



Oconee Joint Regional Sewer Authority

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OCONEE JOINT REGIONAL SEWER AUTHORITY Ad-Hoc Sewer Feasibility Implementation Committee May 8, 2025

The Ad-Hoc Feasibility Implementation Committee meeting was held at the Coneross Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant.

Commissioners/Committee Members that were present:

- Joel Jones (Citizen - formerly worked for ReWa) – Committee Chair
- Chip Bentley (Appalachian Council of Gov'ts.)
- Amanda Brock (Oconee County)
- Chris Eleazer (Oconee Joint Regional Sewer Authority)
- Scott McLane (City of Seneca)
- Celia Myers (City of Walhalla)
- Scott Parris (City of Westminster)
- Sue Schneider (Citizen - formerly worked for Spartanburg Water)
- Rivers Stilwell (Attorney, Maynard Nexsen) - *via Microsoft Teams*
- Scott Willett (Anderson Regional Joint Water System)

Committee Members that were not present:

- None (all were in attendance)

OJRSA appointments and staff present were:

- Lynn Stephens, Secretary/Treasurer to the Board and Office Manager

Others present were:

- Lawrence Flynn (Pope Flynn - OJRSA Attorney) – *via Microsoft Teams*
- Angie Mettlen, (Vice President, W.K. Dickson/Ardurra)
- Katherine Amidon (Environmental Planner, Bolton & Menk)
- Tony Adams, Oconee Co. Citizen

A. Call to Order – Mr. Jones called the meeting to order at 9:07 a.m. He stated there is a draft recommendation to discuss, and the committee will determine who is in support of this recommendation today.

B. Public Comment – None.

C. Approval of Minutes:

- **Ad Hoc Sewer Feasibility Implementation Committee Meeting of April 10, 2025**
Ms. Brock made a motion, seconded by Mr. Willett, to approve the April 10, 2025 Ad Hoc Feasibility Implementation Committee Meeting minutes as presented. The motion carried.

D. Committee Discussion and Action Items:

1. **Review Draft Recommendations for Reconstitution and Discuss Next Steps** – Mr. Jones asked for any comments and thoughts.

Mr. Stilwell said when this first came out, he thought it sounded like another member was being added to the board and some of the other ideas from the committee were just buried in there. He also said the third bullet point *[when discussing a draft document]* about the collection systems being consolidated into one system seems to be inconsistent with the system having members; it's a radical unification proposal. He is worried that there will be the same issues with the interim step of adding Oconee County as a member. Ms. Amidon said the bullets are not sequential; all the bullet points must happen. Ms. Mettlen agreed with Ms. Amidon. Mr. Stilwell said that if some of the things discussed are done, there is no such thing as members; Ms. Mettlen replied that if everyone consolidates, it becomes a governing body of the Authority and how those members are appointed/elected. Mr. Jones suggested that there be a clarification of what a "member" is.

Mr. Flynn stated that under the statute, they are still members and are the only members that can reconstitute the system. He said there is an open question of how board members are appointed and who they have to be. He added that the Joint Authority Act will still be used, and in order to get to a joint authority, the board has to be made up of the cooperative members of the local government. Therefore, the members are still the constituency of the county, and the board of directors is whoever is appointed to govern that body. Ms. Mettlen stated that if the committee determines this is the way to go, there will be clarification in the language on this based on the statute.

Ms. Brock suggested striking out the word "member" on the third bullet item completely, because there are no other collection systems. Ms. Schneider and Mr. Bentley agreed with that.

Mr. Stilwell asked about the "equitable rate structure" in that same third bullet item. He said he thought it was going to be a single rate structure and asked if other rate structures are being anticipated. Ms. Mettlen replied it is only one rate structure. Mr. Jones suggested changing that to a "unified equitable rate structure."

Mr. Willett asked about the rate structures, and there was some discussion about the current rates in the Member Cities. Ms. Mettlen said the Authority has done a rate study, and if the consolidation happens, there will be several steps that will go into valuation of collection system assets and a condition assessment of the assets to determine the value in the future. This information may update that rate study to determine the rate as a consolidated entity. Ms. Mettlen said there may need some consideration (at least initially) in regard to the valuation piece and the asset piece for investment in the different systems. Mr. Jones said the rates are what they are, but you can adjust the value of the system when you talk about consolidation. Mr. Willett asked if the OJRSA's rates are different for the Member Cities' rates; Mr. Eleazer replied no, the OJRSA charges the same for all users.

Mr. Jones stated that this committee should just recommend a "unified equitable rate structure" and how it plays out is beyond the work of this committee. Ms. Mettlen agreed that this would be in the next steps. Mr. Flynn also agreed.

Mr. Stilwell asked if Oconee County joining is part of the financial part of the consolidation: are they putting their assets in or selling them? Ms. Mettlen replied that this is to be determined. Mr. Stilwell stated the new organization would need to buy the county's and the Member Cities' systems. Mr. Willett said the better word is "acquire," and several committee members agreed with that. Mr. Bentley said it will depend on the members and their position, and this is not the role the committee gets to play; Ms. Mettlen replied that we are gaining ground in some areas, but there will be hard work to come in other areas.

As there may be some surcharges to get all the members to the same level, Mr. Willett suggested there be a timeline in the recommendation to allow for equalization. He said a standard rate couldn't be developed if there is no timeline for everyone to become equal. Ms. Mettlen replied there isn't enough information currently for this committee to set a timeline, but that could be part of the recommendation that this is part of the valuation of assets. Ms. Brock suggested

recommending six (6) months to establish a timeline, as it could take that long to figure out the financial components. Mr. Willett added things that are left unsaid generally don't get done.

Mr. Jones agreed that this could be part of the recommendation to state that this should be fully implemented by a certain date. Mr. Flynn said that there should be a hard deadline of no later than a year to determine how to do the valuation and asset review; this process will take a long time, but without the deadline, it could potentially drag on forever. Ms. Mettlen agreed and said the longer it goes on, the more debt could be added to the various systems. She said there already are some debt entanglements to deal with and don't need to add any more.

Mr. Willett said he suggested giving some guidance (rather than a hard number) that equalization payments should not extend beyond the life of the notes that are already out there. Ms. Mettlen agreed. Mr. Jones said there may be other ways to do this rather than equalization payments. There may be a way to just value everything and make them whole. There is a difference between water and sewer: There are no assets in wastewater; it's just who has the least liabilities.

Mr. Stilwell asked if this could be done by the next legislative session, or do we need two (2) years? Ms. Mettlen replied that if everyone agrees that consolidation is the way to go, the valuation process can be started while waiting for the legislative changes. There is no need to do that sequentially. That valuation process will take some time, and it can happen before the statute is modified.

Mr. Stilwell asked who is going to pay for the valuation; Ms. Mettlen replied she couldn't commit on a funding agency, but if meaningful steps are taken to make changes for the better, there will be support. One of the criteria for principal forgiveness under the SRF (State Revolving Fund loan) is consolidation, and SCDES does engineering-only principal forgiveness, so this can be done stepwise.

Mr. Stilwell said that the systems in Greenville were thought to be fine for twenty (20) years, but when they were being looked at by another entity, it was determined they weren't. He asked how the valuation process would be objective. Mr. Jones replied it isn't; Ms. Schneider said you take what they say and move forward.

Mr. Jones said as things move forward, you must be careful with what you commit to and what you promise, and don't overstate or understate things. He added that is why he doesn't want this committee to get too far into the details on this, because this will become a sticking point and will prevent this committee from moving forward. These items will need to be figured out, but not right now.

Mr. Jones asked if everyone was good with:

- Bullet #1: Reconstituting the Authority to include Oconee County as a member. Everyone was good with that.
- Bullet #2: Reconstituting the Authority to allow to provide retail sewer services within the service area. Everyone was good with that.
- Bullet #3: Consolidation of the collection systems. Mr. Jones asked if everyone agreed this is necessary. Everyone agreed with that. Mr. Stilwell said this should be the first bullet. Ms. Mettlen said the bullets can be reordered.
- Bullet #4: Mr. Jones asked if the five (5)-member board was good with everyone, and it was good for all.

2. Discuss District Boundary Options – Mr. Jones then asked if the other part of bullet item #4 (full appointment of commission by the Governor upon recommendation of Oconee County legislative delegation based upon an appointive index of customers) was good with everyone, and if everyone thinks it's the best path forward.

Mr. Willett asked how an appointive index was going to work. Mr. Jones said Ms. Amidon was going to help with this. Ms. Amidon said she was going to hand out maps but asked Mr. Flynn to first state the importance of defining a service boundary with the legislative change. Ms. Mettlen

added that the maps are for “reference only”, and they will be returned to Ms. Amidon at the end of the meeting (*not included in these minutes*).

Mr. Flynn said full county boundaries would normally be assigned if an entity has the taxing authority, and people are being burdened with the taxes to support the system but not receiving those services; however, this does not apply here, because the Sewer Authority does not have the taxing authority. Therefore, the service area needs to be limited to those areas where service is provided, which would include the current Member Cities’ service areas.

Mr. Flynn added that the introduction of Oconee County adds a unique element, as there are people in the county not receiving service. Identifying what this looks like, and getting someone the opportunity to serve on the board without having the opportunity to be a sewer customer is a unique situation to work through. He said the best approach is to limit the service area to those people who receive retail services from the organization.

Mr. Flynn stated that the appointive index will identify the various service constituencies based on how many members are within a particular area; the determination would be based on relative percentages rounded up to the nearest whole number.

Ms. Schneider asked by identifying a service area of the areas receiving retail service, if a new industry or subdivision wants to come online outside that area, would it be annexed in based on approval of the county, or how would the service area be enlarged? Mr. Flynn said it would have to be hardwired to a permit served or run through the Oconee County; there is not real clear designated Authority. The Joint Agency Act contemplates that it is just the systems that are otherwise controlled. It’s not an issue now under the Act, because the territorial area doesn’t matter as members appoint the members they want to appoint. With what is being proposed, it changes the way things currently work. Mr. Eleazer asked if the service area could be defined as where they are receiving service or within a certain radius of existing infrastructure; Mr. Flynn replied that this would probably be the best result as it avoids someone having to make an independent discretion.

Ms. Amidon explained what the 4 pages of maps represent based on the 20-Year Master Plan that was done (including projected growth areas, proximity to corridors, where the public wanted to see growth, the areas for prioritization on commercial and industrial facilities, and proximity to existing sewer infrastructure), the natural drainage basins within the county, and the five (5) council districts. Mr. Stilwell asked if there were five (5) districts for the five (5) commissioners; Ms. Amidon said yes for those five (5) to be chosen by the Governor. Mr. Stilwell suggested no subdistricts like Greenwood County is.

Ms. Schneider apologized for missing the last meeting but asked if electing members at large off the table. Mr. Jones said, although he couldn’t remember what the issues were, after determining who was eligible to be elected, it was the consensus that it would be challenging to elect at large; however, it will still be written into the legislation as an option, but it is not a preferred recommendation. Mr. Flynn added that you must comply with the constitutional provisions and have equal voting (one man, one vote). He was not saying this can’t happen, but it adds a layer of complexity that will have to be resolved legislatively. Ms. Mettlen asked if you change the word “elected” to “appointed” at large, would that get us further? Mr. Flynn replied yes, because then you don’t have a “one man, one vote” issue and just have an equitable distribution issue (providing there is an applicable appointment mechanism).

Ms. Amidon asked how you avoid all five (5) members being from the same area if you don’t have districts. Mr. Stilwell said the delegation must do that. Mr. Jones asked if there could be something hardwired into this process for the delegation to follow, or a recommended process to follow. Ms. Schneider thinks it would be hard for legislation to be passed if the delegates were provided with even more guidance. She added that the delegates do not want to be bound. Mr. Jones said the board could always build this into their own policy; Ms. Schneider added that they could determine what makes a viable candidate to submit for consideration.

Mr. Eleazer asked Mr. Flynn if there were some guidelines in another policy that defined what the qualifications are for the candidates to be eligible. Mr. Flynn said it states commissioners must hold the qualifications of an elector (meaning they are a resident of Oconee County in the area served by the Authority). Ms. Amidon asked if the Authority could define how far away from the service line (a block or a mile) an elector may be; Mr. Flynn said yes, the language is broad right now, so it is flexible.

Ms. Schneider said she hopes that the recommendation is not just to solve the legislation problem but also builds the opportunity for the next question: when the next customer wants to come online that is outside of the service area, what is the mechanism that allows for that adjustment? Mr. Jones said it should be up to the entity to make these decisions. There was some additional discussion about how Anderson County would factor into this.

Mr. Eleazer said he hadn't thought much about this but asked if it was decided the service area was 1 mile from the sewer line, and a customer wants to come online 2 miles away but is willing to build their own treatment system, do they become a provider? Mr. Jones said it makes the most sense not to draw a radius but figure out the watershed boundaries. Ms. Mettlen said there already is a board adopted Master Plan where the service area is. Mr. Eleazer asked if the watershed boundaries could be set up as the service area. Mr. Jones recommends that is what the Authority should do, as well as hardwiring in some road corridors.

Mr. Jones asked if everyone feels it is a good idea to designate the service boundaries (not countywide). Mr. Flynn reminded everyone that this committee doesn't get to design it; it must be designed in the general statute that gives the Authority the opportunity for the map to be permissible. The committee needs to think of ways to provide general legislative language into the statute that identifies the watershed boundaries as the justifiable area for service. This will be complicated with the appointment methodology if you deviate solely from the folks who are receiving service from the system.

Ms. Schneider and Ms. Amidon stated it could be for those in the service area rather than those receiving service. Mr. Flynn asked who defines the service area? He added that this must be generally applicable because it comes through the Joint Agency Act. Someone must define the service area when it goes from a membership methodology to gubernatorial methodology.

Mr. Jones said he was still a little confused as to whether this was going to be appointed by the Governor based on a determined service boundary, and if so, what the boundary is going to be. Mr. Flynn replied that the cleanest and easiest is that only those receiving service from the Joint Agency can be members of the Joint Agency. Ms. Brock said that is too limiting. Mr. Flynn added that as new service is received, they can become members, because they are now in the service area.

Mr. Jones asked how do you determine who the five (5) board members are, and whether they could be from the same municipal area. Mr. Flynn stated that currently it is based on an appointive index based on the number of people on the system; however, this is subject to change.

Ms. Myers said she thought it was previously discussed that the Member Cities still wanted to have a say in the transition of appointing someone – or recommending someone to the delegation. She said if this is taken out, she is not sure the Walhalla City Council will be in support of moving forward. Mr. Willett said you cannot stop the Member Cities from recommending someone to the delegation, but the delegation doesn't necessarily have to pick that choice. Mr. Bentley said you cannot pin the delegation down on a candidate. Ms. Myers said she understood that, but if everything is taken away from the City, there may be a problem. Ms. Schneider stated that the City wouldn't own the system anymore. Ms. Myers said she didn't know, but if the City Council sees everything taken away, they may not even be open to consolidation as the two are tied together. She said she is trying to anticipate a problem before it starts.

Mr. Jones said if there is no support to do this, this all falls apart. He said he would challenge the Member Cities to ask why they feel like they need direct influence over the agency. Mr. Bentley asked what impact it would have. Mr. Jones said what risk would they have? Ms. Schneider added

they wouldn't own or operate the system. Ms. Myers replied the customers would be the Cities' constituents, and everything is political.

Ms. Schneider asked what goes into Anderson County right now. Ms. Brock stated that the person from Anderson County who was discussing this is no longer there, and she hadn't heard from them since. Mr. Eleazer replied there is nothing in Anderson County right now, but the OJRSA has been approached by developers about it. The developers have been told to contact Anderson County directly to see if they will help get sewer to them.

Ms. Schneider added that when you get the multiple delegations, it adds a bit more complexity. Mr. Jones said if the reconstitution cannot be figured out, it could be a step where delegation makes the new entity a multi-county entity which would overcome a lot of hurdles. Mr. Eleazer said the Anderson part could be figured out later whether they want to come in or be served by contract. Mr. Willett said if Anderson were to become a contractor, there would be the same problem with them as there is now with the Member Cities. Mr. Eleazer said they would not have representation on the board. Mr. Willett said he understood that, but when it comes to controlling the flow and that collection systems are not equitable right now. Mr. Eleazer spoke about how ReWa mandates that other sewer providers served by ReWa meet their requirements and added there are mechanisms in place right now that would allow the OJRSA to address that.

Ms. Brock said there was discussion in the minutes about a transitional committee, and she said it seems to be skipped over now. She said this would appease some of the Member Cities to hand their assets over now or at least release control, as there are elections at city and county levels that could offer a diluted process rather than it all at once. Ms. Myers said it is a big jump going from having one (1) representative from each city to nothing. Mr. Jones said the purpose is not to say how to get there but rather where the Authority needs to be; once the recommendation is made, the current board can figure out how to get there.

Ms. Mettlen asked what Ms. Brock envisions the transitional committee to be and whether it was to replace the current board. Ms. Brock answered yes, and said it would take things out of the hands they are currently in. She said that although she doesn't have a hand in it right now, she wouldn't be on the transitional committee. Ms. Brock added this is new, so parameters can be added as it goes along. It would give each Member City a comfort level knowing someone is on the board to stop the process as it is right now and move them forward to the next process rather than elect a man off the street to flip the coin completely over.

Mr. Bentley said there was also discussion about having someone "shepherd" the process, and he asked if this transitional committee would do that; Ms. Brock answered yes. Mr. Bentley asked how the transitional group would let go any different than the current group; Ms. Brock replied they would have a defined term. Mr. Bentley said he meant as in giving up the assets and control; Ms. Brock replied its purpose would be transition where right now there is no purpose to transition.

Mr. Jones asked Mr. Flynn if there is a legal way to do this, or would it take a legislative change to do it. Mr. Flynn said this adds an extra level of complexity into the general legislation that does not currently exist. The statute does not contemplate a reconstitution of an existing entity, and the idea of a temporary Ad Hoc or transitional committee would have to be layered in as an additional authorization in the statute.

Mr. Bentley asked if the committee could just be a part of the existing Authority that is done internally. Ms. Amidon stated the SWAG agreement would need to be redone. Mr. Flynn replied that it could be an Ad Hoc Committee similar to this one where it is a transitional committee that makes recommendations and could be set up where it can potentially qualify under whatever methodology the governor is going to appoint, and then can get "a wink-and-a-nod" from the senator that says the transitional members are also going to be the first members of the organization (theoretically killing two birds with one stone). Otherwise, there would need robust language to add this transitional committee that does not exist in the statute.

Mr. Stilwell asked if the existing members could add the County right now. Mr. Flynn replied yes. Mr. Stilwell said if they added the County this summer, there would be a two (2)-year transition de facto.

Ms. Schneider said until the entities are willing to give up their assets, the things that need to be fixed will never get fixed. There will be failing systems and challenges. Ms. Schneider stated, "If the idea is to hold control, and I understand why politicians do that; believe me, I get it. I'm going to tell you then they are voting for a path to continue not having an effective sewer system in Oconee County." She added, "Tomorrow will be as effective as yesterday," if the collection systems continued to be owned by the different partners operating independently under a board of its own members.

Mr. Bentley said the committee's job is to figure out what the best system is long-term and what the structure should be in the next twenty (20) years, but what is being argued now is how involved this committee should be and what the interim steps are to get there. Ms. Brock said the committee should start a dilution process with the board change. She said that she believes everyone wants the long-term benefits. Mr. Parris said he didn't feel like everyone understands what the benefits are, as they are looking at giving up the system and losing control over the rates even though they don't really have control over the rates now. They will be better off in the long run with spreading it out over the whole system, which will lower the costs, but they don't understand that. He suggested that this somehow be relayed to each Member City. Mr. Jones said there has been a study on the table for a long time now and asked if no one explained it to them. Mr. Jones said it makes no sense for them to keep a system they don't want to own in the first place; if you own the system, you must own the responsibility that goes along with it.

Mr. Eleazer spoke about the OJRSA's enforcement on the sewer systems. He stated that the OJRSA encourages them to budget and rehabilitate their systems, but it isn't clear how hard the OJRSA can push those upstream systems to correct the issues. Mr. Parris said it isn't an option not to push. Mr. Eleazer said the state expects the OJRSA to step in on their behalf and enforce this.

Mr. Willett asked what the problem would be with going back to gubernatorial appointments, using the appointed index, and allowing Walhalla and Westminster to appoint a single member and Seneca two members with the recommendations from those entities right now for a transition committee? Then trust the delegation to do what they need to do in the future with the guidance of the appointed index as it provides a tighter alignment with the Joint System Act. Mr. Jones said he didn't think this committee needed to spell all of this out.

After a bit more discussion, Ms. Mettlen said there would be no appointive index and it will be called an "initial" board instead of a "transitional" board; Ms. Brock agreed. Ms. Mettlen said there was discussion about the board adding a member from Oconee County now. Mr. Eleazer asked if that would make a ten (10)-person board. Mr. Parris asked if the requirements set aside for an elector would apply to the transition committee, because if it does, it would wipe out most of the current board members.

Mr. Jones added he is going to poll for support in a few minutes. Mr. Jones said regarding the recommendation, there will be some language added to allow for interim leadership to get to the final leadership. Mr. Eleazer suggested that there be a compromise to avoid losing votes. Mr. Jones said the recommendation will be that there will be an interim solution that ensures representation from the current members based on the appointive index. Mr. Willett said moving to the appointive index could disqualify most of the existing board members. Ms. Mettlen asked if the appointive index should be removed and it just say appointed. Mr. Parris said yes. Ms. Brock withdrew her word "transition" and asked to make it "initial" instead. Ms. Mettlen added Oconee County has to be added before the reconstitution to get the initial board.

- 3. Review Committee Member Support for Proposed Recommendation** – Mr. Jones read over the bullets again and summed up the discussion about the initial board with the County seat added.

Mr. Jones asked, in response to a previous discussion, if there should be a timeline. Mr. Eleazer said that Mr. Bronson, OJRSA board chairman, mentioned this and asked if Mr. Flynn, Mr. Jones, and Ms. Mettlen could discuss this collectively and develop an idea of what the timeline could be at the next meeting. Mr. Eleazer asked Mr. Flynn to send out some information as to what would need to go into the timeline. *Although Mr. Flynn was still on the Teams meeting, he did not respond.* Ms. Mettlen said she would reach out to him.

Mr. Jones polled committee members on what they supported based on a list of five (5) levels of support that Ms. Amidon displayed on the monitor. The list was as follows:

- 1) Full Endorsement;
- 2) Endorsement - with minor points of contention;
- 3) Endorsement – with major points of contention;
- 4) Stand Aside – with major reservations (requires changes); and
- 5) Withdrawal (complete disagreement).

Ms. Amidon said each vote means the member supports it at such a level where they will educate those who must vote on it; this is super critical. Mr. Jones asked each committee member individually where they were in their support of the recommendation. The answer was: Mr. Willett selected item #1; Mr. McLane #1 (after stating that his council and mayor would want some input); Ms. Brock #1 (providing the language suits the needs and concerns); Mr. Parris #1; Ms. Schneider #1; Mr. Eleazer #1; Ms. Myers #1; Mr. Stilwell 0.5 (essentially #1); and Mr. Jones #1.

Ms. Mettlen said she will meet with Mr. Flynn next week to work on the draft recommendation further.

4. Committee Action Items – None.

5. Consider Posting Meeting Minutes to the OJRSA Website Upon Approval by the Ad Hoc Committee – Mr. Eleazer stated that it takes almost two (2) months to post the minutes from the Ad Hoc Committee meetings to the OJRSA website for the public to view, because the Committee approves them the following month, and then it is an additional month before the OJRSA Board accepts them. It was requested to post them prior to the OJRSA Board approval. The F&A Committee was okay with this as long as the Ad Hoc Committee permitted it.

Ms. Brock made a motion, seconded by Ms. Myers, to permit the Ad Hoc Committee Meeting minutes to be posted on the OJRSA website after committee approval but prior to acceptance of the OJRSA Board. The motion carried.

E. Public Comment Following Committee Discussion and Action Items – Mr. Adams stated that he remembered in the fall when Ms. Mettlen presented the Regional Feasibility Study recommendations. He said there were other recommendations made, including if this doesn't work out, it could be turned over to another entity. He doesn't know how this will work out, but he prays for everyone.

F. Upcoming Meetings

- 1. Operations & Planning Committee** – Wednesday, May 21, 2025 at 8:30 a.m.
- 2. Finance & Administration Committee** – Tuesday, May 27, 2025 at 9:00 a.m.
- 3. Board of Commissioners** – Monday, June 2, 2025 at 4:00 p.m.
- 4. Sewer Feasibility Implementation Ad Hoc Committee** – Thursday, June 12, 2025 at 9:00 a.m.

Ms. Brock requested the date be changed as she has a conflict. It was agreed to move the meeting to Monday, June 19, 2025 at 9:00 a.m.

G. Adjourn - The meeting adjourned at 10:58 a.m.

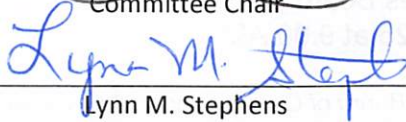
Approved By:


Joel Jones
Committee Chair

Date Approved:

6/16/25

Approved By:


Lynn M. Stephens
OJRSA Secretary/Treasurer

Notification of the meeting was distributed on April 11, 2025 to *Upstate Today*, *Anderson Independent-Mail*, *Westminster News*, *Keowee Courier*, WGOG Radio, WSNW Radio, City of Seneca Council, City of Walhalla Council, City of Westminster Council, Oconee County Council, SC DHEC, www.ojrsa.org, and posted at the OJRSA Administration Building.



Ad Hoc Sewer Feasibility Implementation Committee

OJRSA Operations & Administration Building

Lamar Bailes Board Room

May 8, 2025 at 9:00 AM

This advisory committee was established by the OJRSA Board of Commissioners at its November 4, 2024 meeting to consider recommendations and report to the OJRSA Board and Oconee County as identified in the [Regional Feasibility Planning Study](#) as adopted by the OJRSA on September 9, 2024. The committee can neither create policy nor make decisions on behalf of the OJRSA or other wastewater service providers within the area. See the study at www.ojrsa.org/info for more information.

OJRSA commission and committee meetings may be attended in person at the address listed above. The OJRSA will also broadcast meetings live on its YouTube channel at www.youtube.com/@OconeeJRSA (if there is a technical issue preventing the livestreaming of the meeting, then a recording will be published on the channel as soon as possible). For those not able to attend in person, then the OJRSA Board or Committee Chair will accept public comments by mail (623 Return Church Rd, Seneca, SC 29678) or at info@ojrsa.org. Comments must comply with the public session instructions as stated on the meeting agenda and will be received up until one hour prior to the scheduled meeting. If there is not a public session scheduled for a meeting, then comments shall not be accepted.

Agenda

- A. Call to Order** – Joel Jones, Committee Chair
- B. Public Comment** – Receive comments relating to topics that may or may not be on this agenda. Session is limited to a maximum of 30 minutes with no more than 5 minutes per speaker.
- C. Approval of Minutes**
 - Ad Hoc Sewer Feasibility Implementation Committee Meeting of April 10, 2025
- D. Committee Discussion and Action Items** – Joel Jones, Committee Chair, unless otherwise noted
 1. **Review Draft Recommendations for Reconstitution and Discuss Next Steps** – Review the revised draft reconstitution memo with the next steps outlined for reconstitution of the Joint System and conveyance of the Members' collection systems to the Joint Authority and discuss next steps
 2. **Discuss District Boundary Options** – Reconstitution of a new sewer authority will require defining a service area for proposed management purposes and appointing board members. Options for this will be presented and discussed.
 3. **Review Committee Member Support for Proposed Recommendation** – A successful recommendation will need the support of all stakeholders party to this process. Discussing their willingness to endorse the recommendation is an important step in finalizing the recommendation.
 4. **Committee Action Items** – Discussion among committee members regarding making final recommendations for steps forward towards reorganization, consolidation, and other matters relevant to this committee.
 5. **Consider posting meeting minutes to the OJRSA website upon approval by the ad hoc committee** – Chris Eleazer, Committee Member
- E. Public Comment Following Committee Discussion and Action Items** – Session is limited to a maximum of 30 minutes with no more than 5 minutes per speaker.
- F. Upcoming Meetings** *All meetings to be held in the Lamar Bailes Board Room unless noted otherwise.*
 1. Operations & Planning Committee – May 21, 2025 at 8:30 AM
 2. Finance & Administration Committee – May 27, 2025 at 9:00 AM
 3. Board of Commissioners – June 2, 2025 at 4:00 PM
 4. Ad Hoc Sewer Feasibility Implementation Committee – June 12, 2025 at 9:00 AM
- G. Adjourn**



NAME (Print)

ORGANIZATION

Oconee County

Arduvra

City of Surrey

Bottom Mark

ACOG

City of Westminster

[Signature]

City of Walhalla



REGIONAL SEWER FEASIBILITY STUDY

Draft Reconstitution Recommendations for Discussion May 8, 2025

Items in italics to be further discussed at the May 8th Meeting

Governance Structure

- The Authority shall be reconstituted to include the County as a Member.
- Reconstitution shall provide that the Authority shall have the power to provide retail sewer services within its service area.
- Current member collection systems shall be consolidated into one system to be owned and operated by the Authority.*
 - Equitable rate structure to be developed and deployed
- The governing body of the Authority shall be a five-member board of commissioners (the “**New Commission**”). Draft legislation has been proposed to amend the Joint Authority Act to permit new methods for appointing or electing commissions. The recommended path forward is as follows:
 - Full appointment of the New Commission by the Governor, upon the recommendation of the legislative delegation from Oconee County based upon an appointive index of total customers
 - *Service Area and district boundaries TBD (for discussion May 8th)*
 - *Language that clarifies changes to the service area and district boundaries should be clearly defined*

Voting Mechanism

- General matters shall be determined as one vote per commissioner
- *Weighted voting as an option for finance-related matters TBD pending district boundaries. Note, this may not be necessary if the Members are not appointing the Commissioners.*

*Note, with consolidation the following items are resolved or no longer needed:

- Operating Agreement
- Expansion & debt parameters
- Addition of New Members

Next steps:

- State legislation changes to permit the governor appointed board of commissioners
- Evaluation and valuation of the collection systems (including debt), terms finalized, transfer of collection system to the Authority
 - o Opportunity for funding assistance
- Rate restructuring with added collection systems
 - o Opportunity for funding assistance