

Oconee County Board of Commissioners Called Meeting
Courthouse Commission Chambers
August 24, 2021 – 5:00 p.m.
Minutes

Members Present:

Chairman John Daniell
Commissioner Mark Thomas
Commissioner Chuck Horton
Commissioner Amrey Harden
Commissioner Mark Saxon (virtually)

Staff Present:

Justin Kirouac, County Administrator
Daniel Haygood, County Attorney
Holly Stephenson, County Clerk
Alex Newell, Internal Services Director
Wes Geddings, Finance Director
Diane Baggett, Communications Manager
Tracye Bailey, Deputy Clerk

Others Present:

Courtney Bernardi, President of Oconee Chamber of Commerce
Brian Broderick, Mayor of City of Watkinsville
Rick Waller, Chairman of Oconee County Industrial Development Authority

Call to Order: 5:00 p.m.

Chairman John Daniell called the meeting to order and stated that participants using Zoom may comment by using the raised-hand feature.

Approval of Agenda:

ACTION:

Motion:	Chuck Horton made the motion to approve the agenda as submitted.
Second:	Mark Thomas
Voted in Favor of Motion:	Mark Thomas, Chuck Horton, Amrey Harden, Mark Saxon
Voted Against Motion:	None
Final Action:	Motion Passed.

Oconee County Economic Development Bonds:

Presented by: Courtney Bernardi, President, Oconee Chamber of Commerce

Discussion: Request approval of bonds for COSTCO to locate to Oconee County, already approved by the Oconee Industrial Development Authority. The project has been worked on for ten to eleven years to make sure it benefits the community. COSTCO is the world's 4th largest retailer, will locate next to Hobby Lobby on a 23-acre site owned by the Bishop Company, and plans a 155,000 square foot building with 699 parking spaces and an 18 spot fuel center with ability to expand to 24 pumps (largest ever done by COSTCO). This will be their 16th location in Georgia. Oconee is the smallest community to ever see a COSTCO, but are expected to draw customers regionally.

COSTCO is a strong retailer known for how they value their employees. The Oconee location will employ 253-275 employees with a starting wage of \$16.50 per hour and an average salary of \$58,000 per year plus bonuses, benefits, time and a half on Sunday, and educational expenses for employees and dependents. Costco has never closed a store. The proposed opening is in mid-2022 (May-June), with expected \$94 million the first year in sales with an estimated 8% increase each year.

Frank Bishop thanked the Commissioners for support and making this possible.

Daniel Haygood, County Attorney, explained the proposed deal structure to include the issuance of bonds not to exceed \$16 million to cover the developed property, site improvements and location costs on Parkway Boulevard. The project will generate \$3 million in sales tax dollars with LOST, SPLOST and ELOST, plus TSPLOST if passed would be another million dollars. Oconee County's legal limitation will be an amount no more than the revenue generated from LOST. Should Costco close or move, there will be no obligation on the IDA or the County for further bond payments. Debt reserve will hold \$1.2 million for the last payment. Due to IRS rules, \$3.2 million of \$16 million will be put in an investment for County until it earns enough income to pay back the amount of the incentives to the County. \$11.6 million is the remainder and true County investment.

The other portion of this proposal is the abatement of property taxes. The IDA will own the property, so no real or personal property taxes will be paid for about 15 years. This is an approximate \$3.5 million incentive or \$300,000 per year. The school board is in agreement with the details of the proposed resolutions.

Commissioner Harden asked questions regarding the business, incentives, potential revenue and county obligations.

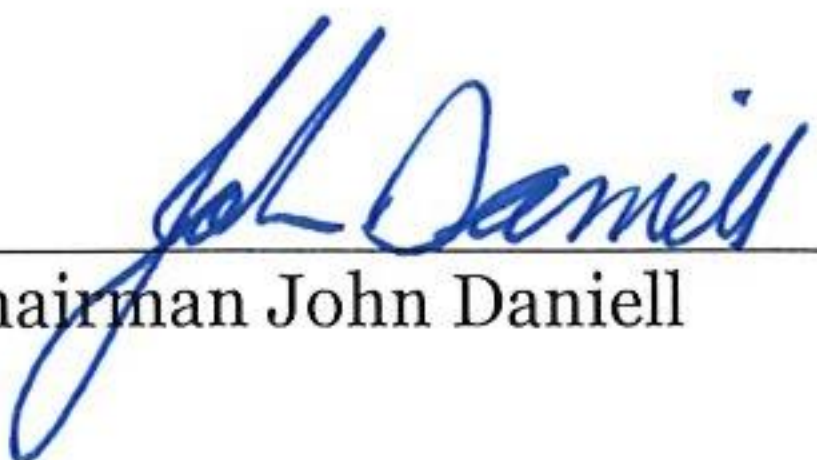
*The Public Comment Period was opened and there were no comments.
Chairman Daniell asked if there were "raised hands" in Zoom and there were none.*

ACTION:

Motion:	Chuck Horton made the motion to approve the Resolution approving the agreement with the Industrial Development Authority.
Second:	Mark Thomas
Voted in Favor of Motion:	Mark Thomas, Chuck Horton, Amrey Harden, Mark Saxon
Voted Against Motion:	None
Final Action:	Motion Passed.

Meeting Adjourned:

Motion:	Mark Saxon made the motion to adjourn the meeting.
Second:	Mark Thomas
Voted in Favor of Motion:	Mark Thomas, Chuck Horton, Amrey Harden, Mark Saxon
Voted Against Motion:	None
Action/Motion:	Motion Passed.
Meeting Adjourned:	5:27 p.m.


Chairman John Daniell


Holly Stephenson, County Clerk

9-721
Date