



**MINUTES**  
**OCONEE COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING**  
**Regular Meeting**  
**April 14, 2009**

**MEMBERS, OCONEE COUNTY COUNCIL**

Mr. Reg Dexter, District V, Council Chairman  
Mr. Joel Thrift, District IV, Vice Chairman  
Mr. Mario Suarez, District III, Chairman Pro Tem  
Mr. George Blanchard District I  
Mr. Wayne McCall, District II

Oconee County Council met on Tuesday, April 14, 2009 at 7:00 PM in Council Chambers, 415 South Pine Street, Walhalla, SC with all Council Members, County Administrator Dale K. Surrent, Thomas L. Martin County Attorney and Elizabeth G. Hulse, Clerk to Council present.

**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.oconeese.com/council](http://www.oconeese.com/council)]. In addition it was made available to the newspapers, radio stations, television stations and concerned citizens.

Member of the press present: Ray Chandler – Anderson Independent, Carlos Galarza - Daily Journal and Dick Mangrum-WGOG Radio, Ashton Hester- Keowee Courier.

**Call to Order:**

Mr. Dexter called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.

**Pledge of Allegiance:**

Mr. McCall led the pledge of allegiance to the United States Flag.

**Minutes:**

Mr. Thrift made a motion, seconded by Mr. McCall, approved 3 – 0 that the minutes from the March 12, 2009 Special Called meeting be adopted as printed.

Mr. Thrift made a motion, seconded by Mr. Blanchard, approved 4 – 0 that the minutes from the March 17, 2009 Workshop Meeting w/Infrastructure Advisory Commission be adopted as printed.

Mr. Suarez made a motion, seconded by Mr. Blanchard, approved 5 – 0 that the minutes from the March 17, 2009 Regular Council Meeting be adopted as printed.

Mr. Thrift made a motion, seconded by Mr. McCall, approved 3 – 0 that the minutes from the March 20, 2009 Workshop Meeting with Mr. Sala re: Solid Waste be adopted as printed.

## **Public Comment Session:**

Mr. Richard Hughes addressed Council in reference to Item # 7 on the Agenda commenting on the proposed changes to the Zone Enabling Ordinance 2007-18 (ZEO). Mr. Hughes explained his support of the proposed changes to the ZEO and urged Council to accept the proposed changes on the second reading as presented by the Planning Commission.

Ms. Gwendolyn McPhail addressed Council in reference to Agenda Item #10 concerning the Fair Play resident request. Ms. McPhail started by giving Council an overview of plans for the Carolina Foothills Heritage Fair. Ms. McPhail proceeded by addressing Council with two requests. First, Ms. McPhail asked Council for a written agreement with the West Oak Young Farmers and Oconee County to use the property known as the Golden Corner Commerce Park to host the fair and make changes to benefit the fair. Second, Ms. McPhail requested assistance from Oconee County to make road improvements needed in order to host the Fair on the property. Ms. McPhail stated that the projected date for the Carolina Foothills Heritage Fair is October 2009.

Mr. Ralph Stutzman addressed Council in reference to the ZEO. Mr. Stutzman gave reasons of his support of the ZEO. Mr. Stutzman also stated how much he likes living on the lake and wants to protect it.

Mr. Wendell Johnson addressed Council with his concerns about the protection of Lake Keowee and his support of the ZEO and overlay ordinance.

Ms. Donna Linsin addressed Council in reference to Item #7 on the Agenda concerning Ordinance 2009-03. Ms. Linsin stated her concerns about the wording of the amendment and the use of the word "right". Ms. Linsin stated her concerns about the rights of property owners involving utility structure erection. Ms. Linsin urged Council to think about the wording of the amendment.

Mr. Jack Dudley addressed Council stating that the Planning Commission has now made their recommendations of the ZEO with a 1300 ft setback. Mr. Dudley informed Council that it is now their responsibility to give the issue its full and immediate support.

Mr. Devoe Blackston addressed Council with his concerns about the overlays and zoning, stating that the 1300 ft overlay would be impossible to control. Mr. Blackston also stated that it is important to respect others' property and to also hear the voices of all property owners.

Ms. Susie Cornelius addressed Council reading from a statement that she requested be filed with the permanent record as part of the minutes. In this statement Ms. Cornelius gives her recommendations/comments to Council on Agenda items that related to the Budget, the Planning Commission, Federal Flood Control Requirements and Oconee County Health Insurance.

Ms. Sharon Hamilton addressed Council speaking on behalf of the Mountain Lakes Community Association. Ms. Hamilton explained concerns with the proposed change related to the mandatory and retroactive establishment of a 25' vegetative buffer on all lakefront parcels. In conclusion, Ms. Hamilton stated that Oconeeans want the protection of the ZEO and those impacted by the Keowee/Jocassee overlay support enforceable buffers and a minimum of 1,300 ft of boundary protection.

Mr. Gary Owens addressed Council representing the Advocates for Quality Development. Mr. Owens opened by commending the Planning Commission for all of their hard work on the presented amendments. Mr. Owens also addressed a few myths regarding the overlay and concluded by encouraging Council to approve the recommendations made to leave the lake overlay boundary at 1300 ft.

Mr. Robby Lee addressed Council stating his concerns about the focus being on the 1300 ft setback instead of the 25 ft buffer area for vegetation. Mr. Lee stated that the lakes need to be reserved as natural lakes and suggested that a larger vegetation buffer be set.

Mr. Tom Markovich addressed Council in reference to Ordinance 2009-10 relating to the requirements of the Planning Commission and terms of office. Mr. Markovich stated that making terms for the Planning Commission co-terminous would be a mistake. Mr. Markovich stated that not only will it be awkward but it will invite “politics” in which the commission wants to stay away from. Mr. Markovich recommended that there be four year staggered terms.

Mr. Pearson addressed Council with comments about various issues in the County that included County officials separating the personal and professional issues, County officials truly listening to and representing citizens, Oconee County needing more Council members and the lots on Lake Hartwell.

Mr. Barry Nichols addressed Council with his concerns about budget spending stating that County officials should consider taxpayers that are going to be paying for what is being spent in the budget. Mr. Nichols concluded with comments about Lake Keowee- all citizens being able to use it and the 25 ft boundary set that he feels like isn't enough.

**Extended Public Comment Session:** *[None scheduled for this meeting]*

**Point of Order:**

**Executive Session**

Mr. Thrift made a motion, seconded by Mr. Blanchard, approved 5 – 0 to enter Executive Session for the purpose of receiving legal advice and discussing contractual matters.

Council entered Executive Session at 7:57 p.m.

Council returned from Executive Session at 8:48 p.m. on a motion by Mr. Thrift, seconded by Mr. McCall, approved unanimously.

Mr. Dexter stated that no actions were taken at this meeting regarding matters discussed in Executive Session; information pertaining to upcoming legal issues was given.

**Consideration of the following Ordinances:**

**Ordinance #2009-03:**

Council discussed each proposed change to Ordinance 2009-03 “An Ordinance To Amend The Oconee County Zoning Enabling Ordinance, Ordinance 2007-18, In Certain Limited Regards And Particulars, Only, As To The Procedures AND STANDARDS For ZONING AND Rezoning Property, As To The Methods AND STANDARDS Required For Enacting Or Imposing Overlay Districts, and As To The Method For Funding Zoning Administration In Oconee County; To Refer The Amendments And Matters Proposed By This Ordinance To The Oconee County Planning

Commission In Accordance With South Carolina Law For Review, Comment, And Recommendation; TO REVIEW AND CONSIDER THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE OONEE COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION; To Ratify And Affirm All Other Provisions Of Ordinance 2007-18 Not Amended Or Modified Hereby; and Other Matters Relating Thereto” and took action as follows:

***Article 8 [changes to language for Method 2 & 3]***

Mr. Blanchard made a motion, seconded by Mr. Suarez, approved 5 – 0 to accept Article 8 as proposed.

***I-85 Overlay District [Five language change recommendations & New Section addition]***

Mr. Suarez made a motion, seconded by Mr. Blanchard, approved 5 – 0 to approve this language change.

***Lake Overlay District [changes to language in 11.1.a.3]***

Mr. Blanchard made a motion, seconded by Mr. Thrift, approved 5 – 0 to approve this language change.

***Funding Implementation & Operation of Zoning Program***

This was discussed and received as information – no action taken.

***Non-Conformance Provisions [change language in Article 4 to add Section 4.3]***

Mr. Blanchard made a motion, seconded by Mr. Thrift, approved 5 – 0 to approve this language change.

***Complaint Process [change Section 2.7]***

Mr. Suarez made a motion, seconded by Mr. Blanchard, approved 5 – 0 to approve this language change.

***Planning District Rezoning Method [change Section 8.5 – Method 1]***

Mr. Suarez made a motion, seconded by Mr. Blanchard, approved 5 – 0 to approve this language change.

***Small Area Zoning / 40 lot platted subdivision [add language to Section 8.5 – Method 2]***

Mr. Blanchard made a motion, seconded by Mr. Suarez, approved 5 – 0 to approve this language change.

***Exemption for Electric Utilities***

Mr. Martin addressed concerns with language in this section with Council. Mr. Suarez made a motion, seconded by Mr. Thrift, approved 5 – 0 to approve this language change on second reading.

Mr. Thrift made a motion to amend Ordinance 2009-03 to reduce the 1,300 foot overlay to 750 feet. Discussion followed with several members voicing concerns that this is not what citizens in the affected areas wish in their districts.

Mr. Thrift stated the motion again, seconded by Mr. McCall, approved 4 -0 [Mr. Blanchard abstained.

**Ordinance #2009-06:**

Mr. McCall made a motion, seconded by Mr. Thrift, approved 5 – 0 to approve on first reading [in title only] of **Ordinance #2009-06** “AN ORDINANCE TO ESTABLISH THE BUDGET FOR OCONEE COUNTY AND TO PROVIDE FOR THE LEVY OF TAXES FOR ORDINARY COUNTY PURPOSES IN OCONEE COUNTY FOR THE FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING JULY 1, 2009 AND ENDING JUNE 30, 2010.”

**Ordinance #2009-07:**

Mr. McCall made a motion, seconded by Mr. Thrift, approved 5 – 0 to approve on first reading [in title only] of **Ordinance #2009-07** “AN ORDINANCE TO ESTABLISH THE BUDGET FOR THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF OCONEE COUNTY AND TO PROVIDE FOR THE LEVY OF TAXES FOR THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF OCONEE COUNTY FOR THE FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING JULY 1, 2009 AND ENDING JUNE 30, 2010.”

**Ordinance #2009-08:**

Mr. Dexter made an amendment informing that there is no such things as a special purpose tax; the word purpose has been eliminated from the amendment in two places.

Mr. Suarez made a motion, seconded by Mr. Thrift, approved 5 – 0 to approve on the first reading of **Ordinance #2009-08** “AN ORDINANCE TO PROVIDE FOR THE LEVY OF TAXES FOR THE KEOWEE FIRE SPECIAL TAX DISTRICT AND TO ESTABLISH THE BUDGET FOR THE KEOWEE FIRE SPECIAL DISTRICT FOR THE FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING JULY 1, 2009 AND ENDING JUNE 30, 2010” with amendment.

**Ordinance #2009-10:**

Mr. Dexter stated that he would like for the Planning Commission to look at the two at-large position appointments and if they feel that it is something that needs to be addressed by Council he would like for it to be done before the second reading.

Mr. Thrift made a motion, seconded by Mr. Dexter, approved 5 – 0 to approve on the first reading of **Ordinance #2009-10** – AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND SECTION 32-4 OF THE OCONEE COUNTY CODE OF ORDINANCES PERTAINING TO THE OCONEE COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION, IN CERTAIN LIMITED REGARDS AND PARTICULARS, ONLY, AS TO MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENTS AND STANDARDS, TERMS OF MEMBERS, PROCEDURES FOR REMOVAL OF MEMBERS, AND SALARIES AND FUNDING STANDARDS; AND TO RATIFY AND AFFIRM ALL OTHER PROVISIONS OF SUCH SECTION 32-4 NOT AMENDED OR MODIFIED HEREBY; AND OTHER MATTERS RELATED THERETO.

After the vote Mr. Martin commented suggesting that the Planning Commission review the entire ordinance as it as drafted and address Council with any recommendations and/or changes that they may have.

**Ordinance #2009-11:**

Mr. Thrift made a motion, seconded by Mr. McCall, approved 5 – 0 to approve on the first reading of **Ordinance #2009-11** “AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE TRANSFER OF CERTAIN OCONEE COUNTY REAL PROPERTY; AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION AND DELIVERY OF A REAL PROPERTY DEED RELATED TO THE SAME; AND OTHER MATTERS RELATED THERETO” in Title only.

After the vote Mr. Martin requested of Council that the County staff be given permission to discuss the preceding matter with the City of Seneca. Mr. Suarez made a motion, seconded by Mr. Thrift, approved 5 – 0 to grant County staff permission to meet with the City of Seneca to discuss the preceding matter.

## **Consideration of the following Resolutions:**

### **Resolution #2009-07:**

Mr. Holbrooks along with Mr. Norton addressed Council with information from their recent meeting with FEMA regarding floodplains. A lengthy discussion followed with questions from Council about FEMA requirements pertaining to floodplains.

Mr. Thrift made a motion, seconded by Mr. Suarez, approved 5 – 0 to approve on first and final reading of **Resolution #2009-07** “OCONEE COUNTY COUNCIL ASSURES THE FEDERAL INSURANCE ADMINISTRATION THAT IT WILL ENACT AS NECESSARY, AND MAINTAIN IN FORCE IN THOSE AREAS HAVING FLOOD, OR FLOOD-RELATED EROSIONS HAZARDS, ADEQUATE LAND USE AND CONTROL MEASURES WITH EFFECTIVE ENFORCEMENT PROVISIONS CONSISTENT WITH THE CRITERIA SET FORTH IN PART 60 OF THE NATIONAL FLOOD INSURANCE PROGRAM REGULATIONS (CFR44);”

## **Discussion & Possible Action Items:**

### **Oconee County Health Insurance**

Mr. Surrett opened with an explanation of the Health Insurance Program for Oconee County employees and retirees. Mr. Surrett then introduced Mr. Jeff Miller from Benefit Administrators who addressed Council explaining insurance renewal calculations. Mr. Surrett informs Council of the renewal options that would be the most cost effective for the County. Mr. Surrett along with Ms. Kay Olbon, Human Resource Director, explained the wellness programs that Oconee County offers and thanked employees for their participation informing Council that this saves the County money. Ms. Olbon explains what is involved with the wellness programs emphasizing diabetes, blood pressure and cholesterol screenings where unknown conditions have been identified and treated.

Ms. Olbon also informed Council of the Medical Reserve account in which overages are placed and can be used to cover insurance increases. Mr. Surrett comments on County savings with the Wellness Program and suggests that participation becomes mandatory.

Mr. Surrett addressed Council recommending Option #1 for the insurance renewal.

Mr. Suarez made a motion, seconded by Mr. McCall, approved 5 – 0 to approve the staff recommendation of Option #1 for the Oconee County Health Insurance Renewal.

### **PRT / Request to Release Budgeted Recreation Funds**

- Fair Oak Youth Center / \$19,000
- Seneca Recreation Department / \$12,500
- Westminster Recreation Department / \$2,500
- Tamasee-Salem Recreation Department / \$12,5000

Mr. Suarez made a motion, seconded by Mr. Thrift, approved 5 – 0 to approve the request to release budgeted recreation funds.

Ms. Hulse addressed Council clarifying that the motion was made for all four requests listed. Council confirmed.

### **ATAX / \$1,000 / Advertising “Issaqueena’s Last Ride” bicycle ride / May 2, 2009**

Mr. Dexter opened by asking if funds were available, Mr. Surrett replied yes.

Mr. Suarez made a motion, seconded by Mr. McCall, approved 5 – 0 to approve ATAX funds to be used for advertising “Issaqueena’s Last Ride”.

**Heritage Corridor Ambassadors Tour Sponsorship / \$1,000**

Mr. Phil Shirley, PRT Director requested that this agenda item be withdrawn at this time.

**Auditor / Assessor / Delinquent Tax / Treasurer / Tax Center / QS/1  
Forms & Supply Agreement / \$26,780.82 / FY 09-10**

Mr. Surrett addresses Council with a brief overview of the yearly contract and services utilized with QS1.

Mr. McCall made a motion, seconded by Mr. Thrift, approved 5 – 0 to approve funding of the agreement with QS1.

**Contract Renewal / \$142,130.83 / FY 09-10**

Mr. Blanchard addresses Mr. Surrett asking if this is a part of the budget process. Mr. Surrett states that is it but, because of tax season contracts need approval ahead of time.

Mr. Suarez made a motion, seconded by Mr. Thrift, approved 5 – 0 to approve funding of the contract with QS1.

**Bid 08-21 / Solid Waste / \$39,950 / Roll-Off Recycling Containers**

Mr. Surrett addresses Council explaining the details of the Bid 08-21. Mr. Thrift asked how many containers will be received. Mr. Surrett replied, “10”.

Mr. McCall made a motion, seconded by Mr. Suarez, approved 5 – 0 to approve award Bid #08-21 to Nu-Life Environmental, Inc. of Easley, SC for ten recycling containers in the amount of \$39,950.

**Airport / \$3,500 / Demolition of Abandoned Derelict Structure**

Mr. Kevin Short, Airport Director, came before Council to answer any questions that may arise. Discussion followed between Mr. Short and Council about the structure. Mr. Surrett amended Mr. Short’s comments with details of County costs involving the demolition of the structure.

Mr. Thrift made a motion, seconded by Mr. McCall, approved 5 – 0 to authorize the demolition of the derelict house on Airport property.

**Bid 08-09 / Officer Uniforms for Sheriff, Animal Control & Detention / \$53,482.34**

Mr. Surrett addresses Council explaining the Officer Uniform contract. Mr. Dexter asks Mr. Surrett to explain the financial impact, discussion follows.

Mr. McCall made a motion, seconded by Mr. Thrift, approved 5 – 0 to approve award Bid #08-09 to Wright Johnston Uniforms in the amount of \$53,482.34.

**Oconee County Board of Assessment Appeals Funding Request / \$3,000**

Mr. Suarez asked where funding would be transferred from. Mr. Surrett suggested use of the Council Contingency Fund.

Mr. Suarez made a motion, seconded by Mr. Thrift, approved 5 – 0 to grant the Board of Assessment Appeals additional funding in the amount of \$3,000 to be funded from Council Contingency.

**Fair Play Resident Request / +/- \$44,645 / 1 Year Lease for Commerce Park**

Mr. Dexter asks Mr. Surrett to outline the details. Mr. Surrett explains improvement requests and lease for the Golden Corner Commerce Park from Fair Play residents.

Mr. Blanchard addressed Mr. Surrett recommending that he meet with Eddie Taylor-Site Manager and Mack Kelly, County Engineer, to determine exactly what is needed and to come back to Council with specifics. Mr. Blanchard also stated that it was his understanding that sponsors would be used to cover costs. Mr. Surrett explains sponsor support of fair and masterplan of property. Discussion followed. Mr. Surrett emphasizes the need for the contract as first priority.

Mr. Thrift made a motion, seconded by Mr. McCall, approved 5 – 0 to begin negotiations of a contract as outlined above.

**Council Committee Reports:**

**Transportation / Mr. Thrift**

Mr. Thrift read from an outline of the Transportation Committee Meeting held on March 23, 2009 that is filed with these minutes.

**Law Enforcement, Public Safety, Health & Welfare / Mr. McCall**

Mr. McCall read from an outline of the Law Enforcement, Public Safety, Health & Welfare Committee meeting held on March 19, 2009. In addition, he noted that revisions to the flow chart presented are pending and that potential savings may be identified regarding the Westminster Fire Station.

Mr. Thrift made a motion, seconded by Mr. Suarez, approved 5 – 0 to authorize up to \$50,000 to be expended from the Engineering Account [account #743/Engineering Services] for engineering studies for the Westminster Fire Station.

**Budget, Finance & Administration / Mr. Blanchard**

Mr. Blanchard read from an outline of the Budget, Finance & Administration Committee workshop meetings held on March 19, 2009 and April 14, 2009 that is filed with these minutes. Mr. Blanchard announced the Administrator Budget Presentation to Council to be held Wednesday, March 15, 2009 at 6:00pm. Mr. Blanchard also announced that the Budget Workshop scheduled for April 16, 2009 is cancelled. The Budget Workshops will resume on Thursday, April 23, 2009 at 6:00pm.

**Commission / Board Reports to Council:** *[none scheduled for this meeting]*

**Board and Commission Appointments:**

**Library Board**

Mr. Dexter stated that he doesn't have all applications so this will be deferred until the May 5, 2009 Council meeting.

**ATAX Commission**

Mr. McCall stated that Carol Baumgarner has expressed an interest in serving on this Commission. Mr. Blanchard stated that she has also expressed an interest in the Library Board. Discussion followed.

Mr. McCall stated the he is still searching for someone for the ATAX Commission.

### **Emergency Services Commission**

Mr. McCall is waiting on paperwork from Mr. Jess Nevell, who is the only one that has expressed interest.

Mr. Suarez stated that he would like to recommend Mr. Nate Carver for the Emergency Services Commission. Mr. Suarez made a motion, seconded by Mr. Thrift, approved 5 – 0 to recommend Mr. Nate Carver for the Emergency Services Commission noting that his term being co-terminus.

### **Planning Commission**

Mr. Dexter stated that he had a recommendation for District 5 that has been approved.

Mr. McCall made a motion to reappoint Mr. Randy Abbott for the Planning Commission. Mr. Blanchard commented that he has an application from Mr. Abbott indicating that he is in his district. Discussion followed. Mr. Abbott's correct district is to be verified by Registration and Elections.

Mr. Blanchard announced Mr. Bill Nelson's retirement from the Planning Commission and stated that he would like to recommend Ms. Andrea Heller for District 1. Mr. Blanchard made a motion, seconded by Mr. Suarez, approved 4 – 1 [Mr. McCall opposed] to recommend Ms. Andrea Heller for the Planning Commission.

Mr. Suarez stated that he will confirm with the current District III representative if he wishes to continue to serve.

Mr. Martin commented stating that since Council is currently undergoing readings on Ordinance #2009-10 that will change both the terms of the members and the reappointment, he suggested postponing the reappointment of the Planning Commission until Ordinance #2009-10 is in effect, this will prevent having do reappointments twice.

### **Work Link Workforce Investment Board**

There was a brief discussion about Mr. Hugh Foster and his reappointment request. Mr. Blanchard noted that he did not know Mr. Foster.

Mr. Dexter made a motion, seconded by Mr. Thrift, approved 4 – 0 [Mr. Blanchard abstained] to approve Mr. Foster's request for reappointment to the Work Link Workforce Investment Board.

### **Administrator's Report:**

Mr. Surret begins by informing Council of the savings of hand-held radios purchased for the Fire Dept.

Mr. Surret also gave an update of the draft map that Mr. Luther Lyle bought before Council about a week ago informing Council that minor revisions are being made but, project is moving forward.

Mr. Surret also addressed Council with the County's recommendation that everyone have a weather alert radio in their home. Mr. Surret also informed Council that these radios can be purchased locally.

Mr. Surret informed Council that the Keowee Fire Truck has been delivered. Mr. Surret stated that payment for the truck and two others that are proposed are to be determined in the budget.

Mr. Surrett referred Council to Mr. Martin who was to make a recommendation to Council concerning an Industrial Lease that was discussed in Executive Session. Mr. Martin explains the terms of the lease and recommends that Council allows Mr. Surrett to authorize the execution of the document. Mr. Blanchard made a motion, seconded by Mr. Thrift, approved 5 – 0 to authorize Mr. Surrett to execute the document.

Mr. Surrett addressed Council with an announcement from Mr. Kevin Short that at approximately 9:15pm a Business Jet attempted to land at the Oconee County airport and hit a deer. There were no injuries but there was some damage to the Jet. He reported that Airport staff were on the scene.

**Old Business:**

*[none reported at this meeting]*

**New Business:**

**Point of Order:**

**Executive Session**

Mr. Dexter stated that he received a request to go into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing personnel and contractual matters.

Mr. Thrift made a motion, seconded by Mr. McCall, approved 5 – 0 to enter Executive Session for the purpose of discussing personnel and contractual matters.

Council entered Executive Session at 11:03 p.m.

Council returned from Executive Session at 11:47 p.m. on a motion by Mr. McCall, seconded by Mr. Thrift, approved unanimously. Mr. Dexter stated that no actions were taken.

**Termination of County Administrator:**

Mr. McCall made a motion to terminate the contract of Mr. Dale K. Surrett. Mr. McCall addressed Mr. Martin inquiring of the proper protocol for this action to take place. Mr. Martin stated that he doesn't know if there are any proper guidelines set by state law or by the contract. Mr. Martin suggested that termination be effective when notice of reason(s) for termination is delivered to Mr. Surrett.

Mr. McCall restated the motion to terminate the contract of Mr. Surrett, seconded by Mr. Thrift. Discussion continued prior to a vote.

Mr. Blanchard commented giving his opinion of even the consideration of such action. Mr. Blanchard stated that Mr. Surrett was a fine man, he ran the County well and he did everything that the Council has asked him to do. Mr. Blanchard stated that in his opinion this action is just wrong. Mr. Suarez also commented on his opinion asking where were the laws of compassion and understanding. Mr. Suarez addressed Council saying that they are focusing on the imperfections of Mr. Surrett and stated that he hopes that they can be at peace with themselves with their upcoming decision.

Mr. Dexter opened up the floor for additional comments from Council members and then called for a vote by person. Mr. Dexter stated that the motion had been made and seconded to terminate Mr. Surrett's contract, he then asked each Council member for their vote.

Mr. Blanchard voted not to terminate Mr. Surrett.

Mr. Thrift voted to terminate Mr. Surrett.

Mr. Suarez voted not to terminate Mr. Surrett.

Mr. McCall voted to terminate Mr. Surrett.

Mr. Dexter voted to terminate Mr. Surrett.

It was decided by Council on a 3-2 vote to terminate Mr. Surret's contract as the Oconee County Administrator.

Mr. Dexter addressed Mr. Martin asking if Council could move forward to appoint an interim Administrator. Mr. Martin stated that it is up to Council but it would be appropriate to appoint an interim Administrator. Mr. Dexter addressed Council asking if they had any suggestions.

Mr. McCall made a motion, seconded by Mr. Thrift, to appoint Mrs. Elizabeth Hulse as the interim Administrator. Mr. Dexter opened the floor for questions/comments. Mr. Suarez addressed Mrs. Hulse asking how she felt about the nomination. Mrs. Hulse replied that it is a tough question but she is willing to help on an interim basis if that is the wish of the Council.

Mr. Dexter opened the floor for questions/comments. Mr. Blanchard commented stating his concerns about Council not fully understanding or not caring about the actual duties of the County Administrator. Mr. McCall stated that it hurts him to do this but, he has no choice. Discussion followed.

Mr. Dexter stated that a motion had been made to appoint Mrs. Hulse as the interim Administrator.

Mr. McCall made a motion, seconded by Mr. Thrift, approved 4-1 [Mr. Blanchard opposed], to appoint Mrs. Hulse as the interim Administrator.

Mr. Dexter stated that he will inform certain individuals that Oconee County is in the process of looking for an Interim Administrator

**Adjourn:**

Mr. McCall made a motion at 11:56 p.m., seconded by Mr. Thrift that the meeting be adjourned. The motion was approved unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted:

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Stacy Crosby  
Sen. Administrative Asst.