

MEMBERS, OCONEE COUNTY COUNCIL

Mr. George C. Blanchard, District I Mr. Thomas S. Crumpton, Jr., District II
Mr. Mario Suarez, 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, January 16, 2007 at 7:00 pm in Council Chambers, 415 South Pine Street, Walhalla, SC with all Council Members except Mr. Blanchard 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, & WSNW Radio.

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

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 Lyles called the meeting to order.

Pledge of Allegiance:

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

Minutes:

Mr. Ables made a motion, seconded by Mr. Suarez, approved 4 – 0 that the minutes of the regular meeting held January 2, 2007 be adopted as printed.

Public Comment Session:

Mr. Berry Nichols addressed Council regarding taxes as well as the County and School District combining resources for a Seneca Library.

Public Comments Continued:

Mr. Larry Linson addressed Council regarding the County financial report presented at the January 2, 2007 meeting and the School District's proposal to construct a \$20,000,000 school as well as using pre-fabricated buildings for County and School purposes.

Mr. C. W. Richards addressed Council regarding the search for a new County Administrator.

Mr. Bo Horne addressed Council regarding reassessment, tax relief and roll back of 2006 reassessments.

Mr. Bill Bruehl addressed Council regarding prayer before the Council Meetings.

Mr. George Cleveland addressed Council regarding the work session to discuss prayer before the Council Meetings, Seneca and Rural Fire agreement, Seneca Library, jail and Economic Development.

Mr. Francis X. Maloney addressed Council regarding the County Administrator, the sewer system, county properties and West Point Stevens properties.

Mr. B. J. Littleton addressed Council regarding political correctness being the downfall of our country.

Sheriff's Department:

Mr. Crumpton made a motion, seconded by Mr. Ables, approved 4 – 0 that the Sheriff's Department be authorized to apply for a Justice Assistance Grant in the amount of \$10,453.50 with a local match of \$3,484.50 (provided by narcotics seizure funds) for the purpose of purchasing law enforcement equipment and technology to assist the Narcotics Division of the Sheriff's Department.

Dive Team:

Mr. Crumpton made a motion, seconded by Mr. Suarez, approved 4 – 0 that the County accept a grant from the Department of Natural Resources in the amount of \$25,000 for the purchase of twin 175 hp motors for the County Dive Team pontoon.

ATAX Grants:

Mr. Ables made a motion, seconded by Mr. Suarez, approved 4 – 0 that an ATAX grant in the amount of \$3,080 to the Oconee Community Theater for billboard advertising be adopted.

Mr. Ables made a motion, seconded by Mr. Suarez, approved 4 – 0 that an ATAX grant in the amount of \$5,500 to the Oconee Community Theater for building enhancements to include a new speaker and lighting system be adopted.

Mr. Ables made a motion, seconded by Mr. Suarez, approved 4 – 0 that an ATAX grant in the amount of \$2,175 to the Blue Ridge Arts Council for advertising of their annual Juried Art Show be adopted.

Parks, Recreation & Tourism:

Mr. Crumpton made a motion, seconded by Mr. Suarez, approved 4 - 0 that J. Davis Construction, Inc. (only bidder) be engaged to construct a back porch/veranda to the Alexander-Cannon-Hill House at High Fall Park at a cost not to exceed \$40,000 with \$30,000 of the cost coming from a SC National Heritage Corridor grant and the local match of \$10,000 coming from line item 013 202 90150 18850. (See attached bid sheet)

Mr. Ables made a motion, seconded by Mr. Crumpton, approved 4 – 0 that the bid to replace all the water lines at South Cove Park be awarded to Tugaloo Pipeline, Inc. who was low bidder at \$35,000. The funds for this project are budgeted in line item in line item 010 204 50850. (See attached bid sheet)

Road Department:

Mr. Ables made a motion, seconded by Mr. Crumpton, approved 4 – 0 that the bid for striping of approximately 87.9 miles of County roadways be awarded to Peek Service Company, LLC who was low bidder at an approximate amount of \$45,342 for a one year period with option to renew for an additional four one year periods in accordance with bid 06-15 provided their work is satisfactory. (See attached bid sheet)

Building Codes:

Mr. Crumpton made a motion, seconded by Mr. Suarez, approved 4 – 0 that the bid for a computerized building codes system be awarded to Builderadius (only bidder) in the amount of \$49,000 with \$30,500 of the funding coming from line item 010 702 30024, \$14,500 of the funding coming from line item 010 702 30056 and the remaining \$4,000 coming from line item 010 711 30056. (See attached bid sheet)

Information Technology:

Mr. Ables made a motion, seconded by Mr. Crumpton, approved 4 – 0 that a maintenance agreement with ESRI for GIS be adopted at a cost of \$17,115 with funding coming from line item 010 711 30056. (See attached agreement)

Assessor's Office:

Mr. Ables made a motion, seconded by Mr. Crumpton, approved 4 – 0 that a temporary server license in the amount of \$3,500 for the conversion of data in the Assessor's Office to the new system be adopted. (See attached agreement)

"Welcome to Oconee County Signs" Contingency Funds:

Mr. Crumpton made a motion, seconded by Mr. Suarez, approved 3 – 1 (Mr. Ables voting against) that \$8,745 be taken from contingency for the purchase of three new "Welcome to Oconee County" signs with the new logo.

Ordinance 2007-01:

Mr. Ables made a motion, seconded by Mr. Crumpton, approved 4 – 0 that Ordinance 2007-01, "AN ORDINANCE TO PROVIDE FOR THE ISSUANCE OF A NOT EXCEEDING ONE MILLION TWO HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLAR (\$1,200,000) OCONEE COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA, GENERAL OBLIGATION BOND (KEOWEE FIRE TAX DISTRICT PROJECT), SERIES 2007; TO PRESCRIBE THE PURPOSES FOR WHICH THE PROCEEDS SHALL BE EXPENDED; TO PROVIDE FOR THE PAYMENT THEREOF; AND OTHER MATTERS RELATING THERETO" be adopted on second reading.

Ordinance 2006-30:

Mr. Suarez made a motion, seconded by Mr. Ables, approved 4 – 0 that Ordinance 2006-30, "AN ORDINANCE AMENDING ORDINANCE 99-14, UNIFIED PERFORMANCE STANDARDS TO INCLUDE CHAPTER 7, TATTOOING FACILITIES WITHIN THE UNINCORPORATED AREAS OF OCONEE COUNTY" be adopted on second reading.

ATAX Committee Appointment:

Mr. Suarez made a motion, seconded by Mr. Ables, approved 4 – 0 that Mr. Glenn Abbott be appointed as the At Large Representative on the ATAX Committee.

Council Committee Reports:

Mr. Suarez informed Council that he had met with Mr. Jim Alexander, Economic Development Director and Mr. Sam Dickson, Member of the Economic Development Commission regarding a work session to discuss strategic planning for the County.

Administrator Report:

Mr. Hendricks reported the progress being made on the proposed Department of Social Services Building and informed Council he would have a proposed floor plan with cost estimates and an estimated completion date to them at the February 6, 2007 Council Meeting. In March Mr. Hendricks will present plans for paying for the completion of the building.

Tax Base:

Mr. Ables reminded the audience there was no public outcry when Oconee County lost approximately \$7,000,000 in taxes due to the loss of J. P. Stevens and the State's lowering of Duke Power's assessment when Duke had just invested close to \$1,000,000,000 in the County. Further, there was no public outcry when the State Legislature allowed Duke to move approximately \$1,000,000,000 of their assets on paper to Cherokee County even though the facility is physically located in Oconee County. Mr. Ables reminded the audience that we need industry in Oconee County and he would continue to fight for industry for the next two years.

Tax Payments:

Mr. Crumpton requested that the Administrator & Attorney check into the legality and feasibility of letting citizens make their tax payments in installments.

Work Session:

Mr. Lyles announced a joint work session of Council & the Planning Commission Monday, January 29, 2007 at 10:00 am in Council Chambers for the purpose of discussing the proposed sign ordinance.

Road & Transportation Committee Meeting:

Mr. Crumpton scheduled a meeting of the Road & Transportation Committee Tuesday, February 6, 2007 at 2:00 pm in Council Chambers.

Executive Session:

Mr. Ables made a motion, seconded by Mr. Crumpton, approved 4 – 0 that Council go into executive session for the purpose of discussing personnel matters, legal matters and contractual matters subject to attorney/client privilege.

Open Session:

There was no action when open session resumed.

Adjourn:

Adjourn: 8:40 pm

Respectfully Submitted:

Opal O. Green,
Clerk to Council