



MINUTES

OCONEE COUNTY COUNCIL

Regular Meeting

June 18, 2024

MEMBERS, OCONEE COUNTY COUNCIL

Mr. John Elliott, District I
Mr. Matthew Durham, Chairman, District II
Mr. Don Mize, Vice Chairman, District III
Mr. Julian Davis III, District IV
Mr. Glenn Hart, Chairman Pro Tem, District V

Oconee County Council met at 6:00 PM in Council Chambers, 415 South Pine Street, Walhalla, SC with all Council Members [Mr. Durham via phone], County Administrator Amanda F. Brock, County Attorney David Root [via phone], & Jennifer C. Adams, Clerk to Council 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.oconeesc.com/council]. In addition, it was made available [*upon request*] to the newspapers, radio stations, television stations and concerned citizens.

Members of the press present: Andrea Kelley / The Journal, Dick Mangrum / 101.7 WGOG

Call to Order

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

Moment of Silence

Mr. Mize asked for a moment of silence prior to the Invocation.

Invocation

Mr. David Root, County Attorney, gave the Invocation.

Pledge of Allegiance

Mr. David Dial led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.

Approval of Minutes

Mr. Davis made a motion, seconded by Mr. Elliott, approved 5 – 0, to approve the May 21, 2024 regular meeting minutes as presented.

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Attorney's Comments

Mr. Root provided an update related to Project Spark **Ordinance 2024-15**, noting the minimum job requirement was previously listed as 150 but has been amended to reflect 130.

Administrator's Comments

Ms. Brock stated to Council that she was giving up her time to allow Ms. Stacey Whichel with Evergreen Solutions, LLC, who completed the Comp and Wage Study for Oconee County, to provide an update of their findings to Council.

Ms. Stacey Whichel, Project Manager, addressed Council utilizing a power point presentation entitled, "Classification & Compensation Study Oconee County, SC" [copy in backup] and provided an overview of their findings, proposed plans and recommendations.

Ms. Brock noted that the anticipated amount of \$2 million dollars was budgeted for implementation of the Comp and Wage study and this would include Fire and Emergency Services, even though they were left out of a portion of the study.

Mr. Davis voiced his concern that this presentation was not listed on the posted agenda.

Ms. Brock addressed Mr. Davis' concern by noting it was an error and miscommunication on her part that this presentation was not listed on the agenda.

Presentation to Council

Upstate Alliance Economic Development Regional Update – Mr. John Lummus / President & CEO

Mr. John Lummus, Upstate Alliance President and CEO, addressed Council utilizing a power point presentation entitled, "Upstate SC, Business moves here. Yours can, too." [copy in backup] and provided an update regarding economic development in the Upstate and Oconee County.

Council extend their thanks to Mr. Lummus and his team for all they do for the Oconee County and the Upstate.

*Oconee County Election Security Update - Mr. Keith Jones / Department of Homeland Security
Mr. Matt Norris / Cybersecurity Analyst for the South Carolina Election Commission*

Mr. Keith Jones with the Department of Homeland Security addressed Council with their findings and recommendations related to voting security in Oconee County, noting Mr. Matt Norris was unable to attend the meeting.

Mr. Jones proceeded to provide Council with information related to their assessment of voting security, noting this is not an inspection and there is no legal requirement for the County to follow their recommendations.

Mr. Elliott inquired as to what Homeland Security recommends related to voting security in Oconee County.

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Mr. Jones provided an overview of Homeland Security’s recommendations for increasing voting security in Oconee County, noting there were no glaring issues.

Public Comment Session

If you are not able to attend in person and you have a comment, you may submit it by contacting our Clerk to Council, Jennifer C. Adams at jennifercadams@oconeesc.com or 864-718-1023, so that she may receive your comment and read it into the record.

1. Ms. Maria Green addressed Council with her concerns related local government conduct.
2. Mr. Franke Pearson addressed Council with his opinion that more County representatives should be present at Veteran Services within the County.

Mr. Mize responded to Mr. Pearson and noted he was actually working during the Veteran’s Day Memorial Service.

Council Members Comments

Mr. Durham responded to Mr. Pearson, noting he was also at work during the Veteran’s Day Memorial Service, then went on to address Ms. Green’s concerns related to local government conduct.

Mr. Elliott addressed Mr. Pearson and noted he has been present in the past at Veteran’s Day Memorial Services but there is really no good excuse that Council should not be present.

Mr. Hart apologized for his absence from the Veteran’s Day Memorial Service and noted the he has a honorable discharge from the Army for the time he served in Vietnam.

Mr. Davis agreed that more Council members should strive to attend more events within the County as their schedules allow.

Public Hearing for the Following Ordinances

ORDINANCE 2024-01 AN ORDINANCE TO ESTABLISH THE BUDGET FOR OCONEE COUNTY AND PROVIDE FOR THE LEVY OF TAXES FOR ORDINARY COUNTY PURPOSES, FOR THE TRI-COUNTY TECHNICAL COLLEGE SPECIAL REVENUE FUND, FOR THE EMERGENCY SERVICES PROTECTION SPECIAL REVENUE FUND, FOR THE ROAD MAINTENANCE SPECIAL REVENUE FUND, FOR THE VICTIM SERVICES SPECIAL REVENUE FUNDS, FOR THE COMMUNITY HEALTH AND COMMUNITY SERVICES SPECIAL REVENUE FUND, FOR THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CAPITAL PROJECT FUND, FOR THE BRIDGE AND CULVERT CAPITAL PROJECT FUND, FOR THE CAPITAL VEHICLE / EQUIPMENT FUND, FOR THE PARKS, RECREATION, AND TOURISM CAPITAL PROJECTS FUND, FOR THE FIRE / EMERGENCY SERVICES CAPITAL VEHICLE AND EQUIPMENT FUND, FOR THE GENERAL ONE TIME CAPITAL FUND, AND FOR THE DEBT SERVICE FUND, ALL IN OCONEE COUNTY FOR THE FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING JULY 1, 2024 AND ENDING JUNE 30, 2025.

Mr. Mize opened the floor for Public Comment.

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Noting that no citizens signed up to address Council and no citizen submitted or presented any written comments for the record.

Mr. Mize closed the Public Hearing regarding **Ordinance 2024-01**.

ORDINANCE 2024-02 AN ORDINANCE TO ESTABLISH THE BUDGET FOR THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF OCONEE COUNTY 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, 2024 AND ENDING JUNE 30, 2025.

Mr. Mize opened the floor for Public Comment.

Noting that no citizens signed up to address Council and no citizen submitted or presented any written comments for the record.

Mr. Mize closed the Public Hearing regarding **Ordinance 2024-02**.

ORDINANCE 2024-03 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, 2024 AND ENDING JUNE 30, 2025.

Mr. Mize opened the floor for Public Comment.

Noting that no citizens signed up to address Council and no citizen submitted or presented any written comments for the record.

Mr. Mize closed the Public Hearing regarding **Ordinance 2024-03**.

ORDINANCE 2024-15 AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION AND DELIVERY OF A FEE-IN-LIEU OF AD VALOREM TAXES AND SPECIAL SOURCE REVENUE CREDIT AGREEMENT, BY AND BETWEEN OCONEE COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA AND SCHNEIDER ELECTRIC USA, INC. (FORMERLY IDENTIFIED AS PROJECT SPARK), ACTING FOR ITSELF, ONE OR MORE CURRENT OR FUTURE AFFILIATES, AND OTHER PROJECT COMPANIES (COLLECTIVELY "COMPANY"); PROVIDING FOR A FEE IN LIEU OF AD VALOREM TAXES INCENTIVE; PROVIDING FOR A SPECIAL SOURCE REVENUE CREDIT; AND OTHER RELATED MATTERS.

Mr. Mize opened the floor for Public Comment.

Noting that no citizens signed up to address Council and no citizen submitted or presented any written comments for the record.

Mr. Mize closed the Public Hearing regarding **Ordinance 2024-15**.

ORDINANCE 2024-16 AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION AND DELIVERY OF A FEE-IN-LIEU OF AD VALOREM TAXES AND SPECIAL SOURCE REVENUE CREDIT AGREEMENT, BY AND BETWEEN OCONEE COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA AND A COMPANY CURRENTLY IDENTIFIED AS PROJECT TURN, ACTING FOR ITSELF, ONE OR

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MORE CURRENT OR FUTURE AFFILIATES, AND OTHER PROJECT COMPANIES (COLLECTIVELY “COMPANY”); PROVIDING FOR A FEE IN LIEU OF AD VALOREM TAXES INCENTIVE; PROVIDING FOR A SPECIAL SOURCE REVENUE CREDIT; CREATING OR MODIFYING A JOINT COUNTY INDUSTRIAL AND BUSINESS PARK BETWEEN OCONEE COUNTY AND PICKENS COUNTY SO AS TO DESIGNATE THE PROPERTY OF THE PROJECT AS PART OF SUCH PARK; AND OTHER RELATED MATTERS.

Mr. Mize opened the floor for Public Comment.

Noting that no citizens signed up to address Council and no citizen submitted or presented any written comments for the record.

Mr. Mize closed the Public Hearing regarding **Ordinance 2024-16**.

ORDINANCE 2024-17 AN ORDINANCE TO REZONE A SERIES OF PARCELS, SPECIFIED HEREIN, FROM THE CONTROL FREE DISTRICT TO THE LAKE RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT (TWENTY-THREE (23) PARCELS, KEOWEE PLANTATION), PURSUANT TO OCONEE COUNTY CODE OF ORDINANCES CHAPTER 38, ARTICLE 8.

Mr. Mize opened the floor for Public Comment.

Noting that no citizens signed up to address Council and no citizen submitted or presented any written comments for the record.

Mr. Mize closed the Public Hearing regarding **Ordinance 2024-17**.

ORDINANCE 2024-18 AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 38 OF THE OCONEE COUNTY CODE OF ORDINANCES, IN CERTAIN LIMITED REGARDS AND PARTICULARS ONLY, REGARDING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF MINIMUM LOT SIZE AND MAXIMUM LOT DENSITY PROVISIONS FOR THE CONTROL FREE DISTRICT; AND OTHER MATTERS RELATED THERETO.

Mr. Mize opened the floor for Public Comment.

1. Mr. Tom Markovich spoke in opposition to **Ordinance 2024-18**.
2. Ms. Martha Steele spoke in support of **Ordinance 2024-18**.
3. Ms. Leigh MacKenzie spoke in support of **Ordinance 2024-18**.
4. Mr. Patrick Gannon spoke in support of **Ordinance 2024-18**.
5. Mr. Dave Emanuel spoke in support of **Ordinance 2024-18**.
6. Ms. Sharon Hamilton spoke in support of **Ordinance 2024-18**.
7. Ms. Patti Cason spoke in support of **Ordinance 2024-18**.
8. Ms. Phyllis Macy spoke in support of **Ordinance 2024-18**.

Mr. Mize closed the Public Hearing regarding **Ordinance 2024-18**.

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Third Reading of the Following Ordinances

ORDINANCE 2024-01 *[see caption above]*

Mr. Hart made a motion, seconded by Mr. Elliott to approve **Ordinance 2024-01** on third and final reading.

Mr. Davis noted he is grateful that no changes have been made to **Ordinance 2024-01** coming into third reading.

Motion approved 5 – 0.

ORDINANCE 2024-02 *[see caption above]*

Mr. Hart made a motion, seconded by Mr. Elliott, approved 5 - 0, to approve **Ordinance 2024-02** on third and final reading.

ORDINANCE 2024-03 *[see caption above]*

Mr. Elliott made a motion, seconded by Mr. Davis, approved 5 - 0, to approve **Ordinance 2024-03** on third and final reading.

ORDINANCE 2024-15 *[see caption above]*

Mr. Elliott made a motion, seconded by Mr. Davis, to approve **Ordinance 2024-15** on third and final reading.

Mr. Davis and Mr. Durham extended their appreciation to Schneider Electric for continuing to invest in Oconee County and thanked Oconee Economic Alliance for their work on this project.

Motion approved 5 – 0.

ORDINANCE 2024-17 *[see caption above]*

Mr. Elliott made a motion, seconded by Mr. Davis, approved 5 - 0, to approve **Ordinance 2024-17** on third and final reading.

Second Reading of the Following Ordinances

ORDINANCE 2024-16 AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION AND DELIVERY OF A FEE-IN-LIEU OF AD VALOREM TAXES AND SPECIAL SOURCE REVENUE CREDIT AGREEMENT, BY AND BETWEEN OCONEE COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA AND A COMPANY CURRENTLY IDENTIFIED AS PROJECT TURN, ACTING FOR ITSELF, ONE OR MORE CURRENT OR FUTURE AFFILIATES, AND OTHER PROJECT COMPANIES (COLLECTIVELY “COMPANY”); PROVIDING FOR A FEE IN LIEU OF AD VALOREM TAXES INCENTIVE; PROVIDING FOR A SPECIAL SOURCE REVENUE CREDIT; CREATING OR MODIFYING A JOINT COUNTY INDUSTRIAL AND BUSINESS PARK BETWEEN OCONEE COUNTY AND PICKENS COUNTY SO AS TO DESIGNATE THE PROPERTY OF THE PROJECT AS PART OF SUCH PARK; AND OTHER RELATED MATTERS.

Mr. Elliott made a motion, seconded by Mr. Davis, approved 5 - 0, to approve **Ordinance 2024-16** on second reading.

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ORDINANCE 2024-18 AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 38 OF THE OCONEE COUNTY CODE OF ORDINANCES, IN CERTAIN LIMITED REGARDS AND PARTICULARS ONLY, REGARDING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF MINIMUM LOT SIZE AND MAXIMUM LOT DENSITY PROVISIONS FOR THE CONTROL FREE DISTRICT; AND OTHER MATTERS RELATED THERETO.

Mr. Elliott made a motion, seconded by Mr. Davis to approve **Ordinance 2024-18** on second reading.

Mr. Davis noted this ordinance would only affect subdivisions of 10 houses or more.

Mr. Mize thanked all citizens who spoke in favor of **Ordinance 2024-18**.

Motion approved 5 – 0.

First Reading of the Following Ordinances

ORDINANCE 2024-19 AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE CONVEYANCE OF EASEMENT RIGHTS TO DUKE ENERGY CAROLINAS, LLC FOR THE PURPOSE OF UTILITY INFRASTRUCTURE CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE AT PROPERTY OWNED BY OCONEE COUNTY IN WALHALLA, SOUTH CAROLINA, CURRENTLY DESIGNATED BY OCONEE COUNTY TAX MAP NUMBER 500-19-01-006; AND OTHER MATTERS RELATED THERETO.

Mr. Elliott made a motion, seconded by Mr. Davis, approved 5 - 0, to approve **Ordinance 2024-19** on first reading.

First & Final Reading for the Following Resolutions

None for this meeting.

Discussion Regarding Action Items

Emergency Replacement of Electric Fire Pump System

Department: Facilities Maintenance

Amount: \$66,105.63

10% Contingency: \$6,610.56

Total: \$72,716.19

Budget: \$72,716.19 Project Cost: \$72,716.19 Balance: \$0.00

The current fire suppression system at the Oconee County Courthouse is currently failing and is out of service. The original fire suppression system was installed when the Courthouse was completed in 2003. The fire suppression system includes an electric fire pump that boosts water pressure and pumps the water to all five (5) floors of the Courthouse. Without the electric fire pump, the water pressure coming into the building would not be sufficient to reach the upper floors if the sprinkler system was needed.

Impact Fire Services is the maintenance provider of the sprinkler and fire suppression system at the Courthouse. During routine maintenance, it was discovered that the current fire pump system had components that had failed and was out of service.

Due to the safety risk to the Courthouse building and citizens inside, Procurement Staff approved this purchase as an

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Emergency. On June 12, 2024, purchase order 56084 was issued and the order was placed. The expected time for completion is 2 weeks.

Due to safety risk of the Courthouse building the citizens inside, the Facilities Maintenance Director request to proceed with Impact Fire Services as an emergency procurement. Impact Fire Services has extensive knowledge of the current fire suppression system. If staff were to issue a solicitation for the replacement of the electric fire pump system, it would delay the purchase by approximately two to three months. This additional time could prevent the sprinkler system from activating in the event of fire in the Courthouse.

It is the staff's recommendation that Council authorize the Administrator to transfer sufficient funds to appropriate line item.

Mr. Hart made a motion, seconded by Mr. Davis, approved 5 - 0, to approve the transfer of sufficient funds to the appropriate line item by the County administrator for the replacement of the Electric Fire Pump System and the Oconee County Courthouse.

Request Council's approval for submission of an Airport Safety and Maintenance Grant application to the South Carolina Aeronautics Commission (SCAC) and commit \$35,370.00 in local funding to replace the rotating beacon and tower.

Total cost of this project: \$141,480.00

South Carolina Aeronautics Commission's portion will be 75 % of total cost equating to \$106,110.00

Oconee County providing the remaining 25% of total costs, equating to \$35,370.00

- Oconee Airport has received numerous complaints due to the lack of visibility and identification of the Airport during night-time operations.
- The existing Beacon/Tower has been in service for an overextended amount of years resulting in rust, corrosion, and safety issues.
- The South Carolina Aviation Commission, (SCAC) reviewed the height, condition, and age of the existing beacon/tower and determined a replacement was warranted.

The South Carolina Aviation Commission has agreed this project is Grant eligible. Approval of application is contingent upon SCAC approval and funding.

It is the staff's recommendation that Council authorize the County Administrator to execute documents related to the submission and possible award of the SCAC Airport Safety and Maintenance Grant and to commit \$35,370.00 in local funding.

Mr. Elliott made a motion, seconded by Mr. Davis, to authorize the County Administrator to execute documents related to the submission and possible award of the SCAC Airport Safety and Maintenance Grant and to commit \$35,370.00 in local funding.

Ms. Brock noted that the Aeronautics Commission meeting is prior to the next County Council meeting and, while there was no assumption the budget would be approved, in the event the budget was not approved this request would have been removed from the agenda.

Motion approved 5 – 0.

Council Committee Reports

None for this meeting.

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Board & Commission Appointments **Conservation Bank Board**

1 At-Large seat: One questionnaire on file for this seat.

Mr. Mize nominated Ms. Jessica Fry, approved 5 – 0, to serve as an At-Large representative on the Conservation Bank Board.

Executive Session

Mr. Elliott made a motion, seconded by Mr. Davis, approved 5 – 0, to enter into Executive Sessions for the following purposes, as allowed for § 30-4-70(a) of the South Carolina Code of Laws:

1. *Receive legal advice and discuss potential acquisition related to Emergency Services.*
2. *Receive legal advice and discuss pending litigation – Stokes v. Oconee County.*

Council entered into Executive Session at 7:44 p.m.

Council returned from Executive Session at 8:40 p.m. on a motion made by Mr. Elliott, seconded by Mr. Davis, approved 5 – 0.

Discussion Regarding Action Item

Council consideration of the purchase of improved real property for Emergency Services purposes.

As requested by Ms. Brock, Mr. Elliott made a motion, seconded by Mr. Hart, approved 5 – 0, to direct County Administrator to continue the search and identification of suitable property for the intended purpose of expansion of emergency services.

As requested by Mr. Root, Mr. Elliott made a motion, seconded by Mr. Hart, approved 5 – 0, to direct County Attorney to pursue case resolution as discussed related to Stokes vs. Oconee County.

Adjourn:

Mr. Hart made a motion, approved unanimously, to adjourn at 8:41 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Jennifer C. Adams
Clerk to Council

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