



MINUTES
CONSERVATION BANK BOARD
February 06, 2024
Oconee County Administrative Offices, Council Chambers
415 S. Pine Street, Walhalla, SC 29691

MEMBERS

Ms. Emelyn Jones, Chair, At Large
Mr. Andrew Smith, Vice Chair, District II
Mr. Ryan Keese, Secretary, District, III
Mr. Gordon Becker, District I

Mr. Taylor Howard, Treasurer, District IV
Mr. Scuddy Walker, District V
Mr. Scott McCurry, At Large
Mrs. 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. McCurry and Mr. Becker absent] 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]. 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 9:01 a.m.

Election of Officers

Chair: Mr. Smith nominated Ms. Jones to serve as OCCB Chair, seconded by Mr. Howard, approved 5 – 0. No other nominations for OCCB Chair were made.

Mr. Smith handed to meeting over to Ms. Jones to preside as the new OCCB Chair.

Vice Chair: Mr. Howard nominated Mr. Smith to serve as OBBC Vice Chair, seconded by Mr. Keese, approved 5 – 0. No other nominations for OCCB Vice Chair were made.

Secretary: Mr. Smith nominated Mr. Keese to serve as OCCB Secretary, seconded by Mr. Howard, approved 5 – 0. No other nominations for OCCB Secretary were made.

Treasurer: Mr. Smith nominated Mr. Howard to serve as OCCB Treasurer, seconded by Mr. Keese, approved 5 – 0. No other nominations for OCCB Treasurer were made.

Approval of 2024 Meeting Dates

Ms. Jones noted the meeting dates to the Board and asked Board members if they had any scheduling conflicts with the proposed 2024 meeting dates.

Mr. Smith made a motion, seconded by Mr. Howard, approved 5 – 0, to approve the 2024 meeting dates as presented [copy filed in backup].

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.

Approval of Minutes

Mr. Keese made a motion, seconded by Mr. Walker, approved 5 – 0, to approve the September 5, 2023 regular minutes as presented.

Treasurer's Report

Mr. Howard read the Treasurer's Report for the Community First Bank and the Local Government Investment Pool [State Pool] and noted they are accurate as presented [copies filed in backup]. He further noted the balances on the reports are as follows:

Community First Bank for August 2023 is \$480.00, September 2023 is \$480.00, October 2023 is \$480.00, November 2023 \$480.00 and December of 2023 is \$480.00.

Local Government Investment Pool [State Pool] for August 2023 is \$369,115.46, September 2023 is \$370,816.05, October 2023 is \$372,591.84, November 2023 is \$374,331.23 and December 2023 is \$376,135.65.

Mr. Smith made a motion, seconded by Mr. Keese, approved 5 – 0, to accept as presented the Treasurer's Report for Community First Bank for August, September, October, November and December of 2023 and the Local Government Investment Pool [State Pool] for August, September, October, November and December of 2023.

Fundraising & Public Relations Reports

Mr. Keese inquired about the Duke Energy / Bad Creek re-licensing and if the OCCB could possibly put in a request for funds when the re-licensing occurs.

Ms. Jones noted that Upstate Forever was interested in helping the OCCB become a stakeholder, and went on to add that a lot of organizations are going to request funding during this re-licensing process and it could be two or three years before funding was ever received, if granted.

Ms. Jones stated that in the meantime other forms of fundraising could be explored by the Board but noted that she (Ms. Jones) would like to obtain more profile grants and closings by the OCCB before exploring fundraising options.

Mr. Keese updated Board members, letting them know that Mr. Smith, Ms. Jones and himself met yesterday with Riley West and some of his (Mr. Keese) family members to explore placing several hundred acres of land into a conservation easement along the south end of HWY 11, coming into Fair Play.

Mr. Keese went on to add that sewer expansion into the southern part of Oconee County was a concern of citizens in that area and this would be an opportunity for the OCCB to inform land owners about the option of placing their land into a conservation easement.

Mr. Keese then provided the Board with details related to the South Carolina Farm Bureau Land Trust.

Short discussion by Board members followed about promoting conservation easement in the southern part of Oconee County, where sewer expansion is planned.

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.

Ms. Jones provided the Board with details related to an organization called South Carolina 7 (SC7) and the yearly month-long event they hold that starts in the upstate, noting Tom Mullikin leads this event.

Mr. Howard informed the Board that the Chattooga Conservancy is holds its annual fundraiser at the Chattooga Belle Farm and this could be an opportunity to raise awareness about the OCCB.

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].

Discussion Items

Mr. Smith and Mr. Keese noted that this was the last year of their term and encouraged Board members to be actively thinking of new candidates who may like to serve on the OCCB.

Adjourn:

Mr. Smith made a motion, approved unanimously, to adjourn the meeting at 9:27 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Jennifer C. Adams
Clerk to Council & Staff Liaison

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.