - 67

YTD Calls - 700

August Pierce County Fire responded to:

- 3 - Law Enforcement Support
- 2- Trash Fires
- 1 - Grass Fire
- 1 - Structure Room and Contents Fire
- 1 - Cooking fire extending into cabinets
- 1 - Carbon Monoxide Alarm
- 2 - Electrical Short Circuits
- 3 - Gas Leak / Gas Odor
- 4 - Power Lines Down
- 11 - Motor Vehicle Collisions
- 12 - Medical Calls
- 2 - Gunshot Wounds
- 6 - Lift Assist
- 5 - False Alarms
- 4 - Cancelled in Route
- 1 - Fire Alarm
- 7 - Trees Down
- 1 - Rescue / Extrication

Fire:

PCFD offered 10 hours of FF training

Fire 1 attended a 32-hour Fire and Life Safety Educator Course in Forsyth.

Hurst Jaws on 2201 annual service completed

E26 out of service for repairs at Tom Nehl in Waycross. Reserve Engine 2206 is in service at Hacklebarney till repairs can be completed

2316 out of service for tank repairs at the GA Forestry Unit in Alma

EMA:

Fire 1 and Fire 2 attended a crisis track training course in Brunswick for new software on tracking storm damage during Natural Disasters

Fire 1 and Fire 2 completed the Essential Facilities list for the upcoming Hazard Mitigation Planning

Fire 1 and Fire 2 attended the Pierce is Prepared meeting offered by PCFC at the Pierce County Chamber office

PIERCE COUNTY PROBATE JUDGE, MOYE HOWARD

Firearms

9 New License	\$315.00
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18 Renewal	<u>\$396.00</u>
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Subtotal	\$711.00
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Marriage

1 Marriage-Counseling	\$25.75
10 Marriage-No Counseling	\$507.25
3 Marriage Certified Copies	<u>\$30.00</u>
Subtotal	\$563.25

Probate

2 Annual, Intermediate or Final Return	\$20.00
3 Miscellaneous Probate	\$40.00
4 Notice of Claim of Claim of Creditor	\$60.00
1 Petition for Letters of Administration	\$180.00
1 Petition to Compromise Doubtful Claim of Minor/Ward	\$180.00
6 Petition to Probate Will in Solemn Form	<u>\$900.00</u>
Subtotal	\$1,380.00

PIERCE COUNTY RECREATION DIRECTOR, COACH MO

2026 Fall Program

- Soccer

Big Kickers 5/6 (2 teams)

Future Bears 3/4 (2 teams)

- Tackle Football (3 8U, 3 10U, 1 12U) Flag Football Coed 5/6 (3 teams)

- Girls Flag Football (1 10U and 1 12U))

- Volleyball (2 8U, 3 10U, 3 12U, 1 14U)

- Cross Country – New Program added this year.

Competed in Brantley August 22 District Warm-up Meet

§ Coed Ran by Age

§ 12u Karma Perry finished 20 out 63.

§ 10u Presley Howell finished 48 out of 78.

§ Next meet August 29th

Fall Program have surpassed the 500 mark. We now have 539 2026 Fall athletes.

September 5 – Softball Rec Night

September 10 – Volleyball Rec Night

September 18 – Fall Sports Rec Night (PCHS Football)

September 9th Both (Ware St. and Yeomans St) Parking Lots will be renovated. Projected to be finished the same day.

September 14th – Season Starts

October 6th & 8th - Buddy Bowl / Pink Out (Breast Cancer Awareness)

October 8th Regular Season Ends. Allstar selections will begin.

NO Games for fall break October 12th – 16th

PIERCE COUNTY TAX COMMISSIONER, NICOLE SCURRY

Processed 2,827 motor vehicle transactions for August.

We will be having a mobile home sale October 6th and advertisements will be in the Blackshear Times. .

It is our goal to have a 20th tax deadline this year.

PIERCE COUNTY CORONOR, WILLIAM WILSON

37 investigated deaths for the first six months of 2026

PIERCE COUNTY ACCOUNTING CLERK, MARY SKIPPER

For the period ending July 31, 2026, total revenues collected were \$12.5 million, representing 76.2% of the budgeted revenue of \$16.5 million. Total expenditures for the same period were \$8.6 million, or 52.3% of the budgeted expenditure amount of \$16.5 million.

Overall, revenues continue to track ahead of expenditures, resulting in a positive financial position through July 31, 2026.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED

THOMAS W. SAULS
INTERIM, PIERCE COUNTY MANAGER

19. Adjournment -Commissioner David Lowman made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:15 p.m. Commissioner Randy Dixon seconded the motion. The motion carried and the meeting was adjourned at 7:15 p.m.

Neal Bennett
Commission Chairman

Troy Mattox
Commissioner, District 1

Not in Attendance
Graham Raley
Commissioner, District 2

Randy Dixon
Commissioner, District 3

David Lowman
Commissioner, District 4

Donna Golding
County Clerk