

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

The Pike County Board of Commissioners held its Regular Monthly Meeting on Wednesday, September 9, 2026 at 9:00 a.m. in the Courthouse, Main Courtroom, 16001 Barnesville Street, Zebulon, GA. Chairman Briar Johnson convened the meeting and Commissioners Tim Daniel, Tim Guy, Ken Pullin, and James Jenkins attended. County Attorney/County Manager 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 Daniel/Guy 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 25, 2026, Regular Monthly Meeting.
 - b. Minutes of the August 25, 2026, Executive Session.
 - c. Minutes of the September 3, 2026, Workshop.
 - d. Minutes of the September 3, 2026, Executive Session.

Motion/second by Commissioners Guy/Daniel to approve the minutes of the August 25, 2026 Regular Monthly Meeting, the minutes of the August 25, 2026 Executive Session, the minutes of the September 3, 2026 Workshop and the minutes of the September 3, 2026 Executive Session, motion carried 5-0.

- 6. **INVITED GUEST**
 - a. Employee Recognition for service to Pike County.

County Manager Rob Morton recognized **Madaline “Saylar” Warford** of the Pike County Magistrate Court for five (5) years of dedicated service to Pike County. CM Morton expressed his appreciation for her commitment and noted the importance of her role in supporting criminal proceedings within the Magistrate Court. Chief Magistrate Judge Marcia Callaway -Ingram commended Saylar’s strong work ethic, highlighting her growth and development since joining the staff at age 21. Judge Callaway-Ingram emphasized Saylar’s professionalism in her public-facing role representing the Magistrate Court as well as the county’s other judicial offices. She noted that Saylar is a fabulous employee who makes Pike County proud. Saylar Warford was presented with a 5-year service certificate and pin in recognition of her milestone and continued dedicated service.

County Manager Rob Morton stated **Jessica Strickland** of the Pike County Probate Court was unable to attend the meeting but wished to recognize her for five (5) years of dedicated service to Pike County. Jessica Steickland will be presented with a 5-year certificate and pin in acknowledgment of her milestone and continued dedicated service.

- 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 Daniel/Guy to accept the reports, motion carried 5-0.
 - b. County Manager Report

Update on County finances for the following funds/accounts:

General Fund	\$1,058,479.38
Fire Dept. Donations.....	\$11,587.29
Cash Reserve Account.....	\$281,973.72
Jail Fund	\$35,332.56
E-911 Fund	\$47,640.11
DATE Fund	\$18,488.04
Juvenile Court Fund.....	\$17,555.41
Residential Impact Fees.....	\$369,946.83
Commercial Impact Fees	\$21,116.99
C.A.I.P FUND	\$139.14
General Obligation SPLOST 2022-2028.....	\$4,183,417.08
L.M.I.G. Grant (DOT).....	\$472,834.75

- c. County Manager Comment

County Manager Rob Morton provided updates on several active administrative and community matters:

 - **iWorQs Platform Accessibility:** The county utilizes the iWorQs platform across multiple departments, including Planning and Development for permitting and code enforcement, Public Works for work orders and driveway permits, and Animal Control for code enforcement. County Staff held a presentation with an iWorQs representative on Thursday, September 3, 2026, to evaluate expansion options to allow the Board of Commissioners and

administrative staff direct system access and regular tracking work orders and permits. CM Morton has copies of training materials for the Commissioners who are interested in utilizing the system.

- **Preliminary Sales Ratio Appeal:** The Board of Assessors filed an appeal against the state's preliminary sales ratio because the county's assessed sales ration fell below the statutory 38% threshold. The appeal hearing is scheduled for September 10, 2026, at 10:00 a.m. at the Board of Assessors' office. If the appeal successfully raises the ratio to the 38% threshold, the county will be legally eligible to collect its full 40% utility tax collection. If the appeal fails, the collections remain restricted to 37%.
- **Development Authority Briefing:** The Board of Commissioners has a joint meeting scheduled for 10:30 a.m. today, September 9, 2026, with the Development Authority and their consultants to review local economic development initiatives and prospective grant funding streams.
- **Hilltop Community Celebration:** The annual Hilltop Neighborhood and Community Celebration is occurring this week. A public Ceremony is scheduled for Saturday, September 12, 2026, at 11:00 a.m. at the old school in Hilltop. CM Morton stated that since the physical bronze historical marker would not be delivered in time, the manufacturer provided a highly detailed duplicate that will be displayed during the presentation.

d. Commissioner Reports

District 1 – Commissioner Daniel – No report.

District 2 – Commissioner Guy – No report.

District 3 – Commissioner Pullin – No report.

District 4 – Commissioner Jenkins – No report. .

At Large Chairman Briar Johnson thanked Vice-Chairman Tim Daniels for stepping in at the last minute to preside over the previous meeting due to his own inability to attend. Chairman Johnson also expressed appreciation to the EMA Director, Jim Totten, for the extensive work and effort put into the Hazard Mitigation Plan.

e. County Attorney Report to Commissioners – No report.

8. UNFINISHED BUSINESS - NONE

9. NEW BUSINESS

a. Discussion regarding the use of the Courthouse Main Courtroom.

County Manager Rob Morton stated that Bryan Richardson, on behalf of the American Legion, has requested the use of the main courtroom in the Courthouse for a recognition ceremony. He noted concerns regarding authorizing the use of the main courtroom for an entity that is not part of Pike County government. In addition, there may be a financial impact associated with such an event, as it is not included in the current budget. Specifically, there may be additional costs for security and oversight provided by the Sheriff's Department.

While the Board has previously allowed use of the lobby during inclement weather, the main courtroom has not been authorized for use by entities unrelated to Pike County government, its departments, or court-related functions. Filming movies has been allowed in the past, with the production company responsible covering all associated security costs. The County has also recently denied a request from a third party seeking to use the courtroom for meetings.

Commissioner Daniel stated that he believes if the County speaks with Bryan Richardson and explains that the Board does not wish to open the courtroom for general public use, Mr. Richardson will understand.

Chairman Johnson pointed out that opening the courtroom after normal business hours would force the county to incur substantial overtime labor costs for Sheriff's deputies to provide security. He noted these expenses are unbudgeted and would require a new funding allocation to the Sheriff's budget if courtroom use were normalized.

The Board agreed to maintain its current policy and not move forward with the application.

Discussion only, no motion entertained.

b. Declare Library Books List, consisting of 183 books, as surplus property.

County Manager Rob Morton explained that the library periodically weeds out older, damaged, or uncirculated volumes from its collection. If the books are declared surplus, the staff can discard them through public donation or other appropriate methods.

Motion/second by Commissioners Pullin/Daniel to approve the library book list, consisting of 183 books, as surplus property, motion carried 5-0.

c. Appoint voting delegate for 2026 Legislative Leadership Conference.

County Manager Rob Morton stated the Association County Commissioners of Georgia (ACCG) 2026 Legislative Leadership Conference is scheduled for October 2026. Both Commissioner Jenkins and Commissioner Daniel plan to represent Pike County at this event. Because the county must designate

a single voting representative for the legislative voting sessions, the Board will need to select one delegate to serve as the official voting delegate.

Motion/second by Commissioners Daniel/Pullin to appoint Commissioner James Jenkins as the voting delegate for the 2026 Legislative Leadership Conference, motion carried 5-0.

- d. Approve/deny the Pike County Hazard Mitigation Plan update 2025-2030 and authorize Chairman Briar Johnson to sign the resolution.

County Manager Rob Morton stated the county was previously advised by EMA Director Jim Totten this past spring that the Hazard Mitigation Plan Update for 2025–2030 had been completed and submitted to FEMA for review. FEMA has since reviewed the update and determined that it is compliant with all applicable regulations. The Board has been provided with a summary of the update along with a proposed Resolution to Adopt the plan. CM Morton recommends approval of the Resolution to Adopt the 2025–2030 Hazard Mitigation Plan Update.

Emergency Management Agency (EMA) Director Jim Totten presented the final draft of the five-year Pike County Hazard Mitigation Plan Update, spanning 2025 through 2030. Totten emphasized that updating this comprehensive plan every five years is mandatory under federal law. Failure to adopt the updated plan would render both Pike County and its municipalities ineligible for various federal disaster-mitigation grants, including baseline annual grants of approximately \$5,000.

The plan was compiled over three county-wide public meetings. Because the County documented strong attendance from local municipal representatives, the accumulated meeting hours were counted as in-kind matching contributions. As a result, the federal planning grant fully reimbursed the contractor's fees, ensuring that Pike County taxpayers incurred no direct out-of-pocket costs for producing the 200-plus-page document.

The plan serves as a registered inventory of regional hazards and proposed mitigation projects. Due to increased storm activity in recent years, tropical weather systems were officially added to the local hazard list. FEMA requires that any project seeking federal disaster-mitigation funding be formally listed within this document.

Key projects included in the 2025–2030 plan are:

- **Tornado warning sirens** — Siren installations cost approximately \$10,000 each. Under the FEMA mitigation program, the County is responsible for a 15% local match (about \$1,500), while federal grants reimburse the remaining 85%.
- **Emergency infrastructure improvements** — Proposed items include advanced warning software, vehicle-mounted radio repeaters to maintain communication during severe outages, backup generators, and Starlink satellite terminals for emergency backup data lines.

Totten noted that while local emergency declarations do not guarantee immediate reimbursement for all damages, they establish the legal framework necessary to secure downstream federal funds. For example, following a past tornado on the north side of the County, Public Works managed the immediate recovery internally, but the emergency declaration enabled subsequent federal grant funding that the County is now using to purchase emergency radios and generators.

EMA Director Jim Totten recognized GEMA Field Coordinator Mandy Juarez, who was present in the audience.

Motion/second by Commissioners Guy/Daniel to approve the Pike County Hazard Mitigation Plan update 2025-2030 and to authorize Chairman Briar Johnson to sign the resolution, motion carried 5-0.

- e. Authorize Chairman Briar Johnson to execute the pending tax appeals submitted by the Chief Tax Appraiser for digest submission.

County Manager Rob Morton explained that certifying the pending appeals is a statutory prerequisite for submitting the County's final property tax digest to the State. Because the total volume of outstanding property tax appeals fell safely below the State's maximum threshold, Pike County is permitted to collect 100% of its anticipated tax-digest revenues. Had the number of appeals exceeded the threshold, the State would have restricted tax collections.

Tax Commissioner Donna Chapman reported that outstanding appeals from prior tax years are being systematically reviewed, resolved, and cleared from the record.

Motion/second by Commissioners Daniel/Guy to approve and authorize Chairman Briar Johnson to execute the pending tax appeals submitted by the Chief Tax Appraiser for digest submission, motion carried 5-0.

- f. Consideration and approval of the 2026 County Millage Rate.

County Manager Rob Morton stated that the Pike County School Board sets its own millage rate, which must be formally received by the Board of Commissioners as the County's taxing authority for inclusion on Form PT-32.1. The School Board transmitted its official minutes on Tuesday, September 8, 2026, and Tax Commissioner Donna Chapman obtained their final adopting resolution with the exact figures.

The County completed all mandatory public-notice requirements, including publication of the proposed rollback rate of 8.497 and the County's five-year tax history. Because the Board opted for the rollback rate, it was not legally required to advertise for a property-tax increase. Under the 8.497 rollback rate, Pike County expects to collect approximately \$10.7 million in property-tax revenues, compared to a baseline budget projection of \$10.2 million. County Financial Administrator Clint Chastain noted that

any localized project cost overruns during the fiscal year can be covered using reserves, similar to the previous year.

Chairman Johnson spoke against adopting the rollback rate, advocating instead for maintaining the millage rate at the previous year's rate of 8.946. Johnson noted that since 2014, the Board of Commissioners has rolled back the millage rate every year except for three years when it was held flat, meaning the County has not enacted a millage-rate increase in 12 years. He emphasized that operational costs for fuel, equipment, and staff compensation have risen significantly over the past decade. Johnson cautioned that repeatedly rolling back the rate "kicks the can down the road" and may force the County to confront a major budget deficit in 2027 or shortly thereafter.

The Board also addressed the annual funding millage for the Development Authority of Pike County. In accordance with the County's standing agreement, the Board voted to set the allocation at 0.25 mills.

Motion/second by Commissioners Pullin/Daniel to approve receipt of the Pike County Board of Education millage rate as submitted, motion carried 5-0.

Motion/second by Commissioners Pullin/Jenkins to approve the rollback millage rate of 8.497 for Pike County, motion carried 4-1, with Chairman Briar Johnson opposed.

Motion/second by Commissioners Daniel/Guy to approve the Development Authority of Pike County millage rate of 0.25, pursuant to the existing agreement, motion carried 5-0.

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

11. EXECUTIVE SESSION

- a. County Manager Rob Morton requests 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.
- b. County Manager Rob Morton request Executive Session for 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), germane to pending or potential litigation.

Motion/second by Commissioners Daniel/Guy to adjourn Regular Session and enter into Executive Session at 9:37 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 9-9-2026.

2.

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

3.

The executive session was called to order at 9:37 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:

- Yes 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:

Briar Johnson, Chairman (L.S.)
Tim Daniel, Commissioner (L.S.)
Tim Guy, Commissioner (L.S.)
Ken Pullin, Commissioner (L.S.)
James Jenkins, Commissioner (L.S.)

This the 9th day of September 2026.

Sworn to and subscribed
Before me this 9th day of September 2026.

Robert L. Morton
Morton & Morton Associates
County Attorney and Notary Public
My commission expires: August 4, 2030.

Motion/second by Commissioners Daniel/Guy to adjourn Executive Session and enter into Regular Session at 9:58 a.m., motion carried 5-0.

12. ADJOURNMENT

Motion/second by Commissioners Guy/Daniel to adjourn at 9:58 a.m., motion carried 5-0.

J. Briar Johnson, Chairman

Angela Blount, County Clerk