

Pierce County Board of Commissioners  
Called Meeting Minutes  
Tuesday, February 21, 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 Called Meeting to order at 6:00 PM.
2. Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance – Commissioner David Lowman gave the invocation, and Commissioner Randy Dixon led the Pledge of Allegiance.
3. Approval of Agenda.

Commissioner Harold Rozier made a motion to suspend the rules for this meeting only, which prohibits attendees to speak on certain subjects unless approved in advance and to allow the Chairman to recognize certain City and County Government representatives to speak to the Commission limited to 10 minutes per City representatives and 10 minutes per County representatives, on each issue, for the purposes of hearing their perspectives, agreements and objections to all items, and only those items, related to this agenda, this day. Commissioner David Lowman made a motion to add to the Agenda an Executive Session to discuss a personnel matter. Commissioner Graham Raley made a motion

to add to the Agenda a Request for Action for rescinding the contract offer for County Manager designated finalist Joey Cason. Commissioner Randy Dixon made a motion to amend the agenda to include these changes, and Commissioner David Lowman seconded the motion. All commissioners voted aye, and the motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Randy Dixon made a motion to approve the agenda as amended, with a second made by Commissioner Graham Raley. All commissioners voted aye on approving the agenda.

4. Discussion and/or approval of:

a. E-911 Advisory Board for Pierce County

Chairman Neal Bennett opened the floor for discussion regarding the proposed E-911 Advisory Board for Pierce County:

- Mayor Keith Brooks of the City of Blackshear stated that on January 4 representatives of Pierce County, the City of Blackshear, and the City of Patterson had met regarding the establishment of the E-911 Advisory Board, and that he had left that meeting feeling that the effort was moving in the right direction. Mayor Brooks commented that the Resolution establishing the E-911 Advisory Board was supposed to have been brought forward at the February 7<sup>th</sup> Regular Meeting of the Board of Commissioners, but it was not on the agenda, hence the need for this evening's Called Meeting. Mayor Brooks contends that the proposal presented at tonight's Called Meeting differs greatly from what was agreed upon at the January 4<sup>th</sup> meeting, and feels that the representation proposed for the County is different than what is proposed for the City, and he wants to know why the changes were made. He closed by reminding the Board that the residents of Blackshear pay county taxes as well.
  
- Blackshear Police Chief Chris Wright wanted to state that he has researched other advisory boards from other jurisdictions including Atlanta and others, and finds that does boards have 1 member from each agency represented on their boards, not multiple members of a single agency, with the exception of, for example, a deputy police or fire chief being a designee in the absence of the chief. Chief Wright also took issue with the language in the proposed resolution that

appeared to stipulate that the proposed advisory board could not begin meeting until January 0f 2024, and would only be allowed to meet quarterly rather than as often as needed. Chief Wright closed by expressing concerns over apparent disparities in the dispatching of county law enforcement and that of city law enforcement.

- Interim County Manager Chuck Scragg pointed out that the terms discussed on January 4<sup>th</sup> were a proposal, and not set in concrete, also that the County Commission is the body to appoint board members. Mr. Scragg further stated in rebuttal to Chief Wright that his research showed that there are boards in other jurisdictions that do have multiple members from participating agencies, and his proposed membership was meant to be inclusive, not exclusive. In reference to the County Manager being designated as board chairman, he pointed out that by charter the County Manager is charged with the overall management of all county departments, with the exception of those governed by constitutionally elected officials. Mr. Scragg also clarified the language of the resolution, that it did not stipulate that meeting couldn't be held until January 2024, and that while quarterly meetings are mandated, monthly meetings are allowed.
  
- Tony Walsh, 6122 Stony Brook Drive in Blackshear stated that the squabbles between the city and the county must stop, and that all officials need to do the right thing for the people. He also stated the opinion that the County Fire Chief should represent the county fire department solely on the proposed board, not the volunteer chiefs.
  
- Mr. Kenneth Beck, 251 Strickland Ave., Blackshear asked if the County Manager was the chair for all boards, and Chairman Bennett advised no.

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Chairman Neal Bennett asked if anyone else wanted speak regarding the E-911 Advisory Board Resolution, and hearing none closed the floor. Interim County Manager Chuck Scragg made a point of order that a motion needed to be made to adopt the resolution. Commissioner Harold

Rozier made a motion to adopt the Pierce County E911 Advisory Board resolution, and Chairman Neal Bennett seconded the motion, and opened the floor for any discussion from the other commissioners. Commission Randy Dixon felt that 13 board members is too many, and should be limited to 7 or 8, being the Sheriff, EMS Director, the Pierce County Fire Chief, the Blackshear Fire Chief, the Blackshear Police Chief, the Patterson Fire Chief, the Patterson Police Chief, and the County Manager as the Chairman. Commissioner Graham Raley agrees that 13 members is too many, and he feels the board members should vote on who will be the chair and vice chair. Commissioner David Lowman agrees with Commissioners Dixon and Raley. Commissioner Harold Rozier agrees with Commissioner Dixon that the County Manager should be the board chair. Commissioner Randy Dixon made a motion to adopt the Pierce County E911 Advisory Board Resolution, and Commissioner Harold Rozier seconded the motion. All commissioners voted aye, and the motion passed unanimously.

b. Inmate Housing Intergovernmental Agreement between Blackshear and Pierce County

Chairman Neal Bennett opened the floor for discussion regarding the Inmate Housing Intergovernmental Agreement between Blackshear and Pierce County:

- Blackshear Police Chief Chris Wright states that the jail issue didn't exist until the 2020 Sheriff's election. He further states that he just wants Blackshear to get a fair shake where it comes to housing inmates, and that Pierce County is the only county in the region that doesn't take municipal inmates. Blackshear wants to be charged that same rate as surrounding counties are charged, and wants the county to pass the resolution already passed by the Blackshear City Council.
- Interim County Manager Chuck Scragg clarified some of the language in the resolution, including that Item 7 could be stricken from the resolution, and Item 8 from the word "...excepting..." to the end could be stricken. It was pointed out and confirmed by Sheriff Bennett that the Resolution is asking the there be a cost of \$45 for the first 2 hours a municipal inmate is held, and any time thereafter the rate would be \$35.86 a day, which is actual cost. Sheriff Bennett also recommends

that the agreement be a 12 moth agreement due to the fluctuation of housing costs.

Pending discussed revisions to the resolution, Commissioner Harold Rozier made a motion to table this item until the Regular Board Meeting to be held March 7<sup>th</sup>; Commissioner Randy Dixon seconded the motion. All commissioners voted aye, and the motion to table passed unanimously.

c. Yard Waste Intergovernmental Agreement between Blackshear and Pierce County

Chairman Neal Bennett opened the floor for discussion regarding the Yard Waste Intergovernmental Agreement between Blackshear and Pierce County:

- Blackshear Police Chief Chris wright gave an update that the Blackshear City Council had tabled the matter regarding the agreement in question, but the consensus was the Blackshear City Council had no issues with the county staging storm debris at the landfill, but that city and storm debris needed to be kept separate as to not interfere with any potential FEMA reimbursement after a storm event. Also, there was a consensus that to utilize the landfill that county residents needed to pay a user fee to dispose of yard waste the same as City of Blackshear residents.
- Interim County Manager Chuck Scragg reminded that an intergovernmental agreement is constitutionally mandated to be in place. He would also like to see a schedule of user fees.

Commissioner Randy Dixon made a motion to table this item until the Regular Board Meeting to be held March 7<sup>th</sup>; Commissioner David Lowman seconded the motion. All commissioners voted aye, and the motion to table passed unanimously.

5. Discussion and Request for Action for rescinding the contract offer for County Manager finalist Joey Cason.

Interim County Manager Chuck Scragg advised the Commission that due to an inability to come to agreeable terms, that the contract offer for County Manager finalist Joey Cason would need to rescinded. Commissioner Randy Dixon made motion to rescind the contract offer to Mr. Cason. Commissioner David Lowman seconded the motion. There was no discussion, and all commissioners voted aye. The motion passed unanimously.

6. 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 7:05 PM.

Commissioner Randy Dixon made a motion to enter back into Regular Session. Commissioner Graham Raley seconded the motion. All Commissioners voted aye. The Board of Commissioners entered back into Regular Session at 7:43 PM.

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

7. Adjourn.

Commissioner Randy Dixon made a motion to adjourn the Called Meeting. Commissioner David Lowman seconded the motion. All Commissioners voted aye. Chairman Neal Bennett adjourned the Called Meeting at 7:45 PM.

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Neal Bennett  
Chairman, Board of Commissioners

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Harold Rozier  
Commissioner, District 1

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Graham Raley  
Commissioner, District 2

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Randy Dixon  
Commissioner, District 3

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Charles Yeargin  
Pierce County Clerk

