

**Oconee County Board of Commissioners Meeting
Administrative Building Commission Chambers
April 28, 2026 – 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
Kari Giddens, Assistant Finance Director
Donna Norton, Budget Officer
Lisa Davol, Parks and Recreation Director
C.J. Worden, EMA Director
Adam Layfield, Water Resources Director
Clay Christian, IT Specialist

Call to Order: 6:01 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:

ACTION:

Motion:	Chuck Horton made a motion to approve the April 28, 2026 Agenda.
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:

Sam Edgemon, 1206 Wilkes Farm Court, spoke as a statistical data consultant against the south Watkinsville bypass stating the numbers on potential traffic improvement do not support the cost.

Dana Sullivan, 3876 Rolling Meadows Road, spoke as a scientist against farmland destruction for the south Watkinsville bypass.

Amanda McCoy Ledford, 1881 Old Salem Road, spoke against the Watkinsville bypass and for the preservation of agricultural land.

Lori Breedlove, 1051 Rose Creek Drive, spoke against the Watkinsville bypass and advocated for preserving farmland.

Statements and Remarks from Commissioners:

Commissioner Horton requested the south Watkinsville bypass be discussed on the next agenda so the Commission can make a unified statement to GDOT on their position for the project.

Commissioners Thomas and Saxon agreed to place the item on the next agenda.

Commissioner Harden advised the GDOT public comment period for this project has been extended until May 11, 2026. He continued by discussing the county's Comprehensive Plan and the agricultural land in south Oconee. He also believes the Commission should go on record with a stance on the project. Additionally, he suggests the City of Watkinsville conduct a traffic study to see if other things can be done to alleviate traffic issues before construction of a new road. He would like to remind GDOT that taxpayer money supports farmland preservation in Oconee County.

Chairman Daniell announced the upcoming budget hearings on May 5, 2026 and May 19, 2026, with a vote on the FY27 budget on June 2, 2026 at the 6pm Board of Commissioner Meeting.

Chairman Daniell advised that the State has declared a Level 1 drought. The guidelines for conserving water can be found on the county website.

Discuss the Award of the OVP Tennis Court Expansion Project:

Presented by: Lisa Davol, Parks and Recreation Director

Discussion: After receiving bids for the OVP Tennis Court Facility Expansion last year that were all well over budget, another RFP was issued for the addition of 16 lighted courts and a restroom building with a \$5 million maximum budget. Parks and Recreation received three submittals and recommends awarding the project to Headley Construction Corporation with a not to exceed cost of \$5.5 million coming from SPLOST 2021 and including all budget amendments up to the contract amount for the life of the project.

The Commissioners discussed the relocation of the courts to cut costs. The project will include all 16 promised courts, resurfacing, lighting, and restrooms.

On consensus, this item will be placed on the Consent Agenda at the May 5, 2026 Regular Meeting.

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

3rd Quarter FY26 Financial Update:

Presented by: Melissa Braswell, Finance Director

Discussion: Finance Director Melissa Braswell presented the financial update for the 3rd quarter of FY26, which is through March 31, 2026.

- General Fund revenues and expenditures as compared to budget
- LOST, SPLOST and TSPLOST distributions as compared to prior fiscal year
- Capital and SPLOST budgeted expenditures update
- Water Resource Department revenues and expenses as compared to budget

Discuss IT Cable Replacement for the Courthouse Upgrade:

Presented by: Justin Kirouac, County Administrator

Discussion: County Administrator Justin Kirouac explained that Kevin Price Construction is currently doing construction upgrades to the Courthouse. During this process, the existing IT infrastructure was found to need replacement due to age and condition of existing cables. The request is for approval of a contract amendment with Kevin Price Construction in the amount of \$136,248.85 to replace the courthouse IT cabling infrastructure, bringing the total contract amount to \$4,851,248.85, and includes all necessary budget amendments up to the contract amount for the life of the project.

On consensus, this item will be placed on the Consent Agenda at the May 5, 2026 Regular Meeting.

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

Discuss the SARS Donation Request for OVP:

Presented by: Lisa Davol, Parks and Recreation Director

Discussion: The Sons of the American Revolution have requested placement of a SAR concrete bench and concrete walkway to the bench directly across from the pathway to the Patriot Marker at OVP. The pathway and bench would end at an install of an American Elm (Liberty Tree). The project would have no financial impact to the county. The request is to approve the project to begin so it can be completed by July 4, 2026.

On consensus, this item will be placed on the Consent Agenda at the May 5, 2026 Regular Meeting.

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

Discuss the Local Emergency Operations Plan Adoption:

Presented by: C. J. Worden, EMA Director

Discussion: EMA Director C.J. Worden explained that Oconee County is required to maintain a current Local Emergency Operations Plan (LEOP) to effectively coordinate preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation activities for emergencies and disasters. This will allow continued compliance with GEMA and Homeland Security Agency. The request is to approve and adopt the updated LEOP.

On consensus, this item will be placed on the Consent Agenda at the May 5, 2026 Regular Meeting.

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

Discuss the Renewal of Code RED Mass Notification System:

Presented by: C. J. Worden, EMA Director

Discussion: EMA Director C.J. Worden explained that Oconee County currently uses CodeRED, a mass notification system, to rapidly disseminate emergency and non-emergency information to residents via phone calls, text messages, emails, and mobile alerts. The system is used for severe weather alerts, public safety incidents, road closures, and other time-sensitive notifications. The request is for renewal of the contract as presented at a cost of \$7,500 for the first year and \$9,000 annually for each subsequent year.

On consensus, this item will be placed on the Consent Agenda at the May 5, 2026 Regular Meeting.

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

Discuss the Renewal of the IPAWS Messaging MOA:

Presented by: C. J. Worden, EMA Director

Discussion: EMA Director C.J. Worden explained that Oconee County, via CodeRED, has participated with the IPAWS messaging for several years to allow messaging to non CodeRED subscribers to warn of potential, imminent, or actual hazards. The request is to execute the MOA with FEMA in order to allow continuation of access to IPAWS resources.

On consensus, this item will be placed on the Consent Agenda at the May 5, 2026 Regular Meeting.

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

Discuss GDOT Utility Aid Contract Agreement for SR53/Rays Church Road/Malcom Bridge Road:

Presented by: Adam Layfield, Water Resources Director

Discussion: Water Resources Director Adam Layfield explained that GDOT will include the County's water relocation in its construction contract for the proposed roundabout at Hwy 53/Malcom Bridge Road/Rays Church Road. The estimated relocation costs is \$375,805 with GDOT contributing 25% through Utility Aid. Oconee County will be responsible for 75%. The request is for execution of the Agreement and Resolution with GDOT and for the county portion of \$281,853.75 to include all budget amendments up to the contact amount for the life of the project.

Commissioner Horton asked where the county funds would come from.
Mr. Layfield responded that funds are available from several different funds.

On consensus, this item will be placed on the Consent Agenda at the May 5, 2026 Regular Meeting.

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

Discuss the Ardurra Rapid Mix Evaluation for the Upper Oconee Basin Water Authority:

Presented by: Adam Layfield, Water Resources Director

Discussion: Water Resources Director Adam Layfield explained that Ardurra has submitted a proposal to the UOBWA to provide an independent third-party review and comparative evaluation of the rapid mix alternatives for Bear Creek Water Treatment Plant expansion from 21 MGD to 42 MGD. The request is for approval of the proposal at a cost of \$32,000. Oconee County's share will be 23.809% or \$7,618.88. The request includes all necessary budget amendments up to the contact amount for the life of the project.

On consensus, this item will be placed on the Consent Agenda at the May 5, 2026 Regular Meeting.

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

Discuss Reimbursement to GDOT for Project 0013763 Water Relocation:

Presented by: Adam Layfield, Water Resources Director

Discussion: Water Resources Director Adam Layfield explained that the County previously approved GDOT contractors to perform the waterline relocation work for the SR 316 at Dials Mill Road project. The actual cost was \$278,125 once the work was completed, more than the proposal of \$184,550. The request is to approve the additional cost of \$93,575 to be reimbursed to GDOT. The request includes all necessary budget amendments up to the contact amount for the life of the project.

Commissioner Harden asked if additional work was done to affect the cost.
Mr. Layfield explained that the main component was the price increase in pipes.
Mr. Kirouac explained that GDOT often comes back with a true cost after work is completed.

On consensus, this item will be placed on the Consent Agenda at the May 5, 2026 Regular Meeting.

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

Discuss the 2026 GDOT Local Road Assistance Application:

Presented by: Justin Kirouac, County Administrator

Discussion: Public Works requests approval to complete the 2026 Local Road Assistance application for supplemental funding for FY2026 with no required match. The amount of funding for Oconee County is \$924,659.79 and would be utilized towards the construction of a roundabout at Snows Mill Road, Cole Springs Road, and Aycock Road which is estimated to cost \$900,000. The excess funding of \$24,659.79 of LRA funds would be applied to the resurfacing of Salem Road, which has an estimated cost of \$1,242,076 and will also be covered by TSPLOST funds. The recommendation is to authorize the 2026 LRA application submittal to GDOT, authorizing the Chairman to execute any necessary documents, approving to add Salem Road to the FY2026 resurfacing contract, and approving any future budget amendments up to the contract amount for the life of the project.

Commissioner Harden asked if all would be complete in this fiscal year.
Mr. Kirouac advised the work should be complete by the end of the calendar year.

On consensus, this item will be placed on the Consent Agenda at the May 5, 2026 Regular Meeting.

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

Discuss an IGA with Athens-Clarke County regarding a New ADA Position:

Presented by: John Daniell, Chairman
Discussion: Chairman John Daniell explained the need for a new ADA position in the DA's office. An IGA with Athens-Clarke County will outline on how the position will be handled and funded. The amount covered by Oconee County will be \$150,000 annually.

On consensus, this item will be placed on the Consent Agenda at the May 5, 2026 Regular Meeting.

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

Discuss the Quarterly Acceptance of Deeds, Easements, Etc:

Presented by: Holly Stephenson, County Clerk
Discussion: County Clerk Holly Stephenson requests acceptance of the following easements:

- Amendment and Partial Dedication of Sanitary Sewer Easement from Oconee Office Partners, LLC and SRE Consulting, LLC, dated January 9, 2026 and recorded February 12, 2026 off Jimmy Daniel Road.
- Easement Agreement from Gregory J. Hartmeyer, OFM Conv., as Archbishop of the Archdiocese of Atlanta, as Trustee of AOA Parish Real Estate Trust, dated April 8, 2026 and recorded April 15, 2026 for Epps Bridge Station Upgrade.
- Sanitary Sewer Easement from Claudia Conn Hammett, as Trustee of the Donald Dean Hammett Trust, dated March 26, 2026 and recorded April 24, 2026 on Highway 53.

On consensus, these items will be placed on the Consent Agenda at the May 5, 2026 Regular Meeting.

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

Executive Session:

Motion: Mark Saxon made a motion to adjourn into Executive Session to discuss land acquisition, personnel, and litigation.
Second: Mark Thomas
Voted in Favor of Motion: Mark Thomas, Chuck Horton, Amrey Harden, Mark Saxon
Voted Against Motion: None
Action/Motion: **Motion Passed.**
Adjourn into Executive Session: 7:00 p.m.

No action was taken in Executive Session.

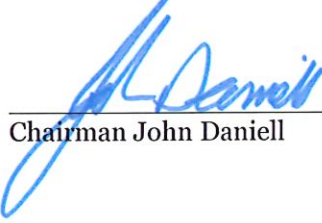
Executive Session Adjourned: 7:35 p.m.

Regular Session:

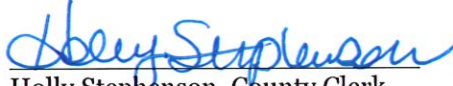
Motion: Chuck Horton made a motion to adjourn back into Regular Session.
Second: Mark Thomas
Voted in Favor of Motion: Mark Thomas, Chuck Horton, Amrey Harden, Mark Saxon
Voted Against Motion: None
Action/Motion: **Motion Passed.**
Adjourned into Regular Session: 7:37 p.m.

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: 7:37 p.m.



Chairman John Daniell



Holly Stephenson, County Clerk

5-5-26
Date