



MINUTES

OCONEE COUNTY COUNCIL

Regular Meeting

September 01, 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 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 / WSPA Channel 7 / Andrea Kelley / The Journal

Call to Order

Mr. Durham called the meeting to order at 6:02 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. Perry Smith 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. August 18, 2026 Regular Meeting Minutes

2. August 26, 2026 Special Meeting Minutes

3. Procurement Item:

RFP 26-01 Aviation Fuel

Department(s): Airport

Estimated Amount: \$2,186,168.00

Procurement was approved by Council in Fiscal Year 2026-2027 budget process

Budget: \$2,186,168* Project Cost: \$2,186,168 *Balance: \$0

(\$270,000.00 for Avgas, \$1,892,000.00 for Jet A, and \$24,168.00 for leased equipment. Total budget reflected. Previous contract expenditures pending. Actual PO and expenditures for recommended contract will align with remaining budget amount after closing previous contract.)*

It is the staff's recommendation that Council:

- 1. Approve the award of RFP 26-01, Aviation Fuel, to Eastern Aviation Fuels, Inc., dba Titan Aviation Fuels, of New Bern, NC, in an estimated amount of \$2,186,168.00.*
- 2. Authorize the County Administrator to execute the contract documents and renew the contract for up to four (4) additional one-year periods, provided the annual amount does not exceed the amount budgeted for aviation fuel and leased equipment and the services provided are satisfactory.*

4. Procurement Item:

RFP 25-09 Professional Engineering/Consultant On-Call Services

Department(s): All

Amount: TBD

There is no dollar amount associated with this approval at this time. All County departments with a budget for professional services may utilize this RFP, provided expenditures do not exceed the amounts budgeted for these services. Any future professional services project in any category with a total cost exceeding \$50,000 will be brought to Council for approval on a project-by-project basis. When a county department has a project requiring services within one of the identified categories, the department head may contact the primary firm awarded for that category and request a proposal for the required services. This process eliminates the need for the County to issue a separate RFP each time these services are needed.

Staff recommends that Council:

- 1. Approve the award of RFP 25-09 for Professional Engineering / Consultant On-Call Services to the following firms for the listed categories:*

Category A: Inspire Placemaking Collective, Inc., Atlanta, GA

Categories B and F: Davis & Floyd, Inc., Greenwood, SC

Categories C and D: Terracon Consultants, Inc., Greenville, SC

Category E: Thomas & Hutton Engineering Co., Greenville, SC

Category G: LS3P Associates, LTD., Greenville, SC

Category H: Devita & Associates, Inc., Greenville, SC

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2. *Authorize the County Administrator to execute contracts with each awarded firm and to renew the contracts for up to four (4) additional one-year terms, provided that performance remains satisfactory and the services continue to be needed.*

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

Proclamations

PROCLAMATION 2026-09 A PROCLAMATION RECOGNIZING THE 88TH ANNIVERSARY OF AMERICA’S FIRST FARM CONSERVATION PLAN ESTABLISHED IN OCONEE COUNTY ON PLOMA M. ADAMS’S FARMLAND

Mr. Elliott made a motion, seconded by Mr. Hart, approved 5 - 0, to approve **Proclamation 2026-09** on first and final reading.

PROCLAMATION 2026-10 A PROCLAMATION RECOGNIZING UNITED STATES CONSTITUTION WEEK

Mr. Hart made a motion, seconded by Mr. Elliott, approved 5 - 0, to approve **Proclamation 2026-10** 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. John Brubacher addressed Council with is concerns regarding mass surveillance systems in Oconee County.
2. Ms. Valerie McCarthy addressed Council in support of **Ordinance 2026-26** that prohibits the use of mass surveillance systems in Oconee County.
3. Ms. Judy Adams expressed her thanks to Council for their research and advocacy of **Ordinance 2026-26**.
4. Mr. Bill Bull addressed Council [copy of comments filed in backup] in opposition to **Ordinance 2026-26** related to mass surveillance systems in Oconee County.
5. Mr. Abe Connally addressed Council in support of **Ordinance 2026-26** related to mass surveillance systems in Oconee County and suggested that an immediate action plan be established for contract cancellations with mass surveillance providers.
6. Ms. Mary Montejo expressed her frustration to Council regarding the delay of completion of the South Cove Pickleball Courts.
7. Mr. Perry Smith addressed Council in support of **Ordinance 2026-26** that prohibits the use of mass surveillance systems in Oconee County.
8. Ms. Lauren Ballard expressed her thanks to Council and administration for their research and advocacy of **Ordinance 2026-26**.
9. Mr. Mario Suarez, former Oconee County Council member, invited Council to a showing of his self-written play entitled “La Zafra”.

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10. Ms. Lynell Hecht addressed Council with her concerns regarding mass surveillance systems in Oconee County.
11. Mr. Mickey Haney addressed Council with his concerns regarding mass surveillance systems in Oconee County.
12. Mr. Doug Hedden addressed Council in support of **Ordinance 2026-26** that prohibits the use of mass surveillance systems in Oconee County.
13. Mr. Alex James addressed Council in support of **Ordinance 2026-26** that prohibits the use of mass surveillance systems in Oconee County.
14. Mr. Lee Sheehan addressed Council in opposition to **Resolution 2026-12** that would withhold recreational funds from the City of Seneca to help offset the increase cost incurred by Oconee County Emergency Communications and Dispatch when they absorbed the City of Seneca dispatch center and in opposition to **Ordinance 2026-26** that prohibits the use of mass surveillance systems in Oconee County.
15. Mr. Emmerson Cooke addressed Council with his concerns related to mass surveillance systems and questioned what would prevent future council's or forms of local government from reinstating mass surveillance systems.
16. Mr. Devin Clay addressed Council with his concerns related to mass surveillance systems, noting that these types of systems need to have "checks and balances" and the privacy of the citizens needs to be the upmost priority.

Council Members Comments

Deputy Administrator and PRT Director, Mr. Phil Shirley, addressed Ms. Montejo's concerns regarding the lack of progress on the Pickleball Courts at South Cove, noting that site work will begin again this week.

Mr. Mize addressed Mr. Sheehan's opposition to **Resolution 2026-12** by providing details as to how and why this resolution is being proposed.

Mr. Hart provided comments related to Mr. Sheehan's statements during public comment.

Mr. Durham provided budgetary information related to **Resolution 2026-12** that proposes the withholding of recreational funds from the City of Seneca to help offset the increase cost incurred by Oconee County Emergency Communications and Dispatch when they absorbed the City of Seneca dispatch center.

Mr. Durham also thanked Mr. Suarez for his invitation to attend his play, "La Zafra".

Third Reading of the Following Ordinances

None for this meeting.

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Second 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 second reading.

Mr. James provided comments related to mass surveillance systems and public safety, noting the constitution does not tell us what rights we have but rather it limits government control, further stating that giving up constitutional rights to government cannot always be trusted.

Mr. Durham provided comments related to mass surveillance systems, noting that the evolution of this technology is rapidly growing and needs to be restricted, therefore **Ordinance 2026-26** will restrict any County funds from being expended on this type of technology within the County.

Motion approved 4 – 1 [Mr. Elliott opposed].

ORDINANCE 2026-27 AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND CHAPTER 2, “ADMINISTRATION,” OF THE CODE OF ORDINANCES OF OCONEE COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA, BY ADDING ARTICLE VIII, 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.

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

Mr. Durham noted that **Ordinance 2026-27** is to provide accountability.

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 2026-08** on second reading.

Mr. Durham noted **Ordinance 2026-28** is ensure that if any County department needs to retain outside counsel, prior approval must first be obtained from County Council.

Motion approved 5 – 0.

First Reading of the Following Ordinances

ORDINANCE 2026-29 AN ORDINANCE TO CONFIRM BUILDING VARIANCE AND TERMINATION OF PURCHASE OPTION FOR OCONEE INDUSTRY AND TECHNOLOGY PARK IN THE PUBLIC RECORD; AND OTHER MATTERS RELATED THERETO (*in title only*)

Mr. Hart made a motion, seconded by Mr. Elliott, approved 5 - 0, to approve **Ordinance 2026-29** on first reading in title only.

ORDINANCE 2026-30 AUTHORIZING, PURSUANT TO TITLE 12, CHAPTER 44 OF THE CODE OF LAWS OF SOUTH CAROLINA 1976, AS AMENDED, THE EXECUTION AND DELIVERY OF A FEE-IN-LIEU OF AD VALOREM TAXES AND SPECIAL SOURCE REVENUE CREDIT AGREEMENT BY AND BETWEEN OCONEE COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA, AND [PROJECT FOX] ACTING FOR ITSELF, ONE OR MORE CURRENT OR FUTURE AFFILIATES AND OTHER PROJECT COMPANIES (COLLECTIVELY, “COMPANY”); PROVIDING FOR A FEE-IN-LIEU OF AD VALOREM TAXES INCENTIVE; PROVIDING FOR A SPECIAL SOURCE REVENUE CREDIT; DEVELOPING A JOINT COUNTY INDUSTRIAL AND BUSINESS PARK BETWEEN OCONEE COUNTY AND ANDERSON COUNTY SO AS TO DESIGNATE THE PROPERTY OF THE PROJECT AS PART OF A MULTI-COUNTY INDUSTRIAL PARK; AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION AND DELIVERY OF A PURCHASE AND SALE AGREEMENT BETWEEN COUNTY AND COMPANY FOR THE TRANSFER OF CERTAIN REAL PROPERTY FROM COUNTY TO COMPANY, SUBJECT TO THE TERMS AND CONDITIONS SET FORTH IN THE PURCHASE AND SALE AGREEMENT; AND PROVIDING FOR OTHER RELATED MATTERS. (*in title only*)

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Mr. Elliott made a motion, seconded by Mr. Hart, approved 5 - 0, to approve **Ordinance 2026-30** on first reading in title only.

ORDINANCE 2026-31_AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND CHAPTER 2, "ADMINISTRATION," OF THE CODE OF ORDINANCES OF OCONEE COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA, BY ADDING DIVISION 4, "APPOINTMENTS AND CONSTITUTIONAL OATHS," TO ARTICLE II, "COUNTY COUNCIL," CONSISTING OF SECTIONS 2-96 THROUGH 2-101; TO ESTABLISH A UNIFORM CONSTITUTIONAL OATH REQUIREMENT FOR CERTAIN PERSONS APPOINTED BY OCONEE COUNTY COUNCIL; TO PROVIDE FOR ADMINISTRATION, SUBSCRIPTION, FILING, AND RETENTION OF SUCH OATHS; TO REQUIRE THE PROVISION OF A COPY OF THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES TO CERTAIN PUBLIC OFFICIALS AND SWORN COUNTY PERSONNEL; TO PROVIDE FOR TRANSITION, RATIFICATION, COMPLIANCE, AND OTHER MATTERS RELATED THERETO.

Mr. Hart made a motion, seconded by Mr. Mize, to approve **Ordinance 2026-31** on first reading.

Mr. Durham provided comments and clarification related to **Ordinance 2026-31**.

Motion approved 5 – 0.

First & Final Reading for the Following Resolutions

RESOLUTION 2026-12 A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE WITHHOLDING OF FIFTY THOUSAND DOLLARS (\$50,000) IN DISTRICT 3 RECREATIONAL FUNDING AND THE REALLOCATION OF SUCH FUNDS TO HELP OFFSET INCREASED COUNTY EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS AND DISPATCH COSTS DUE TO THE CITY OF SENECA CLOSING ITS DISPATCH CENTER AND FAILING TO ASSIST OCONEE COUNTY WITH CONSOLIDATION COSTS.

Mr. Hart made a motion, seconded by Mr. Mize, to approve **Resolution 2026-12** on first and final reading.

Mr. Mize reiterated that **Resolution 2026-12** was not proposed to be punitive in nature toward the City of Seneca Recreation Department.

Mr. Durham noted that it all comes down to funding since Oconee County Emergency Communications and Dispatched absorbed the City of Seneca Dispatch Center.

Motion approved 5 – 0.

Action on Matters Removed from Consent Agenda at Council Member Request

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Discussion Regarding Action Items

Discussion and Council Consideration of Approval of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Oconee County Emergency Services and the Corinth-Shiloh Fire District.

Mr. Jones provided Council with background information related to the above request, noting this is simply an extension of the current MOU until December 31, 2026.

Mr. Durham made a motion, seconded by Mr. Hart, approved 5 – 0, to approve the MOU between Oconee County Emergency Services and the Corinth-Shiloh Fire District.

Council Committee Reports

Mr. James provided information outlining discussions held at the August 18, 2026 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 District 1 seat on the Agricultural Advisory Board.

No nominations were made for the vacant At-Large seat on the Building Codes Appeal Board.

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 regarding settlement claims and potential lawsuit.*
- 2. Discussion of negotiations incident to proposed contractual arrangement and proposed sale or purchase of property.*
- 3. Discussion regarding an economic development matter, Project Sunshine.*
- 4. Discussion regarding an economic development matter, Project Grow.*
- 5. Discussion regarding an economic development matter, Project Hawk.*
- 6. Receive legal advice regarding pending litigations.*

Council entered into Executive Session at 7:43 p.m.

Council returned from Executive Session at 9:12 p.m. on a motion made by Mr. Hart, seconded by Mr. Elliott, approved 5 – 0.

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As requested by Mr. Durham, Mr. James made a motion, seconded by Mr. Elliott, approved 5 – 0, to authorize the County Administrator to execute an agreement between Oconee County and Project Grow.

Adjourn:

Mr. Hart made a motion, approved unanimously, to adjourn at 9:12 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Jennifer C. Adams
Clerk to Council

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