



MINUTES

OCONEE COUNTY COUNCIL

Regular Meeting

May 19, 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 [Mr. Hart absent], 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: Dick Mangrum / 101.7 WGOG, Caleb Gilbert / The Journal

Call to Order

Mr. Durham noted that he will be exiting the meeting early to attend middle school awards night.

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

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

Attorney's Comments

As requested by Mr. Chumley, Mr. Elliott made a motion, seconded by Mr. James, approved 4 – 0, to amend the agenda by removing the discussion item entitled, “PO 56366 Goodwyn Mills & Cawood, Inc.”

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Administrator's Comments

Mr. Jones informed all in attendance that Oconee County Solid Waste will be holding and mattress and box spring drive at the Mountain Rest Convivence Center on June 6' 2026 from 8:00 a.m. – 12 noon .

Mr. Jones also pointed out a scrivener's error in **Resolution 2026-08**, the word "clarifying" should be corrected to read "clarifying'.

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. **May 05, 2026 Regular Meeting Minutes**
2. **May 07, 2026 Special Meeting Minutes**

Mr. Elliott made a motion, seconded by Mr. James, approved 4 – 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. Charles Morgan with the Westminster City Council addressed Council with is concern that County funding was going to decrease for the City of Westminster.
2. Mr. Jeff Bright addressed Council with his views regarding the May 18, 2026 Budget, Finance and Administration Committee meeting and offered his thanks to Council and Administration for their transparency.
3. Ms. Sara Stipe addressed Council with a shout out to the Oconee Winds Orchestra, going on to provide remarks regarding the current hold on plastics recycling in Oconee County and fuel expenses.
4. Mr. Sheehan addressed Council with is opinion that the County needs higher paying jobs and more affordable housing options.
5. Mr. Daniel Manhardt expressed to Council his frustration in the moving of his voting precinct following the latest redistricting.

Council Members Comments

Mr. Durham addressed Mr. Morgan and Mr. Manhardt related to their public comments.

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

ORDINANCE 2026-15 AN ORDINANCE TO IMPOSE A MORATORIUM ON ANY NEW CONSTRUCTION OR DEVELOPMENT OF PLANNED SUBDIVISIONS SEEKING TO

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ESTABLISH MORE THAN 10 RESIDENTIAL DWELLING UNITS, AND OTHER MATTERS RELATED THERETO. *Requested by Councilman Don Mize*

Mr. Durham opened the floor for Public Comment.

1. Mr. Tom Markovich spoke in opposition to **Ordinance 2026-15**.
2. Mr. Ronald Martin expressed his opposition to **Ordinance 2026-15** and urged Council to allow his current contract with a developer to be grandfathered in.
3. Mr. Brian Wilson spoke in opposition to **Ordinance 2026-15** and requested a stay on this ordinance so that a new committee can be formed to review the parameters of the moratorium.
4. Mr. Craig Roy, private developer who is currently under contract with Mr. Martin's property, spoke in opposition to **Ordinance 2026-15** and urged Council to allow this project to be grandfathered in.
5. Mr. Brent Little, with the Project Green Paw that is being constructed at the intersection of Davis Creek Road and Highway 123 in Seneca, urged Council to allow this project to continue, noting they have invested 2 years and 5 million dollars into this project.

Mr. Durham closed the Public Hearing regarding **Ordinance 2026-15**.

Third Reading of the Following Ordinances

ORDINANCE 2026-15 *(see caption above)*

Mr. Elliott made a motion, seconded by Mr. James, to approve **Ordinance 2026-15** on third and final reading.

Mr. Durham made a motion, seconded by Mr. Elliott, approved 4 – 0, to amend **Ordinance 2026-15** section 1(b) to read, “(b) any residential living unit projects to include townhomes, apartments, duplexes or any other multi-unit development exceeding ten (10) dwelling units”.

Motion to approve **Ordinance 2026-15** as amended, approved 4 – 0.

Second Reading of the Following Ordinances

ORDINANCE 2026-13 AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION AND DELIVERY OF A REAL PROPERTY LEASE AGREEMENT BETWEEN OCONEE COUNTY, AS LESSOR, AND OCONEE HISTORY MUSEUM, INC., AS LESSEE, FOR CERTAIN REAL PROPERTY, KNOWN AS THE TOBACCO BARN, LOCATED AT 123 BROWN SQUARE DRIVE, WALHALLA, SOUTH CAROLINA; AND OTHER MATTERS RELATED THERETO.

Mr. Elliott made a motion, seconded by Mr. James, to approve **Ordinance 2026-13** on second reading.

As requested by County Attorney Rob Chumley, Mr. Elliott made a motion, seconded by Mr. James, approved 4 – 0, to amend **Ordinance 2026-13** on second reading by inserting the word “exterior” into the last sentence of Article 1 to read, “Premises does not include the exterior retaining wall separating the upper parking from the lower-level basement area”.

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Motion to approve **Ordinance 2026-13** as amended, approved 4 – 0.

ORDINANCE 2026-14 AN ORDINANCE TO EXEMPT FROM THE PROPERTY TAX, FORTY-TWO AND 75/100 PERCENT OF THE FAIR MARKET VALUE OF A WATERCRAFT AND ITS MOTOR PURSUANT TO S.C. CODE ANN. SECTION 12-37-220 (B)(38)(B).

Mr. Elliott made a motion, seconded by Mr. James, to approve **Ordinance 2026-14** on second reading.

Mr. Durham offered background information regarding proposed **Ordinance 2026-14**.

Motion approved 4 – 0.

ORDINANCE 2026-16 AN ORDINANCE TO AUTHORIZE THE EXECUTION AND DELIVERY OF AN INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENT WITH THE CITY OF SENECA FOR THE ADMINISTRATION AND OPERATION OF 911 AND DISPATCH COMMUNICATION SERVICES; AND OTHER MATTERS RELATED THERETO.

Mr. Elliott made a motion, seconded by Mr. James, approved 4 – 0, to approve **Ordinance 2026-16** on second reading.

ORDINANCE 2026-17 AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND CHAPTER 38 OF THE OCONEE COUNTY CODE OF ORDINANCES TO RENAME THE "CONTROL FREE DISTRICT" AND ITS ABBREVIATION "CFD" TO THE "GENERAL USE DISTRICT" AND "GUD" RESPECTIVELY, AND TO MAKE CONFORMING CHANGES THROUGHOUT CHAPTER 38; AND OTHER MATTERS RELATED THERETO.

Mr. Mize made a motion, seconded by Mr. James, approved 4 – 0, to approve **Ordinance 2026-17** on second reading.

First Reading of the Following Ordinances

ORDINANCE 2026-19 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 AND LOCATED AT MOORES ROAD, SENECA, SOUTH CAROLINA, SUCH PROPERTY CURRENTLY IDENTIFIED BY TAX PARCEL NUMBER 240-00-04-014; AND OTHER MATTERS RELATED THERETO.

Mr. Elliott made a motion, seconded by Mr. James, approved 4 – 0, to approve **Ordinance 2026-19** on first reading.

ORDINANCE 2026-20 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 AND LOCATED AT OWENS ROAD AND MOORES ROAD, SENECA,

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SOUTH CAROLINA, SUCH PROPERTY CURRENTLY IDENTIFIED BY TAX PARCEL NUMBER 520-36-10-017; AND OTHER MATTERS RELATED THERETO.

Mr. Elliott made a motion, seconded by Mr. James, approved 4 – 0, to approve **Ordinance 2026-20** on first reading.

First & Final Reading for the Following Resolutions

RESOLUTION 2026-07 A RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE OCONEE COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION AND PLANNING STAFF TO COMMENCE A COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW AND PROPOSED REVISION OF CHAPTER 26 (ROADS), CHAPTER 32 (DESIGN STANDARDS), AND CHAPTER 38 (ZONING) OF THE OCONEE COUNTY CODE OF ORDINANCES; ESTABLISHING AN INITIAL SCOPE DELIVERABLE DUE NO LATER THAN JULY 1, 2026; DIRECTING THE PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE OF COUNTY COUNCIL TO CONVENE A SPECIAL CALLED MEETING IN JULY 2026 TO RECEIVE THE INITIAL SCOPE AND SET FURTHER DIRECTION; AND OTHER MATTERS RELATED THERETO.

Mr. James made a motion, seconded by Mr. Elliott, approved 4 – 0, to approve **Resolution 2026-07** on first and final reading.

RESOLUTION 2026-08 A RESOLUTION CLARIFYING OCONEE COUNTY RETIREE ELIGIBILITY AND BENEFITS

Mr. James made a motion, seconded by Mr. Elliott, approved 4 – 0, to approve **Resolution 2026-08** on first and final reading.

Action on Matters Removed from Consent Agenda at Council Member Request

None for this meeting.

Discussion Regarding Action Items

PO 56366 Goodwyn Mills & Cawood, Inc.	Department: Emergency Services
Amount: PO 56366: \$49,500.00	Change
Order 1: \$124,000.00	Change Order 2: \$25,000.00
Purchase Order Total: \$198,500.00	

~~As of May 12, 2026, Oconee County has received \$547,104 in reimbursements, with additional projects currently pending review. Management costs paid to Goodwyn Mills and Cawood, Inc. (GMC) are also eligible for reimbursement; however, the total reimbursable amount and reimbursement percentage have not yet been determined. Oconee County will be responsible for any costs not covered through the reimbursement process.~~

~~On July 21, 2020 Council approved the award of RFP 19-10 for Consulting Services for Disaster Recovery and FEMA Public Assistance. This Award provides support to the County's Disaster Recovery operations and FEMA Public Assistance preparation to expedite financial recovery and mitigation to minimize impacts from disasters.~~

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~~On October 10, 2024, Purchase Order No. 56366 was issued to Goodwyn Mills and Cawood, Inc. for Task Order #5 related to Hurricane Helene. The purpose of this purchase order was to provide services in support of data collection and damage assessment/evaluation efforts in regards to Hurricane Helene, which led to the issuance of a federal disaster declaration. The total amount authorized under this Task Order was not to exceed \$49,500 without prior written approval from the Procurement Department.~~

~~On September 2, 2025, County Council approved Change Order No. 1, authorizing the amendment to Purchase Order No. 56366, 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.~~

~~Change Order No. 2 to Task Order 5 includes:~~

- ~~• Project Formulation & Project Worksheet Preparations to include coordination of project worksheets and versions required by SCEMD and FEMA including scope changes, appeals and assistance with all FEMA public assistance (PA) categories.~~
- ~~• Project Worksheet preparations and Project Mitigation to include assistance to identify potential mitigation projects throughout the damaged area. Once projects are identified, GMC will provide an engineering cost estimate and develop the proper paperwork required to qualify FEMA 406 and SCEMD 404 mitigation funding for the project in accordance with the Master Contract.~~

~~This request is for Council Approval for Change Order No. 2 to Goodwyn Mills and Cawood, Inc. in the amount of \$25,000.00 for a total Award of \$198,500.00~~

~~These services are eligible for reimbursement from FEMA Public Assistance and other reimbursement funding sources located by Goodwyn, Mills and Cawood, Inc. The amount of reimbursement is dependent upon approved expenses by FEMA and any unapproved expenses will be paid by Oconee County.~~

It is the staff's recommendation that Council:

~~1. Approve Change Order No. 2, PO 56366, Work Authorization No. 5, Amendment No. 2, in the amount of \$25,000.00, purchase order total \$198,500.00 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.~~

As requested by Mr. Chumley, Mr. Elliott made a motion, seconded by Mr. James, approved 4 – 0, to amend the agenda by removing the discussion item entitled, “PO 56366 Goodwyn Mills & Cawood, Inc. during County Attorney Comments.

Council Committee Reports

Mr. Durham provided information outlining discussions held at the May 5, 2026 and the special May 18, 2026 Budget, Finance and Administration Committee meeting.

Board & Commission Appointments

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

No questionnaires on file requesting consideration of appointment.

Agricultural Advisory Board District 1

One questionnaire on file requesting consideration of appointment.

No nominations were made for the vacant District 1 seat on the Agricultural Advisory Board.

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Executive Session

Mr. James made a motion, seconded by Mr. Elliott, approved 4 – 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 additional settlement agreements to opioid litigation.*
2. *Receive legal advice and discuss contractual matter related to property acquisition.*
3. *Receive legal advice regarding settlement claims and potential lawsuit.*
4. *Discussion regarding the proposed sale and disposition of county-owned real property and related contractual matters.*
5. *Receive legal advice and discuss potential contractual matters related to Emergency Services.*

Council entered into Executive Session at 6:49 p.m.

Mr. Durham exited the meeting.

Council returned from Executive Session at 8:02 p.m. on a motion made by Mr. Elliott, seconded by Mr. James, approved 4 – 0.

Following Executive Session, the following motions were made:

Mr. James made a motion, seconded by Mr. Elliott, approved 3 – 0, to allow County Administrator to proceed with acceptance to remain in the class action lawsuit in regard to opioid litigation.

Mr. James made a motion, seconded by Mr. Elliott, approved 3 – 0, to direct County Attorney to enter into negotiations regarding a proposed sale and disposition of county-owned real property as discussed in executive session.

First Reading of the Following Ordinances

ORDINANCE 2026-18 AN ORDINANCE OF OCONEE COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA, CONFIRMING THE PURCHASE OF CERTAIN REAL PROPERTY LOCATED IN OCONEE COUNTY; AUTHORIZING THE LEASE OF SUCH CERTAIN OCONEE COUNTY-OWNED REAL PROPERTY TO CARRA H. ORR; AND OTHER MATTERS RELATED THERETO.

(in title only)

Mr. Elliott made a motion, seconded by Mr. James, approved 3 – 0, to approve **Ordinance 2026-18** on first reading in title only.

Adjourn:

Mr. James made a motion, approved unanimously, to adjourn at 8:04 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Jennifer C. Adams
Clerk to Council

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