



**MINUTES**  
**OCONEE COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING**  
**Regular Meeting**  
**August 5, 2008**

**MEMBERS, OCONEE COUNTY COUNCIL**

Mr. George Blanchard District I, Chairman  
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

Oconee County Council met on Tuesday, August 5, 2008 at 7:00 PM in Council Chambers, 415 South Pine Street, Walhalla, SC with all Council Members, County Administrator Dale K. Surratt, 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.

Member of the press present: Ray Chandler–Anderson Independent & Brett McLaughlin-Daily Journal.

**Call to Order:**

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

**Pledge of Allegiance:**

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

**Minutes:**

Mr. Suarez made a motion, seconded by Mr. Ables, approved 5 – 0 that the minutes from the July 15, 2008 meeting be adopted as printed.

Mr. Crumpton made a motion, seconded by Mr. Lyles, approved 4 – 0 [Mr. Suarez abstained] that the minutes from the July 17, 2008 planning/workshop meeting be adopted as printed.

## **Honored Guests:**

Mr. Blanchard recognized two honored guests visiting the United States from France and thanked them for their attendance at our Council Meeting:

**Mr. Julien Crespo** who is the Mayor of Vaux Sur Seine, France; President of the Alliance for High School, and Vice President of the Alliance for Recreation.

**Mrs. Francoise Dudignac** who is the retired Vice Mayor of Vaux Sur Seine, France and a retired English Teacher.

## **Public Comment Session:**

Mr. Jack Dudley addressed Council in support of hiring a Planning Consultant to assist the Planning Commission & Planning Department with the zoning issue.

Mr. Gary Littlefield addressed Council regarding his concerns about removal of certain sections on Ordinance 2008-13.

Ms. Linda Lovely addressed Council regarding her support for hiring a Planning Consultant to assist in planning for Oconee County's future.

Mr. Berry Nichols addressed Council regarding his concerns regarding the hiring of consultants when in-house staff should be able to meet the needs, council member's attendance and requesting additional information about proposed zoning in Oconee County.

Mr. B. J. Littleton addressed Council regarding his opposition to the Zoning Enabling Ordinance.

## **Extended Public Comment Session:**

No citizen signed up for Extended Public Comment at this meeting.

## **VC3 presentation to Council:**

Mr. Larry Maddox, Business Development for Government Accounts and Mr. Mike Jann, IT Director for Government Accounts addressed Council regarding the status of the county's IT Department and system. Mr. Maddox utilized a PowerPoint presentation [filed with these minutes] to review the company's history, services provided and results from a needs assessment done when they first arrived in the County in April 2008.

Mr. Jann identified several areas of concern and reviewed progress in areas to include improved project management and task tracking, development of a proactive vs. reactive approach, determination of priorities with departments, identification of equipment on hand and budget review.

Mr. Maddox outlined a proposal for a formal in-depth IT Assessment. Discussion followed. Mr. Blanchard tasked Mr. Surret to present to Council at the next meeting a formal proposal regarding this assessment and potential projects.

Mr. Lyles noted that this is an example where bringing in expert consultants in an area can be very beneficial to the County.

Council thanked Mr. Maddox and Mr. Jann for their time in providing council with their thorough presentation.

## **Public Hearing: Ordinance #2008-13:**

Mr. Blanchard opened the public hearings for Ordinance #2008-13. Mr. Norton initially outlined the Ordinance noting that it amends an existing ordinance and that the County is state mandated to adopt these codes. In addition, he noted that some minor modifications were made to the codes as allowed by the state. Lastly, he noted that penalties and fees were increased to the state allowed maximums.

Ms. Susan Watson addressed Council regarding her opposition to adopting these codes as they are not truly international codes.

Mr. George Cleveland addressed Council regarding his concern that the sections regarding weeks and junk cars were being removed.

Ms. Susie Cornelius addressed Council asking what actions by a citizen would result in a violation of the code. Mr. Norton noted that any violation would be a misdemeanor with a fine and/or possibly jail time. Mr. Channon Chambers, Building Department Director, noted that in the last 4 years only two cases have been prosecuted and they were due to a blatant refusal by a contractor to comply with either a stop work order or refusal to obtain the state mandated permits. Discussion followed. Mr. Blanchard noted that as long as the builders comply with the codes that there will be no issue.

No written comments were submitted.

Mr. Blanchard called the public hearing at an end.

## **Resolutions for Approval:**

### **Resolution 2008-09:**

Chairman Blanchard and Mr. Surrett asked Ms. Marianne Dillard, Procurement Director, to join them on the dais in order to present her with a framed copy of Resolution 2008-09. Mr. Blanchard read the Resolution in its entirety and upon completion Ms. Dillard received a standing ovation from Council and those present in the audience.

Mr. Blanchard stated that in his time on Council and in working with Ms. Dillard that she was very refreshing; noting that she had the respect of all of her fellow employees, vendors and contractors. He noted her professionalism and her attention to detail. Mr. Surrett noted that every building and work site in the county has her "mark" on them and that Council and he appreciated knowing that they had an excellent watch dog for the County. He also noted that she should be very proud of her 30 year career with the County and she can leave knowing that she made Oconee County a better place to live. Lastly, Mr. Surrett reminded those present that Ms. Dillard will always be a part of the County family and that we will always be there for her as she has been there for all of us over the last 30 years.

Mr. Surrett asked Ms. Dillard to recognize those present from her family for this presentation who included her son, Lee Dillard, her brother, William Addis and her mother, Bonnie Addis. In addition, she recognized some of her staff to include Ann Albertson who has worked with

her for the past 18 years; Ms. Tronda Spearman, a new and valued employee and Mr. Glenn Johnson a new worker who came to her department through cooperation with AARP.

Members of Council individually thanked Ms. Dillard for her service and voiced their appreciation also for her professionalism in watching out for Oconee County over the years.

Ms. Dillard thanked those present for their support throughout the years and wished everyone a very successful future.

**Resolution 2008-09** “A RESOLUTION HONORING MARIANNE DILLARD” was unanimously approved on first and final reading.

### **Resolution 2008-11:**

Mr. Norton read the Resolution into the record. Mr. Crumpton noted that this had come before the Transportation Committee and had been approved for referral to full Council.

Mr. Crumpton made a motion, seconded by Mr. Suarez, approved 5 – 0 to approve **Resolution 2008-11** “A RESOLUTION TO ESTABLISH CRITERIA FOR ROAD IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS IN OCONEE COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA” on first and final reading.

### **Items for Consideration by Council:**

#### **Procurement: Planning Consultant Selection:**

Mr. Surrett outlined the details of the need for a consultant who will work closely with the Planning Commission and Planning Department. Mr. Art Holbrooks, Planning Director, addressed specific criteria for the bid and the selection process; noting that the focus was on firms that had previous rural county planning experience. He noted that the company selected had “done their homework” having read the previous 12 months of council minutes and our local newspaper. Mr. Holbrooks noted that the time frame for the consultant’s works is estimated to be 90 days and that options #1 & #2 are not included in this request.

Mr. Ables made a motion, seconded by Mr. Lyles, approved 5 – 0 to award RFP 07-32 to Benchmark CMR, Inc, of Kannapolis NC in the amount of \$21,500.00.

#### **Finance: Master Agreement for GASB 45 Actuarial Valuation Services:**

Mr. Surrett outlined briefly the need for an outside actuarial company to assist the County in order to comply with GASB 45; specifically regarding retiree medical benefits. He noted that the company will work closely with the Finance Department and will report back to Council at a future meeting.

Mr. Ables made a motion, seconded by Mr. Lyles, approved 5 – 0 to authorize execution of the Master Agreement with Gabriel Roeder Smith & Company to prepare the GASB OPEB Valuation for Oconee County at a cost of \$7,280.00.

#### **Emergency Services: Mutual Aid Agreement with SC Forestry Commission:**

Mr. Crumpton made a motion, seconded by Mr. Suarez, approved 5 – 0 to authorize execution of the Mutual Aid Agreement with the SC Forestry Commission Economic Development as presented to Council.

**PO #44979: Talbert & Bright Work Authorization Request:**

**PO #45344: Change Order for BMCO Construction Company / County Airport:**

Mr. Surrett outlined both the Talbert & Bright work authorization request and the Change Order for BMCO as they both relate to ongoing work at the County Airport.

Mr. Crumpton made a motion, seconded by Mr. Ables, approved 5 – 0 to approve the work authorization request for Talbert & Bright in the amount of \$271.88 as out lined in the agenda item summary.

Mr. Crumpton made a motion, seconded by Mr. Lyles, approved 5 – 0 to approve the change order for BMCO Construction Company in the amount of \$900.00 as outlined in the agenda item summary.

**Sheriff's Department Internet:**

Mr. Surrett addressed concerns raised by the Sheriff regarding safe and secure internet access for his offices. Mr. Surrett provided council with a copy of an email [filed with these minutes] outlining the Sheriff's request.

Mr. Surrett stated that it was his recommendation that Council approve the installation of a T-1 network interface for the LEC. He noted that the monthly cost is between \$600 and \$700 dollars. Mr. Surrett asked that Council authorize him to move funds for FY 08-09 from IT to cover this expense. Lastly, Mr. Surrett noted that for future fiscal years that the Communications Department will be responsible for budgeting of this ongoing expense.

Mr. Suarez made a motion, seconded by Mr. Ables, approved 5 – 0 to authorize the Administrator to transfer funds for FY 08-09 to cover the installation and ongoing monthly expense of a T-1 line for the LEC.

**Road Department: Construction of Material Storage & Vehicle/Equipment Storage Facilities:**

Mr. Surrett addressed the Road Department's need to have dry storage for materials and vehicles/equipment. The Road Department is asking Council to approve use of National Forestry money to cover the costs of construction for a Material Storage Facility [\$18,333.12] and a Vehicle/Equipment Storage Facility [\$61,411.36]. Council inquired of Mr. Mack Kelly, Road Department Director, which building was more critical. Mr. Kelly stated that the Material Storage building was imperative as road work can not be done with wet sand/materials. Discussion followed.

Mr. Crumpton made a motion, seconded by Mr. Ables, approved 5 – 0 to authorize the construction of a Material Storage Facility in the amount of \$18,333.12.

**Council Committee Reports:**

**Transportation:**

Mr. Crumpton noted that the Committee met on July 23, 2008 and will meet again on Wednesday, August 6, 2008 at 1:00 p.m.

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

Mr. Blanchard had no report at this meeting.

**Budget, Finance & Administration:**

Mr. Ables had not report at this meeting.

**Planning & Economic Development:**

Mr. Suarez had no report at this meeting.

**Real Estate, Facilities & Land Management:**

Mr. Lyles had no report at this meeting.

**Commission / Board Reports to Council:**

There were no reports presented at this meeting.

**Board & Commission Appointments:**

**Parks, Recreation & Tourism Commission:**

Mr. Blanchard noted that Camille Terry, District I representative, has been relocated with her job to Atlanta. He stated that he concurred with the recommendation of the Commission and the PRT Director to appoint Erin Mckergow to replace Ms. Terry.

Mr. Blanchard made a motion, seconded by Mr. Ables, approved 5 – 0 to appoint Ms. Erin Mckergow as District I representative to the PRT Commission.

**Emergency Management Commission:**

Mr. Ables made a motion, seconded by Mr. Blanchard, approved 5 – 0 to appoint Mr. Tim Grant as the District V representative for the Emergency Management Commission to fill the vacancy left by Mr. Mills.

[For the Record: Mr. Grant's term is defined in Ordinance 2007-07 to be co-terminus with the District V County Council seat.]

## **Administrator's Report:**

### **SCAC: J. Mitchell Graham Memorial Award:**

Mr. Surrett noted that on behalf of Oconee County he gave a 10 minute presentation for consideration for the J. Mitchell Graham Memorial Award entitled "It's Not Good – You Don't Want to Slip in the Polls". In addition, Oconee County participated with adjoining counties in a presentation from the Western Piedmont Alliance.

Mr. Surrett announced that the Western Piedmont Alliance presentation won in their category and that a plaque was mounted outside Chambers recognizing the award. In addition, he noted that Oconee County did not win their category but a participation plaque was also mounted in recognition of our participation.

## **Old Business:**

### **SWAG Agreement:**

Discussion was deferred until after Executive Session.

## **New Business:**

### **County Council Orientation Booklet:**

Ms. Hulse, Clerk to Council, addressed Council regarding the creation of a County Council Orientation Booklet. She noted that during her initial months on the job that she was gathering resources together as a reference tool and that she identified a potential need for the same information for incoming Council members. Ms. Hulse noted that the booklet is broken into three components; council specific, county information and state information. She stated that this booklet is intended to be a living document and revisions and additions will be made periodically to ensure accurate, up to date information. Ms. Hulse asked for permission to have the booklet printed up and distributed prior to the terms for the new incoming Council members.

Mr. Blanchard thanked the Clerk for her work on this booklet and instructed the Clerk to prepare the booklet as outlined above.

## **Executive Session:**

Mr. Blanchard asked for a motion to enter into Executive Session for the purpose of discussion a contractual and personnel matter.

Mr. Suarez made a motion, seconded by Mr. Crumpton, approved 5 – 0 to enter into Executive Session for the reason stated above.

Council entered into Executive Session at 8:34 p.m.

Council returned from Executive Session at 9:19 p.m.

Mr. Blanchard stated that the SWAG agreement was discussed in Executive Session and that at the present time the County is continuing to operate under the original February 28, 2005 SWAG agreement. He noted that the County clearly stated that they had no objections to executing a new document as long as the County was removed from the document and the Sewer Commission name was changed to the Authority.

Mr. Blanchard stated that the document signed by both Walhalla and Seneca is not this document and in addition is a document that has never been presented formally to Council for review. Mr. Norton noted that the new document has provisions in it that the County will not agree to. Representatives from the City of Seneca were present and asked Mr. Norton to review with them the differences in the documents in order to clear up any confusion and facilitate all parties being comfortable with signing the 2008 SWAG agreement.

Mr. Norton agreed to sit down with Mayor Alexander and the City Administrator, Mr. Greg Dietterich after the Council meeting.

Mr. Blanchard made not other statements regarding matters discussed in Executive Session.

**Adjourn:**

Mr. Blanchard motioned to adjourn the meeting at 9:23 p.m. The motion was approved unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted:

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Elizabeth G. Hulse  
Clerk to Council