



MINUTES

OCONEE COUNTY COUNCIL

Regular Meeting

February 20, 2024

MEMBERS, OCONEE COUNTY COUNCIL

Mr. John Elliott, District I
Mr. Matthew Durham, Chairman, District II
Mr. Don Mize, Vice Chairman, District III
Mr. Julian Davis III, District IV
Mr. Glenn Hart, Chairman Pro Tem, District V

Oconee County Council met at 6:00 PM in Council Chambers, 415 South Pine Street, Walhalla, SC with all Council Members [Mr. Durham via phone until Executive Session], County Administrator Amanda F. Brock, County Attorney David Root, & Jennifer C. Adams, Clerk to Council present.

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.

Members of the press present: Andrea Kelley / The Journal

Call to Order

Mr. Mize called the meeting to order at 6:23 p.m.

Moment of Silence

Mr. Mize asked for a moment of silence prior to the Invocation.

Invocation

Mr. David Root, County Attorney, gave the invocation.

Pledge of Allegiance

Mr. David Dial led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.

Approval of Minutes

Mr. Davis made a motion, seconded by Mr. Elliott, approved 5 - 0, to approve the February 06, 2024 regular meeting minutes as presented.

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Attorney's Comments

None at this meeting.

Administrator's Comments

Ms. Brock informed those in attendance that Mr. Durham, Council Chair, was joining the meeting via phone.

Ms. Brock also went on to point out a scrivener's error in the Intergovernmental Agreement for Fire Protection and Other Emergency Response Services document contained in the online backup material, noting under "1. Term" on page one, the date should read "June 30, 2025".

Presentation to Council

Oconee Humane Society 2023 Report – Mr. Byron Oswald / Humane Society Board President

Mr. Oswald addressed Council with a short overview of Oconee Humane Society's achievements in the year 2023 and provided Council with two documents entitled, "Fur the Record 2023" and "Joint Venture Program Funding" [copies filed in backup].

Public Comment Session

If you are not able to attend in person and you have a comment, you may submit it by contacting our Clerk to Council, Jennifer C. Adams at jennifercadams@oconeesc.com or 864-718-1023, so that she may receive your comment and read it into the record.

None at this meeting.

Council Members Comments

Mr. Elliott provided the following statement during Council Member Comments:

"In 2014 I moved to Oconee County. I found paradise, God's country. Here we are in 2024, still paradise, still God's country. Let's fast-forward 10 years, 2034. The beauty is gone, wall to wall houses and industry, there's even a gift shop beside every waterfall. I could kick myself for not doing something in 2024. Gentleman, we're failing. Thank you."

Public Hearings for the Following Ordinances *If you would like to be heard during either of the public hearings, please contact Clerk to Council Jennifer C. Adams at jennifercadams@oconeesc.com or 864-718-1023 so that your participation by may be coordinated.*

ORDINANCE 2024-05 AN ORDINANCE TO APPROPRIATE AND AUTHORIZE THE EXPENDITURE OF FIFTY-SIX THOUSAND AND 00/100 (\$56,000.00) DOLLARS OF FUNDING UNDER THE LOCAL ASSISTANCE AND TRIBAL CONSISTENCY FUND OF THE AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT OF 2021 ("ARPA") FOR THE SENECA LIBRARY ADA RAMP PROJECT AND OTHER MATTERS RELATED THERETO.

Mr. Mize opened the floor for Public Comment.

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Noting that no citizens signed up to address Council; Mr. Mize opened the floor for any citizen wishing to address Council regarding this ordinance. No citizen addressed Council and no citizen submitted or presented any written comments for the record.

Mr. Mize closed the Public Hearing regarding **Ordinance 2024-05**.

ORDINANCE 2024-06 AN ORDINANCE TO SUPPLEMENT ORDINANCE 2021-20, WHICH APPROPRIATED AND AUTHORIZED THE EXPENDITURE OF THREE MILLION AND 00/100 (\$3,000,000.00) DOLLARS OF LOCAL CORONAVIRUS FISCAL RECOVERY FUNDING RECEIVED BY OCONEE COUNTY UNDER THE AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT OF 2021 (“ARPA”) FOR PURPOSES OF THE SENECA WATER AND WASTEWATER INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECT, BY AMENDING THE PROJECT’S SCOPE TO INCLUDE ADDITIONAL WATER SYSTEM IMPROVEMENTS; AND OTHER MATTERS RELATED THERETO.

Mr. Mize opened the floor for Public Comment.

Noting that no citizens signed up to address Council; Mr. Mize opened the floor for any citizen wishing to address Council regarding this ordinance. No citizen addressed Council and no citizen submitted or presented any written comments for the record.

Mr. Mize closed the Public Hearing regarding **Ordinance 2024-06**.

Third Reading of the Following Ordinances

ORDINANCE 2024-05 *[see caption above]*

Mr. Davis made a motion, seconded by Mr. Hart, approved 5 - 0, to approve **Ordinance 2024-05** on third and final reading.

ORDINANCE 2024-06 *[see caption above]*

Mr. Davis made a motion, seconded by Mr. Hart, approved 5 - 0, to approve **Ordinance 2024-06** on third and final reading.

Second Reading of the Following Ordinances

ORDINANCE 2024-08 AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION AND DELIVERY OF A FEE-IN-LIEU OF AD VALOREM TAXES AND SPECIAL SOURCE REVENUE CREDIT AGREEMENT, BY AND BETWEEN OCONEE COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA AND PROJECT RED, ACTING FOR ITSELF, ONE OR MORE CURRENT OR FUTURE AFFILIATES, AND/OR OTHER PROJECT COMPANIES (COLLECTIVELY “COMPANY”), WITH RESPECT TO CERTAIN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROPERTY LOCATED IN OCONEE COUNTY; PROVIDING FOR A FEE-IN-LIEU OF AD VALOREM TAXES INCENTIVE; PROVIDING FOR A SPECIAL SOURCE REVENUE CREDIT; AND DEVELOPING A JOINT COUNTY INDUSTRIAL AND BUSINESS PARK BETWEEN OCONEE COUNTY AND PICKENS COUNTY SO AS TO DESIGNATE THE PROPERTY OF THE PROJECT AS PART OF THE PARK; AND OTHER RELATED MATTERS.

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Mr. Davis made a motion, seconded by Mr. Elliott, approved 5 - 0, to approve **Ordinance 2024-08** on second reading.

ORDINANCE 2024-10 AN ORDINANCE ESTABLISHING A BUDGETARY INCREASE LIMITATION FOR OCONEE COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA; AND OTHER MATTERS RELATED THERETO.

Mr. Hart made a motion, seconded by Mr. Mize, to approve **Ordinance 2024-10** on second reading.

Mr. Davis made a motion, seconded by Mr. Elliott, to delay second reading of **Ordinance 2024-10** to the next meeting, when Mr. Durham can attend in person.

Mr. Durham, via phone, noted there is still a third reading of the above-mentioned ordinance.

Mr. Elliott noted that he believes it would be a good idea to delay the second reading until Mr. Durham could attend in person, since he brought forth this ordinance.

Motion to postpone second reading of **Ordinance 2024-10** failed 2 – 3 [Mr. Hart, Mr. Mize, and Mr. Durham opposed].

Mr. Elliott read a statement [copy filed in backup] posted on LinkedIn by Oconee Economic Development director, Jamie Gilbert, that highlighted the low millage and tax rates in Oconee County.

Mr. Davis expressed his concerns related to **Ordinance 2024-10**, noting that he believes there is a lot of confusion surrounding this ordinance and the County budget and that he is not in favor of passing **Ordinance 2024-10**.

Mr. Mize stated that Mr. Davis was entitled to his own opinion.

Mr. Durham (via phone) commented on prior and current budget numbers, noting this ordinance would ensure future County budgets would not grow beyond a sustainable pace.

Mr. Elliott provided his opinion that this is all politics related to the June primary.

Short discussion continued by Council related to **Ordinance 2024-10** and the County budget.

Motion to approve **Ordinance 2024-10** on second reading, approved 3 – 2 [Mr. Davis and Mr. Elliott opposed].

First Reading of the Following Ordinances

None for this meeting.

First & Final Reading for the Following Resolutions

None for this meeting.

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Discussion Regarding Action Items

Discuss and approve (or ratify) the Intergovernmental Agreement between Oconee County and the City of Walhalla for Fire Protection and Other Emergency Response Services. (See Resolution 2023-15, included in the Backup Materials, regarding prior approval.)

Mr. Davis made a motion, seconded by Mr. Hart, approved 5 – 0, to approve (or ratify) the Intergovernmental Agreement between Oconee County and the City of Walhalla for Fire Protection and Other Emergency Response Services.

Request for Council's approval to authorize the Oconee County Administrator to provide a letter of support for the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR) Property Acquisition Project

- The SCDNR Board has approved the acquisition of approximately seventeen (17) acres, in Oconee County, adjoining the Stumphouse Mountain Heritage Preserve / Wildlife Management Area (WMA).
- The property, delineated at TMS 105-00-02-004 and 105-00-02-006, is composed of upland hardwood forest that provides habitat for game and nongame species.
- Following state guidelines, SCDNR must obtain a letter of support from Oconee County before completing the acquisition and declaring it tax exempt.
- For the previous year, the property tax about was approximately \$17.43.
- Once acquired, the property would be managed as part of the Stumphouse Mountain Heritage Preserve / WMA and open to the public for outdoor recreational activities.

The acquisition of the property would result in tax exempt status for a parcel which yielded approximately \$17. in property tax over the last year.

It is staff's recommendation that Council authorize the Oconee County Administrator to provide a letter of support to the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources for the SCDNR Property Acquisition Project.

Mr. Davis made a motion, seconded by Mr. Elliott, approved 5 – 0, to authorize Oconee County Administrator to provide a letter of support to the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources for the SCDNR Property Acquisition Project.

**Title: 2024 Ford F-450 Crane Truck
\$157,775.50**

Department: Vehicle Maintenance Amount:

Procurement was approved by Council in Fiscal Year 2023-2024 budget process.

Budget: \$157,775.50 Project Cost: \$157,775.50 Balance: \$0.00

(Funding from Capital Equipment / (325) Vehicle Fund)

This crane truck is a 2024 Ford F-450 regular cab 4x4 truck with a Knapheide crane body for Vehicle Maintenance. This purchase includes an Auto Crane EHC-6 Electric / Hydraulic 370-degree field service crane and a Vanair Air-N-Arc 300 gas powered multi-function power system (Compressor, Generator & Welder).

This truck will be used by the Vehicle Maintenance Department to pull cylinders on large equipment, large tires on motor graders and other heavy equipment repairs that must be completed on the road and in remote locations. In addition, this truck will also be used for welding and fabricating road calls and assisting the Sheriff's department when they are in need of a crane.

This crane truck will be replacing a 1995 Ford F-450 Crane/Welding Truck (105.02) with 104,489 miles; which will be sold as surplus or replace older vehicles used in other County departments.

State Contract pricing for Ford pickup trucks is currently awarded to Dick Smith Automotive of Columbia, SC, contract

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number 4400029866. The crane body for the truck comes from Lee Transport Equipment, Inc of Columbia, SC that currently holds the State Contract for truck bodies, contract number 4400027118, and is an authorized dealer for Knapheide. Dick Smith Automotive will coordinate the installation of the crane body; therefore, the County will issue one Purchase Order to Dick Smith Automotive.

It is the staff's recommendation that Council approve the purchase of a 2024 Ford F-450 with crane body to Dick Smith Automotive of Columbia, SC, in the amount of \$157,775.50, per SC State Contract.

Mr. Davis made a motion, seconded by Mr. Hart, to approve the purchase of a 2024 Ford F-450 with crane body to Dick Smith Automotive of Columbia, SC, in the amount of \$157,775.50, per SC State Contract.

Mr. Mize inquired if it would be beneficial to have a 4-door truck, instead of the requested single cab truck.

Mr. Dwayne Peay, Vehicle Maintenance Director, noted that only one or two mechanics would utilize this truck on a maintenance call and the back seat of a 4-door truck would not get a lot of usage.

Mr. Hart inquired if the old truck would be sold on GovDeals or utilized in the County.

Mr. Peay noted that the old truck would be utilized to complete several projects with Solid Waste, then the truck would be listed on GovDeals.

Motion approved 5 – 0.

Council Committee Reports

None for this meeting.

Board & Commission Appointments

Agriculture Advisory Board

District IV seat: No questionnaires on file for this seat.

Mr. Mize noted there are no questionnaires on file requesting appointment to the vacant District IV seat on the Agriculture Advisory Board.

Executive Session

Mr. Davis made a motion, seconded by Mr. Hart, approved 5 – 0, to enter into Executive Sessions for the following purposes, as allowed for § 30-4-70(a) of the South Carolina Code of Laws:

1. *Discussion regarding an economic development matter, Project Cherry.*

Council entered into Executive Session at 6:57 p.m.

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Mr. Durham joined the meeting during Executive Session.

Council returned from Executive Session at 7:10 p.m. on a motion made by Mr. Elliott, seconded by Mr. Hart, approved 5 – 0.

Mr. Durham apologized for his late arrival and noted no action was taken during Executive Session.

Adjourn:

Mr. Hart made a motion, approved unanimously, to adjourn at 7:10 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Jennifer C. Adams
Clerk to Council

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