

EDGEFIELD COUNTY COUNCIL

March 3, 2020

6:00 PM

County Council Chambers

Instrument      Book Page  
202000001201 OR      1794 324

The Edgefield County Council held its regular meeting at 6:00 P. M. Tuesday, March 3, 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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OR Book 1794 Page 324 - 335

**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 Councilman Dean Campbell. The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag was then recited.

**Approval of Agenda**

Motion to amend the March 3, 2020 agenda was made by Councilman Campbell. He stated that he would like Item Number 6 under New Business to be moved to Item Number 1 under New Business. He explained the executive session would have no bearing on this discussion and if moved, the citizens would be able to hear that discussion without staying through executive session, if they needed to go. This was seconded by Councilman Talbert. Motion passed unanimously.

Motion to approve the March 3, 2020 agenda, as amended, was made by Councilman Campbell, and seconded by Councilman Talbert. Motion passed unanimously.

**Approval of Minutes**

Motion to approve the January 16, 2020 County Council minutes (Council Retreat Meeting) was made by Councilman Biggs, seconded by Councilman Talbert. Motion passed unanimously.

Motion to approve the February 4, 2020 County Council minutes (Regular Meeting of Council) was made by Councilman Talbert, seconded by Councilman Campbell. Motion passed unanimously.

**Guest Speakers**

1. Stephen Gilchrist, Chairman of the South Carolina African American Chamber of Commerce. Chairman Cooper noted that Mr. Gilchrist was unable to attend this meeting and is planning to attend the April 7, 2020 County Council Meeting.

EDGEFIELD COUNTY COUNCIL

March 3, 2020

6:00 PM

County Council Chambers

Instrument 202000001201 OR Book Page 1794 325

**Comments from the Public**

None

**Reports**

There was no discussion nor questions on the reports.

**Consent Agenda**

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 Biggs, seconded by Councilman Talbert. Motion passed unanimously.

1. Consideration of reappointments to the Employee Grievance Committee.  
 Fran Forrest.....3 Year Term  
 Tim Mobley .....3 Year Term  
 John Pitman.....3 Year Term
2. Consideration of appointment to the Economic Development Committee.  
 Tucker Miller .....Aiken Co-op
3. Consideration of appointment to the Board of Assessment Appeals.  
 Gloria Bynum.....District 1

**Consent Agenda Ends Here**

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**Public Hearing**

None

**Old Business**

None

**New Business**

1. \*This was New Business Item #6 but was moved to New Business Item #1\*  
 Discussion of Potential Projects for Submittal to the Capital Project Sales Project Tax (CPST)Committee.  
 Mr. Paradise said the CPST Committee will soon be meeting to develop the proposed CPST projects and ballot question. He explained it would be helpful to the CPST Committee to have recommendations for projects from the various Councils in the County. He referenced a memorandum that he'd prepared for Council to look over and discuss as a potential list to submit to the CPST for consideration. He noted this is for discussion and is not for final decision at this meeting. The memorandum presented said:

*At their February meeting, County Council established a Capital Project Sales Tax Commission (CPST Commission). This committee will soon start meeting with a compressed timeline for completion with submittal of the ballot to County Council for approval. Staff would recommend that Council establish a*

**EDGEFIELD COUNTY COUNCIL**

March 3, 2020

6:00 PM

County Council Chambers

Instrument      Book Page  
202000001201 OR      1794    326

*list of projects and the amount of money to be appropriated for each to be sent to the CPST Commission for their consideration. The CPST Commission will have the final say on the projects on the ballot that will come to Council for your approval.*

*The CPST is estimated to generate approximately \$15,145,902 for capital projects. The CPST Commission can distribute this funding for projects as they determine. In order to get fair representation for all of the entities involved, staff would recommend distribution based on population from the last census after \$10 million has been earmarked for a new detention center.*

*Below is a possible funding amount based on population with \$10 million taken out for the detention center.*

Government	Population	Percentage	Distribution Est.
		\$15,145,902.00	\$5,145,902.00
Edgefield County	19,492	0.616098912	\$3,170,384.63
Town of Edgefield	4,750	0.243689719	\$1,254,003.41
Town of Johnston	2,362	0.121177919	\$623,569.70
Town of Trenton	196	0.010055407	\$51,744.14
City of North Augusta	175	0.008978042	\$46,200.13
EC Gross Population 26,975 - * population based on 2010 census			

*Based on the distribution of revenues by population, EC would receive \$3.1 million for capital projects. Since EC partners with the towns for the use of their facilities for recreation, it would be appropriate to include some of EC's funding to improve town recreational facilities.*

*Below are some possible projects that Council may consider. This list is not all inclusive, but representative of some projects that Council may want to consider.*

Possible Projects	Funding Amount
Additional EMS Station	\$500,000.00
Replacement Ambulance	\$200,000.00
Broadband Infrastructure/Improvement	\$500,000.00
Courthouse Improvements	\$50,000.00
Fire Department Radio Upgrade	\$500,000.00
Improvements to Bettis Park	\$100,000.00
Park in Merriwether Area	\$1,000,000.00
Upgrade Edgefield Town Gym	\$50,000.00
Upgrade Edgefield Baseball Facilities	\$50,000.00
Upgrade Johnston Baseball Facilities	\$50,000.00
Rails to Trails Land Purchase and upgrade	\$50,000.00
	\$3,050,000.00

EDGEFIELD COUNTY COUNCIL

March 3, 2020

6:00 PM

County Council Chambers

Instrument      Book Page  
202000001201 OR      1794 327

Chairman Cooper said he believes one of the biggest issues Edgefield County is funding a new jail. He said this is a priority because it serves all of the municipalities as well as the county. He said he understands that the money generated from the CPST, if approved, will not fund the jail in the first 8 years but it would be a good start towards that project. He said if Council followed the plan set forth in the memorandum, there would be money left for other projects that are "wants" in the County. He also noted the amounts of money that would go to the municipalities for projects they would like to complete, based on the formula that is set in the code. Chairman Cooper noted the other possible projects that can be found in the memo above.

Councilman Biggs said that he believes the proposed projects in the memorandum is a solid list. He said he hopes that everyone understands the jail is a necessity and not a want. He said he is afraid that if the county doesn't take action with the jail soon, the State will force the county to take action. He said he believes passing the CPST to help fund the jail would be the least intrusive way to fund a new jail. He said this would allow for anyone that shops in Edgefield County to contribute to funding the jail and not just the property tax owners.

Councilman Campbell said putting the jail aside for a few minutes, since everyone seems to agree on that project. He would like to discuss two items. He said this list would go to the CPST Committee for their consideration. He noted they could take the recommendations or not but he believes there will be some sort of investment in recreation. He said as a general rule he would like to remind everyone that, in his opinion, Recreation should be treated as a department. He said if the Recreation Department is moved in budget from its own section to be funded by the General Fund, the county would have to make some investments in that department. He explained that if this is done, and he has no problem with things like this, he wanted to remind everyone that if the CPST passes and a million dollars is used to develop a park in Merriwether, that would come with long term costs due to upkeep and equipment maintenance. He said the armory in the Town of Johnston could make a community center for the citizens in the area. He also noted that if needed, it could be used for a shelter or emergency operations center in the event of a natural disaster. He said that would be a benefit to the citizens and the county.

Chairman Cooper said this is just a guide to present to the CPST committee at their meeting on the following Monday night. Mr. Paradise told Chairman Cooper this list was just for discussion at this time. He explained that since it isn't listed on the agenda as an action item, it would need a formal vote at a later time. Chairman Cooper said this would come back to Council at the April Meeting for a formal vote from Council. He went on to say that he likes this list as it is now and wanted to clarify to anyone that may not be clear, that the CPST Commission has total control in the list that will come back to Council for a final vote to be put on the ballot. Mr. Paradise said Council may want to change dollar amounts or projects. He noted this was just a starting point. Councilman Talbert asked Mr. Paradise if a Councilmember were to contact him prior to the next meeting, would the list be able to be amended at that point and presented to Council at the April Meeting with those amendments. Mr. Paradise said that was correct because at the April Meeting, Council would be able to make any additional amendments prior to approval.

2. Consideration of Approval of Awarding Bid Number 02-12-2020-1000 – Mobile Router.

EDGEFIELD COUNTY COUNCIL

March 3, 2020

6:00 PM

County Council Chambers

Instrument 202000001201 OR Book Page 1794 328

Bidder Information	Bid Amount
ROK Brothers 8201 Cloverleaf Drive Millersville, MD 21108-1524	\$14,070.50
RCN Technologies 200 Jennings Ave Knoxville, TN 37917	\$13,726.93

Mr. Paradise told Council that Edgefield County EMA and EMS staff have reviewed the bids for the Mobile Router Project and are recommending that the bid be awarded to, the low bidder, RCN Technologies in the amount of \$13,726.93. The project is for ten mobile repeaters and antennas that will be installed in the ambulances, EMS and EMA vehicles with one unit that will be portable. He explained the mobile repeaters will provide the emergency services with a way to connect to the internet that is designed for the rugged use by first responders. He said EMS primarily connects to the local hospitals in order to transmit vital data about patients before arriving at the hospital and this equipment for this project is fully funded by a DHEC Healthcare Coalition grant.

Motion to award bid number 02-12-2020-1000 – Mobile Router to RCN Technologies in the amount of \$13,726.93 was made by Councilman Biggs, seconded by Councilwoman Kennion. This entered Council into discussion. Councilman Campbell asked if this equipment was covered 100% by grant. Mr. Paradise asked Mrs. Spurgeon, EMA Director, to answer this question. Mrs. Spurgeon said the equipment is covered 100% and there would be no additional costs to the county. Motion passed unanimously.

3. Consideration of Approval of Resolution Number 19-20-1089, “Fair Housing Resolution.”

Mr. Paradise said the Upper Savannah Council of Governments asked Edgefield County to recognize the month of April as Fair Housing Month. He said the State of South Carolina enacted the South Carolina Fair Housing Law in 1989.

Motion to approve resolution number 19-20-1089 was made by Councilman Talbert, seconded by Councilwoman Kennion. Motion passed unanimously.

4. Consideration of Approval of First Reading of Ordinance Number 19-20-767, “An Ordinance to Amend Chapter 42-10 of the Edgefield County Solid Waste Ordinance.”

Mr. Paradise said Council has expressed the want to move the responsibility of the litter control officer from the Sheriff’s Office to the County Administrator. He said in order for this move to be made, Council would need to change that in the County Code. He said currently, the Sheriff has the Litter Control Officer working in the jail. He went on to say the Sheriff is not opposed to having this responsibility transferred to the County Administrator. Mr. Paradise said the ordinance presented makes this change effective July 1, 2020.

Motion to amend ordinance number 19-20-767 to change the effective date from July 1, 2020 to immediately upon adoption was made by Councilman Biggs, seconded by Councilman Campbell. Motion to amend passed unanimously.

Motion to approve first reading of ordinance number 19-20-767, as amended, was made by Councilman Biggs, seconded by Councilman Talbert. This entered Council into discussion. Councilman Campbell said the job duties are briefly covered in the ordinance. He asked Mr. Paradise if this ordinance needed to go into more detail or list other things that this employee would be

EDGEFIELD COUNTY COUNCIL

March 3, 2020

6:00 PM

County Council Chambers

Instrument      Book Page  
202000001201 OR      1794 329

responsible for as Litter Control Officer. Mr. Paradise said staff would look over this with the County Attorney to be sure the county has that flexibility with this job.

Motion passed unanimously.

5. Consideration to Authorize the County Administrator to request assistance from the SC Revenue and Fiscal Affairs (RFA) Office for the Redistricting of County Council Districts following the 2020 Census.

Mr. Paradise said the 2020 Census is now underway and explained that once the census is complete, County Council district lines will need to be redrawn to ensure that all state and federal laws are met for proper representation. He said staff doesn't have the expertise to handle this project alone. Mr. Paradise explained the County has two options: 1) hire a private consultant and pay the rate for that consultant or 2) apply for help from the South Carolina RFA. He went on to say the RFA Office will provide assistance to the county at no charge to develop the necessary changes. He said the RFA Office states that Counties should begin the process about a year before and recommends that Counties start now if they would like to have assistance from the RFA. Mr. Paradise said census data will be released by April 1, 2021 and the County Council districts are required to be redrawn and approved by ordinance by April 2022. He said Council approves this tonight, he would be able to go ahead and ask the SC RFA for their assistance.

Motion to authorize the County Administrator to request assistance from the SC Revenue and Fiscal Affairs (RFA) Office for the redistricting of County Council districts following the 2020 Census was made by Councilman Campbell, seconded by Councilman Biggs. This entered Council into discussion. Councilman Talbert said he had concerns about this because he'd just received the information and wanted more time to look over this before a formal vote was taken. He also said he may need more information than what was provided. He said he would like to table this until the April meeting. Councilman Campbell withdrew his motion and Councilman Biggs withdrew his second. ~~Councilman Talbert made the motion to table this item of business until the April County Council Meeting.~~ His motion to table was seconded by Councilwoman Kennion. Motion passed unanimously.

**Comments from the Public**

Chairman Cooper said he wanted to remind everyone this section is a total of 30 minutes, allowing a maximum of 5 minutes per speaker. He said 9 individuals signed up to speak and that would total 45 minutes. He said if someone finishes their 5 minutes early that would allow for more people to speak. He said he would leave it up to the commenter's to determine if everyone got to speak or not. (7 ended up speaking – 1 citizen thought he was just signing in to show attendance and didn't want to speak and 1 citizen signed up twice)

1. Christine Hunt – 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment Sanctuary

Thank you for allowing me to speak tonight. My name is Christine Hunt, I have been an Edgefield resident since 2012. I am speaking on behalf of myself, my family, my friends and my fellow county residents that have allowed me to be their voice this evening.

County council is no stranger to facing challenges that arise in present time as well as challenges that face us years and maybe even decades down the road. The discussion around second amendment sanctuary resolutions and ordinances has rapidly progressed from a conversation between a few local

EDGEFIELD COUNTY COUNCIL

March 3, 2020

6:00 PM

County Council Chambers

Instrument      Book Page  
202000001201 OR      1794 330

folks and grown into an informal, but strong alliance of many like-minded residents. Alliances create change and change creates movements. While it is easy to ignore a few individuals' opinions, a movement is not as easy for government to ignore.

This is a formal request to ask council for a resolution making Edgefield County a Second Amendment Sanctuary. A resolution that speaks to resist any state or federal legislation that could further restrict the constitutional rights of citizens. Rights listed under the Second Amendment of the US Constitution. A county resolution would reassure residents that we do not need to fear unconstitutional ordinances, similar to what has transpired in Columbia, SC. While that gun-control ordinance is being fought by our states attorney general, it is currently victimizing law abiding people.

Possible infringements include, but are not limited to; depriving law abiding citizens the right to carry weapons concealed as per our permitted rights, high capacity magazine bans, assault weapon bans, red flag laws, semi-automatic weapon bans, and any other counter-measures to hinder or restrict constitutional rights of the people. While the county may not be able to provide complete immunity from federal and state laws, meaning those laws intended to be resisted, the county does have the ability to create resolutions and ordinances and can work with the sheriff when deciding the priority of enforcement. By refusing to enforce specific laws or appropriate funds toward their enforcement, our county can severely limit the impact of unconstitutional laws should they be passed by the state or federal government.

At the last county council meeting, the request for second amendment sanctuary resolutions was deferred to the sheriff for opinion and enforcement, but a sheriff cannot pass ordinances or resolutions. This also puts the sheriff's department in a precarious position as their funding is determined by county council. Residents would be curious to hear council's position on red flag laws and the working relationship with the sheriff if it came down to taking action. A resolution is simply a declaration of support, a formal document asserting our position when our constitutional rights are challenged. A resolution does not create or change any laws that exist. A resolution requires nothing but county support and will help us get our message to state lawmakers.

We enjoy some of the most beautiful freedoms in South Carolina, freedoms that other states have never known or had maybe once enjoyed, but somehow lost forever. In reference to our second amendment rights being under attack, Councilman Cooper made a statement on social media that "South Carolina is today where Virginia was in 2014". While we understood that statement was likely meant to ease our worry as to the events in Virginia possibly occurring here, we still perceive the statement as an unsettling one. Had Virginia residents known where their state was headed in regards to losing second amendment freedoms, it is without a doubt they would have formed alliances sooner and protected their rights. When freedom is challenged, we as constituents cannot be retroactive, we have to be proactive.

In 2018, Larry Martin, Chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee said 50 articles of gun control legislation had been presented to South Carolina lawmakers in a 2 year period. While they have not made it far in the legislative body, it is a testament to the fact that each year, our second amendment rights are indeed, under fire. It is our duty and responsibility as the people, the electors of power, to

EDGEFIELD COUNTY COUNCIL

March 3, 2020

6:00 PM

County Council Chambers

Instrument      Book Page  
202000001201 OR      1794 331

implore that our rights be protected and to ask the council to construct and vote on a resolution declaring the county's intention of no further infringements, or enforcements of infringements of the Second Amendment.

On December 4, 2019, Councilman Cooper made the beautiful and truthful comment on social media stating "I think the role of elected leaders is to defend the principles of our republic". It is today, March 3, 2020 we are asking our elected leaders to help us, the residents of Edgefield County, defend our republic. While it is not our belief that only certain parts of the constitution should be defended... (This is where Mrs. Hunt ran out of time.)

2. Natonia Tillman – Vision 2020

Mrs. Tillman said she is speaking on behalf of Vision 2020 and Beyond. She explained this is a non-profit organization focused on community initiatives. She said they specifically focus on health, education and local support. She wanted to remind everyone for the March for Hope event that would be held at Twin Lakes Airport, Trenton on Saturday, March 28, 2020. She said this event will include about 50 local vendors attending, a health and fitness stage, a survivor state, a health walk and a kids zone, to name a few. She invited everyone to attend and hopes this will become an annual event in Edgefield County.

Councilwoman Kennion said that she would be in attendance and planned to participate in the health walk.

3. Tiffani Ireland – Soccer

Mrs. Ireland said that she has been involved in the soccer program for over 20 years. She said she started before there was a soccer complex and has been a part of the program from the start and has helped it grow to what it has become today. She said they have two seasons that are held in the spring and fall. She said they have in excess of 100 participants in both seasons. She said the soccer program is not only self-funding but contributes revenue to the Recreation Budget. Mrs. Ireland said she wanted to address a drainage issue regarding the soccer complex they use that is owned by the Town of Edgefield. She said she has been trying to get the drainage issue solved for approximately 10 years. She went on to say the field was built on top of a landfill that hinders the drainage. She said the recent rain has prevented them from starting their season. Mrs. Ireland said they were told they wouldn't be able to use the field. She said they've found some alternate solutions to move forward with their season but that this solution wouldn't be able to be used in the fall due to football season. She also explained that Bettis Academy Park also isn't large enough to accommodate everyone. She explained these are short term, band-aid fixes. She said the drain issues on the field need to be addressed and corrected. Mrs. Ireland said they had an expert come out and look at the field. She said his recommendation was to have a French drain installed and that it would cost approximately \$45,000. She said he also said the project would take about a month.

4. Phillip Ireland – Soccer

I have been associated with the recreation soccer program for nearly 26 years. My wife Tiffani and I began coaching for the recreation program when there was just one team. The program is now flourishing with over 12 teams and over 120 players per season. At times, we may have 300 people

EDGEFIELD COUNTY COUNCIL

March 3, 2020

6:00 PM

County Council Chambers

Instrument      Book Page  
202000001201 OR      1794 332

or more on the field playing and watching the games. That is stunning for a small county. The field we play on has been a wonderful place to play. It provides a family atmosphere and it is centrally located and easy to get to. As board members, we have taken great pride in the soccer complex and the program that we all have created for Edgefield County.

There is only one problem. The field does not drain well. As board members we have known this and experienced this and the city officials know this. We have brought it to the attention of Administration and Council for over 10 years. Nothing has been done about the situation. I guess it has been one of those things that you just hope for the best, that it doesn't flood and then get through the year with no major problems with the field, then you just hope for the best for next year. And soon it is forgotten about. I know there have been some grants that the county and city have had such as the PARD Grant. This problem could have been fixed a long time ago.

Well this year, however, luck has run out. It's been raining all winter. The field was wet before we arrived and it's wet now with no end of rain in the near future. Many practices were cancelled due to rain. The kids have basically had no practices this season due to the fact that drainage is little to none.

We received a call on 3-2-2020 saying that we could no longer use the field. We have just begun our season and were to have our first games on 3-2-2020. Much work has gone into preparing for this season. As you know, we all give up hours of our personal time to have a successful program.

I immediately called the Mayor of Edgefield. He advised me that David Coleman had closed the field and that he wanted no one on the field. The Mayor further advised me that he, himself, has not seen the field, but that maybe if we stayed off the field for a week or two that it would dry up and that we could continue to play. The Mayor further stated that he wanted soccer in the City of Edgefield. The schedule for the season had just been completed. The Mayor further stated that the city would assist in every way possible to move the goals to Bettis Academy. I advised him they would be upset about the situation due to people not liking the change.

We received feedback on the move. Many people will drop out. This would mean that the people would want their money back. The whole season is going to be a great blow for recreation soccer, as well as the county recreation league and the good reputation we have built for the county. We will get through it somehow.

The only thing we can do is hope the situation is fixed as quick as possible. If the field would have been fixed a decade ago, Edgefield County would not be having this problem. I don't know what will happen this season, but due to the above facts, it will not have a good ending for anyone and will reflect upon our county recreation program for years.

5. Arthur Northrop – Soccer

Mr. Northrop told Council that he moved to Edgefield County 20 years ago. He said one of the major things that drew them into and made them a part of this community was the institutions in Edgefield County. He said one of those institutions was the soccer program. He went on to say that he would

EDGEFIELD COUNTY COUNCIL

March 3, 2020

6:00 PM

County Council Chambers

Instrument      Book Page  
202000001201 DR      1794 333

like to see County Council move past the political divisions between the County and the Town and work together to correct this issue because this is what is best for the citizens and the community.

Chairman Cooper said Council and staff are aware of the problem. He said he is sorry that the season is getting off to a late start and that staff would be looking into possible solutions for the drainage issue. Mr. Paradise said that he was informed that the landfill has actually been removed. He said the county would have to further investigate this since the information is conflicting. He said once staff has all of the information, they will be able to start working on solutions. He went on to say he could ask Cranston Engineering to give the county a cost estimate for a plan. He also noted the condition of the field as it is right now, is a danger to the children and that is why soccer has been moved at this time. He said staff is trying to salvage the season as best they can and look into finding a permanent solution. Councilwoman Kennion said she would like to see the County and the Town collaborate on this and noted that she was disappointed that this has been going on for 10 years without a solution.

6. Jason Furmage – Flooding on Coronet Drive

Mr. Furmage said he has a problem with flooding in his neighborhood on Coronet Drive. He said he believes the county didn't build the retention pond up to code. He also noted there is a subdivision with construction that has already been started near his property and he hasn't seen anything come to the citizens for their comments. Mr. Paradise said the Planning Commission will have a public hearing on that subdivision. He also noted that this particular project hasn't been approved to his knowledge. Ms. Gilley told Mr. Furmage the Planning Commission had their Public Hearing scheduled for March 12, 2020 at 6PM in the County Council Chambers.

7. Venetia Northrop -

Mrs. Northrop thanked Council for representing the citizens. She also stated that she is opposed to a 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment Sanctuary designation. She explained this county is growing and we should be more inclusive rather than exclusive.

Chairman Cooper said that in regards to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment Sanctuary issue, Council would review resolutions from other counties that have moved forward with that designation. He said they would also review the minutes from those counties where they discussed the 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment Sanctuary designation. He also said he believes the issue will be fought in the ballot box. He said he thought the people need to be aware of who is investing money outside of South Carolina to fund the political races and how those funds are changing the politics in this State. Mr. Paradise added that on February 27, 2020 the 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment Protection Act was introduced into the South Carolina State Senate and it is under consideration.

**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 Capital Project Sales Tax
2. Executive Session to receive legal advice concerning a potential claim covered by attorney client privilege.

EDGEFIELD COUNTY COUNCIL

March 3, 2020

6:00 PM

County Council Chambers

Instrument 202000001201 OR Book Page 1794 334

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

Council returned from Executive Session. Motion to leave executive session and enter into open session was made by Councilman Biggs, seconded by Councilman Talbert. Motion passed unanimously.

**New Business Continued**

6. Consideration of Approval for the County Administrator to enter into an agreement for Municipal Advisory Services with Compass Municipal Advisors, LLC.

Motion to approve for the County Administrator to enter into an agreement for Municipal Advisory Services with Compass Municipal Advisors, LLC was made by Chairman Cooper, seconded by Councilman Biggs. Motion passed unanimously.

**County Administrator's Report**

Mr. Paradise started his report by saying staff received permit approval from the South Carolina Department of Transportation for the first four County entrance signs. Those signs have been ordered and will be located at Hwy 25 N, Hwy 121 & Saluda County, Bettis Academy Road, and Martintown Road. He went on to say the next batch staff will be working on will include Hwy 25 S (where the median begins), Hwy 19 at Aiken County/Edgefield County line, Hwy 378 at McCormick County/Edgefield County line, and Hwy 23 at Saluda/Edgefield County Line.

Next, Mr. Paradise said the Edgefield County Water and Sewer Authority approved the bid for the Stephens Road sewer line extension to serve Tavern Hill. He said the low bid was \$286,203 from Tri-Star Contractors of Edgefield. He said Edgefield County's match of 25% will be total \$71,550.75. He was happy to announce this was well within the \$162,500 the county budgeted for this project.

Mr. Paradise then said the Augusta Regional Transportation Study (ARTS) will be having a meeting at Sweetwater Community Center on Monday, March 9<sup>th</sup>, from 4 PM to 7 PM to gather community input in updating the region's 30-year Transportation Plan.

Mr. Paradise moved on to say staff has been notified by South Carolina Association of Counties that the county's Worker's Compensation modifier has reduced from a .89 to a .80. This reduction will result in a lower Worker's Compensation premium for the County. He noted a 1.0 is the standard mode with anything less receiving a reduced premium and over 1.0 would see an increase.

Then Mr. Paradise said staff is continuing to work with the Capital Project Sales Tax Commission. He said the appointee from the Town of Edgefield, Beth Worth, met and appointed Beverly Lipscomb from Trenton and Goldie Dean from Johnston to the Commission on February 27, 2020.

Mr. Paradise told Council that Edgefield County had two fires in the month of February that resulted in fatalities. He said staff would be reaching out to the fire departments and the fire protection partners in order to develop a plan that may help prevent fire fatalities in the future.

Mr. Paradise then said Jane Doolittle has started work as the Veteran Affairs Officer and Judge Joseph Mosely has assumed the duties of the Magistrate.

Next, Mr. Paradise said Edgefield County applied for a \$2,500 grant to advertise the 2020 Census. He said this project is being conducted by LaKeisha Bryant and Fran Forrest. He said they are going to provide information at various events that are taking place in the county. They will also visit all apartments, daycares, nursing homes, schools, senior housing, and local farms with farm workers. He

EDGEFIELD COUNTY COUNCIL

March 3, 2020

6:00 PM

County Council Chambers

Instrument      Book Page  
202000001201 OR      1794 335

went on to say they also plan to have the material placed in each office of the county and the towns of Edgefield and Trenton. Mr. Paradise noted the Town of Johnston will be handling their office through the same grant opportunity.

Mr. Paradise closed his comments by saying he'd attended the South Carolina Association of Counties' mid-year conference and Institute of Government in Columbia on February 19-20, 2020.

**Comments by County Council Chair**

Chairman Cooper started his report by saying he looks forward to participating in the March for Hope event to be held on Saturday, March 28, 2020 at Twin Lakes Airport, Trenton. He encouraged everyone to help promote it, as well as participate.

Chairman Cooper went on to say that he participated in the South Carolina Rural Summit that was held in Clemson, SC the previous two days. He mentioned that among other things, Lt. Governor Pamela Evette spoke about the Census and its importance for funding, especially for rural counties. Chairman Cooper encouraged everyone to use their sphere of influence to ensure we get a complete census count in Edgefield County. He referenced that it doesn't only impact funding, but the number of Congressional Representatives. With internal migration, we can expect for South Carolina to gain an additional U.S. Representative, at some point in the future.

Chairman Cooper noted the Cyber growth that is taking place and mentioned he spoke with Secretary of Commerce Bobby Hitt about it at the Rural County Summit earlier that day. Secretary Hitt mentioned an additional group Edgefield County should be involved in, as it relates to recruiting Cyber Business, Chairman Cooper stated he would be following up on that.

Chairman Cooper mentioned the Finance Committee had met with all of the Department Heads as well as the Elected/Appointed Officials to hear budget requests. He said the Finance Committee will be meeting with the County Administrator and Finance Director to review the revenue projections for the upcoming budget in the coming week. He closed his comments by announcing that the Budget Work Session would be held on Tuesday, March 17, 2020 at 6:00PM in the County Council Chambers.

**Adjourn**

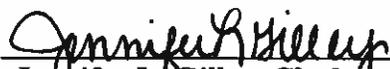
Councilman Talbert made the motion to adjourn at 8:25PM, seconded by Councilwoman Kennion. Motion passed unanimously.

Edgefield County Council



H. Scott Cooper, Chair

ATTEST



Jennifer L. Gilley, Clerk to Council