



Oconee Joint Regional Sewer Authority

623 Return Church Road
Seneca, South Carolina 29678
Phone (864) 972-3900
www.ojrja.org

OCONEE JOINT REGIONAL SEWER AUTHORITY Ad-Hoc Reconstitution Committee and Executive Committee August 13, 2026

The Ad-Hoc Reconstitution Committee and Executive Committee meeting was held at the Coneross Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant.

Commissioners/Committee Members that were present:

- Chip Bentley (Appalachian Council of Gov'ts.)
- Kevin Bronson (City of Westminster) – Committee Chair – *via Microsoft Teams*
- Chris Eleazer (Oconee Joint Regional Sewer Authority)
- Lawrence Flynn (Pope Flynn - OJRSA Attorney) – *via Microsoft Teams*
- Joel Jones (Consultant, JonesWater)
- Scott Moulder (City of Seneca)
- Celia Myers (City of Walhalla)

Committee Members that were not present:

- Katherine Amidon (Environmental Planner, Bolton & Menk)
- Glenn Hart, Oconee County Councilman
- Angie Mettlen, (Vice President, Ardurra)

OJRSA appointments and staff present were:

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

Others present were:

- Mayor Linda Oliver, Town of West Union – *via Microsoft Teams*
- Tony Adams, Oconee Co. Citizen
- Will Kerr, Raftelis – *via Microsoft Teams*
- Charles "Chazzo" Habliston, First Tryon Advisors – *via Microsoft Teams*

A. Call to Order – Because he is attending remotely today, Mr. Bronson asked Mr. Moulder to lead the meeting. Mr. Moulder called the meeting to order at 9:02 a.m.

B. Approval of Minutes

- **Ad Hoc Reconstitution Committee and Executive Committee Meeting of May 14, 2026**
Ms. Myers made a motion, seconded by Mr. Bentley, to approve the May 14, 2026 meeting minutes as presented. The motion carried.

C. Committee Discussion and Action Items

1. **Receive Quarterly Progress Report No. 4 as Submitted to South Carolina Rural Infrastructure Authority, OJRSA Board, and Oconee County (Exhibit A)** – Mr. Eleazer stated this progress report is a summary of events for the previous quarter as recommended to be sent to the Rural Infrastructure Authority (RIA) by the general feasibility study, and Mr. Flynn and the facilitators reviewed the report. This is for information only; the report has already been submitted to the RIA. Mr. Jones added that this committee is close to deviating from the proposed RIA schedule and might want to contact the RIA to reset the schedule with them before the end of the year.

2. Status Update on Financial Studies – Mr. Jones said Raftelis or First Tryon can give an update on this in Ms. Mettlen's absence. Mr. Kerr of Raftelis stated there was nothing significant to share at this time, but he would explain what they are working on. Raftelis is working on a custom rate model. The focus has been on status quo scenarios for a baseline to measure things from financially. The firm met individually with each entity in July which was helpful to understand what the most important issues are to each community. He said that Raftelis won't be asking for more data. They have enough information and are in pretty good shape; however, they have not received any information from Oconee County at this point and are moving forward with what the info they have.

Mr. Kerr stated the current focus is on two (2) key issues: 1) what a consolidated system operations and maintenance expenses look like, and 2) what the capital investment needs for the local collection systems are (and if there are more needs than are known). Raftelis is trying to figure out a broad assumption and is working with Ardurra and First Tryon on this. He also said First Tryon is making headway and gave Raftelis some debt information already. From there, Raftelis is not too far from having a consolidated rate calculation figured out and can give preliminary findings to the Ad Hoc Committee soon.

Mr. Moulder asked if there is an industry standard for repairs/replacements based on system size/linear feet that could be used as a starting point for projection on the capital investment needs. Mr. Kerr replied yes, that is where Raftelis is heading. He said Raftelis will have to go with some industry standard or broad assumption and added there are some ways to estimate based on miles of pipe and type of materials used, but it is a slippery slope in terms of getting bogged down in an in-depth analysis and don't want to get too in-depth. Raftelis is working with Ardurra, but there will probably be some assumptions.

Mr. Eleazer explained how the OJRSA worked with Ardurra to develop its Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). Ardurra worked on the CIP after the first round of flow monitoring and CCTV work across the system as part of the CMOM. The pipe ranged from 8" – 36" diameter; the pipes were clay, ductile iron, PVC, and RCP; and the oldest pipe was about 45 years old. The rough estimate was assuming 20-25% of the system needed to be rehabilitated.

Mr. Habliston stated that First Tryon has gathered everything they need about existing debt and is isolating each entity to see what provisions the outstanding loans have on them and figuring out what the repayment schedule looks like to determine what the new OJRSA would look like with the members consolidated. First Tryon will predict how much debt the new OJRSA will require and will look at the Capital Improvement Plan with Raftelis once Raftelis has their baseline model built out.

Mr. Flynn asked if First Tryon is doing a materiality analysis in the event a component is deemed off and where the materiality threshold comes in for the combined system for future coverage on outstanding debt that may not otherwise be contributable to the sewer system. Mr. Habliston asked if this from the perspective of an entity that has a combined enterprise system and what is leaving behind that is not sewer related. Mr. Flynn replied it may be worth thinking through on whether or not those individual components impact the cash flow, because as a combined system, if you sell a component it doesn't materially affect the security interest of the bond holders when you sell off that portion of the system, and they are relying on the sewer revenues for the payment. Someone will have to make the determination that any bonds remaining outstanding are not going to be materially affected by the loss of the revenue stream. Mr. Habliston said he will look at this and make sure it comes into play if that happens.

3. Discussion of Continued County Participation: Funding for Studies, Role on Reconstitution Committee, and Pending Correspondence from OJRSA Board – Mr. Flynn reported that the OJRSA board discussed this at the August 3, 2026 board meeting. Board members and consultants for the Reconstitution Committee reached out to Oconee County a couple of times, but there was not much response. He stated that studies are necessary in this reconstitution process, and it was accepted and approved by this committee to share in the costs of those studies; however, Oconee County has rejected their share of the cost.

There were legitimate concerns expressed by the OJRSA board about this. The board voted to send a letter today from OJRSA Chairman, Mr. Kevin Bronson, and OJRSA Executive Director, Mr. Chris Eleazer, to the Oconee County Administrator, Mr. Stewart Jones (with Oconee County Councilmembers copied on it), to advise them that if they are unwilling to participate and pay their proportionate share, they will no longer be considered a member of this organization with a voting right on the Reconstitution Ad Hoc Committee and also will be removed from consideration for a seat on any reconstituted authority. It is coming to a place where some hard decisions must be made. Mr. Flynn also added that Senator Thomas Alexander and Ms. Bonnie Ammons of the RIA will be copied on the letter.

Mr. Bronson expressed how he is disappointed by this information; he stated he thought it was great to have a regional approach, and he wishes he knew why the County doesn't want to participate. He added that Mr. Flynn, and everyone involved, did a good job with drafting the letter, and he spoke with Senator Alexander a week ago about how Oconee County wanted a seat on the board for a long time, and now that they have the opportunity, they don't want it anymore. He mentioned how he doesn't want to send this letter out, but it is necessary to have a definitive confirmation by a certain date and for preserving the rights of those who are contributing. He ended by stating that he would welcome Oconee County if they reengaged.

Mr. Moulder stated he agreed with Mr. Bronson: He also wishes the letter did not need to be sent and agreed that the letter does not mean a definite stop; he would leave the door open for Oconee County's reengagement.

Mr. Flynn stated this was presented as information only and is not an action item. The OJRSA board already voted to send out the letter.

D. Committee Member Discussion – Mr. Eleazer stated that Mr. Jones mentioned the schedule revision earlier in the meeting and asked if the facilitators would be looking at this. Mr. Jones replied yes and that they would speak to the RIA later and reset the schedule with them at that time.

E. Adjourn – The meeting was adjourned at 9:29 a.m.

Upcoming Meetings

1. **Operations & Planning Committee** – Thursday, August 20, 2026 at 8:30 a.m.
2. **Finance & Administration Committee** – Tuesday, August 25, 2026 at 9:00 a.m.
3. **Reconstitution Committee & Executive Committee** – Thursday, September 10, 2026 at 9:00 a.m.
4. **Board of Commissioners** – Monday, September 14, 2026 at 4:00 p.m.

Approved By:

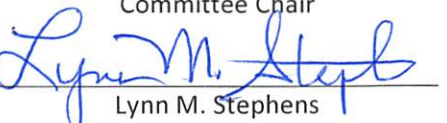


Kevin Bronson
Committee Chair

Date Approved:

9/14/2026

Approved By:



Lynn M. Stephens
OJRSA Secretary/Treasurer

Notification of the meeting was distributed on August 7, 2026 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, SCDES, www.ojrsa.org, and posted at the OJRSA Administration Building.



Ad Hoc Reconstitution Committee and Executive Committee

OJRSA Operations & Administration Building
Lamar Bailes Board Room
August 13, 2026 at 9:00 AM

This advisory committee was established by the OJRSA Board of Commissioners at its August 4, 2025 meeting to consider the reorganization recommendations as identified in the [Ad Hoc Sewer Feasibility Implementation Committee Final Recommendations](#) report. This committee can neither create policy nor make decisions on behalf of the OJRSA or other wastewater service providers within the area. The recommendations are available at www.ojrsa.org/info.

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.

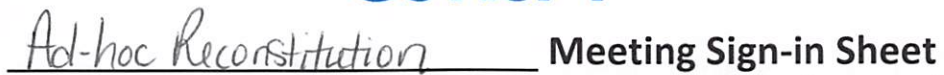
Agenda

- A. Call to Order** – Kevin Bronson, Committee Chair
- B. Approval of Minutes**
 - Ad Hoc Reconstitution Committee and Executive Committee Meeting of May 14, 2026
- C. Committee Discussion and Action Items**
 - 1. Receive Quarterly Progress Report No. 4 as submitted to South Carolina Rural Infrastructure Authority, OJRSA Board, and Oconee County (Exhibit A) – Chris Eleazer, Committee Member
 - 2. Status update on financial studies – Angie Mettlen, Facilitator / Raftelis & First Tryon Teams
 - 3. Discussion of Continued County Participation: Funding for Studies, Role on Reconstitution Committee, and Pending Correspondence from OJRSA Board – Lawrence Flynn
- D. Committee Member Discussion** – Led by Kevin Bronson, Committee Chair
Discussion can be related to matters addressed in this meeting or for future consideration by the Board or Committee. Voting is not permitted during this session.
- E. Adjourn**

Upcoming Meetings

All meetings to be held in the Lamar Bailes Board Room unless noted otherwise.

- Operations & Planning Committee – August 20, 2026 at 8:30 AM
- Finance & Administration Committee – August 25, 2026 at 9:00 AM
- Reconstitution Committee and Executive Committee – September 10, 2026 at 9:00 AM
- Board of Commissioners – September 14, 2026 at 4:00 PM



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Quarterly Progress Report: OJRSA Regional Feasibility and Reconstitution

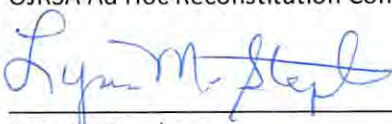
Report No. 4

July 13, 2026

Submittal Statement

This report is provided to the South Carolina Rural Infrastructure Authority, Oconee Joint Regional Sewer Authority ("OJRSA") Board of Commissioners, and Oconee County Council in accordance with the recommendations provided by the Ad Hoc Regional Feasibility Study Implementation Committee and as accepted by the OJRSA Board of Commissioners on July 15, 2025.



Christopher R. Eleazer
OJRSA Executive Director, and
OJRSA Ad Hoc Reconstitution Committee Member

Lynn M. Stephens
OJRSA Secretary/Treasurer

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Background

In 2022, the Oconee Joint Regional Sewer Authority (“OJRSA” or “Authority”) was awarded a Regional Feasibility Planning Grant¹ by the South Carolina Rural Infrastructure Authority (“RIA”). OJRSA subsequently procured the services of W.K. Dickson (now, Ardurra) to develop a comprehensive Regional Feasibility Planning Study (“Planning Study”) to determine if regionalizing sewer collection, conveyance, and treatment in Oconee County, South Carolina (“County”) will streamline service delivery and enhance the success of the community and its quality of life. The Planning Study² included the analysis and recommendations in the following core areas: (1) governance structure; (2) revenues and finance; (3) environmental compliance, (4) utility resources, and (5) efficiency in operations and service.

The Planning Study was completed in August 2024 and adopted by the OJRSA Board of Commissioners (“Board”) in September 2024. A special Ad Hoc Regional Feasibility Study Implementation Committee (“Feasibility Committee”) was established by the Board in November 2024 to review, discuss, and evaluate the Planning Study’s primary recommendations and to provide independent recommendations for implementing this restructuring.

The Feasibility Committee established five major recommendations to reorganize/reconstitute the OJRSA under the South Carolina Joint Authority Water and Sewer Systems Act (the “Act”), as follows:

1. The collection systems of current Authority members and Oconee County should be consolidated into one combined system – owned, operated, and maintained by the reconstituted Authority.
2. The Authority should be reconstituted with a new five-member Board of Commissioners (the “New Board”).
3. The governance documents of the reconstituted Authority will be drafted and supersede all existing Authority governance documents and contracts, which must be dissolved as a part of this process. These documents will also provide that the reconstituted Authority will have the power to provide retail sewer services within its service area as necessary to support the operation of the consolidated collection systems. This should be finalized upon completion of the consolidation but can be drafted during the consolidation process.
4. The current Board will dissolve the Feasibility Committee and then establish a working group or smaller ad hoc committee to oversee and guide the initial implementation steps outlined above (the “Reconstitution Committee”³).
5. It is recommended that a communications plan for the reorganization be developed, which should be used by all entities involved. This plan will ensure clear and consistent messaging while also allowing for input from residents and customers of the Authority. Maintaining an open process is crucial to maximize the chances of success in consolidating the collection systems and establishing the reconstituted Authority with the New Board.

The Feasibility Committee noted the recommendations were vital to the long-term success of the Authority, and in the absence of the implementation of these recommendations, the OJRSA runs the risk of significant regulatory compliance matters, lack of funding, and restrictions on growth and development of the County as a whole.

The final Feasibility Committee recommendations, which were presented to and accepted by the Board at a joint meeting with Oconee County Council in July 2025, included a list of specific tasks which were established by the Feasibility Committee with timelines associated with each function. These included:

1. Within 45 days (August 29, 2025)⁴, the current Board will dissolve the Feasibility Committee and

¹ RIA Grant Number RGRG-23-5006

² *Regional Feasibility Planning Study 2024* by W.K. Dickson, Bolton & Menk, and Willdan Financial Services. (www.ojrsa.org/info)

³ This committee was identified in the recommendations as the “Implementation Committee”

⁴ Target dates are included for each based on date the recommendations were accepted by the Board

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establish the Reconstitution Committee for further implementation oversight.

2. On a quarterly basis, the Reconstitution Committee will provide an update to RIA, the current Board, and Oconee County on the progress of the implementation of these initial recommendations.
3. Within 45 days (August 29, 2025), the legislative revisions to the Act will be finalized and provided to the Oconee County Delegation ("Delegation"). Consultation shall be made with the Delegation on whether lobbyist support will be needed.
4. Within 90 days (October 13, 2025), resolutions of support for system consolidation/Authority reorganization will be provided to and adopted by each governing body affected by the recommendations, including the Board, Seneca City Council, Walhalla City Council, Westminster City Council, West Union Town Council, and Oconee County Council.
5. Within 120 days (November 12, 2025), consultants shall be engaged, and the process of collection system evaluation (technical) and valuation (financial) will be initiated, including identification of potential funding for this effort and immediate rehabilitation projects that may be identified or on current Capital Improvement Plans ("CIP"). Additionally, a rate consultant will be engaged.
6. Within 120 days (November 12, 2025), a Communications Plan will be developed under the guidance of the Implementation Committee and provided to all entities involved.
7. Within 60 days of the approved changes to Act being approved (likely July/August 2026), the list of recommendations for the initial commissioners for the reconstituted Authority ("New Commission") will be provided to the Delegation.
8. Within 15 months (February 27, 2027), the evaluation and valuation of collection systems will be completed.
9. Within 18 months (May 12, 2027), the determination of a timeline for developing a unified, equitable rate structure will be provided as a part of the initial terms for collection system consolidation.
10. Within 24 months (July 15, 2027), legal documents to transfer collection system assets to the Authority will be executed, as well as all necessary reconstitution documents.
11. Within 25 months (August 16, 2027), if the legislative amendments have not been approved, plans for consolidation under the amended Act will be abandoned. Thereupon, the Authority will proceed to consolidate the member system and implement the reconstitution under the existing Act, with such process to be finalized by no later than 36 months (July 17, 2028). Additionally, all members shall be issued permits in compliance with the OJRSA Sewer Use Regulation ("SUR") and added as co-permittees under the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System ("NPDES") permit.

Summary of Current Actions

This section separately addresses each of the specific tasks identified in the Background section above.

Committee Members

The following are members of the Ad Hoc Reconstitution Committee (also referred to herein as the "Committee"):

- Appalachian Council of Governments – Chip Bentley
- Oconee County – Glenn Hart
- OJRSA – Chris Eleazer
- OJRSA Legal Counsel – Lawrence Flynn
- Seneca – Scott Moulder⁵
- Walhalla – Celia Myers⁵
- Westminster – Kevin Bronson⁵

⁵ Also a member of OJRSA Executive Committee

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- Facilitator⁶ – Katherine Amidon
- Facilitator⁶ – Joel Jones
- Facilitator⁶ – Angie Mettlen

Town of West Union Mayor Linda Oliver has also participated in the meetings as a nonvoting member.

Committee Meetings

The following events and meetings occurred during the reporting period:

- April 9, 2026 – Ad Hoc Reconstitution Committee and OJRSA Executive Committee meeting
- May 14, 2026 – Ad Hoc Reconstitution Committee and OJRSA Executive Committee meeting
- June 11, 2026 – Meeting cancelled while financial consultants performed individual meetings with municipalities, county, and OJRSA. Next scheduled meeting is August 13, 2026.

Recommendation Item 1: Dissolve Feasibility Committee and Create New Committee

Target Date: August 29, 2025

Status: Complete

See Report No. 1 for information.

Recommendation Item 2: Submit Quarterly Report

Target Date: Within 14 days after completion of each calendar quarter

Status: Report #4 complete

This quarterly report has been prepared and submitted in accordance with Recommendation Item 2. Best efforts will be made to submit quarterly reports to RIA within two (2) weeks after the end of each calendar quarter⁷ until this process concludes.

Recommendation Item 3: Submit Joint Authority Water and Sewer System Act Draft to Oconee County Delegation

Target Date: August 29, 2025

Status: Complete

Revisions to the Joint Authority Water and Sewer System Act ("JAWSSA") were signed into law by Governor McMaster on Monday, May 18. More information can be found here: https://www.scstatehouse.gov/sess126_2025-2026/bills/829.htm.

Recommendation Item 4: Adoption of Resolutions of Support

Target Date: October 13, 2025

Status: Complete

See Report No. 3 for information.

Recommendation Item 5: Initiate Collection System Technical Evaluation and Financial Valuation

Target Date: November 12, 2025

Status: In process

The OJRSA submitted financial, capital planning, and other requested information to Raftelis Financial Consultants in April 2026. The municipalities and county were expected to submit their information directly to the financial specialists.

Individual meetings will be held with the municipalities and OJRSA during early July.

⁶ Facilitators are nonvoting members

⁷ The end of March, June, September, and December of each year

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Recommendation Item 6: Develop Communications Plan

Target Date: November 12, 2025

Status: Ongoing

The following Reconstitution Progress Communication Memorandums were disseminated to the councils and leadership of the Member Cities, Oconee County, Town of West Union, and key stakeholders during this quarter:

- April 17, 2026 – Memo #3 focused on addressing questions regarding land use control and wastewater expansion.
- April 22, 2026 – Memo #4 provided an update on the project and timeline and includes the on-going list of proposed future memo topics
- Future memos may include the following topics:
 - Update following adoption of revisions to the JAWSSA
 - Collection system technical evaluation and financial determination information
 - Order of operations and party(ies) responsible for handling matters such as complaint response and determining rates if reconstitution and consolidation occurs
 - Wholesale Agreements
 - Initial commissioners for the New Commission

Recommendation Item 7: Consider Initial Commissioners for New Authority

Target Date: Within 60 days of approved changes to Act (likely July/August 2026)

Status: Not started

This will need to be considered at an upcoming meeting.

Recommendation Item 8: Complete Technical Evaluation and Valuation of Collection Systems

Target Date: February 27, 2027

Status: Study underway

As noted in Recommendation Item 5, this study is underway and is expected to be completed by October 2026.

Recommendation Item 9: Develop Unified, Equitable Rate Structure

Target Date: May 12, 2027

Status: Not started

Recommendation Item 8 must be completed prior to beginning this task.

Recommendation Item 10: Execute Transfer of Wastewater Collection System Assets and Reconstitution Documents

Target Date: July 15, 2027

Status: Not started

This task will begin later in the process.

Recommendation Item 11 (contingency): Abandon Consolidation and Reconstitution Plan

Target Date: August 16, 2027

Status: Not applicable at this time

This contingency item will only apply if the Reconstitution Committee cannot reach consensus.⁸ That said, there are some questions from some of the entities regarding the proposed Board appointment process and voting allocations with the reduced number of members. The facilitators recognize that these issues

⁸ The necessary legislative amendments were approved as submitted to Senator Thomas Alexander by OJRSA. See Recommendation Item 3 for more information.

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are ones that could derail the process. As such, they are working to clarify the process/voting allocations and address other concerns from the entities as they arise to keep this effort moving forward. The importance of transparent and open communication has been conveyed to the committee as the facilitators feel this to be a key factor in successfully completing the reconstitution of the authority.

Past Actions

See previous submittals for previous actions performed by the Reconstitution Committee.