



# MINUTES CONSERVATION BANK BOARD

August 18, 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  
VACANT, 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 [except Marvin Prater] 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](http://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 9:11 a.m.

## **Approval of Minutes**

Ms. Hitchcock made a motion, seconded by Ms. Havran, approved 4 – 0, to approve the amended minutes from February 25, 2020 meeting as presented.

Ms. Havran made a motion, seconded by Ms. Hitchcock, approved 4 – 0, to approve the minutes from May 19, 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 May 2020 is \$16,810.00; June 2020 is \$16,790.00; and July 2020 is \$16,755.00.

Mr. Keese made a motion, seconded by Ms. Hitchcock, approved 4 – 0, to accept as presented the Treasurer's Report for Community First Bank for May, June, & July 2020.

- Local Government Investment Pool [State Pool] for May 2020 is \$542,435.54; June 2020 is \$497,757.42; and July 2020 is \$409,949.65.

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Mr. Keese made a motion, seconded by Ms. Hitchcock, approved 4 – 0, to accept as presented the Treasurer’s Report for the Local Government Investment Pool [State Pool] for May, June, & July 2020.

### **Discussion Items**

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

#### **Proposal of a joint meeting of between the Agriculture Advisory Board and OCCB**

Ms. Vivian Kompier, Oconee Planning & Zoning Department, addressed the Board highlighting the following:

- Agricultural Advisory Board has requested a joint meeting with the OCCB to discuss protecting, promoting, and preserving of agriculture and forestry land for future generations
- Farmers do not have anyone to will their land to
- Agricultural Advisory Board meets on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday at 6:30 p.m. every month
- Inquired about having a representative from Naturaland Trust, Upstate Forever, or Oconee Soil & Water Conservation service at the joint meeting to discuss their part in the process

Ms. Havran made a motion, seconded by Mr. Keese, to attend an Agricultural Advisory Board meeting to have an informal meeting without quorum with 3 members of the OCCB.

Ms. Havran made a motion, seconded by Mr. Keese, approved 4 – 0, to amend the previous motion to add Mr. Keese, Mr. Smith, & Ms. Hitchcock to attend the Agricultural Advisory Board on ~~Tuesday~~, Monday, September 14, 2020 at 6:30 p.m. for an informal meeting to discuss how the two boards can work together.

#### **New Agenda Requirement**

Mr. Smith noted Mr. David Root, County Attorney, sent an email and recommended that County Council and Boards and Commissions discontinue using New Business and Old Business on agendas. Discussion continued.

#### **Mid-Year Report to Administration**

A Mid-Year Report is completed every year and the Clerk to Council sends to Administration. The Clerk filled out the report and the Board shared input that was needed to complete the report [final version filed with backup materials].

#### **Openings on Board**

Mr. Smith noted there was 1 At-Large seat open and the District 5 seat is open at the present time. He further noted at the end of 2020, his seat will come open as well. The Clerk noted Districts I & III and 1 At-Large seat are co-terminus and Districts II, IV, & V and 1 At-Large seat are co-terminus. She further noted representatives in Districts II, IV, V, & 1 At-Large seat would expire on December 31, 2020. Interested applicants would need to fill out a questionnaire and send to the Clerk before February 2021 for these vacancies.

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### Update on Ordinance Revision

The proposed revisions to the ordinance will be discussed at the 08.18.2020 Real Estate, Facilities, & Land Management Committee meeting. Mr. Smith noted he would be in attendance and would present the revisions to this committee. If the proposed revisions pass through the Real Estate, Facilities, & Land Management Committee, the ordinance and amendments will be sent to full Council for approval. The ordinance will undergo three readings and a public hearing before approved.

### Discussion regarding Payments on Current Grants

Mr. Smith noted most of the grants were discussed under the Mid-Year Report. He further noted the Elaine Morris property will close at the end of August and The Estate of William Lyles will close in early October. He noted that the Chapman Bridge property and Gary Lyle property were both closed.

Discussion continued to include what documents are needed prior to closing, which include the deed, settlement statement, insurance policy, conservation easements, etc., revisions to documents if needed, closing date, process of retrieving funds, and create a policy that states for all fee simple and the exact language that will be in the deed.

### Discussion regarding Policy 002 & 003

Mr. Smith noted Ms. Hitchcock withdrew discussions related to Policy 003.

Ms. Hitchcock addressed the Board utilizing a handout entitled “Oconee County Conservation Bank, Policy No. 002” [copy filed with backup materials] and noted the purpose of this policy is to establish a policy for this Board, future Board members, and staff to know what the procedures are for funds and ensure no one can embezzle from the fund.

The Board discussed changes to Policy 002 and made corrections to the Draft copy. Ms. Hitchcock noted she would make corrections to the policy and bring back to the next meeting for approval.

### Discussion regarding establishing a Policy Committee

Mr. Smith noted at the last meeting the OCCB established a grant agreement committee with Ms. Hitchcock, Ms. Havran, and himself as the Board members that would make up this committee. Mr. Smith suggested to create a procedure committee that includes the grant agreement, revising procedures, etc.

Mr. Smith made a motion, seconded by Ms. Havran, approved 4 – 0, to dissolve the grant agreement committee and establish a procedure committee to work any and all procedures related to the OCCB.

Mr. Smith noted the members that would serve on the procedure committee would be Ms. Hitchcock, Ms. Havran, and himself.

### Discussion regarding Oconee County Council report, Duke Energy report, and Grant status

The Oconee County Council report and grant status was discussed earlier in the meeting.

Mr. Smith noted the requirement per the memorandum of agreement with Duke Energy is the OCCB sends a report within two years of the grant award. Mr. Shea Airey, previous Chair of OCCB, sent a

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report in 2018 to satisfy this requirement and Mr. Smith noted the OCCB should continue to complete this request. Further, he noted he would complete the report and bring to the next meeting for approval.

Discussion regarding Publication of Policies

Mr. Smith noted at a previous meeting, the OCCB approved for the policies to be posted on the Oconee County website. The Clerk noted she would need more direction as to which documents would need to be added and further explained there is limited space on the web for this information. Mr. Smith noted this item would be discussed under the procedure committee.

Discussion regarding establishing a Fundraising Committee & Public Relations Committee

Mr. Smith noted these two committees could be handled under the procedure committee. He further inquired about having a press release of the grants that were approved by County Council upon recommendation of the OCCB. Lengthy discussion continued to include endowment, fundraising, and press releases for the OCCB.

**Next Meeting:**

The next meeting will be held at 9:00 a.m., Tuesday, September 15, 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 10:40 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

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Katie D. Smith  
Clerk to Council & Staff Liaison

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