



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Oconee Conservative Budget: The Standard For Fiscal Accountability

As Oconee County Council Chairman, I am proud to announce the upcoming first reading of a landmark ordinance, "The Oconee Conservative Budget: The Standard For Fiscal Accountability," set for first reading during the February 6th County Council meeting. This initiative is a testament to our commitment to responsible governance and fiscal prudence.

Recent data on our county's finances has shed light on a concerning trend. Since 2016, the growth of the county budget has surged by just over 45%, while the combined rate of inflation and actual growth in our community is just over 20%. This discrepancy means an average annual budget growth of 5.7%, compared to a 2.96% increase in inflation plus population growth. Such a disparity leads to a compounding effect, placing an ever-growing burden on our taxpayers. It's clear that to ensure the long-term economic health and sustainability of Oconee County, we must take decisive action.

In response to this fiscal trend, the proposed ordinance introduces a prudent restriction: the growth of the general fund budget will be capped at a rate no greater than the sum of annual inflation plus population growth percentages. This policy anchors our budgetary expansion to tangible economic and demographic metrics, ensuring that our fiscal growth is both justified and sustainable.

I am particularly proud to note that, according to Mary-Kathryn Craft of the South Carolina Association of Counties, there are no known county ordinances of this kind in our state. This makes Oconee County a pioneer in fiscal responsibility - a leader amongst our peers. With the introduction of the "Oconee Conservative Budget," we aim to align our spending with genuine growth and needs, ensuring a sustainable future for all residents.

This ordinance is more than a policy; it's a promise to our community. By controlling our spending and aligning it with actual population growth and inflation, we are safeguarding our future and ensuring that taxpayer dollars are respected and wisely utilized. The "Oconee Conservative Budget" is a reflection of our values and a step towards a more secure and prosperous Oconee County.

Sincerely,

Matthew Durham
Chairman, Oconee County Council