

**SPECIAL CALLED MEETING
PIKE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

The Pike County Board of Commissioners held a Special Called Meeting on Monday, February 20, 2023, at 4:00 p.m. at the Pike County Courthouse, Courtroom 2, 16001 Barnesville Street, Zebulon, GA. Chairman Briar Johnson convened the meeting and Commissioners Tim Daniel, Tim Guy, and Jason Proctor attended. County Manager Brandon Rogers, County Attorney Rob Morton and County Clerk Angela Blount were also present. (O.C.G.A. § 50-14-1(e) (2)). Due to unforeseen circumstances, Commissioner James Jenkins was unavailable to attend the meeting.

- 1. CALL TO ORDER.....Chairman J. Briar Johnson**
- 2. INVOCATION.....Silent Invocation**
- 3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.....Chairman J. Briar Johnson**
- 4. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA - (O.C.G A. § 50-14-1 (e) (1))**

County Mananger Brandon Rogers requested to amend the agenda to add Federal Emergency Management Agency, FEMA, under Agenda Item 5 New Business, Item a. and move Discussion with the Pike County Industrial Development Authority regarding funding to Item b. under New Business.

Motion/second by Commissioners Daniel/Proctor to approve the amended agenda, motion carried 4-0.

5. NEW BUSINESS

- a. Discussion with the Federal Emergency Management Agency, FEMA.

Catherine Anderson, FEMA Intergovernmental Affairs Specialist – External Affairs, addressed the Board stating that she is the liaison between the Elected Officials and FEMA. Eight counties are designated for FEMA Individual Assistance: Butts, Henry, Jasper, Meriwether, Newton, Pike, Spalding and Troup. On February 15, 2023 two Disaster Survivor Assistance teams went out; one visited private homes and the other visited faith based organizations, community base organizations and private sectors. The teams had about 139 interactions with individuals, visited 342 homes, visited 28 faith-based organizations and 10 businesses. The Disaster Recovery Center is located in Griffin at the Spalding County Senior Center 885 Memorial Drive Griffin, GA 30223. The deadline to apply for FEMA assistance is Monday, March 20, 2023.

Brian Miller, FEMA – Individual Assistance, addressed the Board stating FEMA has had 64 individual households to register that live in Pike County. Out of the 64 reported, 50 had no damage. If someone is insured, usually homeowners’ insurance will take care of the wind and hail type issues associated with tornadoes. FEMA requires a copy of the insurance settlement or denial letter, and they take that information, send an inspector out to the property, and see if there are any unmet needs that FEMA maybe be able to assist with. Some things that insurance will not cover that FEMA will cover are wells, septic tanks, private roads, or bridges. The U.S. Small Business Administration if offering low-interest disaster loans. Homeowners, renters, nonprofit organizations, and businesses approved for these loans have up to one year from the date of their first disbursement to begin making payments. The interest is zero percent during this deferment period and interest will begin accruing when the payment becomes due. There is no prepayment penalty, and borrowers can begin making loan payments during the deferment period if they choose. Some FEMA applicants may be referred to the SBA to apply for a disaster loan. Long-term, low-interest disaster loans for homeowners, renters, nonprofits and businesses may be available to cover losses not fully compensated by insurance or other sources. Homeowners and renters should submit an SBA disaster home loan application even if they are not sure they will need or want a loan. There is no obligation to take all or part of an approved loan. IF SBA cannot approve the application, SBA will refer you to FEMA’s Other Needs Assistance program for possible additional assistance. If the SBA application is approved, individuals are not obligated to accept an SBA loan. However, failure to return the application may disqualify you from other possible FEMA assistance and other grants or services. The SBA disaster loan deadline to apply for property damage is March 17, 2023. The deadline to apply for an economic injury disaster loan is October 16, 2023.

Monica Myles, U.S. Small Business Administration – Public Affairs Specialist, addressed the Board stating the interest rate on SBA loans right now for individual homeowner is 2.315%, for nonprofit is 2.375% and business is 3.305%. No interest accrues the first year.

Discussion only, no motion entertained.

- b. Discussion with the Pike County Industrial Development Authority regarding funding.

The Pike County Board of Commissioners met with the Economic Development Authority, in attendance for the Economic Development Authority was Bryan Oglesby, Kel Brannon, Stewart Esary and Sonny Gwyn. Bryan Oglesby wanted everyone to remember it is no longer known as the Industrial Development Authority, IDA, it is the Economic Development Authority. The name was changed many years ago to the Economic Development Authority. There needs to be a proactive approach to recruiting businesses to Pike County. The Economic Development Authority has gone over a year without an Executive Director and they need one. The pay scale for the Director is not competitive with the surrounding counties. Pike County is falling behind

Meriwether County and Lamar County. Pike County is becoming a bedroom community. Chairman Briar Johnson noted it was talked about Meredith Maddox being the Director for the Economic Development Authority and wanted to know if that was still the direction the Economic Development Authority Board was going. Bryan Oglesby replied no, Meredith Maddox is a full-time employee of the Pike County Chamber of Commerce and does not have room for additional duties with the Economic Development Authority. The Director needs to be a specific recruit that has the network. Bryan Oglesby noted he would like to get a list of every business owner that lives in Pike County and their business is located outside of Pike County and see why their business is located in another county. Pike County needs the right businesses, not the storage locker capital of Georgia. Kel Brannon stated the Economic Development Authority needs to get a director hired that can go out and recruit business, be at the Capital, be around and be seen. The business that came to the Business Park over the last 18 months reached out to the Economic Development Authority, they have not recruited anyone. Three lots were sold in the Business Park recently. Governments cannot offer incentives to a business. County Manager Brandon Rogers noted currently the county has a standing agreement to consider up to \$100,000.00 per year for expenses the Economic Development Authority may need plus the cost of the Executive Director (\$48,000.00 per year) and the \$63,000.00 per year in budget expenses. The total the county is paying out is \$111,000.00 per year with the max of \$211,000.00 per year to the Economic Development Authority. One idea that has been presented is to offer the Economic Development Authority a percentage of a mill and no other budget to work with. These funds would be set similar to how the school is set up where they would receive the funds and have control of how they are spent each year. Based on last year's numbers, if the Board of Commissioners authorizes a quarter of a mill, the Economic Development Authority would have around \$162,000.00 to operate from. If the Board of Commissioners were to authorize a half of a mill, the Economic Development Authority would be looking at \$324,000.00 per year as an operating budget. Bryan Oglesby noted that they have discussed dedicating a quarter of a mill to the Economic Development Authority by the form of a resolution. Commissioner Proctor asked would this have to go through the state. County Manager Brandon Rogers stated that County Attorney Rob Morton did some research and up to a mill can be designated by the Board of Commissioners for Economic Development only. County Attorney Rob Morton stated the state law provides a specific statute that authorizes up to a mill for Development Authorities in Georgia. The county as the taxing authority can do it for other things. A percentage of a mill can be allocated, or an actual number can be allocated. Pros/Cons of percentage of mill is as mill changes, it increases without having to change a resolution. Whereas if you do the annual budget, you have to set the number. Commissioner Guy asked if the Director job can be subbed out or does it need to be in-house. Bryan Oglesby said no, you do not want to sub it out to a consultant on commission. Commissioner Daniel asked if they thought abolishing Economic Development on the county side and giving the quarter of mill to them if that is what they would want. Bryan Oglesby stated that would work, they could find the right person for the Director. The Board of Commissioners and the Economic Development Authority all agree an Economic Director needs to be hired. Chairman Johnson asked if a quarter of a mill would be enough to fund the Economic Development Authority. Bryan Oglesby replied today, yes. Sonny Gwyn asked with \$160,000.00 a year that will allow the Economic Development Authority to find the type of person they need. Bryan Oglesby replied yes, \$75,000.00 salary, benefits, and potentially a car to drive.

Motion/second by Commissioners Daniel/Guy to allow Meredith Maddox to address the Board, motion carried 4-0.

Meredith Maddox addressed the Boards stating one category that the Boards need to consider when looking for Economic Director is travel, sending them to shows. The Chamber of Commerce can add value to the Economic Development. The Chamber of Commerce helped with the Christmas Parade and special events and would like the Boards to know that the Chamber is there to help.

Commissioner Proctor asked Economic Development how much they have in the bank. Stewart Esary replied \$312,000.00. Bryan Oglesby refreshed everyone's memory about the Business Park in Zebulon that land was donated to IDA from Thomaston Mills. Grants paid for the roads. The Economic Development Authority has no costs in the Zebulon Business Park therefore they can afford to sit and wait for the right businesses to come in. The Economic Development Authority would like to buy a track of land on 341. The Economic Development website needs to be updated and kept current. Commissioner Proctor asked if the Director could get county benefits. Bryan Oglesby stated self-employment benefits are not as much as you think. Bryan Oglesby asked County Attorney Rob Morton what the timeline would be like to pass a resolution. County Attorney Rob Morton replied the resolution can be done quickly, the issue is this would be done in connection with the county's budget process. One resolution would be just to specify the relationship in the agreement. As far as the funding mechanism it can be done in conjunction with the budget. The Board of Commissioners need to decide if they want to allocate a number or set a percentage of the mill rate. A resolution only requires one reading with the Board of Commissioners. The Board of Commissioners and the Economic Development Authority both agreed to allocating a percentage of a mill. County Attorney Rob Morton stated the resolution could state up to a mill since the Board of Commissioners has the authority to allocate up to a mill. The Economic Development Authority, Department 75, will be abolished for Fiscal Year 2023-2024. Both Boards agreed with allocating a quarter of a mill to the Economic Development Authority. The Executive Director for the Economic Development Authority will be located in the Pike County Chamber office building.

Discussion only, no motion entertained.

6. EXECUTIVE SESSION – NONE

7. ADJOURNMENT

Motion/second by Commissioners Proctor/Guy to adjourn at 5:32 p.m., motion carried 4-0.

J. Briar Johnson, Chairman

Angela Blount, County Clerk