



# MINUTES CONSERVATION BANK BOARD

April 16, 2024

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

## **MEMBERS**

Ms. Emelyn Jones, Chair, At Large  
Mr. Andrew Smith, Vice Chair, District II  
Mr. Ryan Keese, Secretary, District, III  
Mr. Gordon Becker, District I

Mr. Taylor Howard, Treasurer, District IV  
Mr. Scuddy Walker, District V  
VACANT, At Large  
Mrs. Jennifer C. Adams, 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 and Jennifer C. Adams, 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**

Ms. Jones called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

## **Approval of Minutes**

Mr. Howard made a motion, seconded by Mr. Smith, approved 5 – 0, to approve the February 6, 2024 regular minutes as presented.

Mr. Keese joined the meeting.

## **Treasurer's Report**

Mr. Howard read the Treasurer's Report for the Community First Bank and the Local Government Investment Pool [State Pool] and noted they are accurate as presented [copies filed in backup]. He further noted the balances on the reports are as follows:

Community First Bank for January 2024 is \$480.00, February 2024 is \$480.00, and March 2024 is \$480.00.

Local Government Investment Pool [State Pool] for January 2024 is \$377,927.96, February 2024 is \$379,599.72, and March 2024 is \$381,385.18.

Mr. Smith made a motion, seconded by Mr. Walker, approved 6 – 0, to accept as presented the Treasurer's Report for Community First Bank for January, February and March of 2024 and the Local Government Investment Pool [State Pool] for January, February and March of 2024.

**A video recording of this meeting is available at [www.oconeesc.com](http://www.oconeesc.com). Meetings have been live-streamed beginning January 17, 2017. Brought to you by Your Oconee.**

## **Grants Status**

Mr. Walker informed the Board that there have been no changes in the OCCB Grants Disbursed and Expenses chart [copy filed in backup].

## **Discussion Items**

### Discussion regarding Fall Creek Headwaters Application for Funding

Ms. Jones noted to the Board that today's special meeting would be for collecting questions to submit to Upstate Forever regarding the Fall Creek Headwaters application for funding.

Mr. Smith started the discussion by asking for clarification regarding if the endowment funding by the land owners, for stewardship, monitoring and enforcement of the conservation easement, would be included in the transaction.

Mr. Chris Starker, Upstate Forever Land Conservation Manager, addressed the Board by providing background information on the Fall Creek Headwaters property.

Mr. Starker went on to explain the guidelines required by the IRS on properties that are under conservation easement, noting Upstate Forever will make site visits to this property at least once a year to ensure the requirements of the conservation easements are being met.

Mr. Starker informed the Board that the monitoring of conservation easement properties by Upstate Forever does come with a cost and that is where the endowment funds from the property owners come in and went on to state those funds would not be included in the transaction from the OCCB should the application be approved.

Mr. Smith pointed out that page 13 of the application is missing a signature.

Mr. Starker ensure that he would get this signed and sent back to the Board.

Short discussion followed by the Board and Mr. Starker regarding Fall Creek Headwaters property.

Ms. Jones informed the Board to send any other questions they may have regarding the application to Mr. Keese by Friday, April 19, 2024, and then noted a site visited would need to be coordinated with Board members, the property owners, and Mr. Starker.

Mr. Keese, Mr. Howard and Ms. Jones all indicated they would like to attend the site visit.

Mr. Starker added that he had received a map via text this morning that the US Forrest Service produced called a "Land Owner Adjustment Strategy", that identifies land in South Carolina that is a priority for conservation and noted the Fall Creek Headwaters property is identified as a priority on this map.

Mr. Starker did show the map to the Board on his phone, noting he would email this map over, it will then be added to the backup information for viewing.

**A video recording of this meeting is available at [www.oconeesc.com](http://www.oconeesc.com). Meetings have been live-streamed beginning January 17, 2017. Brought to you by Your Oconee.**

Ms. Jones instructed the Board to complete the OCCB Criteria Worksheet and be ready to review and complete the Evaluation Worksheet at the May 14, 2024 OCCB meeting.

Mr. Howard inquired if the Board needs to go into Executive Session to finalize the application.

Mr. Smith noted that convening into Executive Session is not needed to finalize the application.

**Adjourn:**

Mr. Smith made a motion, approved unanimously, to adjourn the meeting at 9:27 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

---

Jennifer C. Adams  
Clerk to Council & Staff Liaison

**A video recording of this meeting is available at [www.oconeesc.com](http://www.oconeesc.com). Meetings have been live-streamed beginning January 17, 2017. Brought to you by Your Oconee.**