

Oconee County Administration

Amanda F. Brock Administrator

Oconee County
Administrative Offices
415 South Pine Street
Walhalla, SC 29691

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COUNCIL

John Elliott
District I

Wayne McCall
District II

Paul Cain
District III

Julian Davis,
Chairman
District IV

J. Glenn Hart
District V



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

In order to continue to provide essential services to our citizens and protect the health and well-being of both citizens and staff, Oconee County will be reducing certain non-essential operations and services, as needed. At this time, the County will continue to remain open, however, changes in operations due to the surrounding circumstances may result in longer wait times due to limited staff and personnel.

The Oconee County Council meeting, scheduled for March 17, 2020, at 6:00 p.m. will be held in Council Chambers. For the health and safety of Council, staff and the public, access to Council Chambers will be restricted. The public can view the meeting on Youtube.com and on the County website. Additional means for the public to listen to the meeting are being explored, and an update will be provided prior to call to order. Meeting minutes and recordings may be requested from the Clerk to Council.

The County Council Agenda, amended on March 16, 2020, will include the Oconee County State of Emergency Declaration. The Oconee County Emergency Declaration follows emergency declarations made by the President of the United States and the Governor of South Carolina, and it is purposed to allow more fluid movement by the County Administrator and staff during the Coronavirus pandemic. The emergency declaration allows the Administrator to directly authorize certain actions that would normally require County Council approval. The Administrator will take such actions on the advice of the Director of Emergency Services and the County Attorney and in consultation with the Chairman of Council. Typical examples might include expediting procurement activities, altering job functions, and repurposing county facilities.

The Law Enforcement, Public Safety, Health and Welfare Committee and Real Estate, Facilities & Land Management Committee meetings, scheduled for March 17, 2020, have been cancelled. All Boards and Commission meetings have been suspended until after March 31, 2020.

Oconee County requests that all citizens and patrons call ahead or visit the County website (oconeesc.com) prior to visiting the Administrative Offices located in Walhalla at 415 S. Pine Street. Many of the services provided by Oconee County are available online. This will help reduce person-to-person contact and will assist in the efforts to lower the spike of possible exposure to COVID-19, or coronavirus. Department-specific updates are provided below.

Clerk of Court

The Supreme Court of South Carolina has ordered that all Family Courts statewide shall only hear emergency matters including, but not limited to, DSS Emergency Protective Custody, Juvenile Detentions, Bench Warrants, and Emergency Petitions for Orders of Protection from Domestic Abuse. It is further ordered that only attorneys, their clients, and necessary witnesses will be allowed to appear for these emergency hearings.

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Human Resources

Human Resources will suspend job postings and new hires until further notice.

Parks, Recreation & Tourism (PRT)

The following actions will be taken, effective immediately, to limit face-to-face interactions and avoid group gatherings.

- All park programs will be postponed until further notice.
- All county park buildings and shelter rentals will be cancelled with a full refund or rescheduled after April 15.
- Existing camping reservations will be honored; however, all unreserved camping inventory will be closed until April 15.
- The South Cove and High Falls stores will be closed to the public until March 31.
- Day use areas will remain open as of now.
- The Oconee History Museum will be closed until March 31.

Public Library

All branches of OCPL will be closed to the public until further notice.

Probate Court

Probate Court will remain open, but requests that the public limit visitation unless necessary. Staff will be calling individuals with appointments scheduled over the next few weeks to determine if the individual's needs can be handled over the telephone, via email or through regular mail. Please contact probate court prior to any walk-in visits to determine if the matter can be handled without an in-person visit. Emergency hearings will continue to be held. Any hearings for non-emergency matters shall be continued to a future date and time. Oconee County Probate Staff will be in communication with attorneys and parties to litigation regarding rescheduling. Continuances and extensions will be granted without difficulty. Public Records, including requests for estates and marriage licenses, are available online.

Phone: 864-638-4275

Email: probateinfo@oconeesc.com

Register of Deeds

The Register of Deeds office will remain open with limited access. Recording documents should be sent via mail for recordings, if possible. Digital copies of most plats, deeds and other recorded documents are available on the Oconee County website. Requests for information not readily available may be sent to staff by email or phone. Due to these changes, wait times may be longer than normal. Please be patient with staff as we implement these new procedures.

Phone: 864-638-4285

Email: registerofdeedsinfo@oconeesc.com

Rock Quarry

Regular customers are encouraged to apply for a monthly account to reduce the need to handle money or credit/debit cards.

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Treasurer's Office

Patrons should make all payments to the Oconee County Treasurer's Office online or via the drive thru window.

Please try to be patient as County staff are doing the best they can to continue to serve its citizens during this time. Additional information regarding County services and any changes thereto will be provided as the situation evolves.

Citizens and staff should wash their hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not regularly available, hand sanitizer may be used. High traffic surfaces should be disinfected frequently, including door knobs, light switches and phones. All persons should maintain a safe social distance of 6 feet from others as recommended by federal authorities. If you experience symptoms, please stay home except to get medical care.

I would like to personally thank the public and Oconee staff for their continuous efforts in protecting the health and safety of the people of Oconee County.

The Coronavirus (COVID-19) was first identified in Wuhan, China. Over the past few weeks, the disease has rapidly spread in multiple countries, including the United States. The virus mainly spreads from person-to-person through direct contact or respiratory droplets. Symptoms of the virus include fever, cough, and shortness of breath.

For more information, please visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at: <https://www.cdc.gov/> or the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control website at: <https://www.scdhec.gov/>.