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Oconee's coffers are overflowing

Interim administrator identifies $6.6 million left unspent from capital projects

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WALHALLA — Some county officials and a few members of the general public gazed into the muddled maze of government finances in a way never done before.

Oconee County Interim Administrator and Finance Director Kendra Brown conducted a more than two-hour tour of local government's coffers during a meeting Thursday night of the County Council's Budget, Finance & Administration Committee.

The numbers dazed some and stunned others.

For starters, the committee chaired by Council Chairman Reg Dexter discovered that more than $6.6 million dollars is available right this moment for the Council to do as they wish.

Brown said the millions of dollars were set aside in previous years for capital projects and not used.

For instance, the 1 mil set aside for economic development infrastructure has accumulated $2.1 million that is sitting in the county's account. Another $1.4 million to repair bridges and culverts are waiting to be used.

Brown pointed at almost $1 million budgeted in 2007 for Interstate 85 infrastructure that remains untouched.

"No doubt we have cash in hand," Brown said. "What we have to see is what are we going to do with that money."

Dexter wasted little time in saying that he would like to see the money used to create jobs.

"I have a problem of (the money) being there and nothing getting done," he said.

He proposed to the other members who attended the meeting — Councilmen Paul Corbeil, Wayne McCall and Joel Thrift — that they consider donating shovel-ready properties as bargaining chips for attracting good industry.

McCall, who earlier in the week alluded to the county having $43 million in cash reserves, advocated using

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