

**MINUTES
OCONEE COUNTY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING
AUGUST 7, 2007**

MEMBERS, OCONEE COUNTY COUNCIL

Mr. George Blanchard District I
Mr. Thomas S. Crumpton, Jr., District II
Mr. Mario Suarez, District III
Mr. Marion E. Lyles, District IV, Chairman
Mr. H. Frank Ables, Jr., District V

The Oconee County Council met Tuesday, August 7, 2007 at 7:00 PM in Council Chambers, 415 South Pine Street, Walhalla, SC with all Council Members, County Administrator Dale K. Surrett, Elizabeth G. Hulse, Clerk to Council & Mr. Bradley A. 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, WSPA TV & WSNW Radio.

Members of the press present: Brett McLaughlin–Daily Journal & Dick Mangrum–WGOG Radio.

Other Organizations Notified:

Also notified was the Oconee County Tax Payers Association.

Call to Order:

Chairman Lyles called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance:

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

Minutes:

Mr. Ables made a motion, seconded by Mr. Crumpton, approved 5 – 0 that the minutes of the regular meeting held July 17, 2007 be adopted as printed.

Mr. Ables made a motion, seconded by Mr. Blanchard, approved 5 – 0 that the minutes from the Joint Council meeting with the Sewer Transition Committee held on July 17, 2007 be adopted as printed.

Public Comment Session:

Chief John Wire Bull Hilton addressed Council regarding the Cherokee monument planned for the Courthouse grounds entitled “Spirit of Oconee”.

Mr. Berry Nichols addressed the Council regarding various issues to include the Seneca Library, preserving the upper Chattooga River and the Stumphouse Tunnel status.

Mr. B. J. Littleton addressed Council regarding the Cherokee monument and his family history.

Items for Consideration by Council:

Transfer of funds for purchase of Track Hoe:

Mr. Surrett, Mr. Rick Martin, Rock Quarry, and Mr. Tom Moxley, Road Department, addressed Council regarding the transfer of budgeted funds for the purpose of purchasing a Track Hoe for the Rock Quarry. Mr. Martin and Mr. Moxley prepared a presentation with photographs to illustrate needs.

Mr. Crumpton made a motion, seconded by Mr. Suarez, approved 5 – 0 authorizing the Rock Quarry to obtain bids for a used Track Hoe for approximately \$126,000 [money received by the Quarry from the sale of the Screen Plant].

Animal Shelter Update:

Mr. Surrett and Mr. Lake Julian, Facilities Maintenance, addressed Council regarding the status of the Animal Shelter. Mr. Julian prepared a presentation with photographs, plats and the facility floor plan.

No action was taken on this project. Mr. Lyles requested that this item be forwarded to the Real Estate, Facilities and Land Management Committee for their review.

Advertising Request to Appear in SC Visitor’s Guide “Smiles & Places”:

Ms. Veronda Holcombe-Lewis addressed Council regarding an advertising request in the amount of \$8,500.00 [a 1/3 color page advertisement utilizing an upstate waterfall for the background] to appear in the South Carolina State Visitor’s Guide “Smiles & Places”.

Mr. Blanchard requested that Ms. Lewis coordinate this advertisement with our brochure displayed at the Visitor Centers.

Mr. Blanchard made a motion, seconded by Mr. Ables, approved 5 – 0 authorizing the purchasing of the advertisement in the “Smiles & Places” brochure.

Request permission to obtain Grant Pack for Workforce Center:

Ms. Veronda Holcombe-Lewis addressed Council to request permission to obtain an application packet for a grant for a Workforce Center from the South Carolina Community Development Block Grant Program.

Mr. Ables made a motion, seconded by Mr. Suarez, approved 5 – 0 authorizing Ms. Holcombe-Lewis to obtain an application packet for a Workforce Center.

Change order for “Next Day Apparel” DSS Building:

Mr. Surrett and Mr. Julian, Facilities Maintenance, addressed Council regarding a change order for the “Next Day Apparel” DSS Building. Mr. Julian noted that the change resulted from the need for additional unexpected insulation. In addition, Mr. Julian informed Council that this project is still under budget.

Mr. Crumpton made a motion, seconded by Mr. Blanchard, approved 5 – 0 approving the change order for the “Next Day Apparel” DSS Building.

Ordinance 2007-15:

Mr. Blanchard complemented Economic Development on the Cost Benefit Analysis provided. In addition he requested that a Cost Benefit Analysis be provided to Council for all Fee in Lieu of Tax Ordinances by their second reading.

Mr. Ables made a motion, seconded by Mr. Blanchard, approved 5 – 0 that Ordinance 2007-15, “AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION AND DELIVERY OF A FEE IN LIEU OF TAX AGREEMENT BETWEEN OCONEE COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA AND PROJECT SENTRY; AND OTHER MATTERS RELATING THERETO INCLUDING, WITHOUT LIMITATION, PAYMENT OF A FEE IN LIEU OF TAXES RELATED TO THE PROJECT” be adopted on second reading.

Ordinance 2007-09:

Mr. Blanchard made a motion, seconded by Mr. Suarez, approved 5 – 0 that 2007-19, “SIGN CONTROL ORDINANCE OF OCONEE COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA” be adopted on second reading.

Council Committee Reports:

Law Enforcement, Public Safety, Health & Welfare Committee Report:

Mr. Blanchard reported that Mr. Rodney Burdette, Emergency Services Director, made a presentation to the Committee updating them on the progress being made by the Emergency Services Department on building construction, determination of vehicle needs and personnel.

Mr. Blanchard asked each Council member to also have ready for the Council meeting to be held on September 4, 2007, the individual they have selected to sit on the Emergency Services Commission.

Budget, Finance & Administration:

Mr. Ables had no report at this meeting.

Real Estate, Facilities & Land Management:

Mr. Lyles had no report at this meeting.

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, August 14, 2007 at 10:00 a.m. in County Council Chambers.

Road & Transportation:

Mr. Crumpton had no report at this meeting.

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, August 14, 2007 at 11:00 a.m. in County Council Chambers.

Planning & Economic Development:

Mr. Suarez had no report at this meeting.

Administrator Report:

Mr. Surrett addressed Council and read a letter from Peggy Westmoreland, Interim Director, Register of Deeds, regarding her staff's assistance after hours to a family who needed to record a Power of Attorney for an ill family member.

Council commended the Register of Deeds staff for their extra effort and for being conscious of and exceeding the public's expectations.

Old Business:

No old business was discussed at this meeting.

New Business:**“Oconee Eagles” Radio Controlled Airplane Group:**

Mr. Lyles addressed Council along with members of the “Oconee Eagles”, a radio controlled airplane group, regarding their request to use the Five Forks Landfill to fly their planes.

Mr. Norton addressed Council stating that each member has liability insurance along with the group. A draft agreement has been prepared which would need the signature of each member wishing to utilize the landfill.

Mr. Crumpton made a motion, seconded by Mr. Ables, approved 5 – 0 authorizing the group's use of the Five Forks Landfill to fly their airplanes.

Request for Public Meeting:

Mr. Ables requested that a Public Hearing be scheduled for Wednesday, August 15, 2007 at 5:00 p.m. in Council Chambers for the purpose of discussing a potential agreement between Oconee County and a private utility to provide sewer service.

Upper Chattooga River Resolution Request:

Mr. Ables made a motion, seconded by Mr. Crumpton, approved 5 – 0 requesting a Resolution be drafted stating the Council's desire to maintain the upper Chattooga River in a pristine manner for fishing, hunting and other nature-based activities.

Nature Conservancy regarding Stumphouse Mountain & Issaqueena Falls Project:

Mr. J. Harold Thomas spoke briefly and introduced Mr. Hollerman, Nature Conservancy who addressed Council regarding the status of the Stumphouse Mountain and Issaqueena Falls Project.

Mr. Hollerman noted the project encompasses the waterfall, a 2 mile trail on the old railroad bed, the Stumphouse tunnel along with two other tunnels and the hardwood forest.

Their efforts center on not only the tunnel and waterfall but an additional 511 acres to be designated a state Heritage Preserve.

Mr. Hollerman made a request of Council to donate up to \$300,000 toward the permanent preservation of this site.

Mr. Ables made a commitment on behalf of the Council and requested that Mr. Surrett explore financial options to meet the needs of the Nature Conservancy.

Adjourn:

Council adjourned at 9:05 PM

Respectfully Submitted:

Elizabeth G. Hulse
Clerk to Council