



OCONEE COUNTY
AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY BOARD

415 S. Pine St. Walhalla, SC 29691

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www.OconeeSC.com

Board Members

Rex Blanton, Chairman, District 3

Kim Alexander, District 1

Nate Duncan, District 2

Gary Wilson, District 4

Charlie Whiten, District 5

Tessa Moxley, At-Large

David McMahan, At-Large

Absent: Gary Wilson (District 4)

STAFF

Elise Dunaway

MINUTES

6:00 p.m., Monday, December 8, 2025

Oconee County Council Chambers

- 1. Call to Order** – Chairman Rex Blanton called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.
- 2. Moment of Silence** – A moment of silence was observed.
- 3. Invocation** – The invocation was led by David McMahan.
- 4. Pledge of Allegiance** – The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Nate Duncan.
- 5. Amendment to Agenda** – A motion was made by David McMahan to amend the agenda to include discussion and action regarding postponement of Agricultural Advisory Board meetings for the first quarter of 2026 at the request of County Administration and County Council. The motion also included removing Item C (Agricultural Signage) from the agenda and confirming Farm Center discussion under Item B.

The motion was seconded and approved unanimously

6. Minutes Approval – November 10, 2025

Corrections were discussed regarding the Land Protection section of the November 10, 2025 minutes. It was clarified that:

- The referenced property was sold to Natureland Trust, not the Forestry Service.
- There is no conservation easement or deed restriction associated with the property.

A motion was made by Davvid McMahan to strike incorrect references to a conservation easement or deed restriction and to correct the purchaser to Natureland Trust. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

A subsequent motion was made to approve the November 10, 2025 minutes as amended. Motion approved unanimously.

7. Public Comments – None

8. Discussion

Farmland Protection

David McMahan discussed future opportunities for meaningful agricultural initiatives once meetings resume, including:

- Exploration of pulpwood-based power generation technologies to support the timber industry and local energy resilience.
- Potential tours of existing facilities utilizing such technology.
- Cooperative equipment-sharing concepts to support young and beginning farmers, including county-stored shared equipment.

Board members discussed the importance of cooperative models, networking among small farmers, and long-term opportunities tied to forestry and energy generation. Updates were provided on outreach to utility providers and the anticipated long-term nature of such efforts.

A motion was made by David McMahan to draft a letter of appreciation to Oconee County Council thanking them for their adherence to zoning density standards and protection of farmland related to the Clemson-area development proposal. Motion was seconded and approved unanimously. Mr. McMahan volunteered to draft and present the letter.

Farm Center Presentation

Mr. Daniel Rothel, Farm Center Director, provided an extensive informational presentation regarding:

- Potential development of an agricultural incubator model focused on small-scale farming.
- Demand creation for local agriculture through events, education, youth engagement, and cooperative models.
- Opportunities for collaboration among the Farm Center, Clemson Extension, FFA programs, homesteaders, and private landowners.
- Concepts related to land access, conservation partnerships, and pilot projects.

No action was taken by the Board.

Quarter 1 Meeting Postponement

At the request of County Administration and County Council due to staffing constraints, a motion was made to postpone regular Agricultural Advisory Board meetings for January, February, and March 2026, with the first meeting of 2026 to be held on April 13, 2026.

Motion was made and seconded. Approved unanimously.

9. District Reports – No District reports were presented.

10. Adjournment – A motion to adjourn was made and seconded. The meeting was adjourned unanimously.