



MINUTES CONSERVATION BANK BOARD

May 18, 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

Mr. Nicholas Gambrell, District IV
Mr. Scuddy Walker, 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. Gambrell] 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 9:04 a.m.

Mr. Smith reminded members when the Clerk to Council sends an email, do not hit "Reply All" as this would constitute a quorum.

Approval of Minutes

Ms. Havran made a motion, seconded by Mr. Keese, approved 6 – 0, to approve the minutes from April 6, 2021 meeting as presented.

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 March 2021 is \$4,420.00;

Local Government Investment Pool [State Pool] for March 2021 is \$344,366.03.

Mr. VanOver made a motion, seconded by Mr. Keese, approved 6 – 0, to accept as presented the Treasurer's Report for both Community First Bank and the Local Government Investment Pool [State Pool] for March 2021.

Fundraising & Public Relations Reports

Mr. Smith noted he was able to get in contact with Senator Thomas Alexander to set up a meeting, which will be Monday, May 24, 2021 and in attendance will be Ms. Havran, Mr. Keese, & himself.

A video recording of this meeting is available at www.oconeesc.com. Meetings have been live-streamed beginning January 17, 2017. Brought to you by Your Oconee.

He noted that Ms. Havran created a presentation and will be asking for five million dollars as an endowment so the OCCB can generate interest.

Discussion continued to include:

- SC has \$840 million that needs to be spent
- Ecotourism
- Preserving land for future water quality
- Important to get a news article written for the citizens to know what the OCCB is about
- Look at individual properties to make sure they meet the goals

Per Mr. Smith, Mr. Eddie Martin, Oconee Soil & Water Conservation District, addressed the Board and noted they have criteria that they look, such as minimum acreage, conservation values, etc. He noted the applicants are pre-qualified before they come before the OCCB. Mr. Martin noted he has turned away potential applicants for various reasons.

Discussion Items

Discussion and/or action regarding Whetstone Hill property

Discussion regarding the Criteria Worksheet and Evaluation Scoresheet [copies of both filed with backup materials] of the Whetstone Hill property continued to include but not limited to:

Conservation Criteria	Maximum Points	Received
Environmental Sensitivity	32	14
Percentage of Property Sharing a Boundary with Protected Land	4	0
Historical / Cultural Features	9	0
Prime / Statewide Important Soil Types	8	6
Actively Farmed	6	4
Public Visibility of Property	1	1
Scenic Views	2	2
Public Access	6	0
Location	2	2
Threat of Development	5	0
Size of Protected Property	5	1
Impact on Offsite Water Quality	3	3
Plans for Property	2	2
Total Points Received		35

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Financial Criteria	Maximum Points	Received
Financial Expertise and Resources for Enforcement (<i>Pass/Fail item</i>)		Pass
Funding Percentage Requested	3	2
Matching Funds	5	5
Partnerships, Etc.	3	0
Cost per Acre to OCCB	2	2
Other Economic Benefits	2	1
Total Points Received		10
Total OCCB Scoring Index (OSI)		45

Ms. Havran made a motion, seconded by Mr. VanOver, approved 6 – 0, to approve the Evaluation Scoresheet with a score of 45.

Ms. Hitchcock made a motion, seconded by Mr. Keese, approved 6 – 0, to approve the grant request from Upstate Forever in the amount of \$11,499.00.

Discussion and/or action regarding Taychoedah property

Discussion regarding the Criteria Worksheet and Evaluation Scoresheet [copies of both filed with backup materials] of the Taychoedah property continued to include but not limited to:

Conservation Criteria	Maximum Points	Received
Environmental Sensitivity	32	19
Percentage of Property Sharing a Boundary with Protected Land	4	0
Historical / Cultural Features	9	0
Prime / Statewide Important Soil Types	8	6
Actively Farmed	6	4
Public Visibility of Property	1	1
Scenic Views	2	2
Public Access	6	0
Location	2	2
Threat of Development	5	0
Size of Protected Property	5	1
Impact on Offsite Water Quality	3	3
Plans for Property	2	2
Total Points Received		35

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Financial Criteria	Maximum Points	Received
Financial Expertise and Resources for Enforcement (<i>Pass/Fail item</i>)		Pass
Funding Percentage Requested	3	2
Matching Funds	5	5
Partnerships, Etc.	3	0
Cost per Acre to OCCB	2	2
Other Economic Benefits	2	1
Total Points Received		10
Total OCCB Scoring Index (OSI)		45

Mr. Scuddy Walker left at 10:05 a.m. during this discussion and before the below motions.

Ms. Havran made a motion, seconded by Mr. VanOver, approved 5 – 0, to approve the Evaluation Scoresheet with a score of 42.

Mr. VanOver made a motion, seconded by Ms. Havran, approved 5 – 0, to approve the grant request from Upstate Forever in the amount of \$17,999.00.

Mr. Smith made a motion, seconded by Ms. Hitchcock, approved 5 – 0, for Ms. Havran to complete the Findings form for the Whetstone Hill property and Mr. VanOver to complete the Findings form for the Taychoedah property.

Ms. Hitchcock made a motion, seconded by Ms. Havran, approved 5 – 0, for Mr. Smith to present the Whetstone Hill property and Taychoedah property to County Council for approval.

Continued discussion and/or action regarding Peggy Moore property

Mr. Smith gave an update noting the closing for the property is scheduled for June 3, 2021.

Continued discussion and/or action regarding William Lyles Estate property

Mr. Smith noted he was approached by the lessee of the farmland, which is Mr. Jimmy Robbins and is also the same lessee on Whetstone Hill. He noted Mr. Robbins was very unhappy that this was going to the farm service because [1] he may potentially lose his lease to grow corn and hay and [2] he doesn't trust the forest service's stewardship potential. He further noted the OCCB needs to require the applicant to tell the Board if there is a lessee so they can comment during the process.

Mr. Smith wrapped up the meeting noting the messages he had received from Mr. Chris Starker, Land Conservation Manager with Upstate Forever, during the meeting regarding the different topics.

Next Meeting:

The next meeting will be held at 9:00 a.m., Tuesday, August 10, 2021 at the Oconee County Council Chambers, 415 South Pine Street, Walhalla, SC 29691.

A video recording of this meeting is available at www.oconeesc.com. Meetings have been live-streamed beginning January 17, 2017. Brought to you by Your Oconee.

Adjourn:

Mr. Keese made a motion, approved unanimously, to adjourn the meeting at 10:19 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Katie D. Smith
Clerk to Council & Staff Liaison

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