



MINUTES
OCONEE COUNTY COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING
PUBLIC HEARINGS FOR BUDGET ORDINANCES
June 9, 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

Oconee County Council met at 6:00 PM in Council Chambers, 415 South Pine Street, Walhalla, SC with all Council Members, Administrator Scott Moulder, Interim Finance Director Ladale Price & 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: Dick Mangrum – WGOG Radio, Ray Chandler-Anderson Independent & Steven Bradley -The Daily Journal.

Call to Order:

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

Public Hearings for the Following Ordinances

Ordinance 2015-01 “AN ORDINANCE TO ESTABLISH THE BUDGET FOR OCONEE COUNTY AND TO PROVIDE FOR THE LEVY OF TAXES FOR ORDINARY COUNTY PURPOSES, FOR THE TRI-COUNTY TECHNICAL COLLEGE SPECIAL REVENUE FUND, FOR THE ROAD MAINTENANCE SPECIAL REVENUE FUND, FOR THE VICTIM SERVICES SPECIAL REVENUE FUND, FOR THE BRIDGE AND CULVERT CAPITAL PROJECT FUND, AND FOR THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CAPITAL PROJECT FUND, ALL IN OCONEE COUNTY FOR THE FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING JULY 1, 2015 AND ENDING JUNE 30, 2016.”

Mr. McCall opened the floor for this public hearing.

[Italicized text reflects Council and/or staff comments related to a citizen comment]

Mr. Galen DeHay, Tri County Technical College [TCTC] Sr. VP, addressed Council regarding the current status of the TCTC campus in Oconee County; noting their intent to proceed with an expanded presence in the county. He stated that TCTC anticipated that after the site is selected that design work would take approximately 6-8 months, followed by state approvals that will take many months and finally bids & construction to follow within a year or two.

Council comments related to Mr. DeHay’s presentation centered on timing for site selection and construction, potential use of existing buildings in the county, state approval process, suggestion to design with expansion vertically versus horizontally.

Ms. Jean Jennings addressed Council suggesting various areas to review for potential cost savings to include food for the Detention Center, eliminating the CVB personnel and vehicles from the county roll, utilizing in house staff to prepare for reassessment, etc.

Council questioned the Administrator regarding the current reassessment process. Mr. Moulder noted that the reassessment has been ongoing for the past 4 years and is being done by in house staff.

Ms. Jaime Dexter addressed Council reading from a prepared statement [copy filed with these minutes] asking Council to cease the search for an in house attorney and to reappoint Mr. Martin, McNair Attorney, for the remainder of 2015.

Mr. Ward Fetrow addressed Council regarding various aspects of the budget to include the “high cost of wants” to include land purchases for the Oconee Industry & Technology Park [\$5 million], Golden Corner Commerce Park [\$2.5 million], and TCTC land for Oconee campus [\$6 million]. Additionally he voiced concerns with the Broadband Project FOCUS and a proposed Spec Building for \$2 million.

Council questioned the Administrator regarding land purchase prices as quoted by Mr. Fetrow. Mr. Moulder stated that the TCTC property purchase is budgeted for \$700,000 not \$6 million and that there is not a Spec Building proposed in the budget for the next fiscal year.

Mr. Jim Henderson addressed Council in support of inclusion in a salary increase for county employees and specifically Sheriff Office deputies.

Council noted the excellent job being done by the Sheriff and his staff and questioned resources spent in other areas of the budget that could be reallocated to the sheriff's office for public safety.

Oconee County Sheriff Mike Crenshaw addressed Council in support for inclusion of a cost of living increase for county employees. Sheriff Crenshaw reviewed previous budgets and thanked Council for their support in the past. He noted that this increase would assist not only is department but county wide with recruitment of quality personnel and retention of that staff. Sheriff Crenshaw also asked that the compensation study done several years ago and only initiated for phase I be reviewed for further implementation to bring salaries up to competitive levels.

Lastly, he invited Council to a meeting on June 11, 2015 at 2:30 p.m. in the training room at the Law Enforcement Center for the Sheriff's Office Youth Camp. The presentation will include a slide show and will allow Council to meet the boys.

Council noted the excellent job being done by the Sheriff and his staff and recognized that recruitment and retention are a county wide issue.

Mr. McCall asked if any additional citizens wished to address Council; none stepped forward.

Additionally, Mr. McCall asked if any citizens wished to submit written comments regarding **Ordinance 2015-01**; no citizen presented any written comments for the record.

Mr. McCall closed the Public Hearing regarding **Ordinance 2015-01**.

Ordinance 2015-02 “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, 2015 AND ENDING JUNE 30, 2016.”

Mr. McCall noted that no citizens had signed up to address Council regarding this ordinance. He asked if any citizens wished to address Council; none stepped forward.

Additionally, Mr. McCall asked if any citizens wished to submit written comments regarding **Ordinance 2015-02**; no citizen presented any written comments for the record.

Mr. McCall closed the Public Hearing regarding **Ordinance 2015-02**.

Ordinance 2015-03 “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, 2015 AND ENDING JUNE 30, 2016.”

Mr. McCall noted that no citizens had signed up to address Council regarding this ordinance. He asked if any citizens wished to address Council; none stepped forward.

Additionally, Mr. McCall asked if any citizens wished to submit written comments regarding **Ordinance 2015-03**; no citizen presented any written comments for the record.

Mr. McCall closed the Public Hearing regarding **Ordinance 2015-03**.

Other Business

Cost of Living Adjustment [COLA]

Ms. Cammick addressed Council utilizing a handout prepared by the Administrator [copy filed with these minutes] regarding a COLA for county employees; noting specifically that she felt that the Sheriff Deputies were underpaid. Discussion followed with various opinions offered to include but not limited to: cost related to a 2% COLA; limiting COLA to employees making \$45,000 or less; utilizing money set aside for the TCTC land purchase to fund a COLA [*Mr. Moulder noted that this was not possible as those funds were designated millage and could not be used for general operations, i.e., salaries*]; COLA to be applied on each employee’s anniversary date; increased millage to fund COLA; reallocation of funds from the CVB and SC Heritage Corridor to go to the Sheriff’s office; and, staff morale if a COLA is not applied to all employees.

Council concurred to allow Mr. Moulder sufficient time to develop options and to review with the Budget, Finance & Administration Chair for Council’s consideration at the next meeting.

Adjourn

Mr. Thrift made a motion, approved unanimously 5 - 0, to adjourn at 7:31p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Elizabeth G. Hulse
Clerk to Council