

A Work Session of the Oconee County Board of Commissioners was held on Thursday, January 26, 2017 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 W. E. "Bubber" Wilkes
Commissioner Mark Saxon

Staff Present: Jeff Benko, CPA, Administrative Officer
Kathy Hayes, County 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, Operations and Facilities
Paula Nedza, Director, IT
J.R. Charles, Director, Economic Development
Allen Skinner, Director, Property Appraisal
Lisa Davol, Deputy Director, Parks & Recreation
Catlyn Vickers, Director, Animal Control
Bruce Thaxton, Fire Chief
Karla Hulsey, EMA

Chairman Daniell called the meeting to order at 9:06 a.m.

Overview and Purpose of Work Session:

Chairman John Daniell stated that Commissioner Horton will be absent for the meeting today. He stated that the Department Directors will give reports to the Board.

Planning and Code Enforcement – B.R. White, Director

Director White discussed defining character areas regarding location and zoning, which include three components: Geographical Character Area (location), Character Area Description, and Development Strategies. Community standards could be used to ensure that the character and appearance of areas will be compatible within the community. Performance zoning may be an alternative to traditional zoning and a land use guidance (point) system could be used as a growth management tool.

Commissioner Thomas asked how a point system would be implemented. Director White stated that the point system would be a simple project rating system to score proposed projects and does not have to be implemented on a county-wide basis.

Director White discussed that the Short-Term Work Program may include modifications to the Unified Development Code (UDC) after updating the Joint Comprehensive Plan. Community improvements in the UDC will continue according to the Board's vision. In order to reduce turn-around time for plan review, Mr. White discussed outsourcing this process and include on-call inspections. With the Board's approval, a RFQ could be issued with recommendations to the Board in April.

Director White discussed the advantages of technology advances for the department including electronic permit/review and digital records for storage/accessibility. He will present cost and software options to the Board within 60 days. Mr. White discussed updating standards to the building codes for quality and safety. He briefly reviewed the process of adopting local amendments under the State's Uniform Codes Act through the Department of Community Affairs (DCA). Oconee County's Unified Development Code could also be updated regarding architectural standards. Mr. White will outline possible considerations for a local amendment and UDC amendment to the Board in July.

Director White reviewed the National Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) process and asked for direction from the Board. He provided three options: Request a Memorandum of Agreement from Oconee River Soil Water Conservation District (ORSWCD) for plan reviews; surrender of the Local Issuing Authority (LIA) to the State, which includes a 45-day review period; or, continue the review process as it is currently handled.

Director White asked for guidance from the Board regarding a draft ordinance for Property Maintenance. A comparison matrix of other jurisdictions using Property Maintenance Codes will be prepared for the Board's review to include components used from International Codes Council (ICC) and codes of each jurisdiction included in the matrix.

Chairman Daniell stated that the Board will discuss Planning and Code Enforcement goals at the Agenda Setting Meeting of the Board on January 31, 2017.

Finance Department – Wes Geddings, Director

Director Geddings stated that the County is financially healthy and strong. He recommended a revision in the Fiscal Policy (last revision was 2002). Mr. Geddings stated that the Finance Department has approximately 5,000 active vendors and has implemented an electronic payment system. He proposed that purchasing limits be increased from \$750.00 to \$1,500.00; quote limits increased from \$5,000.00 to \$10,000.00; and increase bid limits from \$10,000.00 to \$20,000.00. Commissioner Thomas asked who

would have the approval authority. Mr. Geddings stated that the authority would be with the Department Director. The Finance Department would review and provide fiscal/budgetary guidance.

Director Geddings recommended that the Board begin conversion to a Purchasing-Card (P-Card) system and include this in the Fiscal Policy revisions. County Attorney Haygood asked if this will require an ordinance amendment, and Mr. Geddings stated an amendment will be required. Mr. Geddings recommended that the Fiscal Policy be part of the budget process with revisions every two to three years.

Director Geddings stated that within the Fiscal Policy, the Travel Policy needs updating to include travel/reimbursement forms revision; definition of short/long distance travel; per diem rate; use of county vehicle versus personal vehicle; mileage reimbursements; mileage calculations with departure/return locations as the Courthouse; and, definition of prohibitive expenses.

Director Geddings reviewed the current Budget process as defined by ordinance under the Chief Financial Officer's duties. Recommendations to the current Budget process will require approval by the Board for an amendment to the Ordinance. Mr. Geddings stated three options for the FY18 Budget process: Continue with the current process, accept a new process, or delay the Budget process for 30 days to allow for revisions. Mr. Geddings handed out the current Budget schedule.

Chairman Daniell stated that, from Department Director discussions, the Budget process needs revisions. This item will be discussed at the January 31, 2017 Agenda Setting Meeting of the Board with action at its Regular Meeting on February 7, 2017.

Director Geddings stated that sales tax has increased with 52.8% of total tax revenue being sales tax and 47.9% being property tax. SPLOST is important for capital projects and he recommends that the next SPLOST include more technology projects.

A break was taken at 10:30 a.m. and the Work Session continued at 10:38 a.m.

Tourism Department – Alex Perschka, Director

Director Perschka reviewed the Mission Statement for Tourism and stated that Oconee attracts tourists from other "market areas." Annual tourism spending in Oconee totals approximately \$39.8 million in 2015. The Tourism Department is funded in part by the hotel/motel tax. With the addition of one to two hotels, Tourism could be funded independently of General Fund contributions. Mr. Perschka stated that a Convention and Visitors Bureau is in the forecast for Tourism. He is working with several community partners to develop Agri-Tourism within the county. Plans for 2017 include a new Tourism brochure, website updates, more diverse marketing plan and improvements to the Eagle Tavern Museum. A Tourism Product Development Resource Team is in the process of discussing future goals and ideas for the Tourism Department.

Fleet Maintenance – Dwayne Collins, Director

Director Collins discussed technology capabilities within the Fleet Maintenance Department regarding GPS installation in county vehicles. With GPS, the Fleet Maintenance Department would have the capability to receive service notifications, track mileage, vehicle location and speed limits. He recommends that, upon the Board's approval, Fleet Maintenance start with a small system with minimum components. Also, the system would not be installed on fire trucks and Sheriff's vehicles.

Human Resources – Malinda Smith, Director

Director Smith reviewed the completed technology upgrades during the past year for Human Resources reporting and Payroll through Infinisource/iSolved. Reporting capabilities are used for demographics, payroll deductions, leave accruals, job compensation history, training management, information retrieval for various compliance reports, and benefit administration.

Ms. Smith stated that the next steps for the department are implementing Time and Attendance with the iSolved Payroll System beginning May 2017. Currently, the department has a manual process for entering payroll transactions into the General Ledger. Plans are to interface the payroll system with the General Ledger and eliminate the manual process. During FY18, benefits administration may be handled online with an open enrollment period for health, dental and vision insurance. Electronic imaging for the department would be beneficial and eliminate the need for multiple file storage rooms. An update is needed to the HR Policy to include Pay for Performance and the Step Pay Plan. Communication with employees is vital for the HR Department through emails and written notification. Ms. Smith noted that the employee website link, previously accessible through the County website, was lost with the implementation of the new County website. The iSolved Time and Attendance can upload information to employees. Communication is also provided through informational sessions/training and presentations.

Civic Center – Shawn Wheeler, Director

Director Wheeler discussed the SPLOST funding of \$1.5 million for an addition to the Civic Center for a loading dock and dressing rooms, office renovations and a new HVAC system. Other needs include LED lighting, theatre rigging, concrete repair, exterior painting, new flooring throughout the Center, restroom updates, and concession stand countertops. Final revisions are being made to the Civic Center project and will be sent to Finance for an RFP.

Director Wheeler discussed the impact of a new Civic Center in the county. Demands for booking the Center continue to increase. The banquet room of the current center could be reserved three times over the current reservations. A new center could accommodate current/future needs of additional meeting space, office space for civic organizations, eliminate space restraints with the school system, open new avenues to generate income (such as food services), small conferences/retreats, and eliminate parking constraints. Upon completion of a new Center, the old Center could be used by the School System.

Director Wheeler stated that the current Joint Use Agreement with the School System has had no revisions since its creation. He stated that the relationship between the School System and County has been very favorable, but lack of space and parking continues to be an issue.

On motion by Commissioner Wilkes and second by Commissioner Saxon, the meeting was adjourned for a lunch break at 11:55 a.m.

The meeting resumed at 1:15 p.m.

Operations and Facilities – Marvin Poe, Director

Director Poe discussed expanding Facility Dude into other departments and utilizing new components, such as Capital Forecast and Facility Assessment. Maintenance Edge is the current component in use. Mr. Poe stated that the central work order desk is working well. Requests are made through Facility Dude with automatic email updates. Not all employees are utilizing the system and continue to send emails instead of submitting a work order request through Facility Dude.

Information Technology (IT) – Paula Nedza, Director

Director Nedza handed out a draft Information Technology Policy to the Board. Ms. Nedza stated that the IT Department ensures business continuity between all county departments and provides support to offices, other than county offices, which are located in county buildings. Facility Dude has been helpful, because the IT Department does not have a person to receive work orders.

Director Nedza reviewed the responsibilities of the IT Department involving protection of county information and life cycle management for desktops, servers, cell phones, desk phones, computers, laptops, equipment, and equipment maintenance. Dude Solutions/Facility Dude will be implementing another module for equipment inventory.

Director Nedza discussed planning for growth and obsolete equipment. With 51 computers to replace this fiscal year, the department is halfway through the process. Another employee position is needed and will be requested in the FY18 budget.

Director Nedza referred to the IT Policy draft regarding social media. She recommended that departmental Facebook pages be utilized to share information with the public. Currently, there are 11 departments with a Facebook page. Guidelines and criteria will need to be developed for maintaining social media. Citizens can sign up for alerts through the new website and departmental Facebook pages will also provide information to the public.

Director Nedza will continue to offer training for users and would like to offer “lunch & learn” training sessions. A discussion continued regarding the work order process, an additional employee in the IT office to handle work orders and/or a centralized employee to handle work orders.

Economic Development – J. R. Charles, Director

Director Charles stated that Economic Development is the ultimate team sport which involves local government and, at times, the State of Georgia, regional partners, Joint Development Authorities and other groups/individuals pulling everyone together. The 2005 Economic Development Comprehensive Plan will be updated as part of the County’s Joint Comprehensive Plan. Decisions will need to be made regarding the type of businesses to Oconee County and the needs of the business regarding resources/infrastructure. Mr. Charles proposes making on-site visits to commercial and retail businesses to develop continued working relationships.

Mr. Charles discussed establishing loan/grant programs through the Oconee County Industrial Development Authority (OCIDA) to assist start up business funding and also a possible partnership with Terry College of Business at UGA.

Administrative Officer Benko asked if Director Charles should be considered for the Joint Comprehensive Plan Stakeholders Committee and Mr. Charles stated that he would like to be considered.

Property Appraisal – Allen Skinner, Director

Director Skinner discussed the need for property inspections every three years. Due to growth in the County, the department is not able to evaluate within the recommended three-year cycle. Appraisers tried using iPads in the field but an internet connection is required and encountered “dead spots.” New technology is now available with no internet connection necessary as the parcels to be inspected will be downloaded onto the tablet. When returning to the office, the information will sync with the office computers. GIS maps can be loaded on the tablets, pictures can be taken, and GPS capabilities are also on the tablets. Department production is increased, because Appraisers can stay in the field

longer. Chairman Daniell asked that Director Skinner present the costs for the tablets, annual software maintenance and training to the Board on January 31, 2017 at the Board's Agenda Setting Meeting.

Director Skinner stated that, with Appraisers in the field for longer periods of time, there will be a need to have vehicles in the pool dedicated to the Property Appraisal Department. The Appraisers are identified by a logo on their shirts and knocking on the homeowner's door as a notification that the Appraisers are on-site. A logo could also be placed on the vehicle identifying the Property Appraisal Department. Notifications are placed on the County website, advertisements in the paper, and mailings to property owners regarding approximate dates and the areas where property evaluations will occur.

Adjourn:

There being no further business, on motion by Commissioner Wilkes and second by Commissioner Thomas, the meeting was adjourned at 2:27 p.m.

County Clerk

Chairman

Date