Oconee County Board of Commissioners Meeting
Administrative Building Commission Chambers
December 2, 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
Diane Baggett, Communications Director
Melissa Braswell, Finance Director
Kari Giddens, Assistant Finance Detector
Donna Norton, Budget Officer
Adam Layfiled, Water Resources Director
Lisa Davol, Parks and Recreation Director
Guy Herring, Planning and Code Enforcement Director
Kyle Stephens, Planner
Ethan Perry, Planner

Call to Order: 6:00 p.m.
Chairman John Daniell called the meeting to order.

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

Approval of Agenda:
Chairman Daniell requested to amend the agenda to add Item 9:2: Alcohol Beverage Ordinance Amendment.
ACTION:

Motion:	Mark Saxon made a motion to approve the December 2, 2025 Agenda with the amendment.
Second:	Mark Thomas
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:
Rudy Rodriguez, co-owner of Costa Allegra, spoke to the Commission in hopes of working out an issue for his business to thrive in Oconee County.

Statements and Remarks from Commissioners:
Chairman John Daniell recognized a UGA Journalism class for attending the meeting.

Approval of Minutes:
Minutes of November 4, 2025 Regular Meeting and November 25, 2025 Agenda Meeting:

ACTION:

Motion:	Chuck Horton made a motion to approve the November 4, 2025 Regular Meeting minutes and the November 25, 2025 Agenda Meeting minutes.
Second:	Mark Thomas
Voted in Favor of Motion:	Mark Thomas, Chuck Horton, Amrey Harden, Mark Saxon
Voted Against Motion:	None
Final Action:	**Motion Passed.**

Presentation By Kemper Sports on Dawson Park:

Presented by: Steve Goris, Senior Vice President, Kemper Sports

Discussion: Kemper Sports representative Will Spence spoke briefly about Kemper Sports and the background of their company, which focuses on youth and recreation sports venues.

Richard Stiftinger presented the feasibility study results for Dawson Park, stating that Oconee County is a great place for destination sports tourism industry with multi-use fields and indoor courts. Phase 1 of the facility would include 10 outdoor multi-purpose fields spanning 92 acres with 1616 parking spaces. Future phases would add an additional 6 multi-purpose fields, a 90,000 square foot indoor sports complex with 8 basketball courts or 16 volleyball courts, and an additional 872 parking spaces.

Kemper presented four baseline operating models with synthetic or grass fields being the difference. Year Five financial forecast numbers for the four models to include direct impact drivers, spending, and tax revenues were also presented, along with the proposed next steps for making the project move forward.

Commissioner Harden questioned negative profitability in year five on all the models.

Mr. Stiftinger responded that the goal is to break even by year five and become profitable in the following years along with covering operational costs of the park. Discussions continued about the negative numbers shown, but how much higher those numbers will be if there is no sports tourism revenue to offset the costs of operating and maintaining a park. Chairman Daniell stated the size of Dawson Park was a county decision, and the county would be responsible for operation and maintenance expenses. Kemper Sports was contacted to provide a way to offset these costs with revenue from sports tourism. There was additional discussion about the need for additional hotel rooms and how the estimations of required rooms were achieved.

Commissioner Harden asked if their proposal would meet the current needs of the county.

Mr. Stiftinger responded that it would meet current county needs.

Commissioner Horton spoke of the current need for additional field and court space in the county. He also spoke about the money leaving the county when travel teams play outside of this county. He believes this industry will help restaurants and small businesses here.

Commissioner Saxon asked about the reason for the five-year projection.

Mr. Gorse responded that the five-year plan gives a good projection for longer expectations.

Commissioner Thomas asked about the staffing for a facility and whether the priority is outdoor fields. He also suggested private/public partnerships and the cost effectiveness of doing the civil work for the entire site at one time.

Mr. Stiftinger responded that if retained, Kemper will staff the fields other than for park programs. The current top priority does seem to be outdoor fields, but indoor space is also a big priority as funding allows for it.

Presentation of the FY25 Audit Report by Rushton:

Presented by: Justin Burruss, Audit Manager, Ruston & Company

Discussion: Rushton Accounting Audit Manager Justin Burruss explained he is presenting a draft audit due to a second audit required on federal funds that is still being reviewed. He presented their draft independent auditor report and provided an unmodified opinion of the County's financial records. Mr. Burruss announced an unmodified or clean opinion for the FY25 financial statements for Oconee County. He presented to the Board a three-year Statement of Net Position; General Funds revenues, expenditures and unrestricted fund balance; Water and

Sewer Fund revenues and expenditures; SPLOST expenditures; and TSPLOST expenditures. The full report includes a report on internal control, compliance and other matters with no material weaknesses and no significant deficiencies. Also, no material non-compliance or other matters were noted. The final item is a report on compliance and internal controls compliance for major programs with no material weaknesses, no insufficiencies, and no non-compliance issues. He also discussed with the Commissioners current and future report changes.

Commissioner Horton asked Mr. Burruss to show the fund balance figures again.

Rezone No. P25-0200:

Applicants:	Carter Engineering
Owners:	Wallace and Lauren Miller
Location:	1040 Bridlegate Drive
Acreage:	±4.45
Zoning:	AR-3 (Agricultural Residential Three Acre District)
Request:	Change conditions of previous Rezone #3903 to modify condition #4 to revise/remove the rear platted buffer.

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-3 (Agricultural Residential Three Acre District) in the Agricultural Preservation Character Area. The applicant and owner request a change of conditions of the previous Rezone #3903 to modify condition #4 to revise/remove the rear platted buffer that had a radius of 400' from active poultry houses. The Planning Commission and Staff recommend approval with two conditions.

The Public Hearing was opened.

Mark Campbell, Carter Engineering, applicant, requested approval of the change due to the chicken houses no longer being in use.

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 Rezone No. P25-0200 for Wallace and Lauren Miller; modification of condition of previous rezone #3903; ±4.45 acres; 1040 Bridlegate Drive 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 #P25-0200 with two conditions.**
(See documentation in Ordinance and Resolutions Book No. 25.)

Rezone No. P25-0205:

Applicants:	Joe Moon, Breedlove Land Planning, Inc.
Owners:	Oconee Office Partners, LLC
Location:	1150, 1255, 1300, 1350, 1430, 1560, 1630, 1625 & 1575 Champions Way
Acreage:	±13.53
Zoning:	OBP (Office-Business Park District)
Request:	Modify the conditions of previous rezone #P21-0108 to allow an increase in the total allowed building area from 86,000 square feet to 105,000 square 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 OBP (Office-Business Park District) in the Regional Center Character Area. The applicant and owner request a modification of conditions of Rezone #P21-0108 to allow an increase in the total allowed building area from 86,000 square feet to 105,000 square feet. Staff and the Planning Commission recommended approval with ten conditions.

The Public Hearing was opened.

Kevin Price, owner and developer, requested approval discussing a second entrance, the economic benefits to the county, and the flexibility for space needs.

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

ACTION:

Motion: Chuck Horton made a motion to approve Rezone No. P25-0205 for Oconee Office Partners, LLC; request to modify the condition of existing rezone P21-0108; ±13.536 acres; 1150, 1300, 1350, 1430, 1560, 1630, 1625, 1575, and 1255 Champions Way with ten conditions.
Second: Mark Saxon
Voted in Favor of Motion: Mark Thomas, Chuck Horton, Amrey Harden, Mark Saxon
Voted Against Motion: None
Final Action: **Motion Passed to approve Rezone #P25-0205 with ten conditions.**
(See documentation in Ordinance and Resolutions Book No. 25.)

Rezone No. P25-0209:

Applicants:	Ronald T. Chapman
Owners:	Meredith L. Chapman and Ronald T. Chapman
Location:	1810 Elder Mill Road
Acreage:	±6.0
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 Agricultural Preservation Character Area. The applicant and owner request a rezone to AR-3 (Agricultural Residential Three Acre District) to create two 3-acre lots. Staff recommends denial of the request as it does not comply with the Comprehensive Plan. If approved, Staff recommends one condition. The Planning Commission recommended approval with the one condition.

The Public Hearing was opened.

Tyler Chapman, applicant, requested approval of the rezone to make two residential lots and enable his daughter to build a house next to his.

Jacob Holland, son-in-law of owners, requested approval of the rezone to build a home on his wife's family land.

There were no further comments in favor of the request.

Mark Costello, 1800 Elder Mill Road, spoke against the request as it does not fit the area due to the shape of lots and number of driveways needed.

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

Commissioner Horton asked Mr. Herring about the area and lot sizes.
Mr. Herring stated the lot is the Agricultural Preservation area and most lots in the area are larger lots.

Commissioner Harden asked about the possibility of a guest home on the same lot.
Mr. Herring explained it would be allowed at 50% of the main structure as zoned now. The proposed site plan was reviewed again.
Commissioner Thomas asked about the well site. The location and proximity to the driveway were discussed. Also, the proposal is for two driveways off Elder Mill Road.
Commissioner Thomas asked about the square footage of the proposed house.
Mr. Chapman responded that the proposal is 2400 square feet.
Discussions continued about the driveways, well location, and recombination and easement for a driveway.

ACTION:

Motion:	Mark Saxon made a motion to approve Rezone No. P25-0209 for Meredith L. Chapman and Ronald T. Chapman, ±6.0 acres, 1810 Elder Mill Road with one condition.
Second:	Mark Thomas
Voted in Favor of Motion:	Mark Thomas, Mark Saxon
Voted Against Motion:	Chuck Horton, Amrey Harden, John Daniell
Final Action:	**Motion was defeated 3-2.** *(See documentation in Ordinance and Resolutions Book No. 25.)*

ACTION:

Motion:	Amrey Harden made a motion to deny Rezone No. P25-0209 for Meredith L. Chapman and Ronald T. Chapman, ±6.0 acres, 1810 Elder Mill Road with one condition.
Second:	Chuck Horton
Voted in Favor of Motion:	Chuck Horton, Amrey Harden, John Daniell
Voted Against Motion:	Mark Thomas, Mark Saxon
Final Action:	**Motion Passed 3-2 to deny Rezone #P25-0209.** *(See documentation in Ordinance and Resolutions Book No. 25.)*

Special Use P25-0233:

Applicants:	Carter Engineering Consultants
Owners:	Briarwood Baptist Church
Location:	1900 Robinhood Road
Acreage:	±17.18
Zoning:	AG (Agricultural District)
Request:	Modify conditions of previous Special Use Approval #6983 to modify Condition #7 to not apply to the Robinhood Road side of the property.

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 Community Village Character Area. The owner requests a Special Use Approval to modify Condition #7 of the previous Special use Approval #6983 to not apply to the Robinhood Road side of the property. Staff and the Planning Commission recommend approval of this request with two conditions.

The Public Hearing was opened.

Mark Campbell, Carter Engineering, applicant, requested approval of the change.

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

ACTION:

Motion:	Mark Thomas made a motion to approve Special Use No. P25-0233 for Briarwood Baptist Church; ±17.18 acres; 1900 Robinhood 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 Special Use #P25-0233 with two conditions.** *(See documentation in Ordinance and Resolutions Book No. 25.)*

Consider Appointments to the Oconee County Board of Elections and Registration:

ACTION:

Motion:	Mark Saxon made a motion to appoint Shami C. Jones and Tammy Gilliand to four-year terms to begin January 1, 2026 and expire December 31, 2029.
Second:	Chuck Horton
Voted in Favor of Motion:	Mark Thomas, Chuck Horton, Amrey Harden, Mark Saxon
Voted Against Motion:	None
Final Action:	**Motion Passed.**

Consider Appointments to the Oconee County Board of Health:

ACTION:

Motion:	Mark Thomas made a motion to appoint Susanna Rains-Moriarty to a six-year term to begin January 1, 2026 and expire December 31, 2031.
Second:	Amrey Harden
Voted in Favor of Motion:	Mark Thomas, Chuck Horton, Amrey Harden, Mark Saxon
Voted Against Motion:	None
Final Action:	**Motion Passed.**

Consider Appointments to the Farmland Preservation Ranking Committee:

ACTION:

Motion:	Mark Saxon made a motion to appoint Joel Burnsed and Rick Garrett to three-year terms to begin January 1, 2026 and expire December 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.**

Consider Appointment to the Keep Oconee County Beautiful Commission:

ACTION:

Motion:	Amrey Harden made a motion to appoint Robert Legg and Shweta Doshi to terms to begin immediately and expire June 30, 2026.
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 Contract #2 for the LAS Decommission Process:

Presented by: Adam Layfield, Water Resources Director

Discussion: Water Resources Director Adam Layfield explained this scope of services as part of the LAS decommission process covers the upgrade of Oconee County's Veterans Park Pump Station and related infrastructure to accommodate sewage received from the new Rocky Branch Road Pump Station as well as gravity flows from OVP and future Parkside development collection systems. The flows will be conveyed to the Calls Creek Water Facility for treatment. The recommendation is to approve the Task Order for $927,490.35 and 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 Contract #2 for the LAS Decommission Process.
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 an Intergovernmental Agreement for Municipal Court Services with the City of Bogart:

Presented by: Daniel Haygood, County Attorney

Discussion: County Attorney Daniel Haygood explained that the City Of Bogart's need for court is outweighed by the cost of running the court. The request is to make the Chief Magistrate the Municipal Court Judge so that court will be held at the county courthouse and overseen by the Oconee County Clerk of Court. There is a termination clause to this IGA if necessary.

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

ACTION:

Motion:	Amrey Harden made a motion to approve an Intergovernmental Agreement for Municipal Court Services with the City of Bogart.
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 the Alcohol Beverage Ordinance Amendment:

Presented by: Daniel Haygood, County Attorney

Discussion: County Attorney Daniel Haygood explained that the State distance requirement between school grounds and the sale of distilled spirits changed in 2021 but gave counties the option to set their own distances. He stated it makes sense to make the same distance of 300 feet from school or church grounds for restaurant beer and wine sales, along with distilled spirits by the drink. The result will be a consistent set of distances for the county. Part of the motion is to suspend the Rules of Order to adopt this tonight as the amendment affects an upcoming renewal.

Commissioner Harden asked Mr. Haygood to point out the change in the amendment.

The Public Comment Period was opened.

Martha Rodriguez, co-owner of Costa Allegra, shared how important this change is for their business, *Ramon Funes, Sr., owner of Tamez Barbeque*, explained the importance of this amendment to his new business.

There were no further comments.
The Public Comment Period was closed.

ACTION:

Motion:	Chuck Horton made a motion to suspend the Rules of Order and adopt the amendment to the Oconee County Alcoholic Beverage Ordinance.
Second:	Mark Thomas
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:	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 an Amendment to the Real Estate Agreement Contract for a Contract Extension of 1621 Daniels Bridge Road.

2) Approval of the Epps Parkway Sewer Collector Upgrade Bid Award.

3) Approval of the Senior Center Amended Transportation Agreement.

4) Approval of the OVP Pump Station Replacement.

5) Approval of the Heritage Park Central Schoolhouse Rehabilitation Design Proposal.

6) Approval of the OVP Gym Floor Replacement.

7) Approval of the Final Contract Modification for Snows Mill Road at Lane Creek Road Roundabout Project.

8) Approval of an Extension of Cell Tower Lease with Prime Tower at OVP.

9) Approval of the Board of Commissioners Meeting Schedule for 2026.

10) Approval of the Board of Commissioners Vice-Chairman Schedule for 2026-2029.

11) Approval of the Quarterly Acceptance of Deeds, Easements, Etc.

Chaiman Daniell announced this is the last meeting of 2025 and wished everyone a Merry Christmas.

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:	8:07 p.m.

John Daniell — Chairman John Daniell

Holly Stephenson — Holly Stephenson, County Clerk

1·6·26 — Date