

**CAMDEN COUNTY  
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

**WORK SESSION**

**2009 REASSESSMENTS  
TUESDAY, MARCH 17, 2009 4:00 PM  
200 EAST FOURTH STREET, WOODBINE, GEORGIA 31569**

**The Camden County Board of County Commissioners held a Work Session at 4:00 p.m. on Tuesday, March 17, 2009, in the Board of Commissioners' Meeting Chambers of the Government Services Building, Woodbine, Georgia.**

**Chair Rainer called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.**

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

**Guests: Chief Appraiser Rick Daniel, Department of Revenue Director of Local Government Services Vikki Lambert, Terry McCormick – GMASS.**

Chair Rainer welcomed everyone and stated that the goal of the Work Session is to present fact based information regarding property assessments.

County Administrator Steve Howard introduced Vikki Lambert of the Department of Revenue.

Ms. Lambert presented the Board with a power point presentation regarding the process of deriving your property assessment. She explained that there are more people involved with the process than just the Board of Tax Assessors and that as property assessment rise the Board of County Commissioners in turn should be able to role the millage rate back. She apologized if parts of her presentation were things the Board of County Commissioners had already heard. Ms. Lambert then turned the presentation over to Chief Appraiser Rick Daniel.

Mr. Daniel explained the situation with the website and the values that were posted prematurely. Mr. Daniel stated that he took sole responsibility for the situation. He continued the power point presentation explaining the process of mass appraisal as well as educating the taxpayer. He stated that GMASS is a reputable company. Mr. McCormick explained the work being done in a series of steps as well as the goal of getting Camden County equalized. He stated that a satellite station for the Tax Assessors office will be utilized for residents in that area so tax payers do not have to travel to Woodbine for appeals, general information & questions. He explained the

public awareness aspect and reviewed the steps for filing an appeal as well as the citizen's timeline. Also, he explained who the Board of Tax Assessors members are and how to contact them. He expressed that the Tax Assessor's office is not hiding anything. Mr. Daniel introduced Terry McCormick of GMASS.

Terry McCormick, GMASS, referred to the power point presentation and explained that GMASS was contracted to assist Camden County in re-valuations. He explained the ratio and what the required ration is. Also, he explained how utilities are affected by the ratio of a county.

Mr. Daniel stated that there are materials out on the tables for anyone who wishes to take them regarding property assessments.

Strategic Planning Director Diana Smith explained to the Board the issues with elected verses appointed Board of Tax Assessors. She gave the Board an overview of House Bill 233 & 489 as well as the House Bill regarding the City of St. Marys Homestead Exemption Freeze.

County Administrator Steve Howard stated that at this time any questions from the Board of County Commissioners can be offered.

Each member of the Board of County Commissioners took this time to express concerns and questions from the guests.

*At this time comments / questions from the public were offered by:*

Attorney Jim Stein

Attorney Stein stated that he obtained the information that was posted on the Camden County Maps website through Open Records Law and it took him some time and correspondence with various people to be able to open & study that information. He stated that there had been some slight adjustments to the data since he first obtained it. Mr. Stein asked Mr. Daniel who posted that data to the website.

Mr. Daniel responded that his office, he himself takes responsibility for that data being posted.

Mr. Stein stated that the Assessor's office says they were shocked he even obtained that information and through open records he would like to obtain the original figures posted on the Camden County Maps website.

Chair Rainer instructed County Attorney Green to make sure Attorney Stein obtains the information he is referring to.

City of St. Marys, Mayor Rowland Eskridge

Mayor Eskridge asked why the "Downtown" area of St. Marys is separated in the ration referred to by GMASS and not St. Marys as a whole in the entire ratio. He asked that

the sales be checked and the amount of industrial in the City of St. Marys is not correct data.

Roger Rillo

Mr. Rillo stated that the whole thing is out of whack. He explained that in the last 2 years his property increased 40% and now another 80% totaling 120%. He stated that recently he took an appraiser course with the Mayor of St. Marys and others. He explained that looking at the data that was posted on the Camden County Maps website there is not a pattern anywhere in the City of St. Marys. He stated that old mill homes, 800 square feet, doubled & tripled in assessment. He stated that he understands that taxes have to be raised but to what extent when people that have lived there all their lives cannot afford to anymore.

City of St. Marys, Council Member Greg Byrd

Council Member Byrd stated that he has been looking at the real estate problem all across the United States and that is not easy to find a stable way to value a home. He explained that the only stable way to do that is to get stability in the economy.

City of St. Marys, Council Member Gull Weaver

Council Member Weaver stated that she is concerned with the procedure that is in affect and she had no idea she had till April 1<sup>st</sup> to file a return.

Attorney Bert Guy

Attorney Guy stated that the bottom line is fairness and people are being singled out. He asked what part of the County will not be attacked by reassessments.

Chair Rainer adjourned the Work Session at 5:43 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

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David L. Rainer, Chair

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Kathryn A. Bishop, Interim County Clerk

**CAMDEN COUNTY, GEORGIA  
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
REGULAR MEETING  
MARCH 17, 2009, 6:00 PM**

**A regular meeting of the Camden County Board of County Commissioners was held at 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday, March 17, 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.

Finance Director Michael Fender 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 Stephen L. Berry; Commissioner Charlene Sears; County Administrator Steve Howard; County Attorney Brent Green, and Interim County Clerk Kathryn Bishop.**

**AGENDA AMENDMENTS:**

None.

**MOTION TO ADOPT THE AGENDA:**

Commissioner Sears made a motion, seconded by Vice-Chair Zell, to adopt the agenda.

**The motion carried unanimously.**

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

Commissioner Keene a motion, seconded by Chair Rainer to approve the minutes of the March 3, 2009 regular meeting.

**The motion carried unanimously.**

**PRESENTATIONS:**

- GEB Corp – Retirement Plan Administrator (*Robert Kim, power point presentation*)

Robert Kim, Representation of GEB Corp Retirement Plan Administrator explained that the company is now 100 % owned by ACCG effective September 1, 2008 and presented an overview of GEB Corp.'s commitment to service and investment options.

- Joint Proclamation declaring March 28, 2009, Earth Hour 2009, for 1 hour between the hours of 8:30 PM & 9:30 PM ***(read by Commissioner Sears and presented to Barbara Ryan, St. Marys Earthkeepers)***

Commissioner Sears read the Joint Proclamation declaring March 28, 2009, Earth Hour 2009, for 1 hour between the hours of 8:30 PM & 9:30 PM and presented the Joint Proclamation to Barbara Ryan, representative of the St. Marys Earthkeepers.

- Proclamation recognizing National Professional Social Work Month 2009 ***(read by Vice-Chair Zell and presented to Mary Gail Lindsey, MSW, School Social Worker)***

Vice-Chair Zell read the Proclamation recognizing Professional Social Work Month 2009 and presented the Proclamation to Mary Gail Lindsey, MSW, School Social Worker.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

Attorney Jim Stein, St. Marys

Attorney Stein approached the Board and presented a handout to each Commissioner. He explained the issues he had while trying to retrieve data requested from a disk provided by the Tax Assessors Office through an open records request. He stated that everyone here better beware of the fiasco with the property reassessments.

**REGULAR AGENDA:**

**1. Approval of Tax Release Application.**

Vice-Chair Zell made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Keene to approve the Tax Release Application.

**The motion carried unanimously.**

**2. Approval of Intergovernmental Agreement regarding Wayne County Passing Siding Project. *(presented by Hillary Stringfellow)***

Commissioner Sears made a motion, seconded by Vice-Chair Zell to approve the Intergovernmental Agreement regarding Wayne County Passing siding Project.

**The motion carried unanimously.**

**3. Verbal Resolution *(if necessary)* for actions to be taken in regards to any actions recommended from previous Work Session scheduled this date in regards to Reassessments.**

Commissioner Berry stated that during the break Robert Rudolph, Chair of the Board of Tax Assessors, was talking to the man from GMASS and he was heard saying “see

what we have to put up with". Commissioner Berry stated that the Board of Tax Assessors just does not get it. He urged the Board that it is time to call for the resignation of the Board of Tax Assessors. He explained that it all comes down to accountability.

He stated that he then heard Terry McCormick, GMASS, say in his presentation that they need to get in a room with the door shut and get this worked out.

Commissioner Berry made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Sears to pass a Resolution requesting that the 4 members of the Board of Tax Assessors, Robert Rudolph, James Lucree, Freddy Nobles & Norman Covert, not including Richard Frizzell, resign by 5:00 PM Thursday, March 18, 2009 and if they do not resign withhold funding for the 4 Board of Assessors allocated pay and forbid funding to be removed from any other line item within the Board of Tax Assessors budget to compensate said 4 members.

Commissioner Sears asked County Attorney Brent Green if it is legal to ask the Board of Tax Assessors to resign.

County Attorney Green stated yes it is legal to ask.

Commissioner Sears asked what would happen if they resigned.

County Attorney Green stated that the new appointments would be required to attend 40 hours of mandated training before they could vote on matters pertaining to the Board of Tax Assessors. He explained that the ramifications could mean the digest would not be approved and disruption of the appeals process for taxpayers.

Commissioner Rainer stated that we need a workable solution.

Commissioner Berry urged the Board to take a stand and say we have had enough of the Board of Tax Assessors.

Chair Rainer adjourned the meeting for a 5 minute recess.

Chair Rainer reconvened the meeting.

Commissioner Berry explained that the mandated training could be achieved immediately with the upcoming offered courses by the Department of Revenue. He stated that it is not a good option to tell the citizens to go hire a lawyer and go to court. He stated that the Board of Tax Assessors scares him and he is sure that volunteers to be appointed to the Board of Tax Assessors will come forward.

Chair Rainer adjourned the meeting for a 20 minute recess.

Chair Rainer reconvened the meeting.

Commissioner Berry made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Sears to withdraw the previous motion.

**The motion carried unanimously.**

Commissioner Berry made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Sears to adopt a Resolution requesting the resignations of 4 members of the Board of Tax Assessors, Robert Rudolph, James Lucree, Freddie Nobles & Norman Covert, not including Richard Frizzell, by 4:00 PM, Friday, March 20, 2009 and in the event said resignations are not tendered, the County Administrator is directed to withhold all funding to compensate the said 4 members of the Board of Tax Assessors, as provided by law, from their approved County budget and no other funds are to be utilized by the Board of Tax Assessors to pay said compensation.

Commissioner Keene asked for discussion regarding what is to be done if the Board of Tax Assessors refuses to resign.

Commissioner Berry stated that if they do not resign daily monitoring can be arranged and recording of the Board of Tax Assessor meeting can be arranged. He stated that at least we have done everything we could possibly do.

Chair Rainer called for the Interim County Clerk Kathryn Bishop to conduct a roll call vote of the motion.

**Roll Call Vote:**

**Chair Rainer – Yes**

**Vice-Chair Zell – Yes**

**Commissioner Berry – Yes**

**Commissioner Sears – Yes**

**Commissioner Keene – Yes**

**The motion was approved by unanimous vote.**

***Public Works – Director Scott Brazell***

- 4. Approval of contract between Camden County and Georgia Department of Transportation for acquisition of Right of Way for the Horse Stamp Church Road Interchange.**

Vice-Chair Zell made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Sears to approve the contract between Camden County and Georgia Department of Transportation for acquisition of Right of Way for the Horse Stamp Church Road Interchange.

**The motion carried unanimously.**

## Reports

- ***Calendar – January/February***

Interim County Clerk Kathryn Bishop read the March & April calendars.

- ***County Administrator's Report***

County Administrator Steve Howard reported the following:

County Administrator Steve Howard stated at this time he has asked Strategic Planning Director Diana Smith to provide the Board with current project updates.

Strategic Planning Director Diana Smith announced the Camden County has been selected to receive the Neighborhood Stabilization Grant. She also provided the Board with an overview of House Bill 480. She stated that the Spotlight on the Department tonight is the H.O.P.E. Charity Committee and encouraged everyone to visit the displays outside in the lobby area.

### **ADDITIONAL PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

Attorney Jim Stein

Attorney Stein explained that there are 42 charitable hospitals in Camden County not paying taxes and that is a big shortfall to the County. He asked that this be looked in too.

Chair Rainer asked County Attorney Green to look in to this matter.

Jay Moreno

Mr. Moreno stated that has of today there are 32 applicants with master degrees for the Joint Development Authority position. He stated that the Joint Development Authority meets at 9:30 AM this Friday and he urged the Board to attend to this meeting.

Commissioner Sears reminded everyone that Saturday, March 21, 2009, is the St. Marys River Clean Up.

### **ADJOURNMENT:**

Commissioner Sears made a motion, seconded by Vice-Chair Zell, to adjourn the March 17, 2009, meeting. The vote was unanimous to adjourn the meeting at 7:32 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

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David L. Rainer, Chair

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Kathryn A. Bishop, Interim County Clerk