

EDGEFIELD COUNTY COUNCIL

January 7, 2020

6:00 PM

County Council Chambers

The Edgefield County Council held its regular meeting at 6:00 P. M. Tuesday, January 7, 2020 in the County Council Chambers, 225 Jeter Street, Edgefield, SC. Notice of this meeting was provided to 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
Dana Waters, 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 Steve Davis from True North Church. The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag was then recited.

Approval of Agenda

Chairman Cooper made the motion to move New Business, Item Number 1 to be held directly after the Guest Speaker. He explained Mr. Davis would have to drive back home and this would help him get back on the road, sooner rather than later. Motion was seconded by Councilman Biggs. Motion passed unanimously.

Motion to approve the January 7, 2020 agenda as amended was made by Councilman Talbert, seconded by Councilwoman Kennion. Motion passed unanimously.

Election of Chair and Vice Chair

Councilman Biggs asked that the number of votes be read aloud by the County Attorney.

Mr. Marine explained the process of the voting procedure. He explained that the positions would be good for a one year term and if there was a tie, there would be a re-vote. He stated that Council would vote for Chairman, Mr. Marine then would take up the votes, he would count them with Ms. Gilley and they would verify the number of votes. Then the process would be repeated for Vice-Chairman.

Mr. Marine and Ms. Gilley verified each set of votes and Mr. Marine announced that for 2020, Scott Cooper would be the Chairman with the tally being 3-2 and Albert Talbert would be the Vice Chairman with the tally being 3-2.

Approval of Minutes

Motion to approve the December 3, 2019 County Council minutes (Regular Meeting of Council) was made by Councilman Campbell, seconded by Councilman Talbert. Motion passed unanimously.

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Guest Speakers

- 1. Kay Benitez, Founder and Executive Director of Megiddo Dream Station

Mrs. Benitez presented Council with a PowerPoint Presentation. She told Council the Megiddo Dream Station is making an immediate and lasting impact through its' effective and demanding job training program. Since its' founding in 2012 they have a 97% placement rate with a 95% retention rate, placing over 700 people in over 80 job sites throughout the CSRA. Mrs. Benitez was happy to announce that they are bringing their job training program to Edgefield County in 2020.

*The entire presentation filed with the permanent file for this meeting and copies can be obtained from the Clerk to Council.

Council thanked Mrs. Benitez for her work and they were happy that this program will be coming to Edgefield County. Councilman Campbell asked Mrs. Benitez if she could explain a little bit about the Core Program that will be coming to Edgefield County and what it entails. Mrs. Benitez said the Core Program is a program that is 4 days a week for 8 weeks. Monday through Thursday students are required to attend class from 9AM to 1:30PM. She said these classes include job training, creating resumes, practicing for interviews, finance classes, project management classes, a bible study class, computer classes, communication classes and soft skill classes.

New Business

- 1. Presentation of annual external audit report for FY 2018-2019.

Grant Davis, Mauldin & Jenkins, presented the annual external audit report for FY 2018-2019. He started by telling Council that Edgefield County received the CAFR award in 2019. He went by page to review several items:

Page 1 – Mr. Davis reported that on the Independent Auditor’s Report it shows that Edgefield County received an unmodified opinion on these reports which means the county got the best results possible.

Page 4 - Mr. Davis said this compares 2018 and 2019 and how things have changed over time.

Page 12 – Mr. Davis said this is the Basic Financial Statements. He said this shows the county as a whole. He said this reports shows that there is \$7.8 million in cash, \$24.2 million in total assets (1/2 of these assets are capital), \$17.5 million in liabilities. He said that it is important to note that the \$17.5 million in liabilities includes \$14.3 million in State Pension. He said there is no concern over that number. Mr. Davis said there is \$8.1 million in equity.

Page 14 – Mr. Davis said this is a Balance Sheet that shows major and non-major funds. He said he would be covering the General Fund since it is the most important. The General Fund has \$4 million in cash with \$225,000 current liabilities. He said the fund balance is \$5.5 million with \$4.3 million being unassigned.

Page 17 – Mr. Davis said the revenues show \$10.4 million with the expenditures showing \$9.9 million. He said this reflects an increase of \$0.5 million.

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Page 55 – Mr. Davis said this is the budget schedule. He said the revenues that were projected totaled \$8.9 million but the actual collected was \$10.3 million.

Page 56 – Mr. Davis said this page reflects the expenditures. He said \$10.1 million was budgeted but the actual expenditures totaled \$9.9 million.

Mr. Davis said pages 55 and 56 show that the County brought in more money than was anticipated and spent less money than was anticipated and both of those are great things for Edgefield County. He said these two things together resulted in an increase in the equity of the fund balance of half a million dollars.

Page 109/110 – Mr. Davis said there were no noted issues other than in two offices there needs to be a segregation of duties. He said the additional checks and balances would only protect the employees and Edgefield County. Mr. Davis wanted to be clear that there was no ill intent found but that the employees that receive the mail and or payments don't need to balance accounts without an additional employee checking behind them to be sure there are no mistakes. Mr. Davis said this particular instance is common in many counties but particularly in small counties. He said while it is common, they are required to note this in the audit.

Management Letter – Mr. Davis said there were two items in this letter that he wanted the cover.

1. Capital Assets – They recommend Edgefield County staff go through the list of capital assets and clean it up and add more detail regarding the assets.
2. Segregation of Duties – He said this is a reiteration from pages 109/110.

Councilman Campbell thanked Mr. Davis and said he had several questions. He asked for further detail on the segregation of duties that was noted in the audit. Mr. Davis said they have a process called "interviews" to test different departments to see if any procedures need to be modified. He explained that during the interviews in two of the departments, they found instances where an employee is reconciling the bank statement, writing checks from accounts, makes deposits and receives payments. He said this could allow for misappropriation. Mr. Davis went on to say they found this issue in the Sheriff's Office and the Probate Court. He said they spoke with the Judge in Probate Court and this procedure has already been modified and corrected. He explained they will have a second person that isn't involved in the process will now be checking behind the other employee. He said the finding in the Detention Center of the Sheriff's Office has also been addressed. They are going to separate those duties. Councilman Campbell also noted that in the FY 2018-2019 budget, County Council budgeted to move approximately \$631,000 out of reserves to balance the budget. He said that from reading the audit he understands, the money wasn't actually used and it remained in the reserves and that they also put \$505,000 additional dollars into reserves. Mr. Davis said that Councilman Campbell was correct. He said this was due to the additional revenue and decrease in expenditures he covered earlier. Councilman Campbell said that on page 8 in the financial report, the footnote shows, revenue increased approximately \$1.1 million due primarily to increased property tax revenues. Councilman Campbell asked Mr. Davis to explain this in more detail. Mr. Davis said this could be due to several different things including: property taxes, growth and charges for services or fees and even an improvement in the economy. Councilman Campbell said there was growth in residential, commercial and industrial taxes. He specifically named Bondex and noted

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their growth. He said this why it is important for Council to work with existing industries. He explained that when they grow, the tax base increases. He also said that staff does a good job at managing expenses. He said these things especially in FY 2018-2019 have allowed for Council, for the fifth time in ten years, to put money back into the reserve fund instead of taking from it to cover the budget. Mr. Davis noted the Edgefield County Reserve Fund has a little over 6 months of operations in it which is a good place to be financially. Councilman Biggs noted that the reserves has been built up and that it is there for County Council to draw from if necessary but that it also allows for them to have a cushion so that things are not so lean, a tax increase has been necessary. He noted that Council is watching the budget closely. Mr. Davis reported that overall the audit for Edgefield County was good and the reserve fund was in good standing. Council thanked Mr. Davis for coming to present the audit.

Comments from the Public

None

Reports

Councilman Biggs thanked Ms. Gilley for getting the litter reports that were missing to him. He also noted that there have only been 3 inmates volunteering to pick up litter for the last 5 months. He said this resulted in 14 bags of litter being picked up. He noted this is not enough to keep Edgefield County clean and that he is still working with Palmetto Pride to try and control this issue.

Consent Agenda

None

*Chairman Cooper noted that he would be recusing himself from the public hearing the old business number 1 because his family’s property is adjacent to the property in those items of business. He explained that Vice Chair, Albert Talbert would run the meeting during those items of business. Chairman Cooper turned in a recusal statement to Ms. Gilley and stepped out of the room while the remaining Councilmembers voted. The recusal form is on file in Ms. Gilley’s office with the minutes of this meeting.

Public Hearing

1. Public Hearing of Ordinance Number 19-20-766, “An Ordinance to Zone 101 Acres of Land, more or less, Owned by SLH Investments to Planned Development (PD) and Approve the Concept Plan for said Property’s Development.”

1. Todd Brown – Mr. Brown gave a presentation on Tavern Hill and the proposal of that Rural Preservation Community. He started by saying Tavern Hill is a rural preservation community situated on 100 or so acres in the heart of the Sweetwater community. He said a wide range of housing products, open spaces, walking trails and community areas would be available in Tavern Hill. He said he believes Tavern Hill will become Edgefield County’s premier planned development community. Mr. Brown said Tavern Hill is being developed and managed by a team with over 100 years of experience in the development and building industry. He said their experience in creating some the premier communities in the local and regional markets will set Tavern Hill apart from other communities in the CSRA. He noted that they have developed several

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local communities including Cooper Place, Mount Vintage, Hammond’s Ferry and Shaw Estates. Some of the regional developments they’ve been involved with include Clear Springs, Fort Mill, SC, Reynolds Plantation, Oconee County, GA, Homestead Preserve, Hot Springs, VA and Governors Club, Chapel Hill, NC. Mr. Brown said this teams includes Charles Blackston, Chad Blackston, Ray Brown and himself. Mr. Brown told Council and the audience the guiding principles for this development include: reflecting the heritage and history of Edgefield County and the Sweetwater community, providing connectivity and community gathering spaces throughout the development, being sensitive to and enhancing the Sweetwater corridor and providing a model for future land development and zoning. Mr. Brown said the development master plan included approximately 101 acres, 212 lots in 3 phases, a mix of lot sizes and orientations, over 30% dedicated to open space and parks and nearly 60% of land to be pervious to the area. He said the targeted housing market will be median housing priced between \$265,000 and \$400,000, architecture representative of Edgefield County heritage, strengthening the community image by design and imitation and to capture buyers looking for a true community and a return to a lifestyle indicative of yesteryear.

- 2. Linda Anderson – Mrs. Anderson said that she understands development is necessary but has a problem with high density development. She also noted that she thinks they’ve done great work in the past and has no problem with the development team and their style of work. She said that in May 2019 at the public hearing and second reading of the Comprehensive Plan, citizens told County Council that they didn’t want high density developments. She said that at the third reading of the Comprehensive Plan in June 2019, Council amended the wording of the Comprehensive Plan. She said this wording change allowed for high density developments. She noted this voted passed 3-2 with Chairman Cooper, Councilman Talbert and Councilwomen Kennion voting for and Councilman Campbell and Councilman Biggs against. Mrs. Anderson went on to say that this change made it so the Comprehensive Plan, a guide for developers and Planning Commission, no longer specified lot sizes. She said this made things unclear for Planning Commission in instances where they need to refer to the Comprehensive Plan for a guide. Mrs. Anderson said the LMO is being developed now and she would like County Council to hear and take into consideration the input from the citizens. She said the LMO will determine zoning and that it won’t just be a guide. Mrs. Anderson closed her comments by saying County Council is elected by the people to represent the people and she believes that Council’s actions should represent the input from the citizens.

Old Business

- 1. Consideration of Approval of Second Reading of Ordinance Number 19-20-766, “An Ordinance to Zone 101 Acres of Land, more or less, Owned by SLH Investments to Planned Development (PD) and Approve the Concept Plan for said Property’s Development.” Councilman Talbert asked if there was anything new regarding this ordinance. Mr. Paradise said there have been no changes since the second reading. Councilman Talbert opened the floor for discussion from Council. Councilman Campbell said he had questions for Mr. Brown and invited him to return to the podium. Councilman Campbell thanked Mr. Brown for the presentation and told him that it was very helpful. Councilman Campbell said several citizens have stated they don’t want a high density development

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and compared it to the development known as Sweetwater Commons. Councilman Campbell said Sweetwater Commons is laid out very tightly with many town homes and small yards. He asked Mr. Brown if this proposed development would mimic Sweetwater Commons. Mr. Brown said this wouldn't be similar in comparison to space between homes. He said in Sweetwater Commons there is approximately 5 feet between homes. He said that in Tavern Hill there would be approximately 15-20 feet in between homes. He said there will be some town homes in Tavern Hill but that they would be 2 story to keep a "feeling of space." Councilman Campbell asked if Council hadn't amended the wording in the Comprehensive Plan at third reading, would the Tavern Hill have been proposed. Mr. Brown said, "No, not based off of returns and things of that nature." He said he doesn't want to build a subdivision but a community. He said the development team has set a pattern to keep Tavern Hill appealing in feel and vision. Councilman Campbell said this is a small County and he didn't want this next question to sound negative. He said the public knows that Chairman Cooper recused himself due to his/family land but he also wanted to ask if anyone on the development team has a business relationship with Chairman Cooper. Mr. Brown said no. Councilman Campbell said that on page 8 of the written proposal, it reads that 40% will remain pervious to the area but the presentation said 30%. He asked Mr. Brown which estimate was closer. Mr. Brown said 40% would be closer if that is what was noted in the written proposal. Councilman Campbell said 40% of 100 acres would be 40 acres. He asked if 40 acres would remain "green space." Mr. Brown said that it will probably be closer to 30 acres of green space due to power lines and sidewalks. Councilman Campbell asked Mr. Brown if the term "green space" includes things like power line right-of-ways and sidewalks. Mr. Brown said "green space" is considered any space with no homes. Councilman Campbell moved to page 14. He said the proposal reads that Tavern Hill will reserve access points and connections to the old railroad line for future trail development. Councilman Campbell asked Mr. Brown to explain what they mean by future trail development. Mr. Brown said this property joins the old rail road line and in the future they would be able to develop a trail or bike way, if they decided. Councilman Campbell moved to page 18 and said he understands this to read there will be 2 access points for the development. Mr. Brown said that is correct. One would be on Sweetwater Road and the other on Stephens Road. Councilman Campbell said that while this will add vehicles to the roads in that area, this would still be below the capacity as determined by the South Carolina Department of Transportation. He also noted that this growth is over a 10 year plan. On page 19, Councilman Campbell referred to section 10.4 labeled storm water. He said this reads that all storm water system component will be engineered to meet Edgefield County requirements. He asked if this also includes any and all DHEC requirements. Mr. Brown said the proposal does meet DHEC and Edgefield County requirements. Councilman Campbell asked Mr. Brown what the storm water management process will be once Tavern Hill is completed. Mr. Brown said they don't have all of the details worked out at this point but they believe there would be two retention ponds. He said he believes they will put one at the front of the subdivision and one near the back. He went on to say the one at the front would look more like a pond to enhance the aesthetics. Councilman Campbell asked if he thought two retention ponds would be enough. Mr. Brown said that would be determined by the engineers once they reached that point in the process but so far, they believe this is what will be needed. Councilman Campbell asked if the retention ponds fall under the green space category. Mr. Brown said that was correct. Councilman Campbell moved to page 22. He said the plan states that if the subdivision is completely built out over the next ten years, there will be 74 additional EMS calls, 25 additional highway patrol calls and

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40 additional fire department calls. Mr. Brown said these are the projections they've determined. Councilman Campbell said that he believes that over time, the additional taxes brought in would cover the cost of these additional services. Councilman Campbell moved on to page 23. He said that in the first paragraph the term "community gathering spaces" was mentioned. He asked Mr. Brown if they had any specifics in mind other than outdoor spaces. Mr. Brown said there could be a club house space in the future but at this point, the plan is just a concept. He did say that most areas would be open and outdoors and possibly some gazebo space. Councilman Campbell said that in the second paragraph the proposal reads, "over time additional PD – Planned Development revisions may be required to address the market changes." Councilman Campbell asked Mr. Brown what those changes might include. Mr. Brown said that would refer to the market dropping like it did in 2008. He did note that it would have to be a fairly drastic fall in the market to cause the need for revisions in this proposal. Councilman Campbell asked Mr. Brown if a recession occurred similar to the one in 2008, would the change be to stop building. Mr. Brown said that is correct. Councilman Campbell said that he understood that but was curious if there were any other things that could cause a revision to the plan. Mr. Brown said not that he could think of at this point in the project. Councilman Campbell asked Mr. Paradise that if any changes were made to the proposal, would the changes have to come back to Council for approval. Mr. Paradise said that was correct. Councilman Biggs said that he likes the proposal and the amount of green space that is included in the plan. He asked if SCDOT would require acceleration/deceleration lanes to be added near the entrance that will be located on Sweetwater Road. Mr. Brown said he wasn't sure. Councilman Biggs asked if those lanes were required, if it would affect the setbacks in the plan. Mr. Brown said that it would affect some of the lots that are adjacent to Sweetwater. Councilman Biggs said he would like for them to show more detail regarding landscaping. Mr. Brown said that he agreed there could be more imagery in the plan but that for reference the landscaping would be similar to that at Cooper Place. Councilman Biggs said he was pleased with that, he likes the landscaping at Cooper Place. Charles Blackston added that additional landscaping will be required by the home owners association as well and that would add additional buffering. Mr. Brown said they want a good development that is done correctly for Edgefield County.

Councilwoman Kennion said that she had comments to clear up with Mrs. Anderson. She said: If you look in the Comprehensive Plan, pages 7.6-7.9, the two categories which were changed are the Estate Residential and the Suburban Residential. Both categories have large square acres of territory in the county. Both categories, during the planning period, the lot sizes originally were discussed in terms of allowing green space, which permitted averaging of lot sizes. What that meant was, based on the total area, if you averaged the area that would be the average lot size, based on the total area. The way it was being interpreted by some constituents was lot sizes needed to meet the requirement, not really an average. There is a significant difference, especially when you consider what is being sold in the marketplace.

The wording changes we attempted to make for both were: "Natural conditions, connectivity to utilities and the market are to determine lot sizes. Some areas within this category may have deeper lots to ensure building and septic field site development."

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The purpose was to eliminate specific lot sizes; however, based on two conditions which are prevalent in our county, the averaging over these large geographical areas would take place, naturally. Those two conditions are:

1. Much of our county, including portions of Merriwether, will not perk, meaning septic systems will be problematic except in situations requiring very large lot sizes.
2. Much of our county, including portions of Merriwether, will never receive sewage, thus preventing housing density.

These natural conditions will protect the rural feel of an extremely large portion of our county.

When the vote took place, the vernacular suggested was passed for the Suburban Residential. The Consultant made a suggestion for the Estate Residential portion, and Council voted to accept his recommendation.

It needs to be noted that these changes are not zoning, but a guide for future zoning. The details will actually take place in the Land Management Ordinances, which are taking place currently.

The purpose of the changes was to ensure Edgefield County as a whole stayed competitive to our neighbors. If we locked up hundreds of square miles into a category which required large lot sizes, we would not see very much residential growth, because the portion of the market is roughly 5% of the total market.

Mr. Paradise said he would like to add one clarification. He said Councilman Campbell referred to Sweetwater Commons in his comments. He said Sweetwater Commons is a multi-family residential complex in North Augusta that includes 221 dwelling units on approximately 29 acres. He said for comparison this proposed development is 212 dwelling units on 101 acres.

Councilman Campbell stated there had been talk about having a called meeting for third reading. He asked if a called meeting would be held for third reading or if it would be taken up at the regularly scheduled meeting set for February 4, 2020. Mr. Paradise said third reading would be at the regularly scheduled meeting set for February 4, 2020. Councilman Campbell asked if the called meeting had been cancelled. Mr. Paradise said that was correct. Councilman Campbell said that he appreciates Councilwoman Kennion's comments but that he would like for everyone to keep in mind that the land in today's discussion is un-zoned. He said this (Tavern Hill) ordinance will zone that property and that zoning will be based on the Comprehensive Plan. He went on to explain that the wording Mrs. Anderson referred to as being changed by the 3-2 vote in June 2019 does directly impact this piece of property.

Motion to approve second reading of ordinance number 19-20-766 was made by Councilman Biggs, seconded by Councilwoman Kennion. Motion passed 4-0 with Chairman Cooper abstaining due to his recusal.

*Chairman Cooper returned to the meeting.

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Executive Session

None

Comments from the Public

1. Carolyn Piekielniak – Mrs. Piekielniak told Council that she and Mrs. Gloria Bynum worked with Mr. Paradise to get some shrubbery planted in the half circle of the Kneece Building parking lot. She said now that the shrubbery is in place, they would like to see a water source run to the half circle so that the plants can be watered regularly. She noted that she would fertilize the space when it needed to be fertilized. She also spoke about having some of the art students from Strom Thurmond High School paint the cement wall in the Kneece Building Parking Lot with something regarding pottery on both sides. She said on one side the painting will be about “Dave the Slave,” a potter from Edgefield County. The second side will have art pertaining to all of Edgefield County. Mrs. Piekielniak said she would get a drawing and bring it back at a later date for approval.
2. Michael Anderson – Mr. Anderson stated that he has been working on a petition in Edgefield County in support of Edgefield County naming itself a 2nd Amendment Sanctuary. He said he has 552 signatures so far and that he would like to see Council support the citizens by writing a resolution in support of this petition. He said he is not in favor of the Red Flag Laws because he believes those laws allow for guns to be seized from citizens without due process. He said he also believes that the language of the laws could be written more clearly and with better policies and procedures. Mr. Anderson thanked Council for their time and consideration and closed his comments by saying he hoped County Council would proclaim Edgefield County a 2nd Amendment Sanctuary.

Chairman Cooper said he believes the South Carolina State Legislature is pro 2nd Amendment on both sides. He said this is an election year for the Sheriff and the Sheriff is a constitutionally elected officer. He recommended Mr. Anderson bring up the Red Flag Laws to the Sheriff candidates this year. He went on to say that the County Attorney has researched this issue and he would like to give Mr. Marine a chance to answer as to what the County of Edgefield is allowed to do in this situation. Before he turned the floor over to Mr. Marine, Chairman Cooper asked if the signatures Mr. Anderson had were all from Edgefield County citizens. Mr. Anderson said he didn’t have addresses to verify but that he did state the petition was only for Edgefield County citizens to sign.

Mr. Marine then spoke on the matter and said that the Attorney General’s opinion on this matter states that counties don’t have the authority to pass gun control laws since that is done by the State. He said the counties can restrict discharge policies for safety purposes but they cannot name themselves a 2nd Amendment Sanctuary since that would supersede the Federal Government. Mr. Marine said the County of Edgefield is very limited as to what they can do on this matter.

County Administrator’s Report

Mr. Paradise started his report by telling Council the Edgefield County Water and Sewer Authority (ECWSA) has awarded the bid for the sewer expansion for the Windsor subdivision in the amount of \$325,194. Edgefield County’s portion will be \$81,201.50, which is less than the \$162,500 that was anticipated. He explained that other issues may arise during the construction but that wouldn’t be an issue

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since the County's portion is lower than expected. He went on to say that ECWSA has received the permit approval from DHEC for this project which includes 7,674 linear feet of 6-inch force main.

Mr. Paradise then told Council that staff has received a letter from Rachele Moody, Interim Administrator for the City of North Augusta, regarding recent and planned annexations for the City of North Augusta. He said the City of North Augusta annexed the Baggot property so that the property known as the old North Augusta Country Club could be contiguous. The annexation of the old North Augusta Country Club is scheduled for February 3, 2020.

Next, Mr. Paradise said that on October 16, 2019 staff attended the inspection of the Detention Center done by the South Carolina Association of Counties. He noted that several maintenance items came to light during the inspection and that those items that needed to be addressed by county maintenance have been corrected.

Then Mr. Paradise said the space needs study for a law enforcement center is still in progress. He said as of now it is anticipated that the detention center should be sized for 127 beds with a rough figure of \$17 million. The Sheriff's Office portion would need approximately 21,500 square-feet at an additional \$5.5 million. He noted these costs do not include land, infrastructure, furnishings, or the Magistrate Court.

Mr. Paradise then moved on to say that on December 2, 2019 he attended a meeting sponsored by the Department of Commerce and Piedmont Technical College that included economic developers, county administrators, and chamber of commerce directors in the Upper Savannah Council of Government's district.

Next Mr. Paradise told Council that staff received a letter of appreciation from the National Weather Service for EMA Director, Suzy Spurgeon's, and assistance with the 2019 SKYWARN Recognition Day. He said she took the Edgefield County Emergency Management Trailer for display. He said she was also recognized for her interaction with ham radio operators and SKYWARD spotters.

Mr. Paradise closed his comments by reporting that Edgefield County finished out the calendar year with a total of \$48.8 million in new construction, which is up from \$28.7 million the previous year. He also said new home construction was \$34.4 million in 2019 as opposed to \$25.4 million in 2018 and commercial construction increased from \$3.2 million in 2018 to \$14.4 million in 2019.

Councilman Biggs asked what would need to be done to have a water source run to the half circle. Mr. Paradise said that the asphalt parking lot would have to be dug up to run a line to that space. Councilman Biggs said he understood this would be a costly and difficult fix.

Comments by County Council Chair

Chairman Cooper started his report by welcoming Dana Waters, the new Finance Director. He went on to thank everyone that took the time to come out and participate in the meeting and the people that watch it on the live stream. Chairman Cooper said that today was the kick off for a daily, non-stop flight from Augusta to Washington, DC. He said he also had heard a story recently that he wanted to share with everyone. He said he'd been told a gentleman was given the opportunity to take a job and that he would be able to relocate to live anywhere he chose as long as he had access to Broadband and an airport for traveling purposes when necessary. He said that gentleman chose to live in the Greater CSRA for two reasons. He said those reasons are the church the gentleman attends and the other is quality of life in our region.

Chairman Cooper also announced the following upcoming meetings:

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1. County Council Retreat - January 16, 2020 from 5-9PM in the County Council Chambers
He said this retreat would be broken into 4 sections including 1) finance 2) recreation 3) planning/LMO and 4) open discussion for miscellaneous items.
2. Intergovernmental Meeting – January 27, 2020 at 5:30PM in the Edgefield County Senior Citizens Center

Adjourn

Councilman Talbert made the motion to adjourn at 8:10PM, seconded by Councilman Biggs. Motion passed unanimously.

Edgefield County Council



H. Scott Cooper, Chair

ATTEST



Jennifer L. Gilley, Clerk to Council