



MINUTES CONSERVATION BANK BOARD

February 9, 2021

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

MEMBERS

Mr. Andrew Smith, Chair, District II
Ms. Emily Hitchcock, Vice Chairman, At Large
Mr. Ryan Keese, Secretary, District, III
Ms. Laura Havran, Treasurer, District I

VACANT, District IV
VACANT, District V
Mr. Charles VanOver, At Large
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. Keese] 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

Ms. Smith, Clerk to Council and staff liaison, called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m.

Election of Officers

Ms. Smith explained the procedure of election of new officers.

Chairman

Ms. Hitchcock nominated Mr. Smith as Chair, approved 4 – 0. Mr. Smith presided over the meeting at this time.

Vice-Chairman

Ms. Havran nominated Ms. Hitchcock as Vice-Chairman, approved 4 – 0.

Secretary

Mr. Smith nominated Mr. Keese as Secretary, approved 4 – 0.

Treasurer

Ms. Hitchcock nominated Ms. Havran as Treasurer, approved 4 – 0.

Motion to Amend

Ms. Havran made a motion, seconded by Mr. Smith, approved 4 – 0, to amend the agenda to add “Public Comment Session” to the agenda.

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Public Comment Session

Mr. Eddie Martin, Oconee Soil & Water Conservation District, addressed the Board regarding the Peggy Moore project. He noted an application has been placed with the OCCB for \$10,000 for a conservation easement. He noted they have partnered with Upstate Forever, the SC Conservation Bank, and Natural Resource Conservation Service [NRCS]. He noted with the submission of the NRCS application, he has to submit Phase I, the new survey, and new appraisal to be sent to national headquarters for review. Once completed, a closing date will be set and finalize the project.

Approval of Minutes

Ms. Hitchcock made a motion, seconded by Ms. Havran, to approve the minutes from December 15, 2020 meeting as presented.

Ms. Hitchcock noted under the “Discussion and/or action regarding Naturaland Trust”, the minutes are accurate. However, she noted there needed to be an addition to the minutes to add that Mr. Smith communicated to Naturaland Trust as to why the application would not be accepted.

Ms. Hitchcock made a motion, seconded by Mr. Smith, approved 4 – 0, to amend the December 15, 2020 minutes on page 3 under “Discussion and/or action regarding Naturaland Trust” to add the following to the end of the paragraph “that the Board cannot accept the application and that Naturaland Trust has been informed of this.”

Mr. Smith made a motion, seconded by Ms. Havran, approved 4 – 0, to accept the December 15, 2020 minutes as amended.

Approval of OCCB 2021 Meeting Calendar

Ms. Havran made a motion, seconded by Mr. Smith, approved 4 – 0, to approve the OCCB meeting calendar for 2021.

Treasurer’s Report

Ms. Havran 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 December 2020 is \$4,220.00;

Local Government Investment Pool [State Pool] for December 2020 is \$344,247.00.

Ms. Hitchcock made a motion, seconded by Mr. Smith, to accept as presented the Treasurer’s Report for both Community First Bank and the Local Government Investment Pool [State Pool] for December 2020.

Ms. Hitchcock wanted to further explore the possibility if the Local Government Investment Pool could wire the funds directly to the closing attorney and save the wire fees of Community First Bank.

Regarding the previous motion made by Ms. Hitchcock, seconded by Mr. Smith, it was approved 4 – 0, to accept as presented the Treasurer’s Report for both Community First Bank and the Local Government Investment Pool [State Pool] for December 2020.

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Fundraising & Public Relations Reports

Ms. Havran updated the Board and noted she presented the PowerPoint presentation to group of about 15 citizens in the Keowee Key area. She noted the citizens' feedback was they would prefer to have additional information on the properties that the OCCB conserved.

Ms. Hitchcock noted the website discussion needed to be standing agenda item long term. She requested a "donate now" button added to the website. She further noted the website needs to be updated.

Ms. Havran noted it was difficult to find the Conservation Bank Board on the website. The Clerk to Council gave a quick tutorial of the website.

The Board requested the Clerk to Council to inquire if "Boards" could be added to the tab under Council on the website.

Mr. Smith noted the fund raising committee would be speaking with Senator Alexander about potential funding.

Discussion Items

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

Final Drafts of OCCB forms from Procedures Committee

Mr. Smith noted the final drafts of the Grant Agreement, Criteria Worksheet, Application for Funding, Findings, Grant Procedures, and Evaluation Scoresheet [copies filed with backup materials], which came from the Procedures Committee, will be on the March 2, 2021 agenda for approval. Any edits, revisions, or questions can be directed to Mr. Smith.

Expenditure for recording grant agreement – Elaine Morris project

Mr. Smith noted the revision to the OCCB ordinance that was approved in October of 2020 noted a requirement of a grant agreement and that it be recordable. The Elaine Morris project was the first closing after the adoption of those revisions to the ordinance and the \$25 recording fee was not budgeted.

Mr. Smith made a motion, seconded by Ms. Havran, approved 4 – 0, to approve an expenditure of \$25 to record the Elaine Morris grant agreement.

Next Meeting:

The next meeting will be held at 9:00 a.m., Tuesday, March 2, 2021 at the Oconee County Council Chambers, 415 South Pine Street, Walhalla, SC 29691.

Adjourn:

Ms. Hitchcock made a motion, approved unanimously, to adjourn the meeting at 9:40 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Katie D. Smith
Clerk to Council & Staff Liaison

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