

A Called Meeting of the Oconee County Board of Commissioners was held on Tuesday, April 8, 2008, at 7:00 p.m., in Courtroom No. 1 at the Oconee County Courthouse.

Members Present:

Chairman Melvin Davis  
Commissioner Jim Luke  
Commissioner Don Norris  
Commissioner Margaret S. Hale  
Commissioner Chuck Horton

Staff Present:

Administrative Officer Alan Theriault  
County Attorney Daniel Haygood  
County Clerk Gina M. Lindsey

Jeff Benko, Finance Director  
BR White, Planning Director  
Steve Hansford, Code Enforcement Director  
William White, Projects Coordinator  
Rusty Haygood, Econ Develop Director

Media Present:

Blake Giles, The Oconee Enterprise  
Adam Thompson, Athens Banner Herald

Chairman Davis began the meeting with a Moment of Silence. Commissioner Luke led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chairman Davis stated the purpose of the meeting was to hold the second reading and take final action on an ordinance regulating the sale of wine and malt beverages in Oconee County.

County Attorney Daniel Haygood provided a brief overview of the proposed ordinance. He explained the new ordinance would update the current ordinance that allows the sale of wine and malt beverages by the package. The proposed ordinance includes the addition of 2 classes of licenses that would allow the sale of wine and malt beverages by the drink in restaurants located within certain service areas.

T.L. Turman said he was against the proposed ordinance and expressed encouragement to the Board through prayer. Tom Leach asked that the citizens be allowed to vote on the matter. Charles Jones stated this was a moral issue and the Board of Commissioners should take the steps to have the issue placed on the ballot. Jerry Studdard said the citizens are upset and allowing the sale of wine and malt beverages in restaurants would benefit the development community and not the citizens of the county.

Jerry Price expressed his concern that the ordinance could be “watered down” at the discretion of future Boards of Commissioners. Nedra Johnson said allowing wine and malt beverages in restaurants will bring trouble to the county and it would only be a matter of time before liquor by the drink is allowed.

Carl Nichols stated the county needs to diversify its tax base and it is the Board of Commissioners’ responsibility to make sure the county is fiscally sound. Alex Pannel said the ordinance is essential for managing the drinking of alcoholic beverages in restaurants. Wesley Scott said the passing of the proposed ordinance is economically feasible because it would increase tax revenue and create jobs.

George Krumm expressed his concern for public health. Bill Fox said he doubted additional tax revenue would be received and asked for a vote by the citizens.

County Attorney Daniel Haygood explained that Georgia Law does not allow the Board of Commissioners to put the question of wine and malt beverages by the drink on the ballot. He stated the Board could not delegate that duty.

Chairman Davis asked if the Board would like to make any changes to the proposed ordinance. All said no.

Commissioner Norris made the motion to approve the Ordinance regulating the sale of wine and malt beverages in Oconee County. Commissioner Luke seconded the motion. Commissioners Norris and Luke voted yes. Commissioners Hale and Horton voted no. Chairman Davis voted yes. The Ordinance was approved. **\*\*See Documentation in Ordinances and Resolutions Book No. 18.**

There being no further business, on motion by Commissioner Horton and second by Commissioner Luke, the meeting was adjourned.

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County Clerk

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Chairman

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Date