MINUTES
OCONEE COUNTY COUNCIL
Regular Meeting
October 06, 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. James 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: Andrea Kelley / The Journal

Call to Order
Mr. Durham called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

As requested by Mr. Durham, Mr. Elliott made a motion, seconded by Mr. Hart, approved 4 – 0, to amend the agenda by removing items number 4 and 5 from Executive Session.

Moment of Silence
Mr. Durham asked for a moment of silence prior to the Invocation.

Invocation
Mr. Phil Shirley gave the Invocation.

Pledge of Allegiance
Mr. Tony Adams 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. Hart, approved 4 – 0, to amend **Ordinance 2026-32** by changing "5000 gallons" to "500 gallons".

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Administrator's Comments

Mr. Jones extended his appreciation to Emergency Services Director, Chief Richie Caudill, Fire Chief Chris Smith and Chief Hollifield for the level of professionalism they brought to the scene of the recent large structure fire in Walhalla and for the sacrifices that they make for the citizens of Oconee County on a daily basis.

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. **September 15, 2026 Regular Meeting Minutes**

2. **Procurement Item:**
   2026 Sany SMG200C-8 Motor Grader
   Department: Roads & Bridges
   Amount: $323,899.56

   Procurement was approved by Council in Fiscal Year 2026-2027 budget process.
   Budget: $330,000.00 Project Cost: $323,899.56 Balance: $6,100.44
   (Funding from Capital Equipment / (325) Vehicle Fund)

   It is the staff's recommendation that Council approve the purchase of a 2026 Sany SMG200C-8 Motor Grader from The Ironpeddlers, Inc. of Duncan, SC, in the amount of $323,899.56, in accordance with North Carolina Sheriffs' Association (NCSA) Contract No. 27-11-0421.

Mr. Elliott made a motion, seconded by Mr. Hart, 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. Byron Oswald provided Council with an annual update from the Oconee Humane Society.
2. Mr. Lee Sheehan addressed Council in opposition of sewer expansion.
3. Ms. Sara Stipe addressed Council with her opinion that the Library Resource Assistant position within the Oconee County Library system should have continued to be funded.

Council Members Comments

Mr. Elliott noted that he is a cancer survivor and that early detection is the only cure we have for cancer, going on to encourage all ladies to get their yearly mammograms.

Mr. Hart provided a comical remark.

Mr. Durham made a motion, seconded by Mr. Hart, approved 4 – 0, directing staff to reach out to the 1791 Foundation to inquire about the grants they offer related to firearm safety and education.

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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 by may be coordinated.

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.

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 2026-29**.

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. 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 2026-31**.

Third Reading of the Following Ordinances

ORDINANCE 2026-29 *(see caption above)*

Mr. Elliott made a motion, seconded by Mr. Hart, approved 4 – 0, to approve **Ordinance 2026-29** on third and final reading.

ORDINANCE 2026-31 *(see caption above)*

Mr. Elliott made a motion, seconded by Mr. Mize, to approve **Ordinance 2026-31** on third and final reading.

Mr. Durham made a motion, seconded by Mr. Hart, approved 4 – 0, to amend **Ordinance 2026-31** so that upon passage, the administration of oaths for the County Administrator, County Attorney, Clerk to Council, as well as new board and commission appointees, can be completed in January of 2027.

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Amended motion approved 4 – 0.

Second Reading of the Following Ordinances

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.

Mr. Elliott made a motion, seconded by Mr. Hart, approved 4 - 0, to approve **Ordinance 2026-30** on second reading.

ORDINANCE 2026-32 AN ORDINANCE TO REQUIRE NOTIFICATION TO OCONEE COUNTY EMERGENCY SERVICES OF ANY SEWAGE LEAK IN THE COUNTY THAT IS ~~5000~~ 500 GALLONS OR GREATER; AND OTHER RELATED MATTERS THERETO.

Mr. Elliott made a motion, seconded by Mr. Mize, approved 4 - 0, to approve **Ordinance 2026-32** on second reading.

ORDINANCE 2026-33 AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION AND DELIVERY OF AN AMENDMENT TO FEE-IN-LIEU OF AD VALOREM TAXES AND SPECIAL SOURCE REVENUE CREDIT AGREEMENT BY AND AMONG OCONEE COUNTY AND CURTEC (U.S.A.), INC; AND PROVIDING FOR OTHER RELATED MATTERS.

Mr. Elliott made a motion, seconded by Mr. Hart, approved 4 – 0, to approve **Ordinance 2026-33** on second reading.

First Reading of the Following Ordinances

ORDINANCE 2026-34 AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE AMENDMENT OF THAT CERTAIN AN AGREEMENT FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF A JOINT-COUNTY INDUSTRIAL AND BUSINESS PARK BY AND BETWEEN OCONEE COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA AND PICKENS COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA, TO PROVIDE FOR THE EXPANSION OF THE BOUNDARIES OF SUCH MULTI-COUNTY INDUSTRIAL/BUSINESS PARK CREATED THEREBY TO INCLUDE CERTAIN ADDITIONAL PROPERTY LOCATED IN PICKENS

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COUNTY, AND OTHER MATTERS RELATED THERETO.

Mr. Elliott made a motion, seconded by Mr. Hart, approved 4 - 0, to approve **Ordinance 2026-34** on first reading.

Mr. Durham asked that the above ordinance caption be reviewed for grammatical accuracy.

ORDINANCE 2026-35 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 A COMPANY IDENTIFIED FOR THE TIME BEING AS PROJECT GROW, 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)*

Mr. Hart made a motion, seconded by Mr. Elliott, approved 4 - 0, to approve **Ordinance 2026-35** on first reading in title only.

First & Final Reading for the Following Resolutions

RESOLUTION 2026-14 AUTHORIZING, UNDER CERTAIN CONDITIONS, THE EXECUTION AND DELIVERY BY OCONEE COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA OF A FEE IN LIEU OF TAX AGREEMENT WITH PROJECT FOX WITH RESPECT TO AN INDUSTRIAL PROJECT IN THE COUNTY WHEREBY THE PROJECT WOULD BE SUBJECT TO PAYMENT OF CERTAIN FEES IN LIEU OF TAXES, AND WHEREBY PROJECT FOX WILL BE PROVIDED CERTAIN CREDITS AGAINST FEE PAYMENTS IN REIMBURSEMENT OF INVESTMENT IN RELATED QUALIFIED INFRASTRUCTURE; AND PROVIDING FOR OTHER RELATED MATTERS.

Mr. Elliott made a motion, seconded by Mr. Hart, approved 4 – 0, to approve Resolution 2026-14 on first and final reading.

Action on Matters Removed from Consent Agenda at Council Member Request

None for this meeting.

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Discussion Regarding Action Items

Discussion on Millage for FY 2027, Tax Year 2026

Mrs. Christy Hubbard, former Oconee County Auditor, addressed Council with a power point presentation entitled, "Oconee County Millage Update", and provided a detailed update to Council regarding the changes in millage calculations from the recently approved millage on September 15, 2026.

Ms. Hubbard answered all questions brought forth by Council members.

Mr. Durham made a motion, seconded by Mr. Hart, approved 4 – 0, to accept the updated millage as presented and to extend the appeal timeframe for recent property reassessments.

CO-1 PO 55889 – Thomas & Hutton Engineering Services for Exit 4 – Master Sanitary Sewer Pump Station, Force Main and Limited Gravity Sewer
Department(s): Administration / Economic Development
Amount: PO 55889: $123,845.00
Change Order No. 1: $134,705.00
Purchase Order Total: $258,550.00

Procurement was approved by Council in Fiscal Year 2026-2027 budget process.
Budget: $258,550 Project Cost: $258,550 Balance: $0.00
(Funding from General Obligation Bond 012-707-30025-00921)

At its February 6, 2024 meeting, County Council approved Engineering Services for the Exit 4 – Master Sanitary Sewer Pump Station, Force Main, and Limited Gravity Sewer project. Thomas & Hutton was selected to provide services including General Consulting, Field Investigation, Design, Permitting, Construction Administration and Observation, and Project Closeout. Purchase Order No. 55889 was issued on February 7, 2024.

The project generally includes the installation of a 360-gpm suction-lift sanitary sewer pump station, approximately 4,700 linear feet of 6-inch force main, and approximately 2,000 linear feet of 10-inch gravity sewer main. Related work includes, but is not limited to, clearing and grubbing, grading, traffic control, pavement restoration, and other associated work as shown on the Construction Plans.

Thomas & Hutton's original engineering scope, established in 2024, included construction phase services based on an anticipated six-month construction period and approximately 10 hours per week of construction observation. These estimates were developed using the preliminary design alignments available at that time, which primarily followed secondary roads with minimal pavement impacts and regulatory coordination.

The final design now includes a gravity sewer alignment within SC Highway 243, requiring additional SCDOT coordination and more complex construction sequencing. The construction period is now estimated at 370 days to accommodate pavement restoration, regulatory coordination, construction sequencing, and potential equipment lead times.

Due to the extended construction schedule and increased project complexity, Thomas & Hutton has submitted an updated Construction Phase Services scope to provide the additional observation and contract administration required. The revised scope is based on approximately 20 hours per week of construction observation during the 370-day construction period and continues to use Thomas & Hutton's 2021 rate schedule established at the beginning of the project. The updated scope also includes construction administration services such as shop drawing reviews, pay application reviews, progress meetings, and general project correspondence.

During the bidding phase, contractors expressed concerns regarding the allotted time for completion of the project. In response, the construction schedule was revised to allow 340 calendar days for Substantial Completion, with an additional 30 calendar days for Final Completion. The total construction period is now 370 calendar days, excluding any approved extensions for weather delays.

The extended construction duration increases the amount of construction administration and observation required from Thomas & Hutton beyond what was contemplated in the original engineering services scope and fee.

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It is staff's recommendation that Council approve Change Order No. 1 to Purchase Order No. 55889 with Thomas & Hutton for additional engineering services for the Exit 4 – Master Sanitary Sewer Pump Station, Force Main, and Limited Gravity Sewer project in the amount of $134,705.00, bringing the total engineering services cost for this project to $258,550.00.

Mr. Elliott made a motion, seconded by Mr. Hart, to approve Change Order No. 1 to Purchase Order No. 55889 with Thomas & Hutton for additional engineering services for the Exit 4 – Master Sanitary Sewer Pump Station, Force Main, and Limited Gravity Sewer project in the amount of $134,705.00, bringing the total engineering services cost for this project to $258,550.00.

County Administrator, Mr. Jones, and Procurement Director, Mrs. Popham, provided answers to the questions Mr. Hart and Mr. Mize brought forth regarding the above request.

Motion approved 4 – 0.

ITB 26-02 Exit 4 Pump Station & Sewer Improvements
Department(s): Economic Development
Amount: $3,066,808.00
Contingency (10%): $306,680.80
Total: $3,373,488.80

Procurement was approved by Council in Fiscal Year 2026-2027 budget process.
Budget: $ Project Cost: $ Balance: $0.00
(Funding from BREC RDA Exit 4 ($1,400,000) and 2023 GO Bond ($1,973,488.80)

This project consists of furnishing all materials, equipment, and labor necessary to construct a pump station and sewer improvements at Exit 4 on I-85.

The work generally includes the installation of a 360-gpm suction-lift sanitary sewer pump station, approximately 4,700 linear feet of 6-inch force main, and approximately 2,000 linear feet of 10-inch gravity sewer main. Related work includes, but is not limited to, clearing and grubbing, grading, traffic control, pavement restoration, and other associated work as shown on the Construction Plans.

On September 10, 2026, formal sealed bids were opened for ITB 26-02, Exit 4 Pump Station and Sewer Improvements. Forty-four (44) companies were originally notified of the bid opportunity, and five (5) companies submitted bids. Greenstone Construction, LLC of Seneca, South Carolina, submitted the apparent low bid in the amount of $3,058,258.00.

The Bid Form submitted by Greenstone Construction, LLC was completed but contained a mathematical error for Bid Item 3. The Bid Form listed the Item 3 Unit Price of $17,100.00 as the Extended Price as well. In accordance with Specification Section 00110, Article 16.2, the Unit Price was maintained and the Extended Price was corrected to $25,650.00. The corresponding Subtotal and Grand Total were adjusted by $8,550.00, resulting in a corrected bid amount of $3,066,808.00.

Staff is requesting an owner's contingency of ten percent (10%), or $306,680.80, to address unforeseen conditions or additional work that may arise during construction. This would establish a total project authorization of $3,373,488.80, inclusive of the contingency.

The project has received SCDES Wastewater Construction, SCDES Land Disturbance, and SCDOT Encroachment permit approvals. The design standards were closely coordinated with OJRSA to facilitate OJRSA's agreement to provide the necessary wastewater treatment capacity.

It is the staff's recommendation that Council:

1. *Approve the Award of ITB 26-02, Exit 4 Pump Station and Sewer Improvements to Greenstone Construction, LLC of Seneca, SC, in the amount of $3,066,808.00;*

2. *Approve a 10% Owner's Contingency in the amount of $306,680.80;*
3. *Authorize the County Administrator to execute documents for this project and sign any change orders within the contingency amount.*

Mr. Hart made a motion, seconded by Mr. Mize, to approve the Award of ITB 26-02, Exit 4 Pump Station and Sewer Improvements to Greenstone Construction, LLC of Seneca, SC, in the amount of $3,066,808.00, approve a 10% Owner's Contingency in the amount of $306,680.80 and authorize the County Administrator to execute documents for this project and sign any change orders within the contingency amount.

Mr. Elliott reiterated that Blue Ridge Electric is contributing $1.4 million to the above request.

Mrs. Popham explained to Mr. Hart how the timeline for starting the project will work.

Motion approved 4 – 0.

Council Committee Reports

Mr. Mize provided information outlining discussions held at the September 15, 2026 Law Enforcement, Public Safety, Health and Welfare 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 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 related to a contractual matter.*
2. *Receive legal advice and discussion regarding a personnel matter.*
3. *Receipt of legal advice and discussion regarding a contractual matter with emergency services.*
4. ~~*Discussion regarding an economic development matter, Project Net.*~~
5. ~~*Discussion regarding an economic development matter, Project Homecoming.*~~

Council entered into Executive Session at 6:55 p.m.

Council returned from Executive Session at 7:47 p.m. on a motion made by Mr. Elliott, seconded by Mr. Hart, approved 4 – 0.

Mr. Durham noted that no action was needed following executive session.

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Adjourn:

Mr. Hart made a motion, approved unanimously, to adjourn at 7:47 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

_____

Jennifer C. Adams
Clerk to Council

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