



MINUTES CONSERVATION BANK BOARD

November 19, 2019

Oconee County Administrative Offices, Council Chambers
415 S. Pine Street, Walhalla, SC 29691

MEMBERS

Mr. Andrew Smith, Chairman, District II
Ms. Frances Rundlett, Vice Chairman, At Large
Ms. Emily Hitchcock, Secretary, At Large
Mr. Frank Ables, Treasurer, District V

Mr. Ryan Keese, District III
Mr. Marvin Prater, District IV
Ms. Laura Havran, District I
Ms. Katie D. Smith, Staff Liaison

The Oconee County Conservation Bank Board [OCCB] met at 9:00 a.m. in Council Chambers, 415 South Pine Street, Walhalla, SC with all members present [except Mr. Ables & Mr. Prater; Mr. Keese arrived late] and Katie D. Smith, Clerk to Council acting as staff liaison.

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.

No members of the media were present.

Call to Order

Mr. Smith called the meeting to order at 9:02 a.m.

Approval of Minutes

Ms. Rundlett made a motion, seconded by Ms. Havran, approved 4 – 0, to approve the minutes from September 17, 2019 meeting as presented.

Mr. Keese arrived after the approval of the minutes.

Treasurer's Report

Due to Mr. Ables absence, Ms. Rundlett read the Treasurer's Reports for Community First Bank and the Local Government Investment Pool [State Pool] and noted they are accurate as presented. She further noted the balances on the reports are as follows:

Community First Bank for September 2019 is \$14,980.00 and for October 2019 is \$15,180.00;

Local Government Investment Pool [State Pool] for September 2019 is \$594,209.49 and for October 2019 is \$595,258.54.

Ms. Havran made a motion, seconded by Ms. Hitchcock, approved 5 – 0, to accept as presented the Treasurer's Report for both Community First Bank and the Local Government Investment Pool [State Pool] for September and October 2019 as read by Ms. Rundlett.

Discussion Items

Lengthy discussion followed regarding the topics indicated below, with various opinions expressed, to include but not limited to:

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Continued discussion regarding Alternate Funding Sources

Ms. Hitchcock noted there have been discussions regarding “Rally in the Valley”, which is local event that is held every spring and is held by Oconee Forever. She further noted there have been discussions about having this transferred to a separate entity and all of the net proceeds going to the OCCB.

Lengthy discussion continued to include:

- Need for additional volunteers
- Fundraising efforts
- Event is generally held in May on Lake Jemiki Road; property holds a conservation easement
- Listed as one of the top ten bike rides in South Carolina
- OCCB was created by County Ordinance
- Potential concern from outside donors that County Council has to approve grant awards
- Quorum
- Grants

Mr. Chris Starker, Land Conservation Manager with Upstate Forever, addressed the Board highlighting the following:

- The Lowcountry has several other mechanisms for leveraging funds that is not offered in the Upstate
- Upstate Conservation Fund that would be able to leverage more funds in the Upstate
- Federal grants
- Multiple organizations looking for alternate funding with the same people for the same purposes
- Keowee Toxaway Habitat Enhancement Program, Oconee Conservation Bank Board, & Lake Keowee Source Water Protection Team
- Clean Water Act

Discussion and/or action regarding Presentation to Oconee County Council

Mr. Smith noted he made a brief PowerPoint presentation [copy filed with backup materials] to the County Council on October 1, 2019. He further noted the OCCB had approved three award grants, one for the Moore property, one for the William Lyles Estate, and one for Worthington Hyde Partners, which was changed to Cliff’s Timber, LLC during this year. Between the time of the OCCB meeting and the County Council meeting, Upstate Forever had withdrawn their application for the William Lyles Estate. Mr. Smith noted he only presented the remaining two applications to the County Council for approval, which were both approved.

New Business:

A Statement of Interest form and full application was received from the Estate of William C. Lyles. Mr. Smith noted this is the same property the OCCB has reviewed before but the change is the application is now for a project for the full conservation purchase of the property. Discussion continued to include:

- Conservation value is \$661,000 and the grant request to the OCCB is \$66,100, which is 10% of the conservation value
- OCCB members to review application and complete the criteria ranking sheet and bring to the December 10, 2019 meeting

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- Property has been scored previously
- For every application at the decision meeting, which would be the second meeting after receiving an application, each member would need to individually review the application and complete the criteria scoring sheet
- Received formal withdrawal letter [copy filed with backup materials] from Upstate Forever regarding the Estate of William C. Lyles application dated June 2018

Old Business

Mr. Smith noted the OCCB makes an award approval and takes to County Council for their approval. The Ordinance states that after the date of the County Council approval, the applicant has four months to accept the award by letter, email, etc. and then they will have a year to close on the property but this can be extended up to six months if needed. He further noted that within three months, forward or backward, of the County Council approval, there has to be a current appraisal.

Mr. Smith noted the OCCB received an acceptance letter [copy filed with backup materials] of the award from Oconee Soil & Water Conservation Service regarding the Peggy Moore property and noted the appraisal is from June 1, 2018. He further noted this process could take years to complete the process and three months for an appraisal is not a good time limit. He further noted they cannot waive the ordinance provision and this would need to be an ordinance change.

Mr. Eddie Martin, Oconee Soil & Water Conservation Service, addressed the Board highlighting the following:

- Peggy Moore property
- Oconee Conservation Bank, SC Conservation Bank Board, NRCS
- One appraisal has been completed; if she has to complete another appraisal she would have spent most of the funds she would be receiving from OCCB
- Yellow book appraisals are required for federal funds
- Has until January 1st to submit a current appraisal unless there is a solution
- Rick Holstein can present a market analysis comparing market values to the property and potentially make statement that the values have not changed

Ms. Hitchcock made a motion, seconded by Ms. Havran, approved 4 – 0 [Mr. Keese recused himself; copy of recusal form filed with these minutes] to support, if legally appropriate, accepting a market update for the Moore property to meet the requirements of the three-month current appraisal.

Mr. Smith noted he received the acceptance letter [copy filed with backup materials] from Naturaland Trust dated November 18, 2019 regarding the Cliffs Timber, LLC property.

New Business: *[cont'd]*

Ms. Hitchcock made a suggestion for members to begin brainstorming what language would need to be added to the proposed ordinance change. She also asked for members to decide whether three cycles would be needed every year. She further noted two cycles a year would be better because that would give the OCCB four meetings for the application process and additional meetings to discuss fundraising and other business items. Discussion continued.

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Next Meeting:

The next meeting will be held at 9:00 a.m., Tuesday, December 10, 2019 at the Oconee County Council Chambers, 415 South Pine Street, Walhalla, SC 29691.

Adjourn:

Ms. Havran made a motion, approved unanimously, to adjourn the meeting at 10:17 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Katie D. Smith
Clerk to Council & Staff Liaison

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OCONEE CONSERVATION
BANK BOARD RECUSAL
FORM

OCCB Member Name:

Ryan Keese

[Please Print]

OCCB Member Signature:

R. Keese

Meeting Date:

11.19.2019

Item for Discussion/Note:

Motion to support, if legally appropriate, accepting a market update for the Moore property to meet the requirements of the three-month current appraisal.

Reason for Recusal

I was not present for original meeting/discussion

I have a personal/familial interest in the issue.

Other:


Katie D. Smith
Katie Smith
Clerk to Council