



MINUTES
OCONEE COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING
Regular Meeting
December 2, 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, December 2, 2008 at 7:00 PM in Council Chambers, 415 South Pine Street, Walhalla, SC with all Council Members, County Administrator Dale K. Surrett and Elizabeth G. Hulse, Clerk to Council [Mr. Bradley A. Norton absent] 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, Peter Kent - WSNW Radio & Carlos Galarza-Daily Journal.

Call to Order:

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

Pledge of Allegiance:

Mr. Suarez led the pledge of allegiance to the United States Flag.

Minutes:

Mr. Lyles made a motion, seconded by Mr. Crumpton, approved 4 – 0 [Mr. Blanchard abstained – form filed with these minutes] that the minutes from the November 18, 2008 regular meeting be adopted as printed.

Public Comment Session:

No citizens signed up for Public Comment at this meeting.

Extended Public Comment Session:

No citizens signed up for the Extended Public Comment Session at this meeting.

Public Hearing Regarding Ordinances:

Ordinance 2008-19:

Mr. Blanchard opened the public hearing on **Ordinance 2008-19** “AN ORDINANCE TO CREATE ROAD STANDARDS FOR THE UNINCORPORATED AREAS OF

OCONEE COUNTY AND REPEAL ALL OTHER ROAD RELATED ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS” .

Mr. Blanchard opened the floor for public comment.

No citizens spoke regarding this ordinance.

No written comments were submitted regarding this ordinance.

Mr. Blanchard closed the public hearing regarding Ordinance 2008-19.

Ordinance 2008-20:

Mr. Blanchard opened the public hearing on **Ordinance 2008-20** “AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE LAND DEVELOPMENT AND SUBDIVISION REGULATIONS CHAPTER OF THE OCONEE COUNTY UNIFIED PERFORMANCE STANDARDS ORDINANCE [CHAPTER 6], REPEALING ORDINANCE 2002-05 [Passed May 7, 2002], ORDINANCE 2006-07 [Passed May 1, 2006], AND ORDINANCE 2006-20 [Passed August 15, 2006].”.

Mr. Blanchard opened the floor for public comment.

Mr. Tom Markovich addressed Council regarding wording in this ordinance about septic tanks. His suggestion to Council and staff was to remove current language and replace with language stating that septic tanks must be in compliance with DHEC standards. Council concurred and thanked Mr. Markovich for his hard work and assistance in drafting a good ordinance.

No written comments were submitted regarding this ordinance.

Mr. Blanchard closed the public hearing regarding Ordinance 2008-20.

Items for Consideration by Council:

Communications Site License / Piedmont Forestry Center / \$123,520:

Mr. Surrett reviewed with Council the request from Communications for additional funding and approval of a site lease for the sixth radio site in the Piedmont Forest. He reviewed the history of the six tower project noting that this is the final tower. He outlined the current coverage and how installation at this site will enhance the system. Additionally, Mr. Surrett noted that the county attorney has reviewed the lease and has no concerns. Mr. Surrett stated that all the funding is not in place for this lease but recommended to Council that they begin the work with funding in place and address the remaining funds needs at a future meeting.

Mr. John Murray, Communications, addressed Council and answered questions and provided a brief PowerPoint presentation [filed with these minutes]. Additionally, Mr. Murray requested that this be treated as a sole source procurement issue to allow the existing provider to install the sixth tower. He noted that the original contract was for six sites [with five having been built] and that Gumby Communications was awarded the original contract.

The total project will cost \$256,520 with \$133,005 on hand at present. Mr. Murray noted that an additional \$123,520 will be needed. Discussion followed.

Mr. Lyles made a motion, seconded by Mr. Crumpton, approved 5 – 0 to award [as a sole source vendor] construction the sixth tower to Gumby Communications of Toccoa, GA in the amount of \$256,520.00 utilizing \$133,005 [#012-104-82009-0] on hand initially to being the project.

PRT Commission / \$10,000 / Mountain Lakes CVB Website & Marketing Materials:

Mr. Surrett reviewed the PRT Commissions recommendation that \$10,000 be approved for the Mountain Lakes CVB for the creation / design and initial start up costs of the tourism destination website and marketing collateral which will consist of a visitor’s guide and a

brochure. Discussion followed regarding Council's intent with funding approved at the February 5, 2008 meeting. It was agreed that this request is above and beyond the approved request at the February meeting.

Mr. Ables made a motion, seconded by Mr. Suarez, approved 4 – 1 [Mr. Lyles opposed] to approve \$10,000 in ATAX funds for the creation / design and start up of a website and marketing materials for the Mountain Lakes CVB.

BVB #2008-04 / Emergency Services Pumper Trucks / 2 trucks [Mountain Rest Volunteer Fire Department & Fair Play Volunteer Fire Department]:

Emergency Services Transfer Request Requiring Council Approval:

Mr. Surrent reviewed the staff's recommendation to award BVB #2008-04 for two [2] Emergency Services Pumper Trucks [Commercial Fire Truck for Mountain Rest Volunteer Fire Department / \$313,805 and Custom Fire Truck for Fair Play Volunteer Fire Department / \$371,239] in the amount of \$685,044. He reviewed each trucks requirements as outlined on the agenda item summary. Mr. Surrent reviewed the bid process and bid committee membership. It was the committee's recommendation to award the bid to Spartan Fire & Emergency Apparatus of Roebuck, SC. Discussion followed

Mr. Crumpton made a motion, seconded by Mr. Ables, approved 5 – 0 to award BVB #2008-04 for two pumper trucks as outlined in the agenda item summary to Spartan Fire & Emergency Apparatus of Roebuck, SC in the amount of \$685,044.

The Transfer Request was not immediately addressed at this time [see below].

Communications / Overtime Transfer Request:

Mr. Surrent reviewed the request from Communication to transfer funds from Part Time Dispatcher Pool and Temporary Salary to Overtime in the amount \$20,000 to cover additional overtime and \$1,530 to cover additional social security benefits. Mr. Suarez questioned why we have open part time dispatcher positions. Mr. John Murray advised Council that certification is required for all dispatcher positions and it is difficult to find people willing to go through the training for a part time position. Discussion followed.

Mr. Ables made a motion, seconded by Mr. Crumpton, approved 5 – 0 to authorize transfer of \$21,530 to cover overtime until the end of Fiscal Year 2008-2009.

Emergency Services Transfer Request Requiring Council Approval:

Mr. Blanchard noted that during previous discussion that the motion for Emergency Services only covered the pumper trucks and did not address the transfer request.

Mr. Ables made a motion, seconded by Mr. Crumpton, approved 5 – 0 to reconsider the transfer request for Emergency Services in the amount of \$35,200.

Mr. Ables made a motion, seconded by Mr. Crumpton, approved 5 – 0 to approve the transfer for Emergency Services of \$35,200 from capital paving [010-107-50881-0] to capital expenditures vehicles [010-107-50870-0] to cover the additional costs needed for the purchase of the two pumper trucks.

Communications / Data Conversion to New World Systems / \$61,056:

Mr. Surrent outlined the history and need for conversion of old 911 data from QS1 into a relational database management system so that the data can be easily shared, exported and integrated with other systems. He noted that our IT department attempted to complete this project, expending \$10,000, without success. The request before Council is to authorize funding up to \$61,056 for this project.

Mr. John Murray outlined the phased approach with this conversion noting that initially they will work to convert the last 10 years of data at a cost of \$14,400. The phase approach is designed to minimize costs. Mr. Murray requested approval for funding the entire project with the proviso that if the project can be completed for less than the full amount, that the remaining funds be re-designated to the Communication Site Lease funding shortfall discussed earlier in the meeting.

Mr. Surret noted that it is the staff's recommendation to proceed with phase one with Spartan Technologies in the amount of \$14,400. It is estimated that completion of this phase will take approximately four weeks. After completion review will be done with the Sheriff's Department to determine if additional phases will be undertaken or needed. Mr. Murray will report back after completion and review of the data converted during Phase One.

Mr. Ables made a motion, seconded by Mr. Lyles, approved 5 – 0 to authorize Spartan Technologies to convert existing 911 data up to a maximum cost of \$61,056 and that any remaining funds may be re-directed to the Communication Site lease funding shortfall as outlined above.

Clemson Chamber SCHSL Football Championship Funding Request / \$5,000:

Mr. Surret outlined the Chamber's request for funding to host the South Carolina High School Football Championships. Mr. Phil Shirley noted that this championship is usually held in Columbia, SC. It is the aim of the Chamber to host this championship in the upstate every other year from this point forward. The goal of the championship is to attract 50,000 visitors to the area bi-annually. Mr. Shirley is working to add Oconee County lodging and contact information to the Road to Clemson website so that visitors will have access to county information during their visit.

Mr. Lyles made a motion, seconded by Mr. Suarez, approved 5 – 0 to authorize \$5,000 of ATAX money be allocated to the Clemson Chamber to host the SCHSL Football Championship in December 2008.

AT&T Grant / \$105,000 / Spec Building:

Mr. Surret noted that Council had previously approved receipt of a \$25,000 AT&T Grant to assist in the funding of a spec building at the Commerce Park on Highway 11. AT&T has now indicated they will support the construction of a spec building with \$105,000 – an increase of \$80,000. Mr. Surret noted that the funds would be put into an interest bearing escrow account and if a building is not funded the money could easily be refunded to AT&T. It is the staff's recommendation to void the previous grant contract and authorize the administrator to sign a contract for \$105,000 with the funds being specifically designated for the construction of a spec building.

Mr. Suarez made a motion, seconded by Mr. Lyles, to authorize the County Administrator to execute the AT&T Grant contract in the amount of \$105,000 for the specific use to fund the building of a spec building in the Commerce Park on Highway 11.

Council Committee Reports:

Transportation:

Mr. Crumpton had no report at this meeting.

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

Mr. Blanchard had no report at this meeting.

Budget, Finance & Administration:

Mr. Ables had no 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:

There were no Board or Commission appointments made at this meeting.

Administrator's Report:**Oconee County Holiday Policy:**

Mr. Surrett reviewed with Council the existing policy that if the SC Governor grants holidays that the County will observe the same schedule. Governor Mark Sanford has given state employees Wednesday, December 24, 2008 as part of the Christmas holiday.

Council concurred that the County will follow the policy and that all county offices will also be closed Wednesday, December 24, 2008. The Christmas holiday observed by county offices will be December 24-26, 2008.

Mr. Surrett noted that he will bring to Council at their next meeting the Solid Waste holiday schedule.

Fire / Rescue Squad Volunteer Checks:

Mr. Surrett noted that partial reimbursement / incentive checks have been prepared per Council authorization [as part of the FY 2008-2009 budget] and are being hand delivered by each chief. The amount of each check was based on several factors to include number of calls, etc. The total expenditure from the General Fund [not part of the 2.9 mills] will be \$101,671.

Tri County Landfill Property:

Mr. Surrett notified Council that he had received a letter from ACOG regarding Youngblood Development Corporations request for a refund of their earnest money [plus interest] and requesting that preference be given to them if and when the land is approved for sale in the future. Youngblood was the successful bidder to purchase the land. Pickens and Oconee Counties approved the sale; Anderson County would not. This issue has been on hold for approximately 19-20 months. Mr. Surrett recommended to Council that the response consist of one or the other of Youngblood's requests but not both options. Discussion followed.

Mr. Blanchard made a motion, seconded by Mr. Ables, approved 5 – 0 to authorize the County Administrator to draft a letter to ACOG as outlined above offering the refund but no preference for any future bids. In addition, the County Administrator is to include a request that no action be taken until such time as the new Anderson County Administrator and Council can be contacted to determine their current interest in the sale of this property.

Old Business:

There was no Old Business discussed at this meeting.

New Business:

Our Daily Bread / Golden Corner Ministries Funding Request:

Mr. Suarez stated that he had been contacted by two local charitable organizations regarding a public need during these difficult economic times. Two local agencies that provide food to our neediest citizens are in dire need of funding. He noted that it is not his intent to set precedent but that he felt that a genuine need existed and asked Ms. Julie Przedpelski with Our Daily Bread and Mr. Richard Kulper with Golden Corner Ministries to step forward and outline their current situation and needs.

Both Ms. Przedpelski and Mr. Kulper noted a dramatic increase in requests for assistance, with the elderly making up a large segment of the needy population. They noted that the CAT bus system allows more people to access their facilities to request services. Both organizations serve Oconee County citizens exclusively. It was noted that unemployment has spiked at 9.1%; the 4th highest in South Carolina.

Discussion followed. Mr. Ables noted that Oconee County is a compassionate county and we help those in need here. A citizen suggested that both organizations contact the home offices for Ingles and Bi-Lo to see if they could tap into each company's reclamation program for dented and damaged food projects.

Mr. Suarez suggested Council contributing \$10,000 to the two agencies with one half being paid in December 2008 and the second half payable in the first quarter of 2009.

Mr. Ables made a motion, seconded by Mr. Suarez, approved 5 – 0 to authorize \$10,000 from the Council Contingency Account to be disbursed as outlined above in Mr. Suarez suggestion.

Adjourn:

Mr. Blanchard asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Ables made a motion at 8:16 p.m. The motion was approved unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted:

Elizabeth G. Hulse, Clerk to Council