

The Agenda Setting Meeting of the Oconee County Board of Commissioners was held on Tuesday, July 27, 2010, at 7:00 p.m. in the Commission Meeting Chambers at the Oconee County Courthouse.

Members Present: Chairman Melvin Davis
Commissioner Jim Luke
Commissioner John Daniell
Commissioner Margaret Hale
Commissioner Chuck Horton

Staff Present: Administrative Officer Alan Theriault
County Attorney Daniel Haygood
County Clerk Gina M. Lindsey

Jeff Benko, Finance Director
B.R. White, Planning Director
Emil Beshara, Public Works Director
John Gentry, Parks and Recreation Director
Lisa Davol, Assistant Parks and Recreation Director
Steve Hansford, Code Enforcement Director
Rusty Haygood, Economic Development Director
Peggy Holcomb, Tourism Director
Chris Thomas, Utility Director

Media Present: Vinnie Williams, The Oconee Enterprise
Blake Giles, The Oconee Enterprise
Erin France, Athens Banner Herald

Chairman Davis began the meeting with a Moment of Silence. Commissioner Horton led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of the Agenda: On motion by Commissioner Luke and second by Commissioner Hale, the agenda for the July 27, 2010 meeting was unanimously approved with moving discussion of the revised by-laws of the Keep Oconee County Beautiful Commission earlier on the agenda.

Commissioners Remarks: None.

Citizen Remarks: Nancy Turnbull requested the Adult Education Center be allowed to remain at the Government Annex after the renovation project is complete. Tassie Ruark and Art Zimmerman spoke in favor of the request. Commissioner Luke agreed to lead a search to find an acceptable space (900 to 1000 sq.ft.) for the program to continue in Oconee County.

Lee Becker requested the Board make a detailed FY2011 departmental budget and a detailed FY2010 departmental budget (once consolidated) available to the public.

Flag Presentation: Parks and Recreation Director John Gentry presented the Board with the American Flag that was flown on behalf of the Oconee County Board of Commissioners and County Staff over the American compound, Camp Phoenix, Afghanistan during "Operation Enduring Freedom" on September 11, 2009.

Keep Oconee County Beautiful Commission By-Laws: KOCBC Executive Director Esther Porter presented the revised by-laws of the Keep Oconee County Beautiful Commission. Ms. Porter explained the modifications included correcting the proper name of the Commission and adding the responsibilities of the Executive Director.

Discussions ensued on KOCBC reporting requirements and budget submittal procedures. Ms. Porter requested the Keep Oconee County Beautiful Commission report directly to the Board of Commissioners rather than to a county department. No action was taken.

By consensus, this item will be placed on the August 3, 2010 agenda for further discussion.

2010 Tax Millage Levy – Schools: On motion by Commissioner Horton and second by Commissioner Daniell, the Board unanimously confirmed the 2010 tax millage levy for county schools maintenance and operations of 16.50 and the school bond rate of 1.00 for a total of 17.50 mills. This was the amount levied by the Board of Education.

2010 Tax Millage Levy - County: On motion by Commissioner Luke and second by Commissioner Hale, the Board unanimously approved setting the 2010 net millage rate of 6.686 mills for unincorporated areas and 7.486 mills for incorporated areas.

The 2010 gross millage rate for county government maintenance and operations for unincorporated areas is 10.276; less 2.790 for sales tax rollback and .800 for insurance premium rollback. The 2010 gross millage rate for county government maintenance and operations for incorporated areas is 10.276; less 2.790 for sales tax rollback.

Land Use and Transportation Committee Applicants: The Board interviewed applicant Shane Carson for appointment to the Land Use and Transportation Committee for a 2-year term, expiring September 30, 2012.

The Board will take action on this appointment at the August 3, 2010 meeting.

Recreational Affairs Committee Applicants: The Board interviewed applicant Chris Butts for appointment to the Recreational Affairs Committee for a 2-year term, expiring September 30, 2012.

The Board will take action on this appointment at the August 3, 2010 meeting.

Alcohol License Application – Chef Ming’s: County Clerk Gina Lindsey presented an application for a 2010 Alcohol License submitted by Chef Ming’s located in the Kroger Shopping Center. Owner Fa Guan Chen was present. Ms. Lindsey stated all requirements of the Alcohol Ordinance have been met.

By consensus, this item will be placed on the Consent Agenda for August 3, 2010.

Annual Confiscated Assets Report: Sheriff Scott Berry presented the Annual Confiscated Assets Report for the Oconee County Sheriff’s Department. As of this date, Sheriff Berry stated the balance of the account is \$16,265.98.

Jail Agreement with Athens-Clarke County: Sheriff Scott Berry and Chief Deputy Lee Weems presented an Agreement with Athens-Clarke County for housing up to 90 Athens-Clarke County prisoners in the Oconee County Jail at a rate of \$35 per day per inmate. Chief Weems explained Oconee County will be responsible for routine and incidental services such as inmate transportation to and from the jail and routine inmate medical and dental services. The term of the Agreement is one year and will automatically renew for additional one-year terms unless terminated by either party.

By consensus, this item will be placed on the Consent Agenda for August 3, 2010.

Unified Development Code Amendment - Soaps: The Board held a First Reading and Public Hearing on an Amendment to the Unified Development Code to create an allowable use for Handmade Soaps and Soaps and Detergents. Planning Director B.R. White said the Amendment would allow the manufacturing of soaps in A-1, B-1, B-2 and TB zoning districts as a Special Use.

Russ Page spoke in favor of the Amendment, stating soap-making was an agricultural product and should be allowed in an A-1 area.

Bob Smith was concerned with the broad description and used an example of manufacturing on a property located in a “Country Estates” land use. He said if the proposed Amendment was approved, a revision to the Land Use Plan would also be required.

There being no further public comment, the Public Hearing was closed.

The Board will hold a Second Reading and consider the proposed Amendment at its August 3, 2010 meeting.

Government Annex Renovation Project - Architect: Project Manager Wayne Wilbanks reported a Review Committee consisting of B.R. White, Bruce Thaxton, Chris Thomas, Emil Beshara, Marvin Poe, Ryan Jones and Steve Hansford interviewed and ranked the four selected architectural firms for the Government Annex Renovation Project. The unanimous first place firm was Precision Planning, Inc. at a “start to finish cost” of \$74,500. Mr. Wilbanks advised that a contract could be terminated at any step along the way.

Commissioner Luke expressed his desire for a study of long-term space needs for the county before proceeding with the renovations. Chairman Davis suggested this could be included in the Land Use and Transportation Planning Committee’s study of courthouse space needs.

Commissioner Daniell stated the Government Annex is the most under-used asset of the county and moving county offices there would result in a significant cost savings. Commissioner Horton agreed the resulting office space would serve the departments well for a number of years and save money on leasing office space

Mr. Wilbanks explained that by allowing the architects to complete the pre-design phase and schematic design phase, more information would be available on the condition of the building. Precision Planning, Inc. representative Liz Hudson said the renovated building would be versatile and designed as tenant space.

By consensus, this item will be placed on the August 3, 2010 agenda for further discussion.

Northeast Georgia Regional Solid Waste Management Plan Update: Public Works Director Emil Beshara reported the Georgia Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Act requires county and municipal governments to prepare a local solid waste management plan and periodic update for review and approval by their respective Regional Commission and the Department of Community Affairs (DCA). A five-year Short Term Work Program (STWP) update to the Northeast Georgia Regional Solid Waste Management Plan has been developed in coordination with representatives from each 10-member county.

Mr. Beshara said prior to submission of the plan to the Department of Community Affairs, each of the member counties and 46 municipalities are required to pass a resolution authorizing the transmittal of the draft plan to the Regional Commission and DCA.

By consensus, this item will be placed on the Consent Agenda for August 3, 2010.

Welcome Center Location: Economic Development Director Rusty Haygood and Tourism Director Peggy Holcomb recalled the Cultural Affairs and Tourism Advisory Committee had presented a list of four recommendations for the use of the Hotel-Motel Tax revenues. The two remaining items to be addressed are directional signage and a Main Street presence (location) for the Welcome Center.

Ms. Holcomb reported after evaluating potential locations, 24 N. Main Street (adjacent to the Courthouse) was identified as the ideal location for the Welcome Center. The new owners have expressed an interest in a multiple year lease of the property. Ms. Holcomb noted the lease would be funded by Hotel-Motel Tax revenues.

Elizabeth Hovell noted the current Welcome Center is not easily accessed and this is an excellent opportunity for a Main Street presence.

By consensus, the Board authorized staff to negotiate a lease for the property and return with the information at a future meeting.

Recycling Collection Services: Public Works Director Emil Beshara presented the evaluations of the RFP responses for recycling collection services. He reported RollOff Systems provided the best pricing structure and offered 100% of the value of the recyclable materials to the County.

On motion by Commissioner Hale and second by Commissioner Daniell, the Board unanimously authorized the Public Works Director to enter into negotiations for a mutually beneficial 5-year annually renewable contract with RollOff Systems for recycling collection services.

Solid Waste Collection and Disposal Services: Public Works Director Emil Beshara presented the evaluations of the RFP responses for solid waste and disposal services. He reported RollOff Systems provided the lowest bid based on the number of containers and offered to place containers at the landfill for C&D materials only.

Michael Elder, representing Oconee Waste Transport, spoke on the alternate his company proposed to place a compactor at the landfill to reduce the number of trips and increase tonnage per load. Mr. Beshara stated this is an alternative to be evaluated for the future with data obtained during the ensuing contract as the data is not currently available.

On motion by Commissioner Luke and second by Commissioner Horton, the Board unanimously authorized the Public Works Director to enter into negotiations for a mutually beneficial 1-year contract with RollOff Systems for solid waste collection and disposal services.

Zoom Bait/St. Mary's Sewer Line Project: Economic Development Director Rusty Haygood and Utility Director Chris Thomas recalled the bids for the Zoom Bait/St. Mary's Sewer Line Project exceeded the preliminary engineering report estimate. A request to the Department of Community Affairs for additional grant money to complete the project was denied.

Due to the shortfall in allocated funding, Mr. Haygood and Mr. Thomas requested the Board commit an additional \$400,000 from unallocated excess collections and interest earned on 2004 SPLOST revenues to meet the construction costs for the project.

By consensus, this item will be placed on the Consent Agenda for August 3, 2010.

Farmland Protection Conservation Easement – Ricky House Property: County Attorney Daniel Haygood reported the Ricky House deeds of conservation easements have been prepared to preserve and maintain the conservation values of two adjacent tracts in Oconee County totaling 41.5 acres. The 28.57 acre tract will be purchased with Farmland Protection funds and the 12.93 acre tract will be donated to Athens Land Trust.

By consensus, the acceptance of the Conservation Easement and the appropriation of \$75,000 budgeted for Farmland Protections will be placed on the Consent Agenda for August 3, 2010.

Ethics Ordinance: County Attorney Daniel Haygood reported on recent revisions to a draft Ethics Ordinance for the Board of Commissioners. He suggested the Magistrate Judge and the Probate Judge, along with the designated Special Master, make the appointments to a county ad hoc board of ethics that will hear any ethics complaints involving county commissioners. Mr. Haygood advised if the Magistrate Judge and the Probate Judge agreed, he would incorporate these items into the draft Ethics Ordinance.

Commissioner Daniell requested all references to county staff be removed from the ordinance so that it addresses only county commissioners.

Pension Plan Vesting: Finance Director Jeff Benko recommended the Board amend the Defined Benefit Pension Plan to change the full vesting period from 5 years to 10 years for newly hired employees. Mr. Benko said the change would not affect any currently employed eligible individuals and would ultimately result in reduced funding of pension costs for the county.

By consensus, this item will be placed on the Consent Agenda for August 3, 2010.

FY2010 Auditors: Finance Director Jeff Benko reported that based on the evaluations of the RFQ responses for FY 2010 auditing services, Treadwell, Tamplin and Company was deemed to provide the best mix of service, value and local government expertise. He noted the bid of \$60,010 was \$7,500 lower than the next higher bidder and \$15,000 less than what was charged last year.

By consensus, this item will be placed on the Consent Agenda for August 3, 2010.

August 3, 2010 Agenda: The agenda for the August 3, 2010 meeting was read by County Clerk Gina Lindsey.

Executive Session: On motion by Commissioner Luke and second by Commissioner Daniell, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn into Executive Session to discuss land acquisition, litigation and personnel matters. No action was taken in Executive Session.

On motion by Commissioner Horton and second by Commissioner Luke, the Board adjourned Executive Session. On motion by Commissioner Hale and second by Commissioner Luke, the Board adjourned back into Regular Session.

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

County Clerk

Chairman

Date