

**PIKE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
FEBRUARY 18, 2025 @ 8:30 am**

**Mark Flint  
Jeff Nelson  
Ryan Coleman**

**1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER**

President of the BOC Mark Flint called the meeting to order. Commissioner Jeff Nelson was present, and Commissioner Ryan Coleman was absent due to a problem at work. Pike County Attorney Val Fleig, Auditor Judith Gumbel, and County Administrator Kristi Dischinger were present. Those signing the attendance roster were Jeremy Conder, Gena Ruppel, Tony Cochren, EMS Director Chris Young, County Councilman Travis Troutman, Kyle Adams, Jeff Brenton, Shawn Wilson, EDC Director Ashley Willis, David R. Adams, Mike Horrall, Jeff Davis, Dav\_\_\_\_\_, Assistant 911 Director Brittany Staake, EMA/911 Director Brandon Truitt, Chief Deputy Auditor Audra Warner, Tera Baham, Gabby Segrer, Health Dept Office Manager Natalie Byrd, and Sheriff Jason McKinney.

**2. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES FEBRUARY 3, 2025**

President Flint asked if there were any additions or corrections to the minutes. Commissioner Nelson seconded by Commissioner Flint motioned to approve the minutes. Motion passed 2 – 0.

**3. APPROVAL OF CLAIMS FOR FEBRUARY 18, 2025**

President Flint asked if there were any questions regarding the claims. Commissioner Nelson seconded by Commissioner Flint motioned to approve the claims. Motion passed 2 – 0.

**4. PUBLIC MEETING REGARDING VACATION OF PUBLIC WAYS-CATO**

**a. Petition to Vacate-Cato, Ordinance 2025-05**

President Flint asked if the ordinance had processed through the required stages. Attorney Fleig stated that it was in proper form and Administrator Dischinger stated that the meeting had been properly advertised.

President Flint asked if there were any objections to the proposed ordinance. Hearing no response, he called for a motion to approve. Commissioner Nelson motioned seconded by Commissioner Flint to approve Ordinance 2025-05. Motion passed 2 – 0.

**5. NEW BUSINESS**

**a. Prosecutor's Office-Solar -**

Pike County Prosecutor Darrin McDonald addressed the Commissioners in regard to the Solar projects that are ongoing in the County. He explained that his appearance was originally prompted by a newspaper article wherein County Attorney Val Fleig was misquoted. He understood the article to state that the Sheriff and the Prosecutor were

going to prosecute the truck drivers who were speeding and driving through citizens' yards who live along the county roads leading to and from the project locations.

He stated that since that time he has personally driven the roads, talked with numerous citizens, spoken with Mr. Jamey Dunkley the local project supervisor of the project, NextEra south of Petersburg along Hwy 57, Highway Superintendent Josh Byrd, and reached out to the Commissioners and the County Council. In short, he has found numerous frustrated people including himself. He stated that Superintendent Byrd and Sheriff McKinney were making tremendous efforts to navigate the problems, but unfortunately the problems have not been remedied.

Prosecutor McDonald asked how many projects there were, and it was stated that there were two projects that came before the County Commissioners and Council that sought abatements: **RATTS I (Now AREVON) and INVENERGY**. It was also stated that there were at least three others who were not working with the County in any manner. Their believed locations are Oatsville, a huge one along Cart Road, and Cato. Projects don't have to work with the County because the County is not zoned and does not require any form of building permit. The County can and does; however, require any project utilizing the County Roads to provide a road bond with a specified road usage agreement.

It was stated by Prosecutor McDonald that the existing agreements were not strong enough to protect Pike County Citizens. He stated that if the companies went bankrupt, the County would be left with a mess. He asked if the County had legal counsel for the projects. President Flint stated that Mike Shopmeyer and Lisa Lee (who is with Ice Miller) had guided the County. It was stated by the Commissioners and Superintendent Byrd that the County has learned a lot and any new "road use" agreements would be much tougher. Commissioner Nelson said that he would like to negotiate new agreements with the ones currently in progress.

Prosecutor McDonald stated that the dimensions of the ingress into the staging areas were entirely too small. He stated that no truck could make the turn without going into someone's yard. The amount of mud being drug onto the roads is another big problem. He stated that the roads are showing evidence of stress, and it is evident that they will rupture. Superintendent Byrd stated that the company would not only have to repair the road at project end but was also required to repair the roads while the project was ongoing. Mr. Byrd stated that the roads have to remain drivable.

Attorney McDonald also stated that the project owners were as liable as the drivers. He asked what the penalties were and was told that a \$1,000 fine was to be imposed on the driver/company for using the non-bonded roads. He asked how many citations had been issued. Superintendent Byrd replied that he was in the process of getting them together to present to the companies. His estimate was 20 Sheriff McKinney stated that there was a period when Highway 257 was closed that he did not issue citations because there was no where for the drivers to go.

Superintendent Byrd stated that NextERA which is a company that did not request an abatement is currently on a 15-day notice to stop the mud problem and that he can do the same thing with Ratts I – AREVON (Dutchtown). If the problem is not cured, he will shut the projects down. Attorney Fleig said that would provide the leverage to go after the companies' road bonds.

Prosecutor McDonald stated that he urged the County to obtain a good Land Use Attorney. He also strongly encouraged the Commissioners to consider building permits. There was really nothing that could be further stated but he stated that he hoped that in some way the existing situation in the County could be alleviated.

**b. Treasurer's Office X-Soft Contract**

County Treasurer Susan Brittain explained that her current cashbook was no longer functioning correctly. It will not hold formulas. She stated that there is no tech support available for the program. She also explained that at the time the County invested in the X-Soft Tax software – IN-Tax, there was no cashbook available. It is now available. It will integrate with IN-Tax and automatic overnight posting will be made. This will lessen the opportunity for human error. She explained that the Council has approved an Additional Appropriation to the budget, but the contract for purchase needs to be approved by the Commissioners.

President Flint asked if there were any questions.

Commissioner Nelson seconded by Commissioner Flint motioned to approve the Cashbook contract with X-Soft. Motion passed 2 – 0.

**c. Health Department Credit Card Request**

Health Department Office Manager Natalie Byrd requested that the Health Department be allowed to obtain a credit card. She stated that the new programs being initiated by the department such as the Dental Health program required more purchasing from places like Amazon, she could no longer just call Hudson to buy toothbrushes. Commissioner Nelson asked how anyone managed in today's times without a credit card. The cap for the card was set at \$2,500.

Commissioner Nelson seconded by Commissioner Flint motioned to allow the Health Department to obtain a credit card with GAB with a \$2,500 cap. Motion carries 2 – 0.

**d. Request to Advertise for Bids-CCMG**

Highway Superintendent Byrd stated that the grant work was completed for the CCMG projects. The next step is to advertise for the bids for the materials for the proposed projects.

President Flint noted that there was a typo on the paperwork. The date of the meeting for the bids to be presented was changed to March 17th rather than March 12th. Commissioner Nelson seconded by Commissioner Flint motioned to approve the request to advertise for Bids for the CCMG projects. Motion carried 2 – 0.

**6. BUSINESS BY COMMISSIONERS**

**a. Appointments** -none discussed

**b. Clerk & Treasurer Monthly Reports**

President Flint referenced the Clerk and Treasurer Reports

**c. 2025 Insurance Renewal Quote – Tony Cochren**

Mr. Cochren stated that this is the County Commercial Property and Liability Renewal. He stated that the premiums are market driven and are for the most part increasing- about 22%. Worker’s compensation has decreased to 0.66%. He stated that Blanket Property Liability was 44 million and has been increased to 49 million. He explained that County had an in excess of \$100,000 in auto claims and over 5 years it was an in excess of \$500,000. He said that litigation reduces market capacity and that Municipalities are a specialty market.

He stated that he asked the company to give him some options such as additional deductible options. He has not yet received these and as soon as he does he will get them out. He said the Commissioners could go ahead and approve and then choose options later.

President Flint stated that he did not want to approve at this time. County Administrator Dischinger stated that she had another quote coming. Mr. Cochren said that a decision on renewal had to be made by March 3rd.

**d. Highway Report**

Superintendent Byrd said that he has been working on changing out a bridge on 500 N. He has a beaver problem at Oatsville and is working with the federal officials in regard to fixing it.

**e. ARPA – Interest**

Auditor Gumbel stated that the Council would like to use the interest generated by the ARPA monies to pay down the remaining costs of the new EMS barn. She asked if the Commissioners were in favor of that.

Commissioner Nelson seconded by Commissioner Flint motioned to use the ARPA interest toward paying for the EMS Barn. Motion passed 2 - 0.

**f. EMS Report**

Director Chris Young stated that runs are down due to the weather. All trucks are running. He said they are ready to hang the drywall in the new EMS Barn but felt that a halt should be called in the work until they could get dependable electric service and heat into the building. He also said that there was a question concerning the final grade on the northeast side of the building.

**g. EMA Report**

EMA Director Brandon Truitt stated that he had issued a Travel Advisory before coming to the meeting due to the forecast of 1 – 3 inches of snow. He also stated that he was in the process of taking some required FEMA classes.

**7. BUSINESS BY PUBLIC**

Shawn Wilson, one of the citizens living on Dutchtown Road stated that he was there with the

intent to discuss the damage being done by the Solar Project. He dittoed what Prosecutor McDonald said. He asked if there was any way of shutting the projects down for tracking mud on the road. Superintendent Byrd said he didn't think so because Jarod Bradfield who in charge of IDEM permits for NextERA said that it would take a lot to do that. Mr. Wilson asked if the repair would require milling the road down before it was repaved. Superintendent Byrd stated that the Dutchtown Roads were bonded \$1,521,933 and NextERA's for \$5,374,000. Mr. Byrd said that he had video tapes of the roads before the project started. He will also video tape midway and at the end. Mr. Byrd stated that Jeff Partain with Ratts I – Dutchtown had worked well with the highway.

Mr. Wilson also asked if the work had to take place on Sunday.

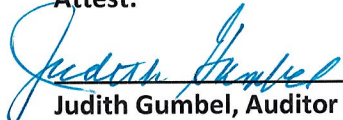
## 8. ADJOURNMENT

At this time President Flint called for a motion to adjourn. Motion was made by Commissioner

Nelson and seconded by Commissioner Flint. Motion passed 2 – 0.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Mark Flint, President

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Jeff Nelson, Vice President

Attest:  
  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Judith Gumbel, Auditor

3-3-25  
Date