

Edgefield County Intergovernmental Meeting

January 31, 2022

5:30 PM

Senior Citizens Center, Edgefield, SC

2022-1593

Filed for Record in

Edgefield County, SC

Charles L. Reel, Clerk of Court

04/07/2022 12:57:43 PM

CTY MISCELL \$ 0.00

Bk OR Vol 1961 Page 263 - 267

Edgefield County Council held its Intergovernmental Meeting on January 31, 2022, at the Senior Citizens Center at 5:30 PM. Edgefield County Chairman Campbell opened the meeting by thanking everyone for attending. He encouraged everyone to enjoy the meal after the blessing of the food. Edgefield County Vice Chairman Talbert rendered the prayer and blessing of the food.

Chairman Campbell began the meeting by once again thanking everyone for attending. He also thanked those who served the food and setup of the facility. He thanked Mr. Jim Dorn for opening the Senior Citizens Center for another Intergovernmental Meeting. He also acknowledged that two of the Edgefield County Councilmembers were not in attendance this evening, Scott Cooper and Jackie Kennion. Before Chairman Campbell opened the floor to the speakers, he asked all in attendance to stand individually to announce themselves and their respective titles. After everyone had announced themselves, Chairman Campbell encouraged all that are to speak to limit their remarks to five minutes.

Brief Remarks

Chairman Campbell went over the County Council agenda concerning the three readings on redistricting. He let everybody know that the voter registration office will let you know where to vote when the time comes. Then he spoke briefly on rezoning. He let us know that the ten-year update is soon to come to an end. Next, he spoke about redefining the Economic Development Committee. Chairman Campbell said we will get started on this tomorrow. Then, he spoke about establishing a new committee with the four towns collaborating with two County Council members. Lastly, he closed by discussing the vote to purchase land for the new law enforcement center. He believes it will be the most significant change in the county that will allow the station to be more effective for the citizens and run efficiently for the Sheriff's office. After Chairman Campbell had completed his remarks, the other speakers followed.

Economic Development – Will Williams, he was not in attendance but he did send his remarks for Chairman Campbell to read to the attendees.

Economic Development Partnership Report to Edgefield County Intergovernmental Meeting

2021 was an exciting year for economic development in Edgefield County. February 10 will be the one-year anniversary of Generac's historic announcement. Since that time, they have also announced an expansion. They began operations right after July 4th 2021 and currently have more than 750 employees on the payroll. They will begin adding an additional 200,000 square feet to the existing building later this year. This was an exciting project to be a part of and there are many in this room who were important members of the team that made it happen!

Several improvement projects for the park are in process. One of those is updating the signage at the entrance. Bids will be accepted later this week and completion is expected by the beginning of the third quarter of 2022. A grant from the SC Department of Commerce is helping the County complete the project. Generac Way is being extended by 600 feet. This project is being paid for by the CTC, the County and grants from Dominion Energy and AT&T. A 600-foot water line extension is also in process and is being paid for by a grant from the SC Rural

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Infrastructure Authority. Due Diligence in the park is also being updated. Having this is critical as we pursue other companies to locate here.

The remainder of our manufacturing entities continue to do well. Bondex has completed another expansion at their facility. We speak with all of the industries regularly to help them solve issues and help position them for further growth in Edgefield County.

EDP in partnership with the county are working with Retail Strategies to attract retail establishments to the county. Primarily, to the county's incentive zones located adjacent to the three towns. But if locations are not within those areas but within the county this will still benefit the county and citizens.

At the beginning of 2021 Edgefield County's unemployment rate was 4.51% (state average 5.3%) which translates into 480 unemployed citizens of the county. We finished 2021 at 2.8% state average 3.5%. This was 297 citizens unemployed. In January 2020 there were 320 unemployed Edgefield County residents. It peaked at 1,131 out of work in May of 2020. The last four months of 2021 the numbers unemployed were fairly consistent in the upper 200's.

Edgefield County School District – Dr. Kevin O’Gorman gave a construction update on the county schools. O’Gorman stated that Johnston Elementary construction had a cost of 1.5 million dollars and it is complete. Douglas Elementary spent \$3000 for new media and it is complete. Parker Elementary is currently in construction for a new 4-to-5-million-dollar multipurpose wing that is almost complete. Merriwether Middle school is currently in renovation worth \$12 million for office space, cafeteria, parking and septic to sewerage. JET Middle school is receiving a new entrance to the building at a cost of \$340,000. Strom Thurmond High School is receiving a renovation to the gym and auditorium; practice track; science wing and service entrance. The Career Center is receiving new turning lanes. He stated that with all the construction happening at the schools in our county, we are still within budget and on time.

Edgefield County Planning Commission – Chairman Fab Burt stated that this has been a challenging year. It started with the LMO and the uproar in the county over that. Then he continued to discuss zoning issues. He said this is a sore thumb in the county. Burt stated that some people don't want change and want things to remain the same while others want change. That is the problem. But growth is coming to Edgefield County and we all need to think about the future of our county. Mr. Burt said he is looking forward to the coming year. Burt acknowledged and thanked Doc Clark for his help and the good group of people who he works with. He said Edgefield is a good county.

Edgefield County Hospital – Chairman Sam Speight thanked the County Council for their presence on the board. Then he continued by informing us about the alliance they have formed with Self Regional Hospital of which the County Council approved. He said had it not been for the Council, we would not have had a doctor in Edgefield. Mr. Speight went further to discuss the hospital merging with Peachtree Health. He acknowledged and thanked the physicians in the county for their hard work and dedication. He informed us that the hospital had received the Top 20 Critical Access Hospital award for 2020. He stated that all this has been possible through the direction of County Council and the Edgefield Hospital Board, we are flourishing. He ended by saying he is happy to serve the healthcare needs of our county.

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Edgefield County Water and Sewer Authority – John Hare began his speech by informing us that the Federal Infrastructure money will be sent to help with water & sewer. These funds will be given out across state line in the amount of \$25 to \$90 million dollars. We are looking at making a significant investment in the water treatment facility. Federal funds from the infrastructure money will be allowed through grant funding. Hopefully, we will be able to reach the North and West side of the county. We had endured some challenges with COVID such as closing the office, and learning how to be flexible. That is the key word, flexible. Now we are just waiting to see what funding the legislature will send to our county.

County Transportation Committee – Chairman Sam Crouch Jr. stated that it was 2 years ago we were recovering from Mill Creek repairs. State road Brightharp and Center Spring are going through pavement reformation. We continue to work with the County to support Generac. Method recovery had partnered with the county to do a repair job. If approved, it would total over \$1 million dollars. We will wait for the infrastructure bill to see what we will be able to do. We did complete the widening of Bettis Academy on the south end to the four-lane highway.

Town of Trenton – Administrator Roger LeDuc began by thanking Edgefield County for allowing him to serve this county. He thanked Fab Burt and his committee for all of their hard work. Then he began his updates by saying that broadband should be at all the Aiken Cooperative customers by the end of 2023. He wants everyone to be served with broadband in the county. He continued with his updates by saying that he was grateful to work with the hospital board to retire an old ambulance. Administrator LeDuc informed us that the former Trenton gym will be able to be used for community events. And, the town recently received a bucket truck with assistance from the state.

Town of Johnston – Mayor Terrence Culbreath went straight into his updates concerning waiting on a fire truck for his town. He said COVID is supposedly to blame for the delay. The funds for the truck are coming from ARPA. He informed the body that IGA is no longer in the area. A resident built a local neighborhood grocery store name TJ Grocery. He next updated us on the building across from the Triangle. He informed us that the building has been torn down and a commercial building is coming. He also told us that Dollar Tree and Family Dollar are partnering in a joint facility. Lastly, he thanked everyone in the room as he acknowledged that this will be his last Intergovernmental Meeting due to him not running for the mayor position again.

Town of Edgefield – Mayor Ken Durham began by thanking Sherrie Holmes and the delegation for all of their help. He said they have faced a lot of challenges but also a lot of opportunities. He said he has a sign that read “If you don’t push, it won’t move!” That is a motto that I go by. He continued to update us on the excitement of the Kendall Mill renovation and the possibility of upscale apartments that would bring in \$23 million dollars over time to the county. He also said they were able to give the city employees a 10 to 25% increase in salary. He is hoping this is close to what they deserve for their hard work. We have had a few disgruntle citizens concerning their garbage pickup. We are currently working at correcting that issue. I would like to thank the five people of our nonprofit team that I call Think Tank. Yarborough; Padgett; Smith and Washington. Finally, I would like to invite all to the Town Council meeting in April and that does not just mean Edgefield, but all.

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City Of North Augusta – On behalf of Mayor Briton William, the Manager of Human Resources, J. D. McCauley was present. J.D. opened up by informing us that the mayor thanks us for the invite, but was unable to attend due to him being at a strategic session in Newberry, South Carolina. He continued by saying he is looking forward to building on the relationship between North Augusta and Edgefield County. He gave updates on the new public safety building on Martintown Road and other ongoing projects in the North Augusta area. J.D. thanked us for the invite and look forward to us working together in the future.

State Legislative Delegation – Senator Shane Massey is absent this evening due to personal reasons.

Representative Bill Clyburn began his remarks by stating that Edgefield is in a good shape. We are doing a good job. Rep. Clyburn updated us on teachers getting an increase in pay but we still have a shortage of teachers. He briefly spoke about healthcare and e-medicine. Next, he updated us on the money coming to South Carolina. He said South Carolina has more money now than before. Money is there to allow flexibility and Edgefield will be able to take advantage of the money. He stated there is \$4.2 billion dollars divided into counties of South Carolina with more to come. We have a delegation that is truly looking out for Edgefield. I will push for Edgefield to get as much money as possible due to him being on the Rural Infrastructure Board. Rep. Clyburn closed with acknowledging that we have good leadership here and we need to take advantage of who is over our county as he commented on Chairman Campbell Administrator LeDuc.

Representative Bill Hixon began his remarks by thanking Representative Bill Clyburn for bringing the money such as ARPA and the Plutonium funds to the county. Hixon stated that Edgefield County has the second highest population of SRS employees. He acknowledged how Administrator LeDuc sent a letter asking for \$18 million from those funds for the county. Those funds will help with the new law enforcement center and other tasks in the county. But he encouraged us not to get mad over matching funds because we will get our share of money. Hixon commented on Sheriff Roland and his appreciation of his work with pushing for the new law enforcement center. He expressed that he was proud to represent our county in Columbia. Representative Hixon closed stating that he is a neighbor who lives in Merriwether and if we need his assistance, we can call on him.

Closing Remarks

Chairman Campbell closed the evening by thanking all who spoke and attended this evening. He especially thanked the delegation for their kind words. He thanked Administrator LeDuc for stepping into his position for the third time after the previous administrator left. Chairman stated that when the administrator leaves or goes away, this allows chaos to happen. He acknowledged how when Mr. LeDuc steps into a room, he brings a calming force. Chairman expressed how Mr. LeDuc is a "we" guy when working. Chairman Campbell continued to emphasize how he is that Administrator that will pull levers to help the county. Chairman Campbell thanked Administrator LeDuc for all he does and has done for Edgefield County. Chairman Campbell asked the attendees to stand and give Administrator LeDuc a round of applause. After the applause, Chairman Campbell asked if anyone else would like to speak that did not speak earlier? Hearing no responses, Chairman Campbell adjourned the meeting at 7:27 p.m.

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Edgefield County Council



Dean Campbell, Council Chairman

Attest



Aretha Eubanks, Clerk to Council