

**Oconee County Board of Commissioners Meeting
Administrative Building Commission Chambers
November 4, 2025 – 6:00 p.m.
Minutes**

Members Present:

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

Staff Present:

Daniel Haygood, County Attorney
Justin Kirouac, County Administrator
Holly Stephenson, County Clerk
Diane Baggett, Communications Manager
Cindy Prichard, KOCBC Director
Melissa Braswell, Finance Director
Kari Giddens, Assistant Finance Director
Donna Norton, Budget Officer
Jody Woodall, Public Works Director
Guy Herring, Planning and Code Enforcement Director
David Webb, Senior Planner
Kyle Stephens, Planner
Ethan Perry, Planner

Call to Order: 6:00 p.m.

Chairman John Daniell called the meeting to order.

Pledge of Allegiance:

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

Approval of Agenda:

ACTION:

Motion:	Chuck Horton made a motion to approve the November 4, 2025 Agenda.
Second:	Mark Thomas
Voted in Favor of Motion:	Mark Thomas, Chuck Horton, Mark Saxon
Voted Against Motion:	None
Final Action:	Motion Passed.

Statements and Remarks from Citizens:

Chuck Neely, 1154 Plantation Drive, expressed concerns about traffic on Plantation Drive once Dawson Park is developed.

Statements and Remarks from Commissioners:

Chairman John Daniell announced that Retired Educators Day was Sunday, November 2 and a proclamation was given by the Board of Commissioners to this group in recognition. He congratulated the Oconee County Parks and Recreation Department for being the District 7 Agency of the year, and their Director Lisa Davol for receiving the Jeff Pruitt Inspiration Award. He announced current openings for the following Citizen Advisory Boards: two openings for the Board of Elections, one opening for the Board of Health, two openings for the Farmland Preservation Commission, and two openings for KOCBC. The deadline for applications online is November 14 at 12noon.

Approval of Minutes:

Minutes of October 7, 2025 Regular Meeting and October 28, 2025 Agenda Meeting:

ACTION:

Motion: Mark Thomas made a motion to approve the October 7, 2025 Regular Meeting minutes and the October 28, 2025 Agenda Meeting minutes.
Second: Chuck Horton
Voted in Favor of Motion: Mark Thomas, Chuck Horton, Mark Saxon
Voted Against Motion: None
Final Action: **Motion Passed.**

Proclamation Honoring the Inaugural Class of Oconee 101:

Presented by: John Daniell, Chairman
Commissioner Mark Saxon presented a proclamation recognizing the Inaugural Class of Oconee County 101.
County Administrator Justin Kirouac thanked the group and Communications Director Diane Baggett for the success of this program.

Second Reading and Consideration of the Text Amendments to the Oconee County Alcohol Ordinance:

Presented by: Guy Herring, Director of Planning and Code Enforcement
Discussion: Guy Herring outlined the proposed changes to Alcohol Beverage Ordinance Section 1 Definitions regarding restaurant parking.

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

ACTION:

Motion: Mark Saxon made a motion to approve the text amendments to the Oconee County Alcohol Ordinance.
Second: Chuck Horton
Voted in Favor of Motion: Mark Thomas, Chuck Horton, Mark Saxon
Voted Against Motion: None
Final Action: **Motion Passed.**

Rezone No. P25-0043:

Applicants:	M. Eric Eberhardt
Owners:	Amir & Connie Tahamtan
Location:	Monroe Highway
Acreage:	±3.341
Zoning:	AG (Agricultural District)
Request:	B-2 (Highway Business 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 Civic Center Character Area. The applicant and owner request a rezone to B-2 (Highway Business District) to allow for a gasoline station with convenience store and truck fueling. The request includes a concurrent Special Use Permit. The Planning Commission and Staff recommend approval with eleven conditions.

Special Use No. P25-0044:

Applicants:	M. Eric Eberhardt
Owners:	Amir & Connie Tahamtan
Location:	Monroe Highway

Acreage:	±3.341
Zoning:	AG (Agricultural District)
Request:	Special Use Permit for a gasoline station with a convenience store and truck fueling B-2 (Highway Business 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 Civic Center Character Area. The applicant and owner request a rezone to B-2 (Highway Business District) and Special Use Permit to allow for a gasoline station with convenience store and truck fueling. The Planning Commission and Staff recommend approval with ten conditions.

The Public Hearing was opened.

Eric Eberhardt, applicant, requested approval of the rezone and special use permit on behalf of QuickTrip and the property owners, agreeing with the conditions as set forth by the Planning.

There were no further comments in favor of the request.

Brenda Jennings, adjacent property owner, discussed traffic concerns at the intersection.

Rebuttal:

Eric Eberhardt, applicant, responded that a traffic impact study will be required, along with the necessary road improvements which should benefit the area.

There were no further comments for or against the request.

The Public Hearing was closed.

ACTION:

Motion: Chuck Horton made a motion to approve Rezone No. P25-0043 for Amir and Connie Tahamtan; AG to B-2; ±3.341 acres; Monroe Highway with eleven conditions.
Second: Mark Thomas
Voted in Favor of Motion: Mark Thomas, Chuck Horton, Mark Saxon
Voted Against Motion: None
Final Action: **Motion Passed to approve Rezone #P25-0043 with eleven conditions.**
(See documentation in Ordinance and Resolutions Book No. 25.)

ACTION:

Motion: Mark Thomas made a motion to approve Special Use No. P25-0044 for Amir and Connie Tahamtan; Allow a gas station with store and truck fueling center; ±3.341 acres; Monroe Highway with ten conditions.
Second: Mark Saxon
Voted in Favor of Motion: Mark Thomas, Chuck Horton, Mark Saxon
Voted Against Motion: None
Final Action: **Motion Passed to approve Special Use #P25-0044 with ten conditions.**
(See documentation in Ordinance and Resolutions Book No. 25.)

Rezone No. P25-0188:

Applicants:	Beall and Company
Owners:	Burgess Jennings Mill Land, LLC & J.G. Griffeth Investments, LLC
Location:	1240 Research Parkway & 1520 Research Parkway
Acreage:	±2.93
Zoning:	B-2 (Highway Business District)

Request:	Change of Conditions of previous Rezone #P24-0100 with an updated concept plan
-----------------	--

Presented by: Guy Herring, Planning & Code Enforcement Director
Discussion: Mr. Herring briefed the Board regarding the request for the property, which is currently zoned B-2 (Highway Business District) in the Regional Center Character Area. The applicant and owner request a change of conditions of existing Rezone #P24-0100 to modify conditions with an updated concept plan to combine lots 5 and 6, and approval of a two-building retail center with parking, driveway, utilities, stormwater management, landscaping, lighting and related items. Staff and the Planning Commission recommended approval with eleven conditions.

The Public Hearing was opened.

Ken Beall, Beall and Company, applicant, requested approval of the rezone. He discussed conditions #4 and #5. He stated a traffic study from August 2025 was completed, showing only the need for one intersection improvement. He questioned why another traffic study was required. Also, the addition of curb and gutters was not a requirement in a prior concept plan and was not in their development plans. He stated these would inhibit the proper run-off as opposed to using ditches.

*There were no further comments in favor of the request and no comments against the request.
The Public Hearing was closed.*

Commissioner Thomas asked Mr. Herring to address conditions #4 and #5 and their necessity. Mr. Herring stated the traffic study should be revised to address the usage change from medical to retail. On the curb and gutter, Mr. Herring stated the existing ditches were disturbed during construction so curb and gutter would now be more appropriate in the retail setting. He stated if the ditches were put back into original condition, the Public Works department should approve that change.

Charman Daniell called on Public Works Director Jody Woodall to address the run-off.

Mr. Woodall agreed that if ditches were repaired to their prior condition, Public Works would approve the condition instead of curbs and gutters.

Mr. Beall stated the traffic study is based on current retail usage and should not require a revision. He also stated the construction of sidewalks is not complete in all areas, but ditches will be recreated once those are complete.

Commissioner Horton asked Mr. Herring again about the traffic study.

Mr. Herring stated there are still some outstanding comments in the study that should be addressed.

Condition #4 will be revised as such.

The condition on the ditches was discussed further and will be revised to allow the ditches to be recreated to their original condition.

ACTION:

Motion: Mark Thomas made a motion to approve Rezone No. P25-0188 for Jennings Mill Land LLC and J. G. Griffeth Investments, LLC; ±2.93 acres; 1240 and 1520 Research Parkway with eleven conditions, including modifications of conditions #4 and #5 as discussed.

Second: Chuck Horton

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

Voted Against Motion: None

Final Action: **Motion Passed to approve Rezone #P25-0188 with eleven conditions.**

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

Variance P25-0047:

Applicants:	Gerell Goolsby
Owners:	Stanley & Gail Goolsby
Location:	1230 Grayson Lane
Acreage:	±1.0

Zoning:	AR (Agricultural Residential District)
Request:	Variance for a metal accessory building constructed without permitting to encroach 32.6 feet into the rear 40-foot setback

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 Suburban Neighborhood Character Area. The owner requests a Variance for a metal building constructed without permits from Oconee County UDC 410.01c (1) and Table 4.1 to allow an accessory structure to encroach 32.6 feet into the rear 40-foot setback. Staff recommends denial of this request.

The Public Hearing was opened.

Gerell Goolsby, owner, spoke in favor of the request. The purpose of the building was to replace an older storage building. He stated that their builder told them there was only a five-foot rear setback.

There were no further comments in favor of the request.

Lisa Clay, adjoining neighbor, spoke against the variance request stating the owner's son has built buildings, a deck, and pool which are all unpermitted. She has concerns over diminished property value, an unpermitted driveway, and her neighbor's lack of respect for county laws.

James Clay, adjoining neighbor, spoke against the variance.

Lynn Jones, 1051 Old Hodges Mill Road, neighbor, spoke against the rezone. She has concerns about the gravel driveway being on her property.

There were no further comments against the request.

Rebuttal:

Gerell Goolsby, owner, stated the deck was properly permitted. The variance concerns only the building which is a storage building with no electricity. He states the driveway is a small gravel driveway that does affect neighbors.

The Public Hearing was closed.

Commissioner Thomas asked if there were permits obtained for the older storage building. Mr. Herring stated he was unsure of older permits, but the deck was permitted. The building in question is not permitted. He stated no complaints have been received about the gravel driveway. Commissioner Horton asked Mr. Goolsby why no permit was obtained for the building. He stated his builder told them that a permit was not required for a building under 1,000 square feet, and the rear setback was only five feet. The structure sits seven feet off the rear property line. Commissioner Horton informed him that requirements change over time. Commissioner Saxon confirmed with Mr. Herring that the pool deck was permitted, and no setback is required for the driveway. The five-foot setback was discussed further. Chairman Daniell confirmed with Mr. Herring stated the setback was five feet prior to 2006 but was increased since then. A stop-work order was issued by the Planning Department, but construction continued, and the building is currently finished. Commissioner Thomas asked that the Concept Plan be brought back up for review and discussion continued with Mr. Herring about what structures are currently on the property.

ACTION:

Motion: Chuck Horton made a motion to deny Variance No. P25-0047 for Gerell Goolsby; ±1.0 acres; 1230 Grayson Lane.
Second: Mark Thomas
Voted in Favor of Motion: Mark Thomas, Chuck Horton, Mark Saxon
Voted Against Motion: None
Final Action: **Motion Passed to deny Variance #P25-0047.**

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

Variance P25-0133:

Applicants:	Ramon Funes
Owners:	Randall Rigby
Location:	2131 Hog Mountain Road
Acreage:	±0.94
Zoning:	B-1 (General Business District)
Request:	Special Exception Variance from Oconee County UDC Article 6 Section 604.01.b and Table 6.1 to reduce the minimum required off-street parking spaces to add an outdoor seating area

Presented by: Guy Herring, Planning & Code Enforcement Director

Discussion: Mr. Herring briefed the Board regarding the request for the property, which is currently zoned B-1 (General Business District) in the Civic Center Character Area. The owner requests a Special Exception Variance from Oconee County UDC Section Article 6 Section 604.01.b and Table 6.1 to reduce the minimum required off-street parking spaces from 73 to 34 (53% reduction) to add an outdoor seating area that would require an additional five parking spaces. Staff recommends denial of the request. However, should the Board choose to grant the variance, Staff would recommend seven conditions.

The Public Hearing was opened.

Ramon Funes, Sr., restaurant owner, spoke in favor of the request. He stated that 800 square feet under the restaurant is not being used and should not affect the number of required parking spaces. He also stated the Health Department has approved his smoker which is outside due to smoke and heat safety. He asked for a compromise regarding the outside smoker being in an enclosed area.

*There were no further comments in favor of the request and no comments against the request.
The Public Hearing was closed.*

Commissioner Horton confirmed that an 80% brick enclosure is required by UDC for the smoker. The owner will need to apply for a variance to approve the outdoor smoker which would be a separate request. The Commissioners discussed the details of the required enclosure and the parking spaces.

ACTION:

Motion: Chuck Horton made a motion to approve Variance No. P25-0133 for Ramon Funes; ±0.94 acres; 2131 Hog Mountain Road, with seven conditions.

Second: Mark Saxon

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

Voted Against Motion: None

Final Action: **Motion Passed to approve Variance #P25-0133 with seven conditions.**

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

Variance P25-0183:

Applicants:	Marvin Gross
Owners:	Marvin and Fedelina Gross
Location:	1050 Skipstone Drive
Acreage:	±2.38
Zoning:	AR (Agricultural-Residential District)
Request:	Special Exception Variance from Oconee County UDC Article 3 Section 351.02.c to place a guest house in the front yard

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 Country Estates Character Area. The owner requests a Special Exception Variance from Oconee County UDC Section Article 3 Section 351.02.c to place a guest house in the front yard. Staff recommends approval of the request with two conditions.

The Public Hearing was opened.

Marvin Gross, applicant and owner, spoke in favor of the request.

*There were no further comments in favor of the request and no comments against the request.
The Public Hearing was closed.*

ACTION:

Motion: Mark Saxon made a motion to approve Variance No. P25-0183 for Marvin Gross; ±2.38 acres; 1050 Skipstone Drive, with two conditions.
Second: Mark Thomas
Voted in Favor of Motion: Mark Thomas, Chuck Horton, Mark Saxon
Voted Against Motion: None
Final Action: **Motion Passed to approve Variance #P25-0183 with two conditions.**
(See documentation in Ordinance and Resolutions Book No. 25.)

Variance P25-0184:

Applicants:	Drew and Sterling Joiner
Owners:	Drew and Sterling Joiner
Location:	1181 Meriweather Drive
Acreage:	±0.94
Zoning:	R-1 PUD (Residential Planned Unit Development)
Request:	Special Exception Variance from Oconee County UDC Article 4 Section 410.01.c(2) to place an accessory building with a floor area greater than 144 feet in the front yard

Presented by: Guy Herring, Planning & Code Enforcement Director
Discussion: Mr. Herring briefed the Board regarding the request for the property, which is currently zoned R-1 PUD (Residential Planned Unit Development) in the Regional Center Character Area. The owner requests a Special Exception Variance from Oconee County UDC Section Article 4 Section 410.01.c(2) to place an accessory building with a floor area greater than 144 feet in the front yard. Staff recommends approval of the request with one condition.

The Public Hearing was opened.

Drew Joiner, applicant and owner, spoke in favor of the request.

*There were no further comments in favor of the request and no comments against the request.
The Public Hearing was closed.*

ACTION:

Motion: Mark Saxon made a motion to approve Variance No. P25-0184 for Drew and Sterling Joiner; ±0.94 acres; 1181 Meriweather Drive, with one condition.
Second: Mark Thomas
Voted in Favor of Motion: Mark Thomas, Chuck Horton, Mark Saxon
Voted Against Motion: None
Final Action: **Motion Passed to approve Variance #P25-0184 with one condition.**
(See documentation in Ordinance and Resolutions Book No. 25.)

Discuss and Consider the Bid Award for the Colham Ferry Road/Astondale Road Roundabout Project:

Presented by: Jody Woodall, Public Works Director
Discussion: Public Works Director Jody Woodall explained that twelve bids were received for the roundabout construction. The recommendation is to award the bid to CMC, Inc., the lowest responsive, responsible bidder for \$636,530 and establishing a project budget of \$724,172.50 to include permitting, testing, administration, right-of-way acquisition, real property cost, and contingency. The request includes authorizing the Chairman to execute necessary documents and approving future budget amendments up to the budgeted amount for the life of the project.

Commissioner Thomas asked about the return radiuses due to the number of trucks that will use this route. County Administrator Justin Kirouac stated the plans do include larger radiuses to accommodate those trucks.

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

ACTION:

Motion: Chuck Horton made a motion to approve the Bid Award for the Colham Ferry Road/Astondale Road roundabout project.
Second: Mark Thomas
Voted in Favor of Motion: Mark Thomas, Chuck Horton, Mark Saxon
Voted Against Motion: None
Final Action: **Motion Passed.**

1st Quarter FY26 Financial Update:

Presented by: Melissa Braswell, Finance Director
Discussion: Finance Director Melissa Braswell presented the financial update for the 1st quarter of FY26 which is through September 30, 2025:

- General Fund revenues and expenditures as compared to budget
- General Fund Capital Fund Projects updates to date
- LOST, SPLOST, and TSPLOST distributions as compared to prior fiscal year along with Project updates to date
- Capital and SPLOST budgeted expenditures update
- Multi-year Projects updates
- Water Resource Department revenues and expenses as compared to budget, along with multi-year projects

Discuss and Consider Farmland Preservation Committee Recommendation:

Presented by: Thad Padgett, Farmland Preservation Committee Chairman
Discussion: The Farmland Preservation Committee focused on community education and outreach this year to educate more landowners about the program. This year, the Committee received one application and recommends a farm just south of Bishop for the conservation easement. He also recognized the life and legacy of Russ Page.

ACTION:

Motion: Mark Thomas made a motion to approve the Farmland Preservation Committee recommendation.
Second: Chuck Horton
Voted in Favor of Motion: Mark Thomas, Chuck Horton, Mark Saxon
Voted Against Motion: None
Final Action: **Motion Passed.**

Review SPLOST 27:

Presented by: John Daniell, Chairman

Discussion: Chairman John Daniell presented a proposed SPLOST 2027 project overview with a referendum amount \$90,434,289 and a budget of \$75,000,000. He stated the election will be on May 19, 2026. There will be Town Hall meetings and other events to educate citizens about the program. SPLOST 27 projects would include general obligation debt service; water and sewer facilities; Farmland Protection program funding; emergency services facilities and equipment; historic and scenic property preservation; general county facilities; Parks and Recreation upgrades, improvements and master plan development; public safety radio upgrades; and Sheriff's Office vehicle replacement.

Consent Agenda:

There were no items removed from the Consent Agenda.

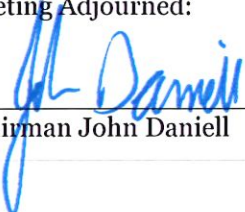
ACTION

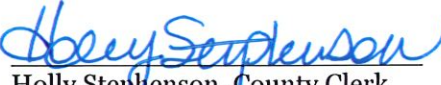
Motion: Chuck Horton made a motion to approve the consent agenda as presented.
Second: Mark Thomas
Voted in Favor of Motion: Mark Thomas, Chuck Horton, Mark Saxon
Voted Against Motion: None
Final Action: **Motion Passed.**

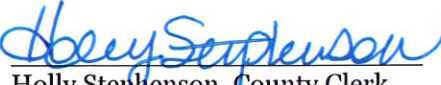
- 1) Approval of an Agreement to Purchase Property at 1621 Daniells Bridge Road.
- 2) Approval of the Extension of the Lease Agreement for Oconee County Annex and Facilities Shop.
- 3) Approval of the Bid Award for Protective Netting for the OVP Quad.
- 4) Approval for the Bid Award for Protective Netting for the OVP Multi-use Fields.
- 5) Approval of the FY25 Year End Budget Amendments for the Issuance of the FY25 Financial Statements.
- 6) Approval of the Contract and Scope Modifications to Carter Engineering and Hill, Foley, Rossi for Dawson Park.
- 7) Approval of a Budget Amendment to Purchase Easements for Epps Bridge Sewer Upgrade.
- 8) Approval of the Oconee County Pre-Disaster Hazard Mitigation Plan.
- 9) Approval of the FY26 Northeast Georgia Regional Commission Aging Services Contract Renewal.
- 10) Approval of the FY26 Northeast Georgia Regional Commission Transportation Services Memorandum of Understanding.

Adjourned:

Motion: Mark Saxon made a motion to adjourn the meeting.
Second: Mark Thomas
Voted in Favor of Motion: Mark Thomas, Chuck Horton, Mark Saxon
Voted Against Motion: None
Action/Motion: **Motion Passed.**
Meeting Adjourned: 8:00 p.m.


Chairman John Daniell


Holly Stephenson, County Clerk

 12.2.25
Date