

MINUTES
OCONEE COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING
Regular Meeting
October 16, 2007



MEMBERS, OCONEE COUNTY COUNCIL

Mr. George Blanchard District I
Mr. Thomas S. Crumpton, Jr., District II
Mr. Mario Suarez, District III
Mr. Marion E. Lyles, District IV, Chairman
Mr. H. Frank Ables, Jr., District V

Oconee County Council met on Tuesday, October 16, 2007 at 3:00 PM in Council Chambers, 415 South Pine Street, Walhalla, SC with all Council Members [except Mr. Suarez], County Administrator Dale K. Surrett, Elizabeth G. Hulse, Clerk to Council & Mr. Bradley A. Norton, County Attorney present.

Press:

Members of the press notified (via mail): Keowee Courier, Westminster News, Daily Journal, Anderson Independent, WGOG Radio, WYFF TV, WLOS TV WSPA TV & WSNW Radio.

Member of the press present: Brett McLaughlin – Daily Journal, Dick Mangrum - WGOG and David Williams – Anderson Independent.

Call to Order:

Chairman Lyles called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance:

Mr. Crumpton led the pledge of allegiance to the US Flag.

Minutes:

Mr. Ables made a motion, seconded by Mr. Crumpton, approved 4 – 0 that the minutes of the regular meeting held October 2, 2007 be adopted as printed.

Mr. Blanchard made a motion, seconded by Mr. Crumpton, approved 4 – 0 that the minutes from the Council Workshop Meeting with the Sewer Commission held on October 2, 2007 be adopted as printed.

Public Comment Session:

Mr. Berry Nichols addressed Council regarding his concerns that the Council members represent all citizens.

Mr. Larry Linson addressed Council regarding his support for billboard regulations.

Mr. Steve McLeod addressed Council regarding his support for the zoning enabling ordinance.

Mr. C. W. Richards addressed Council regarding his opposition to a referendum for a one cent sales tax.

Mr. B. J. Littleton addressed Council regarding his opposition to zoning and the enabling act of 1994.

Citizen Group Concerns regarding Billboards:

Mr. J. Harold Thomas, a representative of a local citizens group, addressed Council regarding billboard installation on Highway 28 between Seneca and Walhalla. Mr. Thomas provided Council with a copy of the South Carolina Code of Laws, Title 57, Chapter 23, [filed with these minutes] in which the designation of scenic highways is addressed.

Mr. Thomas requested Council to take under advisement applying to have this portion of highway designated by the State as a scenic highway. Council took no action at this meeting but stated that they would take the issue under advisement.

Ordinance 2007-16:

Public Hearing regarding Ordinance 2007-16:

Mr. Norton noted that there had been no changes to the Ordinance since second reading.

Mr. Lyles asked for written and/or public comment without response.

Ordinance 2007-16:

Mr. Ables made a motion, seconded by Mr. Crumpton, approved 4 – 0 that **Ordinance 2007-16, “AN ORDINANCE ADOPTING AND ENACTING A NEW CODE FOR THE COUNTY OF OCONEE, SOUTH CAROLINA; PROVIDING FOR THE REPEAL OF CERTAIN ORDINANCES NOT INCLUDED THEREIN; PROVIDING A PENALTY FOR THE VIOLATION THEREOF; PROVIDING FOR THE MANNER OF AMENDING SUCH CODE; AND PROVIDING WHEN SUCH CODE AND THIS ORDINANCE SHALL BECOME EFFECTIVE”** be adopted on third and final reading.

Oconee Chamber Alliance Presentation to Council:

Mr. Bob Moir, Oconee Chamber Alliance representative, addressed Council and provided the members with two handouts [filed with these minutes] outlining the activities of the Chamber Alliance at the Economic Development Summit 2007. Mr. Moir noted that the three municipalities Chambers are working together to identify projects that they unanimously can work on collectively for Oconee County.

Tourism Recommendation Presentation:

Mr. Phil Shirley, Parks Recreation & Tourism Director, provided Council with an overview of current tourism activities and recommendations for the future. Mr. Shirley presented suggestions / finding obtained from several groups [in a PowerPoint presentation filed with these minutes]. One of the main areas for focus identified was to create a Convention Visitor Bureau [CVB].

Mr. Shirley requested permission to proceed with identifying potential funding options, identify potential partners in business and government, researching the potential makeup of an Executive Board, researching and preparing a prospective job description for a CVB director, etc., all of which he would bring back to council in approximately 3 months.

Council requested Mr. Shirley to proceed as outlined above and report back to Council in 3 months.

Items for Consideration by Council:

2006 Property Tax Reassessment Summary:

Mr. Leslie Smith, Assessor's office, addressed Council regarding the status of property tax reassessments from 2006. There were 4,604 appeals in 2006 with 3,379 having been resolved leaving 1,225 reassessment appeals pending. Mr. Smith identified key areas that contributed to a backlog i.e., inadequate staffing, Department of Revenue audit and the change in the reassessment schedule. Mr. Smith stated that the new law will allow citizens to file appeals throughout the year, not just in the first three months of the year as before and that the process will be ongoing.

Arts & Historical Funding Requests:

Mr. Surrent noted that these requests were not ATAX requests and asked the Clerk to Council to amend the agenda to reflect the requests from the Arts & Historical Commission.

Mr. Surrent addressed Council regarding the following four requests for funding from the Arts & Historical Commission:

- \$500 for American Flags
- \$750 for Oconee Community Theater's Summer Youth Program / 2008
- \$1,840 for a historical marker for Gen. John A. Wagener
- \$1,298.40 for 5,000 copies of "A Brief History of Oconee County" brochure

Mr. Crumpton made a motion, seconded by Mr. Blanchard, approved 4 – 0 to approve the four funding requests from

Extending Bid #2005-17: Baker's Waste Bid for Compactor Units & Receiver Boxes:

Mr. Surrett addressed Council regarding extending Bid #2005-17 to Baker's Waste Equipment of Greenville for Compactor Units and Receivers Boxes at a cost of \$159,493.00.

Mr. Blanchard made a motion, seconded by Mr. Crumpton, approved 4 – 0 to approve extending Bid #2005-17 to Baker's Waste Equipment of Greenville, SC in the amount of \$159,493.00.

Landfill Track Loader Replacement:

Mr. Surrett addressed Council regarding the purchase of a CAT 973 Track Loader from Caterpillar. He noted that other companies were reviewed and after the Procurement Director and Solid Waste staff reviewed all options it was determined that Caterpillar makes the only track/crawler loader comparable in size, weight and horsepower with the current loader.

Mr. Blanchard made a motion, seconded by Mr. Ables, approved 4 – 0 to approve procurement to proceed with the sole-source purchase to replace the current landfill track loader with another CAT 973 from Caterpillar for a price of \$429,151.00.

County Participation in Local Update of Census Addresses [LUCA] Program:

Mr. Surrett asked Mr. Aaron Gadsby, Planning Department, to address Council regarding the Local Update of Census Addresses [LUCA] program. Mr. Gadsby outlined three options that the County could participate in with a recommendation from the Planning Department that the County adopt Option #1 which allows 120 days to review and amend the existing Census Bureau address list, to initiate challenges to information collected by canvassers during the next phase of the program and finally allows the County to prioritize review areas within the County.

Mr. Surrett added that this program will also require the addition of one temporary employee who would be specifically dedicated to this project. He noted that they would be hired from a temporary agency at a rate of \$12.00 per hour with an anticipated total expenditure of \$10,800.00.

Mr. Blanchard noted that he attended the South Carolina Association of Counties [SCAC] Fall Coalition meeting recently in Columbia, SC, where the 2010 census was discussed. It was also the recommendation of SCAC that each county to choose Option #1 in this program.

Mr. Blanchard made a motion, seconded by Mr. Ables, approved 4 – 0 to approve the Planning Department to proceed with Option #1 of the LUCA program and in addition authorize the Administrator to transfer funds from the personnel contingency account to hire a temporary employee dedicated to this program to be paid as outlined in the previous paragraph.

Council Committee Reports:

Real Estate, Facilities & Land Management:

Mr. Lyles had no report at this meeting

Road & Transportation:

Mr. Crumpton had no report at this meeting

Law Enforcement, Public Safety, Health & Welfare Committee Report:

Mr. Blanchard had not report at this meeting.

He did note that during the last legislative session in Columbia he had met with John Pierce who has volunteered to facilitate meeting between the County and our local municipalities at no cost after the first of the year.

Budget, Finance & Administration:

Mr. Ables had no report at this meeting.

Planning & Economic Development:

Mr. Suarez was not in attendance therefore no report was made.

Administrator Report:**Register of Deeds Email:**

Mr. Surrett read an email to Council from Rod & April Bentham commending the Register of Deeds staff.

Council commended Ms. Westmoreland and her department for their work.

Old Business:

No Old Business was addressed.

New Business:**Capital Project Commission:**

Mr. Lyles polled the member to determine if Commission members had been selected. No members were identified and Mr. Lyles requested that this item be added to the next meeting agenda for discussion.

Water Restrictions / Drought Situation:

Mr. Blanchard addressed those present regarding the drought situation in Oconee County and the upstate. In addition he requested the citizens along with County Council support the legislators and local groups who are working on solutions to this problem.

Council Meeting Schedule Change:

Mr. Lyles initiated a discussion with Council members regarding a meeting schedule change. It was unanimously decided to cancel the meeting scheduled for Tuesday, November 20, 2007 at 3:00 p.m. and to reschedule the meeting for Tuesday, November 13, 2007 ay 3:00 p.m.

Executive Session:

Mr. Lyles moved to enter into Executive Session at 4:40 p.m. for the purpose of discussing contractual and personnel matters.

Mr. Lyles called the meeting back to Order at 5:13 p.m. stating no action will be taken on matters discussed in Executive Session.

Adjourn:

Mr. Lyles adjourned Council at 5:14 PM

Respectfully Submitted:

Elizabeth G. Hulse
Clerk to Council