

**MEMBERS, OCONEE COUNTY COUNCIL**

Mr. Steven R. Moore, District I Mr. Thomas S. Crumpton, Jr., District II  
Rev. William S. "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, February 7, 2006 at 3:00 pm in Council Chambers, 415 South Pine Street, Walhalla, SC with all Council Members, County Administrator Ron Rabun, Clerk to Council & Mr. Norton, County Attorney present.

**Press:**

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

Members of the press present: Dick Mangrum – WGOG Radio, Dave Williams – Anderson Independent & Brett McLaughlin – Daily Journal.

**Other Organizations Notified:**

Also notified were the Oconee County Tax Payers Association, Citizens for Recreation Center and the Oconee County Democratic Party.

**Call to Order:**

Chairman Ables called the meeting to order.

**Invocation:**

Mr. Rinehart gave the invocation.

**Pledge of Allegiance:**

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

**Minutes:**

Mr. Moore made a motion, seconded by Mr. Lyles, approved 5 – 0 that the minutes of the January 17, 2006 meeting be adopted as printed.

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**SCACOG Annual Report:**

Mr. Robert Strother, Director, SC Appalachian Council of Governments, presented the annual report of activity in Oconee County as follows:

\$ 803,296 to Oconee County from COG aging/workforce development subcontracts  
\$ 500,000 to Oconee County from federal/state direct grants programs  
\$1,303,296 Total invested in Oconee County

**Additional Services to the County in 2005 include:**

Updating the Oconee County component of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy.  
Providing terrorism awareness, supervisory and other training for Oconee County employees.  
Completion of the 2004-05 Oconee County Economic Profile.  
Response to one hundred, twenty one requests for economic and demographic information regarding Oconee County.

Providing ongoing technical support and training for the Oconee County Economic Development Commission.  
Providing a variety of ongoing technical assistance to the municipalities of the County.

**New Programs in 2006 will include:**

Providing training for the Planning Commission & Board of Appeal.  
Expansion of COG's small business lending program to provide additional resources for existing and new business enterprises.  
Publication of the 2005-06 Oconee County Economic Profile.

**Public Comment Session:**

Mr. Gerald \_\_\_\_\_ addressed Council regarding poultry farming and the regulations regarding that industry.

Ms. Susie Cornelius addressed Council regarding tax dollars and accountability.

Mr. Ken Charles addressed Council regarding development in the County.

Mr. B. J. Littleton addressed Council regarding development in the County.

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**Public Comment Session Continued:**

Mr. Francis Maloney addressed Council regarding the rights of property owners to do as they wish with their property.

Mr. John Gardner addressed Council regarding the regulations required to situate a mobile home for habitation.

**Discussion Regarding Possible High-Rise Condominiums On Lake Keowee:**

Mr. Ben Turetzky, President FOLKS addressed Council regarding the adoption of a moratorium on the initiation and development of multi family complexes including, but not limited to condominiums until the current regulations can be reviewed and modifications can be made consistent with the Oconee County Comprehensive Land Use Plan.

Council Members expressed concerns that the County does need zoning.

Mr. Rick Thoennes, developer of the proposed high rise condominium on Lake Keowee addressed Council informing them that he too, was a resident of Oconee County who lived on the lake and he was concerned about the same issues they were. Mr. Thoennes also informed Council there would be no septic tanks, nor infrastructure (water & sewer) problems.

He also informed Council these condo's would be second homes for most of the residents, they would be constructed of noncombustible materials with a sprinkler system. Mr. Thoennes further informed Council that storm water would be filtered before it went into the lake, parking would be under the buildings and the goal of fire personnel would be to evacuate because very entities have the capacity to reach the top of a high rise building with a ladder truck.

Ms. Linda Lovely, Beacon Shores resident also addressed Council urging the adoption of a moratorium stating their belief that before a project such as this go forward that studies regarding public safety, infrastructure and the environmental affect should be put in place.

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**Discussion Regarding Possible High-Rise Condominiums on Lake Keowee Continued:**

After considerable discussion, Mr. Moore read the following statement: Whereas, Lake Keowee has become an extremely desirable location for residential development as is evidenced by increased demand and increasing prices for lakefront property; and whereas virtually all of the Lake Keowee development has consisted of single family lots and homes except for a few small low rise multifamily developments of three or fewer stories in height and whereas, there has been no study of existing infrastructure such as the availability and suitability of roads, water, sewer and environmental impact, related to multifamily development on Lake Keowee and whereas time is needed in order to perform a land use study of lands on Lake Keowee.

Mr. Moore then made the following motion, seconded by Mr. Rinehart, approved 5 – 0 that Oconee County impose a six month moratorium on property within one thousand feet of the lakefront on Lake Keowee or any other lake in Oconee County for multifamily development of more than three stories in height when viewed from the lake with the intention to pursue zoning.

Council further instructed Mr. Rabun to begin the process of having studies completed to have zoning put in place in Oconee County.

**Valenite Grant:**

Mr. Lyles made a motion, seconded by Mr. Moore, approved 5 – 0 that the County apply for a State grant in the amount of \$145,000 for a turning lane for Valenite, Inc.

**ATAX Grants:**

Mr. Crumpton made a motion, seconded by Mr. Lyles, approved 5 – 0 that the attached ATAX grant in the amount of \$5,430 to the Oconee Community Theater be adopted.

Mr. Crumpton made a motion, seconded by Mr. Lyles, approved 5 – 0 that the attached ATAX grant in the amount of \$2,000 to the Quality Coffee-March of Dimes Team be adopted.

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**Ordinance 2006-01:**

Mr. Rabun brought to Council's attention the possibility of adopting proposed Ordinance 2006-01, "AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE COUNTY TAX COMMITTEE WHICH IS COMPOSED OF THE COUNTY AUDITOR, TREASURER AND ASSESSOR TO REVIEW AND TAKE APPROPRIATE ACTION ON AGRICULTURAL AND RESIDENTIAL 4% APPLICATIONS FILED AFTER THE STATUTORY DEADLINE".

After a brief discussion, Council instructed Mr. Rabun to proceed with the process of having this ordinance adopted.

**Library:**

Mr. Paul Johanson, Library Board Chair & Mr. John Adams, Library Board Member addressed Council regarding a feasibility study for the Seneca Library to contain the following:

- Site Feasibility Study
- Evaluate the structural design feasibility of renovating and adding to the existing Seneca Library
- Develop a program and schematic floor plan for a new library building with options on multi-story structures
- Determine how best to maximize the proposed site with regard to future growth, etc.
- Prepare initial construction budgets for each option to be used as a guideline to project approval by County Council

Mr. Rinehart asked that the scope include the following statement: Evaluate the structural and design feasibility of renovating existing downtown structures in harmony with long range development plans.

Mr. Crumpton expressed concerns regarding the construction of a new building to house the Seneca Library rather than an addition and renovation to the current building.

After considerable discussion, this matter was assigned to the Real Estate, Facilities & Land Management Committee for discussion and recommendation to full Council.

The Real Estate, Facilities & Land Management Committee scheduled a meeting Tuesday, March 7, 2006 at 1:00 pm in Council Chambers to discuss the request of the Library Commission.

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**Energy & Fuel Conservation Report:**

Mr. Rabun presented the attached energy and fuel conservation report which shows that the current trend of the four day work week, driving more efficiently, limited travel expense and changes in the thermostat settings shows a projected deficit of approximately \$92,478 through the end of the 2005-06 fiscal year versus a previously projected \$531,000.

Further, Mr. Rabun informed Council that sick leave records indicate an eleven percent cut in sick leave hours being taken by the employees.

There was much discussion regarding the pro's and con's of the four day work week versus the five day work week, the actual savings the County will experience as well as the negative and positive comments received by Council regarding the four day work week. Some of the Council Members requested that official action be taken at the next Council Meeting regarding this matter, however, after further discussion Mr. Ables reminded Council that they had previously, by consensus, committed to a six month trial basis of Mr. Rabun implementing the ten hour/four day work week and other cost saving measures to the County. Therefore, no action was taken to add this matter to the next Council agenda.

**Capital Projects Listing:**

Mr. Rabun presented the attached listing of proposed projects to be presented to the Capital Projects Sales Tax Commission for consideration when compiling the listing of projects to be placed on the November 2006 referendum question:

- Phase I of I-85 Sewer Expansion \$ 8,215,000
- Phase II of I-85 Sewer Expansion \$ 7,360,000
- Phase III of I-85 Sewer Expansion \$ 2,688,000
- Airport Area Sewer Expansion \$ 2,168,000
- Jail Expansion, Phase II \$ 6,500,000

GRAND TOTAL: \$26,931,000

This is only a listing of possible projects and Council scheduled a meeting Monday, February 20, 2006 at 5:00 pm in Council Chambers to discuss possible projects to present to the Commission for consideration to be placed on the referendum.

There was also a brief discussion regarding the emergency service needs at either end of the County, the need for fire substations to improve the ISO ratings in the County, the need for a Seneca Library and Communications tower.

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**Extension of City-County Sewer Agreements:**

Mr. Norton presented the attached extension of the City-County Sewer Agreements to Council. These agreements have been sent to the municipalities; however, their comments have not been transmitted back to the County at this time.

**Council Committee Reports:**

Mr. Moore informed those present that the Road & Transportation Committee met just prior to the Council Meeting, but there was no action to report to Council.

Mr. Crumpton informed those present that the Law Enforcement, Public Safety, Health & Welfare Committee met prior to the Council meeting, but there was no action to report to Council.

The Law Enforcement, Public Safety, Health & Welfare Committee scheduled a meeting Thursday, February 16, 2006 at 10:00 am in Council Chambers to discuss emergency service needs in the County.

The Real Estate, Facilities & Land Management Committee scheduled a meeting Tuesday, March 7, 2006 at 1:00 pm for the purpose of discussing the Seneca Library and other building needs as necessary.

**Administrator Report:**

Mr. Rabun reminded the Council Members that Chief Justice Jean Toal would be at the Courthouse on Friday, February 10, 2006 at 10:00 am regarding the video court arraignment project.

He further reminded Council of the Oconee Alliance meeting Thursday, February 9<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. Rabun informed Council the Capital Projects Sales Tax Commission has tentatively scheduled fourteen meetings around the County beginning in Walhalla Thursday, February 9<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 pm and Seneca City Hall Tuesday, February 7<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 pm.

Mr. Ables interjected the Commission would also be meeting at Fair Play Monday, February 13<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 pm.

Mr. Rabun informed Council that he and Phil Shirley, PRT Director made a presentation to the Legislative Delegation in the hopes of receiving funding for the renovation of the docks at South Cove & High Falls Parks.

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**Administrator Report Continued:**

Mr. Rabun expressed concern regarding the proposed legislative action regarding doing away with property tax and informed Council that Oconee was originally scheduled to appear in Columbia February 14<sup>th</sup>, but felt it would be more beneficial if this was postponed until a later date.

**County Owned Forestry:**

Mr. Moore informed Council that John Little, Forester, would be presenting Council with recommendations regarding ice storm damage to County owned forestry as well as presenting the report on ages of County owned forestry and recommendations.

**Savannah River Basin:**

Mr. Moore asked Mr. Rabun to assess the rulings made regarding the Savannah River Basin.

**Super-Majority:**

Mr. Crumpton informed Council he would have the language drafted by the next Council Meeting regarding the super-majority vote of Council he had requested on financial matters with a super-majority meaning four of the five Council Members present and voting.

**Tri County Technical College:**

Mr. Ables informed Council that Tri County Technical College would be making their annual budget presentation Wednesday, March 15, 2006 at noon.

**Amendment to Moratorium Motion:**

Mr. Moore made a motion, seconded by Mr. Rinehart, approved 5 – 0 that the moratorium motion be amended to include the language of multi-family dwellings due to there being some single family residences that are four storied buildings on Lake Keowee.

**Adjourn:**

Adjourn: 5:35 pm

Respectfully Submitted:

Opal O. Green, Clerk to Council