



# MINUTES CONSERVATION BANK BOARD

February 7, 2023

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

## **MEMBERS**

Mr. Andrew Smith, Treasurer, District II  
Ms. Emily Hitchcock, Chair, At Large  
Mr. Ryan Keese, Secretary, District, III  
VACANT, District I

Vacant, District IV  
Mr. Scuddy Walker, Vice Chairman, District V  
Mr. Scott McCurry, At Large  
Ms. Jennifer C. Adams, 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 [Mr. Keese arrived at 9:05 a.m.] and Jennifer C. Adams, 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](http://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. Hitchcock called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

## **Election of Officers**

Ms. Hitchcock proposed the following officer nominations to the Board:

1. Chair – Emily Hitchcock
2. Vice Chair – Scuddy Walker
3. Treasurer – Andy Smith
4. Secretary – Ryan Keese

Mr. Smith made a motion, seconded by Ms. Hitchcock, approved 4 – 0, to approve the officer nominations as stated.

## **Approval of Minutes**

Mr. McCurry made a motion, seconded by Mr. Walker, approved 4 – 0, to approve the December 13, 2022 meeting minutes as presented.

## **Approval of 2023 Meeting Dates**

Ms. Hitchcock reviewed with the Board the proposed meeting dates for 2023 and after a short discussion between Board members the following dates (copy filed in backup) were approved 4 – 0 on a motion made by Mr. Smith, seconded by Mr. McCurry:

April 4, 2023  
May 2, 2023  
August 8, 2023  
September 5, 2023

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November 14, 2023

December 5, 2023

February 6, 2024

### **Treasurer's Report**

Mr. Smith read the Treasurer's Report for Community First Bank and the Local Government Investment Pool [State Pool]. He further noted the balances on the reports are as follows:

Local Government Investment Pool [State Pool] for January 2023 is \$285,308.97.

[Mr. Keese joined the meeting at 9:05 a.m.]

Mr. Smith questioned the amount of YTD interest on the Local Government Investment Pool [State Pool] statement.

Mr. Smith made a motion, seconded by Mr. Keese, approved 5 – 0, to defer the approval of the January 2023 State Pool Treasurer's Report until the April 4, 2023 meeting to allow him time to investigate the interest earned.

Community First Bank for December 2022 is \$4541.00.

Mr. Smith made a motion, seconded by Mr. McCurry, approved 5 – 0, to accept as presented the Treasurer's Report for Community First Bank for December of 2022.

### **Fundraising & Public Relations Reports**

Mr. Keese noted there were no updates regarding fundraising at this time.

Mr. Hitchcock noted the donation [copy filed in backup] from Ms. Laura Havran in December 2022.

### **Grants Status**

Mr. Walker informed the Board that there have been no changes in the OCCB Grants Disbursed and Expenses chart [copy filed in backup].

### **Presentation – Mr. David Root / County Attorney**

Mr. Root addressed the Board regarding several questions the Ms. Hitchcock, OCCB Chair, previously presented to him related to Board Policies.

Lengthy discussion followed between Mr. Root and the Board regarding the OCCB Ordinance and the Board's policies.

### **Update regarding Whetstone Hill Property**

Mr. Frank Holleman, President Naturaland Trust, addressed the Board with an update on the Whetstone Hill [William Lyles Estate] property, noting their intention to transfer the property to the United States Forest Service [USFS].

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Mr. Holleman informed the Board that the USFS will not accept this property with a conservation easement, therefore Naturaland Trust wishes to reimburse the OCCB the \$66,100.00 so that they can transfer the property without a conservation easement.

Lengthy discussion followed related to this request between the Board, Mr. Holleman, and County Attorney, Mr. Root.

Mr. McCurry made motion, seconded by Mr. Smith, approved 5 – 0, to hold a Special Meeting on March 14, 2023 to consider the request from Naturaland Trust to refund the amount awarded by the OCCB for the conservation easement on the Whetstone Hill [William Lyles Estate] property so that the land may be transferred to the USFS.

### **Discussion Items**

#### **Discussion and/or action regarding revision of Policy 003 Grant Procedures / Policy 005**

##### **Transfer of Property Interests**

Mr. Smith made a motion, seconded by Mr. McCurry, approved 5 – 0, to postpone discussions related to Policy 003 Grant Procedures and Policy 005 Transfer of Property Interests until the April 4, 2023 OCCB meeting, to allow for further revisions to these policies on the advice from County Attorney, David Root.

##### **Agriculture Task Force Update**

Ms. Hitchcock gave an update to the Board regarding the Agriculture Task Force noting that the final report will go before Council at the March 7, 2023 Council meeting.

##### **Next Meeting:**

Ms. Hitchcock noted the next meeting will be held at 9:00 a.m., Tuesday, March 14, 2023, in the Oconee County Council Chambers, 415 South Pine Street, Walhalla, SC 29691.

##### **Adjourn:**

Ms. Hitchcock adjourned the meeting at 10:35 a.m. on a motion made by Mr. Keese, seconded by Mr. McCurry.

Respectfully Submitted:

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Jennifer C. Adams  
Clerk to Council & Staff Liaison

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