



MINUTES
OCONEE COUNTY COUNCIL
SPECIAL MEETING
August 14, 2010

MEMBERS, OCONEE COUNTY COUNCIL

Mr. Reg Dexter, District V, Council Chairman
Mr. Joel Thrift, District IV, Vice Chairman
Mr. Wayne McCall, District II, Chairman Pro Tem
Mr. Paul Corbeil, District I
Mr. Mario Suarez, District III

Oconee County Council met on Saturday, August 14, 2010 at 8:00 AM in Council Chambers, 415 South Pine Street, Walhalla, SC with all Council Members, Thomas L. Martin County Attorney and Clerk to Council, Elizabeth G. Hulse present.

Invited Guest: Archie Barron, District III Councilman Elect

Press: Pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act, notice of the meeting, date, time, place of meeting and agenda were posted on the bulletin board at the County Administrative Offices, 415 South Pine Street, Walhalla, SC, and the County Council website [www.oconeese.com/council]. In addition it was made available [upon request] to the newspapers, radio stations, television stations and concerned citizens.

Member of the press present: Ray Chandler – Anderson Independent, Dick Mangrum – WGOG Radio & Carlos Galarza - Daily Journal.

Call to Order: Mr. Dexter called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m.

Workshop Discussion & Possible Action regarding pending issues for Oconee County:

Mr. Dexter opened the meeting referencing Ordinance 2003-07:

Section 8.1.2: Special Meetings: Special meetings shall be held at such time as the Council Chair or any three members of Council shall direct, provided that no special meeting shall be held unless the Council Chair or Council Vice-Chair shall cause all Council Members to be notified and give twenty-four (24) hours public notice of the hour, date and place of such meeting.

The Chairman noted that the meeting was called in order to address issues that have been on Council's "plate" needing action for a long time.

New Jail Scope & Funding:

Mr. Dexter stated that the purpose of this discussion was to identify and approve the scope and funding for a new jail. Council discussed various options to include:

- **Renovation of existing facility:** It was suggested to remove the bars on existing cells and convert to dorm style cells. Various opinions were voiced with concerns raised that remediation of the existing facility would be costly. It was noted that likely any re-purposing of the building would necessitate bringing the facility up to current building codes.
- **Privatization:** Mr. Corbeil noted that the size facility will not lend itself to privatization as most private companies are looking for 500 bed minimum with preference to 1,000 bed facility or larger.
- **Housing long term sentenced inmates in adjacent counties** for cost/size savings. Mr. Corbeil stated that Pickens County was not interested in this option but Anderson County is willing to discuss the option.
- **Municipal inmates:** Discussion occurred regarding potentially charging the municipalities for housing their inmates.

- **Long Term Public Safety Issues:** Council stated that meetings with the municipalities would be beneficial to discuss long term public safety issues related to fire, rescue, police, judicial system, etc.
- **Phased Building Approach for New Facility:** It was Council's consensus that a phase approach was best making sure any plans allowed for additional facilities to tie in easily.
- **Building Types:** Steel cells and standard block construction were discussed.
- **Bid Process:** RFP, RFQ, Design Build, etc. were all discussed without action.
- **Funding:** It was Council's consensus that a new facility between \$14-16 million would be the goal.
- **Grant Funding:** Council discussed the potential for federal grant assistance with some of the technology infrastructure.
- **Criminal Justice Coordinating Committee [CJCC]:** It was Council Consensus that the creation of this Committee would be beneficial. It was suggested that meetings with the Solicitor's office and family court & municipal judges need to take place to help identify alternative sentencing for low risk offenders.

Council asked the County Administrator to follow up and report back on the following issues as a result of discussions:

1. Contact Greenville County to follow up on the potential for housing Oconee County's long term sentenced inmates in their county.
2. Contact Anderson County to re-visit idea of regional facility based on discussion at the SCAC conference with Anderson County Council Chair.
3. Initiate the formation of the CJCC
4. Provide Council with additional information to include population estimates
5. Identify potential Federal Grants to assist with technology needs for a new jail
6. Further research reduced costs if utilizing steel cell construction.
7. Provide Council with phased approach options for building a new jail for a not to exceed amount of \$14-16 million dollars.

No other actions was taken by Council at this meeting.

Sewer Projects:

Mr. Dexter stated that the purpose of this discussion was to talk about and potentially approve the scope and funding for sewer along I-85, at the Golden Corner Commerce Park and other areas of the county. Council discussed various options to include:

- **208 Authority:** Mr. Martin addressed some of the issues surrounding the 208 Authority noting that the Oconee Joint Regional Sewer Authority [OJRSA] was authorized to act as the County's agent for planning purposes as stated in Ordinance 2009-12 "AN ORDINANCE TO DELEGATE RESPONSIBILITIES TO AND TO DESIGNATE THE OCONEE JOINT REGIONAL SEWER AUTHORITY AS THE AGENT OF OCONEE COUNTY FOR PURPOSES OF ACTING AS THE SECTION 208 WATER QUALITY MANAGEMENT AGENCY IN OCONEE COUNTY, AND TO RECOMMEND TO THE SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROL THAT IT SO RECOGNIZE THE OCONEE JOINT REGIONAL SEWER AUTHORITY; TO PROHIBIT THE DISCHARGE OF POLLUTING SUBSTANCES; TO SET PENALTIES FOR THE VIOLATION THEREOF; AND OTHER MATTERS RELATED THERETO".
- **Private Companies wishing to provide Sewer in on County property:** Mr. Dexter questioned how a private company would receive approval to provide sewer in the unincorporated areas of the county. Mr. Martin briefly summarized that the relationship between the County and the OJRSA would be contractual and that it is legal for the County to contract for sewer services with either the OJRSA or a private company.
- **OJRSA Board:** Mr. Dexter voiced concerns that there are only municipality representatives and no county presence on the OJRSA Board.
- **I-85 / Golden Corner Commerce Park [GCCP]:** Mr. Dexter questioned Council regarding moving forward with sewer for the I-85 corridor and the GCCP. Mr. Corbeil noted that there is a potential private company that is interested in potentially servicing the GCCP. Discussion followed.

No action was taken by Council at this meeting.

Council Break:

Council took one break from 9:35 - 9:45 a.m.

Old Courthouse:

Mr. Dexter stated that the purpose of this discussion was to talk about and potentially approve disposition of the Old Courthouse. Council discussed various options to include:

- **Demolition of the Old Courthouse:** Costs were reviewed and discussed.
- **Review of Proposal from D. H. Griffin Wrecking Co., Inc. / Review of Ard, Wood, Holcombe & Slade facility report/recommendations:** Mr. McCall presented a proposal from D. H. Griffin Wrecking Company [DHG] outlining costs for complete interior demolition [copy of quote filed with these minutes].
- **Donation of the Old Courthouse to the City of Walhalla:** Mr. Suarez suggested donating the building to the City of Walhalla for them to either restore or convert into usable space or for a park / parking area. Discussion followed.
- **Renovation of a portion [main courtroom] of the Old Courthouse:** Options for saving a portion of the building were discussed.
- **Need for full Facilities Needs Assessment by County Administrator:** Mr. Moulder asked that Council defer decision regarding the county using the facility until a full facility needs assessment can be conducted. Council concurred.

Mr. Moulder did remind Council that the DHG proposal presented could not be acted upon as any demolition or renovation would have to be bid out in compliance with the Oconee County Procurement Ordinance.

Brown Building:

Mr. Dexter stated that the purpose of this discussion was to discuss and potentially approve use or disposition of the Brown Building. Council discussed various options to include:

- **Demolition of the Brown Building:** Mr. McCall advocated demolition of the Brown Building; stating that the construction was poor and not worth saving.
- **Oconee County Incubator:** Mr. Corbeil informed Council that Tri-County Technical College has stated that that the space would be a good location for an Oconee County Incubator.
- **Save vs. Demolition:** Mr. Dexter voiced concerns that we not save a facility that we have not identified a productive use for.

Mr. Moulder again stated the need for a full Facility Needs Assessment prior to making decision regarding this property. Council concurred.

Property Acquisition:

Mr. Dexter stated that the purpose of this discussion was to talk about property under consideration for approval by Oconee County. Council discussed various options to include:

- **Recusal of Mr. Thrift related to parcel on Highway 11:** Mr. Thrift noted that questions have arisen regarding his relationship with the owner of property currently being negotiated for purchase by Oconee County. In order to avoid a perceived appearance of impropriety he will recuse himself from voting on this parcel. Discussion followed. It was agreed to remove this parcel from Ordinance 2010-29 and initiate a separate ordinance for the Highway 11 property when scheduled for 3rd and final reading.
- **Discussion of usages for property to be acquired:** Mr. Martin stated that Mr. Thrift could take part in any and all discussions related to the use of property to be acquired by the county.
 - **Property located adjacent to Law Enforcement Center:** The County is in the process of negotiating the acquisition of the property adjacent to the Law Enforcement Center. The property would be incorporated into plans for the new jail facility.
 - **Propex Property / Seneca:** Mr. Moulder updated Council regarding negotiations stating that an informal counter offer has been made and is unacceptable to the

County. He stated that until a formal counter offer is received no response can be made.

- **Highway 11 Property:** Mr. Dexter initiated discussion regarding potential uses for this property to include mixed use light industry / recreational. Mr. McCall stated the property was ideal for heavy industry and a better economic development tool than the GCCP. Mr. Moulder presented for review a draft conceptual drawing from B. P. Barber [copy filed with these minutes] showing potential recreation uses for the property. Discussion followed. Council discussed projects in both Orangeburg and Sumter counties related to recreation / quality of life projects. Council's consensus was that both the purchase of this property and planning for mixed use on the property were a good deal for the county.

Reassessment Update / Mr. Moulder:

Mr. Moulder updated Council regarding the status of the pending reassessment of property taxes. He stated that he challenged the team to develop an action plan with target dates to ensure that all deadlines are identified and met.

Mr. Moulder stated that after Council's approval for use of Tyler Technologies software for the reassessment process that Manitron contacted the County and is now working closely with staff to identify and correct problems with their ProVal software. Based on this cooperation and staff's work with both Lexington and Orangeburg counties [who assisted in identifying problems/fixes] it is his recommendation that the County move forward with utilizing the ProVal software and not spend \$90,000 with Tyler Technology as previously approved. Lengthy discussion followed. Council concurred with the administrator's recommendation as outlined above.

Other Business:

City of Seneca / College within City Limits:

Mr. Thrift stated that he felt Oconee County should support the City of Seneca's efforts to place a Tri-County Technical College [TCTC] satellite campus within the city limits of Seneca. He noted that the City passed a resolution at their last meeting supporting this expansion of TCTC. Discussion followed.

Council directed the Clerk to Council to obtain a copy of the City of Seneca's Resolution for review/discussion by full Council at the August 17, 2010 meeting; and if in agreement with the Resolution introduce a Council Resolution in support of the City of Seneca.

August 17, 2010 Agenda Item / Change Order # 2 for PO #46712 / \$981,451.50 / Plateau Excavation:

Mr. Moulder stated that he wished to discuss with Council prior to action on August 17, 2010 the issues surrounding the need for this change order. Mr. Molder highlighted the history related to issues with the DHEC permit that caused the stop work on the project noting that this was not due to any fault of County personnel. He stated that the plans presented to DHEC contained deficiencies necessitating this change order. Lengthy discussion followed.

Adjourn:

Mr. Corbeil made a motion at 11:56 a.m. to adjourn the meeting. The motion was approved unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted:

Elizabeth G. Hulse
Clerk to Council