

The Agenda Setting Meeting of the Oconee County Board of Commissioners was held on Tuesday, November 25, 2008, at 7:00 p.m. in the Commission Meeting Chambers at the Oconee County Courthouse.

Members Present:

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

Staff Present:

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

Jeff Benko, Finance Director
BR White, Planning Director
Chris Thomas, Utility Director
John Gentry, Parks and Recreation Director
William White, Project Coordinator
Emil Beshara, Public Works Director
Steve Hansford, Code Enforcement Director
Wayne Provost, Strategic/L-R Planning Director
Malinda Smith, Human Resource Director
Capt. Jimmy Williams, Sheriff's Department

Media Present:

Vinnie Williams, 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.

Keep Oconee County Beautiful Commission: The Board interviewed applicant Tracey Stewart for appointment to the Keep Oconee County Beautiful Commission to fill an unexpired term, expiring June 30, 2010. The Board will take action on this appointment at their December 2, 2008 meeting.

Land Use and Transportation Planning Committee: The Board interviewed applicants Chris Herring and Trey Thompson for appointment to the Land Use and Transportation Planning Committee to fill an unexpired term, expiring September 30, 2009. The Board will take action on this appointment at their December 2, 2008 meeting.

2009 SPLOST Allocations: The Board opened the meeting for public comment on the prioritization of 2009 SPLOST allocations. Sonya Adsit, Kate McDaniel, Mary Mellein, Courtney Gale, Tony Glenn, Russ Page and Sarah Bell spoke in support of SPLOST funding for Farmland Protection and Historic and Scenic Site Preservation. Mike Power said projects should be prioritized on a "needed basis" and he supported the preliminary prioritization.

After substantial discussion regarding the prioritization of 2009 SPLOST projects and allocations, the Board of Commissioners came to the following consensus:

G.O. Bond – Recreation	\$4.8 Million
Jail/EOC/911 Lease Purchase	\$6.0 Million
Roads	\$8.0 Million
Water and Sewer	\$6.8 Million
Fire	\$3.9 Million
Radio System	\$3.2 Million
Parks/ Historic & Scenic Preservation	\$1.1 Million
Farmland Protection	\$0.5 Million

The Board will consider approval of the 2009 SPLOST allocations at their December 2, 2008 meeting.

Environmental Health Fees: Dr. Claude Burnett and Environmental Health Director Ryan Jones requested the Board adopt a revised Environmental Health Fee Schedule, as recommended by the Oconee County Board of Health. Dr. Burnett said the request is based on bringing the fees up to the cost of performing the service. He noted the Health Department is experiencing a budget deficit and current Environmental Health expenditures are exceeding revenues by approximately \$75,000.

The Board explained fee schedules were reviewed during the annual budget process and expressed their desire to consider any revisions at that time. By consensus, the Board agreed the Board of Health should request an amendment to their budget if a shortfall occurs in FY2009 and the revised Environmental Health Fee Schedule will be considered during the FY2010 budget process.

2008 Tax Digest Error and Release Order: County Clerk Gina Lindsey presented the 2008 Tax Digest Error and Release Order as recommended by Tax Commissioner Harriette Browning. By consensus, this item will be placed on the December 2, 2008 consent agenda.

2009 Alcohol License Renewals: County Clerk Gina Lindsey presented the applications for the renewal of a 2009 Beer and/or Wine License that were received by the November 15th deadline. Renewal applications for retail sales by the package were received from Bells Food Store, Racetrac, Kroger, T's Corner, A.J.'s Food Store, Fast Phil's, Publix, Wal-Mart, Oconee Fast Mart, Golden Pantry #77, Golden Pantry #15, Oconee Food Mart and Athens Shell. Renewal applications for the sale of malt beverages and/or wine at wholesale were received from Bibbs Distributing Company, Leon Farmer & Company and Northeast Sales Distributing. A renewal application for retail sales by the drink was received from Taqueria La Parrilla. All applicants have met the requirements of the ordinance.

By consensus, this item will be placed on the December 2, 2008 consent agenda.

Employee Retirement Plan: Human Resource Director Malinda Smith reported a number of employees have recently inquired about the possibility of retiring. In light of the current economic conditions, Ms. Smith recommended providing a “one-time window of opportunity” for the retirement of employees that are or will be 62 or older at the end of calendar year 2008. She explained eligible employees age 62 to 64 must have 10 years of service and age 65 and up must have at least 5 years of service.

Ms. Smith explained employees age 62 to 64 would be able to continue health insurance coverage until age 65, at the current rate paid by the county (60/40) under the HMO Plan. At age 65, coverage would be converted to a Medicare Supplement paid 100% by the County.

Employees age 65 and up would be able to continue health insurance coverage at the current rate paid by the County (60/40), under the HMO Plan, for one year. After the one year period, coverage would be converted to Medicare Supplement paid 100% by the County.

Ms. Smith suggested this “window of opportunity” be offered from December 1, 2008 through February 28, 2009 for actual retirement to take place between December 1, 2008 and June 30, 2009. She also noted there would be a retirement incentive of a one-time lump sum payment of \$7,500.

By consensus, this item will be placed on the December 2, 2008 consent agenda.

Wastewater Treatment Capacity: Utility Director Chris Thomas requested approval of the following recommendations regarding the Rocky Branch WWTP upgrade, the Calls Creek WWTP upgrade and the methodology of calculating sewerage plant availability, as discussed at the November 20, 2008 Board of Commissioners work session:

- 1) Continue engineering on the Rocky Branch WWTP until completion;
- 2) Approve the immediate upgrade of the Calls Creek WWTP and the associated trunk lines to the permitted 1mgd, utilizing funding of \$1.5 million from capacity fees and \$1.5 million from SPLOST funds;
- 3) Cease negotiations with Southern Champion to achieve the Guaranteed Maximum Price (GMP) for the Rocky Branch plant and place the project on hold; and,
- 4) Adopt a policy that (a) utilizes actual plant flows of 80% of total plant capacity to determine sewerage availability, (b) limits the amount of capacity that can be sold to not more than 175% of total plant capacity and (c) provides that any additional capacity realized be restricted to commercial usage.

By consensus, this item will be placed on the December 2, 2008 consent agenda.

Daniells Bridge Road Concept Plan: Public Works Director Emil Beshara presented three preliminary concept plans for improvements to the Daniells Bridge Corridor. ABE Consulting, Williams and Associates and RS&H provided the preliminary plans at no cost to the county.

Ambulance Service: Administrative Officer Alan Theriault provided an update on the decision by St. Mary's Hospital and Athens Regional Medical Center to subcontract their ambulance services to a private provider. Mr. Theriault reported that Chairman Davis had made a request to the Zoning Council Subcommittee that Oconee County and Athens-Clarke County have separate ambulance service zones. The subcommittee voted unanimously to pass the recommendation to the full EMS Council.

Executive Session: Commissioner Horton made the motion to adjourn into Executive Session to discuss litigation matters. Commissioner Hale seconded the motion. Commissioners Horton, Hale and Norris voted yes. Commissioner Luke voted no. The motion passed.

No action was taken in Executive Session.

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

Rezone Request #5462 – Fred Gunter Property, LLC: Commissioner Horton made the motion to postpone action on Rezone Request #5462 by Fred Gunter Property, LLC, ± 13.43 acres, located on U.S. Hwy. 441, LaVista Road and Chaddwyck Drive, to the January 6, 2008 meeting. Commissioner Hale seconded the motion. Commissioners Horton, Hale and Norris voted yes. Commissioner Luke voted no. The motion passed.

December 2, 2008 Agenda: The agenda for the December 2, 2008 meeting was read by County Clerk Gina M. Lindsey.

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

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