

A Work Session of the Oconee County Board of Commissioners was held on Friday, January 6, 2017 at 9:00 a.m. in the Community Room of the Community Center at Oconee Veterans Park.

*Members Present:* Chairman John Daniell  
Commissioner Mark Thomas  
Commissioner Chuck Horton  
Commissioner W. E. "Bubber" Wilkes  
Commissioner Mark Saxon

*Staff Present:* Jeff Benko, CPA, Administrative Officer  
Kathy Hayes, County Clerk  
Tracye Bailey, Executive Assistant/Deputy Clerk  
Daniel Haygood, County Attorney  
B.R. White, Director, Planning & Code Enforcement  
Wes Geddings, Finance Director  
Alex Perschka, Director, Tourism  
Dwayne Collins, Director, Fleet Maintenance  
Malinda Smith, Director, Human Resources  
Shawn Wheeler, Director, Civic Center  
Marvin Poe, Director, Facilities & Operations  
Paula Nedza, Director, Information Technology (IT)  
J.R. Charles, Director, Economic Development  
Bruce Thaxton, Fire Chief  
Catlyn Vickers, Director, Animal Control  
Merry Howard, Director, Senior Center  
Wayne Haynie, Director, Utility Director  
Lisa Davol, Deputy Director, Parks & Recreation  
Karla Hulsey, Interim Director, EMA  
Austin Marable, GIS Administrator

Chairman Daniel called the meeting to order at 9:07 a.m.

**Approval of the Agenda:** On motion by Commissioner Horton and second by Commissioner Saxon, the agenda for the January 6, 2017 Work Session was unanimously approved as presented.

**Overview and Purpose of Work Session:**

Chairman Daniell stated that general goals and directions for the Board and County Government will be discussed. The Board will involve the staff with setting priorities and developing a plan to accomplish the Board's goals.

**Ethics Ordinance:**

County Attorney Daniel Haygood reviewed the Ethics Ordinance, stating the ordinance is specific to the Board, and discussed several sections of the ordinance, process of an ethics violation, and the duties of a Special Master.

**Organizational Ordinance:**

Chairman John Daniell reviewed the Organizational Chart from 2009. In 2009, a study was completed by the Carl Vinson Institute of Government, which led to the existing ordinance. Today's ordinance provides for an Administrative Officer which oversees the County Directors and day-to-day operations. Chairman Daniell asked the Board if there were needed changes, revisions, or a repeal of the ordinance.

Chairman Daniell suggested that the Administrative Officer be changed to the title of County Administrator (Section 3) and possible revisions to the Ordinance in order to streamline reporting processes to/from the Administrative Officer. In Section 5.d., he suggested a revision to show recommendation of policies and positions to the Board and, in Section 5.f., include in consultation with the Board of Commissioners.

The Board discussed several issues as follows: Communication between the Chairman, Board and Administrative Officer; issues should be placed on the agenda for discussion; information should be shared to all Board members; and, emails should include both the Chairman and Administrative Officer.

Chairman Daniell stated that changes in the Organizational Ordinance will be drafted for the January 31, 2017 Agenda Setting Meeting with action at the February 3, 2017 Regular Meeting of the Board.

**Overall Board Goals:**

Chairman Daniell discussed overall goals for the Board to include:

- Government-wide electronic file system providing easy records access for the public;
- Facility planning, which may include temporary relocation of departments; master plan for space needs, design and building;
- Key performance indicators;
- Rails to Trails Program;
- County seal redesign.

Board members discussed the following:

- Projects from previous SPLOST should be completed;
- Purchase land and move forward with administration building due to the Court System requiring additional space in the courthouse;
- Purchase land and building for Fire Station 8 to build a new station;

- Review office space at the Government Annex;
- Provide proper office space for employees;
- Implement a strategic plan for the County in conjunction with the Joint Comprehensive Plan. The Strategic Plan would be a five-year plan and would allow the community to have input and set priorities;
- Executive Sessions should be kept to a minimum with advance notice to Board members;
- Broadband availability in the county;
- Work with Board of Education on major projects to strategically plan for buildings and needed infrastructure;
- As the Joint Comprehensive Plan is developed, there may be an opportunity to address items to benefit both the School Board and County. The Board of Education should have a member serving on the Joint Stakeholders Joint Comprehensive Plan Committee;
- The Comprehensive Plan could address zoning maps in order to outline development areas.

**Planning and Code Enforcement:**

Chairman John Daniell presented several items for discussion:

- Consideration/discussion of pre-zoning;
- Comprehensive Plan to include provisions for building of quality homes and businesses;
- Reduce processing time for plan reviews due to staff overload;
- Enlarge computer systems to provide the needed technology for workload and data storage;
- Implementation of property maintenance codes;
- Standards for retail properties within the property maintenance codes;
- Streamline development review and zoning process to include Natural Resources Conservation Review (NRCS).

The Board continued with a discussion regarding building codes, adherence by contractors, and the implementation of a system to monitor quality construction/building standards for contractors working in Oconee County.

**Finance:**

Chairman John Daniell presented the following items for discussion:

- Fiscal Policy update;
- Departmental reporting cycle;
- Budget process is explained in the organizational ordinances (done in 2009), but excessive time is spent in staff budget hearings.

The Board continued with a discussion regarding the budget process; Directors and budgeted departmental purchases; and, Board approval of contracts and change orders.

*The Board took a break from the Work Session at 10:30 am and resumed the Work Session at 10:50 am.*

**TOURISM:**

Chairman John Daniell presented the following items for discussion:

- Hotel/motel tax funding and the Tourism Department;
- Tourism staff interest in participating with Historical Society.
- Tournament hosting;
- Possible Convention and Visitors Bureau.

The Board continued with a discussion regarding Ag Tourism as a consideration and assisting Oconee County's municipalities with Tourism and Economic Development.

**Fleet Maintenance:**

Chairman John Daniell discussed using technology to monitor vehicles regarding service and maintenance. Director Dwayne Collins stated that a basic inventory is kept to cover general maintenance items with tires on a state contract. Commissioner Thomas inquired if local vendors are used. Finance Director Wes Geddings stated that preference is given to local vendors provided the vendor's bid is within 7% of the lowest bid.

**Human Resources:**

Chairman John Daniell shared with the Board that the new payroll program has been implemented and upgrades need to be completed. He would like to have the Step Plan (salary increases) intergraded with the Personnel Policy and asks that Human Resources continue to watch for items that need to be included in the Personnel Policy. Another item he addressed is Board communication with employees and the best method of keeping employees aware of Board decisions.

**Civic Center:**

Chairman John Daniell discussed SPLOST funding for upgrades and developing a plan. The Board continued by stating that parking is an issue for the current Civic Center; consideration of building another Civic Center to handle the demand for events; and, reservation conflicts with the school system.

Director Shawn Wheeler agreed that parking is the major problem. Reservations are not booked at the Civic Center on Friday nights due to shared parking with school events. Administrative Officer Jeff Benko asked Mr. Wheeler to break down the number of school and county events. Mr. Wheeler stated the school bookings are at 50% and the County at 20% with revenue-producing events at 30%. Revenue would increase if the facility was at a location away from school property, and a larger facility could easily be justified. Revisions to the school and county agreement may need revisions.

Board members discussed the possibility of looking for an alternative site; including the Civic Center with Tourism and Economic Development; discussion with school system to expand parking lot; and, a new Civic Center location to include space for a hotel.

**Facilities and Operations:**

Chairman John Daniell discussed the implementation of Facility Dude (online work order program) and expanding the use of this program. Chairman Daniell would like for the county to have a centralized Help Desk or Work Order Desk. Director Marvin Poe stated that IT, Parks & Recreation, and the Jail are currently using the Facility Dude system with other components can be used to expand the program to other departments. IT Director Paula Nedza discussed implementation a program that would allow departments to update inventory.

The Board discussed looking at options to conserve energy; having the power company provide an energy audit; deciding which buildings are due for upgrades and include in strategic plan; LED lighting; phasing in improvement upgrades; and, as major systems need repair, replacing the item if economically more feasible than making repairs.

**Informational Technology (IT):**

Chairman John Daniell discussed that the IT Policy is being updated and, as new software is evaluated for one department, could the same software assist another department. IT Director Paula Nedza stated that Dude Facilities is a program that will provide inventory tracking.

Administrative Officer Jeff Benko asked Director Paula Nedza if local data storage is preferred over cloud data storage. Ms. Nedza stated that local storage is best due to security and availability regarding internet connection.

**Economic Development:**

Chairman John Daniell stated that the Oconee County Industrial Development Authority (OCIDA) is working with Economic Development Director J.R. Charles to develop ideas for Oconee County to work with other counties in our region.

Board members discussed an economic model to determine the direction of the county; the type of businesses that should be pursued; and, the infrastructure Oconee is willing to provide.

*Chairman John Daniell stated that the next Board Work Session will be held on January 10, 2017 at 10:00 am in the Conference Room of Oconee Veterans Park Community Center and a Town Hall Meeting will be held the same evening at 6:00 pm to 7:30 pm in the Community Room.*

**Adjourn:**

There being no further business, on motion by Commissioner Wilkes and second by Commissioner Horton, the meeting was adjourned at 11:40 a.m.

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County Clerk

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Chairman

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date