



**MINUTES**  
**OCONEE COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING**  
**Special Meeting**  
**May 31, 2011**

**MEMBERS, OCONEE COUNTY COUNCIL**

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

Oconee County Council met on Tuesday, May 31, 2011 at 6:00 PM in Council Chambers, 415 South Pine Street, Walhalla, SC with all Council Members, Thomas L. Martin County Attorney, County Administrator Scott Moulder and Clerk to Council, Elizabeth G. Hulse present.

**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](http://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, Ashton Hester – Keowee Courier, Dick Mangrum – WGOG Radio & Carlos Galarza - Daily Journal.

**Call to Order:**

Mr. Thrift called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

**Public Hearing regarding the Following Ordinances:**

**Ordinance 2011-01** “AN ORDINANCE TO ESTABLISH THE BUDGET FOR **OCONEE COUNTY** AND TO PROVIDE FOR THE LEVY OF TAXES FOR ORDINARY COUNTY PURPOSES IN OCONEE COUNTY FOR THE FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING JULY 1, 2011 AND ENDING JUNE 30, 2012.”

**Ordinance 2011-02** “AN ORDINANCE TO ESTABLISH THE BUDGET FOR THE **SCHOOL DISTRICT OF OCONEE COUNTY** (the “School District”) AND TO PROVIDE FOR THE LEVY OF TAXES FOR THE OPERATIONS OF THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF OCONEE COUNTY FOR THE FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING JULY 1, 2011 AND ENDING JUNE 30, 2012”

**Ordinance 2011-03** “AN ORDINANCE TO PROVIDE FOR THE LEVY OF TAXES FOR THE **KEOWEE FIRE SPECIAL TAX DISTRICT** AND TO ESTABLISH THE BUDGET FOR THE KEOWEE FIRE SPECIAL TAX DISTRICT FOR THE FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING JULY 1, 2011 AND ENDING JUNE 30, 2012.”

Mr. Jim LaRue addressed Council regarding **Ordinance 2011-01** reading from a prepared statement [copy filed with these minutes] asking Council to consider increasing the direct aid allocation for the Golden Corner Food Pantry. [Mr. LaRue provided several additional handouts also filed with these minutes.]

Mr. Jim Gadd, Oconee Alliance, addressed Council regarding **Ordinance 2011-01** reading from a prepared statement [copy filed with these minutes] asking Council to fund "Create Oconee" in this budget; with the understanding that there would also be a commitment for two additional years. Mr. Gadd noted that the funding request would be matched by outside organizations either with either a 1:1 match or a 2:1 for every county dollar allocated.

Ms. Susie Cornelius addressed Council regarding **Ordinance 2011-01**. Her comments concerned various areas to include fire protection, park fees, reassessment, sewer and a potential reduction in airplane tax rates thereby shifting the tax burden to the citizens. In addition, she also commented on use of county vehicles, workload indicators and the overall budget process.

Mr. Steve Moore addressed Council regarding both **Ordinance 2011-01 and 2011-02**. He requested Council conduct a compensation/classification study, consider exempting elected officials from the cost of living raise included in the budget, county legal fees, reassessment, airplane tax rates, economic development, capital projects and issues related to the School District of Oconee [SDOC] budget.

Mr. Berry Nichols was not present when called to speak having left the meeting.

Mr. Thrift opened the floor for any additional comments.

Mr. Greg Connelly addressed Council regarding **Ordinance 2011-01** voicing concern that capital projects will derail Council's stated priority of job creation and retention.

No additional citizens came forward to speak.

Mr. Thrift opened the floor for submission of any written comments for the record. The Clerk to Council noted that two emails had been distributed to each Council member and copies would be filed with the minutes of the meeting. No written comments were submitted.

Mr. Moulder noted that a revision to a budget proviso would be requested at the June 7, 2011 regular council meeting.

Mr. Thrift closed the Public Hearings regarding Ordinances 2011-01, 2011-02 and 2011-03. He thanked all who participated and recognized Mr. Moulder and the finance staff for their hard work in preparing the budget for Council review.

### **County Council Response to Public Comment:**

Mr. Corbeil addressed those present regarding some comments made regarding workload indicators and a comp/class study. He stated that it is Council's goal to grow the tax base in Oconee County.

Mr. Corbeil asked staff to prepare for Council's consideration the following change to the FY 2011-2012 budget:

Golden Corner Food Pantry	\$ 5,000
Our Daily Bread	\$ 5,000
Our Daily Rest	\$25,000
"Create Oconee"	\$25,000

Mr. Corbeil noted that the "Create Oconee" funding would be for a three year period in order to allow for hiring of staff to administer the program. Mr. Moulder stated he would bring a proposal for funding to the June 7, 2011 regular Council meeting.

Mr. Martin, County Attorney, addressed Council to provide information related to an issue that faces several counties relating to Act 388 and reassessment. He noted that the act states that if property values increase that millage must decrease creating a revenue neutral situation. At present some counties are facing just the opposite and it is SCAC's opinion that the wording of the Act is mandatory and that if property values decrease that the millage would increase keeping again keeping the revenues neutral. Mr. Martin stated that this issue hopefully will not arise in Oconee County – this was for information purposes only.

Mr. Dexter asked the Administrator if he could identify the revenue reduction if airplane taxes were reduced to 4%. Mr. Moulder noted that it is estimated to be approximately \$25,000. In addition, he asked if this would shift taxes to the citizens. Mr. Moulder assured him it would not; it would only be a reduction for airplane owners.

Mr. Dexter also asked the Administrator to review the county parks parking fee to ensure that it is being equitably applied. Mr. Moulder stated he would report at the June 7, 2011 Council meeting on this matter.

Mr. McCall addressed several issues discussed at the meeting to include airplane taxes and boat taxes. He also voiced concerns regarding increasing direct aid to the food pantry as he felt there were not sufficient safeguards to avoid abuse by some citizens. Mr. LaRue and Ms. Peggy Culper addressed these concerns outlining the steps taken and documentation required to identify those citizens with a true need.

**Adjourn:**

Mr. McCall made a motion at 7:11 p.m. to adjourn the meeting. The motion was approved unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted:

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Elizabeth G. Hulse  
Clerk to Council