

EDGEFIELD COUNTY COUNCIL

March 5, 2019

6:00 PM

County Council Chambers

The Edgefield County Council held its regular meeting at 6:00 P. M. Tuesday, March 5, 2019 in the County Council Chambers, 225 Jeter Street, Edgefield, SC. Notice of this meeting was provided to Edgefielddaily.com, The Edgefield Advertiser and others as requested.

Members present

- Scott Cooper, Chairman
- Albert Talbert, Vice Chairman
- Arthur Biggs, Councilman
- Dean Campbell, Councilman
- Dr. Jacqueline Kennion, Councilwoman

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Others present

- Tommy Paradise, County Administrator
- Bruce Cooley, Assistant Administrator/Finance Director
- Andrew Marine, County Attorney
- Jennifer Gilley, Clerk to Council
- and others as per list attached

Chairman Cooper called the meeting to order. The invocation was given by Pastor Bruce Cooley. The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag was then recited.

Approval of Agenda

Motion to approve the March 5, 2019 agenda was made by Councilman Biggs, seconded by Councilman Talbert. Motion passed unanimously.

Approval of Minutes

Motion to approve the January 29, 2019 County Council minutes (Intergovernmental Meeting of Council) was made by Councilman Campbell, seconded by Councilman Talbert. Motion passed unanimously.

Motion to approve the February 5, 2019 County Council minutes (Regular Meeting of Council) was made by Councilman Talbert, seconded by Councilman Campbell. Motion passed unanimously.

Guest Speakers

None

Comments from the Public

None

Reports

Chairman Cooper asked for a motion to approve the reports as presented. Councilman Biggs made the motion to approve the reports, seconded by Councilwoman Kennion. Motion passed unanimously.

Consent Agenda

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Chairman Cooper asked Council if there were any items that needed to be removed from the Consent Agenda to allow discussion. There were none. Motion to approve the Consent Agenda as presented was made by Councilman Talbert, seconded by Councilwoman Kennion. Motion passed unanimously.

- 1. Consideration of reappointments to the Edgefield County Water and Sewer Authority.
Ron CreswellAt Large
- 2. Consideration of appointments to the Upper Savannah Council of Governments.
Scott CooperEdgefield County
- 3. Consideration of reappointments to the Employee Grievance Committee.
Joe Holmes.....Road Department
Taz PottsAdministration
- 4. Rescind the Appointments to the ARTS Citizens Advisory Committee.
Art Biggs.....At Large
Scott CooperAt Large
- 5. Consideration of Appointments to the ARTS Policy Sub-Committee for SC.
Art Biggs.....At Large
Scott CooperAt Large

Consent Agenda Ends Here

Public Hearing

None

Old Business

None

New Business

- 1. Consideration of First Reading of Ordinance 18-19-757, "An Ordinance to Authorize the Third Amendment to the Agreement for Development of a Joint County Industrial and Business Park Dated as of December 31, 1996, between Aiken County and Edgefield County, as Previously Amended, to Extend the Term of the Agreement and Expand the Area of the Park which is located in Aiken County and Other Matters Related Thereto."

Mr. Paradise said this ordinance is to establish a multi-county industrial park (MCIP) with Aiken County. He explained the park will be located in Aiken County and the agreement to create a multi-county park will allow for the industry in the park to receive certain incentives from the state and Aiken County. He said like other multi-county park agreements, Edgefield County will receive 1% of the FILOT and Aiken County will retain 99%. Mr. Paradise said this is just a procedural function that will not involve Edgefield County creating a new industrial park or requiring any investment on the part of Edgefield County.

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Motion to give first reading of ordinance 18-19-757 was made by Councilman Campbell, seconded by Councilman Talbert. Motion passed unanimously.

2. Consideration of First Reading of Ordinance 18-19-758, "An Ordinance Authorizing Amendments to the Agreement for Development of a Joint County Industrial and Business Park between Aiken County and Edgefield County, Dated as of May 8, 2018, to Expand the Area of the Park which is located in Aiken County and Change the Name of the Park to "Aiken County/Edgefield County-Zeus Industrial Products, Inc." and Authorizing other matters related thereto."

Chairman Cooper said Edgefield County has an existing multi-county industrial park agreement with Aiken County for Zeus Industrial Products, Inc. He explained this ordinance will modify this agreement to include two parcels recently purchased by Zeus Industrial Products that are contiguous to the park along with a proposed road to access the facility. He said the agreement will not require any investment or maintenance on the part of Edgefield County. He asked Mr. Paradise had any comments to add. Mr. Paradise reiterated what Chairman Cooper said and explained that Zeus Industrial Products, Inc had already been announced in Aiken County.

Motion to give first reading of ordinance 18-19-758 was made by Councilman Biggs, seconded by Councilwoman Kennion. Motion passed unanimously.

3. Consideration of Approval to provide up to three surplus vehicles for an Emergency Management exercise.

Mr. Paradise explained that Edgefield County EMA has scheduled a training session with the local fire departments for March 16th. He said this exercise would be simulating a traffic collision with hazardous materials that will include the extraction of patients from vehicles. He said EMA would like to utilize up to three of the surplus vehicles at the county garage. He explained that giving them these cars would save the county from going to purchase vehicles for the training exercise. He also explained these vehicles are currently scheduled to be sold and generally bring between \$500 and \$1,000. Mr. Paradise said that any vehicles used in the exercise, would be sold for scrap following the event.

Motion of the approval to provide up to three surplus vehicles for an Emergency Management exercise was made by Councilman Talbert, seconded by Councilman Biggs. Motion passed unanimously.

4. Consideration of Approval of Directing the County Council Chairman to send a letter to the Legislative Delegation regarding the need for a Traffic Signal on Hwy 25 at Bettis Academy Road.

Mr. Paradise said County Council listed safety improvements for Bettis Academy Road as one of their priorities in their Vision 2023 Plan. He said the improvement of US Highway 25 will create additional traffic to this already busy highway. He went on to say the continued growth along Bettis Academy Road and the opening of Bettis Academy Preparatory Academy is causing increased traffic. In May, 2018, County Council approved a resolution supporting and encouraging the installation of a traffic signal at this intersection after SCDOT listed this as one of the "deadly corridors of South Carolina". Mr. Paradise said a copy of this resolution was sent to the Legislative Delegation, Governor, Lt. Governor, Director of SC Department of Transportation, and the Chairman of the SC Transportation Commission. He said since that time SCDOT has not moved forward on this issue and staff believes it may be time to resend the letter.

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Motion of the approval of directing the County Council Chairman to send a letter to the Legislative Delegation regarding the need for a traffic signal on Hwy 25 at Bettis Academy Road was made by Councilman Talbert, seconded by Councilwoman Kennion. Motion passed unanimously.

5. Discussion of possible changes to the Rental Policies at the Edgefield County Recreation Park on Bettis Academy Road.

Mr. Paradise started by saying at the February 5th meeting of County Council there was discussion concerning the use of county owned recreation facilities and the rental policies. He said staff has provided Council with information from surrounding counties regarding their policies and fees. Mr. Paradise said that at this time Edgefield County's policies and fees are consistent with surrounding counties. He said that it will be up to Council to decide if they would like to keep the current policy, do away with rentals or increase the rental fees. Mr. Paradise did explain that citizens can visit the park any time without paying the fees but they aren't able to reserve the field/facility for their use. He said some of the fees also cover the painting of the fields. He explained this money covers the cost of the paint when an individual wants a field marked for their personal use.

Councilman Biggs said that he believes the policy that is currently being used should stay in place. He said he likes that citizens can use the park free of charge unless they want to reserve it.

There were no other comments from Council members.

There was no vote on this item. It was discussion only.

6. Consideration of Approval for Edgefield County Government to Co-Sponsor "March for Parks" on April 20, 2019.

Mr. Paradise said that during the February 5th meeting Council heard a request to waive fees for this year's March for Parks. He said that in discussing the issue with Council and parties involved with the event it appears that Council may wish to be a cosponsor of the event. He said the county's responsibility for co-sponsorship would be to waive the fee and be sure the park is clean and ready for the event on April 20th.

Councilman Campbell asked what the fee amount is that the county would be waiving. Mr. Paradise said it costs \$500 for the day.

Councilman Biggs said he doesn't agree cosponsoring the event but does believe in waiving the fee for this event. He explained this may set a precedence for other groups to ask for Edgefield County to co-sponsor events and he would rather hear groups come on a case by case basis to have the fee waived.

Councilwoman Kennion said that she would like to know how long the County has been waiving the fee for the March for Parks event. Mr. Paradise said there has never been a formal waiver of this fee but that he doesn't think they have ever been charged. He said he always thought the county was affiliated with this event and just recently found out that he was misinformed. She asked what the difference is in co-sponsoring the event versus waiving the fee for the event. Mr. Paradise said County Council can decide who they would like to co-sponsor based on the moral values of the community and if the event is consistent with the strategic plan and add some quality of life value to the citizens. He said if Council waives the fee, they would need to develop some criteria for what allows for a fee to be waived or denied a waiver to promote consistency.

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Chairman Cooper said that he believes the county should co-sponsor this event. He said in the future he thinks organizations should come to Council to ask for a co-sponsorship so they will have a chance to explain how their event is a benefit to Edgefield County.

Councilman Biggs asked if a fee is waived would there be an agreement outlining the responsibilities of the party renting the facility. Mr. Marine said yes, they would be responsible to fill out the current rental agreement. He went on to say the rental agreement would still need to be filled out even if the event is co-sponsored. Councilman Biggs said he still believes the county should waive the fee because he doesn't think that a sponsorship is just for an event but is a sponsorship of a group and their actions other than just the day of an event. Mr. Paradise said this co-sponsorship would be of just the March for Parks event and not the group. Councilman Biggs said he is just trying to be cautious of starting a precedence that Council will sponsor certain groups/event versus just waiving a fee. He said it feels like they are now having to choose what events are more important than others but that as long as they have to fill out the rental agreement, he will accept either choice of a co-sponsorship or fee waiver.

Motion for the approval of Edgefield County to co-sponsor the March for Parks event on April 20, 2019 was made by Councilman Talbert, seconded by Councilwoman Kennion. Motion passed unanimously.

Councilman Biggs asked for the floor to speak about Litter Control. He started by saying that only inmates that have been sentenced can volunteer to work litter control. He explained this limits the amount of litter than can be picked up each month. He said for the month of January there were only 10 days of litter pick up. He said of those 10 days there were 3 inmates on 1 day, 2 inmates on 2 days and 1 inmates on the remaining 7 days. He said the litter office also helps work Courthouse security and he believes the county needs to look at other options to see if we can find a better solution for litter control. Councilman Biggs said that he has asked Ms. Gilley, Clerk to Council, to get him some information about the Palmetto Pride Litter Control Program so that he can see what can be done by the state to try and help with the litter problem. Councilman Biggs thanked the citizens that do work hard to keep litter picked up and then ended his comments by thanking the Merriwether Fire Department for responding so quickly to an incident that occurred in Mount Vintage earlier in the week.

Comments from the Public

1. Linda Anderson - Mrs. Anderson said that she believes Palmetto Pride is a great program and spoke highly of a family on Stephens Road that cleans up litter on that road. She said she would like to see more signs notifying people of fines that can be received if they are caught littering. Councilman Biggs said that Edgefield County used to have no signs and he has worked hard to get 3 put in Edgefield County.

Mrs. Anderson also praised the Merriwether Fire Department and other volunteers that helped with initial tornado cleanup. She said she understands that FEMA won't be responding to this disaster due to the minimal damage and that Edgefield County staff isn't allowed to clean-up personal property or debris that citizens pile up on the side of the roads but she would like to see someone from Edgefield County Government organize the clean-up efforts and volunteers. She said Edgefield County staff did help clean up the debris on the side of the roads when the tornado hit the Town of Johnston a year or so ago.

Chairman Cooper said he would address this in his report.

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Councilman Campbell said that while the county did allow the road crew to use staff to help the clean-up efforts in the Town of Johnston, they only helped after all other clean-up efforts were exhausted. He went on to say the Town of Johnston also paid for the debris to be taken to Tri-County Solid Waste so the county didn't bear that expense. Mr. Paradise added that when this occurred, county staff only picked up debris that were in the public roadway and didn't go onto private property.

2. Rick Berry – Mr. Berry with Edgefield Interagency was pleased to announce that they experienced almost double the regular attendance at their last meeting. He was pleased to report that he is forming relationships with other groups around Edgefield County including Mental Health, Veteran Affairs, education providers and Hospice.

County Administrator's Report

Mr. Paradise started his report by The National Weather Service has confirmed that the county suffered an impact from an ESF 2 tornado (111 mph to 135 mph) near Sportsman Corner for 5.05 miles along a straight line toward Trenton on the night of Sunday, March 3, 2019. He said there were over 1,700 reported power outages in the area and Aiken Electric Co-op brought in additional crews to rebuild the system. He reported that the majority of power was restored by dark on Monday afternoon and fully restored by 9 PM Monday night. Mr. Paradise said SCDOT and the Edgefield County Road Crew worked through Sunday night and on Monday clearing roads. SCDOT anticipated having the right-of-way cleaned by Friday. He said eight people were injured in the storm, seven of those people were transported by EMS but all of the injuries were reported as minor. Mr. Paradise said the damage assessment by the Building and Planning and Tax Assessor's offices has been ongoing with an estimated 40 buildings being impacted by the storm. He also noted that a large tract of straight wind from Jacob Mackey to Monetta High School impacted the eastern portion of the county. He said these winds damaged a church on Highway 19 at the county line, destroyed their food pantry, and did minor damage to houses in the area.

Mr. Paradise then told Council that a public comment session for the Comprehensive Land Use and Transportation Plan was held on February 12th with written comments being accepted through February 15th. He said the comments are being added to the draft which should be reviewed by the Planning Commission at their March meeting.

Next, Mr. Paradise said budget meetings were held with elected and appointed officials on February 12th & 13th. He said the budget is on schedule and a budget work session should be scheduled for Council before the April meeting.

Mr. Paradise then told Council that he and Suzy Spurgeon attended a Fire Safe South Carolina meeting on February 7th that was conducted by the State Fire Marshal's office. He said the meeting included first responders from across the state and looked at ways to make our communities safer.

Mr. Paradise reported that he attended the SC Association of Counties mid-year conference and Institute of Government on February 20th & 21st. He said he received a legislative update, update concerning opportunity zones, and the economic impact of agriculture as it relates to South Carolina's economy while he was there. He said he attended classes for economic development and property taxes.

Mr. Paradise closed his comments by telling Council that AT&T's First Net has provided the county with two cell phones to assess coverage in Edgefield County. He said this network provides first responder priority and may provide better coverage than the current carrier.

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Comments by County Council Chair

Chairman Cooper started by thanking everyone in the community that responded to the tornado that happened on Sunday night. He said many people helped not only in a rescue capacity but also in administrative response. He said that he has been in touch with several groups that may be able to provide help since the county didn't reach the FEMA threshold for assistance.

Chairman Cooper closed his comments by announcing the Budget Work Session. He said it would be held on Monday, March 18, 2019 at 6:00PM in the County Council Chambers.

Executive Session

Actions may be taken in public session on matters discussed in Executive Session including contractual matters.

1. Executive Session to receive legal advice regarding a potential claim covered by attorney client privilege

Motion to enter executive session was made by Councilman Talbert, seconded by Councilwoman Kennion. Motion passed unanimously.

Chairman Cooper stated no votes or action was taken in Executive Session. He then asked for a motion to enter back into open session. Motion was made by Councilman Talbert, seconded by Councilman Biggs. Motion passed unanimously.

Councilman Campbell stated that he wanted it noted in the minutes that he left the executive session about half way through because he didn't believe the items being discussed were allowed by the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).

Adjourn

Councilman Biggs made the motion to adjourn at 7:16PM, seconded by Councilman Talbert. Motion passed unanimously.

Edgefield County Council



H. Scott Cooper, Chair

ATTEST



Jennifer L. Gilley, Clerk to Council