



MINUTES

OCONEE COUNTY COUNCIL

Regular Meeting

August 18, 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. Elliott via phone], 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: Fox Carolina News, Dick Mangrum / 101.7 WGOG, Andrea Kelley / The Journal

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. Jones gave the Invocation.

Pledge of Allegiance

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

Attorney's Comments

None for this meeting.

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Administrator's Comments

None for this meeting.

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. August 04, 2026 Regular Meeting Minutes

Mr. James made a motion, seconded by Mr. Hart, approved 4 – 0, to approve all items on the consent agenda as presented.

Proclamations

PROCLAMATION 2026-08 A PROCLAMATION HONORING THE WESTMINSTER 10U & 12U ALL-STAR SOFTBALL TEAMS ON THEIR 2026 SOUTH CAROLINA ATHLETIC PROGRAMS STATE CHAMPIONSHIP

Before reading **Proclamation 2026-08**, Mr. James congratulated and extended his appreciation to both teams, their coaches, parents and community on winning the South Carolina Athletic Programs State Championship.

Mr. Durham made a motion, seconded by Mr. James, approved 5 - 0, to approve **Proclamation 2026-08** on first and final reading.

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. David Crockett directed a question to Mr. Durham as to if he still intends to investigate the feasibility of dissolving the Corinth-Shiloh Special Tax District for Fire Protection.
2. Mr. Dillon Collard addressed Council in support of **Ordinance 2026-26** and encourage Council to end the 287G agreement between the Sheriff's office and Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

Council Members Comments

Mr. Hart provided comments related to the municipalities that make up the Oconee Joint Regional Sewer Authority, noting that Oconee County is not one of them.

Mr. Durham responded to Mr. Crockett's and Mr. Collard's public comments and went on to note his concern that the County tax-payers were "being positioned to inherit the consequences of years of problems within a municipal sewer system that the County did not own or operate."

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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 2026-24 AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE CONVEYANCE OF EASEMENT RIGHTS TO UPCOUNTRY FIBER FOR THE PURPOSE OF UTILITY INFRASTRUCTURE CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE AT PROPERTY OWNED BY OCONEE COUNTY, LOCATED AT THE INTERSECTION OF NEBO CHURCH ROAD AND HARBIN ACRES ROAD, SENECA, SOUTH CAROLINA, SUCH PROPERTY CURRENTLY IDENTIFIED BY TAX PARCEL NUMBER 256-00-04-031; AND OTHER MATTERS RELATED THERETO.

Mr. Durham 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. Durham closed the Public Hearing regarding **Ordinance 2026-24**.

ORDINANCE 2026-25 AN ORDINANCE FOR THE PRESERVATION, REDEVELOPMENT, AND SALE OF THE HISTORIC OCONEE COUNTY COURTHOUSE LOCATED AT 211 W. MAIN ST. WALHALLA, SOUTH CAROLINA; AND OTHER RELATED MATTERS.

Mr. Durham 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. Durham closed the Public Hearing regarding **Ordinance 2026-25**.

Third Reading of the Following Ordinances

ORDINANCE 2026-24 *(see caption above)*

Mr. Hart made a motion, seconded by Mr. James, approved 5 - 0, to approve **Ordinance 2026-24** on third and final reading.

ORDINANCE 2026-25 *(see caption above)*

Mr. Mize made a motion, seconded by Mr. James, to approve **Ordinance 2026-25** on third and final reading.

Mr. Durham noted that he recognizes this ordinance as a winning opportunity that could save the County two million dollars.

Motion approved 5 – 0.

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Second Reading of the Following Ordinances

None for this meeting.

First Reading of the Following Ordinances

ORDINANCE 2026-26 AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND CHAPTER 2 OF THE OCONEE COUNTY CODE OF ORDINANCES BY ADDING AN ARTICLE ENTITLED “PROTECTION FROM MASS SURVEILLANCE”; TO PROHIBIT THE USE OF COUNTY FUNDS, PROPERTY, PERSONNEL, EQUIPMENT, CONTRACTS, INFORMATION-TECHNOLOGY SYSTEMS, AND OTHER COUNTY RESOURCES FOR PROHIBITED MASS SURVEILLANCE SYSTEMS; TO PROHIBIT THE PLACEMENT OR OPERATION OF SUCH SYSTEMS ON COUNTY PROPERTY AND WITHIN COUNTY-CONTROLLED ROAD RIGHTS-OF-WAY; TO ESTABLISH ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS FOR DISCRETIONARY COUNTY APPROPRIATIONS, RECREATION FUNDS, ACCOMMODATIONS-TAX AWARDS, GRANTS, SPONSORSHIPS, AND OTHER COUNTY-CONTROLLED DISTRIBUTIONS; TO INCLUDE MUNICIPALLY SPONSORED EVENTS AND MATERIAL IN-KIND MUNICIPAL SUPPORT WITHIN SUCH ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS; TO PREVENT CIRCUMVENTION THROUGH AFFILIATED OR SEPARATELY INCORPORATED ENTITIES; TO AMEND CHAPTER 30, ARTICLE III, BY ADDING PERMANENT ACCOMMODATIONS-TAX ELIGIBILITY, DISCLOSURE, AND ENFORCEMENT PROVISIONS; TO AMEND CHAPTER 26 BY PROHIBITING MASS SURVEILLANCE ENCROACHMENTS WITHIN COUNTY-CONTROLLED RIGHTS-OF-WAY; AND OTHER MATTERS RELATED THERETO.

Mr. Hart made a motion, seconded by Mr. James, to approve **Ordinance 2026-26** on first reading.

Mr. Elliott stated that public safety is the top priority for County Council and FLOCK cameras are used for public safety, therefore he will be voting against **Ordinance 2026-26**.

Mr. James provided a lengthy statement as to why he supports **Ordinance 2026-26**, noting the dangers of these camera’s tracking abilities.

Mr. Durham stated that he stands with Mr. James’ statement and agrees that public safety is important but it does not trump the constitutional rights of each citizen.

Mr. James made a motion, seconded by Mr. Hart, directing staff to request access to the unredacted audit logs of the Flock Camera system from the Oconee County Sheriff’s office.

Mr. Mize suggested that in addition to the above request, he would also like to have access to the municipalities unredacted audit logs as well.

Mr. James included Mr. Mize’s request within his motion.

Motion approved 5 – 0.

Motion to approve **Ordinance 2026-26** on first reading, approved 4 – 1 [Mr. Elliott opposed].

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ORDINANCE 2026-27 AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND CHAPTER 2, “ADMINISTRATION,” OF THE CODE OF ORDINANCES OF OCONEE COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA, BY ADDING ARTICLE VII, ENTITLED “POSITION AUTHORIZATION AND CLASSIFICATION CONTROL”; TO REQUIRE ALL COUNTY POSITIONS, REGARDLESS OF FUNDING SOURCE, TO BE INCLUDED IN A POSITION AUTHORIZATION AND CLASSIFICATION SCHEDULE APPROVED BY COUNTY COUNCIL; TO PROVIDE THAT THE RECEIPT OR AVAILABILITY OF A GRANT, STATE APPROPRIATION, DONATION, RESTRICTED REVENUE, FEE, OR OTHER FUNDING DOES NOT INDEPENDENTLY AUTHORIZE THE CREATION OR CONTINUATION OF A COUNTY POSITION; TO ESTABLISH UNIFORM PROCEDURES FOR THE CREATION, RECLASSIFICATION, CONTINUATION, EXPIRATION, AND ABOLITION OF COUNTY POSITIONS; TO PRESERVE LAWFUL APPOINTMENT AND PERSONNEL AUTHORITY; TO PROHIBIT CIRCUMVENTION; AND TO PROVIDE FOR CODIFICATION, SEVERABILITY, CONFLICTING PROVISIONS, AND AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

Mr. Durham noted a scrivener’s error in the title above where “Article VII” should state “Article VIII”.

Mr. Hart made a motion, seconded by Mr. James, to approve **Ordinance 2026-27** on first reading.

Mr. Durham noted this ordinance just clarifies that any created County position must be approved by County Council.

Motion approved 5 – 0.

ORDINANCE 2026-28 AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND SECTION 2-191, “APPOINTMENT; DUTIES,” OF DIVISION 4, “COUNTY ATTORNEY,” OF ARTICLE III, “OFFICERS AND EMPLOYEES,” OF CHAPTER 2, “ADMINISTRATION,” OF THE OCONEE COUNTY CODE OF ORDINANCES, IN ORDER TO REQUIRE COUNTY COUNCIL AUTHORIZATION BEFORE A COUNTY AGENCY, COMMISSION, BOARD, DEPARTMENT, OR COMMITTEE MAY EMPLOY OR RETAIN AN ATTORNEY OTHER THAN THE COUNTY ATTORNEY; AND OTHER MATTERS RELATED THERETO.

Mr. Hart made a motion, seconded by Mr. James, to approve **Ordinance 2026-28** on first reading.

Mr. Durham noted he brought this ordinance forward after reading a recent Attorney General opinion regarding an elected office who hired an outside lawyer to oppose their own county.

Motion approved 5 – 0.

First & Final Reading for the Following Resolutions

RESOLUTION 2026-10 A RESOLUTION APPOINTING AND COMMISSIONING GRETCHEN LEROY AS A CODE ENFORCEMENT OFFICER (ANIMAL CONTROL) FOR THE PROPER SECURITY, GENERAL WELFARE, AND CONVENIENCE OF OCONEE COUNTY; AND OTHER MATTERS RELATED THERETO.

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

RESOLUTION 2026-11 A RESOLUTION CONSENTING TO AND AUTHORIZING THE ANNEXATION INTO THE CITY OF SENECA OF CERTAIN PROPERTY OWNED BY OCONEE COUNTY AND PRESENTLY DESIGNATED BY TAX MAP NO. 520-36-10-017.

Mr. Mize made a motion, seconded by Mr. Hart, approved, to approve **Resolution 2026-11** on first and final reading.

Mr. Hart provided his reasons as to why he opposes this resolution.

Mr. Durham provided background information related to **Resolution 2026-11** and went on to provide the reasons as to why he will be opposing this resolution.

Motion approved 3 – 2 [Mr. Durham and Mr. Hart opposed].

Action on Matters Removed from Consent Agenda at Council Member Request

None for this meeting.

Discussion Regarding Action Items

Request for Council's acceptance of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Grant offer for Airport Improvement Program (AIP) Project No. 3-45-0016-039-2026 and Airport Infrastructure Grant (AIG) Project No. 3-45-0016-040-2026 with approval to commit a total of \$11,335.00 in matching funds, and to authorize the County Administrator to execute all necessary Grant documents pertaining to the Airport Layout with Master Plan Narrative Project.

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) regulates civil aviation, manages the national air traffic control system, and establishes and enforces aviation safety standards throughout the US. As part of these responsibilities, the FAA collects and analyzes data for each Airport, including aircraft operations, aircraft size, and aircraft approach speed. This information is used to determine the appropriate airport design classification and to establish the applicable design standards for airport facilities, including runways, taxiways, and associated safety areas, in accordance with FAA airport design criteria.

- July 2025, The FAA notified Oconee County Regional that the airport's current category B2 classification has been reclassified to category C2 due to the increase in the volume of aircraft traffic, as well as the larger size and higher operating speeds of aircraft utilizing the airport. Airport category/classification changes require the preparation and submittal of a new Airport Layout Plan (ALP) and accompanying Master Plan Narrative. These documents will reflect the airport's reclassification from Category B2 to Category C2 by incorporating the applicable C2 design standards, identifying facilities that currently meet B2 standards, and outlining the future improvements necessary to achieve compliance with C2 standards.
- May 1, 2026, Airport Engineering Consultant firm, Ardurra Group, Inc. assisted Oconee County in the preparation and submission of an Airport Layout Plan and accompanying Master Plan Narrative Project application to the FAA for funding consideration under the Airport Improvement Program (AIP) and Airport Infrastructure Grant (AIG) programs.
- July 20, 2026, Oconee County received Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Grant offer under the Airport Improvement Program (AIP) Project No. 3-45-0016-039-2026 and the Airport Infrastructure Grant (AIG) Project No. 3-45-0016-040-2026 for the Airport Layout Plan with Master Narrative Project.

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The Oconee County Regional Airport now wishes to accept the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Airport Improvement Grant (AIP) Project No. 3-45-0016-039-2026 and the Airport Infrastructure Grant (AIG) Project No. 3-45-0016-040-2026 for the Airport Layout Plan with Master Narrative Project.

Timely acceptance of these grants is crucial to ensure FAA funding for the Airport Layout Plan with Master Narrative Project. The grant offers must be accepted and submitted to the FAA no later than August 20, 2026, in order to secure funding for the project.

The total cost for the Airport Layout Plan with Master Plan Narrative project is approximately \$453,398.00. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has offered to fund ninety-five percent (95%) of the eligible costs up to \$430,728.00. Oconee County will provide a local matching share of two and a half percent (2.5%) approximately \$11,335.00. The remaining two and a half percent (2.5%), also totaling \$11,335.00 will be funded by the South Carolina Aeronautics Commission (SCAC).

Staff recommends that Council approve the acceptance of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Grant offer for Airport Improvement Program (AIP) Project No. 3-45-0016-039-2026 and Airport Infrastructure Grant (AIG) Project No. 3-45-0016-040-2026 with approval to commit a total of \$11,335.00 in matching funds, and to authorize the County Administrator to execute all necessary Grant documents pertaining to the Airport Layout with Master Plan Narrative Project.

Mr. Hart made a motion, seconded by Mr. James, to approve the acceptance of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Grant offer for Airport Improvement Program (AIP) Project No. 3-45-0016-039-2026 and Airport Infrastructure Grant (AIG) Project No. 3-45-0016-040-2026 with approval to commit a total of \$11,335.00 in matching funds, and to authorize the County Administrator to execute all necessary Grant documents pertaining to the Airport Layout with Master Plan Narrative Project.

Mr. Hart explained why he is in full support of this request.

Motion approved 5 – 0.

Council Committee Reports

Mr. James provided information outlining discussions held at the August 04, 2026 special Planning and Economic Development Committee meeting.

Board & Commission Appointments

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

One questionnaire 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 positions on the Building Codes Appeal Board or the Agricultural Advisory Board.

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:

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1. *Discuss a personnel matter in regards to the County Auditor's office.*
2. *Discuss a matter of potential litigation regarding county property.*
3. *Receive legal advice and discuss contractual and personnel matters related to the Roads and Bridges Department.*
4. *Receive legal advice relating to a potential claim.*
5. *Discussion regarding an economic development matter, Project Best.*
6. *Discussion regarding an economic development matter, Project Homecoming.*
7. *Discussion regarding an economic development matter, Project Monument.*
8. *Discussion regarding an economic development matter, Project Sunshine.*
9. *Discussion regarding an economic development matter, Project Grow.*

Council entered into Executive Session at 6:51 p.m.

Mr. James exited the meeting at 8:29 p.m.

Council returned from Executive Session at 9:18 p.m. on a motion made by Mr. Hart, seconded by Mr. Mize, approved 4 – 0.

Mr. Durham noted that no action needed to be taken after executive session.

Adjourn:

Mr. Hart made a motion, approved unanimously, to adjourn at 8:18 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Jennifer C. Adams
Clerk to Council

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