

A Work Session of the Oconee County Board of Commissioners was held on Tuesday, January 9, 2018 at 9:00 a.m. in the Conference 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: Justin Kirouac, County Administrator  
Kathy Hayes, County Clerk  
Daniel Haygood, County Attorney  
Bruce Thaxton, Fire Chief  
Catlyn Vickers, Animal Services Director  
Lisa Davol, Parks & Recreation Director  
Emil Beshara, Public Works Director  
Merry Howard, Senior Center Director  
Malinda Smith, Human Resources Director  
Wes Geddings, Finance Director  
J.R. Charles, Economic Development Director  
Wayne Haynie, Water Resources Director  
Sandy Weinel, Planning & Code Enforcement Assistant Director  
Alex Perschka, Tourism Director  
Shawn Wheeler, Civic Center Director  
Marvin Poe, Facilities & Operations Director  
Paula Nedza, Information Technology Director  
Alex Newell, Management Analyst  
Dwayne Collins, Fleet Maintenance Director

Media Present: Michael Prochaska, The Oconee Enterprise

Chairman Daniel called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. County Administrator Justin Kirouac presided over the meeting and presented the Oconee County Strategic Plan.

Mr. Kirouac gave a brief overview of items to be discussed at the meeting to include the purpose of the plan and a timeline. A recap of 2017 goals was also presented.

**Summary of 2017 Countywide Objectives:**

Mr. Kirouac presented the goals discussed during work sessions at the beginning of 2017 and updated the Board regarding the progress of the goals. A staff retreat has been planned to discuss goals for 2018 and 2019. During a future Board Meeting, a formal strategic plan will be presented to the Board.

**Review of 2017 Goals/Objectives:**

Mr. Kirouac reviewed goals and objectives presented during January of 2017 and gave a brief update regarding progress of each item:

- Electronic filing system implementation and open records management – A vendor was selected and the scanning project has started with the County Clerk's Office.
- Departmental Key Performance Indicators (KPI) – KPIs were implemented during the past three months.
- Rails to Trails – The Joint Comprehensive Plan Committee members have discussed Rails to Trails and the concept of connectivity within areas of the county. This is a long-term plan with a considerable amount of logistical issues to be resolved.
- New Oconee County Seal – The new seal was not designed in 2017.
- Broadband Internet Service – The County continues to work with broadband providers to find a solution to provide additional service.
- Facility Maintenance Plan – A plan is being created for maintenance of Parks and Recreation facilities, including ball fields. Maintenance plans will also be created for the remainder of county facilities.
- Planning and Code Enforcement – Completion of the Joint Comprehensive Plan during 2018; time reduction for building plan reviews; technology enhancements with electronic scanning project; implement software system for permitting, inspections and interdepartmental communications; update of Building Code Standards for quality and safety; in-house review of erosion control plans as required by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS); and development of a Property Maintenance Code.
- Finance Department – Fiscal Policy update, which will be presented to the Board at the January 2018 Agenda Setting Meeting; monthly financial reporting with reports placed on the website; and an update to the Budget process, which will also be presented at the Board's January 2018 Agenda Setting Meeting.
- Tourism – Review establishment of a Convention and Visitors Bureau; development of tourism with agri-tourism and participation with the Historical Society; and tournament hosting and priority consideration of field uses.

- Fleet Maintenance – Trial software for GPS tracking and maintenance installed. Previous maintenance procedures, purchasing vehicles and retirement of vehicles are more valuable than the trial software.
- Human Resources – Technology upgrades are in progress including the completion of employee time clocks in government buildings; implementation of the new employee pay step system, which began January 2018; and continued enhancements in employee communication and policy compliance.
- Civic Center – SPLOST funding for dressing rooms at the Civic Center was not executed due to forward-funding of the Parks & Recreation Field Expansion; discussion regarding a new Civic Center; and green parking has not been implemented.
- Facilities/Operations – Expansion of Facility Dude software continues to assist with work orders.
- Information Technology - Facility Dude has been integrated with IT Department work orders and IT policy updates are forthcoming during the first quarter of 2018. Athens Micro has been implemented to handle tasks within the IT Department, which allows the IT staff to plan for the County's technology needs into the future. An IT position was eliminated with Athens Micro handling duties previously assigned to the position.
- Economic Development – Developing an economic development strategy and involvement of Oconee County Industrial Development Authority, Convention and Visitors Bureau, Oconee County Chamber of Commerce.
- Property Appraisal – Technology enhancement software and iPads were purchased; Key Performance Indicators have been developed.
- Animal Services – SPLOST funding was included for facility improvements and remodeling the current facility or building a new facility will need to be considered. Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) have been drafted and reviewed by the Animal Services Board with plans to present to the Board during FY2018.
- Public Works – Policy updates presented to the Board during 2017; plans to initiate a County-Wide Transportation Plan during 2018; Sheriff's Office Firing Range Project continues while working out logistics to be a "good neighbor" to the citizens in the surrounding areas.
- Fire/EMA – Fire Marshal duties were moved into a full-time position and the position transferred from Code Enforcement to the Fire Department. Fire codes and ordinances will be reviewed/developed and presented to the Board for adoption. A new location for Fire Station No. 8 has been acquired. Emergency Management Agency (EMA) Director was hired during 2017. The EMA Department now consists of Fire and EMS.
- Parks & Recreation – Organizational structure, financial models and maintenance to be reviewed; department restructuring has been completed; OVP Field Expansion Project should be completed during FY2018; a Parks Master Plan is under review for 2018 needs assessment; joint use with the Board of Education continues with field sharing and subsidizing light costs at the Middle School.
- Senior Center – Programs have been integrated with the Parks & Recreation Department and both departmental directors work well together.

Chairman Daniell thanked staff for their efforts to accomplish goals during 2017.

**Mission and Vision:**

Mr. Kirouac presented the existing mission on the County website and suggested that the current mission remain in place with no changes:

“Provide the highest quality services in a fiscally responsible manner  
to promote the health, safety and general welfare of all Oconee citizens.”

**Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats (SWOT) Analysis:**

Mr. Kirouac presented strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities (SWOT) of Oconee County.

Strengths included are:

- \*Excellence of the Oconee County education system;
- \*presence of several major thoroughfares through Oconee County: SR 316, US 441, and US 78;
- \*Proximity to the University of Georgia, Athens Technical College, and the University of North Georgia;
- \*Availability of land suitable for development;
- \*\*Population growth; Regional leader in Per-Capita income; and Strong Communities.

Mr. Kirouac noted that items with double asterisks are included in the new Comprehensive Plan.

Weaknesses from the current Comprehensive Plan:

- \*Challenges associated with coordinating intergovernmental agencies that may go in different directions;
- \*Non-diversified economy;
- \*\*No public transportation;
- \*\*Truck Traffic through Watkinsville;
- \*\*Existing development is very auto dependent;

- \*\*Lack of connectivity;
- \*\*Little or no coordination between GDOT and County.

Mr. Kirouac again noted that items with double asterisks have been included in the new Comprehensive Plan.

Opportunities were presented as follows:

- Regional approach to economic development;
- Expand Cooperation with School District;
- \*High-end single-family housing growth;
- Connect city centers with paths for bike riding and pedestrians;
- Tax Base Diversification;
- \*\*Amend ordinance for greenspace/facility;
- \*\*TSPLOST

Mr. Kirouac noted that the last four items have been identified as opportunities for the new Comprehensive Plan.

Threats were presented as follows:

- \*Economic Growth that occurs too rapidly could decrease rural character, open spaces, and increase strain on infrastructure and amenities (from 2008);
- \*\*Continue growth;
- \*\*Budgeting challenges (new Comprehensive Plan)

The items listed above as Strengths, Weaknesses, Threats and Opportunities will be evaluated to draft a new vision for Oconee County. The existing vision from the 2008 Comprehensive Plan stated:

“A diverse community where life takes on a balanced pace with rural, suburban and small-town lifestyles, where an excellent education system, high tech economic opportunities, agricultural activities and open space are highly valued. In order to maintain this identity we must proactively plan for a sustainable future of natural resource protection, historic preservation, quality services, a balanced tax base and appropriate infrastructure.”

Mr. Kirouac suggested that the vision be revised as follows:

“A diverse community, with world-class schools, thriving commercial sectors, vibrant town centers, high-end residential housing and amenities and the preservation of the rural quality of life.”

He stated that the vision should produce strategic goals/objectives of which four have been identified as considerations for 2018.

**Strategic Goals and Objectives:**

Mr. Kirouac recommended Strategic Goals and Objectives for 2018.

Goal No. 1: Smart Government -- Provide services with Efficiency, Effectiveness, Citizen Engagement and Transparency.

Goal No. 2: Smart Growth -- Growth that fits Oconee County in the areas of Planning, Economic Development, Tourism and Historic Preservation.

Goal No. 3: Smart Infrastructure – Develop far-sighted infrastructure improvements that meet the County’s needs now and going forward through transportation, water/sewer and high-tech infrastructure.

Goal No. 4: Quality of Life – Cultivate Oconee’s quality of life through Parks & Recreation, arts and culture, public safety and education.

The goals will assist with the budget process with budget requests being placed within one of the strategic goals.

**Next Steps:**

Mr. Kirouac asked that the Board consider the presentation and confirm/amend the mission, vision and strategic goals. Staff will develop objectives under the strategic goals to present to the Board at a future meeting. The budget process will follow with budget requests developed from the goals set forth in the strategic plan.

Chairman Daniell reminded the group that the Water Resources Open House is next Tuesday night, January 16, 2018, at 6:00 pm at the Civic Center.

**Adjourn:**

There being no further business, on motion by Commissioner Wilkes and second by Commissioner Saxon, the meeting was adjourned at 9:36 a.m.

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County Clerk

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Chairman

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date