

MEMBERS, OCONEE COUNTY COUNCIL

Mr. Steven R. Moore, District I Mr. Thomas S. Crumpton, Jr., District II
Rev. William S. “Bill” Rinehart, District III Mr. Marion E. Lyles, District IV
Mr. H. Frank Ables, Jr., District V

MINUTES, OCONEE COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING

The Oconee County Council met Tuesday, November 7, 2006 at 3:00 pm in Council Chambers, 415 South Pine Street, Walhalla, SC with all Council Members and the 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, & WSNW Radio.

Members of the press present: Brett McLaughlin – Daily Journal, Dick Mangrum - WGOG Radio & Ashton Hester – Keowee Courier.

Other Organizations Notified:

Also notified were the Oconee County Tax Payers Association, Citizens for Recreation Center and the Oconee County Democratic Party.

Call to Order:

Chairman Ables called the meeting to order.

Invocation:

Mr. Rinehart gave the invocation.

Pledge of Allegiance:

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

Minutes:

Mr. Moore made a motion, seconded by Mr. Crumpton, approved 5 – 0 that minutes of the regular meeting held October 17, 2006 be adopted as printed.

Public Comment Session:

Mr. Arlon Moore addressed Council regarding Building Codes and requirements for setting up mobile homes.

Public Comment Session Continued:

Mr. Larry Linson addressed Council regarding the possibility of a pre-engineered steel building as a Department of Social Services Building.

Mr. Tommy Pickard addressed Council regarding Building Codes and the regulations for setting up mobile homes.

Ms. Susie Cornelius addressed Council regarding the proposed patient tower at Oconee Memorial Hospital.

Mr. Berry Nichols addressed Council regarding duplication of services in County Offices.

Mr. Tom Markovich addressed Council regarding the proposed roads standards ordinance.

Mr. Steve Sokol addressed Council regarding the Seneca Library, civic center, County Representative on the Regional Task Force to Study Issues Relative to the Savannah River Basin and strategic planning for the County.

Mr. B. J. Littleton addressed Council regarding mobile homes and zoning.

Seneca Library Discussion:

Upon request of Mr. Rinehart, Mr. John Adams, Library Board Chairman, made the following attached presentation to Council regarding the Seneca Library:

First, I want to set the record straight regarding a recent Daily Journal article referencing the new Oconee County library in Seneca. In a Capital Projects presentation regarding the new library, the Daily Journal used the words “at the Seneca location.” These were not my words, but rather words of the Daily Journal. In fact, my written response to the Daily Journal never used the work “location”, as this was unsettled. Any confusion regarding this should be directed to the Daily Journal.

History – Where We Are

- On May 16, the Library Board of Trustees submitted findings of the authorized feasibility study by the Trehel Corporation covering the current library site in Seneca. The report showed three possible options on the current site. It was also noted that the Library Board favored Option #3 of the feasibility study, a single-story 33,000 SF building that, with furniture, fixtures and equipment equated to \$7,541,490 (as of May 2006)

- There was a fourth option, Option #4, that wasn't presented because we hadn't been asked to present alternatives to the current site. Option #4 was to place the Option #3 building on a comparable alternate site, thereby not having to stage construction or remove the existing library building.
- At the May 16 meeting, by motion and 4 – 1 vote, the Council requested that the Board of Trustees explore other feasible options in conjunction with the City of Seneca. \$2,500 was authorized to be taken from contingency for this purpose, which has not been spent.
- At several Trustee meetings to follow, including some specially called meetings, the Trustees established firm criteria by which potential sites would be scored, and measure applied to each based on perceived value.
- Then Chairman Paul Johanson and I met with Seneca Mayor Dan Alexander and Planner Ed Halbig to explore options within the city limits, and in particular certain city-owned parcels, and one parcel owned by the Oconee County School District.
- Then, Trustees submitted a number of potential sites to be scored, including the current site. In all, there were ten sites to which scoring were applied. Through this exercise, even considering a site-cost difference, a preferred alternate site rose to the top, i.e., the northeast corner of Wells Highway and West South 4th Street. This parcel contains approximately 5.911 acres and priced at \$677,000 (\$114,532 per acre). This site, though close-in, is not yet in the city limits of Seneca. However, it is nearly surrounded by city limits, and is mostly residential (see map attached).
- Then just as we were preparing to present this site to Council, the Capital Projects Commission voted to change the referendum language to require the new County Library in Seneca to be only within the city limits. I urged the Capital Projects Commission not to make this requirement as, by doing so, they were infringing on the Board of Trustees work. I was unsuccessful.

(At this time, upon inquiry of Council Mr. Norton, County Attorney, stated to his recollection, the City of Seneca was concerned that it would become known as an Oconee County Library, rather than the Seneca Library if it was not constructed within the City Limits)

Seneca Library Discussion Continued:

- Prior to the following Council meeting, by personally distributed letters to each Council Member, I urged that the revised referendum language be rejected. It was not, and was passed without thought of the implication or consideration of the work of the Trustees.
- When this occurred, all work the Trustees had done was for naught. This action sidelined the Trustees until the referendum passes or fails, so we know under what rules we are operating.

The facts, as they exist today

- Though the alternate site is just outside the city limits (see map attached), the Library Board of Trustees stands by their choice alternate site at Wells and West South 4th Street, and stands by their selection process. If the referendum fails, it is not an issue.
- 38 years ago, the current library site was a natural, given the size of Seneca at the time. Seneca is growing, and will continue to grow. In the City of Seneca, the majority of growth, as indicated by building permits, is in the area of the alternate Wells/South 4th Street site. Educational complexes have sprung-up in this area in recent years, and more are anticipated. The new library is being built for the future, not for the past.
- A 33,000 SF library building, to be the Main Library, complete with administration and support staff, does not qualify as a “neighborhood library.” As Oconee County continues its pursuit of industry and other workforce opportunities, we would be remiss to hide the \$8.5 million dollar investment in this great new facility.
- Sheep Farm Road, north of Highway 123, is extending to Highway 28. This too will make the alternate site even more desirable and accessible. The alternate site also has a traffic signal which, over time, will prove to be a great asset for access to this site. It is easily accessible from all directions, with an entrance off Wells Highway, and an entrance off West South 4th Street.
- The Library Board of Trustees, and County Council, has a responsibility to locate public facilities in areas known to be safe for public use. We believe this site is safe now, and will continue to be so in the foreseeable future.

Seneca, Library Discussion Continued:

Other considerations

- There is some perception that I have a beneficial interest in the sale of the alternate site, as my company represents the property owner. Because of this, by unanimous vote at the last Trustee meeting, I committed to assign 100% of my fees, if this site is selected, to a newly formed OCPL Renaissance Fund (see sample schedule attached). And, by doing this, solicit grants and other private donations for the purpose of purchasing art and art objects for Oconee County Libraries. Attached is an example reconciliation of net cost, cost savings, and potential Renaissance funding. It is assumed the county will have the property appraised for their purposes, so there should be comfort in the ultimate purchase price.
- The current library site in Seneca has significant value for other uses and some Council Members have expressed concern about “continuing to tear-down buildings.” Seneca themselves could put this property to great community use, such as a history museum or law enforcement center by example. If Seneca doesn’t want the property, then there is private funding that may have an interest in this site.
- Another county option, though more expensive operationally, would be to leave the current building as a children’s library. Or, this site and building could be the sale site for The Friends of the Library. You don’t have to think far for other uses of the current building which would not require demolition.
- There has been a lot of discussion and comparison of Design Build and Design Bid form of construction. The Library Board of Trustees, assuming qualified applicants, prefers the Design Build process. This decision needs to be made at once, so the Library Board of Trustees know how to proceed.

My involvement – Action

My involvement on the Library Board, and now as Chairman, is for the sole purpose of enhancing the library user’s experience. With me, this is a broad spectrum. Design, décor, layout, functionality, and a welcoming environment are paramount. In addition, libraries that have these qualities create what Starbucks calls “the third place.” It’s not home, nor is it the office. Instead, it has a sense of place, where people can met for a variety of activities....a community place.

Seneca Library Discussion Continued:

The Library Board of Trustees takes their job seriously, has waded through prejudicial voices, and has made the hard decisions. The board looks forward to working with you for a new county facility we can truly be proud of. When people visit Oconee County, locals should say “You’ve got to see our new library.” If we cannot create this kind of excitement with our investment, then we shouldn’t make it.

I personally gave several information talks in support of the Capital Projects Referendum. Through this, and through discussion with friends and colleagues, I am convinced the new Oconee County Library in Seneca is of the greatest value and desire of voters. Even the few I encountered not in favor of the referendum seemed in favor of the new library.

\$45,000 was authorized from 2005-2006 funds to commence design work, which I believe was carried forward. We are ready to move forward once site selection and design build/design bid issues are settled, and full-funding issues are resolved by Council.

Thank you again.

LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES

John W. Adams, Chairman

Mr. Rinehart reminded Council of the proviso in the 2006-07 budget which states: “if the capital projects sales tax referendum fails in the general election, the County will incur general obligation debt of \$8,000,000 to building a Seneca Library and \$4,000,000 to building a Recreation/Aquatic Center.”

Recreation/Civic/Aquatic Center:

Mr. Phil Shirley, Parks, Recreation & Tourism Director, presented the following information regarding the proposed recreation/civic/aquatic center:

The Vision: To provide and promote the opportunity for Oconee County citizens to improve their quality of life through active participation in fitness, wellness, aquatic and civic events.

The Mission: To create a complex that will offer budget friendly accessibility to our citizens, provide a health and family incentive to new residents and industries and has the ability to be self supportive through memberships, user fees and sport tourism events.

Focus Areas: Aquatics / Fitness / Social/Civic Events

Recreation/Civic/Aquatic Center Continued:

The aquatics section will feature recreation swimming, competitive swimming, aquatic aerobics curriculum, swim curriculum, heated therapy pool, warm water therapy curriculum, physical rehabilitation and arthritis therapy, aquatic therapy classes, a kid’s splash zone with zero depth entry, large slide, indoor spray features and party room for year round revenue.

The fitness section will feature cardio/fitness, a multi-purpose room featuring fitness curriculum, aerobics, martial arts, dance, and an elevated indoor walking area featuring year round accessibility, cushioned surface and 2-3 lanes for walking and jogging a well as racquetball courts. There will be a 4,000 square foot meeting room or reunions, business meetings, social gatherings, club meetings, warming kitchen, catered events, technology friendly and revenue producers.

There will be specialty areas that feature indoor playground with party room, child care space with two hour blocks and concession area for events and machined concessions.

The estimated cost is \$7,700,000 with proposed funding through the one-cent sales tax (if referendum passes), local/state and federal grants, corporate sponsorship programs and private/donated funds.

The projected operational costs are \$500,000 - \$650,000 annually with six full time employees at a cost of \$289,375 and between \$35,000 and \$45,000 for part time staff.

Projected user fees are as follows:

	County Resident	Non-County Resident
Individual:	\$35 month	\$45 month
Family (2adults 2 children)	\$50 month	\$60 month
Family plus:	\$5 per child month	\$10 per child month
Senior:	\$25 month	\$35 month
Senior Family:	\$35 month	\$45 month
Daily fee:	\$7 person	\$10 person

Regional Task Force to Study Issues Relative to the Savannah River Basin:

Mr. Crumpton made a motion, seconded by Mr. Rinehart, approved 4 – 0 (Mr. Moore abstaining) that Mr. Howard Moore be appointed as the Oconee County Representative on the “Regional Task Force to Study Issues Relative to the Savannah River Basin”.

Roads Standards Ordinance 2006-12:

Upon recommendation of Mr. Hendricks, Mr. Moore made a motion, seconded by Mr. Crumpton, approved 5 – 0 that the attached recommended changes to the roads standards section of the subdivision regulations (Sections 6.8 – 6.11) be assigned to the Road & Transportation Committee.

Mr. Moore scheduled a Road & Transportation Committee prior to the next Council Meeting.

Planning Quorum:

Upon inquiry of Mr. Rinehart, Mr. Hendricks informed Council there was no problem with the Planning Commission having a quorum present for their meetings.

Economic Development:

Mr. Moore made a motion, seconded by Mr. Lyles, approved 5 – 0 that the County accept site certification funding assistance for the Fair Play Commerce Center from Genesis Consulting Group (selected by Santee Cooper) in the approximate amount of \$22,000. (See attached information)

Mr. Rinehart made a motion, seconded by Mr. Crumpton, approved 5 – 0 that the County accept financial assistance from the Palmetto Economic Development Corporation in an amount of up to \$40,000 or 90% of the cost for the development of an Economic Development Strategic Plan for the County. (See attached information)

Solid Waste:

Mr. Lyles made a motion, seconded by Mr. Crumpton, approved 5 – 0 that the County enter into an agreement with Santee Cooper whereby Santee Cooper will pay Oconee County for used oil. (See attached agreement)

The closure of a portion of Crooks Road and expansion of the landfill site was referred to the Road & Transportation Committee.

Communications:

The attached agreements between Oconee County & Toccoa Falls for the placement of a communications tower at Toccoa Falls were assigned to the Law Enforcement, Public Safety, Health & Welfare Committee.

Communications Continued:

The attached maintenance agreement between Oconee County and Eaton Electrical, Inc. for maintenance of the Powerware Plus50 Utility Power System at the 911 Center was referred to the Real Estate, Facilities & Land Management Committee.

Emergency Management:

Mr. Rinehart made a motion, seconded by Mr. Moore, approved 5 – 0 that the attached Memorandum of Agreements Between the South Carolina Emergency Management Division, Office of the Adjutant General and Oconee County regarding the use of the Statewide Alert and Notification System (REACH SC) be adopted.

Hospital:

The attached proposed changes to Oconee Memorial Hospital Bylaws were assigned to the Planning & Economic Development Committee for a recommendation to Council.

Ordinance 2006-22:

Mr. Moore made a motion, seconded by Mr. Crumpton, approved 5 – 0 that Ordinance 2006-22, “AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION AND DELIVERY OF A FEE IN LIEU OF TAX AGREEMENT BETWEEN OCONEE COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA, AS LESSOR, AND TIMKEN US CORPORATION; AND OTHER MATTERS RELATING THERETO INCLUDING WITHOUT LIMITATION, PAYMENT OF A FEE IN LIEU OF TAXES” be adopted on second reading.

Ordinance 2006-23:

Mr. Moore made a motion, seconded by Mr. Crumpton, approved 5 – 0 that Ordinance 2006-23, “AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION AND DELIVERY OF AN AGREEMENT BETWEEN OCONEE COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA AND TIMKEN US CORPORATION FOR GRANTING CERTAIN INFRASTRUCTURE CREDITS TO TIMKEN US CORPORATION” be adopted on second reading.

Ordinance 2006-25:

Mr. Lyles made a motion, seconded by Mr. Crumpton, approved 5 – 0 that Ordinance 2006-25, “AN ORDINANCE EXTENDING THE TIME FOR FILING AN APPEAL ON THE 2005 REASSESSMENT OF PROPERTIES IN OCONEE COUNTY FOR AN ADDITIONAL THREE MONTHS” be adopted on third and final reading.

Ordinance 2006-27:

Mr. Moore made a motion, seconded by Mr. Rinehart, approved 5 – 0 that Ordinance 2006-27, “AN ORDINANCE TO DEVELOP A JOINTLY OWNED AND OPERATED INDUSTRIAL/BUSINESS PARK WITH PICKENS COUNTY, SUCH INDUSTRIAL/BUSINESS PARK TO GEOGRAPHICALLY LOCATED IN OCONEE COUNTY AND ESTABLISHED PURSUANT TO SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS FOR 1976, SECTION 4-1-170 ET SEQUITUR, AS AMENDED; TO PROVIDE FOR A WRITTEN AGREEMENT WITH PICKENS COUNTY PROVIDING FOR THE EXPENSES OF THE PARK, AND THE PERCENTAGE OF REVENUE APPLICATION, AND THE DISTRIBUTION OF FEES IN LIEU OF AD VALOREM TAX TO THE COUNTIES AND RELEVANT TAXING ENTITIES” be adopted on first reading.

Ordinance 2006-28:

Mr. Rinehart made a motion, seconded by Mr. Crumpton, approved 5 – 0 that Ordinance 2006-28, “AN ORDINANCE AMENDING ORDINANCE 99-14 TO INCLUDE SIGN REGULATIONS IN OCONEE COUNTY” be adopted on first reading in title only and referred to the Planning Commission for recommendation to Council.

Ordinance 2006-29:

Mr. Moore made a motion, seconded by Mr. Crumpton, approved 5 – 0 that Ordinance 2006-29, “AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE TRANSFER OF PROPERTY FROM A LEASE AGREEMENT PURSUANT TO TITLE 4, CHAPTER 12 OF THE CODE OF LAWS OF SOUTH CAROLINA, 1976, AS AMENDED TO A FEE AGREEMENT PURSUANT TO TITLE 12, CHAPTER 44 OF THE CODE OF LAWS OF SOUTH CAROLINA, 1976, AS AMENDED; THE ENTERING INTO OF CERTAIN COVENANTS AND AGREEMENTS AND THE EXECUTION AND DELIVERY OF CERTAIN INSTRUMENTS INCLUDING THE AFORESAID FEE AGREEMENT AND PRESCRIBING MATTERS RELATED THERETO” be adopted on first reading.

RESOLUTION 2006-19:

Mr. Moore made a motion, seconded by Mr. Lyles, approved 5 – 0 that Resolution 2006-19, “A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION AND DELIVERY OF AN INDUCEMENT AGREEMENT BY AND BETWEEN OCONEE COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA AND TIMKEN US CORPORATION WHEREBY, UNDER CERTAIN CONDITIONS, OCONEE COUNTY WILL EXECUTE A FEE IN LIEU OF TAX AGREEMENT FOR HE PROJECT INVOLVING NOT LESS THAN EIGHTEEN MILLION DOLLARS (\$18,000,000) INVESTMENT AND OCONEE COUNTY WILL PROVIDE AN INFRASTRUCTURE CREDIT”

Council Committee Reports:

There were no Council Committee reports.

Administrator Report:

Tax Notices:

Mr. Hendricks reported to Council that the County is waiting for approval regarding Oconee County's reassessment from the Department of Revenue before mailing out tax notices.

Executive Session:

Mr. Hendricks also requested an executive session for the purpose of discussing personnel in five County Departments and also a land purchase.

Homestead Exemption:

Mr. Crumpton made a motion, seconded by Mr. Lyles, approved 5 – 0 that a letter be sent to the Legislative Delegation on behalf of Council requesting that Homestead Exemption for seniors be increased to \$100,000.

Appraisal for Regional Landfill Property:

Mr. Ables informed Council that the Chair of Pickens County Council had contacted him regarding the SC Appalachian Council of Governments securing an appraiser for the property owned by Anderson, Oconee & Pickens Counties; however this appraiser will need to be approved by Council.

Delay of November 21st Council Meeting:

Mr. Rinehart requested that the date of the November 21st Council Meeting be changed to November 28th due to his being out of the country at that time, however this request was withdrawn due to public hearings already being advertised for that date.

Executive Session:

Mr. Lyles made a motion, seconded by Mr. Crumpton, approved 5 – 0 that Council go into executive session for the purpose of discussing personnel in five departments and also a land purchase.

Open Session:

There was no action when open session resumed.

Adjourn:

Adjourn: 5:10 pm

Respectfully Submitted:

Opal O. Green,
Clerk to Council