

Oconee County Board of Commissioners Meeting
Administrative Building Commission Chambers
August 25, 2026 – 6:00 p.m.
Minutes

TAX MILLAGE LEVY PUBLIC HEARING
August 25, 2026 – 6:00 p.m.

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
Russ Henson, Fire Marshal
Clay Christian, IT Specialist

Call to Order: 6:00 p.m.

Chairman Daniell stated this is the third Public Hearing for the 2026 Tax Millage Levy. He gave the current digest numbers, stating that the incorporated digest increased to \$424,597,452 for 2026, with \$19 million of the increase related to real growth. The incorporated exemptions increased by \$4 million. The unincorporated digest increased to \$3,520,900,575 billion for 2026, with \$176 million of the increase related to real growth. The unincorporated exemptions increased by \$63 million. The Tax Commissioner's calculated roll back rates to only recognize real growth are: unincorporated -4.157, incorporated -4.984. State law requires the gross millage rates to be the same for both unincorporated and incorporated areas. The rate is then reduced by local option sales tax for all taxpayers and the insurance premium tax which affect unincorporated areas only.

The recommended unincorporated millage rate for 2026 is 4.124 mills, which is below the calculated roll back rate. The recommended incorporated millage rate for 2026 is 5.154 mills, which is the same as 2025. The recommended tax rates will generate additional property taxes of \$788,124 over 2025, which is 4.5% less than the true real growth of the digest at the true roll back rate.

*The Public Hearing was opened.
There were no comments and The Public Hearing was closed.*

Call to Order: 6:03 p.m.

Chairman John Daniell called the meeting to order.

Pledge of Allegiance:

County Commissioner Chuck Horton led the Pledge after a moment of silence.

Approval of Agenda:

ACTION:

Motion: Chuck Horton made a motion to approve the August 25, 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:

Jeff Wilkes spoke to the Commissioners about concerns with GDOT's proposed Watkinsville truck bypass recommendation and asked for more discussion and transparency. He spoke in favor of no bypass or usage of the old pipe plant property.

Statements and Remarks from Commissioners:

Commissioner Harden suggested a Town Hall Meeting to discuss the Watkinsville truck bypass further. The next Town Hall Meeting will be held on Tuesday, October 20, 2026. The Commissioners discussed many questions that should still be discussed with GDOT. There will be another Public Open House hosted by GDOT once more data has been collected and assessed. Their comment period is open through Thursday, August 27.

Chairman Daniell announced that Georgia Highway 316 will be closed at Jimmy Daniel Road with no access starting on September 14 and is expected to last for six months.

Discuss an Ordinance Amendment for the Solid Waste Ordinance:

Presented by: Guy Herring, Planning and Code Enforcement Director
Discussion: Planning and Code Enforcement Director Guy Herring explained two proposed revisions to the Solid Waste Ordinance: applications should be presented to the Planning and Code Enforcement office for review; and the umbrella policy section should have a \$1,000,000 requirement for liability coverage.

On consensus, this item will be placed on the Consent Agenda at the September 1, 2026 Regular Meeting.

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

Discuss an Ordinance Amendment to Regulate the Use of Public Rights-of-way for Sporting or Recreational Purposes:

Presented by: Guy Herring, Planning and Code Enforcement Director
Discussion: Planning and Code Enforcement Director Guy Herring explained two proposed revisions to the Ordinance to Regulate the use of public rights-of-way for sporting or recreational purposes: applications should be submitted to the Planning and Code Enforcement office for review; and if not approved, the applicant can appeal to the Board of Commissioners within 30 days in writing to the County Clerk.

On consensus, this item will be placed on the Consent Agenda at the September 1, 2026 Regular Meeting.

Commissioner Harden asked how far in advance applicants are required to apply.
Mr. Herring responded there is a minimum of 10 days.
County Administrator Justin Kirouac stated events should be planned further ahead.

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

Discuss the Revocation of a Resolution to Regulate Refunds of Building Permit Fees:

Presented by: Guy Herring, Planning and Code Enforcement Director

Discussion: Planning and Code Enforcement Director Guy Herring requested a revocation of this Resolution approved November 6, 1990 to align with the current Board of Commissioners Fee Schedule for Planning and Code Enforcement.

On consensus, this item will be placed on the Consent Agenda at the September 1, 2026 Regular Meeting.

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

Discuss a Budget Amendment for Jail Server Replacement:

Presented by: Melissa Braswell, Finance Director

Discussion: Finance Director Melissa Braswell explained that the Oconee County Sheriff's Office is requesting replacement of the existing server used to support JailTracker, the jail's management system. The quote for the project is \$32,414.16. The recommendation would be a budget amendment of \$32,415 from assigned fund balance reserved for the Jail in the Capital Fund.

On consensus, this item will be placed on the Consent Agenda at the September 1, 2026 Regular Meeting.

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

Discuss a Budget Amendment for Oconee County Extension Office Support:

Presented by: Melissa Braswell, Finance Director

Discussion: Finance Director Melissa Braswell explained that the Oconee County Extension Office has requested funds to temporarily fill a vacant County Agent position through a contracted individual following a recent resignation. UGA is not currently filling this position. The recommendation is to consider approval of a budget amendment transferring \$20,800 from personnel to operating expenditures (contract labor) to fund the contracted position at \$20.00 per hour for up to 20 hours per week.

Commissioner Horton asked if there was a person in mind for the position. Ms. Braswell responded that a volunteer may fill the position.

On consensus, this item will be placed on the Consent Agenda at the September 1, 2026 Regular Meeting.

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

Discuss a Budget Amendment for the FY26 Resurfacing Program:

Presented by: Justin Kirouac, County Administrator

Discussion: Public Works requests approval to add additional roads to the FY26 resurfacing program as it came in under budget. The recommendation is a FY27 budget amendment for \$561,338.87 from TSPLOST to carry funds forward and allow 40.57 miles of roadway to be resurfaced from the FY26 resurfacing program and avoid waiting for the 2027 contract to be awarded.

On consensus, this item will be placed on the Consent Agenda at the September 1, 2026 Regular Meeting.

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

Discuss the FY27 Resurfacing and LMIG Application:

Presented by: Justin Kirouac, County Administrator

Discussion: County Administrator Justin Kirouac gave an update on the annual LMIG grant through GDOT to provide funding for the FY27 resurfacing program. The amount of funding for Oconee County for FY27 is \$906,024.03. This grant requires a 30% match. The resurfacing

program for FY27 proposes to resurface 25.30 miles of roadway. The request is for approval of the FY27 Resurfacing Road list. The final pricing and contract will be brought back before the Board for approval prior to the end of the year.

Commissioner Thomas asked if the county was still evaluating the roads on an annual basis. Mr. Kirouac explained that an annual re-assessment of actual conditions is done.

On consensus, this item will be placed on the Consent Agenda at the September 1, 2026 Regular Meeting.

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

Discuss the Purchase of a 2000 Gallon Tanker Truck:

Presented by: John Daniell, Chairman

Discussion: Oconee County Fire Rescue requests approval for the purchase of a 2000 Gallon Tanker Truck for Station 1 at an estimated cost of \$250,000. The truck will replace a 1998 Ford Tanker than will be transferred to Station 8. The funds will come from the Fire Department 2021 SPLOST.

On consensus, this item will be placed on the Consent Agenda at the September 1, 2026 Regular Meeting.

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

Discuss and Consider the 2026 Tax Millage Levy for Oconee County Government Maintenance and Operations:

Presented by: John Daniell, Chairman

Discussion: Chairman Daniell stated the required hearings were held. The recommend 2026 mileage rates are 4.124 for the unincorporated areas and 5.154 for the incorporated areas.

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

ACTION:

Motion to Confirm: Mark Saxon made a motion to approve the 2026 tax millage levy for Oconee County Government Maintenance and Operations of 4.124 mills (unincorporated) and 5.154 mills (incorporated).

Second: Chuck Horton

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

Voted Against Motion: None

Action/Motion: **Motion Passed.**

Discuss and Consider the 2026 Tax Millage Levy for Oconee County Schools Maintenance and Operations:

Presented by: Justin Kirouac, County Administrator

Discussion: The Board of Education passed a motion recommending the school levy of 13.836 mills for maintenance and operation at their August 10, 2026 meeting. The request is to ratify this rate.

ACTION:

Motion to Confirm: Mark Thomas made a motion to confirm the 2026 tax millage levy for Oconee County Schools Maintenance and Operations of 13.836 mills.

Second: Chuck Horton

Voted in Favor of Motion: Chuck Horton, Mark Saxon, John Daniell

Voted Against Motion: None

Action/Motion: **Motion Passed.**

Discuss the Abandonment of Unnamed Right-of-way at 2015 Simonton Bridge Road:

Presented by: Justin Kirouac, County Administrator

Discussion: County Administrator Justin Kirouac explained that an old driveway serving several lots near 2015 Simonton Bridge Road has been shown to be old right-of-way. The owner of 2015 Simonton Bridge has requested it be abandoned and absorbed into the property per the original deeds from the 1960's. The recommendation is to proceed with abandonment.

On consensus, this item will be placed on the Consent Agenda at the September 1, 2026 Regular Meeting

The Public Comment Period was opened.

Amanda Dalton, 2015 Simonton Bridge Road, spoke in favor of the abandonment.

Jeremy Dalton, 2015 Simonton Bridge Road, spoke in favor of the abandonment and willingness to maintain the property.

Alinde Fojtik, 2013 Simonton Bridge Road, spoke about an easement for a utility waterline for 2041 and 2051 Simonton Bridge Road.

County Attorney Haygood, Chairman Daniell, and County Administrator Kirouac continued discussions with the property owners who agree with the recommendation for abandonment.

There were no further comments, and the Public Comment Period was closed.

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: 6:51 p.m.

No action was taken in Executive Session.

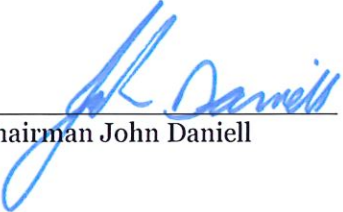
Executive Session Adjourned: 7:14 p.m.

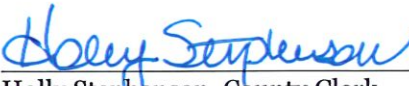
Regular Session:

Motion: Chuck Horton made a motion to adjourn back into Regular Session.
Second: Mark Saxon
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: 7:15 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: 7:15 p.m.


Chairman John Daniell


Holly Stephenson, County Clerk

9-1-2026
Date