Oconee County Board of Commissioners Meeting
Administrative Building Commission Chambers
May 6, 2025 – 6:00 p.m.
Minutes

Members Present:
Chairman John Daniell
Commissioner Mark Thomas
Commissioner Chuck Horton
Commissioner Amrey Harden
Commissioner Mark Saxon

Staff Present:
Daniel Haygood, County Attorney
Justin Kirouac, County Administrator
Holly Stephenson, County Clerk
Melissa Braswell, Finance Director
Donna Norton, Budget Officer
Whitney Sperlik, Civic Center Director
Lisa Davol, Parks and Recreation Director
Guy Herring, Planning and Code Enforcement Director
Ethan Perry, Planner

Call to Order: 6:00 p.m.
Chairman John Daniell called the FY26 Budget Public Hearing to order.

Pledge of Allegiance:
County Attorney Daniel Haygood led the Pledge after a moment of silence.

FY26 Proposed Budget Public Hearing:
Finance Director Melissa Braswell presented the proposed FY26 Budget, stating the Budget supports the mission of Oconee County and is designed to achieve the strategic goals set forth for the county.

The proposed FY26 General Fund Budget is $45,704,250 which is a balanced budget with fund balance usage for Sheriff's Office body cameras. She discussed the FY26 General Fund proposed revenues and expenditures as compared to the FY25 budget, while detailing some increases departmentally and by classification. The proposed budget is an increase of 12.20% over the FY25 General Fund Budget.

The total proposed budget for FY26 is $83,700,551 to include capital, SPLOST and TSPLOST, special revenue, and enterprise funds. This is a 9.22% increase from prior year. Proposed revenues and expenses by fund and function were presented.

The total proposed budget for Water Resources, the largest Enterprise Fund, is $16,495,616. Revenues and expenses were presented by classification.

The FY26 Budget supports the strategic goals of the county with a commitment to public safety, transportation maintenance and improvements, water and sewer infrastructure plan, and the fleet phase replacement program.

The 2nd Budget Hearing is scheduled for May 20, 2025 at 6pm and the Budget Adoption scheduled for June 3, 2025. The full presentation, budget summary, and fee schedule will be posted on the Oconee County website at the conclusion of this meeting. Ms. Braswell explained some fee schedule changes for FY26.

The Public Comment Period was opened.

Jeff Morgan, 2340 Watson Springs Road, asked if the presentation is available online.
Ms. Braswell responded that the presentation will be posted online at the conclusion of the meeting.

Suzannah Heimel, Twin Oaks Court, asked about facial recognition equipment for the Sheriff's Office.
Chairman Daniell stated any questions on that request could be addressed to the Sheriff.

Blake Underwood, 2153 Barnett Shoals Road, thanked the Board for funding the SRO Program.

Jeff Hood, Julian Court, asked if COSTCO was meeting tax revenue expectations, if the jail was still housing out-of-county prisoners, and details on Oconee's share of the new DA's payroll.
Chairman Daniell explained COSTCO is exceeding expectations, the jail is still housing out-of-county prisoners and doing well with that, and the county commits to DA office supplements plus is adding another $150,000 for an additional district attorney with benefits to bring funding back to the level prior to losing the grant.

The Public Hearing was closed.

Call to Order: 6:35 p.m.
Chairman John Daniell called the meeting to order.

Approval of Agenda:
ACTION:

Motion:	Mark Thomas made a motion to approve the May 6, 2025 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:
Jeff and Jenny Morgan, 2340 Watson Springs Road, addressed traffic concerns on Colham Ferry Road.
Chairman Daniell responded with information on traffic studies and plans for the Colham Ferry/Astondale intersection.

Statements and Remarks from Commissioners:
Chairman Daniell reminded citizens of the next Town Hall Meeting on Tuesday, May 13, 2025 at 6pm at the Administrative Building.

Approval of Minutes:
Minutes of April 1, 2025 Regular Meeting and April 29, 2025 Agenda Meeting:

ACTION:

Motion:	Mark Saxon made a motion to approve the April 1, 2025 Regular Meeting minutes and the April 29, 2025 Agenda Meeting minutes.
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. P25-0015:

Applicants:	Pittman and Greer Engineering
Owners:	Blake Underwood
Location:	2153 Barnett Shoals Road

Acreage:	±48.96
Zoning:	AG (Agricultural)
Request:	AG (Agricultural) to AR (Agricultural Residential)

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) in the Country Estates Character Area. The applicant requests a rezone to AR (Agricultural Residential) for a twelve-lot development. The Planning Commission and Staff recommend conditional approval of this request to rezone to AR-3 (Agricultural Residential Three Acre District) with five conditions.

The Public Hearing was opened.

Frank Pittman, Pittman and Greer Engineering, requests the rezone to AR for a maximum of twelve lots. The proposal includes nine two-acre lot and three larger lots which fits the character area and nearby neighborhoods. He states AR-3 zoning for this parcel would actually allow up to sixteen lots but these lots would be more difficult to sell. He spoke in opposition to condition #4 in regards to storm water ponds.

Blake Underwood, 2153 Barnett Shoals Road, requests the rezone to AR with a maximum of twelve lots with an average lot size of close to four acres. He also spoke against condition #4.

Owen and Maggie Holdaway, 2021 South Barnett Shoals, spoke in support of the AR proposal for the property.

Eleshea Borders, 1057 Ashford Road, spoke in support of the rezone.

Jason Lawson, 1070 Porter Creek Drive, spoke in favor of the rezone.

There were no further comments in favor of the request.

Dan MaGee, Loch Lomond Circle, requests a 165-year-old structure on the parcel be saved, and there be no change in conditions.

Rebuttal:

Blake Underwood, is offering the 165-year-old structure to anyone who would like to move it, but stated it is in very poor condition.

Suzannah Heimel, Twin Oaks Court, requests the action on this zoning issue be postponed based on the requested rezone not being properly advertised by sign and in the paper, along with letters not being sent to all adjoining property owners.

Joe Ezernack, 1071 Twin Oaks Trail, spoke in favor of the rezone.

There were no further comments for or against the request.
The Public Hearing was closed.

Planning Director Guy Herring stated the rezone was properly advertised with photos to document. County Attorney Daniel Haygood stated that Oconee County code does not require mailing notices. County Administrator Justin Kirouac had a photo of the sign with date stamp. The staff put the sign back up once they learned it had fallen over. He agrees all was properly advertised.

Commissioner Thomas asked Mr. Herring about condition #4. Discussions continued between Commissioners, Mr. Herring, and Mr. Pittman in regards to the drainage and storm water ponds.

Commissioner Horton discussed with Mr. Pittman the lot sizes and density for the proposal.

ACTION:

Motion: Mark Thomas made a motion to approve Rezone No. P25-0015 for Blake Underwood, ±48.96 acres, 2153 Barnett Shoals Road, AG to AR with four conditions, removing conditions #4 and #5 as presented, then adding a condition #4 that there be a maximum of twelve lots.
Second: Chuck Horton
Voted in Favor of Motion: Mark Thomas, Chuck Horton, Amrey Harden, Mark Saxon
Voted Against Motion: None
Final Action: **Motion Passed to approve Rezone #P25-0015 with four conditions.**
(See documentation in Ordinance and Resolutions Book No. 25.)

Discuss and Consider the Award of the RFP for Civic Center Repairs:

Presented by: Whitney Sperlik, Civic Center Director
Discussion: The Civic Center issued an RFP for various repairs and received three proposals. Director Whitney Sperlik recommends awarding the contract to Reams Enterprises, Inc. for a total contract amount of $505,404.54 with an additional 10% owner's contingency. The request included all necessary budget amendments up to the contract amount for the life of the project.

The Public Comment Period was opened and there was no Public Comment.

ACTION:

Motion: Mark Saxon made a motion to approve awarding the RFP for Civic Center repairs to Reams Construction.
Second: Amrey Harden
Voted in Favor of Motion: Mark Thomas, Chuck Horton, Amrey Harden, Mark Saxon
Voted Against Motion: None
Final Action: **Motion Passed.**

Discuss and Consider the Design Services Contract for the Hog Mountain Road/Wellbrook Road Roundabout:

Presented by: Justin Kirouac, County Administrator
Discussion: County Administrator Justin Kirouac explained that with the anticipated growth around the 441/Hog Mountain Road corridor, a traffic study has recommended a roundabout at Wellbrook Road and Hog Mountain Road. The recommendation is to approve the design services contract with Carter Engineering for $195,000 for the roundabout and additional $55,000 for the alternative raised median, for a total of $250,000. An additional 10% is requested for ancillary services arising during the design process. The request includes all budget amendments up to the contract amount for the life of the contract.

The Public Comment Period was opened and there was no Public Comment.

Commissioner Harden requested a draft of the concept once complete for public comment at that time.

ACTION:

Motion: Mark Thomas made a motion to approve the design services contract with Carter Engineering.
Second: Amrey Harden
Voted in Favor of Motion: Mark Thomas, Chuck Horton, Amrey Harden, Mark Saxon
Voted Against Motion: None
Final Action: **Motion Passed.**

Discuss and Consider Dawson Park Gym and Field Services Building Architectural Services:

Presented by: Justin Kirouac, County Administrator

Discussion: County Administrator Justin Kirouac explained that the county is currently undergoing civil design of Dawson Park with Carter Engineering. A separate firm will be required to design the two gymnasiums and the field services building. The recommendation is to approve the contract with Hill Foley Rossi to design the field services building at a cost not to exceed $185,000 and the two gymnasiums at cost not to exceed $397,000. The request includes all budget amendments up to the contract amount for the life of the contract.

The Public Comment Period was opened and there was no Public Comment.

ACTION:

Motion:	Chuck Horton made a motion to approve the architectural services for Dawson Park Gyms and Field Services Building with Hill Foley Rossi.
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.
Commissioner Harden asked about the timeline of Item 1, the roundabout at Cole Springs and Clotfelter Roads at Highway 53.
County Administrator Justin Kirouac responded that construction could begin in the Fall of 2026 after design and right-of-way acquisition if funding becomes available.

ACTION

Motion:	Mark Saxon made a motion to approve the consent agenda as presented.
Second:	Mark Thomas
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 Design Services Bid for a Roundabout at Cole Springs Road/Clotfelter Road at Highway 53.

2) Approval of Replacement of the OVP Pump Station for Irrigation.

3) Approval of the 441 Collection Site Scale House Replacement.

4) Approval of the Bid Award for Construction Manager at Risk for the Courthouse Renovation Project.

5) Approval of a Change Order for Utility Relocation for Highway 53 at Snows Mill/Rocky Branch Road.

6) Approval of the Heritage Park Easement Plat Agreement.

7) Approval of the 2025 Local Road Assistance Application.

8) Approval of Replacement of the Jail Server.

9) Approval of the FY25 Civic Center Vehicle.

10) Approval of the FY25 Senior Center Van Purchase.

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:	7:33 p.m.

John Daniell
Chairman John Daniell

Holly Stephenson 6-3-25
Holly Stephenson, County Clerk Date