

MEMBERS, OCONEE COUNTY COUNCIL
Mr. Steven R. Moore, District I Mr. Kenneth E. Johns, Jr., District II
Rev. William "Bill" Rinehart, District III Mr. Marion E. Lyles, District IV
Mr. H. Frank Ables, Jr., District V

MINUTES, OCONEE COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING

The Oconee County Council met Tuesday, July 6, 2004 at 7:00 PM in Council Chambers, 415 South Pine Street, Walhalla, SC with Mr. Ables, Mr. Lyles & Mr. Johns present. Mr. Norton, County Attorney was also present.

Press:

Members of the press notified (via mail): Keowee Courier, Westminster News, Daily Journal, Anderson Independent, WGOG Radio, WYFF TV & WLOS TV.

Members of the press present: Ray Chandler – Daily Journal, Dave Williams – Anderson Independent, Ashton Hester – Keowee Courier & Dick Mangrum – WGOG Radio.

Other Organizations Notified:

Also notified were the Oconee County Tax Payers Association and the Oconee County Democratic Party.

Call to Order:

Chairman Ables called the meeting to order.

Invocation:

Mr. Johns gave the invocation.

Pledge of Allegiance:

Mr. Norton led the pledge of allegiance to the US Flag.

Minutes:

By consensus, Council adopted the minutes of the regular meeting held June 15, 2004 and the minutes of the special meeting held June 22, 2004.

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County Revenue Sources:

Mr. Brent Robinson, Merchants Capital, LLC gave the attached presentation to Council regarding revenue sources. The presentation included the following:

(1) The Oconee County overview includes our association with Anderson, Cherokee, Greenville, Pickens & Spartanburg Counties. The incorporated municipalities of Salem, Seneca, Walhalla, West Union & Westminster. Sumter National Forest, Chau Ram County Park, Lake Hartwell State Park, Coneross Campground, Oconee Point, Oconee State Park, Stumphouse Tunnel Park, Oconee Station State Park High Falls County park, South Cove County Park, Devils Fork State Park. Rivers: Chauga, Chattooga, Whitewater & Little; Lakes: Jocassee, Keowee & Hartwell

(2) Population & Housing: The county population grew 18.1% between 1990 and 2002

(3) Wealth Levels: Between 1990 and 2001 the per capita income levels in the county increased each year at an average growth rate of 4.3%

(4) Gross Retail Sales: In 2003 the retail sales in the county were \$935,839,328

(5) Taxes: The county millage is number twelve in the state at 65 mills for county operations and number fourteen in the state at 139 mills for school operations

(6) The Merchant's Capital, LLC overview includes their foundation in 1987, coverage in the southeast and national capital markets, they specialize in public finance, real estate/multifamily housing and corporate debt markets, multimillion dollar underwriting portfolio; one of the largest investment banking staffs in the southeast

After Mr. Robinson's presentation Mr. Lyles suggested we have a retreat as soon as possible and invite Mr. Robinson to attend.

Oconee Shrub:

Upon request of the Walhalla Garden Club, Mr. Johns made a motion, seconded by Mr. Lyles, approved 3 – 0 that the "Oconee Azalea" be adopted as the official shrub of the county.

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Water Portion of the Infrastructure Plan:

Mr. Paul Lewis, Goldie & Associates presented the water portion of the Infrastructure Plan to Council. Five needs that need to be addressed are:

(1) Work with existing institutions – the county needs mechanisms for involvement in water development, water suppliers control the water system development and water suppliers have limited resources

(2) Protect Water Resources – water quality of its lakes is critical to the success and future of Oconee County, septic tanks, lake development and surrounding urban areas

(3) Achieving fire flow capabilities – greater accessibility to fire hydrants and lower insurance rates

(4) Connect water systems in Oconee County

(5) Water system improvements and upgrades – project lists submitted by suppliers:

Pioneer Rural Water System Projects: 10" and 16" mains – 11 proposed projects - \$11,000,000 / Water storage tank - \$1,000,000

Salem Water System Projects: Booster pump upgrade - \$1,400,000 / two new wells - \$200,000 / water storage tank - \$500,000 / expansions and loops - \$2,600,000 and new WTP with Walhalla

Seneca Water System Projects: Water plan upgrades - \$3,025,000 / storage capacity - \$2,500,000 / new water treatment plant at Newry dam - \$10,000,000

Walhalla Water System Projects: New WTP - \$25,000,000 / expansions and loops \$1,700,000

Westminster Water System Projects: 25 MG settling pond - \$1,025,000 / storage tanks - \$3,100,000 / 24" Chauga raw water line - \$1,000,000 / new WTP - \$30,000,000 / loops and extensions \$1,000,000 – See attached presentation

Sheriff's Department:

Council voted unanimously to adopt a Child/Elder Abuse Grant in the amount of \$89,875 with a 25% match in the amount of \$22,469, which is in their budget.

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Delinquent Tax:

Upon recommendation of Mrs. Phyllis Lombard, Finance Director, Mr. Johns made a motion, seconded by Mr. Lyles, approved 3 – 0 that the amount for collection of delinquent taxes on bankruptcies be set at \$1,000.

Vehicle Decals:

Council deemed it appropriate that vehicles for the Magistrate, Fire Department, Solicitor and Coroner have permanent decals.

Ordinance 2004-15:

Mr. Johns made a motion, seconded by Mr. Lyles, approved 3 – 0 that Ordinance 2004-15, "AN ORDINANCE AMENDING ORDINANCE 97-14, OCONEE COUNTY POLICIES & PROCEDURES MANUAL, SPECIFICALLY SECTIONS 3-1, 3-4 & 3-5" be adopted on third and final reading.

Infrastructure Master Plan:

Mr. Ables informed Council he had asked the County Attorney, the Economic Development Director and the Planning Director to prepare a summary of the infrastructure master plan to be distributed to the hospital, school district, municipalities, businesses, industries and other interested parties.

Purchasing, Contracting, Real Estate, Building, & Grounds Committee Recommendation:

Upon recommendation of the Purchasing, Contracting, Real Estate, Building & Grounds Committee Council voted unanimously to adopt the attached change order to the contract by and between Oconee County and Synergem.

Personnel & Intergovernmental Recommendations:

Upon recommendation of the Personnel & Intergovernmental Committee, Council voted unanimously to adopt the following:

(1) The hiring freeze will be lifted on all positions approved in the 2003-04 fiscal year and those positions approved in the 2004-05 fiscal year budget be considered on a case-by-case basis

(2) A title change of Secretary I to Secretary II in the Library

(3) A title change of Court Clerk II to Deputy Clerk of Court

(4) Human Resources Director receive increase of \$2,976 due to increase in duties

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Personnel & Intergovernmental Recommendations Continued:

(5) The School District will supply \$35,000 for the County to place a School Resource Officer at Salem High School which creates a new position in the Sheriff's Department, but due to reclassification there will be a savings of just over \$2,000

County Wide Public Forum:

Mr. Ables stated he would like for the County to hold public forums for the citizens to express their concerns regarding the sewer/water referendum and asked the Mr. Norton, County Attorney, Mr. Alexander, Economic Development Director and Mr. Tom Hendricks, Planning Director coordinate these forums.

Roads & Transportation Committee Recommendations:

Upon recommendation of the Roads & Transportation Committee, Council voted unanimously to grandfather the old section of roadway in Blue Mountain Estates as it was constructed to county specifications at the time contingent upon the shoulder work being completed, some drainage and seeding being completed to the Roads & Bridges Superintendent's approval and the new portion being paved at twenty feet if it meets county specifications with one year probation and one year bond on the entire roadway.

Also, Whispering Brook also be accepted with 100% of the rights-of-ways, the use of plastic culverts, seeding, erosion control, one-year bond and one-year probation period.

Public Comment Session:

Ms. Susie Cornelius addressed Council regarding Mr. Brent Robinson's presentation.

Ms. Andrea Parker informed Council she was new in the County, just wanted to introduce herself and become acquainted with county government.

Mr. B. J. Littleton addressed Council regarding an incinerator for disposal of garbage and the administrator for the County.

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Adjourn:

Adjourn 8:10 PM

Respectfully Submitted:

Opal O. Green, Clerk to Council