

MEMBERS, OCONEE COUNTY COUNCIL

Mr. George C. Blanchard, District I 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

MINUTES, OCONEE COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING

The Oconee County Council met Tuesday, March 6, 2007 at 7:00 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, WSPA TV & WSNW Radio.

Members of the press present: Peter Kent – WGOG Radio, Carlos Galarza – Daily Journal, Ashton Hester – Keowee Courier & Dave Williams – Anderson Independent.

Other Organizations Notified:

Also notified were the Oconee County Tax Payers Association & Citizens for Recreation Center.

Call to Order:

Chairman Lyles called the meeting to order.

Pledge to US Flag:

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

Minutes:

Mr. Ables made a motion, seconded by Mr. Crumpton, approved 4 – 0 (Mr. Blanchard abstaining) that the minutes of the February 20, 2007 meeting be adopted as presented.

Public Comment Session:

Mr. Frank Kieninger addressed Council assuring them that a group of men were praying for them.

Public Comment Session Continued:

Mr. C. W. Richards addressed Council regarding the search for an administrator, the upcoming budget discussions and the workshop Council held regarding taxes and reassessment.

Ms. Susie Cornelius addressed Council regarding Foothills Alliance and Solid Waste.

Mr. Ben Turetsky addressed Council regarding the workshop Council held with the Planning Commission and the workshop Council held regarding planning/zoning in the unincorporated areas of the County.

Mr. Berry Nichols addressed Council regarding an open discussion meeting and asked that Council pray for Michael Deanhardt and the ACLU, he also addressed Council regarding the County & School budgets.

Mr. B. J. Littleton addressed Council regarding the public comment session being thirty minutes long regardless of the number of speakers.

Foothills Alliance:

Ms. Fay Brown, Director, Foothills Alliance expressed appreciation to Council for the \$25,000 given to them in last year's budget and requested their continued support so they can maintain their work with victims of sexual assault.

City of Westminster Request:

Mr. Lyles made a motion that the attached request of the City of Westminster for one hundred tons of crusher run gravel to be used on a roadway adjacent to the ball field at the middle school be granted. However, this motion died for lack of a second.

Statewide Court Case Management System:

Mr. Hendricks informed Council that the State will provide, at no cost to the County, Court Case Management Software, installation, setup and configuration, data conversion from the current system, training, on site support during Go-Live and other support and services to make the project a success. The County will receive significant value from the state and ongoing maintenance costs will be equivalent to the current maintenance costs.

Phone System for DSS:

Mr. Ables made a motion, seconded by Mr. Crumpton, approved 5 – 0 that the bid for a phone system for the Department of Social Services be awarded to Alt Communications, Inc. at a cost of \$32,249.45 to be paid for from the following line items: \$25,000 – 010 711 50840 and \$7,249.45 from line item 010 711 82008. This is a portable system and can be moved when the Department of Social Services moves into their new building.

Recreational Funds:

Mr. Crumpton made a motion, seconded by Mr. Ables, approved 5 – 0 that the following budgeted recreational funds be dispersed: (See attached)

- \$2,500 – Salem Recreational Department from line item 010 202 30901
- \$2,500 – Walhalla Recreational Department from line item 010 202 30902
- \$2,500 – Seneca Recreational Department from line item 010 202 30903
- \$2,500 – Westminster Recreational Department from line item 010 202 30904
- \$10,500 – Fair Oak Youth Center from line item 010 202 30905

ATAX Grants:

Mr. Blanchard made a motion, seconded by Mr. Ables, approved 5 – 0 that the attached ATAX Grant in the amount of \$2,255 to the Blue Ridge Arts Council to be used for advertisement of the annual members art show be adopted.

Mr. Crumpton made a motion, seconded by Mr. Suarez, approved 5 – 0 that the attached ATAX Grant in the amount of \$6,100 to the Oconee Conservatory of Fine Arts to be used for advertisement of their first annual talent showcase be adopted.

Emergency Management Grant:

Mr. Crumpton made a motion, seconded by Mr. Ables, approved 5 – 0 that the County accept, on behalf of Emergency Management, a Local Emergency Management Performance Grant in the amount of \$30, 513 for salaries and benefits for Emergency Management staff.

PARD Grant:

Mr. Ables made a motion, seconded by Mr. Crumpton, approved 5 – 0 that Parks, Recreation & Tourism be authorized to apply for a PARD Grant in the amount of \$4,720 for new ADA sidewalks at South Cove & High Falls Parks. If approved, this grant will require a local match in the amount of \$1,180 which is budgeted in line item 010 202 99998.

Economic Development Grant:

Mr. Crumpton made a motion, seconded by Mr. Ables, approved 5 – 0 that Economic Development be authorized to apply for a South Carolina Coordinating Council for Economic Development Grant in the amount of \$175,000 for turning lanes at Timken Manufacturing Facility. If approved, this grant will require a local match in the amount of \$15,575 which is budgeted in line item 010 707 60707.

Solid Waste Grants:

Mr. Crumpton made a motion, seconded by Mr. Suarez, approved 5 – 0 that Solid Waste be authorized to apply for the following South Carolina Department of Health & Environmental Control Grants which require no local match:

Increased Paper Material Collection	\$50,000
Used Oil	\$ 4,500
Waste Tire/Automobile Dismantler Tire	\$ 3,250

Rock Quarry Grant:

Mr. Ables made a motion, seconded by Mr. Suarez, approved 5 – 0 that the Rock Quarry be authorized to apply for a PalmettoPride Tree Grant for beautification and dust abatement. This grant requires no local match.

Council Committee Reports:

Mr. Blanchard informed those present that the Law Enforcement, Public Safety, Health & Welfare Committee meeting scheduled for 6:00 pm tonight was cancelled at the request of the City of Seneca and he hoped to have that meeting in the next month.

Administrator’s Report:

Mr. Hendricks asked for an executive session to discuss a personnel matter regarding Boards & Commissions, a contractual matter and a legal matter.

Administrator's Report Continued:

Mr. Hendricks also informed those present that the proposed budget would be presented to Council Wednesday, March 21, 2007 at 10:00 am in Council Chambers.

Boards/Commission Appointments:

Mr. Crumpton made a motion, seconded by Mr. Suarez, approved 5 – 0 that the following District II Board/Commission appointments be made:

James Moore	Solid Waste Commission
Michael Wright	Emergency Management Commission
Luther Lyle	Arts & Historical Commission
Larry Brandt	Recreation Commission

Also that Ms. Jenny Bagwell be appointed as an At Large representative on the Arts & Historical Commission.

Mr. Lyles made a motion, seconded by Mr. Crumpton, approved 5 – 0 that Mr. Ronald Mitchell be appointed as the District IV representative on the Recreation Commission.

Mr. Blanchard made a motion, seconded by Mr. Suarez, approved 5 – 0 that Mr. Davis M. "Butch" Butts be appointed to represent Stations 2, 11 & 17 on the Rural Fire Commission.

Mid-Year Conference:

Mr. Blanchard attended the South Carolina Association of Counties Mid-Year Conference and was able to meet with Legislative Members regarding some priority issues. At this time it appears as if the State will have a budget surplus of \$1,325,000,000 and that is projected to be \$1,500,000,000 by the end of the legislative session.

Another issue discussed was worker' compensation and it looks as though the second injury fund will be phased out.

The refusal by the State to accept prisoners is against state law and the counties are not being reimbursed for the prisoners the State refuses to take, however, Senator Mike Fair has introduced a bill to remedy this situation. This bill has the support of our local Senator and the Sheriff's Association.

It does not appear that the "takings bill" will pass the Senate or the House. The concern is that this bill will get attached to something that will be very difficult to vote against.

Mid-Year Conference Continued:

The last issue they discussed was the Governor's restructuring proposal, however, there did not seem to be a lot of support for this proposal.

Ordinance 2007-02:

Mr. Blanchard made a motion, seconded by Mr. Ables, approved 5 – 0 that the Planning Commission immediately begin the process of developing a citizen initiated, community-based zoning program for the unincorporated areas of Oconee County. This program shall be primarily based around the boundaries of the existing fire districts, but will also include provisions for the creation of special overlay districts. Also, it is vital that the program not only reflect concern for protecting the property values and lifestyles of the more fortunate Oconee County citizens, but also insure that traditional ways of life are protected while being affected as little as possible. To facilitate these efforts, the Commission shall report back to Council within thirty (30) days to provide an estimated timeline of the project, a list of crucial milestones, and an overview of expected needs.

The directive shall also constitute first reading, in title only of Ordinance 2007-02, "OCONEE COUNTY ENABLING ORDINANCE".

Executive Session:

Mr. Blanchard made a motion, seconded by Mr. Crumpton, approved 5 – 0 that Council go into executive session for the purpose of discussing a personnel matter regarding Boards & Commissions, a contractual matter and a legal matter.

Open Session:

There was no action when open session resumed.

Adjourn:

Adjourn: 8:20 pm

Respectfully Submitted:

Opal O. Green
Clerk to Council