

**Oconee County Board of Commissioners Meeting
Administrative Building Commission Chambers
June 3, 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
Guy Herring, Planning and Code Enforcement Director
Kyle Stephens, Planner
Ethan Perry, Planner
Jody Woodall, Public Works Director
Lisa Davol, Parks and Recreation Director

Call to Order: 6:00 p.m.

Chairman John Daniell called the meeting to order.

Pledge of Allegiance:

Commissioner Mark Thomas led the Pledge after a moment of silence.

Approval of Agenda:

ACTION:

Motion:	Chuck Horton made a motion to approve the June 3, 2025 Agenda.
Second:	Mark Saxon
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 Morgan, 2340 Watson Springs Road, addressed speeding concerns on Colham Ferry Road, along with the safety of the Colham Ferry Road at Astondale Road intersection.

Jenny Morgan, 2340 Watson Springs Road, spoke of traffic safety concerns on Colham Ferry Road.

Statements and Remarks from Commissioners:

Commissioner Mark Thomas addressed the Morgans, expressing his condolences for their loss and suggesting they reach out to the Sheriff to discuss enforcement.

Chairman John Daniell explained the traffic research and current plans for the Colham Ferry/Astondale Road intersection, providing traffic study data.

Approval of Minutes:

Minutes of May 6, 2025 Regular Meeting, May 13, 2025 Town Hall Meeting, and May 20, 2025 Agenda Meeting:

ACTION:

Motion: Mark Saxon made a motion to approve the May 6, 2025 Regular Meeting minutes, May 13, 2025 Town Hall Meeting minutes, and the May 20, 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. P25-0039:

Applicants:	Robert Woelfl
Owners:	Robert Woelfl
Location:	1488 Old Bishop Road
Acreage:	±10.0
Zoning:	AG (Agricultural District)
Request:	AR-3 (Agricultural Residential Three Acre 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 applicant/owner requests a rezone to AR-3 (Agricultural Residential Three Acre District) to allow for two lots that are 7 acres and 3 acres. Staff and the Planning Commission recommended approval with two conditions.

The Public Hearing was opened.

There were no comments in favor of the request and no comments against the request.

The Public Hearing was closed.

Commissioner Thomas asked if AR-3 matched the character area for the location.

Mr. Herring explained minimum lot size would typically be four acres, but the division is into two lots only, a three-acre lot and a seven-acre lot.

ACTION:

Motion: Mark Thomas made a motion to approve Rezone No. P25-0039 for Robert Woelfl, ±10.0 acres, 1488 Old Bishop Road with two conditions.

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 #P25-0039 with two conditions.**
(See documentation in Ordinance and Resolutions Book No. 25.)

Variance No. P24-0255:

Applicants:	Eric Dove
Owners:	Susan Chamberlin
Location:	1011 Barnett Drive
Acreage:	±1.079
Zoning:	AR (Agricultural Residential District)
Request:	Special Exception Variance to reduce setback from 200 feet to 34.4 feet along Barnett Shoals Dr and 38.1 feet along Barnett Drive for a garage.

Presented by: Guy Herring, Planning & Code Enforcement Director

Discussion: Mr. Herring briefed the Board regarding the request for the property, which is currently zoned AR (Agricultural Residential District) in the Country Estates Character Area. The owner requests a variance from UDC Sec. 348.s to reduce the required private freestanding garage setback from 200 feet to 34.4 feet along Barnett Shoals Drive and 38.1 feet along Barnett Drive. Staff recommends approval of this request with two conditions.

Variance No. P25-0078:

Applicants:	Eric Dove
Owners:	Susan Chamberlin
Location:	1011 Barnett Drive
Acreage:	±1.079
Zoning:	AR (Agricultural Residential District)
Request:	Special Exception Variance to reduce the front yard setback from 40 feet to 34.4 feet.

Presented by: Guy Herring, Planning & Code Enforcement Director

Discussion: Mr. Herring briefed the Board regarding the request for the property, which is currently zoned AR (Agricultural Residential District) in the Country Estates Character Area. The owner requests a variance from UDC Article 4, Sec. 410.01 and Table 4.1 to reduce the front yard setback from 40 feet to 34.4 feet. Staff recommends approval of this request with two conditions.

The Public Hearing was opened.

Susan Chamberlain, owner, had no comments.

There were no further comments in favor of the request.

Eric Starkey, 1020 Barnett Drive, neighbor, spoke against the request due to property value and environmental concerns.

There were no further comments against the request.

The Public Hearing was closed.

Commissioner Horton confirmed there is not an existing HOA in the subdivision.

Commissioner Thomas asked about drainage in the neighborhood.

Mr. Herring responded there are no curbs and gutters. Condition #2 was added to repair the ditch system along the lot.

Commissioner Harden asked about vegetative screening.

Mr. Herring responded none was required by code.

Discussions continued with the owner in regards to building location, drainage and potential vegetation.

Commissioner Thomas asked Jody Woodall about drainage complaints in the area. Requiring the owner add the ditch back to the lot was again discussed to correct drainage problems.

ACTION:

Motion: Mark Saxon made a motion to approve Variance No. P24-0255 for Susan Chamberlin, ±1.079 acres, 1011 Barnett Drive with the two proposed conditions, and adding a third condition to require evergreen vegetation to be added on the two street facing sides.

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 Variance #P24-0255 with two conditions.**

(See documentation in Ordinance and Resolutions Book No. 25.)

ACTION:

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Motion: Mark Thomas made a motion to approve Variance No. P25-0078 for Susan Chamberlin, ±1.079 acres, 1011 Barnett Drive with three conditions.
Second: Mark Saxon
Voted in Favor of Motion: Mark Thomas, Chuck Horton, Mark Saxon
Voted Against Motion: Amrey Harden
Final Action: **Motion Passed 3-1 to approve Variance #P25-0078 with two conditions.**
(See documentation in Ordinance and Resolutions Book No. 25.)

Oconee County Board of Assessors Appointment:

ACTION:

Motion: Mark Saxon made a motion to appoint Jeffrey B. Watson to the vacated term to begin immediately and expiring March 31, 2028.
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 Animal Services Advisory Board Appointments:

ACTION:

Motion: Mark Thomas made a motion to appoint Linda Wistrom and Amy Bramlet to two-year terms beginning July 1, 2025 and expiring June 30, 2027.
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 Appointment:

ACTION:

Motion: Mark Saxon made a motion to appoint Stan Ruth to a five-year term to begin July 1, 2025 and expire June 30, 2030.
Second: Chuck Horton
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 Jody Pope, John Lawson, Angela Young, Ashley Sorrells, and Tamara Andros to two-year terms beginning July 1, 2025 and expiring June 30, 2027.
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 Tourism and Visitors Bureau Appointments:

ACTION:

Motion: Mark Saxon made a motion to appoint Stephanie VanDyck, Deesha Hagwood, Casey Deming and Amber McCall Deutsch to two-year terms beginning July 1, 2025 and expiring June 30, 2027.
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 Grounds Maintenance Contract RFP:

Presented by: Justin Kirouac, County Administrator
Discussion: County Administrator Justin Kirouac explained an RFP was issued for a single provider of all grounds maintenance for county facilities and nine responses were received. The recommendation is to award the contract to the top firm, Houseman, for a total of \$618,987.19 for annual maintenance and separate as-needed services at \$56,675. The request includes 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: Chuck Horton made a motion to approve the contract for ground maintenance for county facilities.
Second: Mark Thomas
Voted in Favor of Motion: Mark Thomas, Chuck Horton, Amrey Harden, Mark Saxon
Voted Against Motion: None
Final Action: **Motion Passed.**

Discuss and Consider Adoption of the Proposed FY26 Budget:

Presented by: John Daniell, Chairman
Discussion: Chairman Daniell stated the proposed FY26 General Fund Budget is \$45,704,250, with a proposed total budget of \$83,700,551. Chairman Daniell expects no tax increase hearings in 2025 based on the currently recorded tax digest. The request is for adoption of the presented budget for the General Fund, the Total Budget, and the fee schedule.

The Public Comment Period was opened.

Jeff Morgan, 2340 Watson Springs Road, asked about the facial recognition equipment requested. Chairman Daniell responded that it would be used by the Sheriff's Office to aid in identification of shoplifting suspects.

*There were no further comments.
The Public Hearing was closed.*

ACTION:

Motion: Chuck Horton made a motion to approve the FY26 Budget as presented for the General Fund, total budget, and the FY26 fee schedule.
Second: Mark Saxon
Voted in Favor of Motion: Mark Thomas, Chuck Horton, Amrey Harden, Mark Saxon
Voted Against Motion: None
Final Action: **Motion Passed.**

Discuss and Consider Right of Way Donations to GDOT

Presented by: Daniel Haygood, County Attorney
Discussion: County Attorney Daniel Haygood explained the need to convey right of way tracks to GDOT as part of the Highway 316 interchange improvement projects inside Oconee County.

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

ACTION:

Motion: Mark Saxon made a motion to approve the right of way donations to GDOT.
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 Ratification of the IGA for Provisional Financial Services between Oconee County, Georgia and the Upper Oconee Basin Water Authority:

Presented by: John Daniell, Chairman
Discussion: Chairman John Daniell explained the need for Oconee County to provide financial services for the Upper Oconee Basin Water Authority due to change in leadership with the authority. The agreement will be a five-year agreement, if needed, at a rate of \$1500 per month to the county.

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

ACTION:

Motion: Mark Saxon made a motion to approve the IGA with the Upper Oconee Basin Water Authority.
Second: Chuck Horton
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 FY26 ACCG-IRMA Property and Liability Insurance Renewal:

Presented by: Holly Stephenson, County Clerk
Discussion: County Clerk Holly Stephenson requests approval of the FY26 Property and Liability Insurance proposal with ACCG-IRMA (Association County Commissioners of Georgia – Interlocal Risk Management Agency) in the amount of \$439,156 after a \$23,114 safety credit applied from FY25.

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

ACTION:

Motion: Chuck Horton made a motion to approve the FY26 ACCG-IRMA Property and Liability Insurance Renewal.
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 New High Shoals Road at Union Church Road Roundabout Project Bid Award:

Presented by: Jody Woodall, Public Works Director
Discussion: Public Works Director Jody Woodall explained the request for the bid award for ITB 25-04-018 for the roundabout construction with nine bids received. The recommendation is to award the contract to the lowest, responsive bidder, CMC, Inc., in the amount of \$740,267.49 for construction, \$15,000 for geotechnical and material testing, and \$96 for NPDES permitting. The request is for a project budget not to exceed \$755,363.49, all necessary budget amendments up to the contract amount for the life of the project, and authorizing the Chairman to execute all necessary documents.

Commissioner Harden asked about right of way acquisition.
Mr. Woodall responded that right of way acquisition is almost completed.

Commissioner Thomas asked who would oversee the construction project.
Mr. Woodall responded that Atlas Contracting and Geo Hydro would oversee the project.
Chairman Daniell asked about anticipated start date.
Mr. Woodall responded that construction should begin within 14 days of the Notice to Proceed.
Construction should be limited to 180 days with no closure required.

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

ACTION:

Motion: Mark Thomas made a motion to approve the contact for Roundabout Construction at New High Shoals Road and Union Church Road.
Second: Amrey Harden
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.

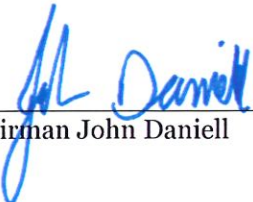
ACTION

Motion: Mark Saxon made a motion to approve the consent agenda as presented.
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 RFP #25-03-015 Roadside Mowing Annual Contract Bid Award.
- 2) Approval of the Epps Bridge Parkway Sewer Collector Upgrade Engineering.
- 3) Approval of the US 441 Sanitary Sewer Diversion Engineering.
- 4) Approval of the Quarterly Acceptance of Deeds, Easements, etc.

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: 6:51 p.m.


Chairman John Daniell


Holly Stephenson, County Clerk

7-8-25
Date