



MINUTES CONSERVATION BANK BOARD

June 11, 2019

Oconee County Administrative Offices, Council Chambers
415 S. Pine Street, Walhalla, SC 29691

MEMBERS

Mr. Andrew Smith, Chairman, District II
Ms. Frances Rundlett, Vice Chairman, At Large
Ms. Emily Hitchcock, Secretary, At Large
Mr. Frank Ables, Treasurer, District V

Mr. Ryan Keese, District III
Mr. Marvin Prater, District IV
Ms. Laura Havran, District I
Ms. Katie D. Smith, Staff Liaison

The Oconee County Conservation Bank Board [OCCB] met at 9:00 a.m. in Council Chambers, 415 South Pine Street, Walhalla, SC with all members present [except Ms. Frances Rundlett and Mr. Mr. Prater; Mr. Keese arrived late] and Katie D. Smith, Clerk to Council acting as staff liaison.

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.

No members of the media were present.

Call to Order

Mr. Smith called the meeting to order at 9:04 a.m.

Approval of Minutes

Mr. Ables made a motion, seconded by Ms. Havran, approved 4 – 0, to approve the minutes from May 7, 2019 meeting as presented.

Treasurer's Report

Mr. Ables noted the Treasurer's Reports as presented are accurate. He further noted the balance on the report for March is \$613,735.46 and the balance on the report for April is \$604,168.13. Ms. Hitchcock made a motion, seconded by Ms. Havran, approved 4 – 0, to accept as presented the Treasurer's Report for March and April 2019.

Mr. Keese arrived after the Treasurer's Report.

Discussion Items

Lengthy discussion followed regarding the topics indicated below, with various opinions expressed, to include but not limited to:

Continued Discussion regarding Alternate Funding Sources

- Letters of Support [copy filed with these minutes]
- Formal presentation / visual aids
- Ms. Havran and Mr. Smith to work on formal presentation and Mr. Keese to work on list of individuals to reach and bring back to the next meeting

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Application Review Schedule/Timeline

- Ordinance has an application review schedule timeline
- Prior board members created a new schedule by policy which was to accept applications January 1st thru June 30th and make decisions on applications July 1st thru December 31st

Ms. Hitchcock made a motion, seconded by Mr. Smith, to vacate the current policy of accepting applications during the first 6 months of each year and awarding grants during the last 6 months of the year so that we can comply with the Ordinance, which establishes the deadlines for grant applications as April 1st, August 1st, and November 1st of each year.

Discussion continued to include:

- Could compare all the properties at once with prior schedule
- Restrictive
- Cannot have a policy that does not comply with the Ordinance

Regarding the previous motion made by Ms. Hitchcock, seconded by Mr. Smith, approved 5 – 0, to vacate the current policy of accepting applications during the first 6 months of each year and awarding grants during the last 6 months of the year so that we can comply with the Ordinance, which establishes the deadlines for grant applications as April 1st, August 1st, and November 1st of each year.

Ms. Hitchcock made a motion, seconded by Mr. Smith, to schedule two meetings within 60 days of each grant application deadline in order to comply with the Ordinance requirement to send grant recommendations to County Council within 60 days of the deadline.

Discussion continued to include:

- Next grant application deadline is August 1st
- Schedule a meeting shortly after the deadline to discuss the applications and then an additional meeting within 60 days from the application deadline to make decision
- Decision could be to approve application, approve with modifications, or disapprove
- Next meeting is scheduled for August 13, 2019
- Two applications are referenced on the agenda; to comply with the Ordinance, a meeting could be scheduled for September 10th, 17th, or 24th, 2019 to satisfy the criteria for a second meeting within the 60 days for the August application cycle
- One meeting to receive all of the applications, to decide who will conduct the site visit on the property, etc.; second meeting would allow applicant to have additional time to get the information needed and for the Board to make decisions

Regarding the previous motion made by Ms. Hitchcock, seconded by Mr. Smith, it was approved 5 – 0, to schedule two meetings within 60 days of each grant application deadline in order to comply with the Ordinance requirement to send grant recommendations to County Council within 60 days of the deadline.

Mr. Smith made a motion, seconded by Ms. Hitchcock, approved 5 – 0, to cancel the August 13th & October 8th, 2019 OCCB meetings and schedule OCCB meetings for August 27th, September 17th, & November 19th, 2019.

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Continued Discussion and/or Action Regarding Moore property

The Board did not discuss this item at the meeting.

Mr. Ables made a motion, seconded by Ms. Havran, approved 5 – 0, that all applications need to be redacted of personal information, such as Driver’s License number, Social Security numbers, Date of Birth, etc., that the Board receives.

Continued Discussion and/or Action Regarding William Lyles Estate

The Board did not discuss this item at the meeting.

Discussion Regarding Presentations for 2019

Mr. Smith noted if anyone has an idea for someone to give a presentation, bring to the Board and they can be added to the agenda.

Discussion regarding the proposed budget

Mr. Smith noted he challenged the Board to come up with a budget but are not required to have one.

Mr. Smith made a motion, seconded by Ms. Havran, to establish an annual budget of \$100,000 and a maximum grant cap of \$25,000 within each annual cycle.

Discussion continued to include:

- Grant cap of \$25,000 each
- Would not want to spend all funds in one grant cycle
- Amend motion if all the funds are spent during one grant cycle
- Trying to address a problem that does not exist
- Establish clear communication to Upstate Forever and Soil and Water Conservation, etc.
- Maximum grant
- Mission was to help landowner with some of the cost such as attorney fees, surveying fees, etc. and not to provide anything for the land
- Ordinance 2011-16, section 2-405 – Use of Funds
- \$100,000 budget and assess each project on its merits
- Establish the budget for the remainder of the year and can review at a later time

Regarding the previous motion made by Mr. Smith, seconded by Ms. Havran, it was approved 5 – 0, to establish an annual budget of \$100,000 and a maximum grant cap of \$25,000 within each annual cycle.

Discussion regarding the Oconee County Treasurer’s Office to manage funds through the State Pool

Mr. Smith noted he met with Mr. Greg Nowell, Oconee County Treasurer and Ms. Connie Bellotte, Chief Deputy Treasurer on May 21, 2019 as a result of the May 7, 2019 meeting. The OCCB had to authorize the Treasurer’s Office to sign on the Board’s behalf. The Treasurer’s Office will be managing the funds in the State Pool. Mr. Smith delivered a handout entitled Community First Bank Funds Transfer/Payment Order Request [copy filed with backup materials] to members of the Board noting the amount that was transferred to the State Pool from Community First Bank on May 22, 2019. The amount that was transferred was \$589,168.13.

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Mr. Smith made a motion, seconded by Mr. Ables, approved 5 – 0, to approve the Oconee County Treasurer being able to sign on behalf of the Oconee County Conservation Bank Board’s account with the State Pool.

Mr. Smith updated the OCCB of the process the Treasurer’s Office relayed to him. He noted that once the OCCB has approved a grant application, this is sent to the County Council for their approval or denial of the recommendation of the OCCB. If funds are approved by County Council, the Clerk to Council is to relay this information to the County Treasurer’s Office by email and also a phone call to the Treasurer’s Office and they are to pull the funds from the State Pool.

Mr. Smith made a motion, seconded by Mr. Ables, approved 5 – 0, to amend the previous motion and add to direct the Treasurer to send funds to the OCCB Community First Bank account.

Mid-Year Report to Administration

The OCCB was asked to complete a Mid-Year Report and submit to Administration. Mr. Smith noted the Clerk had started on the report and he gave a copy to each member. The OCCB members reviewed the report and gave the Clerk instructions to update the Accomplishments, Meetings to Date, Future Expectations, & Goals sections with the information provided. The Clerk updated the Mid-Year Report and submitted to the Administrator’s Office [finalized copy filed with backup materials].

Mr. Smith made a motion, seconded by Ms. Hitchcock, approved 5 – 0, to amend the previous motion regarding the annual budget to clarify that it applies to the fiscal year, which starts July 1st.

The Clerk reminded all members to never “reply all” to an email because that would constitute a quorum.

New Business:

None at this meeting.

Old Business

Mr. Smith noted Ms. Rundlett gave him a copy of the report for the Moore property entitled “Impressions of Moore Property” [copy filed with backup materials]. The Clerk noted she received a copy as well and gave a copy to the members of the OCCB.

Next Meeting:

The next meeting will be held at 9:00 a.m., Tuesday, August 27, 2019 at the Oconee County Council Chambers, 415 South Pine Street, Walhalla, SC 29691.

Adjourn:

Ms. Hitchcock made a motion, approved unanimously, to adjourn the meeting at 10:30 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Katie D. Smith
Clerk to Council & Staff Liaison

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