

EDGEFIELD COUNTY COUNCIL BUDGET WORKSHOP

March 15, 2022

6:00 PM

County Council Chambers

The Edgefield County Council held Budget Workshop at 6:00 P.M. Tuesday, March 1, 2022, 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

Dean Campbell, Chairman
Albert Talbert, Vice Chairman
Scott Cooper, Councilman
Tiffani Ireland, Councilwoman
Jackie Kennion, Councilman

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Others Present

Roger LeDuc, Administrator
Taz Potts, County Finance Director
Aretha Eubanks, Clerk to Council
Hart Clark, Building & Planning Director

Call To Order

Chairman Campbell called the Budget Workshop to order at 6:00 pm.

Discussion of FY 2022-2023 Budget

Chairman Campbell said we will discuss the FY 2022-2023 General Operating Budget and Special Revenue Fund Budget. He said we will do the comments in the order of the agenda. Chairman Campbell said let me set the stage for both Council and for the people here so we will all be on the same page and what's going to happen here tonight.

Tonight is our Budget Workshop.

To remind Council and our guests, at the Workshop, we do not vote on any topic. This is a draft budget that Council and Administrator are here to discuss. This is a less formal meeting because we will hear from you and discuss with you as well. We may ask the Administrator to make changes to the budget before we take it up at first reading at our April meeting, if we have a consensus to do that.

Also, I want to remind Council that at this meeting, we'll hear the Administrator's report on the budget as he walks through the memo he provided us. Then I will go through the budget page-by-page just to ensure we've covered everything you want covered. I'll be moving through the page-by-page pretty quickly because you've had this budget for several days for study. However, please understand that this doesn't mean you can't ask questions later on any page or any budget topic.

During first, second, and third readings of the budget, we can discuss any line item or other topic in the budget you'd like to discuss. The point of what I'm doing is this: For the three readings, we won't be going through the memo again nor will we go through the budget page-by-page. At

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our next three meetings, we'll just discuss what the Administrator recommends and what Council wants to discuss.

In other words, at each meeting, I'll simply ask the Administrator if there are changes we need to consider that have come in since the last budget discussion – and there always are items that pop up that have to be added or taken away from the budget. Then I'll be asking Council at each reading if you have any questions or suggested changes to the budget. We can vote to amend it at that time.

Are there any questions on the process I've described for our meeting tonight or moving forward?

If not, then I'll remind you that this budget comes to you put together by staff, and comes recommended by the Budget and Finance Committee. I'll ask Mr. Talbert if he has anything to add since he is the Chair of the Budget and Finance Committee.

Mr. Talbert said he had no comments.

Thank you, Mr. Talbert

Mr. LeDuc has spent a great deal of time working through this budget to bring us a balanced budget with no tax or fee increases. I want to say a big thank you to him, and also a big thank you to Taz Potts, our Finance Director, for working to put this budget together for us.

I'll ask the Administrator to take us through the budget.

Administrator LeDuc thanked Taz especially for all the help she has given to this budget and Renee Austin who is the clerk that did a lot of the typing with putting this budget together. Administrator LeDuc continued thanking the elected officials and department heads for their time and input towards this budget document. He acknowledged that it was not just one person, it was many people that have put this budget together. I know a lot of elected officials and department heads had to really think hard about what was important as we looked at what to fund and what not to fund knowing that we always have a very tight budget with a lot of considerations. Administrator LeDuc again thanked everyone for their help in any way towards this budget.

Administrator's Budget Memo

Over the past two years the County, State and Country has faced some very difficult issues. However, we are seeing a new and brighter day coming for the County. With this budget the County will meet the ongoing needs of the citizens, while building for a better future.

The Edgefield County employees are our most important asset. Last year unfortunately, we only gave them a 1% raise. We have included a minimum 5% raise in this year's budget except for the Sheriff's Department and for the EMS paramedics which both received a substantial raise last

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fall. I know that sounds great, but we all know how inflation is hitting everything and increasing the cost. After looking at local governments, if this continues, we may have to look at that again. I am hoping that will not be the case considering we have a minimum five percent increase included in the budget and we have the Archer report coming back probably in the next couple of weeks. Due to the information from the Archer report, there may be a few other adjustments that we will make based on that. But I would be coming back to you before the first, second or third reading.

The health and well-being of our employees is critical, especially with what we just experienced with the pandemic. We currently have a nurse at the County's Detention Center who works five, six hours days or thirty hours weekly. Medication is given to the inmate before the breakfast and dinner meals and the nurse is not available at either of these times. Additionally on the weekends no nursing assistance is available to medically assess new inmates or assist with any medication. At the end of each day the nurse leaves instructions to the Detention Center staff on what's needed. It would be helpful to have medical personnel on duty seven days a week at the Detention Center. We recommend increasing the nurses work schedule to 8 hours daily Monday-Friday and 6 hours on Saturday and Sunday. A full-time nurse could also provide medical assistance to all the County employees. Their expanded duties for the employees would include:

- Wellness checkups
- Triage and assess on the job injuries
- Provide yearly flu, tetanus or other preventive shots to employees
- Monitor blood pressure or blood sugar
- Provide counseling on a variety of health-related subjects

If the Council agrees to a full-time nurse, we could obtain this service through our local hospital or medical provider. We would speak with Edgefield Hospital and arrange a contractual agreement with us. They would provide the nurse and we would pay the hospital for that service. If they are not willing to provide a nurse for us, then we will look at some other provider that will allow us to have a nurse. An examination office for County employees could be designed as part of the new Law Enforcement Center and meanwhile we would utilize an office somewhere near or in the Detention Center. We are recommending increasing the nurse's hours to 52/week at an increased cost of \$27,000. That is one major thing we have in the budget that we are asking for your approval and the funding is there for that nurse.

Information Technology has become a critical need for all of our county departments. Every department has experienced problems since our former computer provider, EDTS, sold their company a few years ago to a company in the northeast what is now called Corsica. They provide okay service that I am have not been really impressed with. Our website has only a minimal amount of data and we have repeatedly encountered problems with broadcasting our meetings. We are investigating the financially feasible to hire our own IT staff. It would require at a minimum a salary of \$60-70,000 for the fulltime employee plus their benefits and related

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cost plus a part time employee to assist with this operation. The part-time person could be a high school or college student because they know about computer setup and operations. Taz and I will be working on this to try to determine how we are going to be able to come up with enough funding so we will have our own in-house IT department. That is probably the number one concern I heard most from elected officials and department heads. We believe now is the time to move this in-house and we hope to give you further details concerning this change before third reading of the budget.

Chairman Campbell asked Administrator LeDuc, right now you are saying that neither one of the two previous concerns are in this budget.

Administrator LeDuc responded with the nurse is in the budget. We raised it from \$113,000 currently to \$140,000 salary which should cover the estimating 52 hours a week for a nurse. The IT is not in the budget independently. But it is in the budget within various departments. We need to draw the budgeted amount out of each department and find out the real needs. Then we will pay for that individual and a half. Chairman Campbell did not comment any further on this topic. Administrator LeDuc continued with the memo.

Based on the audited reserves as of June 30, 2021, the General Fund has a fund balance of \$6,297,419. In FY 2021/2022, Council designated \$1,174,000 from the fund balance, this year it's \$958,661. Our General Fund operating budget for this year without ARPA funds is \$12,685,155. After utilizing the \$958,661 from our reserves, the County will have \$5,338,758 or just over 5 months of reserves available, which is an excellent cushion for the County. The county has an ordinance that says we have to have a minimum of three months in reserve. We are well over the minimum. This will allow for any changes or requests from Council we may incur such as the one I was recently presented with from the Public Defender requesting an increase in budget from \$45,000 to \$60,000 for a public defender. This will be an adjustment of the Public Defender budget before the first reading. We know we will have some adjustments and changes. All the changes won't be reflected until we get to the final reading which will be in June.

As the Chairman stated, we do not have any fees or taxes that are increasing. This year we are asking to use the ARPA funds for these one-term non-reoccurring requests that we have listed below.

MAJOR HIGHLIGHTS IN THIS YEAR'S BUDGET:

- **No fees or tax increases.**
- **Increase the number of SROs to eight.**
- **Added \$150,000 from the 2020 vehicle bond to offset the Sheriff lease payments**
- **Use of ARPA; \$494,000 for General Fund \$500,000 for Town Grants and \$50,000 for Retail Strategies in Economic Development. Exhibit A**

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- **Reduced the funds required from reserves from \$1,174,000 in 2021 budget to \$750,000 in this year's budget**
- **Property tax revenue has increase dramatically over the last few years from \$3.68 million in 2020, to \$4.44 in 2021, to a projected \$4.70 actual in 2022**

COUNTY COUNCIL – Two new line items were added to the County Council budget The first; \$500,000 in ARPA funds for grants to the Towns for capital projects. Council would review the projects and if approved provide up to 50% of the money from ARPA funds. The second is for a new program to hire staff to pick up litter along the roadways. In the past each of you have received numerous complaints about the excessive amount of litter along our county roadways. This has been an on-going problem for years. Although we hired a litter control officer last year; who is collecting several tons of litter along our roadways, we still have major litter issues. We are proposing hiring four part-time employees or two fulltime employees working an equivalent 4000 hours yearly, to pick up litter along our major roadways. Hopefully in the near future they will be supplemented with other individuals who are serving community time through our Magistrate Court.

County Council Building – We currently rent the County Council Building at a cost of \$1,200/month. We are recommending purchasing this building with ARPA funds at an estimated cost of \$175,000

Clerk of Court – The phone system in the courthouse is antiquated and needs to be replaced at a cost of \$20,000.

Coroner – During the pandemic the coroner has seen an 33% increase in the number of cases they have been involved. They are requesting a \$10,000 increase each. for the coroner and his two employees' salaries or a total of \$30,000. This would be a 48% increase in salary and we are proposing an no larger than an 11% increase. Additionally, the coroner has requested an increase in most of their line items with an overall budget increase of 36%. We agree with several of his request and below are the items we don't agree on:

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>ACTUAL 2021</u>	<u>YTD ACTUAL</u>	<u>REQUEST</u>	<u>PROPOSED</u>
Bond	\$0	0	400	300
Postage	\$0	0	200	100
Membership	\$0	0	300	250
Travel	\$32	0	300	250
Telephone	\$2,607	1,110	4,000	3,500

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Machine/Equip \$0	634	2,500	1,500
Radio Supplies \$424	0	2,000	800
Training \$0	0	1,500	1,000

Magistrate – For nearly two years the Magistrate **has not** held family court due to the pandemic. He hopes to hold 50 jury trials next year. This will significantly increase several line items in their budget, all of which we funded.

Assessor – To help increase efficiency in assessing or recording new property and to make changes to existing properties; we are proposing new software (\$95,000) and hardware (\$15,000) for the Assessor’s department. The cost for these items will be offset by the saving in manhours to record and store this information. This expense will be paid for from ARPA funds.

Emergency Management – The Assistant Emergency Management position is currently vacant. We propose utilizing an employee in another department as the assistant. Since the assistant is not frequently utilized, they should be able to continue working the majority of the time in their current position. We propose giving the Director a pay raise reflective of the increase in their duties. The current employee will be utilized as the assistant when needed and also receive a small increase. Overall, we project a \$8,000 decrease in salary/benefits for this budget. A grant covers 50% of the salaries and 100% of any capital improvements.

Sheriff – The Sheriff is requesting two new deputies, an investigator and a patrol Lieutenant. In the budget we are recommending hiring two employees, one Lieutenant and one deputy; we have added \$130,000 for their salary and benefits. Three non-certified individuals are currently attending the SC Law Enforcement Academy and will become certified officers this summer. This will give us three **new** on duty deputies allowing us to operate at full strength for the first time. For the very first time, a School Resource Officer is ever County schools. These eight officers will take a burden off the investigators and other deputies who in the past would have responded to the school complaints. Additionally, we have added three new line items in this budget for ammunition, tasers, and body cameras, which will reduce some of the spending in specialized department supplies. We hope to receive State grant funds to offset some of the cost for the tasers and cameras. If not, we will fully fund their purchase with ARPA funds for this equipment. The cost for 12 new leased vehicles will increase our payments from \$144,000 to over \$240,000 this year. Additionally, we will need to upfit all of these vehicles at an additional cost of \$120,000 which will come from the ARPA funds. This will be offset by a reduction in the maintenance cost for automotive equipment. The department wants to increase the employee training and needs equipment to provide additional safety for his employees and to assist with his daily operation. The new equipment totals \$100,000 and we are recommending the full amount from the ARPA funds. This equipment includes stop sticks, shields, ammunitions, ballistic plates, ballistic helmets, tasers, rifles, Glocks, radar, lidar, seatbelt locks and a casper. The School Resource Officers increased from 5 to 8 during the school year. Three are funded at an 80-20% and five are fully funded. This increases their cost from the general fund to \$44,000.

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The Sheriff has asked for several other line-item increases as he expands his operations to provide quality service to everyone within the County. Below are the items we didn't fully fund.

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>YTD 2021</u>	<u>YTD 2022</u>	<u>REQUEST</u>	<u>PROPOSED</u>
R&M Auto	N/A	41,045	100,000	50,000
Lodging	\$2,520	4,782	7,000	6,000
Training	\$11,198	5,176	20,000	15,000
Specialized	\$16,117	5,462	25,000	17,000

Dispatch Operation – They are requesting an additional dispatcher in this budget. We are not recommending the funding of this position. They also requested increases in training and some of this can be offset with E911 funding. Below are the items we didn't fully fund.

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>YTD 2021</u>	<u>YTD 2022</u>	<u>REQUEST</u>	<u>PROPOSED</u>
Electric/Gas	\$3,380	551	10,000	4,500
Machine Repairs	\$0	162	1,500	500

Detention Center – They are requesting three new employees as they believe the detention center population will increase with the Magistrate conducting juror trials. However, they anticipate keeping the inmate population to approximately 40 persons. Due to the increase in pay last fall, we are almost fully staffed for the first time in years. We are not recommending any increased staffing at this time. They are recommending several increases; primarily with training and the attending nurse, which was discussed earlier. Our goal is to develop a contractual agreement with a local hospital similar to other jurisdictions throughout South Carolina. Below are items we didn't fully fund.

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>YTD 2021</u>	<u>YTD 2022</u>	<u>REQUEST</u>	<u>PROPOSED</u>
Telephone	\$2,419	1,527	5,000	3,000
Boarding	\$117,448	81,947	225,000	200,000

Animal Control – Typically our animal control officer transports animals twice daily to the Aiken County shelter. We recommend hiring a part-time person to help transport animals to the Aiken County shelter at least once a day. This will allow the officer to respond to more animal calls. We are budgeting ten hours per week at a cost with benefits at \$8,000 yearly.

County Maintenance – From April through September our maintenance employee spends almost their entire time mowing and trimming around all of our buildings, convenience centers.

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industrial park and entrance signs. They need a part-time employee to help them out all year long but especially during the growing season. We have added 1000 hours or \$16,000 with benefits to this budget. Additionally, we budgeted a \$2/hour increase for our building maintenance employee. He has expanded his role and saved the county tens of thousands of dollars over the past few years.

Building Maintenance – The DSS building requires a new roof, the Council Chambers roof needs repairs and the Courthouse requires painting and carpet replacement. Altogether the total repair cost for all the major items in the buildings; totals \$90,000. We will utilize ARPA funds for this work.

Piedmont Technical College – Last year we increased our payment to Piedmont Tech from \$65,000 to \$75,000. This year we are again raising our payments by \$10,000 for a total of \$85,000.

Road Fees – On June 30, 2021 the SC Supreme Court ruled that the Greenville County Road Fee was invalid and needed to be eliminated because it didn't provide full value to the residents and businesses paying the fee. We eliminated our road fee in September 2021 and increased our taxes to provide most of the funds necessary to support our roadway system. The State legislators are working on a solution to this problem and hopefully it will be resolved later this year. We hope they will provide the necessary legislation so we can eliminate the tax and reinstitute the fee beginning in January 2023. If not, we may need to raise our road fee tax in September to cover the expenses for this operation which were not covered by the tax increase last year. The Road Fee had a fund balance of \$749,141 at the end of FY 2020-21. Staff recommends using \$152,850 of the fund balance to offset expenses for FY 2022-23. Those expenses include the purchase of a replacement dump truck for \$140,000.

Economic Development – We are increasing our payment to the Economic Development Partnership from \$75,000 to \$80,000 this year. Additionally, we are continuing with our contractual agreement with Retail Strategies with the \$50,000 cost coming from ARPA. The Industrial Development Fund had a balance of \$249,241 at the end of FY 2020-21.

Emergency Management Services – The EMS fund has seen a drop in its reserve balance in recent years but is stable. By working with the Hospital Board and using ARPA funds for major purchases we will avoid the need for additional funding this year. Additionally, this year there is no need for a transfer from our reserves. The EMS Fund had a balance of \$243,884 at the end of FY 2020-21.

Solid Waste Fee – The Solid Waste fund is stable even with a 24% increase in payments to the Tri County Solid Waste Authority from \$619,480 to \$769,000. The budget includes adding extra personnel to the Sweetwater Convenience Center and an increase in pay to \$8.10/hour. The Solid Waste Fund had a balance of \$226,022 at the end of FY 2020-21.

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Victim's Bill of Rights – The Victim's Bill of Rights Fund provides for the Sheriff's Office assistance to those who are victims are their families. A portion of the fines and forfeitures are returned to the county to fund this budget. However, in recent years the funding has not adequately supported this position. The FY 202-21 balance showed a deficit of \$14,776 as of June 30, 2021. We will need to transfer \$60,505 from the General Fund to the Victim's Bill of Rights Fund.

Administrator LeDuc ended his memo by thanking the Council for their time.

Chairman Campbell asked Administrator LeDuc, on page three of the memo, under Clerk of Court, do the new phone system cost \$20,000? Administrator LeDuc apologized for not mentioning this item. Administrator LeDuc continued to explain that all three floors of the Courthouse will receive the new phone system. Currently the clerk's do not have call waiting or voicemail service provided on their phone. This a very antiquated system that need to be replaced.

Chairman Campbell said he would like to ask Council a question. He asked Council how do they feel about purchasing the Council Chambers for approximated \$175,000? Councilman Talbert said he think this would be a great asset to Edgefield County. We noticed that we are renting it now and we would save the taxpayer money in years to come if we go ahead and purchase this building. I know it indicated that although we are only renting this building, we are responsible for any repairs. I have no problem with purchasing this building. Councilwoman Kennion asked, why we never considered buying this building until now? Administrator answered with, I'm not sure if anybody knew that we didn't own this building. And, the amount that it cost to rent this building is reasonable. But, now that we have the ability through the ARPA funds, that is why I think we should purchase it. If we did not have those funds, I would be on the fence as to whether we should purchase it or not. Since we have the money, let's get the building. This building serves the needs of this county tremendously and I believe it is a great time to do this in my opinion. Councilwoman Ireland asked the who do we rent this building from? Councilwoman Ireland asked Finance Director Taz Potts who do we rent this building from. Finance Director Potts said Mr. Matthew Mims. Councilwoman Ireland asked if they are willing to sell it. Administrator LeDuc commented that in our lease agreement, there is a formulated way we can do this that is written in the agreement. But I would have to ask our attorney. Councilwoman Ireland said she all for it. Administrator LeDuc commented that we have already paid for this building more than once. Chairman Campbell stated that it is a consensus if you want to go ahead and put that in as an ARPA item. Chairman Campbell acknowledged the usage of this building by other departments for workshops, training and meetings. Due to the usage of the building, Council has to go to the clerk to ask if it is available on certain dates. Councilman Cooper acknowledged that this building is also rented out if it is not being used by the county government. Council was in agreement to move forward on this.

Chairman Campbell asked the Council, for any other questions or comments concerning the budget.

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Councilwoman Ireland said she have questions. First, in regards to the Archer study, you said it is due back in a week. Do you think we will need to meet again to make adjustments once the Archer study come in? Are we going to factor it into this year's budget or are we going to try to utilize that information and start making steps? Administrator LeDuc answered that he is very sensitive to the needs of the employees. I don't to say that it will all be answered after the study come back. But that is when we really start to analyze once it is completed on an individual and departmental basis. It will take a while to get the results, but I have made a commitment to the employees and Council that we will look at the study as we did for the Sheriff Department and paramedics. At the appropriate time, if we need to, we will meet together and make some adjustments. Please understand that it will be more of a case-by-case basis that I would really need to analyze. We will do the same as we did with the elected officials and department heads. He said that by third reading, we will have enough facts and information that we may be coming back to you with some adjustments. Administrator commented that for now, let's just stay at the 5% and see if there is any need for adjustments beyond that. Administrator LeDuc stated that he would not be surprised if there were not some. Councilwoman Ireland said I'm just happy to hear that you are going to use the Archer study.

Councilwoman Ireland said her second question is in regards to the IT. Are we in a contract now and how much will it cost for us to get out of that contract? Administrator LeDuc responded with the contract ends on June 30, 2022. They have already heard from someone within the county that I was not going to sign the contract. I told Taz to let them know that no decision has been made, and they know how disappointed I have been on a couple of occasions.

Councilwoman Ireland said she has a couple of comments. First of all, I hate that we have gotten to the point where we have to pay people to clean up our roads. That is just sad, but I know it is needed. The second thing is in regards to the road maintenance fee. I have spoken to Senator Shane Massey about this and while we thought this might be an easy sell. I have heard there is opposition from the upstate. Councilwoman continued with what their opposition is unclear. So, I asked Senator Massey how we can help. I am waiting on the answer on what we can do. She stated that I think they thought they being our delegation, it would be an easy quick fix but only to find out it is not. She concluded by saying she just wanted to give us all that update.

Chairman Campbell said he would like to mention on litter that he and the Administrator have talked a lot about this. He stated that as disappointed he is about the litter problem. we just can't police our way out of this. Chairman Campbell continued with the sheriff, deputies and litter officer do a good job. But I don't think we will ever see a law enforcement every half mile, on every road 24 hours a day. People litter when officers are not around. We still need to find people and encourage magistrate to find people to pick up trash. Maybe this is an innovative way to try, but if does not work, we can change it. Then we will do something different the next year.

Chairman Campbell asked Council and the Administrator if we need to talk about Exhibit A? Administrator LeDuc said he would if you want him to. Chairman Campbell explained that Exhibit A is all the items that are to be covered by the ARPA funds. Then, Chairman Campbell

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said next you will the budget ordinance of which Council will go over that consist of maybe nine pages before you get to the budget worksheets.

Chairman Campbell began going through the budget worksheet with Council page by page. Council did not have any comments or questions during the page by page review.

Comments On The Budget

Chairman Campbell acknowledged that we have a couple of the elected officials in attendance. Chairman asked them if they would like to speak.

Sheriff Jody Rowland, no comment.

Charles Reel, no comment.

Jane Doolittle, no comment.

Then Chairman Campbell continued with the department heads by asking if they would like to speak.

Jim Dorn told the Council that he appreciates the salary increase for the 31 employees, all over 60 years old that he manages. Mr. Dorn explained that the men use this as an additional income to help supplement them. Mr. Dorn stated that the Edgefield County Recycling Centers are open more than anybody else's near our area. He said they currently make \$8.10 an hour, but they would like for their salary to receive a .10 increase. He stated that would make their hourly salary at \$8.20 and he would like for Council to consider it. Mr. Dorn stated that at the recycling center on Sweetwater Road is becoming an issue and thanks to Administrator LeDuc, we were able to add an additional employee. That has helped, but that is just a temporary fix. Mr. Dorn continued with in the next year or so, we will need another employee to assist with the compactors at the Sweetwater Recycling Center.

Suzy Spurgeon asked the Council what is the breakdown of her salary was, considering losing my assistant. She said she has not been told what the breakdown is or what the person from the other department might get versus what I will get. All I know is \$8,000 less than what we currently have. Councilwoman Ireland said she is curious to of what would we pay and what would be the increase in Susie's salary. She continued with what would we give off for this backup person? Administrator LeDuc said the same thing we discussed. Mrs. Spurgeon said I don't know; you didn't tell me a figure. Administrator LeDuc informed her that yes, we did. Chairman Campbell said we will come back to this due to information not being present at this meeting.

Garrett Lynn had no comments.

Taz Potts had no comments.

Public Comments

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George Thornton, member of the Civic League Board who is one of 6 attending to represent the league. He gave a brief history background about the Civic League and what they are affiliated with in Edgefield. Mr. Thornton stated that the mission of the Civic League is to promote Edgefield County through its physical assets and employees and volunteers. Mr. Thornton acknowledged that the Welcome Center houses meeting space for the public and public events; public restrooms for visitors to Edgefield and events held in Edgefield Town Square. He described what is housed in the Welcome Center pertaining to Edgefield County. Mr. Thornton said Edgefield County has the best genealogical library in the state. Mr. Thornton continued with the Welcome Center average almost 1600 people for 2016 to 2020, this does not include family members or children. Mr. Thornton explained how due to COVID, they have had a significant decline of approximately 1000 visitors a year, but it is projected to reverse in 2022. He said that he believes that visitors have made contributed significantly to the county and town businesses, and the county tax revenue. He continued with the Civic League requires an annual operating budget of approximately \$72,500 just to support and continue operations. The budget is fairly straightforward and I will give you a copy of this to consider. Mr. Thornton stated that 80% of the budget is for salary. He continued that they are in the process of recruiting a director for the Welcome Center activities that will have a minimum of a bachelor's degree preferably in library science. Mr. Thornton continued with explaining that the rest of the budget is split between utilities, insurance, administration and building maintenance with an assumed 5% inflation rate for this year. Mr. Thornton stated that the Civic League Board of Directors respectfully requests the Edgefield County Council provide \$35,000 in annual support to continue the Civic League operations and housing of the genealogical society. Mr. Thornton continued that number. \$35,000, represents 46% of the proposed operating budget. This proposed budget will also allow for an increase in civic league sponsored activities, community support and the right staff. Mr. Thornton again asked Council for support to the Civic League and that he would be happy to answer any question Council might have about the Civic League from me or other board members that are present. Chairman asked Administrator LeDuc, how much money do we currently give to the Civic League? Mr. Timmerman said no money from the county. Chairman Campbell asked Mr. Timmerman did we give money for insurance or something of that nature. Mr. Timmerman said we have not received, but we used to be a line item until five or six years ago and the line item was decreased annually and then it went to zero. Chairman Campbell asked Mr. Timmerman do they get \$20,000 from the town of Edgefield. Mr. Timmerman responded that is correct. Chairman Campbell asked Mr. Timmerman is it \$20,000 out of the \$72,500 budget. Mr. Timmerman again responded with correct. Chairman Campbell asked Mr. Timmerman where does the other \$52,00 come from that fund your budget. Mr. Timmerman answered we have money coming in the county that generated a service for the county that was \$16,800, \$14,000 from the genealogical society. Mr. Timmerman continued with we are looking for funds to run the Civic League. Mr. Timmerman also added that they host fundraisers and various things to raise funds for the league. Then Mr. Timmerman added that they do accept donations occasionally. Mr. Timmerman added that they had to have some renovations done

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over the last few years like a roof that was done six years ago that cost \$22,000. He continued with if they had to replace the roof right now, they would be in bad shape.

Chairman Campbell asked Council if they have questions for Mr. Timmerman.

Councilman Cooper said he is curious about the visitors form out of town and what percentage of them are considering moving to the area in the last couple of years. Mr. Timmerman responded with explaining the type of visitors they serve who come from different parts of the state and country asking about information concerning Edgefield County.

Councilman Talbert stated to Mr. Timmerman that he appreciates you all for serving Edgefield County. He continued to speak with Mr. Timmerman about the expectation of more people wanting to come in due to Generac opening. Councilman Talbert said he appreciate them coming forward with asking for help. He said once Council go back and meet, we will talk about what we can help you all with.

Councilwoman Ireland asked do they cover the entire county of Edgefield or do Johnston and Trenton have a civic league? Mr. Timmerman responded that they have a chamber and that is the only connection we have with Johnston. He continued that they have the Ridge Heritage organization of which we work with. Councilwoman Ireland asked Mr. Timmerman how many employees do you have? Mr. Timmerman answered with one full time and they pay others to fill in when needed. He continued with other than that, it is mostly volunteers.

Councilman Talbert asked Mr. Timmerman do they have membership. Mr. Timmerman said it is an invited position that we elect 12 board to oversee the care of the building.

Councilwoman Ireland asked Mr. Timmerman is the Town of Edgefield giving you \$20,000? Mr. Timmerman answered that the Town of Edgefield give a little over \$20,000. Councilwoman Ireland asked Mr. Timmerman does the Town of Johnston and Trenton? Councilwoman Ireland asked do you plan to ask them? Mr. Timmerman answered that they have not but it is an idea.

Chairman Campbell asked if any other comments or questions from Council?

Councilman Cooper said he just have a comment. He expressed that for the past three weeks he has had people at his home from out of town and thinks it's a big trend nationwide. I think it is a great investment for the county. Mr. Timmerman commented that Edgefield County is the pulse of the South.

Chairman Campbell asked if there is anyone in the public who would like to speak tonight? Hearing none from the public. Chairman Campbell asked Council is there anything they want to discuss related to the budget?

Councilwoman Ireland asked would it be a big deal to do the \$8.20, which is .10 more for Mr. Dorn's employees? Administrator LeDuc said he asked for \$8.10 and that is what I put in the budget but I do not think it will be a big deal other than the fact that they had a 24% increase in the solid waste fee from Tri-County. Mr. Dorn asked exactly what are you getting from Tri-

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County for your expenses. Administrator LeDuc said the amount of material they have had to send to Three Rivers from Edgefield County has increased. Mr. Dorn said that he spoke with someone today and the number of residences in the county has increased by 35% this year. Administrator LeDuc said it is not a 35% increase in residence. Mr. Dorn asked does Edgefield County get money for recyclables or does it stay with Tri County? Administrator LeDuc asked Council who have attended Tri County meetings? Chairman Campbell answered that Councilman Talbert and I have. Chairman Campbell further explained that Tri County keeps the money to keep the taxes lower. Administrator asked Chairman Campbell why are the costs for garbage so high. Chairman Campbell answered that since COVID hit, people are producing more garbage from renovations, cleaning out where they live, and yard debris.

Chairman Talbert asked when was the last time the Council had a raise? Administrator LeDuc answered that Council last received a raise in 1998 and that was 24 years ago. Councilman Cooper commented that it is worth noting for the public if we were to raise our salary for the first time in 24 years, it would not go into effect until after the next election cycle. Administrator LeDuc clarified to the body that Council cannot give itself a raise according to state law and the raise has to go into effect after the next election.

Administrator LeDuc asked if he could respond to a question asked earlier on salary from the EMA Director. He stated that she asked for a \$5000 increase in the budget and there is a \$4000 increase in the budget for her. Chairman Campbell asked the EMA Director Suzy Spurgeon does this answer her question. Mrs. Spurgeon answered yes. Councilwoman Ireland asked Administrator LeDuc does all the \$4000 go to her? Administrator LeDuc answered yes. Councilwoman Ireland asked how much will the new person receive? Administrator LeDuc answered he do not want to discuss until they have a candidate and how this position would affect their duties.

Councilman Cooper said he would like to thank Administrator LeDuc and his team for all of their hard work.

Councilwoman Kennion said she received an email about the sheriff getting an award. Administrator LeDuc announced that Sheriff Jody Roland was honored with being selected to attend a week-long meeting at the FBI Academy in Quantico.

Adjourn

Motion made by Councilman Cooper. Motion seconded by Councilwoman Kennion. Motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 7:34pm.

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Edgefield County Council



Dean Campbell, Council Chairman

Attest



Aretha Eubanks, Clerk to Council