

SPECIAL CALLED MEETING
PIKE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

The Pike County Board of Commissioners held a Special Called Meeting on Wednesday, May 14, 2025, at 1:00 p.m. in the Courthouse, Main Courtroom, 16001 Barnesville Street, Zebulon. Chairman Briar Johnson convened the meeting and Commissioners Tim Daniel, Tim Guy and Ken Pullin attended. County Attorney/County Manager 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 unable 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))**

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

5. NEW BUSINESS

- a. **PUBLIC HEARING:** To receive public input regarding the Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Budget.

Kristen Cudnohufsky addressed the Board, expressing questions and concerns regarding significant variances between prior year actuals, departmental requests, and proposed figures for the FY 2025–2026 budget, including but not limited to:

- Department 10 – Contingency: Increase from \$50,000.00 in the prior year’s budget, requested to \$100,000.00 in this year’s proposed budget; purpose unclear.
- Department 13 – Commissioners: Revenue increase of \$2.4 million.
- Department 17 – Tax Assessors: Budget increase to \$279,015.00; concern over employee salary increases given historical performance and reliance on third-party services. Total increase for Tax Assessors Department is \$186,434.00, purpose for increase is unclear.
- Department 33 – Sheriff: Increase of \$407,261.00.
- Department 42 – Public Works: Decrease of \$462,198.00.
- Department 61 – Recreation: Increase of \$174,502.00.
- Department 71 – Water Authority: Increase of \$207,645.00.
- Department 76 Agribusiness: Decrease of \$42,450.00.
- Fire Department and EMA: Decrease in funding noted as alarming due to already minimal staffing.
- Overall budget change: \$3.2 million increase in expenditures.
- The proposed budget is lacking a 3, 5, or 10-year financial trend data for public review and analysis.
- Line Item #100-03-1545-311200-000 – Property Tax – Prior Year: Noted inconsistency between budgeted and actual figures; FY 2024–2025 actual through date is \$204,775.00 when \$100,000.00 was budgeted compared to the FY 2025-2026 budget \$150,000.00 budgeted and recommended.
- Questioned valuation of \$2 million land purchase; requested clarity on location and appraisal basis.
- Urged the Board to review all departmental budgets thoroughly and justify major percentage changes.

David Paulson addressed the Board stating though unprepared, commented on a 13.5% budget increase for real property revenues from \$8.6 million to \$10.6 million, compared to a CPI increase of 2.4%–2.9%. He expressed concern that the increase appears excessive.

Becky Watts presented the following comments and inquiries:

- Employee Insurance: Encouraged continuation of two-plan system for employees; suggested adjusting the county’s 85% contribution, especially for dependents if changes needed to be made. Encouraged the Board to do the best they can for the employees.
- Dept. 10 – Transfer Station Lease: Questioned \$10,000.00 allocation.
- Dept. 13 – Board of Commissioners: Requested explanations for line items: Uniforms (\$250.00) and Contract Services (\$65,000.00). Mrs. Watts also would like to know what the Penalties/Late Charges (\$8,114.00) was for in FY 2024-2025 budget.
- Dept. 14 – Elections and Registration: Asked about increases in Board Compensation (\$7,500.00) and Contract Services.
- Dept. 17 – Tax Assessors: Referenced open records showing use of Traylor and Norman Appraisals in lieu of two employees; requested clarity.
- Dept. 18 – Building and Grounds: Uniform expenses remain at \$750.00 despite low actuals.

- Dept. 20 – Court Services: New line items for Professional Services, Food, Small Equipment, and Contract Services (\$4,000.00); purpose unclear.
- Dept. 25 – Court – Trial/Appeals: New entries for Professional Services and Food, purpose unclear.
- Dept. 34 – Jail: Variance in uniform expenses.
- Dept. 55 – McIntosh Trail Public Transport: \$10,500.00 added; not present in prior year.
- Dept. 65 – Libraries (Communications – Phone): Discrepancies in budgeted and actual figures.
- Dept. 71 – Water Resources: \$208,545.00 total budget; questioned if it funds water lines.
- Dept. 72 – County Agent: Expressed concern about absence of agent-related funding.
- Dept. 74 – Planning & Development: Questioned \$27,000.00 for Contract Services.
- Dept. 77 – Development Authority: Asked if \$116,968.00 is approximately a quarter mill.
- Dept. 80 – Fire Department: Concerns over employee salaries, uniform budget (\$15,000.00 requested; \$7,500.00 recommended).
- Dept. 91 – Animal Control: Missing cell phone allocation; unclear \$5,500 Contract Services.
- Dept. 98 – Transfers In: Questioned \$600.00 from Hotel/Motel tax; asked about FY 2024–2025 budget Line-item Other Fin Sources-Sale of Land (\$1,584) and nothing budgeted for FY 2025-2026 budget.
- Dept. 38 – E-911 (Expenditures): Noted changes in equipment; requested clarification.
- Dept. 17 – Tax Assessors (Expenditures): Contract Services recommended at \$16,982.00; purpose requested.
- Dept. 71 – Water Resources (Expenditures): \$1,955,000.00 for Water Authority Improvements; clarification requested.
- Fund 275 – Hotel/Motel Tax: \$1,000.00 requested and recommended; questioned purpose.
- Dept. 93 – Special Local Option Tax – Principal Debt Payments: \$1,975,000.00 requested and recommended; purpose questioned.
- Dept. 42 – Public Works (Expenditures) – Unpaved Repairs/Surface Treatments: \$201,647.00 requested; asked for details.

Commissioner Pullin noted that the county owes United Bank \$2.3 million in November 2025 for land acquisition; this is reflected in the Commissioners’ budget. He expressed just looking at the summary page of the budget, it gives the citizens the perspective about apparent budget priorities:

- Increased funding for Tax Assessors and Sheriff’s Office.
- Decreased funding for Public Works.
- Significant variance between requested and recommended Parks & Recreation allocations.

Commissioner Pullin asked about clarity and future planning for the Fire Department to improve insurance ratings and reiterated that Animal Control remains a contentious topic needing attention.

Commissioners will have a scheduled FY 2025-2026 Budget workshop on Thursday, May 22, 2025, at 5:30 p.m. in the main Courtroom of the Courthouse.

6. EXECUTIVE SESSION - NONE

7. ADJOURNMENT

Motion/second by Commissioners Daniel/Guy to adjourn at 1:34 p.m., motion carried 4-0.

J. Briar Johnson, Chairman

Angela Blount, County Clerk