

The Agenda Setting Meeting of the Oconee County Board of Commissioners was held on Tuesday, May 27, 2008, in the Commissioners Meeting Chambers, Oconee County Courthouse.

Members Present:

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

Staff Present:

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

Jeff Benko, Finance Director
Wes Geddings, Senior Finance Officer
John Gentry, Parks and Recreation Director
BR White, Planning Director
Steve Hansford, Code Enforcement Director
John Hatcher, Utility Director
Emil Beshara, Public Works Director
William White, Projects Coordinator
Rusty Haygood, Econ Develop Director

Media Present:

Vinnie Williams, The Oconee Enterprise
Adam Thompson, Athens Banner-Herald

FY 2009 Budget Hearing: At 6:30 p.m., the Board held a public hearing on the proposed Fiscal Year 2009 Fiscal Year Budget.

Chairman Davis shared the major items proposed for the FY 2009 Budget:

1. The budget for all funds is balanced in accordance with all applicable state laws.
2. The overall budget reflects an approximate 5% decrease over the FY08 budget with the property tax millage rate of 6.98 mils to be reduced by an amount equal to the inflationary growth of the digest caused by property re-assessments.
3. As has been the case the past several fiscal years, emphasis has been placed in the areas of Law Enforcement and Public Safety. One (1) additional Investigator, five (5) additional Jailers and three (3) Court Services Deputies are included for the Sheriff's Office; and one (1) additional Communications Officer for E911 is included as are a number of vehicles in keeping with our ongoing life-cycle management program with patrol vehicles. For the Fire Department, two (2) additional prototype pumper have been recommended.
4. A 2.3% cost of living increase and a 2.7% (merit) increase for county employees is included, as is an improved County Retirement program.
5. Aggressive road resurfacing and road maintenance minimization through our FY 2009-FY 2010 TIM Plan have been budgeted.
6. A continuation of Farmland Protection is also included in the FY09 budget.

Finance Director Jeff Benko presented a power point presentation on the proposed budget. He reported the FY 2009 proposed Budget Highlights include conservative revenue projections based on FY 2007, a millage rollback equal to the Tax Commissioner's calculation of digest growth attributable to property reassessments, the implementation of Senior Citizen Tax Relief and an emphasis on Public Safety. The overall budget reflects a 5.02% decrease over the FY 08 budget. Emphasis was placed in the areas of Public Safety, Parks and Recreation, Senior Center, Fire Department and Public Works - Road Improvements. The proposed budget for the General Fund is \$25,234,877. The proposed budget for all funds is \$39,388,887.

Mr. Benko stated any new tax revenue will only come from new growth. Administrative Officer Alan Theriault explained the Property Taxpayer's Bill of Rights and noted the requirements for public hearings and advertisements.

There being no public comments, the Public Hearing was closed.

Agenda Meeting: At 7:00 p.m. Chairman Davis called the Agenda Setting Meeting to order and began with a Moment of Silence. The Veterans in the audience led the Pledge of Allegiance.

FY 2009 Budget: Chairman Davis reported the Board will consider adoption of the FY 2009 Budget at the June 3, 2008 regular meeting.

Transfer of Development Rights Study Committee: The Board interviewed Clay Bryant, Melba Cooper, Delmar Finco, Phillip Freshley, Edward Gardiner, Anthony Glenn, Justin Greer, Albert Hale, Wayne Jordan, Chuck Lee, Kate McDaniel, Bob Smith, Brian Tomlinson and Chuck Williams for appointment to the Transfer of Development Rights Study Committee. Applicants Jeff Christie and Linda Carol Porterfield were unable to attend. The Board will take action on these appointments at the June 3, 2008 meeting.

Veterans Memorial – Asphalt and Curbing: Larry Davison and Mike Maxey provided an update on the Veterans Memorial under construction at the Oconee Community Complex. Reverend Davison, Chairman of the Oconee County Veterans Memorial Foundation, said a dedication is planned for July 4th, 2008. He told the Board the Veterans Memorial Committee had voted to request a change in the park name to “The Oconee Veterans Park”. He also requested the main entrance into the park be named “Veterans Parkway”.

Mr. Maxey requested county assistance in procuring materials to complete the parking lot. He explained all labor has been donated, as well as the transportation of the materials. On motion by Commissioner Horton and second by Commissioner Hale, the Board unanimously approved funding up to \$15,000 to assist with asphalt, crusher run and concrete curbing for the Veterans Memorial parking lot, to be coordinated by Administrative Officer Alan Theriault.

Oconee Community Complex – Recommendation to Rename: Parks and Recreation Director John Gentry presented a recommendation by the Citizens Advisory Committee on Cultural and Recreation Affairs, to rename the Oconee Community Complex. Mr. Gentry said the committee received both written and verbal requests, all recommending a different name. The committee’s recommendation is only for the Board of Commissioners to consider renaming the park, but does not recommend a name.

On motion by Commissioner Luke and second by Commissioner Horton, the Board voted unanimously to request the Citizens Advisory Committee on Cultural and Recreation Affairs make a recommendation of names for the park, with the word “veterans” being included in the name.

Rezone Request No. 5710 – Travis Marshall (Postponed): On motion by Commissioner Norris and second by Commissioner Hale, the Board voted unanimously to postpone action on Rezone Request No. 5710 by Travis A. Marshall, \pm 50.97 acres, located on SR 15, to the August 5, 2008 meeting, as requested by the applicant.

Broadcasting Meetings: Administrative Officer Alan Theriault reported several citizens have requested the Board of Commissioners broadcast its meetings. Mr. Theriault recommended digitally filming the meeting and posting it to the county website for viewing the following day. He explained anyone with a computer could view the meetings in this manner as opposed to a PEG channel where one would have to be a cable subscriber. The Board requested Mr. Theriault proceed with a cost analysis for webcasting the Board of Commissioners meetings.

Indigent Defense Services Agreement: Administrative Officer Alan Theriault presented the proposed Indigent Defense Services Agreement between the Circuit Public Defenders Office of the Western Judicial Circuit, the Oconee County Board of Commissioners and the Unified Government of Athens-Clarke County for FY 2009. Mr. Theriault noted there were no changes to the proposed Agreement and recommended approval.

By consensus, this item will be placed on the Consent Agenda for June 3, 2008.

Hwy. 53 Collection Center Lease: Administrative Officer Alan Theriault recommended the renewal of the Lease Agreement for the Highway 53 Sanitation Site with Allen Hunter for the period July 1, 2008, through June 30, 2009. Mr. Theriault noted there were no changes to the proposed Lease Agreement.

By consensus, this item will be placed on the Consent Agenda for June 3, 2008.

Tax Refund: County Attorney Daniel Haygood reported the McCalla, Raymer, LLC law firm mistakenly filed two Clarke County deeds in Oconee County and made payment of intangible tax in the amount of \$816.00 and transfer tax in the amount of \$302.00 to Oconee County. Clerk of Courts Angie Watson has recommended a refund of the taxes paid in error.

By consensus, this item will be placed on the Consent Agenda for June 3, 2008.

Variance Request No. 5722 – Virgil Langford Road, LLC (Postponed): On motion by Commissioner Luke and second by Commissioner Horton, the Board voted unanimously to postpone Variance Request No. 5722 by Virgil Langford Road, LLC, \pm 1.494 acres, located on SR 316 and Langford Drive, until the companion Rezone Request comes before the Board.

June 3, 2008 Agenda: The agenda for the June 3, 2008 meeting was read by County Clerk Gina Lindsey.

Citizen Remarks: Kate McDaniel said she was excited about the prospect of webcasting the Board of Commissioners meetings. Charles Baugh expressed appreciation to the Board for moving quickly on a decision. Tony Glenn offered suggestions on webcasting technology.

Larry Davison thanked the Board for considering a name change for the park.

Executive Session: On motion by Commissioner Norris and second by Commissioner Luke, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn into Executive Session to discuss land acquisition and personnel matters. No action was taken.

On motion by Commissioner Luke and second by Commissioner Horton, the Board adjourned Executive Session.

On motion by Commissioner Luke and second by Commissioner Norris, the Board adjourned back into Regular Session.

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

County Clerk

Chairman

Date