



2024 OCONEE COUNTY ANNUAL REPORT

STRATEGIC PLANNING

County Council and Administration hold an Annual Strategic Planning Retreat to review the previous year's accomplishments, establish goals for the upcoming year, and prioritize longer term goals in preparation for the future.

At the Strategic Planning Retreat, Council discusses their individual and collective strategic initiatives for the upcoming year – this combined vision provides Administration directives for both management and budgeting.

If we fail to plan, we must plan to fail.



Oconee County Mission Statement

It is the mission of Oconee County to provide our current and future citizens and visitors' quality services while protecting our communities, heritage, environment and natural resources, in an ever-changing world.

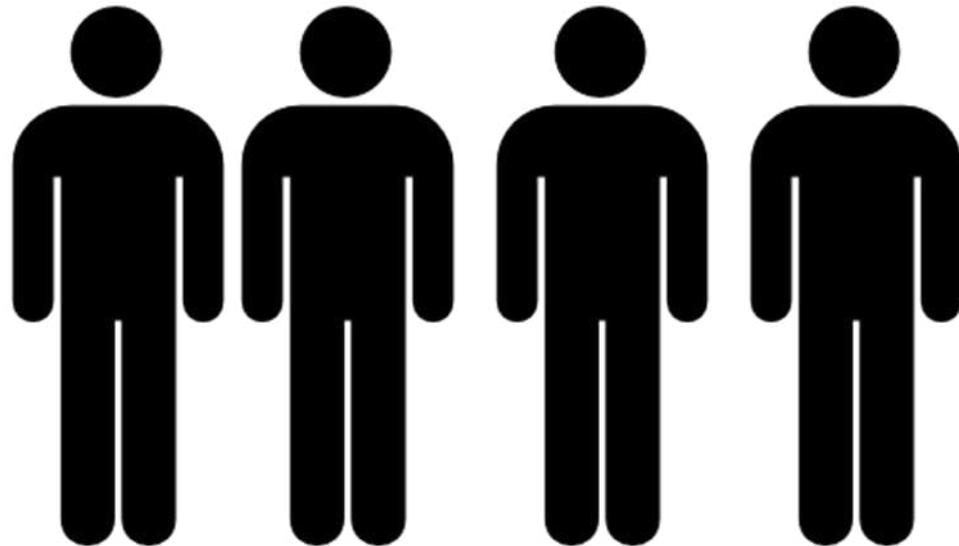
Oconee County Vision Statement

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.



TIER ONE PRIORITIES

In 2024, Tier One initiatives were prioritized by four (4) Council members during the Strategic Planning Retreat. This single initiative was addressed by four of the five Council members, and should receive due consideration for funding in the upcoming fiscal year. This year, there was only one Tier One priority.



COMPENSATION, WAGE & TIME USE STUDY



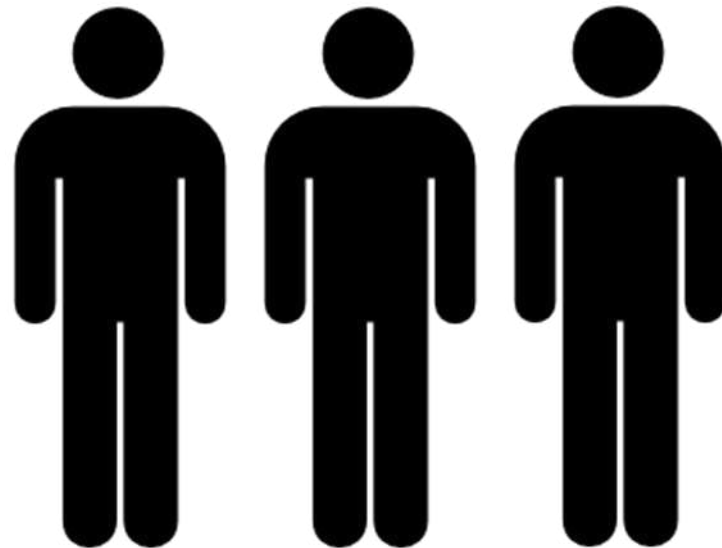
Over 75% of employees participated in focus groups or responded to an online anonymous survey to provide input.

Compensation increases and the new pay scale were implemented in September 2024.

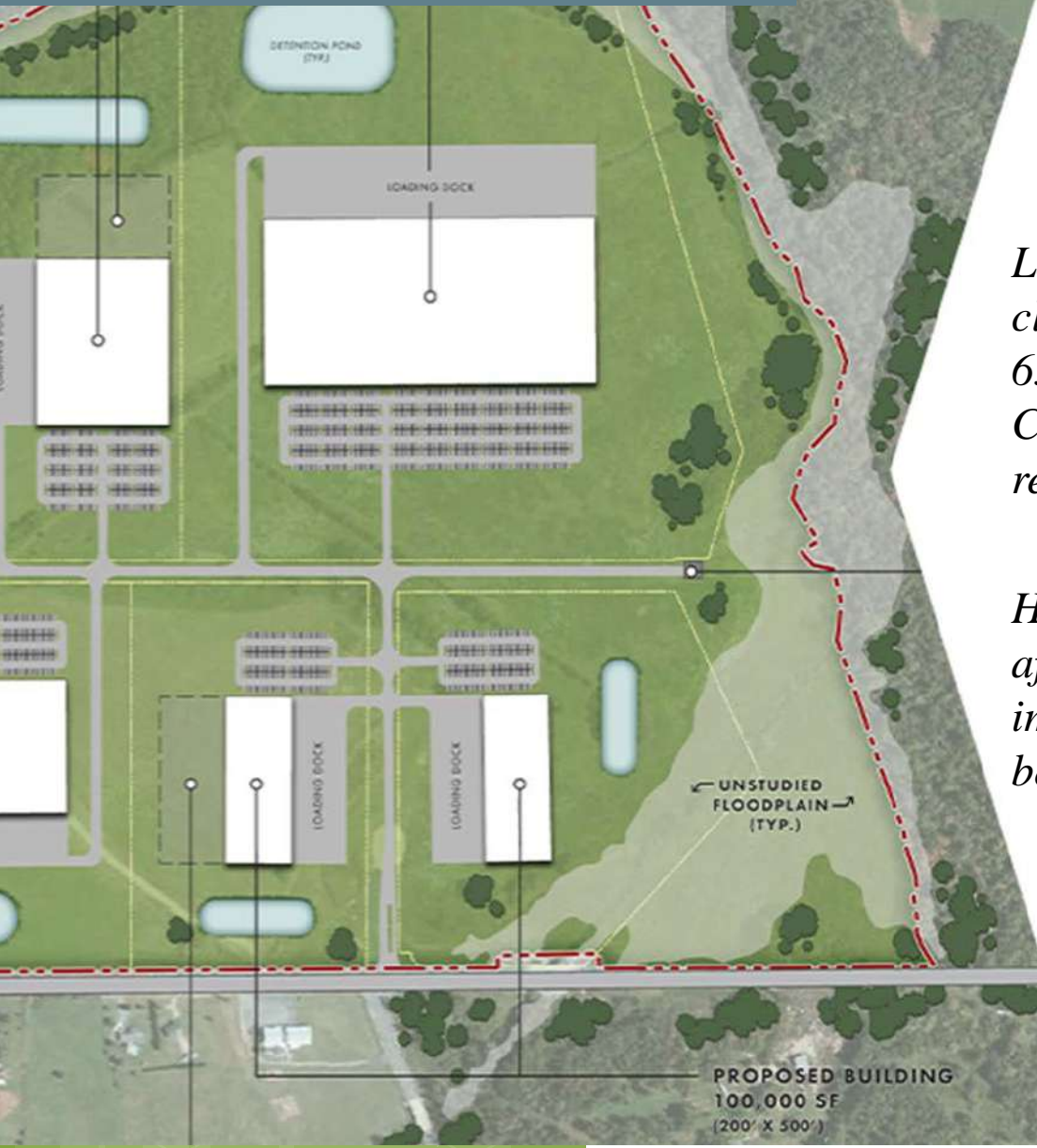


TIER TWO PRIORITIES

These priorities, identified by three Council members during the Strategic Planning Retreat, were addressed by a majority, and will be prioritized in the FY 2024-2025 Budget and beyond.



GCCP SITE IMPROVEMENTS



Last year, Council approved the clearing and grading of approximately 65 acres at the Golden Corner Commerce Park, creating a 42-acre pad ready site.

Hurricane Helene's immense rainfall affected the site, resulting in necessary improvements which are anticipated to be completed in Spring 2025.



SOLID WASTE PLAN & EQUIPMENT REPLACEMENT

In 2024, Oconee County purchased a 2025 Kenworth T-880 Roll Off to service compactor containers at the recycling centers, parks and other departments, as needed.

Oconee County also purchased a 2024 Caterpillar 973 HRC Track Loader with Landfill Package, an instrumental piece of landfill equipment which is used to excavate soil, spread soil as landfill cover and move material across the landfill.

Funds were allocated to repair the 2018 John Deere 1050K Crawler Dozer and the 2016 Bomag Landfill Compactor.

Staff is obtaining quotes for the construction of a new “wall” area at the C&D Landfill to address user safety and ease.



SHERIFF'S OFFICERS SALARIES STRUCTURE / EQUIPMENT UPGRADES

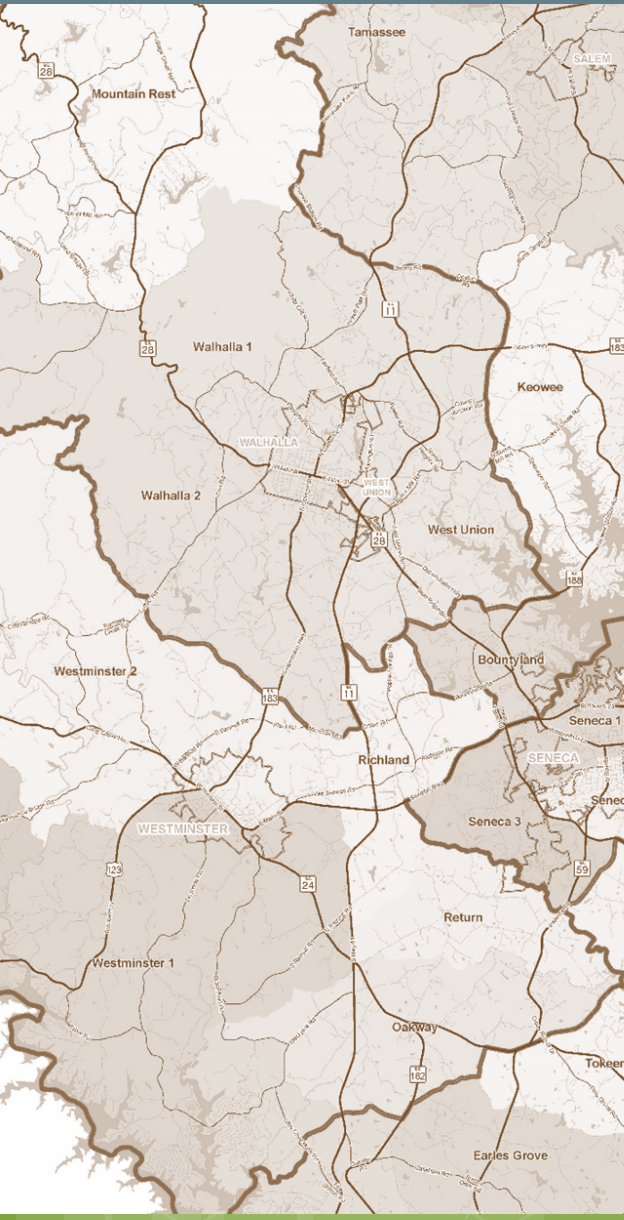


Administration and Finance worked closely with the Sheriff's Office for across-the-board implementation of an upgraded pay scale, addressing both longevity and compression.

For increased protection of officers, Oconee County purchased and installed ballistic glass and armored door panels for 65 Sheriff's Office vehicles, and implemented firearm and equipment upgrades for officers.



ENHANCE VOTING SECURITY



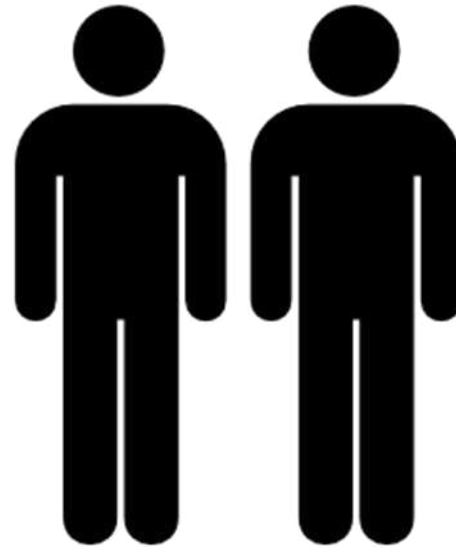
In 2024, five major election events took place, with early voting for both the June Primaries and November General Elections bringing in more than 20,000 citizens.

For enhanced security, Administration worked closely with the Registration & Elections Board and staff to implement one-way entry, consistent law enforcement presence, upgraded signage and additional staff.



TIER THREE PRIORITIES

Tier Three initiatives were prioritized by two County Council members during the strategic planning meeting.



TIER THREE PRIORITIES

- ***Increased Road Funding / Millage :*** *The Road Maintenance Fund was increased from 2.1 Mills to 3.1 Mills.*
- ***Continued Momentum Sewer South / Engineering to Exits 1, 2 and 4:*** *Sewer expansion has been steadily progressing throughout the year.*
- ***Oconee County Quarry – Rate Increases for Non-residents / Second Crusher Operation:*** *In August 2024, Oconee County implemented different rates for in-county and out-of-county customers, resulting in a better balance of Quarry product availability while keeping pricing moderate for residents.*
- ***Improvement of Development Standards:*** *In October 2024, Council approved Ordinance 2024-23, amending Chapters 32 and 38 of the Oconee County Code of Ordinances.*
- ***Increase Allocations to Volunteer Fire Stations:*** *Council approved 2.0 Mills designated for the newly established Fire / Emergency Services Capital Vehicle & Equipment Fund. Oconee County purchased six pumper/tankers to add to the fleet placed around the County in volunteer departments. Funds were also budgeted for Emergency Services to reimburse stations for fuel expenses over the county’s annual allocations.*





2024 OCONEE COUNTY YEAR IN REVIEW



A Brief History of Oconee County

Oconee County, located in the northwest corner of South Carolina on the edge of the Blue Ridge Mountains, takes its name from a Cherokee word meaning “land beside the water”. The County was formed in 1868 when the State legislature divided Pickens District into Pickens and Oconee Counties.

Native Americans lived here for thousands of years, and this area was home to the Cherokee. Their villages were located near water, good hunting grounds and tillable land. Dwellings in the Cherokee villages were houses not unlike the rustic homes of early European settlers. They farmed hundreds of acres of corn in the rich land along the rivers and maintained peach and apple orchards. During Colonial time the Cherokee were allies and trading partners with the British. They had an extensive trading network including a trading path that extended from Charleston to the Mississippi River and intersected other paths at the Cherokee “lower town” of Keowee. The main path also went through Oconee Town and crossed Oconee Mountain (formerly known as Station Mountain). The British built Fort Prince George across the Keowee River from Keowee Town to protect the Cherokee and the important trade paths.

It was the Cherokee’s choice to side with the British during the Revolutionary War, which led to the destruction of their Lower Towns and the loss of most of their tribal land in the Upstate in the Treaty of DeWitt’s Corner in 1777. They sold the remainder of their tribal land in South Carolina in the Treaty of 1816, but were not forced to leave and many of their descendants live here today. The Cherokee cultural legacy has become an integral part of our County’s heritage.

Following the Revolutionary War, veterans and settlers from other parts of the State began moving in, including a small group of Germans under the leadership of General John A. Wagener and the German Colonization Society of Charleston, South Carolina, who founded and settled the town of Walhalla in 1850. Today, Walhalla serves as the County seat.

A number of Irishmen came to Stumphouse Mountain in the mid-1850’s to build the Blue Ridge Railroad that was chartered to connect Charleston with the Midwest. Economic reasons and the Civil War caused the project to fail to meet completion. Stumphouse Tunnel is today a tourist attraction on the National Register of Historic Places.

After the Civil War, the Richmond and Air Line Railroad (now the Southern Railroad) was built through Oconee County, and the present towns of Seneca and Westminster came into being. Large textile mills were built in the Upstate in the 1890’s, with Newry in southeast Oconee County remaining as one of the earliest, least-altered textile villages in South Carolina.

As Oconee County welcomed in the new century, textile manufacturing expanded, lumber mills prospered, and agricultural enterprises, such as dairy farms and commercial apple orchards, contributed to the County’s economy. By 1960, the County’s economy was becoming more diverse with the opening of the Torrington Company, set to manufacture precision needles, and the plans of Duke Energy to construct electrical energy projects in the County that would ultimately create Lakes Keowee and Jocassee, as well as a nuclear energy facility.

Oconee County continues to be a strong contender in the national and global marketplace. Today, the County’s economic diversity can be attributed to a number of high-tech manufacturers that employ a well-trained work force able to meet the needs of business and industry.

Tourism now plays a vital role in the County's economy, as tourists visit many local and state parks, historical sites, and take part in recreation that includes hiking, waterfall viewing, rafting, and other nature-based activities. Quality of life in Oconee County is excellent, as measured based on the social and economic environment provided by our freedoms, happiness, material well-being, environmental health, and community life factors. The citizens of Oconee County are committed to fostering economic growth while protecting the natural beauty of the County.



Top Left to Right: White Waterfalls, The Old Seneca Depot; Bottom Left to Right: The Old Jail and Kenneth Mill; Provided by Oconee History Museum

Overview of Oconee County and Our Government

- **Oconee’s Seal** symbolizes Oconee’s rich Native American history. “Oconee” (Ae-quo-nee) is an ancient Cherokee word meaning “land beside the water.” The design of the seal reflects the Native American symbols for “land” and “water.” The green, upper part of the design is the symbol for mountain while the blue, lower part of the design is the symbol for water – representative of the five main rivers of Oconee: Chattooga, Chauga, Tugaloo, Keowee and Seneca. The blood-red ring around the design in the traditional Cherokee “circle of life” connecting all living things.



- **Called “The Golden Corner”**, Oconee County is located in an area known as the “Upstate of South Carolina.”
- **The land area** of Oconee County is 625.41 square miles.
- **The geography** plays host to significant environmental resources:
 - Sumter National Forest
 - Ellicott Rock Wilderness Area
 - Jocassee Gorge Wilderness Area
 - Campgrounds
 - State and County Parks:
 - Chau Ram County Park
 - High Falls County Park
 - South Cove County Park
 - Devils Fork State Park
 - Lake Hartwell State Park
 - Oconee State Park
 - Oconee Station State Park
 - Coneross Campground
 - Oconee Point
 - Stumphouse Tunnel /Issaqueena Falls Park
 - Rivers:
 - Chauga River
 - Chattooga River
 - Whitewater River
 - Little River

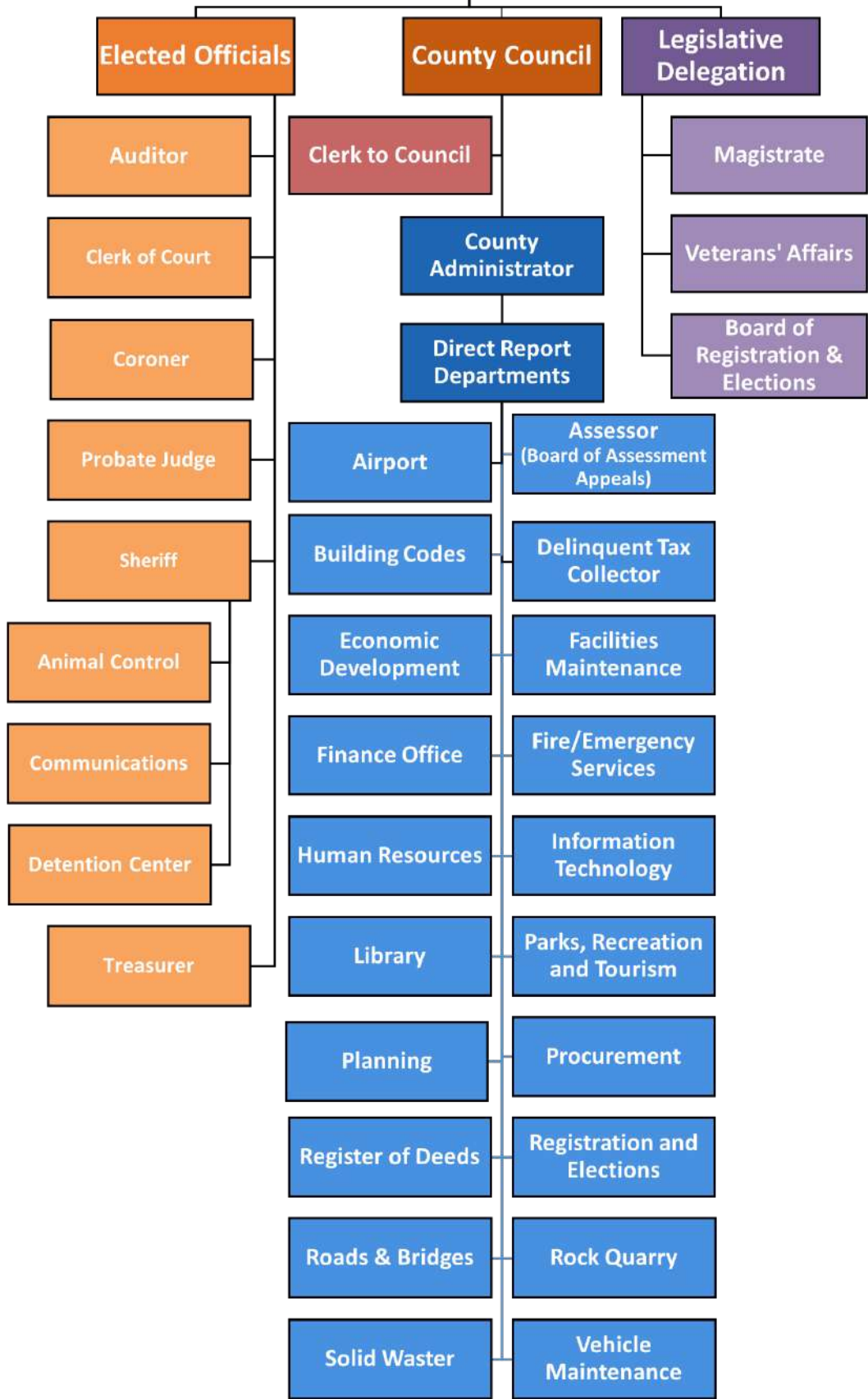
- Major Lakes:
 - Lake Jocassee
 - Lake Keowee
 - Lake Hartwell

- **Oconee County is home** to five (5) municipalities:
 - Town of Salem
 - City of Seneca
 - City of Walhalla (County Seat)
 - Town of West Union
 - City of Westminster

- **Oconee County adjoins 10 other counties in 3 states:** Anderson and Pickens in South Carolina; Jackson, Transylvania and Macon in North Carolina; and Rabun, Habersham, Stephens, Franklin and Hart in Georgia.



Citizens of Oconee County



Form of Government:

- The Council – Administrator form of professional government was approved by voter referendum in November 2003. Oconee County was formerly under the Council – Elected Supervisor form of government.

County Council:

- Five (5) officials are elected from single-member districts for staggered four-year terms.
- Oconee County Council Members:

District I	John Elliott
District II	Matthew Durham, Chairman
District III	Don Mize, Vice Chairman
District IV	Thomas James
District V	James Glenn Hart

Other County Elected Officials:

Clerk of Court	Lisa Burton
Coroner	Karl E. Addis
County Auditor	Christy Hubbard
County Treasurer	Gena Acree
Probate Judge	Danny Singleton
Sheriff	Michael Crenshaw
Solicitor	Micah Black

Oconee County Legislative Delegation:

State Senator, South Carolina District #1
The Honorable Thomas C. Alexander

State Representative, South Carolina District #1
The Honorable William R. Whitmire

State Representative, South Carolina District #2
The Honorable Adam Duncan

United States Congressman:

South Carolina's 3rd Congressional District
The Honorable Sheri Biggs

United States Senators:

The Honorable Lindsey O. Graham
The Honorable Timothy E. (Tim) Scott

Oconee County Mission Statement

It is the mission of Oconee County to provide our current and future citizens and visitors quality services while protecting our communities, heritage, environment and natural resources, in an ever-changing world.

Oconee County Vision Statement

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.

County Council Priorities

Each year, County Council and Administration hold a Strategic Planning Retreat to review the previous year's accomplishments, establish goals for the upcoming year, and prioritize longer term goals in preparation for the future. The Oconee County Strategic Planning Retreat was held on Friday, February 24, 2023. During the retreat, County Administrator, Amanda Brock, presented the Annual Budget Update, followed by the 2022 Annual Report.

The strategic planning initiatives are ranked based on Council members' commitment to a specific matter, and further discussion.

Tier One Priorities

In 2024, Tier One initiatives were prioritized by four (4) Council members during the Strategic Planning Retreat. This single initiative was addressed by four of the five Council members, and should receive due consideration for funding in the upcoming fiscal year. This year, there was only one Tier One priority.

Implementation of Compensation, Wage and Time Use Study:

- *For four consecutive years, Council has identified employee recruitment and retention as a top tier priority. This year, that priority solidified even further by the approval of a Comprehensive Compensation, Classification and Time Use Study.*
- *Over 75% of employees participated in focus groups or responded to an online anonymous survey to provide input.*
- *Compensation increases and the new pay scale were implemented in September 2024.*

Tier Two Priorities

These priorities, identified by three Council members during the Strategic Planning Retreat, were addressed by a majority, and were prioritized in the FY 2024-2025 Budget and beyond.

Golden Corner Commerce Park Site Improvements:

- *This initiative, anchored in Council's desire to stimulate economic development in the Southern portion of the County, addresses infrastructure and site improvements at GCCP to enhance future recruitment of industry. This priority is parallel to Council's commitment for Sewer Expansion to Exits 1, 2, and 4.*
- *Last year, Council approved the clearing and grading of approximately 65 acres at the Golden Corner Commerce Park, creating a 42-acre pad ready site.*
- *Hurricane Helene's immense rainfalls affected the site, resulting in necessary improvements, which are anticipated to be completed in spring of this year.*

Solid Waste Long Range Plan / Equipment Replacement:

- *As the County realizes increased growth, Council recognizes the need to plan for that growth in primary service areas. The Solid Waste Division is one of the target areas slated for enormous expansion in both use and expectation.*

- *In 2024, Oconee County purchased a 2025 Kenworth T-880 Roll Off to service compactor containers at the recycling centers, parks and other departments, as needed.*
- *Oconee County also purchased a 2024 Caterpillar 973 HRC Track Loader with Landfill Package, an instrumental piece of landfill equipment which is used to excavate soil, spread soil as landfill cover and used to move material across the landfill. Funds were also allocated for the repair of our 2018 John Deere 1050K Crawler Dozer and the 2016 Bomag Landfill Compactor.*
- *Staff is currently obtaining quotes for the construction of a new “wall” area at the C&D Landfill to address user safety and ease.*

Sheriff’s Officers Salaries Structure / Equipment Upgrades:

- *This particular priority outlines Council’s many-year commitment to address law enforcement salaries, as well as to address compression within the Sheriff’s Office. The second part of this priority is for the upgrade of weapons for officers.*
- *Since law enforcement wasn’t included in the Evergreen Compensation Study, Administration and Finance staff worked closely with the Sheriff’s Office for across-the-board implementation of an upgraded pay scale which addressed both longevity and compression.*
- *For increased protection of officers, Oconee County purchased and installed ballistic glass and armored door panels for 65 Sheriff’s Office vehicles, and implemented firearm and equipment upgrades for officers.*

Enhanced Voting Security:

- *Council prioritized the necessity to improve the Early Voting Precinct (Pine Street Administrative Building) to provide a more secure facility for Oconee voters as well as generally increasing security at the Pine Street.*
- *During 2024, five major election events took place, with early voting for both the June Primaries and the November General Election bringing in more than 20,000 citizens.*
- *Administration worked closely with the Registration and Elections Board and staff to implement one-way entry and exits; consistent law enforcement presence; as well as upgraded signage and additional staff.*

Tier Three Priorities

Tier Three initiatives were prioritized by two County Council members during the strategic planning meeting.

Increased Road Funding / Millage:

- *In April of 2024, Council approved an increase to the Road Maintenance Fund from 2.1 Mills to 3.1 Mills. The approved FY 2024-2025 Budget maintained the funding at 3.1 Mills, with the increased value of a bringing the funding up to \$2,046,000.*
- *In FY 23-24, the Oconee C-Fund Committee approved \$1.4 million for preliminary paving of various roads and an additional \$70,000 for the road extension at Oconee Industry and Technology Park.*
- *In 2024, we approved the contract for paving approximately 22 county-owned roads, allocating \$7,474,452.54 from the Road Maintenance Fund and C-Funds for the multiyear project.*

Continued Momentum Sewer South / Engineering to Exits 1, 2 and 4:

- *Sewer expansion has been steadily growing throughout the year. In February 2024, Council approved engineering services for Exit 4 - Master Sanitary Sewer Pump Station, Force Main and Limited Gravity Sewer.*

- In December 2024, Oconee submitted all relevant permit documents for Exit 4 construction. Once approval is received, we are ready for the bidding process to begin.
- In addition to the progress for Exit 4, the Oconee Joint Regional Sewer Authority received its operating permit for Sewer South Phase II, for sewer expansion to Exits 1 & 2, in December.

Oconee County Quarry – Rate Increases for Non-residents / Second Crusher Operation:

- In August of 2024, Oconee County Rock Quarry implemented different rates for in-county and out-of-county customers resulting in a better balance of quarry product availability while keeping pricing moderate for County residents.

Month	County Usage		In-County Tons		Out of County	
	Tons	Value	Tons	Revenue	Tons	Revenue
January	2391.69	\$ 30,508.37	36798.27	\$ 495,223.57	14450.77	\$ 267,131.76
February	4022.99	\$ 49,638.48	39361.76	\$ 529,720.17	17220.17	\$ 258,968.32
March	2397.27	\$ 36,109.14	37410.87	\$ 554,250.25	18626.89	\$ 236,373.93
April	3109.11	\$ 45,306.38	45504.87	\$ 658,007.22	18805.30	\$ 301,358.68
May	2131.05	\$ 31,387.94	39989.83	\$ 577,379.24	14205.38	\$ 225,145.43
June	2232.10	\$ 32,487.20	33853.85	\$ 482,787.38	15826.83	\$ 239,630.84
July	2594.64	\$ 37,355.50	33220.86	\$ 439,268.60	18201.78	\$ 290,683.38
August *	2779.71	\$ 45,812.09	33680.76	\$ 536,556.26	7720.15	\$ 154,137.03
September	1646.80	\$ 27,206.04	20399.87	\$ 334,815.14	5478.48	\$ 116,339.25
October	901.74	\$ 15,947.79	32659.05	\$ 558,829.58	10532.62	\$ 234,975.05
November	704.45	\$ 11,666.96	28183.16	\$ 457,432.94	6804.02	\$ 144,829.09
December	1120.52	\$ 17,632.02	32014.40	\$ 541,516.26	10900.39	\$ 242,495.18
	26032.07	\$ 381,057.91	413077.55	\$ 6,165,786.61	158772.78	\$ 2,712,067.94
* Implementation of Out of County Rates						

Improvement of Development Standards:

- Council enacted a Commercial Junkyard Ordinance, applying to all new commercial junkyards and existing ones under specific conditions, such as property sales or expansions.
- In October 2024, Council revised setback measurement calculations for flag lots and irregularly shaped lots, providing greater clarity and consistency in their application.
- Oconee County Council also adopted a new density requirement for the Control Free Zoning District, tying future development density to the availability of sewer infrastructure to support sustainable growth.

Increase Allocations to Volunteer Fire Stations:

- In the FY 2024-2025 Budget, Council approved 2.0 Mills designated for the newly established Fire / Emergency Services Capital Vehicle & Equipment fund.
- Oconee County ordered six 2,000-gallon pumper/tankers to add to the fleet of emergency response apparatus placed around the county in volunteer departments.
- To address budgetary constraints at individual Volunteer rescue squads and fire stations, funds were included in the Emergency Services budget for the allocation to stations to reimburse for fuel expenses that are over the county's annual allocation. This measure addresses the shortfalls faced by the busiest stations without reduction to the lesser busy stations.

A YEAR IN REVIEW

In addition to the specific priorities established by Council, Oconee County departments consistently delivered exceptional services across the board, while maintaining responsible stewardship of public funds.

Airport: The Oconee County Regional Airport (KCEU) continues to experience an increase in transit operations, as well as adding to the number of based customers. Airport staff successfully managed weekly business traffic and increased Clemson football traffic during season, while continuing to pursue additional certifications and training.

- **Hurricane Helene:** In the aftermath of Hurricane Helene, our airport transformed into a drop-off point for hurricane relief efforts, benefiting both our County and North Carolina. Collaborating with the local community, Seneca Fire Department, and a nearby manufacturing company, we received an overwhelming influx of supplies at our airport. Our dedicated staff efficiently loaded each aircraft and managed the supply drops. The donations included generators, chainsaws, tents, cots, baby formula, 1,200 MREs, canned goods, water, and much more. This remarkable mission not only showcased the resilience of our community but also highlighted the invaluable role our airport plays in times of crisis.
- **Grants:** KCEU secured a Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) grant for the design of our Taxiway rehabilitation, with plans to pursue construction funding in 2025 and a State grant for a replacement of the rotating beacon.
- **Operations:** KCEU now has two matching Chevy Tahoes to utilize for its courtesy cars, utilized by airport patrons that require of transportation. KCEU also installed a much-needed pedestrian gate to facilitate after-hours access to and from the airport.
- **Employee Accomplishments and Certifications:** Various staff members successfully completed the Titan Fuel Quality Control Class, and three employees obtained their pilot certifications while balancing full-time and part-time jobs.
- **Jet-A Fuel:** Jet-A Fuel sales continue to increase and serves as the airport's primary revenue source. For the first time, we are nearing the milestone of 500,000 gallons pumped. In 2023 we pumped 396,768 gallons of Jet-A Fuel. In 2024, we increased this to 458,034 gallons, representing a growth of 61,266 gallons, an impressive 15.4% increase compared to 2023.

Assessor: Oconee is growing, and the Assessor's Office's experienced a steady increase of workload numbers for our office. Our front-line staff provided exceptional customer service, assisting with 2,079 email tickets, over 3,500 phone calls in the last quarter alone, and processed thousands of applications, such as legal residence and agricultural use.

Property assessment workloads have seen similar growth. Our staff reviewed an incredible 10,373 deeds and legal documents, and 759 plats, in order up process ownership transfers, mapping updates, and Assessable Transfers of Interest. Our appraisers also reviewed 1,991 building permits, an amazing 681 of which were for new construction homes. For reference, the permit total just five years ago was only 1,089.

Auditor: The Auditor sets debt millage, and provides assessments to the Administrator and County Council for millage to cover the approved operational budget for Oconee County and Oconee County School District. We annually assist all municipalities and special revenue districts with their assessed values for their budgetary needs. Millage is based on the County's total assessed value. Assessed values are determined by the county assessor for real estate and the SC DOR (via guidelines determined by state law) for all personal and real property. Assessed values are totaled, which results in the levy of property taxes for real estate and personal property. The Auditor generates all tax notices that are collected by the Oconee County Treasurer; processes personal property values and assessments (vehicles and all other property with a license plate, boats, motors, airplanes, documented vessels, business personal property, utilities, railroads, manufacturing and FILOT properties) based upon SC Department of Revenue guidelines. The office also processes Homestead Exemptions, Homestead Reimbursement from the

SC DOR and the Manufacturing/MPVE Reimbursement. We also assist citizens with exemptions for other property once granted by the SC DOR.

Recent Accomplishments:

- Customer satisfaction, we strive to ensure that our wait times are low and our service is high.
- Continued to improve all of our online capabilities and to have most office functions available online.
- Introduction to new protocols to ensure that we are meeting all guidelines and ensuring tax notices are on time and accurate. Our schedule is to be met by SC CODE of LAW per deadlines. We are proud that we have always met these deadlines.

Building Codes: The Building Codes department had a busy, hectic, and accomplished fiscal year.

- Permit totals: 3,748
- Inspection totals: 7,669
- Permit fee totals: \$1,771,113.92

Clerk of Court: The safety and security for our citizens, courthouse staff, officers, judges and their staff, continued to be a priority in 2024. Through the efforts of Lt. John Crum with the Oconee County Sheriff's Department, a grant was secured for the use of security enhancements. Older cameras have been replaced with newer, more advanced cameras and additional cameras installed in several critical areas. A gate was installed around the building perimeter to provide an additional layer of security when inmates are transported from the detention center for court appearances.

The SC Department of Social Services Child Support Enforcement Division, in partnership with Conduent, Inc., is working to install TouchPay Kiosks in Clerk's offices across the State to provide a more convenient way for non-custodial parents to make child support payments. There will be no cost to the Clerk of Court's Office and no responsibility to monitor, maintain or service the kiosks. The transaction fees the non-custodial parents will incur will be less than if paying online. Due to the amount of over-the-counter cash payments collected by our office, Oconee County has been chosen as one of the pilot counties for the kiosk project.

Common Pleas

New Cases Filed – 1,130
Foreclosures - 107
Other – 1,023
Foreclosure properties sold - 40

Family Court

New Domestic Relations Cases Filed – 621
New Juvenile Cases Filed – 197

General Sessions Court

New Arrest Warrants Filed – 2,646
General Sessions Cases Indicted – 1,597

Terms of Court Held

Common Pleas – 12 weeks
Family Court – 37 weeks
General Sessions – 16 weeks
General Sessions Non-Jury/Common Pleas Non-Jury – 5 weeks

Delinquent Tax: The Delinquent Tax Office's ultimate goal is the collection of delinquent taxes, not the acquisition or dispossession of property. The number of properties with delinquent taxes we receive each year varies due to numerous influences. The Delinquent Tax Office researches, seeks out, and attempts to notify individuals and companies involved with each property.

In 2024, staff aimed to lower the number of items canceled due to a deficiency in our process. To obtain this goal, we have revamped our title search process to include check items that we normally complete at the end of the tax sale process. We had seven cancelations this year; down from thirty cancelations the previous year.

Delinquent Tax Department Data (2019-2024)						
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
TAX SALE ITEMS	276	374	343	238	304	233
TITLE SEARCHES	1036	613	834	967	893	883
TITLE UPDATES	128	221	221	166	166	249
REDEMPTIONS	100	138	139	90	64	115
CANCELED	14	37	116	85	30	7
DEEDS	245	198	1	200	251	111
PAYMENTS	5595	6647	5591	5691	5534	5161
COLLECTED	\$ 3,604,501.57	\$ 7,744,824.09	\$ 4,002,528.08	\$ 4,597,920.80	\$ 3,731,590.64	\$ 3,416,949.05

Economic Development: Oconee Economic Development reported an excellent 2024. Oconee County announced five projects, representing an anticipated \$114 million in capital investments and the creation of 324 new jobs. (*Annual Report will be provided at the Economic Alliance Annual meeting, Thursday, Feb. 20, 2015*)

Emergency Services / Fire and Rescue: Emergency Services continues to partner with volunteer and paid departments to meet the growing needs of our citizens. Utilizing local partnerships and resources, as well as local, state and federal grants, Emergency Services has expanded services across all areas of the department with a focus on staffing, training, planning and community outreach.

- **Bountyland Fire Station:** The opening of the Bountyland Station 21, on March 15, 2024, allowed us to staff a 3-person Engine crew that is now providing a quick response to citizens within that area. The staffing of this station also helped to improve ISO ratings and insurance premiums to properties that were previously over five miles from a fire station. This has proven to be a busy station and since the opening in mid-March, they have responded to 933 calls for service. This includes 28 fire calls, 550 medical-rescue calls, 154 service calls, 20 hazardous situations, and many other types of calls.
- **Staffing:** Oconee County Emergency Services (OCES) hired a full-time Emergency Planner/Radio System Coordinator on December 25, 2023, and a part-time Radio Programmer in February 29, 2024. Historically, radio programming has been managed by private vendors, the Sheriff's Office, and volunteers. With dedicated OCES personnel handling programming, we now have greater accountability when sub-agencies request our services and can promote county-wide standardization.
- **Training:** Emergency Management conducted a multitude of training events for the purpose of familiarizing the emergency responders in process and use of the radiological response equipment that they would be required to use. These classes included devices such as dosimetry, survey meters, portal monitors, as well as all of the other equipment associated with the response.
- **Planning:** In 2024, Oconee County participated in the Duke Nuclear biennial, full-scale exercise. A full-dress rehearsal and a full participation exercise were conducted to test the operational readiness of the emergency response in Oconee County. Both events passed without any negative critique from FEMA.
- **Community Outreach and Rescue:** In 2024, Emergency preparedness, storm awareness and other classes were conducted to familiarize the general public with what to do in the event of an emergency.

Total Calls	3,257
Fires	170
(104 Structure Fires)	
Overpressure, explosions	4
Rescue, EMS Calls	1,902
Hazardous Situations	79
Service Calls	558
Good Intent Calls	328
False Calls	170
Severe Weather Calls	12
Special Incident Calls	4
Search and Rescue Calls	20
Dive Calls	10

<u>Fire Marshal Division</u>	
Fire Investigations	75
Business Inspections	270
New Construction Inspections	70
Plan Reviews	122
Feasibility Inspections	25

Finance: Procurement and Finance continue to review prospects for new accounting software. This software will assist Procurement, Finance, Administration/Grants and the Treasurer. This task has been ongoing for several years as the current software is not effective considering the growth and advancements ongoing in Oconee County.

The Finance Department operations include payroll processing, accounts payable processing, Local Accommodations collections, County asset processing, budget processing, fiscal year end auditing, bank auditing and more.

- LAT Collections for Calendar Year 2024 - \$ 1,082,110
- ATAX Collections for Calendar Year 2024 - \$ 598,520

Human Resources: In 2024, Human Resources onboarded 184 new hires (up from 96 in 2023) and processed 107 terminations/resignations.

In 2024, Human Resource processed 25 short-term disability claims, 3 long-term disability claims, 2 life benefit claims and 56 FMLA claims. Open enrollment for benefits was held in March 2024, resulting in the processing of various enrollment changes for employees and their dependents. Open enrollment for Flex 125, medical spending accounts, was held in November.

Information Technology / Geographic Information Systems (GIS): In 2024, IT continued to build the physical and network security, update equipment, reduce costs and streamline existing processes. Improvements included an updated badge reader system, migration to new phone servers, the purchase and set-up of new firewalls and the addition of a virus scan suite that integrates with the existing firewall.

In 2024, the GIS / Addressing Department assigned 1,007 new 911 addresses and added 16 new roads to the GIS and 911 databases. Throughout the year, the GIS department assisted departments with maps and data collection for various projects. Major projects included:

- Landing Zones Field Map, Emergency Services
- Add Conservation Easements Added to Planning Internal Map, Planning
- Lakeshore Signs project folders and map, Emergency Services
- Pine Street Safe Places Maps, Risk Management
- Fiber Network Map, General
- Population and area stats, Emergency Services
- Wind Cone Directions for EPZ Map, Emergency Services
- EPZ special filter search on Emergency Services Map, Emergency Services
- Fire District and Rescue District Added to Overdose Tracking Map, Emergency Services

- New EPZ Map with color changing zones and wind cone Direction, Emergency Services
- Auditor Geocode Tool for District 03, General
- Soil Conservation Maps, Soil Conservation

Library: Oconee County Public Library focused on community outreach, youth programming and community service.

- 134,992 total visitors to the libraries
- 2,072 new library cards issued
- Users checked out 173,973 items
- Almost 3,241 participants utilized 104 programs for youth and adults

Library staff engaged with the community in school visits to promote Summer Reading, by adding a new Story Walk Trail to the City of Walhalla's Wanderweg Trail. In 2024, the library's Summer Reading Program continued to prove successful with a large number of participants of various ages completing the reading challenge.

- 1,232 Program Participants
- 467 youth and adults completed the reading challenge of reading 600 minutes
- 889,111 minutes of reading logged by participants

Another big area for the library this past year and going forward is community service and involvement. The library was able to leverage a grant from the Center for Rural and Primary Healthcare at the University of South Carolina to hire a part time Community Resource Associate, or licensed social worker. Using part of the grant, the library was also able to hire a part time bi-lingual assistant to help with Spanish language translation for those in the Latino community who sought assistance.

Magistrate's Court: All Oconee County Magistrate Courts saw increased criminal, traffic and civil cases filed in 2024. This resulted in an overall increase of total revenue and the number of cases disposed throughout the calendar year. The Walhalla Magistrate's office added an additional court clerk to assist with the caseload of the court. On weekends, the five Magistrate Judges rotate to conduct hearings. Information regarding Bond Court, from Bond Court hearings and issuing arrest/search warrants is not included as part of the reporting below.

Seneca – Total Revenue \$253,423
Criminal Filed: 790
Civil Filed: 795
DUI Filed: 187
Traffic Filed: 1,633

Westminster – Total Revenue \$98,221
Criminal Filed: 505
Civil Filed: 773
Traffic Filed: 990

Walhalla – Total Revenue \$654,241.42
Criminal Filed: 1,190
Civil Filed: 814
Traffic Filed: 6,382

Parks, Recreation and Tourism: Oconee County Council has been a major contributor to our ability to provide and enhance the resources managed by our parks, recreation and tourism division. The creation of the parks, recreation and tourism capital projects fund along with the increased accommodations taxes from a targeted compliance effort, have provided a resource tool necessary to begin making a significant improvement into deferred park maintenance items and new capital projects that will sustain our facilities and meet the demands in our community.

Capital Improvements: To enhance guests' experiences within the County-operated Park system, nineteen capital improvement projects are ongoing or were completed in 2024. The Park improvement campaign continues to enhance aging infrastructure and increase our service capabilities for our citizens. Partnering with other County departments, proper planning and the addition of our project manager position have all contributed to the success of our park improvement initiative.

- Demolition and rebuild of the shelter 1 at Chau Ram Count Park-Ongoing
- Enhanced solid waste space at Chau Ram County Park-Complete
- Enhance pedestrian bridge over Ramsey Creek-Ongoing
- Maintenance building at Chau Ram County Park-Ongoing
- Playground enhancements at Chau Ram County Park-Ongoing
- Internal renovations of the High Falls recreation building-Complete
- Design and construction of a new covered deck for the High Falls recreation building-Complete
- New transient dock and fishing pier upgrade at High Falls County Park-Ongoing
- Shoreline Stabilization at High Falls and South Cove County Parks-Ongoing
- Preservation of the Alexander-Cannon-Hill House at High Falls County Park-Ongoing
- Renovation of the South Cove Superintendent Residence-Complete
- Playground equipment upgrades at South Cove Campground-Complete
- Design for renovated beach area at South Cove Park-Ongoing
- New office dock and kayak dock at South Cove Park-Ongoing
- Renovation of the South Cove County Park recreation building (storm damage)-Complete
- Design for additional courts and parking for pickle ball courts at South Cove County Park-Ongoing
- New courtesy dock at South Union Access Area on Lake Hartwell-Complete
- New Gateway signs for secondary roads and Airport-Ongoing
- Security cameras at Seneca Creek-Complete

Park Improvements/Operational Efficiency: The ability to maintain park assets is a result of dedicated funding, devoted staff and proper planning. Oconee parks welcomed over 350,000 people through our gates in 2024 in all recreation areas. Park attendance and engagement has continued to be above average post pandemic and is sustaining at all-time highs year over year. In 2024, we had over 400 building rentals, processed over 45,000 parking passes, over 23,000 camping nights and staff also managed to provide or participate in 149 educational programs for our citizens. Included below is our program summary for 2024. Staff training and safety are a major concern in our service to the public. We currently have six PRT staff members certified as Emergency Medical Responder (EMR) to enhance our response and provide support to park emergency calls. During 2024, all 25 staff members participated in a level of industry specific training and we currently are proud to have 12 different employees holding some sort of industry specific certification.

- **Accommodations Tax Use:** As our accommodations tax revenues continue to rise with the implementation of the short-term rental compliance, the use of these revenues provides a number of positive benefits for our community. In 2024, \$130,000 in accommodations grants were provided to 20 different agencies and over \$40,000 was used to provide docents for 4 historic sites and museums to maintain public access. In addition, ATAX revenues funded 5 full time positions, all of our park seasonal staff as well as all of our park maintenance in 2024. This alone represents over \$750,000 removed from the general fund budget.

- **Short Term Rental Compliance:** Local ATAX revenues continue to rise due to our investment in host compliance software. Since implementing the software just four short years ago, compliance is consistently above 90% and local ATAX revenues have increased over 250% providing project funding to much needed capital and maintenance items which dramatically decrease the burden of the general fund budget for PRT project needs. Since implementation, over 400 short term rentals have moved from non-compliance to compliance.

Planning / Zoning: The Planning / Zoning and Code Enforcement Department had another record-breaking year. 2024 saw increases in plat reviews, subdivision applications, vegetative buffer permits, and overall permit reviews. Additionally, Code Enforcement closed out an all-time high number of complaints.

- The Planning Department has completed the following reviews:

Plats:	681
Subdivisions:	36
Permit Reviews:	4,222
- Code Enforcement rejoined the Planning and Zoning office in 2023 and continued to set records in 2024:

Cases Opened:	381	Cased Closed:	339
---------------	-----	---------------	-----

Probate Court: The Probate Court has continued to improve on providing services to citizens in a time and efficient manner. In general, most walk-ins are taken care of at that time rather than the need of scheduling an appointment. In 2024, Probate Court began tracking statistical information related to the services provided by the staff in this office:

- Received 904 Estate Cases
- Disposed of 1,127 Estate Cases
- Scheduled 227 Estate, Guardianship and/or Conservatorship Cases for Court Hearings
- Mental Health Cases Filed: 502
- Orders/Hearings for Mental Health Cases: 126
- Marriage License Issued: 482
- Marriage Ceremonies: 183

In November, Judge Singleton was appointed by the Chief Justice of the SC Supreme Court to serve on the Probate Court Judges Advisory Committee. This committee makes recommendations to the Chief Justice for the improvement for Probate Court across the state.

Procurement: Procurement staff issues and cancels P-Cards as needed, sets purchasing limits, assists answering questions and keeping track of p-card violations. Violations consists of accidentally using the County P-card for a personal purchase or not obtaining an itemized receipt. Procurement also assists finance in reviewing and approving p-card transactions in works. As the number of transactions increase, the amount of the annual rebate also increases. We want to maximize the use of the P-card for all purchases less than \$2,500.

In 2024, Procurement issued 605 purchase orders, totaling \$20,478,186.26. These purchases included the:

- Purchase and installation of ballistic glass and armored door panels for 65 Sheriff's Office vehicles
- Purchase of fire arm / officer equipment upgrades
- Mass Grading at Golden Corner Commerce Park and necessary repairs due to damages caused by Hurricane Helene
- Road paving for approximately 22 County roads
- Installation of the Oconee County Detention Center Sewage Screen

Roads and Bridges: The Roads and Bridges Department performs routine maintenance on 660 miles of roadway (approximately 500 paved miles and 160 gravel miles). Routine maintenance includes gravel road maintenance, mowing and sloping road rights-of-way, cleaning out culvert pipes and more.

In 2024, the Roads Department completed 2,519 work orders, a significant increase compared to 1,996 the previous year. Our team prides itself on providing good customer service while keeping the roads safe for our citizens, as well as prioritizing safety for our staff while on the work site or in transit.

Roads and Bridges assists Administration and various County Departments with special projects throughout the year. In 2024, some of the larger, special projects included:

- Busch Creek Culvert Replacement
- Oconee Industry & Technology Park (OITP) Road Extension Paving
- Hurricane Helene Disaster Recovery
- Road Paving Contract
- Setting up Debris Sites for Helene
- Cross Creek Rd Slope Failure Repair
- Knollwood Dr Paving
- Replacing Culverts for Paving Contract
- Reviewed Several New Subdivisions and Inspected Construction
- Completed 399 Encroachment Permits

Rock Quarry: The Rock Quarry continues to see record sales. In April alone, the Rock Quarry sold 67,419 tons of stone for a total of \$1,004,538, the highest dollar amount the Quarry has ever sold in one month. Rock Quarry sales for the year totaled \$ 9,289,591.93.

In August, Oconee County initiated separate in-county and out-of-county customers for pricing. This process has allowed us to improve our on-time delivery for in-county customers. Our wait times are considerably less, and our stockpiles are at much higher levels than before the pricing change.

We began the process of installing the dump hopper and crusher wall and are excited to get this fully installed as it will increase efficiency. Dumping directly into the jaw crusher will allow the Rock Quarry to feed the plant at a higher rate. This will free up an operator, allowing the Quarry to expand stripping operations without requiring additional staff.

Solid Waste: In 2024, Solid Waste managed 127,804 tons total of municipal solid waste, C&D debris, yard waste and recyclables. Continued growth in Oconee County has resulted in increased traffic and materials processed through its facilities. Throughout the year, Strawberry Farm and Ebenezer Recycling Centers saw 1,200-1,600 vehicles per day and Salem, Richland and Metromont Recycling Centers experienced 850-1,200 vehicles per day. The necessity for additional staff has resulted in recycling center clerks working 549 overtime hours over the course of the year.

Recycling has also increased across various items, resulting in the collection of 4,371 tons of recyclable materials. The collection of cardboard reached an all-time high with over 1,388 tons managed.

Solid Waste continues to have difficulty filling equipment operator positions due to the CDL requirement and harsh work environment. Equipment operators at the Solid Waste Complex worked over 765 hours of overtime to keep the transfer station in compliance with SC DES and keeping the Material Recovery Facility running smoothly. Staff also work on compactors, replacing cylinders, pumps, etc., helped mow grass at recycle centers and the Solid Waste Complex, and filled in at the scale houses, as needed.

Veteran’s Affairs: In 2024, Oconee County hosted the Third Annual Oconee Veterans Appreciation Day in October at our beautiful South Cove County Park where 800 Oconee County Veterans and family members enjoyed a special day by the lake. Over 30 public service agencies were on hand share their services for our veterans to help make their lives better and more fulfilled.

For the year 2024, the Oconee County Veterans Affairs Office made services available to over 1,500 veterans and family members. The following is a snapshot of the myriad of services we assisted our great veterans with:

- 26 veterans were secured temporary or permanent housing
- Over 200 veterans were provided transportation to healthcare appointments in Greenville and Anderson
- 77 military burial honors for local deceased veterans
- Over 100 Pension claims for disabled veterans and their surviving spouses
- 249 claims for veterans who suffered varying degrees of injury / health issues

The Veterans Affairs Office also served as a drop-off point for supplies needed for hundreds of veterans and their families in the Black Mountain area of North Carolina, left without homes from Hurricane Helene. Supplies were provided to a volunteer group in Seneca and a local church for distribution. Thousands of dollars in goods were collected at the office to support the hurricane relief efforts.

Vehicle Maintenance: The Vehicle Maintenance Department is responsible for service and repair of approximately 1,000 assets, ranging from small engine equipment to large equipment for Roads and Bridges and the Landfill. Last year, staff responded to 90 after-hours emergency calls to provide and secure reliable transportation for every division in the County.

Voter Registration and Elections: In 2024, Voter Registration and Elections successfully updated or replaced all election equipment and conducted five elections in Oconee County. In the upcoming year, Voter Registration and Elections will strive towards obtaining secure office/work/storage building and employing a third full-time permanent employee for Voter Registration and Elections.

IN CLOSING

“It is the mission of Oconee County to provide our current and future citizens and visitors quality services while protecting our communities, heritage, environment and natural resources in an ever-changing world.” TEAM Oconee delivered on this mission, as exhibited by each department’s accomplishments throughout 2024, while managing historical staffing shortages, unprecedented growth and ever-increasing demands.

May 2025 bring us the same determination and dedication to our mission.



OCONEE COUNTY SNAPSHOT 2024

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.

**CAPITAL
INVESTMENT**

\$114 M



**NEW
JOBS**

42
Acres

Pad-ready site at Golden Corner
Commerce Park



\$1.3 M

**BUILDING
PERMIT
REVENUE**

PLANNING & ZONING

4,222 Permit Reviews
681 Plats
36 Subdivisions
Improved Development Standards
Commercial Junkyard Ordinance

New 911 Addresses
Assigned

1,007



16 New Roads Added to
GIS and 911 Database

Compensation, Wage & Time
Use Study Implementation

\$2 M



SHERIFF SALARIES & EQUIPMENT

- Across the board implementation of upgraded pay scale
- Installation of ballistic glass and armored door panel in 65 vehicles
- Firearm and equipment upgrades

VETERAN AFFAIRS

26 Veterans Secured Housing
200 Veterans Transported for Health
Services
77 Military Burial Honors
800 Served at Annual Appreciation Day

5

COUNTY-WIDE ELECTIONS

**UPGRADED EQUIPMENT AND
ENHANCED SECURITY
MEASURES IMPLEMENTED**

134,992 Visitors at the Public Libraries
2,072 New Library Cards Issued

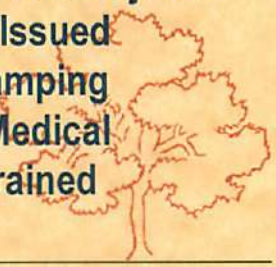


ACCOMMODATIONS TAX

\$130,000 Grants Provided to 20 Agencies
\$40,000 to Museum and Historic Sites
\$750,000 offset costs to General Fund

PARKS, RECREATION & TOURISM

350,000+ Visitors
19 Capital Improvement Projects
45,000 Park Passes Issued
23,000 Overnight Camping
6 Staff Emergency Medical Responder (EMR) Trained



SOLID WASTE

Total Managed – 127,804 Tons
Landfill – 49,287 Tons
Transfer Station – 49,287 Tons
Recyclables – 4,371 Tons
Cardboard Recycling – 1,388 Tons

\$9.2
MILLION

ROCK QUARRY REVENUE

Different rates implemented in August 2024, resulting in a better balance of product availability and moderate pricing for residents

22

COUNTY ROADS PAVED

ROAD MAINTENANCE FUND INCREASED TO 3.1 MILS

\$1.4
MILLION

C-FUNDS FOR PAVING VARIOUS ROADS

EMERGENCY SERVICES / FIRE

- Fire / Emergency Services Capital Vehicle & Equipment Fund
- 6 Pumper / Tankers purchased for use by volunteer departments
- Reimbursements for fuel expenses for volunteer rescue and fire

BOUNTYLAND FIRE STATION CALLS FOR SERVICE

933



3 PERSON CREWS AT BOUNTYLAND STATION

IMPROVED ISO RATING AND LOWER INSURANCE PREMIUMS FOR RESIDENTS

THE JOURNAL

PUBLISHER'S AFFIDAVIT

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA COUNTY OF OCONEE

OCONEE COUNTY COUNCIL

IN RE:

BEFORE ME the undersigned, a Notary Public for the State and County above named, This day personally came before me, Hal Welch, who being first duly sworn according to law, says that he is the General Manager of THE JOURNAL, a newspaper published Tuesday through Saturday in Seneca, SC and distributed in **Oconee County, Pickens County** and the Pendleton area of **Anderson County** and the notice (of which the annexed is a true copy) was inserted in said papers on


January 11, 2025

the rate charged therefore is not in excess of the regular rates charged private individuals for similar insertions.



Hal Welch
General Manager

Subscribed and sworn to before me this
1/11/2025



Velma J. Nelson
Notary Public
State of South Carolina

IFIED PLACE

864.973.6676



upstatetoday.com



YARD SALES:

2 Days - \$25.00

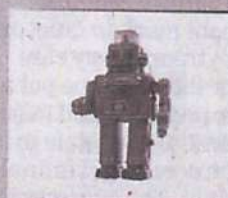
10 Line Limit

Each additional day:

\$5.00

Sell items under \$100

FREE*



*Restrictions apply. Does not include picture.

Call or Email Terrica To Place Your Ad Now!

864.973.6676 • tlyda@upstatetoday.com

FURNISHED

1 Br. - \$595. •
715.
at Our
Specials!
er Pkgs.
is Route.
1
-1672

PORT RENT

OUR
COVERY
RS SALE
hilling
newspap
5-word
d will
newspapers
Call Alanna
uth Carolina
Network,
-7377.

OR SALE

NOTICE
ertising in this
ect to Federal
of 1968 which
advertise "any
tions or dis-
on race, color,
dicap, familial
origin, or inten-

Personal Representative: PEGGY J BREAZEALE
Address: 124 LOLA DRIVE FAIR PLAY, SC 29643
Estate: EDWARD TATE ZEIGLER SR
Date of Death: 9/22/2024
Case Number: 2024ES3700851
Personal Representative: EDWARD T ZEIGLER JR
Address: 38 LANNEAU DRIVE GREENVILLE, SC 29605

The Oconee County Council will meet in 2025 on the first and third Tuesday of each month with the following exceptions: July, August, and November meetings, which will be only on the third Tuesday of each of these months; March, June and December meetings, which will be only on the first Tuesday of each of these months. All Council meetings, unless otherwise noted, are held in Council Chambers, Oconee County Administrative Offices, 415 South Pine Street, Walhalla, South Carolina. Oconee County Council will also hold a Planning Retreat beginning at 9:00 a.m. on Thursday, February 20, 2025 to establish short- and long-term goals. This meeting will be held off-site in the Tri-County Technical College, Oconee Campus, conference room located at 552 Education Way, Westminster, South Carolina. Oconee County Council will also meet on Tuesday, January 6, 2026 in Council Chambers at which point they will establish their 2026 Coun-

cil and Committee meeting schedules. Additional Council meetings, workshops, and/or committee meetings may be added throughout the year as needed. Oconee County Council Committees will meet in 2025 prior to County Council meetings on the following dates/times in Council Chambers located at 415 South Pine Street, Walhalla, South Carolina unless otherwise advertised. The Law Enforcement, Public Safety, Health, & Welfare Committee at 4:30 p.m. on the following dates: February 18, May 20, July 15, & September 16, 2025. The Transportation Committee at 4:30 p.m. on the following dates: February 18, May 20, July 15, & September 16, 2025. The Real Estate, Facilities, & Land Management Committee at 4:30 p.m. on the following dates: April 1, June 3, August 19, & October 21, 2025. The Planning & Economic Development Committee at 4:30 p.m. on the following dates: April 1, June 3, August 19, & October 21, 2025. The Budget, Finance, & Administration Committee at 9:00 a.m. on the following dates: February 20 [Strategic Planning Retreat] and 4:30 p.m. on the following dates: March 4 [4 p.m.], April 15, & May 6, 2025.

NOTICE OF APPLICATION
Notice is hereby given that Ash

South Carolina Department of Revenue for a license/permit that will allow the sale and On Premises consumption of Beer, Wine and Liquor at 671 Highway 123 Bypass Seneca SC 29678. To object to the issuance of this permit/license, written protest must be postmarked no later than January 26, 2025. For a protest to be valid, it must be in writing, and should include the following information: (1) The name, address and telephone number of the person filing the protest; (2) The specific reasons why the application should be denied; (3) That the person protesting is willing to attend a hearing (if one is requested by the applicant); (4) That the person protesting resides in the same county where the proposed place of business is located or within five miles of the business; and, (5) The name of the applicant and the address of the premises to be licensed. ent of Revenue, ABL SECTION, P.O. Box 125, Columbia, SC 29214-097.

Yard Sale?
Call 864-973-6676
today to place an ad!

Oconee County Council

Oconee County
Administrative Offices
415 South Pine Street
Walhalla, SC 29691

Phone: 864-718-1023
Fax: 864 718-1024

E-mail:
jennifercadams@oconeesc.com

John Elliott
District I

Matthew Durham
Chairman
District II

Don Mize
Vice Chairman
District III

Thomas James
District IV

J. Glenn Hart
Chairman Pro Tem
District V



The Oconee County Council will meet in 2025 on the first and third Tuesday of each month with the following exceptions:

- July, August, and November meetings, which will be **only** on the third Tuesday of each of these months;
- March, June and December meetings, which will be **only** on the first Tuesday of each of these months.

All Council meetings, unless otherwise noted, are held in Council Chambers, Oconee County Administrative Offices, 415 South Pine Street, Walhalla, South Carolina.

Oconee County Council will also hold a Planning Retreat beginning at 9:00 a.m. on Thursday, February 20, 2025 to establish short- and long-term goals. This meeting will be held off-site in the Tri-County Technical College, Oconee Campus, conference room located at 552 Education Way, Westminster, South Carolina.

Oconee County Council will also meet on Tuesday, January 6, 2026 in Council Chambers at which point they will establish their 2026 Council and Committee meeting schedules.

Additional Council meetings, workshops, and/or committee meetings may be added throughout the year as needed.

Oconee County Council Committees will meet in 2025 prior to County Council meetings on the following dates/times in Council Chambers located at 415 South Pine Street, Walhalla, South Carolina unless otherwise advertised.

The Law Enforcement, Public Safety, Health, & Welfare Committee at 4:30 p.m. on the following dates: February 18, May 20, July 15, & September 16, 2025.

The Transportation Committee at 4:30 p.m. on the following dates: February 18, May 20, July 15, & September 16, 2025.

The Real Estate, Facilities, & Land Management Committee at 4:30 p.m. on the following dates: April 1, June 3, August 19, & October 21, 2025.

The Planning & Economic Development Committee at 4:30 p.m. on the following dates: April 1, June 3, August 19, & October 21, 2025.

The Budget, Finance, & Administration Committee at 9:00 a.m. on the following dates: February 20 [Strategic Planning Retreat] and 4:30 p.m. on the following dates: March 4 [4 p.m.], April 15, & May 6, 2025.

Sec. 2-61. - Access to and conduct at county meetings, facilities and property.

(a) *Purpose.* The county council has determined that it is necessary to regulate access to county facilities, grounds and property in order to ensure the safety and security of the public who visit these areas or the county employees who serve them. **The conduct of persons who visit county facilities and/or who have contact with county employees must also be regulated to preserve public order, peace and safety.** The regulation of access and conduct must be balanced with the right of the public to have reasonable access to public facilities and to receive friendly, professional service from county employees. These regulations apply to all county facilities and meetings, as defined below, for and over which county council exercises control and regulation, and to the extent, only, not pre-empted by state or federal law.

(b) *Definitions.* The following words, terms and phrases, when used in this section, shall have the meanings ascribed to them in this subsection, except where the context clearly indicates a different meaning:

Facility means any building, structure, or real property owned, leased, rented, operated or occupied by the county or one of its departments, offices or agencies.

***Meeting* means any assemblage of persons for the purpose of conducting county governmental business, operations or functions or any assemblage of persons within a county governmental facility.** The term "meeting" includes, but is not limited to, county council meetings, county board and committee and staff meetings, trials, hearings and other proceedings conducted in the courts of general sessions and common pleas, family court, master-in-equity, probate court and magistrate's court; and other meetings by entities duly authorized by the county council.

(c) *Prohibited acts.* It shall be unlawful for any person to:

- (1) **Utter loud, obscene, profane, threatening, disruptive or abusive language or to engage in any disorderly or disruptive conduct that impedes, disrupts or disturbs the orderly proceedings of any meeting,** or operations of any department or function of the county government, including, without limitation, speaking when not explicitly recognized and authorized to do so by the presiding official in such meeting.
- (2) Bring, carry, or otherwise introduce any firearm, knife with blade longer than two inches or other dangerous weapon, concealed or not concealed, into any facility or meeting. This prohibition does not apply to law enforcement personnel or any other person whose official, governmental duties require them to carry such firearm, knife, or other weapon.
- (3) Engage in partisan political activity, including speech, in any meeting not authorized and called for the purpose of partisan political activity and explicitly authorized for such purpose in the facility in which such activity is to be conducted, or refusing to cease such activity when

the presiding official of the meeting in question has ruled that the activity in question is partisan political activity and has directed that such activity stop.

- (4) Interfere with, impede, hinder or obstruct any county governmental official or employee in the performance of his duties, whether or not on county government property.
- (5) Enter any area of a county government facility, grounds or property when such entry is prohibited by signs, or obstructed or enclosed by gates, fencing or other physical barriers. Such areas include rooms if clearly marked with signs to prohibit unauthorized entry.
- (6) Enter by vehicle any area of a county governmental facility, grounds or property when such area is prohibited by signs or markings or are obstructed by physical barriers; or park a vehicle in such restricted areas; or park in a manner to block, partially block or impede the passage of traffic in driveways; or park within 15 feet of a fire hydrant or in a fire zone; or park in any area not designated as a parking space; or park in a handicapped parking space without proper placarding or license plate; or park in a reserved parking space without authorization.
- (7) Use any county governmental facility, grounds or other property for any purpose not authorized by law or expressly permitted by officials responsible for the premises.
- (8) Enter without authorization or permission or refuse to leave any county governmental facility, grounds or other property after hours of operation.
- (9) Obstruct or impede passage within a building, grounds or other property of any county governmental facility.
- (10) Enter, without legal cause or good excuse, a county governmental facility, grounds or property after having been warned not to do so; or, having entered such property, fail and refuse without legal cause or good excuse to leave immediately upon being ordered or requested to do so by an official, employee, agent or representative responsible for premises.
- (11) Damage, deface, injure or attempt to damage, deface or injure a county governmental property, whether real property or otherwise.
- (12) Enter or attempt to enter any restricted or nonpublic ingress point or any restricted access area, or bypass or attempt to bypass the designated public entrance or security checkpoint of a facility without authorization or permission.
- (13) Perform any act which circumvents, disables or interferes with or attempts to circumvent, disable or interfere with a facility's security system, alarm system, camera system, door lock or other intrusion prevention or detection device. This includes, without limitation, opening, blocking open, or otherwise disabling an alarmed or locked door or other opening that would allow the entry of an unauthorized person into a facility or restricted access area of the facility.
- (14) Exit or attempt to exit a facility through an unauthorized egress point or alarmed door.

(d) *Penalty for violation of section.* Any person violating the provisions of this section shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction, shall be punished in accordance with section 1-7. In addition, vehicles that are improperly parked on any county property, facility, or other premises may be towed at the owner's expense.

(Ord. No. 2003-04, §§ 1—4, 4-15-2003; Ord. No. 2012-06, § 1, 4-3-2012)