

EDGEFIELD COUNTY COUNCIL

November 2, 2021

6:00 PM

County Council Chambers

The Edgefield County Council held their regular meeting at 6:00 PM Monday, October 04, 2021. Notice of this meeting was provided to The Edgefield Advertiser and others as requested.

Members present

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

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Others present

Roger LeDuc, Interim County Administrator
Taz Potts, AP /Payroll Clerk, and
others as per list attached

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Cooper called the meeting to order at 6:02 pm and Reverend Aaron Tripp, Pastor of Edgefield First Baptist Church, gave the invocation. The Pledge of Allegiance to the flag was then recited.

Approval of Agenda

A Motion was made by Chairman Cooper to amend the agenda to remove from the Consent Agenda Joel Pressley who has resigned from the Planning Commission. Motion was seconded by Councilman Campbell. All in favor. Motion passes unanimously.

A Motion was made by Councilwoman Ireland to approve the agenda as amended. Motion was seconded by Councilwoman Kennion. All in favor. Motion passes unanimously.

Approval of Minutes

None

Guest Speaker

Sam Crouch- Edgefield County Transportation

Mr. Crouch said Edgefield County Transportation is set up by state law and appointed by the legislative delegation. Their funds come from a portion of the state gas tax, which comes back to the county. Mr. Crouch said they are obligated to spend a third of what they get on state roads. Mr. Crouch said they are not actually a function of county government but they work hand and hand with the county and the staff, which is county employees. Mr. Crouch said three years ago there was big rain storm in Edgefield County that damaged some roads. Mr. Crouch said Edgefield County Transportation had 3.25 million dollars in savings and this is what fixed these roads. Mr. Crouch said this has slowed the work down on the county roads. He said the arrangement with county is that the county provides the road crew and the equipment to work on the dirt roads. He said Edgefield County Transportation provides the material for the work. Mr. Crouch said that Edgefield County Transportation cannot help the county with the loss revenue from the road maintenance fee that the county will stop collecting starting January 01, 2021. Mr. Crouch asked

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council to make sure they can keep their half of the funding for the agreement with Edgefield County Transportation.

Comments from the Public

Agenda Items other than Public Hearing Matters

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- Persons speaking are a part of the official minutes

Charles Reel

Mr. Reel said he has submitted budget request for the past six years requesting raises for his staff and year after year the request have been removed from the final budget. Mr. Reel said he requested a \$1,000 raise this past budget year, which is 6% for each of his employees but again he was denied and was told the county did not have the funds. Mr. Reel said three months ago council approved a measure to conduct a wage and salary study. Mr. Reel pointed out that the Association of Counties had already done a study and there was no need for Edgefield County to waste money to do another study. Mr. Reel said consistency is crucial and if the council compares one departments salaries to Aiken County and compare all other departments with smaller counties, the council is not being consistent. Mr. Reel asked council to give all departments a raise, not just certain departments.

Rhonda Nowicki

Ms. Nowicki said all county employees need to get paid appropriately and the county is way behind on the pay scale. Ms. Nowicki said citizens are concerned about redistricting. Ms. Nowicki asked council how they are going to have redistricting done and third reading on it by January, if they do not have any maps drawn yet. Ms. Nowicki said this needs to be done so citizens will know who they are voting for. Ms. Nowicki was advised that the council is working on it. Interim Administrator LeDuc advised Ms. Nowicki that the maps will be done by March and the lines will change so some people's districts will change. Interim Administrator LeDuc assured Ms. Nowicki that they would have the maps before council filing.

Gloria Bynum & Lorenzo Williams

Ms. Bynum asked council for support to enhance the Edgefield County Government Building before the Covid-19 started. Ms. Bynum asked council to purchase materials to paint a mural on the building. Ms. Bynum said she thinks a mural would really enhance the Edgefield County Government Building. Ms. Bynum asked council to discuss and let her know of any suggestions they may have. Interim Administrator LeDuc advised Ms. Bynum to get a quote for the mural and materials then council could make a decision. Mr. Williams said there are many fine art students in Edgefield County and this would give them an opportunity to put their skills to work.

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Reports

Monthly reports for August 2021
(SEE DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS)
Agenda/Minutes of the following meetings:
Edgefield County Transportation.....June 3, 2021

CONSENT AGENDA

Remove Joel Pressley who has resigned from the Planning Commission Board.

Motioned by Vice-Chairman Talbert to approve the consent agenda as amended. The motion was seconded by Chairman Cooper. All in favor. Motion passes unanimously.

Consent Agenda Ends Here

PUBLIC HEARING

None

Chairman Cooper closed the Public Hearing at 6:30pm.

OLD BUSINESS

**1. Consideration of Approval of Third Reading of Ordinance Number 20-21-794
“AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE DEVELOPMENT OF A JOINTLY OWNED AND OPERATED INDUSTRIAL/BUSINESS PARK IN CONJUNCTION WITH AIKEN COUNTY CALLED PROJECT RHINESTONE, SUCH INDUSTRIAL/BUSINESS PARK TO BE GEOGRAPHICALLY LOCATED IN AIKEN COUNTY AND ESTABLISHED PURSUANT TO SECTION 4-1-170 OF THE CODE OF LAWS OF SOUTH CAROLINA, 1976, AS AMENDED; TO PROVIDE FOR A WRITTEN AGREEMENT WITH AIKEN COUNTY TO PROVIDE FOR THE EXPENSES OF THE PARK, THE PERCENTAGE OF REVENUE APPLICATION, AND THE DISTRIBUTION OF FEES IN LIEU OF AD VALOREM TAXATAION; AND OTHER MATTERS RELATED THERETO”. This ordinance is to establish a multi-county industrial park (MCIP) with Aiken County.**

The park will be located in Aiken County. The agreement to create a multi-county park will allow for the industry in the park to receive certain incentives from the state and county. Edgefield County will receive 1% of the Fee in Lieu of Taxes This is a just a procedural function; it will not involve Edgefield County creating a new industrial park requiring investment on the part of Edgefield County. **(Exhibit I)**

Interim Administrator LeDuc said Project Rhinestone is Shaw Industries. They are located between I-20 and Highway # 1 in Aiken and they make carpet. Interim Administrator LeDuc said the expansion will be take place at their current location. Motioned by Vice-Chairman Talbert. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Ireland. All in favor. Motion passes unanimously.

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2. REDISTRICTING PLAN FOR EDGEFILED COUNTY

Every ten years the county needs to review and revise their current district lines and adjust them to conform to the new census population data. This means that some of the districts will geographically become larger and others smaller. Over the next several months the State will assist the county with establishing these new boundaries prior to the 2022 elections. A representative from the State Revenue and Fiscal Affairs Office will guide us through the process tonight, receive your comments, and provide answers to your questions. This is the beginning of the process and they will return with new mapping and information for council over the next several months.

Interim Administrator LeDuc said redistricting will take some time but it will also have to be done quickly. He invited individuals from the State to discuss with council the redistricting plan.

Mr. Frank Rainwater - Executive director of the Revenue and Physical Affairs Office.

Mr. Victor Frantroff – Assistant Political Cartographer -Map Drawer

Mr. Adam Demors – GIS Managers

Mr. Rainwater said the redistricting process has changed over the past decade due to court decisions. Mr. Rainwater said it puts county councils more in charge and responsible for redistricting. Mr. Rainwater said 10 years ago there was something called preclearance, which means once county council has adopted its plan, they had to submit it the Department of Justice for preclearance to make sure it met certain criteria. Then the Department of Justice would have to approve it before it went into effect. Mr. Rainwater said now the councils does not have to go through the Department of Justice to approve the redistricting. Mr. Rainwater said the county will have to have the redistricting done before the filing of candidates for county council, which will be in march. Mr. Rainwater said counties are delayed because the census data was not released until the first of October and normally it is released in April. Mr. Rainwater said Edgefield County has a declining population and it has around 4,700 people in each district.

Highlights

1. one person, one vote, the purpose of this is to equalize things under the fourteenth amendment. Mr. Rainwater said you have to make each district equal.
2. Voting Rights Acts – Retro aggression had to look at minority districts, Mr. Rainwater said you have to look at the density of the population and their voting habits. Mr. Rainwater said you have to look at the range of the population. Mr. Rainwater said district 5 is over populated by 766 people and will have to spread those people to the other four districts. District 5 is over by 16% and district 1 has the lowest number of population in it, they are under by 7%. When you look at these two numbers it is a deviation of 24% and the courts say you have to be below 10%.
Mr. Rainwater said they need feedback from council and the community to draw the numbers on the maps. Mr. Rainwater asked council, what is most important to them in their areas.
3. Mr. Rainwater said they looked at the voting age population and said the courts has defined the opportunity for minorities to have an opportunity to elect. He said they have also taken the prisons out, so the people in the prisons are not counted.

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Councilman Campbell asked if Mr. Rainwater's staff would be able to handle the work load for Edgefield County. Mr. Rainwater advised yes; his office would be able to handle it. Mr. Rainwater said he feels very comfortable that his staff will have a plan for the county in the next three weeks. Councilman Campbell asked Mr. Rainwater to break down the numbers on the census. Mr. Rainwater said once the prison is taken out there are 23,557 people, 60%, White, 31% Black, less than 5% Hispanic. Chairman Cooper said he would like to be more centrally located with his district. Interim Administrator LeDuc asked Mr. Rainwater if he could send the county a sample resolution for variance in populations. Mr. Rainwater advised that he would send a copy. Interim Administrator LeDuc asked Mr. Rainwater how he would like the county to provide the information to his office. Mr. Rainwater advised for the council to work through some of the areas that need to be moved and provide it to his office. Chairman Cooper asked what percent did district 2 need to change to. He advised that it is only 1% under. Chairman Cooper said the majority of the shifts has to go to district 1 and district 4. Councilman Campbell requests that anything the Administrator sends to Mr. Rainwater, that it be put on the county website or some other public forum so, everyone sees what has been done.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Approval of new starting salaries for Paramedics.

Over the past few months, the starting salaries for those serving as Paramedics has increased dramatically for all surrounding Counties. These percentage increase ranges from the upper teens to the mid-twenties. Additionally, Generac's starting pay is higher than what we currently pay new paramedics. They do a great job for the County and are a critical service for all of our residents. For the last seven years we utilized three full time crews. Each crew consists of a paramedic and EMT. The paramedic is the critical crew member due to their licensed ability to incubate a patient, administer medicine by pills and shot plus provide other critical procedures. They are like a Physician Assistant or Nurse Practitioner but in the field doing triage. A couple of years ago Aiken County was highly criticized when they were not able to have a paramedic on each of their crews. We **never** want to be in that situation and therefore we need to keep our paramedics at full staff. A comparison of the four surrounding counties is as follows:

Edgefield and Saluda County employees work 24 hours on duty and 72 hours off duty which equates to 2080 regular hours and 208 overtime hours.

Aiken, Greenwood and McCormick County work 24 hours on duty and 48 hours of duty which equates to 2080 regular hours and 800 overtime hours.

Edgefield/Saluda 208 hours of overtime or $1.5 \times 208 = 312$ hours + 2080 hours = 2,392 equivalent hours.

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Aiken/Greenwood/McCormick 800 hours of overtime or 1.5 x 800 = 1,200 hours + 2080 = 3,280 equivalent hours.

<u>County</u>	<u>Hours</u>	<u>Hourly</u>	<u>Salary</u>	<u>20% Increase</u>
Edgefield	2,288	\$13.61	\$32,535	\$39,042/\$16.32/hour
Saluda	2,288	\$20.56	\$49,192	
Aiken	2,880	\$17.01	\$56,000	
Greenwood	2,880	\$13.67	\$45,000	
McCormick	2,880	\$10.66	\$35,107	

Currently we have three EMT's making more than a beginning paramedic, therefore there is no incentive to become a Paramedic. A 20% increase equates to \$87,000 in new funding. The EMS fund balance on June 30, 2020 was \$161,049 versus \$243,884 on June 30, 2021 which is an increase of \$82,835. We recommend increasing the beginning salary for paramedics by 20%, This will still be below Saluda County's starting salary; however, our current revenue stream will not allow us to increase it higher. We can review this again in the next budget cycle to determine what if any further flexibility we may have to increase these salaries.

Interim Administrator LeDuc said the county has started the classification process with Archer and should have the information back sometime early next year. Interim Administrator LeDuc said when they went ahead and raised the salaries for the Sheriff's Department it was because they were losing positions to other areas and they compared it with four to five different agencies. Interim Administrator LeDuc said all the other county salaries are going to be looked at. Interim Administrator LeDuc said Paramedics are very critical to everyday operations. He said EMS is in a separate fund and the pay increases will not be coming from the general fund. Interim LeDuc said there is enough funding to raise salaries for EMS and proposes raising the starting salaries by 20%. Interim Administrator LeDuc said the county has the funds within the budget. Motioned by Councilman Campbell to rise EMS starting salary 20%. Vice-Chairman Talbert seconded the motion. All in Favor. Motion passes unanimously.

2. **Approval to extend the Interim Administrator's Employment Agreement.** The Employment Agreement for the Interim Administrator ended on October 5, 2021. If council desires to extend his contract until March 31, 2022, he is willing to continue employment with the County as per the revised agreement. **(Exhibit II)** Motioned by Councilwoman Ireland. Chairman Cooper seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion passes unanimously.

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COMMENTS FROM PUBLIC

All additional comments

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Nathan York

Mr. York said he stands for the constitution of the Unites States of America and presented a resolution for Edgefield County Council to consider passing. Please see council meeting for November 02, 2021 on you tube to hear the resolution being read by Mr. York.

Lisa Whitaker

Ms. Whitaker said as a paramedic, she can't tell people what this job does for a community and the people it helps. Ms. Whitaker said this is the type of job that affects your mind, body, spirit, and soul. Ms. Whitaker said paramedics do a job that many people will not do and they see the worse things and have to tell people the worse things. Ms. Whitaker said paramedics are an honorable group, they do wonderful work and they are the most forgotten of the emergency system.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

None

ADDITIONAL ITEMS TO REPORT BY THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

1. LeDuc said the county is always concerned with construction and permitting. He said the county is permitting about 6.1 million dollars over last year and about 18.4 million over two years ago or 33% over the permitting two years ago. LeDuc said the county is doing well and the economy is fully back.
2. LeDuc said the State Legislators put aside some funds called the State Stabilization funds, this gave the county some funds they were not expecting. LeDuc said the check came in last week for \$322,000. LeDuc said this is one time only money.
3. LeDuc said Thursday night is the last major Planning Commission meeting and they will be discussing solar panels and district 5 zoning. He said next Tuesday at 6:00pm there will be a work session with the planning commission and county council, to walk council through all the changes and regulations from chapter 8 and 24.
4. LeDuc said on Thursday November 18, 2021 at 6:00 p.m. there will be a public meeting to discuss zoning at one of the public schools.

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5. LeDuc is proposing giving 10% pay increase to Doc Hart and Taz Potts as long as they are filling dual roles. Doc Hart is doing his job plus the county planners job. Taz Potts is the Finance Director and the Clerk to Council. LeDuc said once the county hires a County Planner and Clerk to Council, Mr. Hart's and Ms. Potts salaries will go back to their normal salaries. LeDuc said the county has done this before with other individuals.
6. LeDuc said the county needs to have a non-profit board for the new law enforcement center, so the county can receive funding to get started. LeDuc said the non-profit will be a 501 (c) 3. LeDuc said the non-profit will borrow the money for the new law enforcement center and the county will pay back the loan. LeDuc said this will allow the county to not over exceed its 8% bonding limit.
7. LeDuc said they completed phase I of the environmental study on the land where the county is wanting to build the new law enforcement center. He said there are some concerns of potential contamination. LeDuc said he signed an agreement to start phase II of the report which consists of ten soil borings up to 50ft, and sampling the groundwater to see if there is any contamination before the county buys the property.

COMMENTS BY THE COUNTY COUNCIL CHAIR

Chairman Cooper said Edgefield County was on the Front Page of the Aiken Standard with the investment of Shaw and Generac. Chairman Cooper said this is the second time in three weeks that Edgefield County has been on the front page of the Aiken Standard. Chairman Cooper said the county will continue to experience growing pains. He said council wants to get all employees compensated as close to their competition as they can. Chairman Cooper encourages citizens that are still looking at the zoning categories, to look at the use tables. Look at the use tables and ask is there something that should be allowed that is not in the tables or is there something in the tables that should not be allowed that is in the tables and give your feed back to Doc Hart.

Councilwoman Kennion said today is National Statewide Trash Pickup Day. Councilwoman Kennion said that Secretary Hall from Columbia, SC recommends this be done at least twice a year, early fall and early spring. Councilwoman Kennion said early spring, can be sometime in March. Councilwoman Kennion said she spoke with Bobby Easler today, with SCDOT, and said they picked up over 255 bags of trash today. Councilwoman Kennion encourages every citizen to adopt a highway and keep Edgefield County a beautiful county to live in.

ADJOURN

Motioned by Councilwoman Ireland. Second by Vice-Chairman Talbert.

Meeting adjourned at 7:40 pm

To watch the County Council Meeting live via YouTube: Subscribe to our YouTube Page – Edgefield County Government. You'll be able to see upcoming meetings and can be notified when we go live.

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H. Scott Cooper, Chair

ATTEST



Roger LeDuc, County Administrator