

A Called Meeting and a Work Session of the Oconee County Board of Commissioners were held on Tuesday, October 13, 2009, at 7:00 p.m. in the Community Room at the Oconee Veterans Park Community Center.

Members Present: Chairman Melvin Davis  
Commissioner John Daniell  
Commissioner Chuck Horton

Staff Present: Economic Development Director Rusty Haygood  
County Clerk Gina M. Lindsey  
County Attorney Daniel Haygood  
Finance Director Jeff Benko

Media Present: Blake Giles, The Oconee Enterprise  
Joe Vanhoose, Athens Banner Herald

**Called Meeting:** At 7:00 p.m. Chairman Davis called the Called Meeting to order.

**Water and Sewerage Refunding Revenue Bonds, Series 2009:** County Attorney Daniel Haygood reported the Supplemental Bond Resolution for the Water and Sewerage Refunding Revenue Bonds, Series 2009 was not ready for action by the Board. The Board will hold a special called meeting on October 20, 2009, prior to the Public Meeting, for this purpose.

There being no further business, the Called Meeting was adjourned.

**Work Session:** At 7:10 p.m. Chairman Davis called the Work Session to order.

**Economic Development Discussion:** Chairman Davis announced the purpose of the work session was to discuss the various options for economic development in Oconee County. Members of the Chamber of Commerce, the Development Authority and the Regional Economic Development Task Force were in attendance.

Chairman Davis provided a recap of Oconee County's economic development activities and noted the county currently participates in three regional efforts: the Innovation Crescent, the Georgia Biosciences Joint Development Authority, and the Regional Economic Development Task Force.

Commissioner Daniell expressed interest in merging economic development efforts in Oconee County with Athens-Clarke County as recommended by the Oconee Athens-Clarke Regional Economic Development Task Force. He questioned if the county's current regional focus has been effective in improving Oconee County's position to attract new businesses. Commissioner Daniell proposed redirecting the budgeted funds for Economic Development.

Commissioner Horton stressed the need to have a product to market. He suggested identifying and zoning locations throughout the county, providing infrastructure and possibly developing speculative buildings for businesses and industry. He expressed concern that unless Oconee County had something on the ground to offer, businesses would locate in Athens-Clarke County and there would be no benefit for Oconee County.

Chairman Davis and Commissioner Horton stated their opposition to closing Oconee County's Economic Development Office. Commissioner Daniell indicated he would be agreeable to keeping the local Economic Development Office in place for now.

Margaret Wagner-Dahl, Ed Perkins, Jim Sykes, Paul Chambers and Brian Broderick endorsed Oconee County's participation in a regional economic development partnership with Athens-Clarke County. Mike Lewis said the Chamber of Commerce supports regional cooperation efforts. Kate McDaniel said the county must have a vision. Keith Bradberry said once you have a product, businesses would come. Sarah Bell said the county should be a regional member only if there would be equal benefits for both counties and suggested the county move forward with zoning property and lowering property taxes. Flynn Warren asked about eligible grants for economic development.

Chairman Davis advised it would be in the Board's best interest to set aside another hour at a later meeting for further discussion. By consensus, the Board agreed to place this discussion on the October 27, 2009 agenda.

There being no further business, on motion by Commissioner Horton and second by Commissioner Daniell, the meeting was adjourned.

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County Clerk

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Chairman

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Date