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EDGEFIELD COUNTY COUNCIL

January 3, 2023

6:00 PM

County Council Chambers

The Edgefield County Council held its regular meeting at 6:00 P.M. Tuesday, January 3, 2023, 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

Tiffani Ireland, Councilwoman

Dr. Jackie Kennion, Councilwoman

Jerry Moody, Councilman

Instrument Book Volume Page
2023-813 OR 2031 15

2023-813

Filed for Record in
Edgefield County, SC
Charles L. Reel, Clerk of Court
03/10/2023 10:24:39 AM
CTY MISCELL \$ 0.00
Bk OR Vol 2031 Page 15 - 31

Others Present

David Caddell, Administrator

Aretha Eubanks, Clerk to Council

Hart "Doc" Clark, Building and Planning

Andrew Marine, County Attorney

Chairman Campbell called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

Chairman Campbell introduced County Council's new member Jerry Moody. The invocation was given by Aretha Eubanks, Clerk to Council.

Chairman Campbell asked Hart Clark to introduce Edgefield County's new IT Director, Peter Detmers to the County Council. He did.

Chairman Campbell and County Council welcomed Peter Detmers as the new IT Director for Edgefield County.

Approval of Agenda

Chairman Campbell pointed out that there will be an Executive Session at the end of the meeting, and item 13 on the agenda is a new item we are adding called Report from County Council Members. This item is where County Council members will have the opportunity to discuss items.

Chairman Campbell asked for approval of the agenda as presented. Councilman Talbert made the motion and Councilwoman Kennion seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Swearing In All County Council Members

Attorney Marine informed Council that it is his duty to swear them in for a two-year term on County Council. Attorney Marine gave County Council instructions and proceeded in reading of the Oath as Council repeated after him with their right hand raised in agreement of their swearing-in.

Election of Chair and Vice-Chair

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Attorney Marine came before Council with ballots for the Chairman position. After verification of the count, Attorney Marine announced that Councilman Dean Campbell was voted in again as Chairman. Attorney Marine repeated the process for the vice chairman position. After verification of the count, Councilman Albert Talbert was voted in again as Vice Chairman.

Special Recognition

Chairman Campbell thanked everyone for their attendance tonight. He explained that we are recognizing our youth 11- and 12-year-old football championship winners with a ring ceremony. Recreation Director Nick Wates began the ceremony.

Nick Wates: I would like to recognize our Edgefield County Youth 11 – 12-year old’s Football League team. They finished the year 12-0. They went to the playoffs and won the championship. We are here to present them with a championship ring for their accomplishment. Championship rings were given to each member of the football team that was present.

Councilwoman Kennion: On behalf of the Recreation Board, we would like to say congratulations. Would all the coaches please stand?

“I would like to say thank you for counseling and guiding our children with love and support. You gave them advice when they felt like giving up or when they just wanted to vent about school, homework, or another player. But you still provide leadership and teamwork. You taught, nourished them, and because of you, they flourished. Congratulations to you for winning the championship and for teaching our young men the true meaning of sportsmanship. Thank you so much.”

Councilwoman Kennion asked the parents to stand.

“Behind every football player who believes in himself, there is a football parent who believed in him first. So, when a parent signs their child up for football, they commit themselves to adopt two, three, or more kids. I know, I did it. Parents, during practice or the day of the game, I know you feel bad about going back to that store where you just bought one Gatorade to then turn around and go back to buy twelve or thirteen more Gatorades. I understand. You realized then that you adopted the whole team, and everyone gets a Gatorade. I still understand. We as parents go above to make sure everything runs smoothly because that is what we do. At the end of the day, you are still your child or children’s biggest supporter. Thank you.”

Councilwoman Kennion asked the champions to please stand.

“To our champions, talent wins games, but teamwork and intelligence wins championships. You have proven this to be true to the county. We are so proud of each and every one of you. Thank you for the pride you displayed over the course of the season. You guys have built a solid foundation for next year. Thank you again for the hustle and effort that each and every one of you has given. Great season and congratulations!”

Guest Speaker

Lucille Burton: My reason for being here tonight is that in June, Chairman Campbell placed an ad in the newspaper for those who might be interested in forming an African American Heritage

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Commission. A few of us signed up. Then we came in and Chairman Campbell brought in a young lady from the State Chapter of the African American Heritage Commission. She shared a lot of important information that would help us get started. Through work and determination, we have come quite a way in these six months. We have established ourselves enough that we have voted in a President, Vice-President, and Secretary. Our mission is to promote and document the history of African American citizens in Old Edgefield County District. We have been working to establish our bylaws and constitution. We are at a point where we are ready to move forward with our 501C3. I come before you tonight requesting seed money so that we may accomplish those goals. Through the work of this commission, we will do Edgefield County well. The African American Heritage Commission is not a commission for only African Americans, but for all.

Chairman Campbell asked Council if they have any questions. There were none.

Approval of Minutes

Chairman Campbell asked for approval of the December 6, 2022, regular meeting minutes. Councilwoman Ireland made the motion and Councilwoman Kennion seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Comments from the Public

Gary Rushton: The reason I am here is that I am concerned about the animals. Particularly dogs and their barking. I would like for you to take into consideration the noise and reason for their barking. I understand the noise ordinance and complaints, but please investigate why some situations are caused when a dog barks. Also, take into consideration coyotes that run around that also cause dogs to bark. Dogs do not bark just to bark.

Kathy Ekre: Chairman Campbell I would like to thank you for getting the African American Heritage Commission started. I am thrilled to read the progress in the newspaper because Bettis Academy is dear to my heart. I have three things I would like to discuss. First tMcCracking and Neighborhood Center. I do not understand how we are not assuming that we getting set up for another lawsuit. We need to go back to the beginning, take bids and do fresh appraisals. Otherwise, I could see another lawsuit in the future. Second, the animal ordinance. This is from personal experience. The property needs to be posted. If we can't get enough enforcement with a warrant, at least consider posting on the front and the back of a property a notice of when the animal is going to be obtained and what means, if possible, with the enforcer's name and telephone number. Otherwise, property damage can be done by somebody inadvertently forcing themselves into somebody's home. That is my concern with the animal ordinance. Third, Saluda County and the \$100,000. My question is, does the first \$100,000 go to construction? Will they be billed for their services on an annual or monthly basis? Or is Saluda County going to pay a flat \$100,000 or \$110,000? Those are my concerns.

Nathan York: I want to speak briefly with Council a second time concerning somebody coming down to my property and taking my property which, you have identified in the rewrite to chapter six stating the owner is the individual who has the property of an animal. So, you are saying that the animal is my property. But in the South Carolina constitution, you cannot take it without due

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process of law. So, I am asking why you are saying in that same rewrite of the ordinance that the Animal Control Officer has the authority in one paragraph and the right to enter my property. I am not abrogating my rights to my property to anyone. If there is a problem and it is a problem of the law of which I am in violation of that law, then I would expect a duly appointed member of this Council, County, and Sheriff Department to receive a warrant based on an affidavit or oath of affirmation submitted to me for either a seizure of that property or for me to appear before the court. Then we can talk about due process. But just for you to come onto my property and say we are taking something. I am not happy about that. It is stated twice in that ordinance rewrite. It also says that if I do not allow them into a building or gated area, then they can go get a warrant. I think that is backward. That is not the way South Carolina Constitution is set up. I have a right to my property. This is the second time I have addressed this body concerning this. The first time it was with the LMO. Now I am told that there is a rewrite of tightening of that language and if true. I look forward to reading it. I have a concern about someone entering my property.

Dezdemona Pazdalski: I have the same concern as Mr. Nathan York shared regarding anyone coming onto my property unless they have followed due process. I have a gated property of which our dog is never out. I really do not have an issue, but without a warrant, I do not want anyone on my property. I am assuming liability if someone gets injured on my property. I am not signing up for that. I am not sharing the liability for an illegal, unlawful, and unwarranted entry. Bring the needed necessities if there is an issue. Do your job the right way but do not infringe upon the constitution.

John Pettigrew: I want to speak with you on the ordinance regarding the sale of the Neighborhood Center. I attended a memorial service yesterday in which former Edgefield County Administrator Roger LeDuc gave a tribute to Mayor Cavanaugh of the City of Aiken. Mr. LeDuc spoke of how this Mr. Cavanaugh was known for listening to people. Mr. Cavanaugh would listen and evaluate what people said to him concerning situations. I think that is a good role model for all of us in communications. I have concerns about the procedures and the way the Neighborhood Center is being proposed to be sold. The ordinance states that the asbestos abatement would be at a cost to the county. I am interested to know who is requiring asbestos abatement. Does a government agency or has the building been condemned? From my understanding, asbestos abatement is necessary if you disturb the asbestos or by renovating. Just because a building may have asbestos, it does not necessarily require an abatement. Then the ordinance says at a cost to the county. Who is requiring the county to pay for this? I understand that the potential purchaser intends to demolish the building and build houses. But if someone wanted to use the building, I don't think any demolition would be necessary. In 2021 I asked three questions concerning the Neighborhood Center. How much acreage was involved, was an appraisal done and when and where was the property advertised? The acreage of three was told and it was announced that a new appraisal was done. But I have not seen any copies of any advertising. I have asked for it numerous times and have not seen an advertisement for the property for \$50,000 to my knowledge. Does any of the Council have a copy of that advertising tonight? To protect the taxpayers of this county and give this property maximum exposure, the Neighborhood Center should have been advertised using signage, a realtor website, and a

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newspaper. I believe we need to table this ordinance and make sure the Neighborhood Center was advertised properly before we propose to sell it.

Megan Pearson: I heard you are making changes to the Animal Ordinance, and are you going to post those changes before the third reading? That will allow the citizens to read the changes and talk about animal enforcement.

Chairman Campbell: Yes, for transparency. I want everybody to know what to comment on.

Megan Pearson: Then I will wait until I read the changes.

Paul Gustafson email response, read by Clerk to Council.

“Just do the right thing regarding the property at 400 Church Road. Y’all have already cost the citizens over \$18,000 regarding one lawsuit. Just advertise and rebid the property. Transparency is a wonderful asset.”

Chairman Campbell closed the first comment period.

Reports

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

Old Business

1. Consideration of approval of the second reading of ordinance 21-22-792, to replace section Chapter 6 Animals of the Code of Ordinances.

Chairman Campbell: I will ask Administrator Caddell if he will discuss this ordinance with us and some of the concerns we have heard here tonight.

Administrator Caddell: The first thing I would like to discuss is a concern that I have heard from a few people that was not presented here tonight. The concern is that we have a set number of days for an animal before euthanasia. There are 15 days in the ordinance pertaining to an animal that we find that might have a collar or a microchip. The 15 days is not the length of time until we can euthanize the animal. It is a time that must elapse before we can even advertise the animal for adoption. That is 15 business days. This would ensure if the animal had an owner, they have ample time to claim their animal. The five days are for animals that do not have a collar or microchip. We will be under the assumption that the animal does not have an owner, or it could have slipped its collar unbeknown to us. It is not five days until we euthanize the animal. It is five days until we can advertise for the adoption. Another concern the citizens have is surrendered animals. Those are animals that have been willingly surrendered by their owners to animal control. For those animals, there are zero days for adoption advertisement. Euthanasia is mentioned at the end of each section because if an animal is evaluated by the veterinarian and is reported to be terminally ill, injured, quality of life is beyond what we can help, or an aggressive animal that cannot be adopted out, then it may be euthanized. I just wanted to clarify that there is not a clock ticking on an animal’s life once we have them at animal control. There is no time limit on how long an animal can be listed for adoption. If we have room in the animal shelter, we

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will keep it as long as we can. When we no longer have room, we will do our best to get the animal to a rescue facility. I want to make it clear that this is an adoption-centric facility. We will clarify the language in the ordinance to make it easier to understand. The next issue of concern was farm animals, the nuisance ordinance, and how it is to be addressed. We are going to modify the language for our noise complaints and odors. Next is property entry, I will ask Sheriff Rowland to address that concern, but state law allows a law enforcement officer to enter upon a property to investigate a complaint.

Sheriff Rowland: It is not that we want to violate the constitution. We just want to do our job as accurately as we can. The state law and police academy teach us about going to your property to investigate a complaint. No ordinance is going to give us the ability to walk onto your property and take an animal. No ordinance gives us the ability to go and enter a home, barn, or building. A kennel might have some arguments, but we would not do anything along that line nor does the ordinance state we will do so. In certain circumstances where human life is in danger, then we will go in to look and see how serious the situation is. And that is with extreme circumstances. The court procedure will go as normally as would if it were a call for loud music or an assault.

Administrator Caddell: There will be situations where the court orders that an animal must be impounded. That situation would have gone through the court process. The other situation that we must understand is if there is a dog at large that does not appear to be owned. In the process of capturing the animal, an animal control officer might cross multiple parcels of property before he can detain the animal. This does not mean it is your dog that is housed on your property they are pursuing. But the officer while investigating the complaint who is carrying out his duties might have to come onto your property to detain the animal he or she is pursuing. Again, I hope this clarifies some of the concerns you may have.

Chairman Campbell: Are there any questions or comments from Council?

Councilman Moody: Mr. York, Mona, and Megan did the Sheriff answer your questions? Or do you have any other questions for either Major Ramey or Sheriff Rowland?

Desdamona Pazdalski: I ask that the control officer please be careful when crossing property lines to catch a dog. I don't want someone to get shot by accident.

Megan Pearson: The fact that an officer has the right to enter your property before you have the right to refuse it. I must ask, what happens if I am not home to say you cannot come in without a warrant onto my property? This looks like this is going to be what he wants unless I am not home to say no, you need more. The language needs to be more precise. State law has certain circumstances where the law cannot just come onto your property. But the ordinance reads as if they can.

Louis Pazdalski: Article 2 and a patrol Administration Enforcement number 620, subsection 2, An animal control officer has the right to enter any public or private property in the county. That needs to be tightened up under due process. Special circumstances are exactly why I want to see the police officers protected. I want to see the animals as well as the officers taken care of.

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Hart Clark: We had a meeting earlier today pertaining to the concerns given by Megan Pearson and Rhonda Nowicki. We have already discussed the concerns and rewritten the language in the ordinance. Since it was already in the agenda, we did not feel it was appropriate to bring it to this meeting. We will be posting these changes online for citizens to read. We have already edited the language and we have a few more changes that we are going to address. But there will be some changes to the language between this meeting and the February meeting. Citizens will have the opportunity to go online and read those changes before the next meeting.

Chairman Campbell: I believe a reasonable expectation for citizens to read the changes is a week or two before the next meeting.

Hart Clark: I have also written a Q & A post online that will answer a lot of the comments and questions. I will make sure that once Administrator Caddell and Sheriff Rowland have approved the changes in language, I will post it in the news portion of the Edgefield County website with color highlighting the changes within the document.

Chairman Campbell: From the audience, we heard comments on coyotes. Administrator Caddell, was there anything else you to talk with us about related to this item?

Administrator Caddell: The only other point is on the section related to authority to enter that Mr. Pazdalski spoke of is the section that was rewritten. We should have those changes out within the week.

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

Councilwoman Ireland: I would like to thank Sheriff Rowland and staff; Hart Clark for getting the initial document started so we could get this going. For those of you who don't know the process, Hart Clark and Sheriff Rowland went through the document together and then they met with Councilman Talbert and me to discuss it with the Planning Commission so they would have their opinions and changes to this document that would help guide us in the formation of this document. We said at that meeting that it would change. Changes will need to be made based on comments as what we are seeing tonight. We said most of the comments would come from Councilman Talbert or my district. I want you all to know that we are listening and working on this ordinance. I hope you all see that. We understand that it may have to be edited after this meeting. We are starting something new here and it is historical concerning the animal shelter. This is new and we are learning, and we are trying to do this right. Thank you for all your comments.

Chairman Campbell: We said from the beginning that we wanted public comments on this. We meant that because you can see we are making changes. We are expecting even more changes after the next time. There will be an actual public hearing next month that will not have a limitation on speaking. We are trying to make sure people understand that you do not have to wait to come to the meeting to speak with us. We are available all during the month by phone or email. You can also contact the County Administrator if you desire. Feel free to contact us outside of the Council Chambers. I think it was a great idea for Ms. Pearson to meet with you all and talk about the changes that needed to happen. That was good for them to have that one-on-

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one time and discuss those concerns. I encourage our citizens to reach out to us with their concerns.

Council, if there are no other questions or comments. I ask for your approval for the second reading of ordinance 21-22-792, to replace section Chapter 6 Animals of the Code of Ordinances. Councilwoman Ireland made the motion and Councilman Talbert seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

New Business

1. Consideration of approval to allocate \$3,000 to the Edgefield County African American Heritage Commission.

Chairman Campbell: Ms. Burton spoke earlier concerning the Edgefield County African American Heritage Commission. I appreciate her being here and speaking to us all. I think this is a wise investment for Edgefield County. But I will ask Administrator Caddell if there is anything else further, we need to know.

Administrator Caddell: If Council approves the \$3,000 contribution, it will come from County Council's Contingency Funds. There is \$36,000 remaining in that fund.

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

Councilman Moody: I would like to see if possible once funds have been spent, receipts of what was done with the funds. This would allow Council and the public to see where the funds were spent.

Councilwoman Ireland: I would like to say this is seed start-up funds. From here on out, as with the other nonprofits, you are on your own. You will need to do whatever is needed in fundraising to maintain your funding. We expect once you are up and running, you will carry your weight on your own.

Lucille Burton: Thank you for your support monetary and for extending your service to allow us to hold meetings here in the chambers.

Chairman Campbell: Is there a motion to approve the \$3,000 to the Edgefield County African American Heritage Commission? Councilman Talbert made the motion and Councilwoman Kennion seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

2. Consideration of approval of first reading of ordinance 21-22-793, an ordinance authorizing the delivery of an agreement of purchase and sale, and the conveyance of certain properties between Edgefield County and John McCracking, his successors and assigns.

Chairman Campbell: Due to some of the comments we have received here tonight, I will ask Administrator Caddell to address some of those concerns plus anything else he might need to tell us.

Administrator Caddell: In the spring of 2018, Council approved the advertising of the Neighborhood Center, located at 400 Church Street, Edgefield, South Carolina. It was listed for sale in the newspaper and on the South Carolina business opportunities website. It was listed in

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an RFP format request for proposals on that site. There were no offers or proposals from that listing. In 2019, the property was listed on GovDeals with an asking price of \$50,000. It did receive bids, but the bids stopped at \$47,000. Due to the low bids, the building did not sell. John McCracking offered to purchase the property for \$50,000. As we have heard, the county was required to obtain an appraisal of the property which was completed in August. The appraisal gave an established value as it is now of \$100,000. In the appraisal, it states that it did not consider environmental factors like asbestos. The County asked for a budget from a contractor with the understanding that we were not going to be the customer because we know this building has asbestos in it. The cost to have asbestos removed from a property. The cost for the asbestos removal and demolition is \$68,000. The building is dated with multiple roof leaks, is not handicap accessible, the adjoining building burned down some years past which affected one side of this current building, and the central heating and air are no longer usable. I have heard the comment that this building could be used as is. That is not true. This building needs such extensive renovation that one will encounter the asbestos concern. That would require a full assessment and abatement just to renovate the building. With all that information in mind, the only offer at our minimum of \$50,000, and the fact that Council has voted on three occasions to sell to Mr. McCracking, staff recommends that you sell the building to Mr. McCracking for \$50,000.

Chairman Campbell: Based on what you have said and my memory of this whole process. The only bid that we got was because the other bids did not reach the \$50,000. County Council publicly turned down the low bids. Mr. McCracking is the only person to offer \$50,000. We have never had another bid.

Administrator Caddell: That is the only one I am aware of. I asked the previous Administrator and searched the files to find no indication that ever one was offered above the minimum except for Mr. McCracking.

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

Councilwoman Ireland: This may have started being advertised in 2018. But this is not new. I sat there on the floor with the citizens and covered this for many years before that year. There was a group that wanted this building to catch the overflow from DHEC. They looked at the building well before 2018. I know, I covered it for the newspaper. Every single time this building was mentioned, it was covered in the newspaper. Every time it was placed on GovDeals, it was covered and discussed. This was not a hidden item from the public. Nor was it a backdoor deal. At one time it looked like we were going to have to give the building away. No one wanted the building. It is a stinking building. Council discussed accepting the \$47,000. I sat with the citizens thinking Council was going to accept that deal. The deal was not accepted by Council. Then Mr. McCracking came forward wanting to purchase the building. The reason why I am going to vote tonight to move forward with this sale to Mr. McCracking is the night that Council agreed to sell the property to Mr. McCracking. In my opinion, that was a gentleman's agreement to sell this to a man who offered us what we asked for. In good faith, he made an offer to us, and we accepted that offer. Basically, that was a handshake to Mr. McCracking. It is the honorable and right thing to do to uphold that agreement. He did nothing wrong concerning this sale. If you want to talk about lawsuits, the person that would have a lawsuit in my mind would be Mr. McCracking. He

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came thinking he did everything correctly to purchase this property. I will vote to do the honorable and right thing tonight.

Chairman Campbell: Questions or comments from Council.

Councilman Moody: I would like to ask County Attorney Andrew Marine if he sees anything wrong with us selling the property to Mr. McCracking?

Attorney Marine: The procurement code has been met. It's been advertised and it has been in litigation over the appraisal issue. We have complied with everything and been through all of the steps. How much longer do we need to go?

Councilwoman Ireland: We have done nothing but cause Mr. McCracking money.

Councilman Talbert: We have gone over this for quite a period. We have other items that we need to move forward with. I will be supporting this ordinance with my vote tonight.

Chairman Campbell: Please keep in mind that this is the first reading on this item. Council do we have any further questions or comments? Hearing none. Is there a motion to give the first reading to ordinance 21-22-793? Councilman Talbert made the motion and Councilwoman Ireland seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

3. Consideration to approve a 2.5% employee cost of living increase and salary band adjustment.

Chairman Campbell: I will ask Administrator Caddell if he will discuss this item with Council.

Administrator Caddell: We do propose a 2.5% increase to the County employee salaries. This is due to inflation and competition from other jurisdictions. The estimated cost will be \$218,000. The funds are available in our current budget. They are available because of the temporarily vacant positions that have not been filled and employees leaving their positions. Our budget supports that based on a comparison of the past three years until now. Council should be aware that many years ago, the cost-of-living increases were separated from pay band increases. What that means is that you received a 2% cost-of-living increase, the pay band and the starting salary did not move with that increase. That left that starting salary low as the years advanced. That made us less competitive as an employer. The Sheriff's Department especially felt this for a long time. This increase would do what is standard for employers and move the hiring range. This is an increase in the hiring range. If Council approves this increase, it would be effective on the second payroll in January with a pay date of January 19, 2023.

Chairman Campbell: Questions or comments from Council?

Councilwoman Ireland: We are basically tying the bands back together?

Administrator Caddell: Yes.

Chairman Campbell: For clarity, this is a 2.5% increase for employees, plus any other increase we come up with as a Council in the next budget.

Administrator Caddell: Yes, that is correct. This increase would get us to the next budget year. Any increase approved at that time would be on top of this one.

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Chairman Campbell: The 2.5% raise will continue. It does not go away on June 30th?

Administrator Caddell: Correct. It will be cumulative as you add future raises.

Councilman Moody: This is a mid-year raise, correct?

Administrator Caddell: Correct.

Councilman Moody: They will get their normal raise at the end of the fiscal year?

Administrator Caddell: Generally, they do. In the past, the employees have received one mid-year increase. My predecessor, Interim Administrator Roger LeDuc, stated given the unprecedented inflation that we've had that this may be necessary, and he shared that with me. I studied the issue and decided that this increase is necessary.

Councilman Moody: This is not an early raise, but a raise in addition to their next raise?

Administrator Caddell: Yes, if Council approves it. This raise is not like a bonus or merit raise. This is an increase for every employee that works under Council.

Chairman Campbell: Are there any other questions or comments from Council? Hearing none. Is there a motion to approve the 2.5% employee cost of living increase? Councilman Moody made the motion and Councilwoman Kennion seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

4. Consideration of approval of a Firefighter Training Stipend.

Chairman Campbell: Administrator Caddell will you go through the details concerning this item for us?

Administrator Caddell: I have reported on this after each meeting in the Administrator's Report. We believe that it's in Edgefield County's best interest to have the best-trained firefighters that we can have. We want to give them a stipend to obtain certifications on Level One, Level Two, and Emergency Medical Responder Certification to increase their skill capabilities. We propose a stipend of \$10 per hour of training. Our current EMA Director James Crowder and several of our EMS employees are certified to teach the Emergency Medical Responder training. We do not have training costs associated with that. Our training coordinators can do that. We do have a cost for materials. The total cost for this program for the remainder of this fiscal year is \$11,900. That is to be paid from the current budget. That total is for 21 participants and materials. As we go into the next budget year, we will budget funds for the training.

Chairman Campbell: The purpose of this stipend is to pay for training now but also continue into the next budget year if Council approves it.

Administrator Caddell: Correct. We would offer the full EMR class, and that class would terminate this budget year which is why the \$11,900 may be required this year. The Firefighter Level One class requires three times the number of hours and going to class one or two nights a week. That would extend into the summertime before they could complete the training. We want this program approved so they may begin their training.

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

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Councilman Moody: We are doing the First Responder as the first course, correct?

Administrator Caddell: Yes.

Councilman Talbert: It is a very good cause to support. I have no problem supporting this if they complete their training. But I will have an issue if they should not complete the training. We need you to follow up if you would.

Administrator Caddell: The entire stipend would be awarded one time upon passing the certification test.

Chairman Campbell: Do we have any other comments or questions from Council? Hearing none. Do we have the motion to approve the Firefighter Training Stipend? Council Talbert made the motion and Councilman Moody seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

5. Consideration of approval of an Edgefield Home Town Grant Application for renovations to the Edgefield Activity Center, formerly the Edgefield Town Gym, in the amount of \$80,000.

Chairman Campbell: Again, I will ask Administrator Caddell to discuss this item with us.

Administrator Caddell: We received an application from the Town of Edgefield to convert their town gym into a multi-purpose activity center. Edgefield County approved \$500,000 in Home Town Grants out of our American Rescue Plan funds for the towns. This is the second request from the Town of Edgefield under this program. If funded they will not exceed 1/3 of the total monies there are for the three towns in the county. They propose to do substantial work to improve this facility. Councilwoman Kennion and Councilwoman Ireland are on the committee that reviews these grant applications from the town for these projects. They both have expressed support for this project. Staff recommends supporting this project.

Chairman Campbell: Questions or comments from Council? Hearing none, do I hear a motion to approve this application for \$80,000? Councilwoman Ireland made the motion and Councilwoman Kennion seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

6. Consideration of resolution 21-22-1153, to enter into a partnership with Saluda County on the construction of an Animal Care and Control Facility.

Chairman Campbell: I know Administrator Caddell and Councilman Talbert have been meeting with Saluda County to try to work out an agreement concerning the animal facility. I will ask Administrator Caddell if he will tell us where we are concerning this item.

Administrator Caddell: There was a MOU entered into between Edgefield County and Saluda County in 2015 to partner in the construction of an animal control facility. Those plans fell through at that time. But in December 2022, Saluda advised us that they were moving in this direction. On December 12, 2022, the Saluda County Council voted to recommit to that agreement. They have received information that we are building a new facility and they believe partnering with us is the best way to get their animal control program established. We have formed a working group to develop a formal agreement to make that work if Council approves this resolution. We thank Councilman Talbert for participating in that group. One item that we would like to bring from the old MOU with Saluda County is that they would pay 25% of the

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cost of the construction for this facility. We approved \$554,000 to build our facility. If we are going to partner with Saluda County, then we will need more capacity. To increase capacity at our facility, we would increase the construction cost by \$110,000. If Council approves the resolution tonight, we would be approving the increase in the construction cost by \$110,000. The good news is that Saluda County would pay 25% of the total cost for construction. Saluda would pay us \$166,000. This would reduce the amount that we will use from the American Rescue Plan Funds by \$56,000. We were asked during the comment period, how Saluda County will pay us for the ongoing operations. Saluda County will pay fees based on what Edgefield County residents would pay. If an animal is brought to the animal control facility and is not adopted, then Saluda County would pay the boarding fee to us. The boarding fees take care of the housing and maintenance of the facility. This is how we will move forward with this concerning Saluda County, if Council approves this resolution.

Chairman Campbell: Assuming we approve this resolution tonight, you still have to come back with the details you have worked out with Saluda County.

Administrator Caddell: Correct. I will bring the formal agreement back to Council to be approved by Council. Saluda County will have to do the same with its Council. But we do need to commit to expansion tonight because construction will begin very soon.

Chairman Campbell: Questions or comments from Council.

Councilwoman Kennion: Is this what we are paying Aiken County now?

Administrator Caddell: We do pay Aiken County a lot of money to house our animals. The cost is \$140,000. We will save money by building our own facility and gain funds by partnering with Saluda County.

Councilman Moody: They are limited to 25%, correct?

Administrator Caddell: Correct. They are guaranteed 25% of the kennel capacity for their animals.

Chairman Campbell: It works conversely, if we have more animals and they don't, we would use some of their kennels.

Administrator Caddell: Correct.

Chairman Campbell: Any questions or comments from Council? Hearing none. Is there a motion to give approval to resolution 21-22-1153, to enter into a partnership with Saluda County on the construction of an Animal Care and Control Facility? Councilman Moody made the motion and Councilman Talbert seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

7. Consideration of the first reading of ordinance 21-22-794, to enter into a Multi-County Industrial Park (MCIP) agreement with Aiken County for Project Sabal.

Chairman Campbell: I will ask Administrator Caddell if he will discuss this item with us.

Administrator Caddell: This ordinance is to establish an agreement with Aiken County. This is an Aiken County Park, but Edgefield County will benefit from it. This agreement will allow

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industries in the park located in Aiken County. To receive certain incentives from the State and county. Edgefield County will receive 1% of the Fee In Lieu of taxes for this development. This agreement will not involve any investment whatsoever from Edgefield County. More information will be provided for the second and third readings because this is by title only.

Chairman Campbell: First, because it is an Economic Development issue for Aiken County, then obviously it is just as we say by title only tonight. But, by the second and third readings and before we have a public hearing, it will be advertised what Project Sable actually is. This is in Aiken County, and we will just benefit from it. Do we have any questions or comments from Council? Hearing none, is there a motion to give the first reading to ordinance 21-22-794, to enter into a Multi-County Industrial Park agreement with Aiken County for Project Sable? Councilwoman Ireland made the motion and Councilman Moody seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Comments from the Public

Karl Lown: I am here to discuss budget concerns and a few other things. First, you need to increase the budget this coming year. The 2.5% raise that you approved for the employees is not enough for Public Safety, EMS, and Building and Planning. They deserve more money and more funding to protect the citizens of Edgefield County. You ask for more, but you do not give more to the EMS, police, or Fire Department. Building and Planning need more help. They do not have enough people to enforce the codes and ordinances in this County dealing with houses, animals, and nuisances. I have submitted a nuisance complaint with no response except Hart Clark. It was supposed to go before Council. When asked why it was not enforced, the response is we do not have enough people. If you are not going to enforce them, then you need to scrub them. The Sheriff's Department needs to have more than three deputies on the road. You are budgeted enough to have more but not paying enough. Not having enough deputies on patrol puts the deputy in danger and the citizens. Next is EMS, they had two calls that they could not respond to because they do not have enough ambulances to respond to calls. They take patients to Greenwood and to the other outer-lying hospitals that do not allow them to return in time to respond to another call. Then, the Fire Department is not trained or qualified to respond to those calls. And Fire Department needs to get up to standards. There are no requirements stated in the ordinance for the Chief or Assistant Chief. We need to look at the county as a whole because we are responsible for it.

Amanda Israel: I would like to share my concerns about the Church Street property. I haven't followed it the whole time since this process started. I read all was done concerning market value, appraisals, and renovations. I thought Edgefield County deserves to get every penny out of the property and use those tax dollars for other projects. I wondered why it was not marketed. I heard what you said. But as a Realtor and Broker we were not aware it being on the market. If this was my property, I would want my property to be marketed so the public could see it. The property was not placed on any of the MLS service websites or promoted. I did have a client that was interested in the property and I wrote up a proposal that was above the asking price. Then that client got cold feet and pulled out thinking it was already sold. An appraisal normally says the value of a property is based on current conditions. I have not seen the appraisal that was done recently, nor do I think it was shared with anyone. I have full understanding of the process of

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appraisals, renovations, and marketing. I wish that property would get true market exposure, and be purchased by someone who wants to pay top dollar for it. Appraisers have a saying, "A property is not worth more than what a buyer is willing to pay." How would you know what a buyer is willing to pay if nobody knows it is for sale? You placed it on a government website, but most people don't go on those sites. I wanted to stand up for the citizens of Edgefield County concerning this. Also, I wanted to comment on what Councilwoman Ireland said about Mr. McCracking. I think it is honorable what she said about him, but you should also want to honor the taxpayers. I believe the offer should be presented to Mr. McCracking but I think first the wrong should be corrected for the citizens.

John Hudson: What I have to say is to everybody. I heard from the Lord, "There is no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus. We will get through this. If not, we are all going to hell together. That is the only reason I came here tonight. I don't like going into the past, but this Council has gone and voted on things that were not the people's choice. I was told to speak this to you, "You that vote in the shadow, do you not know that he hears what you say in your bed chamber? Do not think Christ is dead. This year the Word will go forward, with or without us. We must be about kingdom business." You cannot make everyone happy. I pray we can regroup and make righteous decisions.

County Administrator's Report

1. The Animal Care and Control working group prepared a list of main points that will form the basis of the formal agreement with Saluda County. Once we agree on terms, we will draft a formal agreement and bring it to Council for consideration. Saluda will do the same. We expect construction on the new facility to begin this month.
2. LEC- The site has been cleared and perimeter sediment controls have been installed. Major earth moving started in earnest last week. The first status meeting will be held tomorrow with the contractor.
3. During the recent extreme cold, water leaks were reported at five convenience centers, the County Shop, and Bettis Park. A huge thank you to our facilities maintenance person Joe Simpson who came in on his day off to restore water for the attendants at the convenience sites. He repaired lines at the shop and Bettis as well.
4. As you may recall, we received grant funding to put a new roof on the bathrooms at Bettis Park. Brighter Side Roofing was the low and chosen bidder. They should complete the work in the next few weeks.
5. Dates to remember:

January 10, 5 pm - Council Retreat

January 24, 6pm – Joint Council / PC meeting

Comments by County Council Chairman

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First, I want to thank Council for re-electing me as the Chairman. It's an honor and a duty I don't take lightly. I look forward to working with each and every one of you.

Also, I want to again welcome Jerry Moody to his first official meeting as a Council member. We are all happy you're now here.

Also, I want to thank Council for working through tonight's agenda. It's starting out to be a busy year.

That said, the busy year starts with a busy January. Now that tonight's meeting is almost behind us, we have 3 more meetings this month that will set us on a path to bring out the best for Edgefield County.

First, on January 10, Council has its retreat right here in Council Chambers beginning at 5 p.m. We will discuss the projects we'd like to pursue in the short-term and the long-term for our citizens and for the County's future. Out of this retreat will come the next Edgefield County Strategic Plan, which sets our vision as a Council. If any citizen has input for us for this meeting, the time to give it to us is prior to the January 10 meeting.

The next called meeting this month will be a joint meeting with County Council and the Planning Commission. That meeting will be held January 24 right here in Council Chambers beginning at 6 p.m. The Planning Commission handles a lot of critical work for our County, and this joint meeting is our chance to ensure we're on the same page moving forward.

Finally, on January 30, we have our annual Intergovernmental meeting with our elected and appointed officials, which is hosted by County Council. In this meeting, we get to hear in which areas we can work together for the improvement of Edgefield County. This meeting will be held at 5:30 p.m. at the Edgefield Senior Citizens Center since we usually have more than 50 officials attend.

We look forward to all these meetings.

I don't have any additional comments. We have an executive session next to have our annual performance review for the Clerk to Council and the Administrator. I would entertain a motion to move into Executive Session for that reason.

Executive Session

Council entered Executive Session at 7:46 P.M.

Council returned from Executive Session at 8:55 P.M. No action was taken

Adjourn

Chairman Campbell: I don't have any additional comments, and there is no business to conduct. I'd be happy to entertain a motion to adjourn. Councilwoman Ireland made the motion to

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adjourn, and Councilwoman Kennion seconded. The motion passed unanimously. The County Council meeting adjourned at 8:55 P.M.

Edgefield County Council



Dean Campbell, Council Chairman

ATTEST



Aretha Eubanks, Clerk to Council