



MINUTES

OCONEE COUNTY COUNCIL

Special Meeting

April 29, 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 9:00 AM in Council Chambers, 415 South Pine Street, Walhalla, SC with all Council Members, County Administrator Stewart Jones, Deputy Administrator 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]. In addition, it was made available [*upon request*] to the newspapers, radio stations, television stations and concerned citizens.

Members of the press present: Caitlin Alexander / Fox Carolina, Dick Mangurm / 101.7 WGOG

Call to Order

Mr. Durham called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.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

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

Attorney's Comments

None for this meeting.

Administrator's Comments

None for this meeting.

Council's meetings shall be conducted pursuant to the South Carolina Freedom of Information Act, Council's Rules and the Model Rules of Parliamentary Procedure for South Carolina Counties, latest edition. This agenda may not be inclusive of all issues which Council may bring up for discussion at this meeting. Items are listed on Council's agenda to give public notice of the subjects and issues to be discussed, acted upon, received as information and/or disposed of during the meeting. Items listed on Council's agenda may be taken up, tabled, postponed, reconsidered, removed or otherwise disposed of as provided for under Council's Rules, and Model Rules of Parliamentary Procedure for South Carolina Counties, latest edition, if not specified under Council's rules.

A video recording of this meeting is available at www.oconeesc.com. Meetings have been live-streamed beginning January 17, 2017. Brought to you by Your Oconee.

Public Hearing for the Following Ordinances *If you would like to be heard during public hearings, please contact Clerk to Council Jennifer C. Adams at jennifercadams@oconeesc.com or 864-718-1023 so that your participation may be coordinated.*

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.**

Mr. Durham opened the floor for Public Comment.

1. Mr. Lee Sheehan addressed Council with multiple concerns regarding proposed budget transfers in **Ordinance 2026-09**, noting his opinion that this ordinance lacks transparency.

Mr. Durham closed the Public Hearing regarding **Ordinance 2026-09**.

Third Reading of the Following Ordinances

ORDINANCE 2026-09 *(see caption above)*

Mr. Hart made a motion, seconded by Mr. James, to approve **Ordinance 2026-09** on third and final reading.

Mr. Jones, County Administrator, noted **Ordinance 2026-09** is completely transparent, further stating that the budget transfers contained within **Ordinance 2026-09** are in line with state law and will ultimately put the County with a surplus of around \$4.5 million dollars.

Mr. Durham noted that the transfers contained within **Ordinance 2026-09** will balance the budget and pull the County out of a deficit situation, which will help the County maintain its bond rating, as well.

Motion approved 5 – 0.

Discussion Regarding Action Items

Council Consideration and Approval of Addendum to Employer Resolution for Participation in the State Insurance Benefits Program regarding County / Municipality Councilmember Coverage

Council's meetings shall be conducted pursuant to the South Carolina Freedom of Information Act, Council's Rules and the Model Rules of Parliamentary Procedure for South Carolina Counties, latest edition. This agenda may not be inclusive of all issues which Council may bring up for discussion at this meeting. Items are listed on Council's agenda to give public notice of the subjects and issues to be discussed, acted upon, received as information and/or disposed of during the meeting. Items listed on Council's agenda may be taken up, tabled, postponed, reconsidered, removed or otherwise disposed of as provided for under Council's Rules, and Model Rules of Parliamentary Procedure for South Carolina Counties, latest edition, if not specified under Council's rules.

A video recording of this meeting is available at www.oconeesc.com. Meetings have been live-streamed beginning January 17, 2017. Brought to you by Your Oconee.

Mr. Durham made a motion, seconded by Mr. Hart, approved 5 – 0, to approve an addendum to Employer Resolution for Participation in the State Insurance Benefits Program regarding County / Municipality Councilmember Coverage.

Council Discussion regarding FY 2026 / 2027 Annual Budget

Mr. Durham provided information related to a future change in boat tax assessments by the state, noting that after speaking with Mr. Mize and Mrs. Hubbard, Oconee County Auditor, Council would like to implement this change ahead of time in FY 2026-2027 by way of an ordinance.

Mr. Mize noted he is in favor of getting in front of this change before state implementation.

Mr. Mize further noted that he has been accused of saying he would like to raise taxes on “lake folks”, to which he asserted is a totally incorrect statement and further specified this new reduction in boat taxes will actually be beneficial for those living on the lake that own boats.

Mr. Durham made a motion, seconded by Mr. Hart, approved 5 – 0, to direct the County Attorney to draft an ordinance to initiate the reduction of boat tax assessment in alignment with the new state law, for inclusion in the FY 2026-2027 budget, with implementation effective January 1, 2027 and bring this ordinance back to Council for consideration and approval.

Executive Session

Mr. Hart 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 relating to a pending, threatened, or potential claim or other matters covered by the attorney-client privilege, settlement of legal claims, or the position of the public agency in other adversary situations involving the assertion against the agency of a claim.*

Council entered into Executive Session at 9:16 a.m.

Council returned from Executive Session at 10:13 a.m. on a motion made by Mr. James, seconded by Mr. Mize, approved 5 – 0.

Mr. Mize made a motion, seconded by Hart, approved 5 – 0, to direct and authorize County Administrator to engage the South Carolina State Ethics Commission as discussed in executive session.

Adjourn:

Mr. Hart made a motion, approved unanimously, to adjourn at 10:14 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Jennifer C. Adams
Clerk to Council

Council's meetings shall be conducted pursuant to the South Carolina Freedom of Information Act, Council's Rules and the Model Rules of Parliamentary Procedure for South Carolina Counties, latest edition. This agenda may not be inclusive of all issues which Council may bring up for discussion at this meeting. Items are listed on Council's agenda to give public notice of the subjects and issues to be discussed, acted upon, received as information and/or disposed of during the meeting. Items listed on Council's agenda may be taken up, tabled, postponed, reconsidered, removed or otherwise disposed of as provided for under Council's Rules, and Model Rules of Parliamentary Procedure for South Carolina Counties, latest edition, if not specified under Council's rules.

A video recording of this meeting is available at www.oconeesc.com. Meetings have been live-streamed beginning January 17, 2017. Brought to you by Your Oconee.