



MINUTES CONSERVATION BANK BOARD

May 19, 2020

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

MEMBERS

Mr. Andrew Smith, Chair, District II
Ms. Emily Hitchcock, Vice Chairman, At Large
Mr. Ryan Keese, Secretary, District, III
Ms. Laura Havran, Treasurer, District I

Mr. Marvin Prater, District IV
VACANT, District V
Ms. Frances Rundlett, At Large
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 [Mr. Keese via Zoom; Ms. Rundlett was absent] 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 9:05 a.m.

Approval of Minutes

Ms. Havran made a motion, seconded by Mr. Prater, approved 5 – 0, to approve the minutes from February 25, 2020 meeting as presented.

Treasurer's Report

Ms. Havran read the Treasurer's Reports for Community First Bank and the Local Government Investment Pool [State Pool] and noted they are accurate as presented. She further noted the balances on the reports are as follows:

Community First Bank for February 2020 & March 2020 is \$15,660.00 and April 2020 is \$16,810.00; Local Government Investment Pool [State Pool] for February 2020 is \$540,626.23, March 2020 is \$541,352.20, and April 2020 is \$541,974.59.

Ms. Hitchcock made a motion, seconded by Mr. Prater, approved 5 – 0, to accept as presented the Treasurer's Report for both Community First Bank and the Local Government Investment Pool [State Pool] for February 2020, March 2020, & April 2020.

Discussion Items

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

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Continued Discussion regarding Alternate Funding Sources

Mr. Smith noted the deposit in April 2020 in the Community First Account of \$1,150.00 came from Rally in the Valley, which is a private group that Board members Ms. Hitchcock and Mr. Smith participate in. There was to be a fund raising event on May 2, 2020, which was cancelled, but were still able to raise funds, paid expenses, and made a contribution to the Oconee County Conservation Bank Board.

He further noted the Board has often discussed when they were going back to Duke Energy for funding and have discussed plans on raising other funds. Discussion continued.

Old Business:

Mr. Eddie Martin, Oconee Soil & Water Conservation District, addressed the Board via Zoom giving an update regarding the Peggy Moore project. He noted has finished the application for NRCS and is in their ranking stage at the moment. He noted he would need to withdraw the request from the OCCB and would come back when the NRCS application is completed. He further noted Ms. Moore added an additional 21 acres, which would bring the total acreage to approximately 50 acres.

Mr. Smith requested Mr. Martin to send a letter withdrawing the application.

Mr. Chris Starker, Land Conservation Manager with Upstate Forever, addressed the Board via Zoom giving an update regarding the Ernie Lombard project. He noted they are waiting on an appraisal and further noted that Mr. Lombard had inquired an appraiser that he wanted to use but received a message indicating he was unqualified. He further noted he has since found an appraiser for the property but is waiting on Mr. Lombard's approval.

Ms. Hitchcock addressed the Board utilizing a handout entitled "Applicant Privacy" [copy filed with backup materials] and noted the purpose of the policy is to establish requirements to ensure that the personal information of eligible OCCB recipients and property owners is protected to the extent permitted under the SC Freedom of Information Act [FIOA]. Discussion continued.

Ms. Hitchcock made a motion, seconded by Ms. Havran, to adopt policy number 0001, titled Applicant Privacy.

Discussion continued to include:

- Applicants need to redact personal/private information so the Clerk to Council is not responsible
- Submit an unredacted version and a redacted version of the application
- Add this guideline to potential applicants so they this is required

Ms. Hitchcock made a motion, seconded by Ms. Havran, approved 5 – 0, to amend the previous motion and add "direct staff to establish a spot on the website to post all policies, including this one."

Mr. Smith gave an update regarding the amendments that were approved regarding the OCCB ordinance. He noted this will be discussed at the Real Estate, Facilities, & Land Management Committee meeting at 4:30 p.m., June 16, 2020. If the Committee approves the proposed amendments, the earliest for actual approval by County Council and enforced would be September 1st.

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He further noted if approved, OCCB should form a grant agreement committee due to this being a requirement and this would enable members to work on developing a grant agreement. Discussion continued.

Mr. Smith made a motion, seconded by Ms. Havran, to create a grant agreement / application review committee.

Discussion continued to include:

- Committee would be made of volunteers
- Only board members to make up committee or could staff from an eligible partner participate in the committee?
- Mr. Smith, Ms. Hitchcock, & Ms. Havran volunteered to make up the committee members

Regarding the motion made by Mr. Smith, seconded by Ms. Havran, it was approved 5 – 0, to create a grant agreement / application review committee.

New Business:

Mr. Smith noted site visits were just conducted recently to this meeting due to the Coronavirus pandemic and noted that creating an advance may be helpful. He noted the next deadline for applications is August 1st and the next OCCB meeting is August 18, 2020. He further noted it would be helpful if the site visits were already completed prior to this meeting so if there were any questions at that point, they could be presented to the applicant. Discussion continued.

Mr. Smith made a motion, seconded by Ms. Hitchcock, approved 5 – 0, to [1] establish a list of which board members visit properties as applications come in before the first meeting after the application window closes and [2] the list of members are as follows: Mr. Smith & Mr. Prater are the first pair; Ms. Hitchcock and Ms. Havran are the second pair, & Mr. Keese and Ms. Rundlett is the third pair.

Ms. Hitchcock made a motion, seconded by Mr. Smith, approved 5 – 0, for Ms. Hitchcock to complete the “404 Findings” worksheet for the three applications being considered at this meeting.

New Application from Chapman Bridge Oconee Bell Preserve

Discussion regarding the Criteria Worksheet and scoring of the Chapman Bridge Oconee Bell Preserve continued to include but not limited to:

Conservation Criteria	Maximum Points	Received
Environmental Sensitivity	35	25
Percentage of Property Sharing a Boundary with Protected Land	10	2
Historical / Cultural Features	5	0
Prime / Statewide Important Soil Types	10	0
Actively Farmed	5	0
Public Visibility of Property	5	5
Scenic View from Property	5	1
Public Access	10	10

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Threat of Development	5	5
Size of Protected Property	10	5
Total Points Received		53

Financial	Scoring of Financial Criteria					Score
	None	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent	
	0	2	3	4	5	
Funding Percentage Requested				✓		4
Matching or Other Monetary Contributions from Other Agencies or Groups					✓	5
Low Cost for Value Received					✓	5
Other Financial Benefit	✓					0
Other Incentives				✓		4
Total Points Received						18
Total OCCB Scoring Index (OSI)						71

Ms. Hitchcock made a motion, seconded by Ms. Havran, approved 5 – 0, to approve the scoring sheet for Chapman Bridge Oconee Bell Preserve with a total of 71 points.

Ms. Havran read from a prepared statement entitled “Report to OCCB on Site Visit to Cliff Timbers – Chapman Bridge Road” and also presented pictures [copy of report and pictures filed with backup materials] and gave a brief report.

Mr. Smith made a motion, seconded by Mr. Prater, approved 5 – 0, to accept report as discussed.

Ms. Havran made a motion, seconded by Ms. Hitchcock, approved 5 – 0, to approve the award in the amount requested of \$88,000.00 to Naturaland Trust.

Mr. Smith noted the OCCB has 60 days from the application deadline, which was April 1st, to get the report to County Council and will be submitted to be included on the June 2, 2020 Council agenda.

Ms. Hitchcock asked that because this property does not have a conservation easement at this time and the proposed ordinance changes have not been approved, does Naturaland Trust need to include in the deed referencing the grant and the conditions?

Mr. Smith noted that a standard South Carolina conservation bank grant agreement will be recorded with the deed to note the purpose of the acquisition and long-term management is for conservation purposes only and the grant agreement will run with the title of the property. He further noted recently in Oconee County if they ever transfer the property to a state entity, they will record a conservation easement for additional protection. Discussion continued.

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Ms. Hitchcock made a motion, seconded by Ms. Havran, approved 5 – 0, for Mr. Mac Stone have the closing attorney to contact Chair Smith to agree on the language in the deed referencing this grant.

New Application from Morris Family Revocable Trust

Mr. Smith noted this application is a resubmission. He noted the project was funded in the amount of this present request but due to logistical problems with the owner, the closing was not completed and the transfer was not closed.

Discussion regarding the Criteria Worksheet and scoring of the Morris Family Revocable Trust continued to include but not limited to:

Conservation Criteria	Maximum Points	Received
Environmental Sensitivity	35	23
Percentage of Property Sharing a Boundary with Protected Land	10	6
Historical / Cultural Features	5	3
Prime / Statewide Important Soil Types	10	0
Actively Farmed	5	0
Public Visibility of Property	5	3
Scenic View from Property	5	0
Public Access	10	0
Threat of Development	5	5
Size of Protected Property	10	0
Total Points Received		40

Financial	Scoring of Financial Criteria					
	None	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent	Score
	0	2	3	4	5	
Funding Percentage Requested			✓			3
Matching or Other Monetary Contributions from Other Agencies or Groups	✓					0
Low Cost for Value Received					✓	5
Other Financial Benefit	✓					0
Other Incentives					✓	5
Total Points Received						13
Total OCCB Scoring Index (OSI)						53

Mr. Prater made a motion, seconded by Ms. Havran, approved 5 – 0, to approve the scoring sheet for Morris Family Revocable Trust with a total of 53 points.

Ms. Hitchcock made a motion, seconded by Ms. Havran, approved 5 – 0, to approve the award in the amount of \$12,500.00 to Upstate Forever.

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New Application from Gary Lyle

Mr. Prater left the meeting and recused himself from all discussions related to the Gary Lyle property [copy of recusal form filed with these minutes].

Discussion regarding the Criteria Worksheet and scoring of the Gary Lyle property continued to include but not limited to:

Conservation Criteria	Maximum Points	Received
Environmental Sensitivity	35	13
Percentage of Property Sharing a Boundary with Protected Land	10	0
Historical / Cultural Features	5	0
Prime / Statewide Important Soil Types	10	0
Actively Farmed	5	5
Public Visibility of Property	5	5
Scenic View from Property	5	4
Public Access	10	0
Threat of Development	5	3
Size of Protected Property	10	5
Total Points Received		35

Financial	Scoring of Financial Criteria					Score
	None	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent	
	0	2	3	4	5	
Funding Percentage Requested				✓		4
Matching or Other Monetary Contributions from Other Agencies or Groups				✓		4
Low Cost for Value Received					✓	5
Other Financial Benefit			✓			3
Other Incentives					✓	5
Total Points Received						21
Total OCCB Scoring Index (OSI)						56

Ms. Havran made a motion, seconded by Ms. Hitchcock, approved 4 – 0, to approve the scoring sheet for the Gary Lyle property with a total of 56 points.

Mr. Smith made a motion, seconded by Ms. Havran, approved 4 – 0, to approve the award in the amount requested of \$45,000.00 to Oconee Soil and Water Conservation District.

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Next Meeting:

The next meeting will be held at 9:00 a.m., Tuesday, August 18, 2020 at the Oconee County Council Chambers, 415 South Pine Street, Walhalla, SC 29691.

Adjourn:

Ms. Havran made a motion, approved unanimously, to adjourn the meeting at 10:44 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Katie D. Smith
Clerk to Council & Staff Liaison

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OCONEE CONSERVATION
BANK BOARD RECUSAL
FORM

OCCB Member Name: Marvin Prater
[Please Print]

OCCB Member Signature: Marvin Prater

Meeting Date: 05.19.2020

Item for Discussion/Note: Discussions related to the Gary Lyle
property

Reason for Recusal I was not present for original meeting/discussion

I have a personal/familial interest in the issue.

Other: Professional Relationship
with Lyle family

Katie D. Smith
Katie D. Smith
Clerk to Council



OCONEE CONSERVATION
BANK BOARD RECUSAL
FORM

OCCB Member Name: Marvin Prater
[Please Print]

OCCB Member Signature: Marvin Prater

Meeting Date: 05.19.2020

Item for Discussion/Note: To approve the scoring sheet for the Gary Lyle property with a total of 56 points.

Reason for Recusal I was not present for original meeting/discussion

I have a personal/familial interest in the issue.

Other: Professional Relationship with Lyle family

Katie D. Smith
Katie D. Smith
Clerk to Council



OCONEE CONSERVATION
BANK BOARD RECUSAL
FORM

OCCB Member Name: Marvin Prater
[Please Print]

OCCB Member Signature: Marvin Prater

Meeting Date: 05.19.2020

Item for Discussion Note: To approve the award in the amount requested of \$45,000.00 to Oconee Soil & Water Conservation District.

Reason for Recusal I was not present for original meeting/discussion

I have a personal/familial interest in the issue.

Other: Professional Relationship with Lyle Family

Katie D. Smith
Katie D. Smith
Clerk to Council