

MINUTES
OCONEE COUNTY COUNCIL
MEETING with COUNTY DELEGATION
January 12, 2015



MEMBERS, OCONEE COUNTY COUNCIL

Mr. Wayne McCall, District II, Council Chairman
Mr. Paul Cain, District III, Vice Chairman
Ms. Edda Cammick, District I, Chairman Pro Tem
Mr. Joel Thrift, District IV
Mr. Reg Dexter, District V

MEMBERS, OCONEE COUNTY DELEGATION

Representative Bill Sandifer, Chairman
Representative Bill Whitmire
Senator Thomas Alexander

No Recording was made of this meeting.

The Oconee County Delegation invited Oconee County Council to a meeting at 5:30 p.m. at the Gignilliat Center, Seneca, SC with all Council Members, Delegation Members 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, Dick Mangrum/WGOG Radio & Steven Bradley/The Daily Journal.

Call to Order:

Representative Sandifer called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. He welcomed the Council members and public and thanked all for their attendance. Additionally, Representative Sandifer thanked the City of Seneca for the use of the facility. Lastly, he congratulated Chairman McCall, Vice Chair Cain and Chair Pro Tem Cammick on their election to their offices. Various Council members thanked the Delegation for the opportunity to meet and share their perspective regarding the 2015 legislative session and how it will impact Oconee County.

Invocation:

Representative Sandifer asked Senator Alexander to give the invocation.

Pledge of Allegiance:

Representative Sandifer asked Representative Whitmire led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.

Discussion regarding Various Issues Related to the 2015 Legislative Session:

Representative Sandifer opened the floor for questions and/or concerns from Council. Various council members brought up for discussion the following issues with the Delegation representatives:

Increased Cyber Security for Citizens

Ms. Cammick voiced concern for the citizens regarding security of their person information after the hack of state computers last year. The Delegation discussed various aspects of a plan that is being implemented over the next few years to improve cyber security for the state's citizens. Cost was noted as a stumbling block for quicker implementation however the Delegation stated that they were confident that this matter was being addressed.

Education Funding as it relates to recent Supreme Court Decision

Mr. Dexter questioned [1] what plans are being developed to fund public education after the recent Supreme Court Decision, and [2] how it may impact Oconee County Schools. The Delegation noted that the order is not specific regarding remedies. In addition they also voiced concerns regarding the impact on Oconee County students; noting that additional study and funding recommendations from the Governor need to be evaluated. It was also stated that money is not the only answer to the education iniquity noted in the Supreme Court ruling.

State Palmetto Radio System

Mr. McCall voiced concerns that the system is not working as planned and that various public safety agencies are not able to communicate with each other. The Delegation stated that they were not aware of this issue and promised to look into the matter further when in Columbia.

State Turn Over of Short Roads to Counties

Several Council members voiced strong concerns regarding a proposed plan being discussed whereby the State would turn over short roads [+/- .25 miles] to the counties for the counties to maintain. Representative Sandifer stated that the Governor has stated that she will have a proposed plan by the end of January and that an Ad Hoc committee is currently reviewing this issue. It was noted that South Carolina has the 4th largest state road system in the US. Road paving costs were also discussed at some length. Mr. Thrift noted the SCAC's opposition to turning over these roads to the counties and the negative budget impact this would have on counties across the state. Senator Alexander noted that the plan at present would be to turnover short roads with dedicated initial funds; noting that the funding was one time only and not ongoing for the road maintenance. Lastly, bridges were briefly discussed.

Local Government Fund [LGF]

Mr. Dexter & Mr. Thrift questioned the Delegation regarding anticipated funding levels for the LGF in FY15-16. Representative Sandifer noted that based on discussions to date that Council should plan for budgeting purposes to receive the same LGF funding for FY2014-2015. Lengthy discussion followed.

Increased Animal Abuse Laws

Ms. Cammick addressed the Delegation utilizing a handout [copy filed with these minutes] expressing her concerns related to weak animal abuse laws and requested that the Delegation champion strengthening animal abuse laws in South Carolina. Lengthy discussion followed regarding examples of abuse issues and potential solutions.

Adjourn

Representative Sandifer thanked Council for their attendance noting his hope to schedule an additional meeting this year in the fall to follow up on issues discussed. He adjourned the meeting at 6:37 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Elizabeth G. Hulse
Clerk to Council