

**REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING
PIKE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

The Pike County Board of Commissioners held its Regular Monthly Meeting on Wednesday, September 11, 2024, at 9:00 a.m. in the Courthouse, Main Courtroom, at 16001 Barnesville Street, Zebulon. Chairman Briar Johnson convened the meeting and Commissioners Tim Daniel, Tim Guy, Jason Proctor and James Jenkins attended. Interim County Manager/ County Attorney Rob Morton and County Clerk Angela Blount were also present. (O.C.G.A. § 50-14-1(e) (2)).

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

Motion/second by Commissioners Proctor/Daniel to approve the agenda, motion carried 5-0.

5. **APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES - (O.C.G.A. § 50-14-1(e) (2))**

- a. Minutes of the August 27, 2024, Regular Monthly Meeting.
- b. Minutes of the August 27, 2024, Executive Session.

Motion/second by Commissioners Daniel/Guy to approve the minutes of the August 27, 2024 Regular Monthly Meeting and the minutes of the August 27, 2024 Executive Session, motion carried 5-0.

6. **INVITED GUEST**

- a. Employee Recognition for service to Pike County.

Christy Blount with the Joint Board of Elections and Registration was recognized for her five years of service with Pike County. County Attorney/Interim County Manager Rob Morton recognized Ms. Blount for her outstanding job. Joint Board of Elections and Registration Board Member, David Brisendine, stated Christy is doing a great job even during the challenging times with the elections. Mr. Brisendine stated they appreciate Christy. Christy Blount was presented with a five-year certificate and pin.

Billy “Dewayne” Cook with Pike County Public Works was recognized for his fifteen years of service with Pike County. County Attorney/Interim County Manager Rob Morton recognized Mr. Cook for all the work he does for the county. Road Superintendent, Chirs Goodman, stated Dewayne was hired in Public Works in June 2009 as a Mower Operator and quickly transferred into a Dump Truck since he had his CDL license. His truck tore up and Public Works quickly found out Dewayne is a mechanic, so Dewayne was over the shop for several years. The last four years Dewayne has been a Motor Grader Operator, and he does a really good job. Chris Goodman stated that Dewayne Cook is an asset to Pike County. Billy “Dewayne” Cook was presented with a 15-year certificate and pin.

Jamie Strickland with Pike County Sheriff’s Department was unable to attend the meeting. County Attorney/ Interim County Manager Rob Morton noted that Jamie Strickland has been with the county for 25 years and is one of the lead Investigators. Jamie does an outstanding job. Jamie Strickland will be presented with a 25-year certificate and pin.

7. **REPORTS FROM COMMISSIONS, DEPARTMENTS, COMMITTEES, AUTHORITIES**

- a. Monthly Reports submitted from County Departments and County Authorities, including a Revenue/Expenditure Statement for all departments and a summary check register.

Motion/second by Commissioners Proctor/Daniel to accept reports, motion carried 5-0.

For Discussion: Commissioner James Jenkins noted that in the reports, the Joint Board of Elections and Registration did a great job on their August 20, 2024 report and it is well worth the read.

- b. County Manager Report

Update on County finances for the following funds/accounts:

General Fund	\$676,862.66
Fire Dept. Donations.....	\$11,503.50
Cash Reserve Account.....	\$18,085.56
Jail Fund	\$32,405.89
E-911 Fund	\$41,486.86
DATE Fund	\$32,006.00
Juvenile Court Fund.....	\$13,746.25
Residential Impact Fee	\$333,008.44
Commercial Impact Fees	\$13,227.80
C.A.I.P FUND	\$122,359.07
General Obligation SPLOST 2022-2028.....	\$2,318,074.71
L.M.I.G. Grant (DOT).....	\$244,644.51

- c. County Manager Comment

County Attorney/Interim County Manager Rob Morton addressed the Board stating he provided them with a detailed report at the end of last week along with comments about the agenda, therefore he is not going to repeat that information unless they have any questions.

A copy of the CodeRed contract was provided to the Board. This is an annual contract that the county has related to alerting for emergency situations. Morton asked for the Board's consideration to authorize the signature of the Chairman or the Interim County Manager to sign the contract.

Motion/second by Commissioners Daniel/Guy to approve Interim County Manager or the Chairman to sign the CodeRED contract, motion carried 5-0.

County Attorney/Interim County Manager Rob Morton stated the Board has been made aware that the audit for Fiscal Year 2022/2023 was finalized and sent to the state and it has been received. In connection with that, the county is required to have their audit completed within six months of the end of the fiscal year end. At Morton's request, the county has received the Letter of Engagement. The Letter of Engagement is from the auditors to start the process for the next audit so it can be completed by December. Morton asked the Board's consideration to authorize the signature of the Chairman or the Interim County Manager to sign the Letter of Engagement.

Motion/second by Commissioners Guy/Proctor to approve Interim County Manager or the Chairman to sign the Engagement Letter for auditing services, motion carried 5-0.

The county has received a letter from the City of Meansville requesting that the Commissioners consider working with them in reference to road paving. There were Intergovernmental Agreements between the county and each of the municipalities related to paving, the prior agreement was that the county could do the labor for the paving where the municipalities would pay for the materials. The changes that the county has had recently, there are some issues with being able to provide paving services other than patching. The City of Meansville provided a written request that they would like assistance when the county is going out for contract for roads to see if the county would include Milner Road when sending out bids. The City of Meansville will cover the costs.

Chestnut Oak is completed, and the county has received a Certificate of Occupancy. The only dilemma is they are waiting on internet service to be provided with Conexon Connect, hope to have internet service by the end of the month with a move in date corresponding with the end of the month or the first part of October.

Building and Grounds have completed some of the work in the kitchen at the Senior Center.

Chairman Briar Johnson noted that Building and Grounds and Public Works monthly reports were great.

d. Commissioner Reports

District 1 – Commissioner Daniel – No report.

District 2 – Commissioner Guy thanked Ms. Christy Blount for her service.

District 3 – Commissioner Proctor – No report.

District 4 - Commissioner Jenkins – No report.

At Large Chairman Briar Johnson stated before he proceeds with the meeting, he would like everyone to take a moment of silence to acknowledge the significance of today's date in remembrance of 9/11, 23 years ago.

e. County Attorney Report to Commissioners

County Attorney/Interim County Manager Rob Morton stated he will be attending the County Attorney annual training in Athens, Georgia on Thursday and Friday, returning Friday afternoon. Rob Morton stated everything is covered with the Department Heads and if there are any issues he will be available by phone.

8. UNFINISHED BUSINESS - NONE

9. NEW BUSINESS

a. Re-appointment to the Pike County Board of Assessors.

County Attorney/Interim County Manager Rob Morton stated due to the training deadlines and related issues, it is his recommendation to reappoint Parrish Swift to the Board of Assessors so that the training requirements can be extended. The problem is that the necessary training that is required has a waiting list. This is not the responsibility of Parrish Swift of trying not to get the training, it is just the class that he is required to take, has not been available.

Motion/second by Commissioners Daniel/Guy to reappoint Parrish Swift to the Pike County Board of Assessors, motion carried 5-0.

b. Consider appointment(s) to the Public Facilities Authority.

County Attorney/Interim County Manager Rob Morton noted that there are two positions open on the Public Facilities Authority and the county has received one application who is qualified to serve on the Public Facilities Authority. The applicant is Jack Hancock, and it is his recommendation to appoint Mr. Hancock to the Public Facilities Authority. Mr. Hancock is very well experienced in these issues, has served as a local government attorney for many years through various entities and other authorities.

Motion/second by Commissioners Proctor/Guy to appoint Jack Hancock to the Public Facilities Authority, motion carried 5-0.

County Attorney/Interim County Manager Rob Morton stated in connection with the appointment, he would like the Board to consider reopening accepting applications for the Public Facilities Authority to see if the county will receive another application for the vacant position.

Motion/second by Commissioners Proctor/Guy to approve reopen accepting applications for the Public Facilities Authority, motion carried 5-0.

- c. Accept Final Audit Report for FY 2022-2023 and Communications Letter.

County Attorney/Interim County Manager Rob Morton noted this is out of an abundance of caution, the auditors presented the draft of the audit at a previous meeting. The final audit report has been finalized and sent to the state and this is to ratify the acceptance of the Final Audit Report for FY 2022-2023 and the Communications Letter that was signed by the county in connection to that audit.

Motion/second by Commissioners Daniel/Proctor to approve the Final Audit Report for FY 2022-2023 and the Communications Letter, motion carried 5-0.

- d. Probate Court sick leave approval.

County Attorney/Interim County Manager Rob Morton noted that Probate Judge Ginny Blakeney was present and could answer any questions that the Board may have. Judge Blakeney has an employee who has been working part-time in the Probate Court for five years and she has been offered a full-time position in Probate Court. Judge Blakeney is a constitutional officer, and they do not follow the county policy, but Judge Blakeney would like to come to the Board for approval since it goes against the county policy. Judge Blakeney is requesting for the part-time employee who transitioned into a full-time employee in July 2024 to receive sick leave benefits immediately without the six months of continuous full-time employment.

Motion/second by Commissioners Daniel/Guy to approve sick leave as requested by Probate Court, motion carried 5-0.

- e. Approve/deny use of American Rescue Plan Act, ARPA. Funds to purchase EMA Vehicle.

County Attorney/Interim County Manager Rob Morton stated the Board previously approved the acquisition of the EMA vehicle through a loan. There were solicitations for proposals for the loan and the Board authorized the loan with the lowest interest rate, which was United Bank. Morton noted that he and the Finance Administrator, Clint Chastain, were discussing this and the county had not budgeted for the debt service. There is not sufficient money in the EMA budget for the debt service and the note has to be paid off in a year. Debt service is not an authorized expenditure for American Rescue Plan Act, ARPA, funds but outright purchases are. The county did not go through with the loan at United Bank and Morton asked for the Board's approval for the acquisition of the EMA vehicle be paid with ARPA funds. The vehicle was already secured under contract prior to August 9, 2024. Morton asked the Board to consider the additional equipment for outfitting the EMA vehicle with ARPA funds. One of the larger expenditures for the vehicle would be with K & K, a \$10,000.00 expenditure for framework on the back for outfitting the truck. Commissioner Tim Guy asked if the \$10,000.00 would include all the equipment to outfit the truck. Morton replied no, he has a list that includes framework, radios that are necessary, and some other equipment that will be above and beyond the \$10,000.00. The \$10,000.00 is just for the K & K work. Commissioner Tim Daniel stated he thought a grant was anticipated to help pay for that, what will the county do with that grant money. Morton replied the grant has already been awarded. After the figures have been rectified, there will be money left over in the grant because there was a deposit made for the purchase of the vehicle, the county authorized the loan amount of \$35,000.00 and there was a difference in the \$60,000.00 plus purchase price minus the deposit that was made and the \$35,000.00 there was still a balance. The grant money will be used to pay that balance. Any additional grants will be considered for equipment. The vehicle does not have to be fully outfitted at one time but does need to be outfitted with the necessary equipment so it can be used.

Motion/second by Commissioners Guy/Daniel to approve use of ARPA funds to purchase EMA truck and the equipment for outfitting the truck, motion carried 5-0.

- f. Discussion of the interview process for the Public Works Director Position.

County Attorney/Interim County Manager Rob Morton stated the Board was asked to receive the 18 applications and identify the top five selections for possibly proceeding with interviews. Morton asked the Board for their direction of how they would like to proceed with the interview process. In the past because this is a department head, and the way the policy reads is that the appointments can be made by the County Manager with the approval and consent of the Board of Commissioners. The Board has opted to do interviews in Executive Session which is appropriate and if the Board wants to proceed with that, the top five applicants can be identified and invite them to the next regular monthly meeting or a called meeting for interviews. Commissioner Tim Daniel stated he does not know if the Board wants to wait a month until the next day meeting. Morton noted there is a night meeting on September 24, 2024 if they want to do it then. Commissioner Tim Daniel noted he was not opposed to a called meeting either. Commissioner Tim Guy stated he was good with the night meeting. The Board stated they did not come up with five, they only came up with three or four. Morton asked the Board to provide him with their top three and he will find who the common denominators are and invite the three to the next Board of Commissioners night meeting Executive Session.

No motion entertained, discussion only.

- g. Consideration of UGA 4-H position.

County Attorney/Interim County Manager Rob Morton stated the county has received documentation from the University of Georgia, UGA. Brooklyne Wassel is present at the meeting to provide additional information or if the Board has any questions. Penny Cospers retired in which she was designated the Education Agent. The position was not an Ag Agent just an education position that was under the county parameters. Once Ms. Cospers retired, UGA reconsidered their position by providing an actual

Ag Agent position for the county. This position would be a UGA position with a request of a contribution from the county as part of their employment package. The contribution that UGA is requesting for the position is less than what the county budgeted for Penny Cosper's position. The county paid out approximately \$6,500.00 to Ms. Cosper before her retirement, however, the county does have sufficient funds to address the contribution. The recommendation would be to approve this concept with UGA. One benefit to this is UGA will be fully responsible for the employment package and the county will only be responsible for the contribution amount, UGA will be taking over the benefits. Brooklyne Wassel addressed the Board stating the position that was held by Penny Cosper was a 4-H Educator position that qualified as staff and funded 100% by the county. Mrs. Wassel stated she contacted UGA to see if they were willing to add funding to the position now that it was vacant, to help encourage qualified applicants and for the longevity of the position for the county so it does not become a revolving door. UGA offered the position to become an Agent position that would still stay with 4-H youth and development which includes going into the schools and working primarily with the youth. When it goes from an Educator to an Agent classification, it becomes faculty of UGA and that comes with TRS and the benefits that are associated with being an employee of the University.

Motion/second by Commissioners Guy/Daniel to approve UGA 4-H position, motion carried 5-0.

h. Open sealed bids for the 2024 Pike County Paving Projects.

County Attorney/Interim County Manager Rob Morton stated the county has received three bid packages in response to the 2024 Pike County Paving Projects. The roads in the bid package include Watering Hole Plass located inside of Ranchland Estates, Watering Hole Drive located inside of 362 West Place Subdivision, Roberts Quarters Road, and overlay patching for Pedenville Road, Sandefur Road and Chapman Road. The sealed bids submitted include the total for all roads unless noted otherwise:

- McLeRoy Inc. - \$645,691.20 (does not include \$191,350.00 for Roberts Quarters Road triple surface in total)
- Piedmont Paving, Inc. - \$634,509.78 total for all road for Asphalt Base (\$490,058.23 total for all roads for triple surface alternate)
- C.W. Matthews Contracting Co., Inc. - \$789,736.33 (including triple surface)

Commissioner Tim Guy asked if the county was just going to triple surface the dirt part of Roberts Quarters Road. Morton replied yes. Commissioner Tim Guy stated he did not think the county did triple surface anymore. Commissioner Jason Proctor noted he agreed with Commissioner Guy, he did not think the county did triple surface anymore. Morton stated since he was not involved in the bid specifications process, Ken Lalumiere and Chirs Goodman with Public Works were both present to address any questions the Board may have. Commissioner Jason Proctor asked Tanyard Road was triple surface. Chris Goodman replied yes, Tanyard Road is triple surface. Commissioner Jason Proctor stated that he thought the county did not do triple surface anymore. Chris Goodman stated he would recommend the county not to do triple surface, it was an option in the bids. Morton asked for clarification in the bid package was triple surface an optional price or was it included. Chris Goodman replied it was an optional price. Commissioner Jason Proctor asked where Piedmont Paving, Inc. was located. Chris Goodman replied Coweta County. Commissioner Jason Proctor asked where C.W. Matthews Contracting Co was located. Morton replied their corporate office is in Marietta. Morton would like to get with Ken Lalumiere and Chris Goodman to go over the bids in depth and bring a recommendation to the next Board of Commissioners meeting to award the project.

Motion/second by Commissioners Proctor/Daniel to receive bids for 2024 Pike County Paving Projects, motion carried 5-0.

i. **PUBLIC HEARING:** To receive public input on the notice of proposed property tax increase.

1. Board discussion of proposed millage rate.

County Attorney/Interim County Manager Rob Morton reminded everyone that this is one of the requirements since the Board is considering a proposed tax increase. There will be three public Hearings: 1) this one, 2) Special Called Meeting today at 11:00 a.m. and 3) Special Called Meeting on September 24, 2024 at 6:00 p.m. Chairman Johnson opened the floor for the Public Hearing.

Cherry Thomas addressed the Board stating the citizens need to know exactly why there are no alternatives to the tax increase which is going to be heavy. Properties are going to be reassessed and that itself will probably cause an increase. Ms. Thomas asked if some budgets could be cut to avoid an increase. People have to cut their spending when they do not have the funds, and the county should have to do the same thing. The bids that were just read, this brings up a lot of questions and everything should be exact apples to apples. Chairman Briar Johnson stopped Ms. Thomas and told her the Public Hearing is related to the millage rate only.

Darryl Pitts addressed the Board stating at the last meeting when the proposed millage rate was discussed he was curious and started doing some research. Mr. Pitts thanked the County Clerk, Mrs. Blount, and Planning and Development Director, Jeremy Gilbert, for providing documentation that he requested through open records. In Pike County, for just a year dated August 1, 2023 through August 29, 2024, there have been 114 new construction residential permits and 4 new construction commercial permits. The Impact Fees for the year collected on residential was \$664,047.02 and on commercial \$49,359.56. The total fees for the year were \$1,016,259.30. Mr. Pitts noted that was just in a year and there is another subdivision being developed now on Highway 18 and another one being developed on the West side of the county with five lots already under contract. The growth is good on some people but puts a hindrance on the elderly. Mr. Pitts noted he spoke with the insurance company and insurance rates will increase on houses when value of the home increases from reassessments. It is a chain

reaction when people are already struggling with money. Mr. Pitts stated he went to the Tax Commissioners office and spoke with Donna Chapman and going through the books, the businesses in Pike County has not seen a tax increase in over four years. One example is Supreme Corporation on Highway 341, they employee over 300 people and based out of Indianna, they pay about \$28,000.00 a year in taxes and the county does not get much of that because most of it goes to Indianna. Mr. Pitts hopes the Board will look at a rollback just as Commissioner Jenkins and Commissioner Proctor want. Mr. Pitts noted in a Special Called meeting the former County Manager Brandon Rogers stated the county could use ARPA funds so taxes would not increase, if everyone is on the same page then why was that not caught, they could not be used before now.

Commissioner Jason Proctor mentioned the ARPA funds being used to purchase the EMA vehicle, could the ARPA funds be used to purchase the two tractors in Public Works that the county just purchased. County Attorney/Interim County Manager Rob Morton replied there are some opportunities to be able to use ARPA funds, the issue that we are dealing with is that the county has to spend the funds or encumber, and the county had about \$3.2 million balance left in ARPA funds that the county needs to use the funds or identify. The concern is when the Board adopted the budget, the county included the use of \$1.5 million from Fund Balance. This included all the cash accounts, and they have been earmarked for use in the budget. If the county uses the \$1.5 million Fund Balance, the Fund Balance will be reduced from \$4 million to \$2.5 million. Anything else that has to be used to offset that is going to reduce the Fund Balance more. Morton noted that he has met with Fiance Administrator, Clint Chastain, and since the last meeting another option is to identify SPLOST funded projects and LMIG projects and maybe use APRA funds to fund those projects and replace those SPLOST allocations elsewhere. If the county opted to go with the rollback, Morton stated they will be working diligently to identify what funding sources the county can allocate toward to the General Fund budget to help offset that. The problem is the Fund Balance issue. Mr. Chastain indicated at the last meeting it is suggested that the county maintain 25% of the General Fund expenditure budget, which is about \$4 million. The county is going to drop significantly by allocating \$1.5 million of the fund balance. The Board opted for Option 3, which is a .75 mill increase and that is what is being advertised as the proposed tax increase. The millage rate has not been set, there are just discussions of what the options are. Option 3 would provide some additional revenues, the concern is even with the .75 increase, the county will still be dipping into the Fund Balance. The decisions have to be made on what is anticipated. Commissioner Jason Proctor asked what the restrictions were on the Federal Seizure fund account. Morton replied they have to be used for law enforcement uses. Commissioner Jason Proctor asked what the Opioid Abatement Fund can be used for. Morton replied any impact in connection with Opioid that has had an impact on the community that the county has had an expense as in emergency, First Responders or anything medical related, counseling services, any impact where the county is spending money toward providing services related to the Opioid issues. Commissioner Jason Proctor asked if the county could pay McIntosh Trail out of those funds. Morton replied possibly. There will be no decision regarding the setting of the millage rate until after the third Public Hearing on September 24, 2024 at 6:00 p.m.

No motion entertained, Public Hearing only.

10. PUBLIC COMMENT (Limited to 5 minutes per person) - NONE

11. EXECUTIVE SESSION

- a. Interim County Manager Rob Morton requests an Executive Session for discussion or deliberation on the appointment, employment, compensation, hiring, disciplinary action or dismissal, or periodic evaluation or rating of a public officer or employee or interviewing applicants for the position of the executive head of an agency, as provided in O.C.G.A. § 50-14-3(b)(2), germane to personnel.

Motion/second by Commissioners Guy/Daniel to adjourn Regular Session and enter into Executive Session at 9:57 a.m., motion carried 5-0.

CLOSED MEETING AFFIDAVIT

[A copy of the affidavit must be filed with the minutes of the meeting]

**STATE OF GEORGIA
COUNTY OF PIKE**

AFFIDAVIT OF PIKE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Members of the Pike County Board of Commissioners, being duly sworn, state under oath that the following is true and accurate to the best of his/her knowledge and belief:

1.

The Pike County Board of Commissioners met in a duly advertised meeting on 9-11-2024.

2.

During such meeting, the Board voted to go into closed session.

3.

The executive session was called to order at 9:57 a.m.

4.

The subject matter of the closed portion of the meeting was devoted to the following matter(s) within the exceptions provided in the open meetings law:

No Consultation with the county attorney, or other legal counsel, to discuss pending or potential litigation, settlement, claims, administrative proceedings, or other judicial actions brought or to

be brought by or against the county or any officer or employee or in which the county or any officer or employee may be directly involved as provided in O.C.G.A. § 50-14-2(1);

No Discussion of tax matters made confidential by state law as provided by O.C.G.A. § 50-14-2(2) and _____insert the citation to the legal authority making the tax matter confidential);

No Discussion of the future acquisition of real estate as provided by O.C.G.A. § 50-14-3(4);

Yes Discussion or deliberation on the appointment, employment, compensation, hiring, disciplinary action or dismissal, or periodic evaluation or rating of a public officer or employee or interviewing applicants for the position of the executive head of an agency, as provided in O.C.G.A. § 50-14-3(b)(2);

No Other – Germane to authorizing negotiations to purchase, dispose of or lease property.

Pike County Board of Commissioners:

- J. Briar Johnson, Chairman (L.S.)
- Tim Daniel, Commissioner (L.S.)
- Tim Guy, Commissioner (L.S.)
- Jason Proctor, Commissioner (L.S.)
- James Jenkins, Commissioner (L.S.)

This the 11th day of September 2024.

Sworn to and subscribed
Before me this 11th day of September 2024.

Robert L. Morton
Morton & Morton Associates
County Attorney and Notary Public

My commission expires: August 10, 2026.

Motion/second by Commissioners Daniel/Proctor to adjourn Executive Session and enter into Regular Session at 10:21 a.m., motion carried 5-0.

12. ADJOURNMENT

Motion/second by Commissioners Guy/Daniel to adjourn at 10:21 a.m., motion carried 5-0.

J. Briar Johnson, Chairman

Angela Blount, County Clerk