



MINUTES

OCONEE COUNTY COUNCIL

Regular Meeting

September 02, 2025

MEMBERS, OCONEE COUNTY COUNCIL

Mr. John Elliott, District I
Mr. Matthew Durham, Chairman, District II
Mr. Don Mize, Vice Chairman, District III
Mr. Thomas James, 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, County Administrator Amanda F. Brock, County Attorney David Root, & 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: Dick Mangrum / 101.7 WGOG

Call to Order

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

Moment of Silence

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

Invocation by County Council Chaplain

Mr. Root, County Council Chaplain, gave the Invocation.

Pledge of Allegiance

Ms. Kay Knapp led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.

Attorney's Comments

At the request of Mr. Root, Mr. Elliott made a motion, seconded by Mr. Hart, approved 5 – 0, to remove Consent Agenda item #2 “INMAR Rigid Hull Dive / Rescue Boat” for further review, to be brought back at a future meeting for consideration of approval.

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Administrator's Comments

None for this meeting.

Consent Agenda

1. August 19, 2025 Regular Meeting Minutes

2. ~~Procurement Item:~~

~~INMAR Rigid Hull Dive / Rescue Boat~~

~~Department(s): Emergency Services~~

~~Amount: \$89,520.91~~

~~Procurement was approved by Council in Fiscal Year 2025 2026 budget process.~~

~~Budget: \$89,520.91 Project Cost: \$89,520.91 Balance: \$0.00~~

~~(Funding from Emergency Services Capital Equipment / Vehicle Fund (335))~~

~~It is the staff's recommendation that Council approved the purchase of a INMAR Dive / Rescue 670R — 21-foot rigid hull inflatable boat to All Hands Fire Equipment of Wall, NJ in the amount of \$89,520.91, per Sourcewell Contract No. 020124 ALH.~~

3. Procurement Item:

PO 56366 Goodwyn, Mills & Cawood, Inc. Change Order No. 1

Department(s): Emergency Services

Amount: PO 56366: \$49,500.00

Change Order 1: \$124,000.00

Purchase Order Total: \$173,500.00

These services qualify for reimbursement through FEMA Public Assistance, as well as other funding sources identified by Goodwyn, Mills and Cawood, Inc. The reimbursement amount will be based on expenses approved by FEMA; any expenses not approved will be the responsibility of Oconee County.

It is the staff's recommendation that Council:

- 1. Approve Change Order No. 1, PO 56366, Work Authorization No. 5, Amendment No. 1, in the amount of \$124,000.00, purchase order total \$173,500.00 to Goodwyn, Mills and Cawood, Inc. for professional services related to Hurricane Helene FEMA reimbursement requests.*
- 2. Authorize the County Administrator to execute documents for this change order.*

4. Procurement Item:

Council authorization to reimburse expenditures related to costs associated with Sewer South Wastewater Expansion Project from proceeds of the Series 2023 General Obligation Bond for expansion to the I-85 Corridor, in the amount of \$3,385,903.

The bond proceeds are designated for eligible expenses or reimbursing previously incurred costs, as authorized by Council.

Staff recommends approval of this reimbursement request in the amount of \$3,385,903.

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5. Procurement Item:
RFP 25-03 Financial Auditing Services
Department: Finance
Amount: \$66,000.00

Procurement was approved by Council in Fiscal Year 2025-2026 budget process.
Budget: \$80,000.00 Project Cost: \$66,000.00 Balance: \$14,000.00

It is the staff's recommendation that Council:

- 1. Approve the award of RFP 25-03, Financial Auditing Services, to CKH CPA's & Advisors, LLC of Atlanta, GA, in the amount of \$66,000.00.*
- 2. Authorize the County Administrator to renew this contract for up to four (4) one-year terms, as long as the amount does not exceed the amount budgeted for this service, and the services provided are satisfactory.*

6. Procurement Item:
Request for Council's approval to commit matching funds in the amount of \$124,256.00 toward the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Grant Offer for Airport Improvement Program (AIP) Project No. 3-45-0016-037-2025 and \$25,845.00 toward the (FAA) Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) - Airport Infrastructure Grant (AIG) Project No. 3-45-0016-038-2025 for a total of \$150,101.00, pending receipt of the official FAA Grant Award letters and to Authorize the County Administrator to accept and execute all necessary Grant documents pertaining to the Taxiway Pavement Rehabilitation Construction Project.

The total cost for the Taxiway Pavement Rehabilitation Construction Project is approximately \$6,004,051.00. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has agreed to fund ninety-five percent (95%) of the eligible project costs, up to \$5,703,849.00, pending receipt of the official Grant Award letters. Oconee County will provide a local matching share of two and a half percent (2.5%) approximately \$150,101.00. The remaining two and a half percent (2.5), also totaling \$150,101.00, will be contributed by the South Carolina Aeronautics Commission (SCAC).

Oconee County has received an official FAA Grant Award Offer letter for IIJA/AIG Project No. 3-45-0016-038-2025 in the amount of \$982,125.00 for the Taxiway Rehabilitation Construction Project. Airport Director, Mr. Jeff Garrison received notification from FAA stating the second award offer for Grant for AIP Project No. 3-45-0016-037-2025 is in process and should be released soon. Timely acceptance of these Grants is crucial to secure FAA funding for the Taxiway Pavement Rehabilitation Construction Project as the offers must be accepted and submitted to the Federal Aviation Administration no later than September 5, 2025.

It is the staff's recommendation to Council:

- 1. Authorize County Administrator to accept and execute all necessary documents pertaining to Federal Aviation Administration Airport Improvement Program (AIP) Grant Offer Project No. 3-45-0016-037-2025 and the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA)-Airport Infrastructure Grant (AIG) Project No. 3-45-0016-038-2025 for the Taxiway Pavement Rehabilitation Construction Project.*

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2. Approve \$150,101.00 in matching funds.

7. Procurement Item:

ITB 24-14 Airport Taxiway Rehabilitation

Department: Airport

Amount: FAA 95%: \$5,270,913.43

State 2.5%: \$138,708.25

County 2.5%: \$138,708.25

Project Award: \$5,548,329.93

Contingency (15%): \$832,249.49

Total Award: \$6,380,579.42

Procurement was approved by Council in Fiscal Year 25-26 budget process.

Budget: \$6,380,579.42 Project Cost: \$6,380,579.42 Balance: \$0.00

(Funding from Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) - Airport Taxiway Pavement Rehabilitation Grant(s) 95%, South Carolina Aeronautics Commission (SCAC) 2.5%, Oconee County 2.5%)

It is the staff's recommendation that Council:

1. Approve the award of ITB 24-14 to Kwest Group, LLC., of Perrysburg, OH in the amount of \$5,548,329.93, with a 15% contingency of \$832,249.49, for a total award of \$6,380,579.42, pending receipt of grant award.
2. Authorize the County Administrator to execute all necessary documents related to this project and to approve any change orders within the approved contingency amount.

8. Procurement Item:

Ardurra Group, Inc (formerly W.K. Dickson) Work Authorization #5

(Airport Taxiway Pavement Rehabilitation Construction Phase Services)

Department: Airport

Amount: FAA 95%: \$423,434.94

State 2.5%: \$11,143.03

County 2.5%: \$11,143.03

Project Award: \$445,721.00

Contingency 15%: \$66,858.15

Total Award: \$512,579.15

Procurement was approved by Council in Fiscal Year 2025-2026 budget process.

Budget: \$512,579.15 Project Cost: \$512,579.15 Balance: \$0.00

(AIP Project No. 3-45-0016-037-2025 & IJA / AIG Project No. 3-45-0016-038-2025)

It is the staff's recommendation that Council:

1. Approve Work Authorization #5 from Ardurra Group, Inc. in the amount of \$445,721.00 with a 15% contingency of \$66,858.15, for a total award of \$512,579.15, pending receipt of grant award.
2. Authorize the County Administrator to execute all necessary documents related to this project and to approve any change orders within the approved contingency amount.

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Mr. Elliott made a motion, seconded by Mr. Hart, approved 5 - 0, to approve all items, except item #2, on the consent agenda as presented.

Public Comment Session

If you are unable to attend in person and you have a comment you would like to be considered by Council, please email or call the Council Member for your district (<https://oconeesc.com/council-home/council-officials>), so that they may consider and perhaps include your comments during Council Member comments, as and if appropriate.

1. Mr. Lee Hill expressed his frustration to Council regarding ongoing issues related to fraternity parties in his neighborhood.
2. Ms. Amber Olbon addressed Council in opposition to **Ordinance 2025-15 and Ordinance 2025-16.**

Council Members Comments

Mr. Durham responded to Mr. Hill and Ms. Olbon's concerns shared during Public Comment.

Public Hearing for the Following Ordinances

ORDINANCE 2025-13 AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 20 (LAW ENFORCEMENT) OF THE OCONEE COUNTY CODE OF ORDINANCES BY ADDING ARTICLE V, ENTITLED "PROHIBITED OR RESTRICTED CONDUCT – SOLICITATION, OBSTRUCTION OF PUBLIC STREETS, UNAUTHORIZED CAMPING," IN ORDER TO ADDRESS CERTAIN HAZARDS AND PUBLIC HARM RELATED THERETO; AND OTHER RELATED MATTERS.

Mr. Durham opened the floor for Public Comment.

Noting that no citizens signed up to address Council; Mr. Durham opened the floor for any citizen wishing to address Council regarding this ordinance. No citizen addressed Council and no citizen submitted or presented any written comments for the record.

Mr. Durham closed the Public Hearing regarding **Ordinance 2025-13.**

ORDINANCE 2025-14 AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 20 (LAW ENFORCEMENT) OF THE OCONEE COUNTY CODE OF ORDINANCES BY ADDING ARTICLE VI, ENTITLED "PUBLIC NUISANCES," IN ORDER TO ADDRESS CERTAIN HAZARDS AND PUBLIC HARM RELATED THERETO; AND OTHER RELATED MATTERS.

Mr. Durham opened the floor for Public Comment.

Noting that no citizens signed up to address Council; Mr. Durham opened the floor for any citizen wishing to address Council regarding this ordinance. No citizen addressed Council and no citizen submitted or presented any written comments for the record.

Mr. Durham closed the Public Hearing regarding **Ordinance 2025-14.**

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Third Reading of the Following Ordinances

ORDINANCE 2025-13 *(see caption above)*

Mr. Elliott made a motion, seconded by Mr. Hart, approved 5 - 0, to approve **Ordinance 2025-13** on third and final reading.

ORDINANCE 2025-14 *(see caption above)*

Mr. Elliott made a motion, seconded by Mr. Hart, approved 5 - 0, to approve **Ordinance 2025-14** on third and final reading.

Second Reading of the Following Ordinances

To be held after Executive Session.

First Reading of the Following Ordinances

ORDINANCE 2025-17 AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING, PURSUANT TO TITLE 4, CHAPTERS 1 AND 29, OF THE CODE OF LAWS OF SOUTH CAROLINA 1976, AS AMENDED, THE EXECUTION AND DELIVERY OF A SPECIAL SOURCE REVENUE CREDIT AGREEMENT BY AND BETWEEN OCONEE COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA, AND A LEGAL ENTITY IDENTIFIED BY THE COUNTY AS PROJECT BEAMER, ACTING FOR ITSELF, ONE OR MORE CURRENT OR FUTURE AFFILIATES AND OTHER PROJECT COMPANIES; PROVIDING FOR CERTAIN SPECIAL SOURCE REVENUE CREDITS; DESIGNATING CERTAIN PROPERTY TO BE INCLUDED IN A MULTI-COUNTY INDUSTRIAL PARK; AND OTHER RELATED MATTERS. *(In Title Only)*

Mr. Elliott made a motion, seconded by Mr. Hart, approved 5 - 0, to approve **Ordinance 2025-17** on first reading.

First & Final Reading for the Following Resolutions

RESOLUTION 2025-03 A RESOLUTION APPOINTING AND COMMISSIONING THE FOLLOWING PERSONS: TANYA LYNN SPALTI, MEGAN ALYCIA VAN WAGNER, AND MARKEEL DANTONIO DETRO LEONARD AS CODE ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS (ANIMAL CONTROL) FOR THE PROPER SECURITY, GENERAL WELFARE, AND CONVENIENCE OF OCONEE COUNTY; AND OTHER MATTERS RELATED THERETO.

Mr. Elliott made a motion, seconded by Mr. Hart, approved 5 - 0, to approve **Resolution 2025-03** on first and final reading.

Action on Matters Removed from Consent Agenda at Council Member Request

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Discussion Regarding Action Items

PRT Commission-Local ATAX Recommendations / Fall 2025 Cycle / \$70,000

A portion of Local ATAX revenues received by Oconee County are made available for ATAX grants through Ordinance 2011-12. ATAX grants are to be tourism related grants that meet the ATAX guidelines specified by local and State mandates. Grants are recommended by the PRT Commission based on tourism impact of the project and approved by County Council. All external ATAX grant recipients are required to turn in intermediate reports every 180 days to the progress of the grant and a final report upon completion of the grant. These reports are placed in the grant folder, which is kept active by the PRT staff until the grant is considered complete. Internal projects through Oconee PRT are also funneled through local ATAX for eligible projects.

Copies of all ATAX Grant Applications can be found at the following link:

<https://oconeesc.com/documents/council/committees/parks-recreation-and-tourism-commission/2025/backup-material/2025-08-21-backup.pdf>

Beginning Local ATAX Balance: \$649,588

If all grants/projects approved/new balance will be: \$579,588

Sep-25

Local ATAX Grants

Applicant	Funds Request	Project Description	Amount Eligible for ATAX	PRT Commission Recommendation
City of Seneca	\$6,000	WSPA Advertising "Race for the Green"	\$6,000	\$4,500
City of Walhalla	\$10,106	Trails Map/Signage-Stumphouse Mountain Park	\$10,106	\$7,000
City of Westminster	\$7,709	Sports Complex bleachers	\$7,709	\$7,000
Devils Fork State Park	\$13,690	Renovate tent impact pads-camping sites	\$11,768	\$6,000
Discover Upcountry SC	\$15,000	Advertising-Print and Digital	\$15,000	\$6,000
Downtown Seneca Merchants Assoc.	\$1,500	Advertising - Sip-N-Stroll	\$900	\$900
Eagles Nest Arts Center	\$13,950	Advertising, Maintenance, Electrical, Signage, Supply	\$13,950	\$6,500
South Carolina Bigfoot Festival	\$15,000	Advertising, Truss system for stage	\$15,000	\$9,600
The FARM Center	\$11,517	Advertising, Public Services-Heritage Fair	\$11,517	\$6,000
Walhalla Performing Arts Center	\$12,000	Advertising 2025/2026 Fall & Winter Season	\$12,000	\$6,000
Westminster Music Centre	\$10,000	Advertising and Production Concert Series	\$9,040	\$4,000
Wild Hearts Equine Center	\$9,760	Nature Trail signage & Visitor center creation	\$9,760	\$6,500
TOTAL	\$126,232		\$122,750	\$70,000

PRT Internal Request

TOTAL		\$0	\$0	\$0

Total Requested

\$70,000

It is staff's recommendation that Council approve of local ATAX recommendations as presented per the attached spreadsheet.

Mr. Hart made a motion, seconded by Mr. Elliott, to approve of local ATAX recommendations as presented.

Mr. Hart noted that he read where ATAX funds could be used for improvements and projects throughout the County to help off-set taxpayer burden.

Mr. Durham noted that he would like to offset the general fund budget as much as possible by utilizing ATAX funds.

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Mr. Phil Shirley, PRT Director, addressed Council and explained ATAX funds could be expended according to State law.

Motion approved 5 – 0.

Discuss and ratify prior County Council approval regarding the \$20,000 award from the Oconee County Conservation Bank (“OCCB”) for the Stevenson Century Farm property.

Council previously approved an OCCB \$20,000 for this project, but the application materials reflected that the \$20,000 contribution was 9.8% of the project value. Updated appraisals reflect that the contribution will be 10.5% of the project value. Thus, staff seeks Council ratification of the prior \$20,000 award in light of the revised project value and contribution percentage.

Mr. Hart made a motion, seconded by Mr. Elliott, to approve the Stevenson Century Farm property updated appraisal reflecting a change from 9.8% of the project value to 10.5%, but the grant amount of \$20,000.00 will remain the same.

Mr. Root provided background information related to the above request.

Motion approved 5 – 0.

Request for Council’s consideration to support the Oconee County application for the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program application and approval to commit matching funds, not to exceed \$11,500, if awarded, for the Oconee County Hazard Mitigation Plan Development project.

The application is for the development of the Oconee County Hazard Mitigation Plan. The estimated cost for the project totals \$46,000. The Hazard Mitigation Grant Program has a 25% local match requirement, up to \$11,500. Oconee County currently has a Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan with Anderson County, approved in March 2023.

It is the staff’s recommendation that Council approve the commitment of matching funds, not to exceed \$11,500, toward the Oconee County Hazard Mitigation Grant Program application for the establishment of the Oconee County Hazard Mitigation Plan.

Mr. Elliott made a motion, seconded by Mr. Hart, approved 5 - 0, to approve the commitment of matching funds, not to exceed \$11,500, toward the Oconee County Hazard Mitigation Grant Program application for the establishment of the Oconee County Hazard Mitigation Plan.

Council Committee Reports

Mr. James provided information outlining discussions held at the August 19, 2025 Planning and Economic Development Committee meeting.

Board & Commission Appointments

Building Codes Appeal Board..... 2 At-Large Seats

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No questionnaires on file requesting consideration of appointment.

Executive Session

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

1. *Discussion regarding an economic development matter, Project Joshua Tree.*
2. *Discussion regarding an economic development matter, Project Joe.*
3. *Discussion regarding an economic development matter, Project Reclamation.*
4. *Discussion regarding an economic development matter, Project Perot.*
5. *Receive legal advice regarding multi-county industrial park revenue and distribution issues.*
6. *Receive legal advice and discuss potential claims related to real property contractual issue.*
7. *Receive legal advice and discuss employment / personnel and related matters with respect to the structure and administration of certain Oconee County government departments, divisions, boards, and commissions.*
8. *Receive legal advice and discuss potential contractual matters related to property development proposals.*

Council entered into Executive Session at 6:30 p.m.

Council returned from Executive Session at 8:15 p.m. on a motion made by Mr. Hart, seconded by Mr. Elliott, approved 5 – 0.

As requested by Mr. Root in relation to Executive Session item #5, Mr. Hart made a motion, seconded by Mr. Elliott, approved 5 – 0, to authorize the County Administrator to work with the County Auditor and the South Carolina Department of Revenue to clarify the millage set dates, or millage establishment dates, for Itron and US Engine Valve in relation to their fee-in-lieu of tax agreements.

As requested by Mr. Root in relation to Executive Session item #7, Mr. Hart made a motion, seconded by Mr. Elliott, to direct staff to prepare a policy for County Council consideration regarding Emergency Service Division entities expense reimbursement, to include backup documentation.

Mr. Durham noted the Budget, Finance and Administration Committee will hold a special meeting on September 16, 2025 at 4:30 p.m. to discuss and consider approval of the above request policy.

Motion approved 5 – 0.

Second Reading of the Following Ordinances

ORDINANCE 2025-15 AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 10 (EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AND SERVICES) OF THE OCONEE COUNTY CODE OF ORDINANCES BY REVISING THE PROVISIONS OF ARTICLE II.A., ENTITLED “RESCUE SQUAD ADVISORY COMMISSION”; AND OTHER RELATED MATTERS.

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Mr. Hart made a motion, seconded by Mr. Mize, to approve **Ordinance 2025-15** on second reading.

Mr. Durham moved to amend **Ordinance 2025-15** in the following particulars: Regarding member appointment - Two members shall be appointed by the Oconee Rescue Squad Chiefs, and the remaining five members shall be appointed by region, as the currently enacted ordinance states. Regarding budgetary recommendations - Mr. Durham further moved that the commission's budgetary recommendations include operational, capital, and long-range planning budgets. Seconded by Mr. Hart, motion to amend approved 5-0.

Motion to approve **Ordinance 2025-15** on second reading with amendments approved 5 – 0.

ORDINANCE 2025-16 AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 10 (EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AND SERVICES) OF THE OCONEE COUNTY CODE OF ORDINANCES BY REVISING THE PROVISIONS OF ARTICLE II.B. "FIRE SERVICE ADVISORY COMMISSION"; AND OTHER RELATED MATTERS.

Mr. Hart made a motion, seconded by Mr. Elliott, to approve **Ordinance 2025-16** on second reading.

Mr. Durham made a motion, seconded by Mr. Hart, approved 5 – 0, to make the following amendments to section 10-40 of the Code of Ordinances related to the Fire Service Advisory Commission:

Mr. Durham moved to amend ordinance 2025-16 in the following particulars: Regarding member appointment - Two members shall be appointed by the Oconee County Fire Chiefs Association, Inc. and such members may reside anywhere within the County. Additionally, as to the five members appointed by County Council, such members must be, and remain, residents of the County Council district from which they are appointed to serve, or they must serve and continue to serve within such district. Regarding budgetary recommendations - Mr. Durham further moved that the commission's budgetary recommendations include operational, capital, and long-range planning budgets. Seconded by Mr. Hart, motion to amend approved 5-0.

Motion to approve **Ordinance 2025-16** on second reading with amendments approved 5 – 0.

Adjourn:

Mr. Hart made a motion, approved unanimously, to adjourn at 8:23 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Jennifer C. Adams
Clerk to Council

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