



MINUTES
OCONEE COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING
Planning Retreat
February 7, 2013

MEMBERS, OCONEE COUNTY COUNCIL

Mr. Joel Thrift, District IV, 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, February 7, 2013 at 9:00 AM in Council Chambers, 415 South Pine Street, Walhalla, SC with all Council Members, County Administrator Scott Moulder, Assistant Administrator Glenn Breed, Executive Administrative Assistant Amanda Brock 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]. 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 & Norman Cannada - Daily Journal.

Call to Order: Mr. Thrift called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

Audit Presentation / Mr. Moulder

Mr. Moulder turned the floor over to Mr. Mark Pullium, Finance Director, who addressed Council utilizing a PowerPoint presentation [copy filed with these minutes] highlighting the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report [CAFR], ending June 30, 2013. Discussion followed.

Pre Budget Financial Analysis / Mr. Moulder

Mr. Moulder addressed Council utilizing a PowerPoint presentation [copy filed with these minutes] highlighting the following key areas:

- Cash Flow Projection
- Expenditure History
- Personnel v. Operations
- Personnel Expenses
- Number of Personnel by Function
- Revenue History
- Millage Rate trends
- Debt Margin
- Fund Balance Breakdown
- Capital Projects Fund
- Budget Calendar

Mr. Moulder turned the floor over to Mr. Breed who addressed Council utilizing a PowerPoint presentation [copy filed with these minutes] entitled “Revenue Alternatives”. Discussion followed regarding both presentations.

2012 Annual Review & Report to the People / Mr. Moulder

Mr. Moulder addressed Council utilizing a PowerPoint presentation [copy filed with these minutes] and a handout entitled “Annual Report 2013, An Administrative Review” [copy filed with these minutes]. The presentation highlighted the following key areas:

- Organizational Chart
- “Our Commitment” and review of Short Term Goals to include:
 - Jobs & Job Retention
 - Sewer Infrastructure
 - New Jail
 - Development of Communication Plan
 - Administrative Review
 - Zoning
 - Emergency Services / Fire Plan [continuation]
 - Former Courthouse
 - Transportation
 - Reassessment
- Services to Citizens
 - Community Development
[Airport, Assessor, Auditor, Community Development, Delinquent Tax, Libraries, FOCUS Broadband, Parks, Recreation & Tourism, Register of Deeds, Rock Quarry, Registration & Elections, Treasurer’s Office, Veterans Affairs]
 - Judicial Services
[Solicitor’s Office, Clerk of Court, Magistrate’s Office, Probate Court]
 - Law Enforcement & Public Safety
[Sheriff’s Office / Detention Center, Animal Shelter, Coroner’s Office, Emergency Management, Fire Division]
 - Public Works & Facility Services
[Facilities Management, Roads & Bridges, Solid Waste, Vehicle Maintenance]
 - Administrative Services
[Economic Development Commission, Finance, Human Resources, Information Technology, Geographic Information Systems, Procurement]

Discussion followed.

Prior Year Strategic Plan Review & Discussion of Short & Long Term Goals for Oconee County / Mr. Dennis Lambries

Mr. Dennis Lambries, Research Associate, Survey Research Laboratory, Institute for Public Service & Policy Research, University of South Carolina, led Council through discussions reviewing and where applicable updating the mission, vision, short term goals [12 months] and long term goals [2-4 years].

Mr. Lambries final report will be incorporated into these minutes as part of the permanent record of the meeting.

Lunch & Breaks

Council took two morning breaks:

9:46 a.m. to 9:56 a.m.

12:42 p.m. to 12:52 p.m.

Council recessed for lunch between 10:46 p.m. to 11:46 p.m.

Council took an afternoon break between 1:57 p.m. to 2:10 p.m.

Adjourn:

Mr. McCall made a motion at 3:38 p.m. to adjourn the meeting. The motion was approved unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted:

Elizabeth G. Hulse
Clerk to Council

OCONEE COUNTY COUNCIL RETREAT FEBRUARY 7, 2013

**OCONEE COUNTY COUNCIL CHAMBERS
WALHALLA, SC 29691**

BACKGROUND

Oconee County Council met on Thursday, February 7, 2013 in council chambers for its third annual planning retreat. First held in 2011, the purpose of this retreat was to provide council members the opportunity to discuss short-term policies and priorities (defined as 12 to 24 months) to be used by the county administrator and staff in developing the budget which will be presented to council. It also offered the opportunity to discuss long-term goals (defined as three to five years). All council members were present and participated in the identification and prioritization of policy areas that should be addressed. The morning session of the retreat consisted of a presentation by the county administrator and staff on the status of projects and programs initiated as a result of the 2012 planning retreat. Council members were provided the most current status of those projects and programs. The county administrator also presented an overview of the annual report which will be made available to the citizens of Oconee County.

DISCUSSION

The planning retreat began with a review of Oconee County's vision and mission statements. The budget is perhaps the single most important policy document in that it reflects those areas and concerns that will be funded, and the amount of funding that will be made available, during the coming fiscal year. In setting those policy priorities it is important that council use its vision and mission statements as a guide. In fulfilling its mission of helping move the county in the direction of achieving its vision, council must ensure that its budget priorities are aligned. That is, the budget and policy priorities must support achievement of the county's vision for the future.

Vision

Oconee County – A diverse, growing, safe, vibrant community guided by rural traditions and shaped by natural beauty; where employment, education and recreation offer a rich quality of life for all generations, both today and tomorrow.

Mission

It is the mission of Oconee County to provide our current and future citizens and visitors quality services and to protect our neighborhoods, heritage and environment by managing growth and change through smart, inclusive planning.

After discussion, council agreed that both the vision and mission statements were still valid and reflected council's vision for the future of Oconee County.

ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

In order to better understand the environment in which council and county government must operate council conducted an abbreviated SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats). Issues and challenges can fit in more than one classification. For example, an opportunity to expand an existing service can be an opportunity. Availability of a funding source sufficient to help off-set the costs can be viewed as a threat. Listed below is a summarized list of the major strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats identified by council.

Strengths

- Sewer expansion efforts
- Economic Development
 - Better business environment – taxes and incentives
 - Development of industrial parks
 - Ongoing work with new and existing industries
 - Agricultural community/Agribusiness
 - Enhanced employee training through SC Certified Workforce Program
- Tourism
 - National publicity of natural resources (National Geographic)
 - Development of tourism marketing efforts
- 245 mile fiber optic network
- Improved Inter-governmental relations
- Transportation – roads, highways (Interstate 85), rail
- Proximity to Clemson, Tri-County Technical College
- Open communication within and among departments

Weaknesses

- Taxes (either too high or too low)
- Revenue sources (grants, fees, etc.)
- Need to improve inter-governmental relations for regional cooperation to solve/resolve problems and issues
- High 'core' unemployment
- Funding for transportation issues and challenges resulting from growth
- Not currently universal Internet access throughout the county

Opportunities

- Economic Development
 - Marketing effort
 - Change in economic development implementation strategy
- Conference Center (public, private, or public-private)
- Alternative fuels
- Expansion of public transportation
- Marketing of natural resources both for and in relation to tourism

Threats

- Changes in external financial management mandates
- Changes in Local Government Fund
- Lack of respect for 'home rule' at state level

ISSUE IDENTIFICATION

Short Term Policy Areas

Having discussed the challenges in which council must work, members were given the opportunity to identify up to five short term policy areas (12 to 24 months) that need to be addressed. Listed below in alphabetical order are the policy areas that were identified:

- Approve plan for revenue diversification
- Build jail
- Complete jail
- Complete Industrial Parks
- Complete key economic development projects (Golden Corner Commerce Park [GCCP] sewer; GCCP Phase I; Echo Hills Phase I; Seneca rail site)
- Continue communication improvement
- Develop and implement Phase II Zoning Plan
- Echo Hills Parks on line (Phase I)
- Get hard-core unemployed to work

- Go to 100% recycling
- Internet connection for our citizens
- New Jail
- New sources for tax revenue (fees or capital development sales tax)
- Old Court House re-development
- Old Court House resolution
- Push to expand rail service
- Revenues for transportation
- Start new jail
- Upgrade county library system
- Work on sewer
- Work to improve library facilities
- Workable audio system for council chambers
- 1% Capital Projects Sales Tax for unfunded projects (library system, agri-business site; YMCA contribution; Tri-County Technical College campus)

After the list was compiled, each council member had the opportunity to clarify and/or explain why they considered the policy area identified was important. They also had the opportunity to answer any questions that the other council members may have had. The next step in the process was to collapse the policy areas into a workable number. The result was a listing of 11 policy areas. In order to prioritize the list, a 10-4 voting strategy was used. This process allows each council member a total of 10 'votes' to be cast for the policy areas they feel are most important. However, no more than four of their 10 votes can be cast for any one particular policy area. This helps prevent a topic that is of importance to only one council member from being higher on the priority list based on a council member giving their 'favorite' topic 10 votes. Listed below are the 11 policy areas and the total number of votes each received.

- Audio for Council Chambers (1)
- Communications (1)
- Economic Development (14)
- Expand Rail Service (3)
- Former Court House Renovation (5)
- Jail Completion (8)
- Library (5)
- Recycling (2)
- Sewer (7)
- Transportation (1)
- Zoning (3)

The final list of policy areas, in order of priority, is listed below. Because of the importance of expanding rail service and continuing to expand sewer service to economic development success, they were included within the overall area of economic development. Additionally, improving the quality of the sound system within council chambers was taken by the county administrator and a resolution to this issue was begun immediately after conclusion of the planning retreat.

- Economic Development
 - Expand Rail Service
 - Sewer
- Jail
- Library/Formal Court House
- Zoning
- Recycling
- Communications
- Transportation

It is interesting to note the similarity of the policy areas with those identified in the 2012 strategic plan. The 2013 listing of priorities represented continued focus on the part of council to the importance of economic development to the county. The 2012 policy areas and strategic direction not included in the current list have either been adequately addressed or have been resolved in some other manner. This consistency of policy areas is also reflected in the guidance provided by council to continue implementing the strategies identified for many of these in the 2012 strategic plan.

Strategic Direction

1. Economic Development

Echo Hills Phase 2

Sewer to GCCP

GCCP Phase 2

Seneca Rail Site

Better office for Economic Development (501(c) (3))

1a. Expand Rail Service

Market rail spurs throughout the county

1b. Sewer

Continue projects that have been begun

Present Sewer Master Plan to Council

2. Jail

Get it done

3. Library

Develop and present plan for library system expansion to include funding sources

4. Former Court House

Complete current action plan

5. Zoning

Staff to present alternative methods for implementing county-wide zoning

6. Recycling

Develop/refine recycling program to encourage more recycling on the part of citizens and users

7. Transportation

Develop/Present master plan for county roads to include a classification system of roads for maintenance and improvement and an updated map of county roads

Develop/Present funding strategies for transportation improvement efforts

Monitor state efforts to turn over roads to the county

8. Social Welfare Programs

Although not specifically included in the major issues to be addressed, Council discussed the importance and impact of the various social welfare programs that are offered throughout the county. The conclusion of the discussion resulting in Council's commitment to appoint a committee to explore ways help ensure maximum effectiveness of programs throughout the county.

Long Term Policy Areas

Council members were next given the opportunity to identify and discuss policy areas that are likely to surface during the next three to five years. Each council member identified up to three areas that they felt were important to begin having discussions between and among council members. The long term policy areas identified were:

- Aggressive plan that balances job creation, workforce development, and optimal population growth
- Assist with social service access
- Boating safety
- Complete, implement, fund, and maintain master infrastructure plan
- Complete a jail complex
- Expand county transportation

- Jobs and Growth
- Increase revenue sources
- Infrastructure completed in commercial parks
- I-85 developed
- Push to do more county in-house
- Recognized as leading environmentally sustainable community
- Recreation center for Oconee citizens
- Sewer completed for GCCP and south Oconee
- Support YMCA development

After an extended discussion, council members used the same 10-4 voting system used in prioritizing short term goals. Listed below is the final ranking of these long term policy areas.

- Continue efforts to facilitate job creation (12)
- Continue expansion of water and sewer throughout the county (10)
- Revenue sources (7)
- Recreation (5)
- Social Services (4)
- Boating Safety (4)
- Complete Jail (4)
- Transportation (2)
- Environmental Sustainability (2)

The first two long term policy areas continue council's focus on providing an environment that supports job creation, expansion of existing industries, and attraction of new industries. Within this overall policy area is the need to continue expansion of access to water and sewer throughout the county. Identification of alternative revenue sources also represents a continuation of council's current efforts to identify new funding sources to fund improvements throughout the county. As previously mentioned, council has started in motion an effort to ensure that social services are delivered in an effective and efficient manner to those in need.