

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, April 17, 2007 at 3:00 pm in Council Chambers, 415 South Pine Street, Walhalla, SC with all Council Members except and the 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, WSPA TV & WSNW Radio.

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

Other Organizations Notified:

Also notified were the Oconee County Tax Payers Association & Citizens for Recreation Center.

Call to Order:

Chairman Lyles called the meeting to order.

Pledge to US Flag:

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

Minutes:

Mr. Blanchard made a motion, seconded by Mr. Crumpton, approved 3 – 0 (Mr. Suarez not present at this time / Mr. Ables abstaining) that the minutes of the April 3, 2007 meeting be adopted as presented.

Public Comment Session:

Mr. George Cleveland addressed Council regarding fire protection for the City of Seneca and the County.

Public Comment Session Continued:

Mr. Albert Reiger addressed Council regarding a committee of one representative for every 2,000 people in every fire district regarding the citizen-initiated, community-based zoning in Oconee County. Mr. Reiger also suggested paying for a new Seneca Library using the one percent local option sales tax.

Ms. Susie Cornelius addressed Council regarding computer equipment at the Libraries and zoning by fire districts.

Mr. Berry Nichols addressed Council regarding a request to be placed on the next agenda of the Law Enforcement, Public Safety, Health & Welfare Committee to discuss litter control in the County.

Mr. B. J. Littleton addressed Council regarding rural fire protection.

Administrator Candidates:

Mr. Lyles, Council Chair, announced the following four candidates to be interviewed for County Administrator: Dale K. Surrett, Moncks Corner, SC; Ernest B. Segars, Laurens, SC; David McNeil, Brevard, NC and Edward Sealoover, Clarksville, GA. The interviews of these candidates are scheduled April 25 & 26, 2007 beginning at 9:00 am each day.

Annual South Carolina Appalachian Council of Governments Update:

Mr. Steve Pelissier, Director, SC Appalachian Council of Governments, presented the annual update to Council. Mr. Pelissier informed Council that Oconee County's annual investment in SCACOG is \$27,951 and the return on that investment in 2006 was \$1,911,549 broken down as follow: (See attached)

- \$ 990,557 Workforce Development Programs
- \$ 600,000 ACOG/SCDOT Rural Highway System Improvement Program
- \$ 320,992 Aging Service Programs

- \$1,911,549 GRAND TOTAL

Discussion Regarding Seneca Library:

Mr. John W. Adams, Chairman and Dr. Martha Baily, Director, Oconee County Library System addressed Council regarding replacing the Seneca Library on property owned by the Oconee County School District citing the fact that Council had instructed the Library Board to use the \$45,000 in their budget to commence initial schematics and master planning. Mr. Adams stated it would be a design/build 32,000 square foot building and asked Council to approve funding in the amount of \$8,100,000 prior to August 2009.

After considerable discussion, it was the consensus of Council that it would not be prudent to move forward with a bond issue for any building at this time.

Report to Council Regarding Citizen-Initiated Community-Based Zoning Program:

Mr. Art Holbrooks, Planning Director, informed Council that zoning is the establishment of districts which are separated into sections reserved for different land uses. Zoning is simply a tool that can be used to help guide growth and development in the attempt to meet goals established in the comprehensive plan.

The following are milestones to implement zoning in Oconee County:

- (1) Define Fire District Boundaries
- (2) Delivery of Parcel Data/Land Use Information
- (3) Draft Definitions
- (4) Begin Public Meetings
- (5) Hire Zoning Administrator
- (6) Draft Process
- (7) Complete Public Meetings
- (8) Amend Comp Plan to Adopt Land Use Maps
- (9) Complete Draft Ordinance
- (10) Refer Ordinance to Council
- (11) Public Hearings
- (12) Adoption & Implementation

Expected needs are: a Zoning Administrator and administrative position at the time the enabling ordinance is adopted. Zoning personnel can be located adjacent to Planning & Codes. Existing Offices can be moved and modified with hopefully no significant expenditures.

The timeline begins with defining and adopting legal fire district boundaries in April, 2007 and concludes with adoption and implementation in October, 2008. (See attached for further information)

Executive Session:

Mr. Crumpton made a motion, seconded by Mr. Ables, approved 5 – 0 that Council go into executive session to discuss two legal matters and two contractual matters.

Open Session:

When open session resumed, Mr. Blanchard expressed appreciation to the City of Seneca for bringing to the attention of County Council the serious issue of fire protection in their City and the outlying areas. Mr. Blanchard then made a motion, seconded by Mr. Crumpton, approved 5 – 0 that the County cannot meet the City of Seneca’s requirements, therefore, we cannot enter into a contract with them regarding fire protection and instructed Mr. Hendricks and his staff to begin establishing a County-wide fire protection plan.

Mr. Ables had to leave at this time.

PARD Grant:

Mr. Blanchard made a motion, seconded by Mr. Crumpton, approved 4 – 0 that Parks, Recreation & Tourism be authorized to apply for a PARD Grant in the amount of \$9,600 with a local match of \$2,400 for swing structures and disc golf baskets for Chau Ram Park.

ATAX Grants:

Mr. Blanchard made a motion, seconded by Mr. Suarez, approved 4 – 0 that the following ATAX Grants be adopted:

\$1,370 to Blue Ridge Arts Council for the promotion of the Jewelry Art/Glass Show.

\$3,400 to Oconee Community Theater for the promotion of Weekend Theater Package.

\$2,000 to Seneca Woman’s Club for Renovation of Historic Garage.

\$924 to Walhalla Merchants Association for Skirt for Stage/Trailer.

Economic Development:

Mr. Suarez made a motion, seconded by Mr. Blanchard, approved 4 – 0 that the bid for a County-Wide Strategic Plan for Economic Development be awarded to Genesis Consulting Group who was low bid at \$44,000. The Palmetto Economic Development Corporation will fund \$39,600 of this project and the County will only be required to fund \$4,400. (See attached bid sheet)

Keowee Fire District Budget:

Mr. Suarez made a motion, seconded by Mr. Crumpton, approved 3 – 0 (Mr. Blanchard abstaining) that the attached proposed 2007-08 budget for Keowee Fire Tax District not be approved.

Solid Waste:

Mr. Crumpton made a motion, seconded by Mr. Blanchard, approved 4 – 0 that the Solid Waste Department be authorized to use \$16,000 in line item 016 718 50850 to make needed repairs to the interior and exterior of the scale house at the Seneca Landfill, that Solid Waste be authorized to use \$35,000 in line item 016 718 50850 to replace/repair the steel covering on the Transfer Station walls and further that \$8,000 be transferred from line item 016 718 50850 to line item 016 718 30022 for the purchase of materials to make minor repairs and resealing of the concrete floor at the Transfer Station.

Ordinance 2007-03:

Mr. Crumpton made a motion, seconded by Mr. Blanchard, approved 4 – 0 that Ordinance 2007-03, “AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION AND DELIVERY OF AN INFRASTRUCTURE FINANCE AGREEMENT BY AND AMONG OCONEE COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA, LIFT, LLC AND LIFT TECHNOLOGIES, INC. WITH RESPECT TO CERTAIN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROPERTY IN THE COUNTY, WHEREBY SUCH PROPERTY WILL RECEIVE CERTAIN INFRASTRUCTURE CREDITS IN RESPECT OF ITS INVESTMENT IN RELATED INFRASTRUCTURE; AND OTHER MATTERS RELATED THERETO” be adopted on second reading.

Resolution 2007-02:

Mr. Crumpton made a motion, seconded by Mr. Suarez, approved 4 – 0 that Resolution 2007-02, “A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION AND DELIVERY OF AN INDUCEMENT AGREEMENT BY AND AMONG OCONEE COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA, AND LIFT TECHNOLOGIES, INC. AND LIFT LLC, WHEREBY, UNDER CERTAIN CONDITIONS, OCONEE COUNTY WILL PROVIDE CERTAIN INFRASTRUCTURE CREDITS WITH RESPECT OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A MANUFACTURING FACILITY IN THE COUNTY; AND PROVIDING FOR RELATED MATTERS” be adopted on first and final reading.

State Funds for DSS:

Mr. Hendricks informed Council that Senator Alexander had secured a check in the amount of \$500,000 from Health & Human Services to be used for furnishings, etc. for the new Department of Social Services Building.

Grants Secured by Oconee County:

Mr. Hendricks informed Council that Oconee County had secured the following grants from March 2006 – March 2007:

Aeronautics:	\$ 295,575.00
Law Enforcement:	\$ 489,595.12
EMS:	\$ 35,123.00
Solid Waste:	\$ 62,300.00
Emergency Mgt.:	\$ 428,738.00
PRT:	\$ 51,775.00
ATAX:	\$ 247,695.00
Library:	\$ 20,293.02
Rural Fire:	\$ 81,340.00
Rock Quarry:	\$ 2,280.00
Roads:	\$ 1,292,915.45
Economic Development:	\$ 330,000.00
Registration & Elections:	\$ 59,151.00
Miscellaneous:	\$ 640,839.79
 GRAND TOTAL:	 \$ 4,037,620.38

Industrial Park:

Mr. Hendricks asked Council to consider widening the bridge on Highway 59 near the industrial park and preparing turning lanes into the park.

DSS Report:

Mr. Hendricks informed Council that the field work at the new DSS site had been accomplished by the Road Department and the roof was being removed and replaced at the same time.

Road Signs:

Mr. Hendricks had Mack Kelly, Public Works Director, show Council the new road signs the County will be using.

Council Committee Reports:

Upon recommendation of the law Enforcement, Public Safety, Health & Welfare Committee Council voted unanimously to adopt the proposed T-Hangar lease agreement and the proposed minimum standards for the Oconee Airport with an added paragraph regarding skydiving operations and an added paragraph regarding the helipad.

Further, upon recommendation of the Committee, Council denied the request for a change order to New World Systems purchase order #42315 for redundancy capability for the Communications Center for an additional \$23,731.25.

Retreat:

Mr. Suarez asked that Mr. Hendricks organize and plan a retreat for the discussion of what we would like for the County to look like in twenty years.

Employees Health Insurance:

Mr. Blanchard made a motion, seconded by Mr. Suarez, approved 4 – 0 that the contract with Benefit Administrators as third party administrator for the employees health insurance be renewed beginning May 1, 2007.

Billboards in Oconee County:

Mr. Blanchard stated that although he was not going to make this in the form of a motion he felt the County should develop an ordinance to establish criteria for billboards giving the County the right to inspect them to assure they meet the standards and are properly located and maybe charge as much as \$1,000 application fee per billboard.

ADA Consultant:

It was the consensus of Council that the County engage an ADA Consultant to insure that all the requirements of the Department of Justice are met at the Courthouse.

Noise Control Ordinance:

To Mr. Blanchard's inquiry, Mr. Norton, County Attorney, assured him the noise ordinance is enforceable.

Adjourn:

Adjourn: 5:40 pm

Respectfully Submitted:

Opal O. Green
Clerk to Council