



MINUTES

OCONEE COUNTY COUNCIL

Regular Meeting

June 16, 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. Durham via phone], County Administrator Stewart Jones, Deputy Administrator Phil Shirley, County Attorney Rob Chumley [via phone], & 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: Andrea Kelley / The Journal

Call to Order

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

Moment of Silence

Mr. Mize 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

None for this meeting.

Administrator's Comments

None for this meeting.

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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 19, 2026 Regular Meeting Minutes**
- 2. June 03, 2026 Special Meeting Minutes**

Mr. Elliott made a motion, seconded by Mr. James, approved 5 – 0, to approve all items on the consent agenda as presented.

Presentation to Council

Upstate SC Alliance – Mr. John Lummus / President and CEO

Mr. John Lummus addressed Council utilizing a power point presentation entitled, “Upstate SC Business moves here. Yours can, too.” [copy filed in backup] and provided updates regarding Upstate SC Alliance and the benefits they offer.

Mr. Elliott, Mr. Mize, Mr. Durham and Mr. Hart extended their appreciation for all the work that Upstate SC Alliance provides to Oconee and surrounding counties.

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 several questions regarding the FY 2026-2027 budget.

Council Members Comments

Mr. Elliott offered a personal statement related to his current colon cancer diagnosis and encouraged everyone of age or with family history to get tested.

Mr. Mize then offered a statement related to his personal history of prostate cancer.

Mr. Durham offered his personal history of colon cancer testing and went on to thank all staff members and Council for their work and transparency related to the FY 2026-2027 budget.

Mr. Durham then addressed Mr. Sheehan related to his public comment questions regarding the FY 2026-2027 budget.

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 2026-13 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,

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KNOWN AS THE TOBACCO BARN, LOCATED AT 123 BROWN SQUARE DRIVE, WALHALLA, SOUTH CAROLINA; AND OTHER MATTERS RELATED THERETO.

Mr. Mize 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. Mize closed the Public Hearing regarding **Ordinance 2026-13**.

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. Mize 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. Mize closed the Public Hearing regarding **Ordinance 2026-14**.

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. Mize 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. Mize closed the Public Hearing regarding **Ordinance 2026-16**.

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 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. Mize closed the Public Hearing regarding **Ordinance 2026-17**.

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Third Reading of the Following Ordinances

ORDINANCE 2026-13 *(see caption above)*

Mr. Elliott made a motion, seconded by Mr. Hart, approved 5 - 0, to approve **Ordinance 2026-13** on third and final reading.

ORDINANCE 2026-14 *(see caption above)*

Mr. Elliott made a motion, seconded by Mr. Hart, approved 5 - 0, to approve **Ordinance 2026-14** on third and final reading.

ORDINANCE 2026-16 *(see caption above)*

Mr. Hart made a motion, seconded by Mr. Elliott, approved 5 - 0, to approve **Ordinance 2026-16** on third and final reading.

ORDINANCE 2026-17 *(see caption above)*

Mr. Elliott made a motion, seconded by Mr. James, approved 5 - 0, to approve **Ordinance 2026-17** on third and final reading.

Second Reading of the Following Ordinances

Mr. Mize noted that a motion was needed to amend **Ordinance 2026-01** to include approved revisions [copy filed in backup] to the budget document that were approved in the special Budget, Finance and Administration Committee meeting that was held prior to the Council meeting at 4:30 p.m.

Mr. Hart made a motion, seconded by Mr. James, to approve amending **Ordinance 2026-01** to include the revisions approved by the Budget, Finance and Administration Committee.

Mr. Jones provided an overview of the approved revisions.

Motion to amend **Ordinance 2026-01** to include revisions on second reading, approved 5 – 0.

ORDINANCE 2026-01 AN ORDINANCE TO ESTABLISH THE BUDGET FOR OCONEE COUNTY AND PROVIDE 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 /

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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, 2026 AND ENDING JUNE 30, 2027.**

Mr. Hart made a motion, seconded by Mr. James, to approve amended **Ordinance 2026-01** on second reading.

Mr. Durham offered comments related to the newly created Stabilization Fund and funding for a newly implemented County Paving Crew.

Amended **Ordinance 2026-01**, approved 5 – 0, on second reading.

ORDINANCE 2026-02 AN ORDINANCE TO ESTABLISH THE BUDGET FOR THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF OCONEE COUNTY AND TO PROVIDE FOR THE LEVY OF TAXES FOR THE OPERATIONS OF THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF OCONEE COUNTY FOR THE **FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING JULY 1, 2026 AND ENDING JUNE 30, 2027.**

Mr. Hart made a motion, seconded by Mr. James, approved 5 - 0, to approve **Ordinance 2026-02** on second reading.

ORDINANCE 2026-03 AN ORDINANCE TO PROVIDE FOR THE LEVY OF TAXES FOR THE KEOWEE FIRE TAX DISTRICT AND TO ESTABLISH THE BUDGET FOR THE KEOWEE FIRE TAX DISTRICT FOR THE **FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING JULY 1, 2026 AND ENDING JUNE 30, 2027.**

Mr. Elliott made a motion, seconded by Mr. Hart, approved 4 – 0, to approve **Ordinance 2026-03** on second reading.

ORDINANCE 2026-12 AN ORDINANCE TO PROVIDE FOR THE LEVY OF TAXES FOR THE CORINTH-SHILOH SPECIAL PURPOSE TAX DISTRICT FOR FIRE PROTECTION AND TO ESTABLISH THE BUDGET FOR THE CORINTH-SHILOH SPECIAL PURPOSE TAX DISTRICT FOR FIRE PROTECTION FOR THE **FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING JULY 1, 2026 AND ENDING JUNE 30, 2027.**

Mr. Hart made a motion, seconded by Mr. Elliott, approved 5 – 0, to approve **Ordinance 2026-12** on second reading.

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.

Mr. Hart made a motion, seconded by Mr. James, approved 5 - 0, to approve **Ordinance 2026-18** on second reading.

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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 5 - 0, to approve **Ordinance 2026-19** on second 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, SOUTH CAROLINA, SUCH PROPERTY CURRENTLY IDENTIFIED BY TAX PARCEL NUMBER 520-36-10-017; AND OTHER MATTERS RELATED THERETO.

Mr. Hart made a motion, seconded by Mr. Elliott, approved 5 - 0, to approve **Ordinance 2026-20** on second reading.

First Reading of the Following Ordinances

ORDINANCE 2026-21 AN ORDINANCE TO ESTABLISH AN AGREEMENT WHEREBY OCONEE COUNTY WILL ACT AS PROJECT SPONSOR AND SUBRECIPIENT FOR CHATTOOGA LAKE CLUB, A PRIVATE ENTITY, IN ITS UTILIZATION OF FEDERAL FUNDS FROM THE HIGH HAZARD POTENTIAL DAMS REHABILITATION GRANT SUBAWARD, DISPERSED THROUGH THE PASS-THROUGH ENTITY, SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES, TO CHATTOOGA LAKE CLUB, FOR THE PURPOSE OF DAM REPAIRS AND REHABILITATION, IN ACCORDANCE WITH OCONEE COUNTY ORDINANCES, AND OTHER RELATED MATTERS THERETO. *(in title only)*

Mr. Mize noted that no tax dollars will be used for this request.

Mr. Elliott made a motion, seconded by Mr. Hart, approved 5 - 0, to approve **Ordinance 2026-21** on first reading in title only.

ORDINANCE 2026-22 AN ORDINANCE AMENDING ARTICLE II OF CHAPTER 6 OF THE OCONEE COUNTY CODE OF ORDINANCES TO REPEAL THE ADOPTION OF THE INTERNATIONAL PROPERTY MAINTENANCE CODE; AND OTHER MATTERS RELATED THERETO.

Mr. Hart made a motion, seconded by Mr. James, to approve **Ordinance 2026-22** on first reading.

Mr. Elliott asked for further details regarding the above ordinance.

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Mr. Durham noted that he believes the International Property Maintenance Code, that was adopted in his absence on Council, is government overreach and turns the County into a HOA.

Mr. Mize noted that he is in agreement with Mr. Durham.

Mr. James also offered his support for repealing the adoption of the International Property Maintenance Code, noting it will help “shrink” government and it is vague and overreaching.

Mr. Hart noted he does not like the word “International” within the title because it makes him think of “world order”.

First reading of **Ordinance 2026-22** approved 5 – 0 on first reading.

First & Final Reading for the Following Resolutions

None for this meeting.

Action on Matters Removed from Consent Agenda at Council Member Request

None for this meeting.

Discussion Regarding Action Items

Discussion Regarding Action Items

Approval for the Transfer of Funds, in the Amount of \$16,000.00, for Expenditures Related to Grinding Brush for the Solid Waste Department

The Oconee County Administrator is authorized to 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 Administrator has reached the maximum approval limit for such transfers and now must obtain Council approval.

Solid Waste needs to grind brush in May and June to maintain requirements at the Oconee County Mulch Yard, Solid Waste will utilize available departmental funding for a portion of the costs; however, an overage of \$16,000 is required for Professional Services for brush grinding. This service is required due to the grinder that the County owns requiring maintenance/repairs.

Funding is available from a budgeted employee salary account with a surplus balance due to an unfilled position in the Solicitor (504) Department.

Staff recommends that Council approve the transfer of budgeted funds from the unused salary account of the Solicitor to cover the Professional Services required for brush grinding materials for the remainder of the fiscal year.

Mr. Hart made a motion, seconded by Mr. James, to approve the transfer of budgeted funds from the unused salary account of the Solicitor to cover the Professional Services required for brush grinding materials for the remainder of the fiscal year.

Mr. Mize noted that due to equipment failures at Solid Waste, outside professional services are required to stay ahead with brush grinding.

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Motion approved 5 – 0.

Approval for the Transfer of Funds, in the Amount of \$10,000.00, for the hiring of two Temporary Employees in the Treasurer’s Department

This action is budget neutral.

The Treasurer’s office has one full-time position open, Senior Tax Record Specialist, that had two great candidates apply for the position. The County Treasurer has opted to hire both candidates through a temp service (Staffmark) to determine which candidate would be better suited.

The use of a temp service would cut the cost of multiple pre-employment physicals and paperwork. In addition to the resignation of the Senior Tax Records Specialist, a longtime temporary Staffmark employee (12 yrs.) resigned, leaving an temporary employee position vacant. There is also anticipation of a Treasurer’s office employee retiring no later than March 31, 2027 , where the hope would be for a smooth transition to fill that position with the seasoned temporary employee.

Staff recommends that Council approve the transfer of funds approved in the FY 25-26 budget from the salary line item to the professional line item for the hiring of two temporary employees in the Treasurer’s Department.

Mr. Hart made a motion, seconded by Mr. James, approved 5 - 0, to approve the transfer of funds approved in the FY 25-26 budget from the Salaries line item to the Professional line item for the hiring of two temporary employees in the Treasurer’s Department.

Approval for the Transfer of Funds, in the Amount of \$20,000.00, to Cover Overtime Costs for Vehicle Maintenance

The Vehicle Maintenance Department has depleted its overtime budget line item, 010-721-10710-00000. It is currently in the negative in the amount of \$13,291.89. The department would like to transfer \$20,000.00 into the overtime budget to bring the amount current and to cover the rest of Fiscal Year 2025-2026. This shortfall is due to inclement weather and other unforeseen circumstances. The salaries line item, 010-721-10110-00000, has a surplus of funds due to open positions in the department throughout the fiscal year.

Staff recommends that Council approve the transfer of budgeted funds from the salary line item for Vehicle Maintenance to cover overtime overages and anticipated costs for the remainder of Fiscal Year 2025-2026.

Mr. Hart made a motion, seconded by Mr. James, approved 5 - 0, to approve the transfer of budgeted funds from the salary line item for Vehicle Maintenance to cover overtime overages and anticipated costs for the remainder of Fiscal Year 2025-2026.

Council Committee Reports

Mr. Mize provided information outlining discussions held at the May 19, 2026 Law Enforcement, Public Safety, Health and Welfare Committee meeting.

Mr. James provided information outlining discussion held at the May 19, 2026 Planning and Economic Development Committee meeting.

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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.

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 regarding settlement claims and potential lawsuit.*
2. *Discussion regarding the proposed sale and disposition of county-owned real property and related contractual matters.*
3. *Receive legal advice and discuss potential contractual matters related to Emergency Services.*
4. *Discussion of employment, performance evaluation, and contractual matters related to the County Administrator.*
5. *Receipt of legal advice from counsel regarding pending claims and litigation involving Oconee County.*
6. *Receive legal advice regarding pending litigation.*
7. *Discussion of a contractual matter related to county-owned facilities and receipt of legal advice concerning the same.*

Council entered into Executive Session at 6:54 p.m.

Mr. Elliott exited the meeting during Executive Session.

Council returned from Executive Session at 9:16 p.m. on a motion made by Mr. Hart, seconded by Mr. James, approved 4 – 0.

Mr. Hart made a motion, seconded by Mr. James, approved 4 – 0, to amend the County Administrators contract with regards to paid time off as discussed in executive session.

Adjourn:

Mr. James made a motion, approved unanimously, to adjourn at 9:17 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Jennifer C. Adams
Clerk to Council

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