

**PIERCE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, JANUARY 8, 2019 AT 6:00 PM**

Commissioners in Attendance

Neal Bennett Chairman
Harold Rozier, District 1
Mike Streat, District 2
Randy Dixon, District 3
David Lowman, District 4

Staff in Attendance

Franklin Rozier Jr, County Attorney
Jason Rubenbauer, County Manager
Amy Hitt, County Clerk

CALL TO ORDER – Chairman Neal Bennett called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM

INVOCATION/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE – Commissioner David Lowman gave an invocation and led the pledge of allegiance.

MINUTES

December 4, 2018 Public Hearing Minutes
December 4, 2018 Regular Meeting Minutes
December 27, 2018 Called Meeting Minutes

Commissioner Mike Streat made a motion to approve the minutes from the December 4, 2018 Public Hearing and Regular Meeting and the called meeting minutes from December 27, 2018. Commissioner Randy Dixon seconded the motion. All voted aye. Motion approved.

PUBLIC COMMENT

1. Ellis McNeal – People throwing trash on the right of ways and some ways of making Pierce County the cleanest county in Georgia. – Mr. McNeal was not present at the meeting.

GENERAL BUSINESS

2. County Manager Report. Jason Rubenbauer, County Manager stated that LOST revenues are up about 7.8 %, EMS collections are down and the amount being billed is significantly less. Total revenues are up 4.6 % over 2017. Road Department budget is expectedly up due to the significant amount of rain that has been received in the recent months, there are some county roads that are closed due to conditions and there are

several roads with still some major issues. All the graders are running this week and working on drainage issues. There are currently two vacancies at the road department 1 equipment operator and 1 laborer. Interviews are being conducted this week for the vacancies. We are still having issues with people playing in the roads and causing more damage. The Sheriff will cite anyone caught damaging the roadways. Still preparing for the upcoming fire inspection that is scheduled for January 30, 2019. We appreciate all that Chief Bucky Goble has done to help the County during this time, he has gone above and beyond these last few months. Currently working with the Fire Chiefs on their needs of equipment and training standards to help with the ISO. Working on completing the IRMA clean up project with GEMA as well as a couple other items.

3. Request from AROC Investments to rezone from SF to MF 34 lots in Villages of Otter Creek, recommendation from Joint Planning Commission to approve request. Lindsay Thomas, Planning and Codes shared that AROC requested a rezoning from the Planning Commission. The Planning Commission held a public hearing on Oct 8, 2018 and at their December 10, 2018 meeting made a recommendation that the BOC approve the request. Randy Crosby shared that they want to rezone the property to meet the housing needs of the community. He has a water system in the subdivision and needs to be able to get a return on his investment by being able to sell the properties. Danny Johnson shared that he bought a property under the covenants and he is not happy about the request – made comment irrelevant to the situation and Chairman Bennett asked him to sit down.



Commissioner Mike Streat made a motion to approve the rezoning request as presented by the Planning Commission. Commissioner Randy Dixon seconded the motion. All voted aye. Motion approved.

4. Request to approve Alcohol License for Warehouse Billiard, Harry D & Brandi King at 3005 Highway 84 Suite B. Chairman Bennett stated that all the necessary criteria has been met on the application process and he spoke with the Sheriff as well who does not have an objection on the license. Background checks have been completed and this allows them to apply for license with the state.

Commissioner David Lowman made a motion to approve the request for Alcohol license to be issued to Warehouse Billiard, Brandi King and Harry D King at 3005 Highway 84, Suite B, Blackshear Georgia. Commissioner Randy Dixon seconded the motion. All voted aye. Motion approved.

5. Request to make amendment to the Leave Policy Handbook definition of “in good standing”. Add a sentence that reads – “Also, in order to be considered in good standing, a resigning employee is required to give a sufficient notice of resignation, at least two working weeks.”

Commissioner Mike Streat made a motion to approve the amendment to the Leave Policy Handbook as referenced above. Commissioner Harold Rozier seconded the motion. All voted aye. Motion approved.

6. Request to approve bids on contract for EMS services. Chairman Bennett shared that we put out an RFP for EMS Services and received three proposals. American Medical Response at \$400,000.00 annually with an annual 3% increase, Grady at \$350,000.00 annually for five years, and Okefenokee EMS at \$558,320.00 for one year. Bill Compton from Grady is present to talk about the services they will be able to provide. Mr Compton stated that Grady Memorial Hospital is above I-20 and South Georgia EMS is how they are known below I-20. They are a 501 c. 3. and have been in Fulton County for a long time. Over the last four years their emergency rural services have expanded. They are in the 911 business and Albany is their South GA home office. Five years ago they started the EMS College-Tech Center to help grow the EMS field. All of the Grady resources will be available to the employees. All current employees will be offered opportunity to continue serving the county at the same or better rates of pay. Looking at the possibility of a Regional EMS center for 911 services if they can grow the business in the surrounding communities. We will have the availability to use Mobile Integrated Health here which is a PA and EMT that would be available to respond to non-emergency calls. The equipment/vehicles that are currently being used would continue and would maintain the property of the county and would revert back if the contract were to end. Emergency services and transports are 2 completely different business that we operate and would not overlap. The largest asset the company has is its people and they provide competitive compensation and benefits. The Board will receive monthly reports on the activities in the County. The rate of the contract would remain the same for the entire five-year contract period unless there was some catastrophic event that caused a need for renegotiation of the contract. There might be a decrease in the cost if

there were some additional service contracts in the area that would allow for savings. Commissioner Lowman asked if the pay is better than what the County offers? Mr Compton told that the compensation is equal or better. Mark Shealy with Grady was a county employee with Ben Hill County for 25 years prior to working with Grady at Ben Hill and the transition will take between 60/90 days for on boarding and he anticipates that this will be a smooth transition for the employees as well as for the community. James Spivey, PC EMS Director stated that he has been with Pierce County EMS for 23 years and the last six as Director. We have wonderful employees who provide excellent care to patients. The staff feels good about the change coming and he feels that surrounding counties will be looking at this type of change in the future. Randy Williams with Grady stated we take pride in the education that we provide to our employees so we can ensure that our patients are receiving the best possible care. Thank you for the opportunity to work with your community. Chairman Bennett read the following statement. Pursuant to Section 11 of the Pierce County Charter the Board of Commissioners has a responsibility to promote health in Pierce County. For many years Pierce County has directly provided ambulance services including emergency medical services to the citizens of Pierce County pursuant to the provisioner of chapter 11 title 31 of the Official Code of Georgia. As time moves on in the emergency medical services field Pierce County must examine its delivery strategy to make sure that we are providing the highest quality pre-hospital care at a reasonable cost to the community we serve, in a prompt and efficient manner. As costs continue to rise over the years, we must address the delivery strategy. Actual expenses vs collections over the last few years

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	Thru Oct 2018
Actual Operation Cost	\$ 968,209	\$ 1,080,374	\$ 966,452	\$ 940,688	\$ 1,057,641	\$ 1,068,470
Net Collections	\$ 487,644	\$ 347,470	\$ 539,765	\$ 482,152	\$ 538,260	\$ 389,313
Taxpayer Cost	\$ 480,565	\$ 732,904	\$ 426,687	\$ 458,536	\$ 519,381	\$ 679,157

I believe, in partnership with a professional contractor we can provide the most advanced pre-hospital emergency care delivery system in South Georgia. I believe our partnership will provide substantial savings to our taxpayers while retaining current EMS team members – competitive salary and training – maintaining/upgrade the fleet and medical equipment required for the delivery of emergency medical services. While change is sometimes difficult for some in short term the long range benefits for our citizens and EMS employees will be long lived. Response time – professional and courteous service is what drives our emergency services. When my Dad who is 84 years old and my mother 83 dial 911 you expect just that – nothing less. Our employees will make a seamless transition to the contractor. Our stations at 253 Carter Ave, Blackshear and 5535 Gardner Street, Patterson will continue to provide 24/7 emergency services to the citizens. Extra activities that our EMS provides will continue to be provided, like ball game coverage, community event coverage, school activities. Pierce County will continue to maintain its operation zone and license. Bearing in mind the most important

goal being the highest quality pre-hospital care Pierce County has the opportunity to enter into an agreement with a contractor that is currently a provider of emergency ambulance services in the state and desires to provide those emergency services to the citizens of Pierce County. I ask and encourage my fellow commissioners to endorse and support the change to a professional emergency medical services contractor to ensure we are providing the highest quality pre-hospital care at the most reasonable cost to the citizens we serve. Commissioner Lowman thanked Mr. Spivey for sharing the employee view.

Commissioner Harold Rozier made a motion to accept the proposal from Grady for EMS at the \$350,000.00 annually for five years. Commissioner Randy Dixon seconded the motion. All voted aye. Motion approved.

7. Request from Constitutional Officers for the Board to consider adding additional holidays to the employee calendar. Thomas Sauls – Clerk of Court, Moye Howard, Probate Judge, Glenda Dowling – Magistrate Judge, Terresa Davis – Tax Commissioner are requesting that the County employees be granted Christmas Eve as an official holiday. All the surrounding counties already have this as a holiday. Commissioner Rozier stated that he would like for the County Manager to have some conversation with the officials so that a better understanding could be shared with the Commissioners. Commissioner Streat made note that the Officials have the authority to close their offices at their discretion and that the County is a subsidiary of the State and that we have Home rule which allows the commission to make these decisions for the employees of the County. Probate Judge Howard stated that they are not asking for all state holidays, even though the state schedule heavily influences their ability to do a lot of the tasks that they do. Chairman Bennett stated that there probably needs to be some more discussion to determine what the needs are. Commissioner Dixon stated that he thanks all the employees for the job they do and his vote would be to approve the holiday addition because it used to be given to the employees and doesn't understand why it was taken away. Manager Rubenbauer stated that he is bound by the county policy which does not list Christmas Eve as a holiday. Tax Commissioner Davis stated that the policy states that the Chairman can give additional holidays and that they are asking for this on behalf of all the county employees. Manager Rubenbauer stated that based on an average a holiday would result in a productivity loss of \$13,201.12. Probate Judge Howard stated that he called most of the employees and that they would rather do away with the Christmas dinner and ham gift to receive an additional holiday. Commissioner Lowman thanked them for the information. Commissioner Streat said that there is little work to do that day anyway.

Commissioner Randy Dixon made a motion to add Christmas Eve as a paid holiday. Commissioner Mike Streat seconded the motion. All voted aye. Motion approved.

8. Request to approve Budget amendments to the 2018 General Fund budget. Chairman Bennett presented the amendment requests that show an overall budget increase of

\$236,000.00. The actual revenues collected is up \$140,000 the rest will come from fund balance and the expenditures include several things but the largest being the new chiller at the courthouse for \$108,000.00

AMENDMENTS 2018 BUDGET		
Commission		\$ (2,750.00)
Chairman		\$ (2,000.00)
County Manager		\$ (7,800.00)
County Clerk		\$ (6,500.00)
Elections		\$ (35,050.00)
Legal		\$ (5,980.00)
IT		\$ 2,100.00
HR		\$ (3,770.00)
Tax Commissioner		\$ (16,500.00)
Tax Assessor		\$ (41,500.00)
Risk Management		\$ (23,000.00)
Courthouse		\$ 100,000.00
Nichols St		\$ (5,000.00)
College Ave		\$ 14,200.00
Grady Street - HS		\$ 200.00
E911 Bldg		\$ 9,300.00
Clerk of Court		\$ (4,000.00)
Bd of Equalization		\$ (1,250.00)
State Court		\$ (8,000.00)
Solicitor		\$ (11,000.00)
Magistrate		\$ 1,500.00
Probate		\$ (2,000.00)
Juvenile Court		\$ (6,000.00)
Public Defender		\$ 7,900.00
Sheriff Admin		\$ 38,000.00
Investigations		\$ 49,000.00
Deputies		\$ 83,000.00
Jail		\$ 140,000.00
Detail		\$ (6,700.00)
Resource		\$ 21,500.00
Fire		\$ (20,800.00)
EMS		\$ (115,000.00)
Coroner		\$ (5,000.00)
Animal Control		\$ (1,800.00)
EMA		\$ 3,500.00
Road Admin		\$ 5,650.00
Roads		\$ 60,000.00
Road Maint		\$ 37,250.00
Road Maint Shop		\$ 2,850.00
Solid Waste		\$ 9,400.00
Health Bldg		\$ 6,000.00
Welfare Services		\$ (15,000.00)
County Agent		\$ (8,950.00)
INCREASE TO EXPENSES		\$ 236,000.00
Increase in actual collections		\$ 140,000.00
Fund Balance		\$ 96,000.00
INCREASE TO REVENUE		\$ 236,000.00
TOTAL BUDGET		\$ 9,606,878.00

Commissioner Randy Dixon made a motion to approve the budget amendments as presented. Commissioner Mike Streat seconded the motion. All voted aye. Motion approved.

Commissioner Randy Dixon made a motion to enter closed session at 7:26 PM. Commissioner Mike Streat seconded the motion. All voted aye. Motion approved.

CLOSED SESSION

9. Personnel

Commissioner David Lowman made a motion to go back to regular session at 8:59 PM. Commissioner Randy Dixon seconded the motion. All voted aye. Motion approved.

Chairman Bennett stated no action was taken and adjourned the meeting at 9:00 PM.

ADJOURN