

Pierce County Board of Commissioners  
Regular Meeting Agenda  
Tuesday, January 03, 2023 6:00 PM

Commissioners in Attendance: Neal Bennett, Chairman  
Harold Rozier, District 1  
Graham Raley, District 2  
Randy Dixon, District 3  
David Lowman, District 4

Staff in Attendance Franklin Rozier, County Attorney  
Chuck Scragg, Interim County Manager  
Charles Yeargin, County Clerk

1. Call to Order – Chairman Neal Bennett called the Regular Meeting to order at 6:00 PM.
2. Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance – Commissioner Randy Dixon gave the invocation, and Commissioner Harold Rozier led the Pledge of Allegiance.
3. Approval of Agenda.  
Commissioner Randy Dixon made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Commissioner Harold Rozier seconded the motion. There was no discussion. All commissioners voted aye. Motion was unanimously approved.
4. Approval of Minutes
  - a. Regular Meeting Minutes, December 06, 2022

Commissioner Randy Dixon made a motion to approve the November 1, 2022 Public Hearing Minutes, the November 1, 2022 Regular Meeting Minutes, the November 8, 2022 Called Meeting Minutes, and the November 10, 2022 Called Meeting Minutes as presented. Commissioner David Lowman seconded the motion. There was no discussion. All commissioners voted aye. Motion was unanimously approved.

5. Discussion and request for action Re: Rezoning Request Number RZ-10-22-15632

Chairman Neal Bennett presented the Request to Rezone 2724 Midway Road, Blackshear, GA , Parcel #024D-029C, 3.0 Acres, Rezone from Agricultural /Forestry (AF) to Multi-Family (MF) for apartments. Request was made by Harvest Properties and Investments, LLC. This Request was approved by the Planning and Zoning Board at their November 14, 2022 Hearing and Meeting, with no public input offered at that time. At the January 03, 2023 Public Hearing Meeting Dawn Thompson at 6871 Tanglewood Drive in Blackshear, GA expressed concerns and opposition to the offered request due to a potential increase in traffic, noise, and crime if apartments are built. Commissioner David Lowman made a motion to approve the Rezoning Request. Commissioner David Lowman seconded the motion. There was no discussion, and all commissioners voted aye. The motion passed unanimously.

6. USDA Project permission request from Pierce BOC for building (2) fire stations and land acquisition.

Fire Chief Santo Nino petitioned the Board of Commissioners to seek permission to begin the planning and research process towards land acquisition and funding for the construction of two (2) new fire stations in the Hacklebarney and Otter Creek communities. Chief Nino explained that the existing stations are “community” stations not wholly owned by Pierce County, and that the current facilities don’t fit newer, larger fire apparatus. Chief Nino plans to explore funding options through USDA and AFG grants. Commissioner David Lowman made a motion to grant permission for Chief Nino to begin the planning process. Commissioner Randy Dixon seconded the motion. There was no discussion, and all commissioners voted aye. The motion passed unanimously.

7. AFG Grant Award, Operations & Safety, \$70,476, 12/19/2022, Report by Fire Chief Santo Nino.

Fire Chief Santo Nino gave a report on \$70, 476.00 Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) presented to Pierce County Fire Rescue by the US Department of Homeland Security/FEMA. Chief Nino advised the funds from this grant will be utilized to outfit PCFR personnel with personal firefighting protective equipment. Report only, no motion necessary.

8. Schedule for County Manager position search.

Interim County Manager Chuck Scragg presented the tentative schedule and search for the hiring of a permanent County Manager; no motion necessary.

Tentative Schedule for Search and hiring of Permanent Pierce County Manager

December 23, 2023 31, 2023.	Re-advertise position and close applications on January
1/11/2023	Blackshear Times editions 12/28/2022; 1/4/2023;
Facebook,	ACCG/GMA website, Pierce County Govt. Website &
	ICMA web site.
January 3, 2023	Regular Meeting, BOC appoints Interview Committee.
January 31, 2023	5:00 pm deadline for receipt of Applications.
February 1, 2023 interviews.	Interview Committee meets to select candidates for
February 2-14, 2023 finalists.	Interview Committee interviews candidates, selects
February 15-20, 2023	Finalists have interviews with BOC members.
February 21, 2023 comment period.	Called BOC Meeting BOC announces Final Candidate and 14 day waiting &
March 7, 2023	BOC Regular Meeting, BOC appoints final candidate as County Manager New County Manager in Attendance.
March 21, 2023	First day for County Manager as Employee.
March 21-28, 2023	Overlap with Interim Manager.

9. Large animal burial update on County Policy.

Chairman Neil Bennett gave a report that in regards to the burial of large animals discussed at the December 06, 2022 Regular Meeting that it was discovered a policy already existed in the Pierce County Code of Ordinances, and no further action was needed, and no motion was necessary.

**Sec. 6-1. - Burial of dead animals on private property.**

- (a) It shall be lawful for the employees of the county, at the request of a citizen of the county, to bury dead animals on the private property of such citizen at the site appointed by the citizen.**
- (b) Prior to the burying of such animal by the county, a fee in an amount determined from time to time by action of the board of commissioners and set forth in the consolidated fee schedule, shall be paid to the county by the citizen requesting the burying of such dead animal.**

**(Code 2005, § 10-1; Ord. of 12-2-1991, §§ 1, 2)**

## OTHER FEES

REZONING	\$400.00
DEVELOPMENT CODE AMENDMENT	\$250.00
VARIANCE	\$400.00
PERMIT TO FILL, GRADE, OR EXCAVATE IN A FLOOD HAZRD DISTRICT	\$150.00
CONDITIONAL USE & EXCEPTION	\$400.00
BOARD OF APPEALS (NO VARIANCE REQUEST)	\$150.00
TEMPORARY PERMIT	\$50.00
ADVERTISING SIGN	\$50.00
DIRECT SIGN AND ON PREMISE SIGNS	\$25.00
SWIMMING POOL PERMITS	\$75.00
DEMOLITION PERMIT (RESIDENTIAL)	\$75.00
DEMOLITION PERMIT (COMMERCIAL)	\$100.00
SALVAGE/JUNK YARD LICENSE AND RENEWAL	\$200.00
SOIL & EROSION ADMIN FEE (PER ACRE)	\$80.00
(\$40 soil erosion fee/\$40 admin fee-- does not include \$40 EPD fee)	
HOUSE MOVING	\$200.00
REINSPECTION FEE AFTER THE 2ND INSPECTION	\$25.00
BIG ANIMAL BURIAL	\$150.00
ROAD CLOSING	\$400.00
SOLAR PANEL ARRAY	\$1,500 up to 1 acre plus \$50 each additional acr
CELL TOWER PERMIT	\$500.00
PONDS, LAKES, DAMS & SPILLWAYS PERMIT	\$1,000.00
RIGHT OF WAY PERMIT	\$150.00

10. County Manager’s Report of Activities and Financials.

Interim County Manager Chuck Scragg presented the following Report of Activities and Financials:

**County Manager’s Report for December 2022**

**Financial Report:**

1. Budget adjustments have been made from transfers in from ARPA for absorption into the new classifications and pay grades for employees.
2. The General Fund budget through the month of November seems right on track.
3. We will not have our full 2022 Budget versus Actual figures until late January, 2023.
4. We still have unencumbered funds of \$1.43 million in ARPA funds to be utilized in 2023 to shore up the EMS service and pay for necessary vehicles and equipment.
5. Revenues are running slightly ahead at 102% of budget through November.
6. Fuel is running 75% over budget.
7. The EMS deficit is \$217,236 (without the addition of the ARPA). Through November:

YTD Expenses	\$1,038,039	
Budgeted	- \$497,500	(Grady)
Sub-total	\$540,539	
Ambulance fees	+\$323,303	
Deficit	\$217,236	
8. Collected “Prisoner housing fees” for the jail, as revenue, are far ahead of budget. Budget \$55,000. YTD collected: \$234,662 or 391% beyond budget.
9. Waiting for end of year reports on figures for property tax and other collections.
10. Our application for the Local Maintenance and Improvement (LMIG) grant for 2023, was submitted, approved and funded. Funds in the amount of \$778,060.40 were deposited into our account in mid-December.
11. Roberts Civil Engineering will be the 2023 LMIG Administrator. They will put out an RFP bid for use of the funds in mid-January. Roads to be bid include: Meadow Wood Road from Cason Road to Old Alma Road, and portions of Sunset Road and Beulah Church Road for repaving.

**Pierce County Government Departments:**

**12. Emergency Medical Services (EMS)**

- As of the latest report I received from Elevos from 12/1 through 12/20 we had collected 31,431.81\$.
- As of 12/31 at 2300 we have responded to 262 calls for EMS response. This is an average of 8.5 calls per day which is down a bit from average, this is expected during the holiday season.
- We will have the red lights we need to license the newly purchased truck by Monday 1/2. Truck licensed as soon as 1/6.
- Pierce County EMS retook the service on 2/15/22 from that date through 12/31/22 our deployment never decreased from 2 ALS units in service.

**13. Fire Department**

- Pierce County Fire Department has responded to 637 incidents as of 12/30/2022.
- Staffing consists of 1- Full time with a vacant position and 65 Volunteer Firefighters.

- Pierce County Fire Department was awarded the (AFG) Assistance to Firefighters Grants Program for the amount of \$70,476.00 out of \$90,000.00 with local responsibility of \$19,524.00 for (20) Complete sets of structural gear consisting of helmets, coats, trousers, boots, hoods and gloves.
- Permission for approval to secure funding for (2 to 4) stations for land acquisition and building construction through Grants and USDA funded loans.

#### **14. Emergency Management Administration (EMA)**

- Pierce County met GEMA/HS Exercises mandate requirements for FY 2022.
- 2022 December Freeze with minor incidents to municipal Public Works infrastructure with (1) service water line per the City of Blackshear and Patterson.
- Planning for 2023 Infrastructure Generator projects for Pierce County facilities.

#### **15. Tax Assessor**

- GMASS will begin Land portion of re-assessment in January 2023.

#### **16. Planning and Zoning**

- 1 new house for December
- 60 new houses for 2022
- 53 new houses for 2021

#### **17. Planning & Codes**

- Inspections performed amounted to 57.
- One call received for code enforcement in reference to an individual living in a camper on someone else's property. The person has since been removed from the premises.
- Census report was submitted, as it is now sent in monthly rather than annually, with no changes in annexation or boundary lines.

#### **18. Facilities Maintenance Dept.**

- Televisions and speakers have been installed and we are currently waiting for the technician to complete the setup.
- The scoreboard at Bowen field (Rec Dept.) has been repaired and is now operable.
- Twenty work orders were received from various departments and have been fulfilled.

#### **19. Procurement**

- Continuing to work on streamlining payment systems.
- Ensuring accountability and accuracy.

#### **20. Clerk/Human Resources**

- Processed 1 termination (EMS, part-time employee who failed to provide required availability), 1 resignation (Full time corrections officer), and 1 retirement (Full time clerk from the Tax Commissioner's office).
- onboarded 1 seasonal employee for the Recreation Department, a full-time corrections officer for the Sheriff's Department, and 1 Commissioner-elect,
- waiting on a full-time laborer candidate for the Road Department and a part-time paramedic candidate for EMS to come in for onboarding.
- Clerk/HR successfully enrolled for a 7-hour ACCG CORE Human Resources training class to be held in Lawrenceville, GA on January 27<sup>th</sup>, as well as mandated County Clerk training to be held on Jekyll Island on February 5-7.
- We have successfully closed out 2 open records requests.
- Benefits Open Enrollment for 2023-24 will be in June 2023

#### **21. Parks and Recreation**

- For Winter 2023 Basketball we have 192 kids participating in over 22 teams.
- We have 16 shooter shirt sponsors. (Team Sponsor name will be printed on the back of shooter shirts for that particular team.)
- Basketball games will start on January 7 with Championship Saturday scheduled for February 11. This year Rec games will be played utilizing 2 locations, the Rec Gym and Pierce County's Old High School Gym.
- 2023 Spring Sports projected registration start date is early January with projected start date for games April 10.

## **22. Road Department**

- Work continues on cutting the shoulders of 103 miles of road in Pierce County as we "re-stripe" 103 miles of paved roads and make them safer.
- Work will begin on Golf Course Road as soon as the contractor can procure materials. We still have supply chain issues, particularly with gravel. Anticipated Mid-January start date.
- Paving is continuing on West Horseshoe Road.
- Roads Clipped – Old Hoboken RD (12/5/2022 – 12/15/2022) Voight Bridge RD (12/19/2022 – 12/27/2022) Trudie RD (12/28/2022 – Present)
- Roads built up – Eldon RD/ Homestead RD
- Ditches dug – Southside DR (12/1/2022 – 12/7/2022),
- Outfalls Cleaned/Dug – Eldon RD/Johnson RD (12/8/2022) W.C Davis RD/Rawhide RD (12/28/2022),
- Culverts installed/Replaced – 11
- Potholes Patched – 28, 3 Major
- Signs replaced – 39
- Total Road Grader Miles – 240.25/ Estimated with today 256.25
- Road signs Put up – 17
- Loads of Dirt hauled – 216
- Yards of Dirt Moved – 3,456 Cubic Yds
- Continuing to refine the "cycles" for grading
- Installed 175 culverts in 2022 YTD

## **23. Elections**

- Runoff Early Voting-end total 3978 for 1 week
- Worked Sat & Sun to set up-poll pad early vote updates Tear down board room/ set up gym w/Chester
- Trial uploads, set up Eagle, meet managers Election, early tabulation absentees w/board 15 hours
- Start paperwork, Chester tear down gym Eagle-back to vault-build audit teams-confirm Certification/Board meets to certify and sign -upload for Audit
- Conducted Mandatory Statewide Audit
- Voter Certification for Runoff Election Dropped off- Brunswick GSP post
- End of year financial totals (poll workers) bills turned In
- Laptop Apps class. School in Athens Jan. 3-6

## **11. Executive Session for Personnel**

Commissioner Randy Dixon made a motion to enter into Executive Session to discuss a personnel matter. Commissioner David Lowman seconded the motion. All commissioners voted aye. The Board of Commissioners entered into Executive Session at 6:36 PM

Commissioner Randy Dixon made a motion to enter back into Regular Session. Commissioner David Lowman seconded the motion. All

commissioners voted aye. The Board of Commissioners entered back into Regular Session at 6:48 PM.

No action was taken by the Board of Commissioners following the Executive Session for personnel matters.

12. Adjourn.

Commissioner David Lowman made a motion to adjourn the Regular Meeting. Commissioner Randy Dixon seconded the motion. All commissioners voted aye. Chairman Neal Bennett adjourned the Regular Meeting at 6:51 PM.

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Neal Bennett  
Chairman, Board of Commissioners

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Harold Rozier  
Commissioner, District 1

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Mike Streat  
Commissioner, District 2

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Randy Dixon  
Commissioner, District 3

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David Lowman  
Commissioner, District 4

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Charles Yeargin  
Pierce County Clerk