

The Regular Meeting of the Oconee County Board of Commissioners was held on Tuesday, February 7, 2017 at 7:00 p.m. in the Commission Meeting Chambers at the Oconee County Courthouse.

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

Staff Present: Administrative Officer Jeff Benko, CPA
Daniel Haygood, County Attorney
Kathy Hayes, County Clerk
B.R. White, Director, Planning & Code Enforcement
Emil Beshara, Director, Public Works
Wayne Haynie, Director, Utility Department
Wes Geddings, Director, Finance
Paula Nedza, Director, Information Technology
John Gentry, Director, Parks & Recreation

Media Present: Michael Prochaska, Editor, The Oconee Enterprise

Chairman Daniell began the Board Meeting with a moment of silence, and the Pledge of Allegiance was led by Commissioner Wilkes.

Approval of Agenda:

On motion from Commissioner Horton and second by Commissioner Saxon, the Agenda was unanimously approved.

Statements and Remarks from Commissioners:

Judd Shiver stated that the Willow Creek subdivision should not have been refunded sewer capacity. Chairman Daniell stated that Administrative Officer Jeff Benko schedule a time with Mr. Shiver to discuss his concerns.

Statements and Remarks from Citizens:

None.

Chairman Daniell explained to the audience that "Statements and Remarks from Citizens" are for topics that are not included on the Agenda; public comment will be allowed for items on the Agenda; and Consent Agenda items may be removed from the Agenda by a Commissioner. Time limits were reviewed regarding public comments for agenda items.

Minutes:

Commissioner Horton asked that minutes from the January 26, 2017, meeting be approved separately due to his absence from the meeting.

On motion by Commissioner Saxon and second by Commissioner Wilkes, minutes of the January 3, January 6, January 10, January 10 (Town Hall), January 18, January 27 and January 31, 2017 meetings were unanimously approved as submitted.

On motion by Commissioner Wilkes and second by Commissioner Thomas, minutes of the January 26, 2017 meeting were unanimously approved as submitted.

FY 2016 Audit Report:

Matt Miller of Treadwell, Tamplin and Company presented to the Board the FY 2016 Audit Report. Mr. Miller stated that financial statements have been filed with the State of Georgia and are in compliance with the State Department of Audits. Mr. Miller reported an Unmodified Opinion was provided on all funds with no audit findings. He stated that the results indicated a strong financial position for the County and noted an increase in the Fund Balance, which included all county departments were under budget for the fiscal year. SPLOST revenue and expenditures have been reviewed, and the County is in compliance with the SPLOST referendum. The Board expressed appreciation to Finance Director Wes Geddings and staff for the outstanding report.

Joint Comprehensive Plan Process:

Justin Crighton, Planner, Northeast Georgia Regional Commission presented to the Board the process for the update/development of the Joint Comprehensive Plan. He stated that the Comprehensive Plan is a useful guide for local officials while making day-to-day decisions. Mr. Crighton stated that the Joint Comprehensive Plan Stakeholders Committee will meet four to five times during the next 10 to 12 months and will assist the Northeast Georgia Regional Commission in developing the plan. Local officials, both county and municipalities, will review the work of the committee, and the public will be offered public comment opportunities during public forums.

Harden Hill Road Abandonment:

Chairman John Daniell stated that the City of Watkinsville has requested that Harden Hill Road be placed in its road system, which will require an abandonment of the road by the County. He asked that the Board declare the abandonment of Harden Hill Road to be in the best public interest in order to become part of the City of Watkinsville road system. After the required advertising, the Board will hold a public hearing on February 28, 2017.

On motion by Commissioner Saxon and second by Commissioner Horton, the Board unanimously declared the abandonment of Harden Hill Road to be in the best public interest in order to become a part of the City of Watkinsville road system.

Calls Creek Wastewater Reclamation Facility Expansion:

Utility Director Wayne Haynie requested that the Board consider the expansion of the Calls Creek Wastewater Reclamation Facility stating that it is time to move ahead with the project to safeguard the environment and provide additional sewer capacity in the county; funding for the project is available; Crowder Construction, Inc., is experienced with a design/build project; and, expansion will create moderate capacity for moderate growth.

Mr. Haynie requests that the Board authorize the Chairman to execute an Amendment to the existing agreement with Crowder Construction, Inc., for Phase II Construction Services. Phase II services will be performed for a guaranteed Maximum Price, not to exceed \$13,382,491.00, including final permitting, construction, training, commissioning and start-up. Mr. Haynie stated that Phase I of the project was awarded by the Board on February 2, 2016, and covered design phase services of a Guaranteed Maximum Price (survey, design documents, cost estimates, permitting, EPD submittal and preparation).

Commissioner Horton stated his concern for future expansion beyond the 1.5 mgd and including preparation work in this project to allow for a future expansion. Mr. Haynie stated that cost estimates of \$1.1 million will include additional site preparation and structures/equipment to accommodate a future upgrade. He noted that it is more cost-effective to include these costs during this project period. Commissioner Thomas asked about storage options for additional peak flows. Mr. Haynie stated that a clarifier will be repurposed for a storage tank.

Chairman Daniell asked for public comment.

Michelle Mominy stated that she is in favor of refunding sewer capacity fees and Calls Creek Plant upgrade. She asked that the Board vote against expanding to 3 mgd in the future. Jim McGarvey stated his concern about discussions regarding decreasing/increasing the number of pump stations. Lee Becker asked that the Board consider rerouting the effluent into Calls Creek, which is a small creek, to a larger stream instead of including funds for additional site preparation for future expansion. He also asked that the Board consider no expansion beyond the 1.5 mgd. Craig Findley supports the comments of the others that spoke. He spoke against spending \$1.1 million (additional prep work for a future expansion). He stated that Calls Creek cannot handle 3 mgd and does not need a pipeline down the middle of the creek. Mike McCarthy asked that the Board contact Athens-Clarke County to discuss purchasing sewer capacity with the \$1.1 million (funds to be used for additional preparation for a future expansion). Cindy McGarvey asked the Board to provide other alternatives and/or a plan regarding expansion above 1.5 mgd prior to the Board voting on the Utility Department's request to move ahead with the Calls Creek expansion.

Chairman Daniell closed the public comment period.

Chairman Daniell asked Director Haynie to discuss the pump stations and the County's philosophy regarding the pump stations. Mr. Haynie stated that the pump stations are necessary and most pump stations have been donated by developers. Gravity sewer lines are costly at approximately \$1.75 million to \$2 million per mile, and may require installing the lines through homeowners' properties. Gravity sewer can be installed over time provided funds are available and pumping stations could be decommissioned. Pumping stations require power/maintenance and consume smaller percentage of O&M budget than other items, such as purchased water. Four distinct pumping alternatives were provided at the Town Hall Meeting on October 26, 2016. Other alternatives are also being included in the Utility Master Plan being performed by Carter & Sloope Engineers.

Chairman Daniell stated that refunding the sewer capacity fees and the Calls Creek Plant expansion is for the health of the wastewater treatment system. After revisions of the 2005 Utility Master Plan, public meetings will be held to review the plan. The overall goal is to have no net gain in pump stations in the future.

On motion by Commissioner Saxon and second by Commissioner Thomas, the Board voted 3 to 1 to authorize the Chairman to execute an Amendment to the existing agreement with Crowder Construction, Inc., for Phase II Construction Services to be performed for a guaranteed Maximum Price, not to exceed \$13,382,491.00, including final permitting, construction, training, commissioning and start-up. Commissioners Saxon, Thomas and Wilkes voted in favor of the motion and Commissioner Horton voted against the motion. The motion passed.

Wastewater Treatment Capacity Policy – Reserved Capacity for Municipalities:

Chairman John Daniell asked that the Board consider an amendment to the Wastewater Treatment Capacity Policy to allow capacity to be reserved for the County municipalities. He asked that 2% of the 30% reserved for residential sewer capacity be allocated to the municipalities to connect existing structures to the sewer system. The connections will be handled administratively by the Utility Department depending on capacity available at the time of the request.

Chairman Daniell asked for public comment and there was none.

On motion by Commissioner Horton and second by Commissioner Wilkes, the Board unanimously approved an amendment to the Wastewater Treatment Capacity Policy to maintain capacity reserve for County municipalities at 2% within the 30% reserve for residential sewer capacity as stated in the Wastewater Treatment Capacity Policy. **See Ordinances and Resolutions Book No. 21.**

Resolution Providing for the Levy and Collection of Annual Ad Valorem Tax – Oconee County School District:

County Attorney Daniel Haygood presented to the Board a resolution that is needed from the Board for the levy and collection of an educational special one percent sales and use tax for the Oconee County School District in an amount not to exceed \$45 million for the purpose of capital projects. The School District will issue General Obligation Sales Tax Bonds, Series 2017, in the principal amount of \$22.74 million.

Chairman Daniell asked for public comment and there was none.

On motion by Commissioner Saxon and second by Commissioner Horton, the Board unanimously approved a resolution for the levy and collection of an annual ad valorem tax for the Oconee County School District General Obligation Sales Tax Bonds, Series 2017.

Joint Comprehensive Plan Stakeholders Committee:

On motion by Commissioner Saxon and second by Commissioner Wilkes, the Board unanimously approved the following applicants to the Joint Comprehensive Plan Stakeholders Committee for terms expiring July 1, 2018: Charles R. Baugh, Bob Bishop, Laura Carmichael, Kent Chapman, Maria Caudill, Kent Chapman, Lisa Douglas, Thomas Evans Tammy Gilland, Charles Hunt, David Jackson, Sherry Laboon, Laura Iyer, Tommy Malcom, Dorann Mansberger, Daniel Marks, Becky Moore, Ed Perkins, Andy Pippin, Tom Porter, Michael Ransom, Ryan Rickard, Patricia Sebring, David Wenner and Marcus A. Wiedower. Municipality representatives to include: Bishop-Mindy Porterfield; Bogart-John Larkin; High Shoals-Mayor Toby Bradberry; and Watkinsville-Brian Broderick.

Bogart Library Advisory Board – Commissioner Appointees:

On motion by Horton and second by Commissioner Wilkes, Commissioners Horton, Wilkes and Saxon approved Chairman John Daniell and Commissioner Mark Thomas as appointees to the Bogart Library Advisory Board.

Chairman Daniell asked for public comment and there was none.

Hard Labor Creek Reservoir Management Board-Commissioner Appointee:

On motion by Commissioner Wilkes and second by Commissioner Saxon, Commissioners Thomas, Wilkes and Saxon approved Commissioner Chuck Horton to serve as the Board appointee to the Hard Labor Creek Reservoir Management Board.

Chairman Daniell asked for public comment and there was none.

Northeast Georgia Region 10 Emergency Medical Services Board – Staff Appointment:

On motion by Commissioner Saxon and second by Commissioner Wilkes, the Board unanimously approved Karla Hulse, EMA, as the staff appointment to the Northeast Georgia Region 10 Emergency Medical Services Board.

Chairman Daniell asked for public comment and there was none.

FY 2017 Financial Update:

Finance Director Wes Geddings presented the Financial Update-2nd Quarter FY17 to the Board. Mr. Geddings stated that this is the mid-year update, which includes October 1, 2016 through December 31, 2016, and includes General Fund Revenue/Expenditures, Sales Tax Revenue (SPLOST/LOST) and Utilities. Revenue indicates that 71% of FY17 revenue has been received and 47% of FY17 expenditures have been expended. SPLOST/LOST distributions have increased 4.04% in FY17 as compared to FY16. Utility Department Revenue/Expenditures are on track to meet budget.

FY 2018 Budget Submittal Plan and Budget Public Hearing Schedule:

Chairman Daniell requested that the FY2018 Budget Submittal Plan and Budget Hearing Schedule be added to the agenda to discuss and consider. On motion by Commissioner Wilkes and second by Commissioner Horton, the Board approved the addition of this item to the agenda.

Chairman Daniell asked the Board to consider suspending the FY18 Budget Submittal Plan and Budget Hearing Schedule for 30 days in order to review the budget process. In order to comply with the budget ordinance, a vote will be needed by the Board to suspend the process for 30 days. Chairman Daniell stated a review is needed in order to streamline the process and include on the February 28, 2017, Agenda Setting meeting for the Board.

Chairman Daniell asked for public comment and there was none.

On motion by Commissioner Horton and second by Commissioner Thomas, the Board unanimously approved a 30-day suspension of the FY2018 Budget Submittal Plan and Budget Hearing Schedule.

Consent Items:

On motion by Commissioner Saxon and second by Commissioner Wilkes, the Board unanimously approved the following Consent Agenda items:

- 1) Adopted Board of Commissioners Vice Chair Schedule for 2017 through 2020.
- 2) Approved Public Works Director Emil Beshara to obtain survey of 20-foot sewer easement on Old Rocky Branch Road.
- 3) Approved HCM Brannen Building Roof and Gutters Project in an amount not to exceed \$154,817.00.
- 4) Ratified Revision to Upper Oconee Basin Water Authority Resolution Enabling Legislation to Release the Resource Management Commission from the Authority (House Bill 168).
- 5) Approved Property Appraisal Department Transfer of Funds from Personal Services to Computer Equipment in the amount of \$33,858.00 for property appraisal technology upgrades.
- 6) Approved Property Appraisal Department purchase order with DataCloud Solutions, Inc., to include software, iPads, four training days and prorated maintenance in the amount of \$21,138.12.

Executive Session: On motion by Commissioner Saxon and second by Commissioner Wilkes, the Board unanimously voted to adjourn into Executive Session at 8:21 p.m. to discuss personnel.

No action was taken in Executive Session.

On motion by Commissioner Wilkes and second by Commissioner Horton, the Board adjourned Executive Session at 9:10 p.m. On motion by Commissioner Saxon and second by Commissioner Thomas, the Board adjourned back into Regular Session.

There being no further business, on motion by Commissioner Wilkes and second by Commissioner Saxon, the meeting was adjourned at 9:13 p.m.

County Clerk

Chairman

Date