

**Oconee County Board of Commissioners Meeting
Courthouse Commission Chambers
June 7, 2022 – 6:00 p.m.
Minutes**

Members Present:

Chairman John Daniell
Commissioner Mark Thomas
Commissioner Chuck Horton
Commissioner Amrey Harden
Commissioner Mark Saxon

Elected Officials Present:

Sheriff James Hale

Staff Present:

Justin Kirouac, County Administrator
Mike Pruett, Attorney
Holly Stephenson, County Clerk
Alex Newell, Internal Services Director
Melissa Braswell, Finance Director
Donna Norton, Budget Officer
Guy Herring, Planning and Code Enforcement Director
Jody Woodall, Public Works Director
Cindy Pritchard, KOCBC Director
Lisa Davol, Parks & Recreation Director

Call to Order: 6:00 p.m.

Chairman John Daniell called the second FY23 Budget Public Hearing to order and stated that participants using Zoom may comment by using the raised-hand feature.

FY23 Proposed Budget Public Hearing:

Finance Director Melissa Braswell discussed the proposed FY23 Budget. The proposed FY23 General Fund Budget is \$37,894,885 with a total proposed FY23 budget to include the General Fund of \$65,880,198. This budget would cover the time period of July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2023. Ms. Braswell requests adoption of FY23 proposed budget and proposed fee schedule. Also, she requests uncommitting the committed fund balance of \$912,912 and consideration of the multi-year project listing for approval of any necessary budget amendments through the life of the project not to exceed the approved contract amounts.

Chairman Daniell expressed excitement over this budget which will include a \$3,500 salary increase at entry-level for all employee grade, which will be compounded over years of service. Part-time employees will also receive an hourly increase. Public safety employees of grade 10 and above will receive an additional 2% over the \$3,500. The county will continue to fund a Senior Deputy POST certification.

There will be a 10% increase in cost of health insurance in FY23, but the county will cover this increase for any employee who participates in the Wellness Program. Additionally, the county will deposit \$1200 in employee health savings accounts.

For the taxpayers, there will be a millage rate reduction so only real growth in the tax digest will be recognized. Chairman Daniell stated there will be no need for tax increase hearings in Oconee County for this year. He thanked the Board for their commitment to the Strategic Plan and Comprehensive Plan to allow this to happen.

*The Public Comment Period was opened.
There were no comments and no "raised hands" via Zoom.*

The Public Hearing was closed.

ACTION:

Motion: Mark Saxon made a motion to approve the FY23 Budget as presented for the General Fund at \$37,894,885, total budget including the General Fund of \$65,880,198 and the FY23 Fee schedule, in addition to uncommitting the Committed fund balance of \$912, 912 and approving the budget amendments as necessary for multi-year projects presented up to the approved contract amount for the life of the projects.

Second: Chuck Horton

Voted in Favor of Motion: Mark Thomas, Chuck Horton, Amrey Harden, Mark Saxon

Voted Against Motion: None

Final Action: **Motion Passed.**

Call to Order: 6:00 p.m.

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

Pledge of Allegiance:

County Administrator Justin Kirouac led the Pledge after a moment of silence.

Approval of Agenda:

ACTION:

Motion: Mark Thomas made a motion to approve the June 7, 2022 Agenda.

Second: Chuck Horton

Voted in Favor of Motion: Mark Thomas, Chuck Horton, Amrey Harden, Mark Saxon

Voted Against Motion: None

Final Action: **Motion Passed.**

Statements and Remarks from Citizens:

None.

Statements and Remarks from Commissioners:

Chairman Daniell announced the Water Resources Department will hold a public meeting on the proposed expansion of the Calls Creek Water Reclamation Facility on June 14th from 2-3pm at the Community Room of the Oconee County Veteran's Park.

Additionally, on June 14th at 6pm will be the quarterly Town Hall Meeting to be held at the Oconee County Civic Center and virtually. It will include a kick-off for the Comprehensive Plan update.

Approval of Minutes:

Minutes of May 3, 2022 Regular Meeting and May 24, 2022 Agenda Meeting:

Commissioner Harden pointed out an error in the May 3, 2022 Minutes under the Motion for Rezone P22-0035.

ACTION:

Motion: Amrey Harden made a motion to approve the minutes of the May 3 Regular Meeting with one correction and the May 24 Agenda Meeting.

Second: Mark Saxon

Voted in Favor of Motion: Mark Thomas, Chuck Horton, Amrey Harden, Mark Saxon

Voted Against Motion: None

Final Action: **Motion Passed.**

Update on Cole Springs Road Closure:

Presented by: Jody Woodall, Public Works Director

Discussion: Public Works Director Jody Woodall has requested prices from three engineering firms for ICE studies on the Cole Springs Road intersection. Also, he has spoken with the GDOT district pre-construction engineer who is pulling data and researching possible concepts for the intersection. She recommends not moving forward until their research is completed in the next few weeks.

County Administrator Justin Kirouac reminded of the GDOT options currently given for the intersection: keeping the intersection closed; re-opening the intersection as is; or moving towards a short-term or long-term solution. The only option for opening the intersection now is to re-open as is.

Commissioner Harden asked Jody Woodall to stay on top of GDOT for a response in just a few weeks so the Commission can be updated again at the June Agenda Setting Meeting. The goal is a safer re-opening of the intersection.

Coleman Hood, 1351 Overlook Ridge Road, asked the Chairman for a public comment period.

Chairman Daniell responded that this was an update with no vote. Public comments can be made at the June 14th Town Hall Meeting. Mr. Hood verbalized his dislike to the chamber as he left.

Second Reading and Public Hearing of the Proposed Updates to the No Through Truck Ordinance:

Presented by: John Daniell, Chairman

Discussion: The No Through Truck Ordinance was first adopted by Oconee County in 1982 with several updates since. Over the years, roadways were signed for "No Through Trucks", but not added correctly to the listing on the Ordinance. Due to increased complaints related to truck traffic over the last 12-18 months, the Sheriff's office and county administration have worked together to provide an accurate and enforceable truck ordinance with an updated list of No Through Truck roads which Chairman Daniell read aloud.

Additional conversations and reviews with the Sheriff's Office and Clerk of Court's Office produced further revisions of the list. Once the list was posted, a public comment period was opened for citizens to provide input. Based on the comments received, Chairman Daniell and Sheriff Hale met for further review the Ordinance.

The Commission's consensus on May 24th was to maintain the list as it currently stood, with additional conversations about Astondale Road and two sections of Mars Hill Road. Chairman Daniell stated the majority of Mars Hill Road is in the suburban neighborhood character area of the Comp Plan.

Commissioner Harden agreed to leaving Mars Hill Road on the list if additional conversations are had about the verbiage of the Ordinance. He questioned whether the Ordinance impeded the trucking businesses that operate in the county and their ability to make deliveries in the county. The consensus of the Commission and the Sheriff was that the Ordinance allows No Through Truck roads to be used to make deliveries if necessary, but not for trucks passing through Oconee County into another county.

Sheriff James Hale gave background on the Ordinance and explained the difficulty in enforcement due to signage and the judicial branch not always upholding the citations. The Sheriff requests clarification of the Ordinance which will aid his department in enforcement.

Commissioner Harden and Sheriff Hale continued conversations about Mars Hill Road.

The Commission expressed concern for the trucking industry due to rising fuel prices.

Commissioner Horton expressed empathy to truckers and officers when determining when citations should be issued.

Commissioner Harden questioned the amount of the fine if ticketed.

Chairman Daniell responded the Ordinance states the fine can be no more than \$1000.

Chairman Daniell confirmed the consensus of the Commission is to leave Mars Hill Road on the list.

Commissioner Thomas discussed trucking routes for the southern portion of the county near Astondale Road. He also clarified that it is the Sheriff's intent to allow deliveries to our citizens and not create a problem for county businesses to make their deliveries. He expressed safety concerns over truck traffic on Highway 53 with six schools along the route.

Chairman Daniell confirmed the consensus of the Commission to leave Astondale Road on the list.

Commissioner Thomas brought up the question of weight in Item C of the Ordinance. The Sheriff's office will have to make judgment calls in many situations.

County Administrator Justin Kirouac explained Public Works has traveled these roads and will make sure all are properly signed after adoption.

The Public Comment Period was opened.

Chuck Williams, Old Watson Springs Road, expressed concern for south Oconee residents that Astondale Road remain on this list due to increased truck traffic on Highway 15 into Watkinsville. He questioned the MACORTS 2014 Plan in regards to a two-lane road connecting Highway 15 and Highway 441. Chairman Daniell responded there has been an update since 2014 and a current study is in progress on moving traffic from Highway 15 to Highway 441.

Johnny Pritchett, Mayor of Bishop, thanked the Commission for leaving Astondale Road on the list.

Stephanie Bryant, thanked the Commission for leaving Astondale Road on the list. She is still concerned over the speeding truck traffic on Highway 15.

Wendell Faulkner, 4120 Colham Ferry Road, thanked the Commission for leaving Astondale on the list.

Chairman Daniell asked if there were "raised hands" via Zoom and there were none.

The Public Hearing was closed.

ACTION:

Motion:	Chuck Horton made a motion to approve the No Through Truck Ordinance with the listed roads to include Mars Hill and Astondale.
Second:	Amrey Harden
Voted in Favor of Motion:	Mark Thomas, Chuck Horton, Amrey Harden, Mark Saxon
Voted Against Motion:	None
Final Action:	Motion Passed.

Rezone No. P22-0064:

Applicants:	Abe Consulting Inc.
Owners:	Annette Nelson
Location:	2821 Flat Rock Road
Acreage:	±2.02
Zoning:	AG (Agricultural District)
Request:	AR (Agricultural Residential District)

Presented by: Guy Herring, Planning & Code Enforcement Director

Discussion: Mr. Herring briefed the Board regarding the request for the property, which is currently zoned AG (Agricultural District) in the Rural Places Character Area. The applicants/owners request AR (Agricultural Residential District) to subdivide a ±2.02-acre lot for a single-family residence. The Planning Commission and Staff recommend approval of this request with three conditions.

The Public Hearing was opened.

Abe Abouhamdan, 1601 Robinhood Road, representing the owner, requests approval of subdividing the lot for a single-family residence next to the owner's current residence.

There were no further comments in favor of the request.

Mike Overbey, Flat Rock Road, spoke against the request in support of keeping larger acreage.

There were no further comments against the request.

*Chairman Daniell asked if there were "raised hands" via Zoom and there were none.
The Public Hearing was closed.*

Commissioner Saxon questioned the driveway easement.

Commissioner Horton asked to see the area map again.

ACTION:

Motion: Mark Saxon made a motion to approve Rezone No. P22-0064 for Annette Nelson from AG (Agricultural District) to AR (Agricultural Residential District), ±2.02 acres, 2821 Flat Rock Road, with three conditions.
Second: Mark Thomas
Voted in Favor of Motion: Mark Thomas, Chuck Horton, Amrey Harden, Mark Saxon
Voted Against Motion: None
Final Action: **Motion Passed to approve Rezone #P22-0064 with three conditions.**
(See documentation in Ordinance and Resolutions Book No. 2022.)

Oconee County Animal Services Advisory Board Appointments:

ACTION:

Motion: Mark Thomas made a motion to appoint Theresa Ruffen and Shannon Martin to 2-year terms beginning July 1, 2022 and expiring June 30, 2024.
Second: Chuck Horton
Voted in Favor of Motion: Mark Thomas, Chuck Horton, Amrey Harden, Mark Saxon
Voted Against Motion: None
Final Action: **Motion Passed.**

Oconee County Family and Children's Services Board Appointments:

ACTION:

Motion: Mark Saxon made a motion to appoint Latanja Clark to a five-year term to begin July 1, 2022 and expire June 30, 2027; Patricia Wining to a 2-year term beginning immediately and expiring June 30, 2024; and Lea Martin to a 1-year term beginning immediately and expiring June 30, 2023.
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 Tourism and Visitors Bureau Appointments:

ACTION:

Motion: Mark Saxon made a motion to appoint Sarah T. Cumuze, Candice Meeler and Dean Bright to two-year terms beginning July 1, 2022 and expiring June 30, 2024.
Second: Mark Thomas
Voted in Favor of Motion: Mark Thomas, Chuck Horton, Amrey Harden, Mark Saxon
Voted Against Motion: None

Final Action: **Motion Passed.**

Keep Oconee County Beautiful Commission Appointments:

ACTION:

Motion: Mark Thomas made a motion to appoint Darius Johnson and Lona Panter to two-year terms beginning July 1, 2022 and expiring June 30, 2024; and also, Brittany Siewe and Aimee Cheek to one-year terms beginning July 1, 2022 and expiring June 30, 2023.

Second: Mark Saxon

Voted in Favor of Motion: Mark Thomas, Chuck Horton, Amrey Harden, Mark Saxon

Voted Against Motion: None

Final Action: **Motion Passed.**

Consent Agenda:

There were no items removed from the Consent Agenda.

ACTION

Motion: Mark Thomas made a motion to approve all items as presented on the Consent Agenda.

Second: Chuck Horton

Voted in Favor of Motion: Mark Thomas, Chuck Horton, Amrey Harden, Mark Saxon

Voted Against Motion: None

Final Action: **Motion Passed.**

- 1) Approval of the Appointment of a Special Master for the Ethics Board.
- 2) Approval of an IGA with Athens-Clarke County regarding Juvenile Court Judge Compensation.
- 3) Approval of the Hog Mountain Road Multi-Use Path Design Services Award and necessary Budget Amendments.
- 4) Approval of Awarding Invitation to Bid for Herman C. Michael Pickle Ball Courts and necessary Budget Amendments.
- 5) Approval of the Public Defender FY23 Indigent Defense Services Agreement for the period of July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023.
- 6) Approval of the Early Retirement Budget Amendment.
- 7) Approval of Equity and Merit Adjustments.

Meeting Adjourned:

Motion: Mark Saxon made a 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: 7:21 p.m.


Chairman John Daniell


Holly Stephenson, County Clerk

7-12-22
Date