



# MINUTES

## OCONEE COUNTY COUNCIL

### Regular Meeting

### January 6, 2026

#### MEMBERS, OCONEE COUNTY COUNCIL

Mr. John Elliott, District I  
Mr. Matthew Durham, Chairman, District II  
Mr. Don Mize, Vice Chairman, District III  
Mr. Tommy James, Chairman Pro Tem, District IV  
Mr. Glenn Hart, 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 Stewart Jones, Mr. Phil Shirley, 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](http://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 WG)G

#### **Call to Order**

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

#### **Moment of Silence**

Mr. Root asked for a moment of silence prior to the Invocation by County Council Chaplain.

#### **Invocation by County Council Chaplain**

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

#### **Pledge of Allegiance**

Mrs. Jennifer Adams, Clerk to Council, led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.

#### **Approval of Minutes**

Mr. Hart made a motion, seconded by Mr. Elliott, approved 5 – 0, to approve the December 2, 2025 regular minutes as presented.

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Mr. Hart made a motion, seconded by Mr. Elliott approved 5 - 0, to approve the December 19, 2025 special meeting minutes as presented.

## **Election of Officers**

### **Council Chairperson**

Mr. Hart nominated Mr. Durham as Council Chairperson. No other nominations for Council Chair were made. Mr. Root called for the vote. Mr. Durham was elected Council Chairperson on a 5 – 0 vote.

The meeting was then turned over to Mr. Durham to preside as Chair.

### **Council Vice Chairperson**

Mr. Durham nominated Mr. Mize as Council Vice Chairperson, approved 5 – 0, with no other nominations for Council Vice Chairperson being made.

### **Council Chairperson Pro Tem**

Mr. Hart nominated Mr. James as Council Chairperson Pro Tem, approved 5 – 0, with no other nominations for Council Vice Chairperson being made.

## **Re-Appointment of the following Appointed Officials**

### **Clerk to Council and Council Chaplain**

Mr. Durham made a motion, seconded by Mr. Hart, approved 5 – 0, to re-appoint Jennifer C. Adams as Clerk to Council.

Mr. Durham made a motion, seconded by Mr. Hart, approved 5 – 0, to re-appoint Mr. David Root as Council Chaplain.

## **Appointment of Council Committees for 2026 by Chairman**

Mr. Durham made a nomination for the following County Council Committee appointments:

- Budget, Finance, and Administration**

Mr. Durham as Chair, with all of Council as committee members.

- Law Enforcement, Public Safety, Health and Welfare**

Mr. Mize as Chair, with Mr. Hart and Mr. James as committee members.

- Transportation**

Mr. Hart as Chair, with Mr. Durham and Mr. Elliott as committee members.

- Planning and Economic Development**

Mr. James as Chair, with Mr. Mize and Mr. Hart as committee members.

- Real Estate, Facilities, and Land Management**

Mr. Elliott as Chair, with Mr. Mize and Mr. James as committee members.

Mr. Elliott made a motion, seconded by Mr. Hart, approved 5 – 0, to appoint Committee Chairs and members as nominated.

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## **Appointment of 2026 Council Representatives by Chairman**

Mr. Durham made a nomination for the following Council Representatives:

- **SC Appalachian Council of Government Board of Directors**
  - Council Representative – Mr. Hart
  - Citizen Representative – Mr. David Underwood
  - Minority Representative – Mr. Wayne Wright

Mr. Hart made a motion, seconded by Mr. Mize, approved 5 - 0, to appoint Council Representatives for the SC Appalachian Council of Government Board of Directors as nominated.

Mr. Durham made a nomination for the following Council Representative:

- **Oconee Economic Alliance Board Member** – Mr. Don Mize

Mr. James made a motion, seconded by Mr. Hart, approved 5 – 0, to appoint Council Representative for the Oconee Economic Alliance Board as nominated.

## **2026 Meeting Schedule Establishment for Council / Committees**

Mr. Hart made a motion, seconded by Mr. Elliott, approved 5 – 0, to approve the 2026 County Council and Council Committee schedules as submitted (copy filed with these minutes).

## **Attorney's Comments**

None at this meeting.

## **Administrator's Comments**

Mr. Durham offered welcoming remarks to Mr. Stewart Jones as the new County Administrator.

Mr. Jones thanked Council for their confidence in him, noting he is thankful for the opportunity.

Mr. Jones also expressed his appreciation to Mr. Phil Shirley for his support, noting that he [Mr. Shirley] is truly an asset to Oconee County.

## **Public Comment Session**

*[Limited to a total of fifty (50) minutes, five (5) minutes per person]*

*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. Ms. Cathy Plowden addressed Council with her concerns regarding the former Oconee County Courthouse and inquired as to what the future plans are for this building (pictures and petition filed in backup).
2. Ms. Catherine Myus addressed Council with her concerns related to the Oconee County Animal Control Ordinance.

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## **Council Member Comments**

Mr. Elliott requested that the Law Enforcement, Public Safety, Health and Welfare Committee review the Animal Control Ordinance in relation to Ms. Mays' situation regarding her family cat.

Mr. Elliott then provided documents related to Data Centers (copy filed in backup) and urged Council to be proactive and swiftly address the issue of Data Centers for the protection of the citizens of Oconee County.

Mr. Durham addressed Ms. Plowden and Ms. Myus regarding their public comments related to the former Oconee County Courthouse and the Oconee County Animal Control ordinance.

## **Third Reading of the Following Ordinances**

None for this meeting.

## **Second Reading of the Following Ordinances**

**ORDINANCE 2025-26** AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND SECTION 28-9 (“USED AND WASTE TIRES”) OF CHAPTER 28 (“SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT”) OF THE OCONEE COUNTY CODE OF ORDINANCES TO ALIGN THE SAME WITH THE 2025 AMENDMENTS TO S.C. CODE SECTIONS 44-96-170(E) AND (F) RELATING TO WASTE TIRE RECEIPT AND FEES; AND OTHER RELATED MATTERS.

Mr. Elliott made a motion, seconded by Mr. Hart, approved 5 – 0, to approve **Ordinance 2025-26** on second reading.

**ORDINANCE 2025-27** AN ORDINANCE TO REVISE AND EXPAND THE LOCAL CONTRACTOR / VENDOR PREFERENCE PROVISIONS CONTAINED IN THE OCONEE COUNTY PROCUREMENT CODE.

Mr. Elliott made a motion, seconded by Mr. Hart to approve **Ordinance 2025-27** on second reading.

As requested by Mr. Root, Mr. James made a motion to amend **Ordinance 2025-27**, seconded by Mr. Elliott, to change section 5:2, which is a threshold to when local preferences apply, from \$10,000.00 to \$25,000.00 so that it aligns with the advertising and formal bid requirements within the procurement code.

Mr. Root offered Mr. Hart clarification related to the above proposed amendment.

Motion to amend approved 5 – 0.

Mr. Root pointed out to Mr. Hart the proposed changes to the Oconee County Procurement Code as requested.

**Ordinance 2025-27**, with amendments, approved 5 – 0 on second reading.

## **First Reading of the Following Ordinances**

None for this meeting.

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## **First & Final Reading for the Following Resolutions**

None for this meeting.

## **Discussion Regarding Action Items**

None for this meeting.

## **Council Committee Reports**

None for this meeting.

## **Board and Commission Appointments**

### ***Building Codes Appeal Board..... 2 At Large Seats***

- No questionnaires on file

Mr. Durham noted that one questionnaire for the Building Codes Appeal Board was received before the meeting.

Mr. Durham nominated Mr. Paul Hecht, approved 5 – 0, to serve as an at-large member on the Building Codes Appeal Board.

## **Executive Session**

Mr. Elliott made a motion, seconded by Mr. James, 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. *Receive legal advice and discuss fiscal / accounting review processes.*
2. *Discuss personnel and recruitment issues related to the Finance, Planning and Legal departments.*

Council entered into Executive Session at 6:26 p.m.

Council returned from Executive Session at 7:01 p.m. on a motion made by Mr. James, seconded by Mr. Elliott, approved 5 – 0.

Mr. Durham noted that no action was taken during Executive Session.

## **Adjourn:**

Mr. James made a motion, approved unanimously, to adjourn at 7:02 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

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Jennifer C. Adams  
Clerk to Council

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