



MINUTES
OCONEE COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING
Regular Meeting
March 18, 2008

MEMBERS, OCONEE COUNTY COUNCIL

Mr. George Blanchard District I, Chairman

Mr. Thomas S. Crumpton, Jr., District II

Mr. Mario Suarez, District III

Mr. Marion E. Lyles, District IV

Mr. H. Frank Ables, Jr., District V

Oconee County Council met on Tuesday, March 18, 2008 at 6:00 PM in Council Chambers, 415 South Pine Street, Walhalla, SC with all Council Members [except Mr. Ables & Mr. Lyles], County Administrator Dale K. Surrett, Elizabeth G. Hulse, Clerk to Council & Mr. Bradley A. Norton, County Attorney present.

Press:

Members of the press notified (via mail): Keowee Courier, Westminster News, Daily Journal, Anderson Independent, WGOG Radio, WYFF TV, WLOS TV WSPA TV & WSNW Radio.

Member of the press present: David Williams–Anderson Independent and Brett McLaughlin-Daily Journal.

Call to Order:

Chairman Blanchard called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and asked those present to remember former employee Hoyt Orr who died earlier in the day in their thoughts and prayers.

Pledge of Allegiance:

Mr. Surrett led the pledge of allegiance to the US Flag.

Minutes:

Mr. Crumpton made a motion, seconded by Mr. Suarez, approved 3 – 0 that the minutes from the March 4, 2008 regular meeting be adopted as printed.

Public Comment Session:

Mr. Dee Brosnan addressed Council regarding his support for zoning in Oconee County.

Mr. Berry Nichols addressed Council regarding his request that the Council be fiscally responsible during the budget process and provided members with a handout [filed with these minutes].

Mr. B. J. Littleton addressed Council regarding his opposition to zoning.

Extended Public Comment Session:

No citizens signed up for the extended public comment session at this meeting.

Public Hearing: Ordinance 2008-01:

Mr. Blanchard asked those present if anyone wished to make an oral comment to council regarding Ordinance 2008-01.

One citizen requested specific information regarding the fee-in-lieu-of-tax [FILOT] agreement before Council. Mr. Norton outlined the process and reasons FILOT's are given.

Mr. Brain Lamb, President, Lift Technologies, thanked Oconee County for their efforts to help Lift expand their operation and that this FILOT agreement will provide an estimated 60 new jobs in Oconee County.

Mr. Blanchard asked those present if anyone wished to submit to the Clerk to Council any written comments regarding Ordinance 2008-01. None were submitted.

Mr. Blanchard called the public hearing at an end.

Ordinance 2008-01:

Mr. Crumpton made a motion, seconded by Mr. Suarez, approved 3 – 0 that **Ordinance 2008-01, "AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION AND DELIVERY OF A FEE IN LIEU OF TAX AGREEMENT BY AND BETWEEN OCONEE COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA AND THE OWNER OF LIFT TECHNOLOGIES, INC. WITH RESPECT TO CERTAIN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROPERTY, WHEREBY SUCH PROPERTY WILL BE SUBJECT TO CERTAIN PAYMENTS"** be adopted on third and final reading.

Ordinance 2008-04:

Mr. Norton noted that there have been no changes to Ordinance 2008-04 from first to second reading. In addition he stated that a detailed cost benefit analysis was provided to each council member for their review.

Mr. Crumpton made a motion, seconded by Mr. Suarez, approved 3 – 0 that **Ordinance 2008-04, "AN ORDINANCE BY OCONEE COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA, AUTHORIZING AN INFRASTRUCTURE TAX CREDIT (ITECH SOUTH L.L.C. PROJECT); THE ENTERING INTO OF CERTAIN COVENANTS AND AGREEMENTS AND THE EXECUTION AND DELIVERY OF CERTAIN INSTRUMENTS RELATING TO THE ISSUANCE OF THE AFORESAID INFRASTRUCTURE TAX CREDIT, INCLUDING CERTAIN OTHER MATTERS RELATING THERETO"** be adopted on second reading.

Items for Consideration by Council:

Local ATAX Grants through the Arts & Historical Commission:

Blue Ridge Arts Council / \$5,000.00 / POP Open Studio Tour:

Mr. Crumpton made a motion, seconded by Mr. Suarez, approved 3 – 0 to grant \$5,000 to the Blue Ridge Arts Council for advertising and tour maps for the POP Open Studio Tour.

Fair Play Volunteer Fire Department / \$5,000.00 / Advertising-Blue Grass & Gospel Festival

Mr. Crumpton made a motion, seconded by Mr. Suarez, approved 3 – 0 to grant \$5,000 to the Fair Play Volunteer Fire Department for newspaper advertising in SC, NC and GA for the 2009 Blue Grass and Gospel Festival.

Oconee Heritage Center / \$5,000.00 / Purchase the Arve Log Cabin

Mr. Crumpton made a motion, seconded by Mr. Suarez, approved 3 – 0 to grant \$5,000 to the Oconee Heritage Center to be used to purchase the Arve Log Cabin from Madison, SC.

Ram Cat Alley Merchants Association Center / \$5,000.00 / TV advertising on WYFF Channel 4 for the “Arts on the Alley 2008”

Mr. Suarez made a motion, seconded by Mr. Crumpton, approved 3 – 0 to grant \$5,000 to the Ram Cat Alley Merchants Association Center to be used to cover TV advertising on WYFF Channel 4 for the “Arts on the Alley 2008” event.

Save Our Church Steering Committee Center / \$5,000.00 relocating St. John’s Episcopal Church Building

Mr. Crumpton made a motion, seconded by Mr. Suarez, approved 3 – 0 to grant \$5,000 to Save Our Church Steering Committee Center to be used to cover the cost of relocating St. John’s Episcopal Church Building to Kaufmann Square.

Seneca Chamber of Commerce / \$5,000.00 / production of a history video on Oconee County

Mr. Suarez made a motion, seconded by Mr. Crumpton, approved 3 – 0 to grant \$5,000 to the Seneca Chamber of Commerce to be used to cover part of the production costs to make a historical video on Oconee County entitled “A History of the Land Beside the Water”.

Seneca Woman’s Club / \$4,279.00 / advertising & brochures for the South Carolina State Museum traveling Watercolor Exhibit in May, 2008

Mr. Crumpton made a motion, seconded by Mr. Suarez, approved 3 – 0 to grant \$4,279 to the Seneca Women’s Club to be used to cover advertising and brochures for the South Carolina State Museum traveling Watercolor Exhibit in May, 2008.

Walhalla Civic Auditorium / \$5,000.00 / TV advertising regionally to cover Upstate SC, Northeast GA, and Western NC

Mr. Suarez made a motion, seconded by Mr. Crumpton, approved 3 – 0 to grant \$5,000 to the Walhalla Civic Auditorium to be used to cover TV advertising with Comcast network through Northland Cable with commercials to be run regionally to cover Upstate SC, Northeast GA. & Western NC.

Westminster Area Historic Preservation Society / \$1,940.00 / Restoration of counter from England's General Merchandise Store to be used as a counter in the General Store satellite museum

Mr. Crumpton made a motion, seconded by Mr. Suarez, approved 3 – 0 to grant \$5,000 to the Westminster Area Historic Preservation Society to be used to cover restoration of one counter from England's General Merchandise Store.

Westminster Chamber of Commerce / \$5,000.00 / Advertising & brochures for Westminster events

Mr. Crumpton made a motion, seconded by Mr. Suarez, approved 3 – 0 to grant \$5,000 to the Westminster Chamber of Commerce to be used to cover advertising and brochures for Westminster events with advertising targeted in Western NC & Northeast GA.

State ATAX Grants:

Blue Ridge Arts Council / \$2,255.00 / Advertising the "2008 Members Show"

Mr. Suarez made a motion, seconded by Mr. Crumpton, approved 2 – 0 [Mr. Blanchard abstained as his wife is member of this organization] to grant \$2,255 to the Blue Ridge Arts Council for advertising the "2008 Members Show".

Arts & Historical Commission Grants:

Seneca Chamber of Commerce / \$1,592.00 / Production of a History Video on Oconee County called "A History of the Land Beside the Water"

Mr. Suarez made a motion, seconded by Mr. Crumpton, approved 3 – 0 to grant \$1,592 to the Seneca Chamber of Commerce to be used to cover part of the production costs to make a historical video on Oconee County entitled "A History of the Land Beside the Water".

Additional Items for Consideration by Council:

Road Department - Ten Hour Shift Schedule Proposal:

Mr. Surrett summarized the Road Department proposed 5-10 Work Schedule noting that approval was not required and that it was being brought to Council as information. He assured Council that 5 days would be covered and that there are benefits to the longer shifts in fuel savings, clean up / set up times, etc.

Council unanimously voiced approval for the plan.

911 Agreement between Pickens County, Oconee County & Clemson University

Mr. Surrett noted that at the last meeting a draft agreement was presented but that additional work needed to be done prior to Council's approval. Mr. Norton worked with Pickens County and Clemson University to finalize this document. The document presented for approval outlines how calls will be routed to the County's 911 and then back to Clemson University dispatch.

Mr. Crumpton made a motion, seconded by Mr. Suarez, approved 3 – 0 to authorize the County Administrator to execute the Agreement as presented.

SC Office of the Lieutenant Governor – Office on Aging Grant

Mr. Surrett noted that the County will serve as a pass through agency in the administration of the grant. Senior Solutions will utilize the funds to purchase a new transport van and other equipment for the facility. Senior Solutions currently offers a variety of activities at Lake View Assisted Living facility.

Mr. Crumpton made a motion, seconded by Mr. Suarez, approved 3 – 0 to accept the grant award of \$72,090 from the SC Office of the Lieutenant Governor – Office on Aging for Lake View Assisted Living.

2008 Local Emergency Management Performance Grant [LEMPG]

Mr. Surrett noted that Emergency Services is requesting \$16,686 in funds to purchase Emergency Operations Center equipment and other needed communications equipment for Emergency Services command staff. He noted that this request would not include any 800 MHz radio equipment as there would be ongoing charges associated with this type of equipment.

Mr. Crumpton made a motion, seconded by Mr. Suarez, approved 3 – 0 to authorize the 2008 LEMPG grant request in the amount of \$16,686.

Council Committee Reports:

Road & Transportation:

Mr. Crumpton noted that the Road Committee met on Wednesday, March 12, 2008 but that a quorum was not present and the meeting was immediately adjourned. The next Road & Transportation Committee meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, March 19, 2008 at 10:00 a.m. in Council Chambers.

Law Enforcement, Public Safety, Health & Welfare Committee Report:

Mr. Blanchard had no report at this meeting however did comment on the recent the fatal accident involving a county vehicle. Mr. Blanchard expressed on behalf of the County sympathy to the family of the citizen who died.

Mr. Blanchard briefly outlined the professional behavior and compassion provided by Ms. Sheila Wald, Risk Manager, and Mr. Karl Addis, Coroner. He stated that both Ms. Wald and Mr. Addis showed great respect and professionally assisted the wife of the victim who arrived at the scene of the accident. Ms. Wald was instrumental in providing appropriate support for the wife until family arrived on the scene. Mr. Addis refused to allow any movement

of the vehicle or remains until the wife had left the scene. He even went so far as to have her identify her husband by his ring and didn't permit her to be further traumatized by viewing her husband in the vehicle.

Mr. Blanchard thanked, on behalf of the Council and County, Ms. Wald and Mr. Addis for their compassionate and professional behavior at the accident scene. The other Council members present added their thanks.

Budget, Finance & Administration:

Mr. Ables was not present at the meeting therefore no report was presented.

Planning & Economic Development:

Mr. Suarez had no report at this meeting.

Real Estate, Facilities & Land Management:

Mr. Lyles was not present at the meeting therefore no report was present.

Board & Commission Appointments:

Board of Zoning Appeals:

District III: Appoint: Mr. Bill Gilster, 105 Westchester Circle, Seneca, SC 29672
864-882-0831

Mr. Blanchard made a motion, seconded by Mr. Crumpton, approved 3 – 0 to appoint Mr. Bill Gilster to the Board of Zoning Appeals for a four year term.

Mr. Blanchard noted that one At Large position was open on this Board and that if any interested parties wish to be considered to contact the Clerk to Council to have their name considered at a future meeting.

Appointment for At Large seat will be added to April 1, 2008 agenda.

ATAX Committee:

Mr. Blanchard noted that Ms. Sedy has sold her business, Magnolia Manor, to Mr. & Mrs. Blake and that Mrs. Joanne Blake has expressed an interest in taking Ms. Sedy's place on the ATAX Committee.

Hospitality Appointment: Joanne Blake, Magnolia Manor, 207 Westminster Hwy,
Westminster, SC 29693

Mr. Blanchard made a motion, seconded by Mr. Suarez, approved 3 – 0 to appoint Ms. Joanne Blake to the ATAX for a three year term.

Administrator's Report:

UPDATE: Reassessment Appeals:

Mr. Surrett stated that in follow-up to the last meeting that he had met with Marianne Dillard, Procurement Director, and Leslie Smith, Assessor, regarding expediting the hiring of appraisers to assist with the appeals process.

Mr. Surrett stated that based on Council's instruction to move forward that two appraisers have been contracted. The approximate cost will be \$75,000 which will be paid from Council's contingency account until such time as instructed otherwise by Council. He noted that the search will continue and be expanded outside of the county.

UPDATE: Bid #2007-17: Filters for Vehicle Maintenance & Rock Quarry:

Mr. Surrett noted that at the last meeting this bid was addressed by Council and awarded to Anderson Auto Parts in the amount of \$41,335.73 for one year with an option to extend the bid for an additional four 1 year periods. He noted that after the meeting that Procurement identified an error in their report; Myrtle Beach Auto & Truck had withdrawn their bid prior to submission to Council and this was not reflected on the bid sheet. Mr. Surrett stated that Anderson Auto Parts actually did have the low bid as awarded.

Council members expressed their appreciation on the follow-up and clarification regarding this bid.

Zoning Enabling Ordinance:

Mr. Surrett stated that he met with Mr. Art Holbrooks, Planning Director, and Mr. Brad Norton, County Attorney, regarding the status of the Zoning Enabling Ordinance [ZEO]. He stated that the Planning Commission has returned the ZEO to Council for action. Questions arose regarding legislative intent and Mr. Norton stated that it exists at present with first reading. Discussion also focused on the lake overlays. Mr. Holbrooks noted that further work would need to be done on the ZEO prior to third and final reading to include specific state mandated requirements.

Mr. Blanchard scheduled a one hour public hearing on Tuesday, April 15, 2008 at 5:00 p.m. in County Council Chambers regarding Ordinance 2007-18, Zoning Enabling Ordinance.

Employee Health Screenings:

Mr. Surrett noted that approximately 40% of the county employees participated in the free health screening provided by Oconee Memorial Hospital. He noted that next year it will again be offered but potentially with additional incentives to encourage participation. Mr. Blanchard stated that as a member of the Lion Club that his organization would offer to include free vision screening next year.

Old Business:

Treasurer's Office: Web Site Development Contract:

Mr. Blanchard tabled this issue as Mr. Ables and Mr. Lyles are not present at this meeting.

New Business:

Mr. Blanchard stated that he will be absent from the April 1, 2008 meeting as he is having hip replacement surgery. Mr. Crumpton will chair the April 1, 2008 meeting.

Adjourn:

Mr. Suarez motioned to adjourn the meeting at 7:24 p.m. The motion was approved unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted:

Elizabeth G. Hulse
Clerk to Council