



# MINUTES

## OCONEE COUNTY COUNCIL

### Regular Meeting

### April 7, 2026

#### 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, 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, Deputy Administrator Mr. Phil Shirley, County Attorney Rob Chumley, & 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: None

Mr. Durham provided welcoming remarks to Boy Scout Troop #120 and to the new County Attorney, Mr. Rob Chumley.

#### **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**

Mr. James gave the Invocation.

#### **Pledge of Allegiance**

Boy Scout Troop #120 led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.

#### **Attorney's Comments**

Mr. Chumley extended his thanks for the opportunity to join the team at Oconee County.

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## **Administrator's Comments**

Mr. Jones extended his thanks to Mr. Chumley for joining Oconee County as the new County Attorney and announced his excitement that Ms. Deanne Hurst has been hired as the new Planning Director starting April 13, 2026.

## **Presentation to Council**

*Oconee 250 Presentation – Ms. Jennifer Moss*

Ms. Moss, Vice Chair of the Oconee 250 Committee, gave an extended presentation to Council, detailing accomplishments and events that have been scheduled related to the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the United States.

*(a list of these events can be found in the online backup materials)*

## **Consent Agenda**

*[Consent agendas are used to more quickly dispose of routine business by allowing Council to approve more than one item at the same time, without debate, amendment, or individual motions. If a Council member requests discussion about one or more of these items, that item(s) will be removed from the consent agenda and placed on the regular agenda to be discussed later in the meeting.]*

### **1. March 17, 2026 Regular Meeting Minutes**

#### **2. Procurement Item:**

**PO 56334 Change Order No. 1 – Thomas & Hutton Engineering Co.**

**Department(s): PRT**

**PO 56334: \$68,500.00**

**Change Order 1: \$32,350.00**

**Purchase Order Total: \$100,850.00**

**15% Contingency: \$15,127.50**

**Total: \$115,977.50**

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

Budget: \$40,627.50 Project Cost: \$40,627.50 Balance: \$0.00

*(Funding from project contingency funds for South Cove Court Improvements which is funded from PRT Local Accommodations Tax Fund (235).*

*The budget amount equals the total project cost minus the \$75,350.00 that was originally approved.*

*It is the staff's recommendation that Council:*

- 1. Approve PO# 56334, Change Order #1, to Thomas and Hutton Engineering, Co. of Greenville, SC in the amount of \$32,350.00*
- 2. Approve at 15% contingency in the amount of \$15,127.50.*

#### **3. Procurement Item:**

**South Cove Dump Station**

**Department(s): PRT**

**Council Approved 12.2.25: \$30,000.00**

**Additional requested: \$15,000.00**

**Project Total: \$45,000.00**

**10% Contingency: \$ 4,500.00**

**Total: \$49,500.00**

Project was approved by Council at the December 2, 2025 Council meeting.

Budget: \$49,500.00 Project Cost: \$49,500.00 Balance: \$0.00

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*(Funding for project is funded from PRT Local Accommodations Tax Fund Balance (235)  
The project budget amount equals the total project cost plus additional 10% project contingency.*

*It is the staff's recommendation that Council:*

- 1. Approve up to an additional \$15,000 from Local Accommodations Tax Fund Balance.*
- 2. Approve at 10% contingency in the amount of \$4,500.00.*

Mr. Elliott made a motion, seconded by Mr. Hart, approved 5 – 0, to approve all items 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 Sheehan addressed Council with comments related to the cost of the new employee health insurance, PEBA, and noted that he believes the cost is a burden to current employees and retirees.
2. Ms. Cathy Plowden addressed Council with questions pertaining to the current demolition status of the former Oconee County Court House.
3. Ms. Lindy Airey extended her thanks on behalf of the dam owners of the Chattooga Lake Dam to Council and staff for their help and support with their grant application to FEMA.

### **Council Members Comments**

Mr. Durham provided details related to Mr. Sheehan's public comments regarding health insurance costs, then went on to address Ms. Plowden's concerns related to the former courthouse and Ms. Airey's comments related to Chattooga Lake Dam grant application.

Mr. Jones informed Ms. Plowden that he and Mrs. Brittney Martin, Grants Administrator, have been working to find grant opportunities to help with the cost of demolition of the former courthouse.

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

None for this meeting.

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

**ORDINANCE 2026-07 AN ORDINANCE AMENDING SECTION 10-275 ("EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT DIVISION") OF CHAPTER 10 OF THE OCONEE COUNTY CODE OF ORDINANCES, IN CERTAIN LIMITED REGARDS AND PARTICULARS ONLY, WITH RESPECT TO THE MEANS OF ISSUING AN EMERGENCY DECLARATION; AND OTHER MATTERS RELATED THERETO.**

Mr. Elliott made a motion, seconded by Mr. Hart, approved 5 - 0, to approve **Ordinance 2026-07** on second reading.

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**ORINANCE 2026-08** AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION AND DELIVERY OF A REAL PROPERTY LEASE AGREEMENT BETWEEN OCONEE COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA, AS LESSOR, AND THE HOLLY SPRINGS FIRE DEPARTMENT, INC., AS LESSEE, FOR CERTAIN IMPROVED REAL PROPERTY LOCATED AT 11095 LONG CREEK HWY, WESTMINSTER, SOUTH CAROLINA, 29693, CURRENTLY IDENTIFIED BY TAX MAP NUMBER 201-00-01-048; AND OTHER MATTERS RELATED THERETO.

Mr. James made a motion, seconded by Mr. Mize, approved 5 - 0, to approve **Ordinance 2026-08** on second reading.

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

**ORDINANCE 2026-09** AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND ORDINANCE 2025-01, THE BUDGET FOR OCONEE COUNTY, WHICH PROVIDES FOR THE LEVY OF TAXES FOR ORDINARY COUNTY PURPOSES, FOR THE TRI-COUNTY TECHNICAL COLLEGE SPECIAL REVENUE FUND, FOR THE EMERGENCY SERVICES PROTECTION SPECIAL REVENUE FUND, FOR THE ROAD MAINTENANCE SPECIAL REVENUE FUND, FOR THE VICTIM SERVICES SPECIAL REVENUE FUNDS, FOR THE STATE ACCOMMODATIONS TAX SPECIAL REVENUE FUND, FOR THE LOCAL ACCOMMODATIONS TAX SPECIAL REVENUE FUND, FOR THE COMMUNITY HEALTH AND COMMUNITY SERVICES SPECIAL REVENUE FUND, FOR THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CAPITAL PROJECT FUND, FOR THE BRIDGE AND CULVERT CAPITAL PROJECT FUND, FOR THE CAPITAL VEHICLE / EQUIPMENT FUND, FOR THE PARKS, RECREATION, AND TOURISM CAPITAL PROJECTS FUND, FOR THE FIRE / EMERGENCY SERVICES CAPITAL VEHICLE AND EQUIPMENT FUND, FOR THE GENERAL ONE TIME CAPITAL FUND, AND FOR THE DEBT SERVICE FUND, ALL IN OCONEE COUNTY FOR THE **FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING JULY 1, 2025 AND ENDING JUNE 30, 2026.** *(in title only)*

Mr. Elliott made a motion, seconded by Mr. Hart, approved 5 - 0, to approve **Ordinance 2026-09** on first reading in title only.

**ORDINANCE 2026-10** AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE CONVEYANCE OF EASEMENT RIGHTS TO BLUE RIDGE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC., FOR THE PURPOSE OF UTILITY INFRASTRUCTURE CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE AT PROPERTY OWNED BY OCONEE COUNTY IN SENECA, SOUTH CAROLINA, CURRENTLY DESIGNATED BY OCONEE COUNTY TAX MAP NUMBERS 268-00-03-104 AND 268-00-03-089; AND OTHER MATTERS RELATED THERETO.

Mr. Hart made a motion, seconded by Mr. Mize, approved 5 - 0, to approve **Ordinance 2026-10** on first reading.

**ORDINANCE 2026-11** 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 COMPANY CURRENTLY

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IDENTIFIED BY THE COUNTY AS PROJECT DEER, 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 2026-11** on first reading in title only.

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

**RESOLUTION 2026-05** A RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING AND DESIGNATING APRIL 2026 AS FAIR HOUSING MONTH

Mr. Elliott made a motion, seconded by Mr. Hart, approved 5 - 0, to approve **Resolution 2026-05** on first and final reading.

**RESOLUTION 2026-06** A RESOLUTION IDENTIFYING PROJECT DEER; COMMITTING TO ENTER INTO A SPECIAL SOURCE REVENUE CREDIT AGREEMENT; COMMITTING TO MAINTAIN MULTI-COUNTY PARK STATUS; AND OTHER MATTERS RELATED THERETO.

Mr. Elliott made a motion, seconded by Mr. Hart, approved 5 - 0, to approve **Resolution 2026-06** on first and final reading.

### **Action on Matters Removed from Consent Agenda at Council Member Request**

None for this meeting.

### **Discussion Regarding Action Items**

#### ***Approval for the Transfer of Funds in the Amount of \$39,711.00 from Volunteer Compensation***

Transfer between salary appropriations and non-salary appropriations within a department, or between departments within a fund, provided that no such transfer exceeds Ten Thousand and 00/100 (\$10,000.00) Dollars.

During the budget process, the funds required for the insurance related to volunteer fire and rescue squads were included under the Volunteer Compensation line item.

The request, for the transfer of salary appropriations to non-salary appropriations, to insurance for volunteer firefighter and rescue squads, exceeds \$10,000, requiring Council approval.

Oconee County Emergency Services requires the following transfers to cover necessary insurance:

- \$14,751 to pay for supplemental insurance for volunteer fire and rescue squad members
- \$24,960 to pay for ambulance/helicopter insurance for volunteer fire and rescue squad members

The total amount to be considered for transfer out of the Volunteer Compensation is \$39,711.

*Staff recommends Council approve the transfer of funds from Volunteer Compensation to cover insurance for volunteer fire and rescue squads.*

Mr. Hart made a motion, seconded by Mr. Mize, approved 5 - 0, to approve the transfer of funds from Volunteer Compensation to cover insurance for volunteer fire and rescue squads.

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***Approval for the Transfer of Funds, in the Amount of \$98,406.00 to Cover Expenditures Related to Building Codes Inspections***

Transfer between salary appropriations and non-salary appropriations within a department, or between departments within a fund, provided that no such transfer exceeds Ten Thousand and 00/100 (\$10,000.00) Dollars.

The Building Codes Department is requesting a budget to cover expenditures related to the increased need for inspections conducted through RCI of South Carolina, Inc.

Revenue collected for LP Plan Review Fees cannot be posted to the expenditure code to offset the RCI invoices, necessitating a budget transfer.

Funding is available from unfilled employee positions' salaries and fringe in the Oconee Public Library, Procurement and Finance Department.

The transfer is required to cover the cost of February and March building inspections.

Additional transfers will be required for April through June expenditures.

*Staff recommends Council approve the transfer of funds from salaries and fringe for costs associated with RCI of South Carolina, Inc., building codes inspections.*

Mr. James made a motion, seconded by Mr. Elliott, approved 5 - 0, to approve the transfer of funds from salaries and fringe for costs associated with RCI of South Carolina, Inc., building codes inspections.

***Approval for the Transfer of Funds in the Amount of \$10,000.00 from the Solicitor's Office***

Transfer between salary appropriations and non-salary appropriations within a department, or between departments within a fund, provided that no such transfer exceeds Ten Thousand and 00/100 (\$10,000.00) Dollars.

The Solicitor's Office is requesting a one-time budget transfer from the Deputy Solicitor Salary budget to Professional.

The transfer is required to cover the cost of an attorney to prosecute DUI 1st Cases for the 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter of Fiscal Year 2025-2026.

*Staff recommends Council approve the transfer of funds from Deputy Solicitor Salary to Professional for costs associated with contracting an attorney to prosecute DUI 1st Cases.*

Mr. Elliott made a motion, seconded by Mr. Mize, approved 5 - 0, to approve the transfer of funds from Deputy Solicitor Salary to Professional for costs associated with contracting an attorney to prosecute DUI 1<sup>st</sup> cases.

***PRT Commission-Local ATAX Recommendations / Spring 2026 Cycle / \$142,474.00***

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 60 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.

**Beginning Local ATAX available balance: \$257,715.00**

**If all grants/projects approved/new balance will be: \$115,241.00**

*It is the staff's recommendation that Council approve the local ATAX recommendations as presented.*

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Mar-26

**Local ATAX Grants**

Applicant	Funds Request	Project Description	Amount Eligible for ATAX	PRT Commission Recommendation	
City of Seneca	\$10,000	Advertising-Independence Day Celebration	\$10,000	\$5,000	
City of Walhalla	\$15,059	Extend power/purchase vending machine	\$15,059	\$2,000	
City of Westminster	\$2,000	Website for William Bartram Statue project	\$2,000	\$600	
Discover Upcountry SC	\$15,000	Advertising	\$15,000	\$7,500	
Eagles Nest Art Center	\$7,320	Advertising and upgrades	\$7,320	\$4,000	
Lake Hartwell Country	\$10,000	Advertising	\$10,000	\$5,000	
South Carolina Apple Festival	\$10,000	Advertising	\$6,000	\$4,000	
The FARM Center	\$20,000	Digital sign, facility signage	\$20,000	\$3,600	
Upstate Heritage Quilt Trail	\$1,622	Advertising, equipment, digital marketing	\$1,622	\$1,000	
Walhalla Performing Arts Center	\$12,000	Advertising 2026 Season	\$12,000	\$6,650	
Westminster Music Center	\$11,083	2026 Music on Main	\$11,083	\$6,650	
Wild Hearts Equine Therapeutic Center	\$6,000	Construct RV sites and advertising	\$6,000	\$4,000	
	<b>\$120,084</b>		<b>\$116,084</b>	<b>\$50,000</b>	
<b>PRT Internal Request</b>					
PRT	South Cove Pavilion Repair	\$30,000	Construction repairs to unsafe posts	\$30,000	\$30,000
PRT	South Cove Maintenance	\$7,000	Emergency repairs-Restroom HVAC/Office	\$7,000	\$7,000
PRT	Chau Ram Mower	\$12,100	State Contract mower replacement	\$12,100	\$12,100
PRT	Granicus Contract	\$33,374	3-year renewal Short Term Rental software	\$33,374	\$33,374
PRT	Horton Complex sign	\$10,000	Partnership w/ Westminster-digital sign	\$10,000	\$10,000
		<b>\$92,474</b>		<b>\$92,474</b>	<b>\$92,474</b>
Total					<b>\$142,474</b>

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

Mr. Hart noted that he believes a member of Council should be on the PRT Commission to help keep the above requests on the conservative side.

Motion approved 5 – 0.

***Request for Council’s approval for the submission of the Fiscal Year 2026-2027 Oconee County Opioid Recovery Fund Application to the South Carolina Opioid Recovery Fund (SCORF) Board for consideration***

- The Opioid Recovery Fund is settlement funding through a yearly requisition process to the State of South Carolina Opioid Recovery Fund (SCORF) Board.
- The abatement strategies, or, proposed projects are approved by the SCORF Board after requests for funding and yearly strategies have been submitted to them.
- Once abatement strategies and funding are approved by SCORF, awarded funds are sent to Oconee County for program implementation.
- The application, includes the request for funding, in the amount of \$2,309,744.49 includes projects for the Oconee County Sheriff’s Office, Coroner, Emergency Services, as well as, various recovery and prevention programs.
- The County’s current available amount is \$2,627,091.96.

These applications have been reviewed and approved by the Oconee County Opioid Response Task Force for Council consideration. The is no match requirement for this grant.

*It is staff’s recommendation that Council approve the submission of the FY 2026-2027 Oconee County Opioid Recovery Fund application to the South Carolina Opioid Recovery Fund Board.*

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South Carolina Opioid Recovery Fund  
Guaranteed Political Subfund - Oconee County, SC

Applicant	Funds Requested	Project Description	Amount Eligible	Opioid Task Force Recommendation
Christ Centreal Ministries Oconee / OARS	\$ 283,960.00	Harm Reduction Program - Continuation	\$ 283,960.00	\$ 283,960.00
Magnolia House	\$ 185,644.00	Recovery Housing Program for Women in Oconee County - Continuation	\$ 185,644.00	\$ 185,644.00
In His Arms Ministries	\$ 350,000.00	Establishment of a new recovery center in Oconee County - Denied	\$ 350,000.00	\$ -
Kingdom Over Culture	\$ 142,500.00	Recovery Housing Program for Women in Oconee County - Continuation	\$ 142,500.00	\$ 142,500.00
PlaySafe	\$ 110,000.00	Evidence-Based Prevention Program for Athletes/Students - Continuation	\$ 110,000.00	\$ 110,000.00
Giant Slayers Ministries	\$ 76,450.00	Coprehensive, Wrap-Around Services to Individuals with OUD - Continuation	\$ 76,450.00	\$ 76,450.00
FAVOR Upstate	\$ 130,273.56	Comprehensive Recovery Services for People with OUD - Continuation	\$ 130,273.56	\$ 130,273.56
Westminster Fire Department	\$ 78,188.28	Rapid Response to Overdose Patients in Wooded Areas - New	\$ 75,996.88	\$ 75,996.88
City of Seneca Police Department	\$ 67,000.00	Pill Take Back Boxes and Narcotics Removal Vehicle - Continuation	\$ 67,000.00	\$ 67,000.00
Tamassee DAR	\$ 112,202.00	Recovery Housing Program for Women with Children in Oconee County - Continuation	\$ 112,202.00	\$ 112,202.00
Prisma Health	\$ 85,000.00	Designated Vehicle and Monitor for Opioid Response Personnel - New	\$ 85,000.00	\$ 85,000.00
Oconee County Detention Center	\$ 472,708.05	Address the Needs of Criminal Justice-Involved Persons - New	\$ 472,708.05	\$ 472,708.05
Oconee County Coroner	\$ 81,610.00	Evidence-Based Data Collection and Research - New	\$ 81,610.00	\$ 81,610.00
Oconee County Emergency Services	\$ 105,900.00	Invest in Infrastructure and Staffing to Support Collaborative Coordination - Continuation	\$ 105,900.00	\$ 105,900.00
Oconee County Sheriff's Office	\$ 51,500.00	Evidence-Based Sata Collection and Research; LEAD (Prevention Program) - New	\$ 51,500.00	\$ 182,000.00
NOLA Network Recovery Bridges Program	\$ 198,500.00	Increased Access to Comprehensive, Evidence-Based Recovery Services - Continuation	\$ 198,500.00	\$ 198,500.00
	\$ 2,531,435.89		\$ 2,529,244.49	\$ 2,309,744.49
			Total	\$ 2,309,744.49

Mr. Elliott made a motion, seconded by Mr. Hart, to approve the submission of the FY 2026-2027 Oconee County Opioid Recovery Fund application to the South Carolina Opioid Recovery Fund Board.

Mr. Elliott clarified that the above requested funds are not County funds, they actually originated from lawsuits related to opioid litigation.

Mr. Durham noted that the overall requests seem to address opioid related problems in two different ways.

Motion approved 5 – 0.

### **Council Committee Reports**

Mr. Hart provided information outlining discussions held at the March 17, 2026 special Transportation Committee meeting.

Mr. Hart then made a motion, seconded by Mr. Elliott, to accept the following roads into County maintenance:

1. A realigned portion Nellie Rd (P-4449) and Nellie Creek Rd (P-4449) into County maintenance with consideration of abandoning a portion of Nellie Rd (WA-21).
2. Spring Hollow Dr (P-4271)
3. Wells Station Rd (P-4353); Utica Bend Ct (P-4354); and Kings Grant Ct (P-4355)

Mr. Durham, a member of the Transportation Committee, noted he voted to approve the acceptance of these roads because they met all County standards.

Mr. Durham then went on to explain why he would like to bring forth an ordinance change related to road standards and the acceptance of roads into County maintenance.

Mr. Mize inquired as to the total mileage of these roads.

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Council then reviewed the slides containing information related to the above roads from the Transportation Committee meeting on March 17, 2026.

Mr. Hart noted the total mileage of roads is less than 5 miles.

Motion approved 5 – 0.

## **Board & Commission Appointments**

### **Building Codes Appeal Board..... 1 At-Large Seat**

No questionnaires on file requesting consideration of appointment.

## **Executive Session**

Mr. Elliott made a motion, seconded by Mr. Hart, 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 potential contractual matter regarding utilities / infrastructure project(s).*
2. *Discussion regarding an economic development matter, Project Fox.*
3. *Receive legal advice and discuss fiscal / accounting review processes.*

Council entered into Executive Session at 6:36 p.m.

Council returned from Executive Session at 7:45 p.m. on a motion made by Mr. Elliott, seconded by Mr. Hart, approved 5 – 0.

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

## **Adjourn:**

Mr. Elliott made a motion, approved unanimously, to adjourn at 7:45 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

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Jennifer C. Adams  
Clerk to Council

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