

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

The Pike County Board of Commissioners held a Special Called Meeting on Wednesday, September 11, 2024, at 11:00 a.m. in the Pike County Courthouse, Main Courtroom, 16001 Barnesville Street, Zebulon. Chairman Briar Johnson convened the meeting and Commissioners 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)). Due to unforeseen circumstances, Commissioner Tim Daniel was not present.

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

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

5. NEW BUSINESS

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

Chairman Johnson opened the floor for the Public Hearing.

Janice Cairns addressed the Board stating she lives in Meansville, and she and her husband went over the 5-year history that was published in the newspaper. Since 2019 with all the increases in property taxes, it has increased almost 60%. The increase is something that has to happen because of the growth in the county. Mrs. Cairns' perspective is it would be good for the county to be able to get more businesses. Upson County is getting an Aldi grocery store and a Whataburger restaurant. Pike County hired Kyle Fletcher as the Director of Development Authority to help bring in businesses and Mrs. Cairns stated she has not seen any of that happening and asked the Board of Commissioners if they could address that.

Cherry Thomas addressed the Board stating something cannot be fixed if you do not know what is causing the problem. There has to be a way to cut the spending in the departments. Ms. Thomas noted she ran a business for several years by cutting expenses where she could; everyone kept their jobs, but they did not get a raise. The county has got to find ways to cut costs. Ms. Thomas stated she walked into a government office and an employee was sitting there reading a novel, there is too much staff in that office. The office could be rearranged, you could cut back on staff, no one wants to lose their job so you could move them to another place where you need someone. If an employee quits their job or retires, do not rehire someone, let the employees work a little harder that are in there until the county gets through this. People are struggling with inflation. It has been brought up before that children cannot afford to live in the county where they grew up or where their family lives. Ms. Thomas stated her farm has been farmed for 95 years and the house she lives in is an 1880s house and is not comparable to what they look at for a tax reassessment. The house does not have granite counter tops. Ms. Thomas noted she does not qualify for the low-income discounts, but she has contributed a lot in taxes to the county because she was working. Ms. Thomas stated she would take the volunteer job to help find where the budget can be reduced enough in each department so that the county will not have to raise taxes.

Benson Hilly Jr addressed the Board stating he has lived in Pike County for 72 years. Mr. Hilly stated he lives on County Line Road, 20 feet from a lot of the taxes. The millage rate is directly related to the assessment. Mr. Hilly's assessment continues to go up, last year it went up 36%. Mr. Hilly noted he has appealed it four times and he finally settled on 11% because he got tired of appealing. If you add the 36% to what Mr. Hilly's value was then add the increased millage rate to that, that is a sizeable increase. The county should say something about how citizens can try to appeal it to get their assessments lowered, especially to the elderly. There are a lot of people who cannot afford the increase. When Mr. Hilly was young, and he had to go to his parents and ask for money the first thing they would ask is what did you do with the money we gave you. Mr. Hilly asked the Board to look at it and see if something can be done.

County Attorney/Interim County Manager Rob Morton stated there will be another Public Hearing scheduled for 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday, September 24, 2024. The setting of the millage rate will happen at the Board of Commissioners regular monthly meeting on September 24, 2024.

No motion entertained, Public Hearing only.

- 6. EXECUTIVE SESSION - NONE**
- 7. ADJOURNMENT**

Motion/second by Commissioners Proctor/Guy to adjourn at 11:13 a.m., motion carried 4-0.

J. Briar Johnson, Chairman

Angela Blount, County Clerk