

EDGEFIELD COUNTY COUNCIL
October 11, 2022
6:00 PM
County Council Chambers

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The Edgefield County Council held its regular meeting at 6:00 P.M. Tuesday, October 11, 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
Dr. Jackie Kennion, Councilwoman

Others Present

Roger LeDuc, Interim Administrator
David Caddell, Administrator
Taz Potts, County Finance Director
Aretha Eubanks, Clerk to Council
Hart "Doc" Clark, Building and Planning

Chairman Campbell called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM. The invocation was given by Chairman Campbell.

Chairman Campbell acknowledged the new Edgefield County Administrator David Caddell who will begin employment on Thursday, October 13, 2022.

Approval of Agenda

Chairman Campbell asked Council if there are changes to the agenda. Hearing none, Councilman Talbert made the motion and Councilwoman Kennion seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Approval of the Minutes

Chairman Campbell asked for approval of September 12, 2022, regular meeting minutes. Councilwoman Ireland made the motion and Councilwoman Kennion seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Chairman Campbell asked for approval of September 13, 2022 called meeting minutes. Councilwoman Kennion made the motion and Councilwoman Ireland seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Chairman Campbell asked for approval of September 21, 2022 called meeting. Councilman Talbert made the motion and Councilwoman Ireland seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Comments from the Public

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There being no comments from the public during this comment period, Chairman Campbell closed this public comment period.

Reports

Chairman Campbell asked Council if they have any questions or comments on the reports. There were none.

Consent Agenda

Chairman Campbell asked is there an item we need to remove tonight on the consent agenda.

Councilman Cooper: If you look at the consent agenda it is mostly the Planning Commission. Due to old business item number two, I did not put in my Planning Commission reappointment tonight so my replacement could appoint who he chooses.

Chairman Campbell asked is there a motion to approve the Consent Agenda as presented reappointing Lisa Whitaker, Karlene Butler, James F. Burt, and Rhonda Norwicki to the Planning Commission and to appoint Joyce Oliver to the Hospital Board of Trustees. Councilman Cooper made the motion and Councilman Talbert seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Public Hearing

Chairman Campbell opened the Public Hearing on ordinance 21-22-789, an ordinance to amend the development plan for planned development known as Heritage Place Subdivision. No one spoke during the public hearing. Chairman Campbell closed the public hearing.

Old Business

1. Consideration of approval of third reading of ordinance 21-22-787 to establish a Road User Fee of \$30 per vehicle starting January 1, 2023.

Chairman Campbell: We have been talking about this for several months now, but I will ask Administrator LeDuc if there is anything new or different that we need to know.

Administrator LeDuc: There are no changes.

Chairman Campbell asked Council if they had any other questions or comments. Hearing none, Councilwoman Ireland made the motion and Councilwoman Kennion seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

2. Consideration of approval of third reading of ordinance 21-22-788 to set new dates for the appointment of Boards and Commissioners.

Chairman Campbell: We have talked about this item for several months. This ordinance will set new term dates from March following an election. I will ask the Administrator LeDuc if there is anything new or different that we need to know.

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Administrator LeDuc: Just so Council knows as Councilman Cooper stated we are extending all of the appointments that would have occurred in October through December to March 2023. The first group that we are moving is the Planning Commission.

Chairman Campbell asked Council if they had any other questions or comments. Hearing none, Councilman Talbert made the motion and Councilwoman Ireland seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

3. Consideration of approval of third reading of ordinance 21-22-789, to revise the PD Master Plan for Heritage Place.

Chairman Campbell: Council, the last time we gave this item second reading, there were no changes. I will ask Administrator LeDuc if there is anything new or different that we need to know about this planned development.

Administrator LeDuc: There is nothing new or different, but to emphasize that at the meeting in August, you asked them to make some changes. They met the changes and that is now showing on the plans they presented to our Planning Commission.

Chairman Campbell asked Council if they had any other questions or comments. Hearing none, Councilwoman Kennion made the motion and Councilwoman Ireland seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

New Business

1. Consideration of approval of Radio communications System from Motorola Communications of Augusta.

Chairman Campbell: I will ask Administrator LeDuc to walk us through this item.

Administrator LeDuc: This is an item we have been discussing for an extended amount of time. This is a very critical item for the County citizens who are affected by our emergency services daily. There are areas within the County where it is difficult, if not impossible, to receive a signal for communication during an emergency situation. Literally this is a disaster waiting to happen when those kinds of emergency calls occur. Last spring, I asked Council's permission to go ahead and update our communication system. In order for us to complete this task, we will need to replace the radios, add the necessary communication towers, and replace the equipment on the two existing towers. That would allow us additional coverage in areas where we are experiencing problems. Another part of this updated system will be new mobile radios for vehicles and portable radios for their belts that will allow them to have a talk around on a different channel without interference from dispatch or another department. After speaking with officials from the tri-county area including fire chiefs, mayors, sheriffs, and EMS, it was decided that the best system is Motorola. At the last meeting, you had represented here all the towns and fire departments of which they unanimously showed support for this system. The price that has been given to you at \$2,116,384.20 is assuming the worst-case scenario. We do not believe we are going to spend nearly that amount of money, but we wanted to be prepared in case of the "what ifs." Before you tonight is the bid that we have under state contract. We did get a couple of other bids from companies who were out of town and higher in pricing. Augusta Communication was

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priced lower than the state authorized pricing for radio communication equipment. The pricing under the state contract is for radios and not towers. We are giving this to you as one unit so that we will have one company that can work on everything that is needed to fulfill what we need. This will ensure that when we have a problem, we only have one person to point the finger at to get it fixed. We are happy to bring this before you to request approval of the new radio communications system for Edgefield County and all of the emergency operations that use it on a daily basis.

Chairman Campbell: This motion will include everything except for what bucket of money we'll use to pay for it eventually, right?

Administrator LeDuc: That is correct.

Chairman Campbell: So, at some point next year probably, I am going to assume that the Administrator will bring us back a recommendation on the best way to pay for it and that will be the last vote on it because the vote tonight will put everything into motion and then we pay for it when the bill comes due.

Administrator LeDuc: We will put a percentage down to secure the equipment. But, until the equipment for the radios and antennas arrives, which we believe will be late winter or early spring of 2023, the majority of the money will not have to be requisitioned to Augusta Communication. This will give us an opportunity to see where funding is at concerning the American Rescue Funds that we have. To date, we have over \$3,000,000 that we have not allocated for anything. We have talked about stormwater, broadband, radio communication and the animal shelter for possible allocation of funds, but we have not allocated those funds to anything. By that time, we should have a much better idea on the grants that are being made available for broadband from the state and for stormwater through the infrastructure bill. Our hope is that the grants that we submit will be approved and we will not need to use that money. That is why we are holding off on stating exactly where the money would come from at this point in time. You are obligating yourself to pay that. It's just a case of how we want to pay for it. We will bring a definite response to this around the time that the budget will be presented to Council.

Chairman Campbell: Council do you have any questions or comments?

Councilwoman Ireland: I have a couple of questions for clarification and transparency purposes regarding the radios. I think people are used to seeing us bid those things out. We didn't bid them out like we normally do because it's under a state contract and we weren't required to because the state already did the bidding for us. That is correct?

Administrator LeDuc: That is correct. The State went ahead and got a price. This is done for a lot of equipment, machinery and products.

Councilwoman Ireland: I just wanted to share with my fellow Council, audience and viewers that our nearest county that uses this system is McCormick County. I did call Sheriff Stearns in McCormick County to ask him what he thought about the system and to get his opinion on it because they are a lot like Edgefield in our topography. We will share some of the same issues

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that probably have arisen from the communications problems. Sheriff Stearns said at first there were some bumps, but Augusta Communications addressed them immediately and worked out the kinks. It did mostly have to do with topography as well. Sheriff Stearns said he could not be happier with this system and gave them two thumbs up for approval. He said if we were looking at going with them, that we would be well pleased and he recommended them. I just wanted to share that.

Councilman Talbert: I would like to piggy back off of what Councilwoman Ireland just said. I also spoke with the Sheriff of McCormick County and they do recommend this system. We have been in need of a new updated system for a while in Edgefield County. I think this system will be a great asset for the citizens of Edgefield County. We know that Edgefield County citizens want to see their tax money spent wisely and this will be one project that would benefit them all throughout the County. I think this will correct the problem in areas that have low to no signal for emergency response.

Administrator LeDuc: I would like to recognize Hart Clark for all the hard work he has put into this project. He has worked very closely with Sheriff Rowland on the needs and concerns that he had related to this project. Mr. Hart did the lion's share of getting all of this together and I want to thank him for his time and effort.

Councilman Talbert: We thank you all for your time and service.

Chairman Campbell: Do we have any further questions or comments from Council? Hearing none, Councilman Cooper made the motion and Councilwoman Kennion seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

2. Consideration of approval of H.G. Reynolds bid of \$38,318,200 to construct the Law Enforcement Center (LEC).

Chairman Campbell: I will ask Administrator LeDuc to discuss this with us.

Administrator LeDuc: We have represented tonight the owner of H.G. Reynolds and our lead architect from Moseley Architects to answer any questions Council may have concerning the construction of this project. For the past decade plus, we have been in need of a major renovation or erection of a new Law Enforcement Center including the Magistrate's Office. During that time, we looked at several ways to fund this project and we finally settled on looking at a Capital Project Sales Tax which was approved in 2020. This gave us the ability to move forward on this project. Moseley Architects completed a needs study to determine what type and size of facility we would need. This study was presented to Council in 2020. At that time, County Council was dealing with COVID and without face-to-face meetings, this item sat idle for a year. In April 2021, discussions started again about this project. We came to Council in August of that same year asking for permission to select an architect, to acquire the remaining funds needed through a non-profit board, and to purchase land approved of by the Council. The property was purchased at the corner of Rabbit Trail and Star Road. Moseley Architects was hired to design this facility containing all three elements. We have had numerous meetings with Moseley Architects and H.G. Reynolds discussing the essential necessities for this detention facility that will house inmates, provide work space, and courtrooms. They are both experienced with the design and

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construction of detention centers. We were pleased to have a bid opening two weeks ago. Originally, we were going to have four bidders but one dropped out. The low bidder with the alternates was H.G. Reynolds out of Aiken. They are 15 minutes from the base of operations for this project. We are asking Council to approve the architectural agreement between the County and H.G. Reynolds at a cost of \$38,318,200. The cost was about nine percent under the estimate of what we originally thought. We will still be able to provide all the alternatives to this facility. We are excited to move forward and see the ground breaking later this year. It will take about a year and a half approximately to construction completion.

Chairman Campbell: Do we have any questions or comments from Council?

Councilman Cooper: This is just clarification for the public. When we originally began this process, we were going to fund it through the Capital Project Sales Tax thinking it was going to take three or potentially four cycles and then we got some help from the State. For public clarification, would you explain what happened.

Administrator LeDuc: We got into a situation about a year ago wondering if we can even afford to build this as prices were going up. We worked with our Legislation Delegation of which we would like to thank Bill Hixon, Bill Clyburn, and Shane Massey for their support by providing \$18,000,000 towards the project through the Savannah River Plutonium Settlement Funds. With this additional funding from the State added to the \$10,200,000 from the original referendum. The next sales tax will more than pay for this facility. We will have all the money in hand by the year 2030 to pay for this facility.

Councilwoman Ireland: I would like to just remind people that this has been going on for a very long time. When I first remember seeing the specs, I was sitting down there in the past as a reporter. This facility outlived its usefulness 20 years ago. This current facility does not allow room for growth or expansion. What we are moving to will allow us not only to house what we need now, but also allow for future growth and expansion. This is not something we wanted to do but a move we had to do. This need has been long in coming. I just wanted to remind our citizens that this is not something we just decided to do. Unfortunately, it is happening when the economy is not so favorable to our pocketbooks. But I am appreciative of the \$18,000,000 that we are receiving from the State to put towards this facility. I thank our Legislation Delegation for all they have done to help towards this project. I would like to thank everyone who have participated in making this an affordable endeavor for the county.

Chairman Campbell: Do we have any further comments or questions from Council? Hearing none, Councilman Cooper made the motion and Councilman Talbert seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

3. Consideration of approval of the first reading of ordinance 21-22-790, to modify section 24-79 Recreation Vehicle Parks and 24-91 Campgrounds of the Code of Ordinance.

Chairman Campbell: I will ask Administrator LeDuc and Hart Clark of Building and Planning if they would discuss this with us.

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Administrator LeDuc: When Council approved the planning documents last year, we know there was going to be some modifications and changes. We have asked the Planning Commission to look at a number of different things. One of them was on campgrounds and RV parks. In its current form, they are together and there were a number of changes that we wanted to make for someone who might want to build a new campground or new RV park. To avoid any confusion, we are now separating them. We will have one for campground and one for RV parks. What you will see is a number of changes that are in the current ordinance. But it is more detailed to fit the needs of each one individually. This was unanimously recommended by the Planning Commission and we are asking for your approval of first reading tonight.

Chairman Campbell: For clarification purposes, while it is one ordinance, it is divided into several sections? Is that how you wanted it?

Administrator LeDuc: There are two sections instead of one section.

Chairman Campbell: But we have exhibit A, B and C.

Administrator LeDuc: I believe exhibit A & B are the same thing. I will ask our attorney who is not present here tonight why he have them in two sections. There should be one section for A and B should be together.

Councilwoman Ireland: If you look at number two, Planning Commission changed aesthetically and does not leave it subjective. That is the only real change.

Hart Clark: I changed the wording upon recommendation pertaining to aesthetically. Since Planning Commission recommended the changes, that change has to be made by Council in the first reading. So, you are taking the recommendation from the Planning Commission and making that change at the same time as you are making the other changes.

Chairman Campbell: Do we have any questions or comments from Council on this ordinance?

Councilman Cooper: On the recreation vehicle parks, is there a time limit that someone can go to an RV park?

Hart Clark: No recommendation on time limits due on RV parks. The biggest thing between the two is the RV park design standards and campgrounds design should not be the same. The main purpose of the changes is to take the campground out and make the acreage requirements larger and separate.

Chairman Campbell: Does Council have any further questions or comments? Hearing none, Councilwoman Ireland made the motion and Chairman Campbell seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

4. Consideration of approval of the first reading of ordinance 21-22-791 to rezone parcel number 145-09-00-044-000 from General Residential (GR) to General Commercial (GC).

Chairman Campbell: I will ask Administrator LeDuc if there is anything we need to know specifically about this ordinance.

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Hart Clark: This property is located behind a general commercial property located on highway 25. The Planning Commission reviewed it and is recommending that we change this property from General Residential to General Commercial to allow for development of a mechanic shop. The development itself is not being approved here. That will still have to go to the Planning Commission.

Chairman Campbell: Council do you have any questions or comments? Hearing none, Councilwoman Kennion made the motion and Councilwoman Ireland seconded the motion. Motion passed 4 to 1, Councilman Talbert opposed.

Comments from the Public

There being no comments from the public during this comment period, Chairman Campbell closed this public comment period.

County Administrator's Report

1. Fire Department - The fire departments in the past have had a couple of needs including getting new help and having the firefighters become trained. Our Emergency Management manager has been working with the State on the training issue. The State will be attending the next Fire Board meeting which has representative from all of the fire departments to talk about recruiting, certifications and how we can help assist them in the future. This is something that I believe that in the future, County Council, although not over the fire departments directly, will be faced with how the citizens are protected through the fire departments. We want to make sure they are trained properly, staffed appropriately, and make sure that the ordinance created 15 to 20 years ago meets all the needs of the citizens of Edgefield County. We may need to make some changes to that ordinance. Our EMA Manager, Foster Crowder is going to continue to work at assisting the fire departments. We will bring back further information in six months. The next Fire Board meeting is October 27, 2022 of which we will be in attendance.

2. Sweetwater Community Center – You graciously allowed us to go ahead and allow multiple rentals per week at the Sweetwater Community Center. Aretha Eubanks took this task on and has been running with it. She has brought it to the digital age where forms are going to be online where renters could reserve and pay. They will be given a digital code for entry into the building instead of taking the time to come to the office during business hours multiple times to fill out paperwork and pick up the key. They will be able to do this all online. This is due to what Aretha has taken on as a task. Joe Simpson is working with her to install the locks so we don't have to use a locksmith. Hart Clark has been working with contractors to get the facility in greater shape because we were having some foundation settlement. It is a great asset to the community and I wish we had more of them. Maybe that is something we could look at in the future. I thank Aretha for all the work she has done with the center and helping the citizens out with it.

3. Animal Shelter – We did receive bids on the animal shelter but did not put it on the agenda due to the fullness of the agenda. We received a low price of \$554,000 from a local contractor. We will be recommending that to Council at the next meeting. We will be making a recommendation as to how to pay for it. That will be out of the American Rescue Plan Funds. The Animal Shelter will be located next to the new Law Enforcement Center. We are now taking

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a look at the ordinance to make sure that the needs of the Sheriff who will oversee the animal shelter and magistrate's arrangement as far as empowerments, fines and registration are met. We looked at the ordinances that are in Aiken County and made a lot of modifications to make it simpler and easier. We did not know who to present the ordinance to for corrections. Hart Clark came up with a brilliant idea to present it to the Planning Commission for review at the next meeting. A couple of Council members are expected to be in attendance to see what changes need to be made. We are at the very preliminary stages of this project, but we need to get the proper ordinances in place before next summer when the facility is expected to open. This will help us to properly arrange staff for the facility and advertise for pet adoptions. There are a number of things that need to be done before it is opened and we have people who are ready to help.

4. Lastly, I would like to thank you all for allowing me to be here. It's been great!

Chairman Campbell: Council do we have any questions or comments for the Administrator?

Councilman Cooper: You will be here next month?

Administrator LeDuc: Maybe.

Councilman Talbert: I would like to say we truly thank you for the way you gave of yourself with helping us out when we needed someone. Your unselfishness saved us a lot. For that we thank you and we truly appreciate it.

Councilwoman Ireland: This is not goodbye because you are still committed to us for some time. But I do want to let you know how much we appreciate you.

Chairman Campbell: Administrator LeDuc's contract does not run out until the end of December. This is not a goodbye, just a switch of seats for now.

Comments by County Council Chairman

I appreciate everyone coming out to this meeting, which is a week later than normal. We didn't meet on our usual night last week because of the portrait unveiling for Judge Billy Keesley. All of Council attended this historic occasion, and it was an honor for us all. If you're lucky, it's once in a generation that you have a sitting judge's portrait ceremony you can attend. We are proud of Judge Keesley and his body of work.

As you heard earlier, in two days, our new Administrator David Caddell officially takes over. Mr. LeDuc will continue through the rest of this year to help our new Administrator get up to speed. We'll discuss a consulting contract with Mr. LeDuc that might be needed for next year, particularly around budget prep time.

We will be having a drop-in for the new Administrator on Friday, October 14 from 3-5 p.m. right here in Council Chambers. It's open to employees and the general public. It is being advertised on our website and a notice of the drop-in was sent to area media outlets to help us get the word out. I encourage all who would like to shake his hand and say hello to come out. He's a great guy and he's going to do very well as the new Edgefield County Administrator.

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That's all I have. There being no other business, I'd entertain a motion to adjourn.

Adjourn

Chairman Campbell: There being no other business, I'd entertain a motion to adjourn.
Councilwoman Ireland made the motion and Councilman Talbert seconded. Motion passed
unanimously. County Council meeting adjourned at 6:47 P.M.

Edgefield County Council



Dean Campbell, Council Chairman

ATTEST



Aretha Eubanks, Clerk to Council

Aretha Eubanks, Clerk to Council