

**CAMDEN COUNTY, GEORGIA
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING
SEPTEMBER 15, 2009, 6:00 PM**

A regular meeting of the Camden County Board of County Commissioners was held at 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday, September 15, 2009, in the Board of Commissioners' Meeting Chambers of the Government Services Building, Woodbine, Georgia.

Chair Rainer called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Pastor Pettus, Jr., New Life Body of Christ Christian Church delivered the invocation.

Chair Rainer led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Present: Chair David L. Rainer; Vice-Chair Katherine Nisi Zell; Commissioner Willis R. Keene, Jr.; Commissioner Charlene Sears; County Administrator Steve Howard; County Attorney Brent Green, and Interim County Clerk Kathryn Bishop. Commissioner Stephen L. Berry was absent.

AGENDA AMENDMENTS:

Addition under Presentations:

Coastal Georgia Certified Literate Community Program *(presented by Celenda Perry)*

Discussion regarding City of St. Marys Request for Review of Assessor Performance for 2009 Tax Digest. *(Presented by Commissioner Sears)*

Vice-Chair Zell made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Keene to approve the agenda amendments as presented.

The motion carried unanimously.

MOTION TO ADOPT THE AGENDA:

Commissioner Keene made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Sears to adopt the agenda as amended.

The motion carried unanimously.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Vice-Chair Zell made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Keene to approve the regular meeting minutes of September 1, 2009.

The motion carried unanimously.

PRESENTATION:

- Coastal Georgia Certified Literate Community Program

Celenda Perry, representing the coastal Workforce Investment Board, stated that the Coastal Georgia Certified Literate Community Program has been tentatively approved. She stated that a ceremony will be held on September 22, 2009 at 11:00 AM in the Commissioner's Meeting Chambers to designate Camden County as a participant in this worthy program. She encouraged everyone to attend.

- Discussion regarding City of St. Marys Request for Review of Assessors Performance for 2009 Tax Digest.

Commissioner Sears explained that a Work Session was held by the City of St. Marys to discuss the current assessment values plaguing St. Marys residents. She explained

that after a lot of brainstorming it was determined that a resolution calling for state officials to not approve the tax digest for 2009 was not feasible. She stated that in Savannah a Performance Review of the Board of Assessors was requested by County officials due to inflated values. She explained that people just want to be taxed at what is fair market value. Commissioner Sears read the letter from the City of St. Marys to the Board of County Commissioners requesting a resolution be adopted to call for a Performance Review of the Camden County Board of Assessors.

September 15, 2009

Camden County Board of Commissioners
200 E. 4th St., P.O. Box 99
Woodbine, GA 31569

RE: Review of Board of Assessors Performance

To: Chairman Rainer

The City of St. Marys, Georgia is requesting a Review of the Board of Assessors Performance for the 2009 Tax Digest as directed by the Citizens of St. Marys, Pursuant to O.C.G.A. 48-5-295, "The county governing authority must adopt a resolution requesting the performance review and sent the resolution to the Revenue Commissioner."

This request is based on the following:

- a. The current appraisal does not appraise all real property at the fair market value as of January 1, 2009.
- b. The number of appeals, county wide, is significant.
- c. The Tax Assessors' Office refuses to provide the County and City Governments with the current number of appeals.
- d. The Tax Assessors' Office refused to provide the citizens of St. Marys with the current number of appeals.
- e. The process used to identify the appraised values is not valid. (The Tax Assessors' Office paid a company, outside the county, \$3.00 a facility to appraise all City buildings.)
- f. City residents have had appraised value increases from 400% to 2000% in one year.
- g. This problem is a County wide problem, to include all Governments both City and County, and not just one government.

Based on the above, the City of St. Marys requests a review of the Board of Assessors Performance for the 2009 Tax Digest as quickly as possible. Please direct any correspondence that you have to Bill Shanahan, City Manager, at 912-510-4041 and/or bill.shanahan@ci.st-marys.ga.us. We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Rowland T. Eskridge, Sr.
Mayor

cc: Camden County Board of Commissioners
Camden County Manager
City of Kingsland Mayor and Council
City of Kingsland Manager
City of Woodbine Mayor and Council
City of Woodbine Administrator
Department of Revenue
Department of Audits

Commissioner Keene stated that he was not in favor of doing anything tonight until more information can be gathered and everyone has a full understanding. He suggested placing on the next agenda for further discussion. Vice-Chair Zell agreed that something has to be done regarding the current assessments.

Chair Rainer stated that the Board should direct the County attorney to research this issue and bring a proposed resolution back to the Board on the October 6, 2009 regular meeting.

Commissioner Sears stated that she had researched this issue in her training materials and explained the process of a Performance Review to the Board.

County Administrator Steve Howard stated there is a cost involved with travel expenses.

Chair Rainer stated that the proposed resolution should be brought back to the Board at the next meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Teresa Larry

Ms. Larry stated that she had concerns with conditions at the Camden County Jail and she explained that she has a brother incarcerated at the jail. She stated that a few employees at that jail displayed foul attitudes towards her when she voiced her concerns regarding the conditions within the jail. She stated that inmates run out of personal items and she has provided money for her brother to purchase items through the jail commissary. She explained that this money was taken to cover medical expenses incurred by her brother. She stated that the items available to purchase through the jail commissary are very over priced.

Commissioner Sears addressed Ms. Larry's concerns and stated that it cost forty-five (45) to fifty (50) dollars a day to house an inmate in the County Jail. She explained that when she was an employee of the Sheriff's Department the goal was to make the jail self sufficient to take the burden off the taxpayer. She stated that she does understand that personal items are needed.

Winston Barlow

Mr. Barlow stated that it sadly disappoints him that the issue of the Resolution calling for a Performance Review of the Board of Assessors is being put off and time is of the essence. He stated that many people from St. Marys are getting together to file a class action lawsuit. He asked the board if they were waiting on Commissioner Berry and stated that there is a quorum without him. He stated that his confidence has been diminished in the Board of County Commissioners. He stated that taxpayers are not coming to meetings for being discouraged & not getting anywhere. He urged the Board of County commissioners to take action tonight.

Rindy Howell

Mrs. Howell stated that they came before the Board of County Commissioners over two (2) months ago and asked for help. She explained that tonight they have come with a possible solution and time is of the essence.

Dave Schmitz

Mr. Schmitz stated that he owns property in Shadowlawn subdivision and he has seen an increase in assessment that he believes is wrong. He stated that his only avenue is to appeal and thousands of appeals have been turned in. He stated that the people that were hired to do the job did not do it correctly and the people need help before people are taxed out of there homes.

Sydney Howell

Mr. Howell stated that his home was increased and he does not have the money to cover the increase in taxes. He explained that another whole round of foreclosures are coming.

Chair Rainer adjourned the meeting for recess at 6:37 PM.

Chair Rainer reconvened the meeting at 6:42 PM.

Commissioner Sears made a motion, seconded by Vice-Chair Zell to amend the agenda for the addition of Item 1 - City of St. Marys Request for Review of Assessors Performance for 2009 Tax Digest and the agenda renumbered accordingly.

The motion carried unanimously.

Regular Agenda

1. City of St. Marys Request for Review of Assessors Performance for 2009 Tax Digest.

Commissioner Sears made a motion, seconded by Vice-Chair Zell to direct the County Attorney to draft a Resolution to request for a Review of Assessors Performance by the State of Georgia Revenue Commissioner and authorize the Chairman to sign said Resolution.

The motion carried unanimously.

Consent Agenda

2. Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) regarding Camden County Board of Health.
3. Letter of Understanding of services by Karp, Ronning & Tindol, Certified Public Accountants.

Commissioner Sears made a motion, seconded by Vice-Chair Zell to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.

The motion carried unanimously.

Regular Agenda

4. Plantation Point, Phase III, Right-of-Way Acceptance.

Commissioner Keene made a motion, second Vice-Chair Zell to accept the Right-of-Way for Plantation Point, Phase III.

The motion carried unanimously.

5. Solid Waste Disposal Capacity Agreement

Vice-Chair Zell made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Keene to approve the Solid Waste Disposal Capacity Agreement.

The motion carried unanimously.

6. Surplus Item List.

Vice-Chair Zell made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Keene to approve the Surplus Item List.

The motion carried unanimously.

7. Consideration to establish Line of Credit for General Fund.

Vice-Chair Zell made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Keene to approve the Line of Credit for General Fund not to exceed four million two hundred thousand (4.2) dollars.

The motion carried unanimously.

Reports

- Calendar - ***September/October***

Interim County Clerk Katie Bishop read the calendars for September & October.

- County Administrator's Report

County Administrator Steve Howard reported the following:

- He announced that the Emergency Operations Center is complete and currently a ribbon cutting ceremony is scheduled for September 25th.
- He announced that he has asked Strategic Planning Director Diana Smith to talk about a grant that Camden County has applied for.

Strategic Planning Director Diana Smith stated that the final paperwork has been completed for the Tiger Grant. She explained that if Camden County is awarded these grant monies it will be used to complete the Kingsland Bypass. She thanked everyone that devoted time to helping complete this grant.

Keith Post

Mr. Post stated that he would like to thank the County for allowing the ceremony to be held in honor of George Marvin Miller. He explained that Mr. Miller received his medals from time served in the United States Army. He stated that Admiral Bruner attended and the event was a huge success.

ADDITIONAL PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Everett Burch

Mr. Burch stated that he owns a trailer park that is now zoned R-2 and one of these lots has always been used for renting for mobile homes. He explained that since the new ordinance states that mobile homes cannot be placed in R-2 zoning he is at a loss for what he will do with his property.

Chair Rainer stated that he will need to go through the Office of Planning & Development and County Administrator Steve Howard and the matter can be looked into administratively.

Two residents from Plantation Point, Phase II, asked the Board of County Commissioners questions pertaining to the roads in this development.

David Schmitz

Mr. Schmitz thanked the board for the decision made tonight regarding the resolution calling for a Performance Review of the Board of Assessors.

ADJOURNMENT:

Vice-Chair Zell made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Sears to adjourn the September 15, 2009 meeting. The vote was unanimous to adjourn the meeting at 7:10 PM.

Respectfully submitted,



David L. Rainer, Chair



Kathryn A. Bishop, Acting County Clerk