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Edgefield County Intergovernmental Meeting
January 30, 2023
5:30 PM
Senior Citizen Center, Edgefield, SC

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Edgefield County Council held its Intergovernmental Meeting on January 30, 2023, at the Senior Citizens Center. Edgefield County Chairman Campbell called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM. The invocation was given by the Town of Trenton Administrator, Roger LeDuc.

Chairman Campbell - Let's take a moment of silence to remember former Johnston Mayor Terrence Culbreath who passed away in December.

I want to recognize Council/Administrator/Aretha/Jim Dorn, and other helpers.

County Council is pleased to host this again. It is important to network and talk about what we're doing.

Tonight's agenda: 5 minutes each. When I finish County report, next person comes up, and so on. Just follow the agenda. I'll be back at the end.

Brief Remarks

Chairman Campbell - Since we last met, we hired an Administrator, David Caddell, who Council and I think will do a great job for us. He's an Edgefield County resident, and many of you already know him. And our new Clerk to Council began her time with us last January, and she's proven to be a tremendous asset.

From a project standpoint for County Council, our largest project without question is the Law Enforcement Center. This project cost all total is \$42 million or more. We did receive \$18 million from the state for this project, and that makes a huge difference. We thank our Legislative Delegation for that. We'll pay the rest from the Capital Projects Sales Tax that voters passed two years ago.

You probably read that we broke ground on the new Law Enforcement Center in November. It's pretty amazing that just over two years ago, we were rethinking the Law Enforcement Center and how we could even fund it, and now construction is beginning. That's a great success story.

Also, we approved more than a half million dollars to invest in a new Animal Care and Control Facility. It will be built on the same land as the LEC. We broke ground on that facility in December, and it should be ready to operate by the late summer. Also, Saluda County is going to partner with us to make it a two-county facility. That's another success story.

I've talked about two very big projects in Edgefield County – with the Law Enforcement Center being the largest ever. And there's one more very large and critical project: Council approved last year more than \$2 million for a complete overhaul of our County's emergency communications system. Many of you are aware that we have spots in our county where police, fire, EMS and others can't communicate. We've tried to patch it over the years, but that's just been a Band-Aid approach.

This new system will include adding two new towers in our county, and replace communications equipment on two other towers. It will also mean new radios for all our law enforcement, EMS, firefighters, first responders, Emergency Management, and others. This will be a quantum leap for our County in communications, and will provide much better protection for our citizens.

That communications work is ongoing right now and should be operational by late summer, if we don't experience supply chain issues. This project and the Animal Care and Control Facility will be funded through American Recovery Act or ARPA funds.

To be clear, when it comes to the areas I've covered so far, it takes the cooperation of the Towns, fire departments, police, EMS, Emergency Management, and others on topics like the Law Enforcement Center, the animal control facility, and the communications overhaul. I did want to say a special word of thanks to Sheriff Rowland and his staff. We could not have accomplished this work without their involvement and guidance. The Sheriff has been a great partner for us, and we sincerely appreciate his efforts. I also want to thank the Roger, David, Doc, and other staff who worked so hard on these projects.

While those topics fall into the category of major projects, I'd like to mention some other highlights from the year:

- We completed this year a rezoning effort that, as you recall, has taken us about 3-plus years to complete.
- We approved a tax incentive to give developers a chance to breathe new life into Kendall Mill in Edgefield.
- We improved an ordinance that expands the ability for local and minority businesses to bid on jobs, which means we should be able to award more bids to more local and minority businesses.
- We lowered our millage rate for next year because we were able to re-establish a Road Maintenance Fee. This Road Maintenance Fee is a fairer way to pay for roads than a millage increase. Again, thank you to Bill, Bill, and Shane for making that happen on the state level.
- We ear-marked a half million dollars of ARPA funds for grants our Town governments can apply for to help them better the lives for their citizens. We understand that town residents also pay County taxes, and the County is committed to continuing to find ways to work to help our towns.
- To do our part to help curb litter, you know for the past two years we've had a Litter Control Officer, who helps collect trash and has written tickets to offenders. Also, Council approved in this year's budget for the first time two additional workers who we will have picking up litter as 100% of their job.
- There are many other important changes, such as our new Industrial Park infrastructure and signage, as well as work on major storm drainage improvements in some trouble spots in the County.
- We worked with the Hospital board to help procure a new ambulance, and we've also ordered another ambulance since it takes about a year or more to get one.

As I mentioned, these are just some of the highlights. All of you know we've accomplished plenty more.

In all, it's been the most productive year I believe the County has seen in decades. I'm proud of the work undertaken by County Council and shouldered by our staff. I think the public sometimes doesn't get to see what gets accomplished by County Council and County Government. I believe this Council has taken our commitment to Edgefield County citizens to a new level of service. And we've prepared our County for the future.

I want to say a sincere thank you to each member of the County Council.

Now, we look forward to smartly executing what we have begun last year, and we will continue to be good stewards of the taxpayers' money as we work on the new projects on the horizon, including completing a strategic plan that will outline the major work County Council wants to perform both short-term and long-term. You'll see that shortly.

That's my report. I'll turn it over to Will.

Economic Development – President Will Williams began his remarks by stating that their focus is on taking care of the existing industries. He explained that he recently met with the various industries encouraging them to notify him if they are experiencing issues that are slowing down production. Mr. Williams spoke about concerns our local industries are enduring concerning finding reliable employees to fill positions. Mr. Williams continued speaking concerning two of the industries in the county that are expanding, the completion of a 600-foot road extension in the Industrial Park, three projects could not be submitted due to lack of water and electrical supply, two investment parks that are looking at our area, an increase in the average wages in Edgefield County and that our unemployment rate is 4%, which means full employment in a county. Edgefield County is doing well, and we are looking forward to 2023.

Edgefield School District – Superintendent Dr. Kevin O'Gorman began his remarks by acknowledging the new School Board Chairman, Ms. Robin Ball. Mr. O'Gorman continued his remarks by reminding the body of the teacher shortage. He said they are working on a 3-year retention plan to help with this concern. He spoke briefly about concerns with students with the increase in vapes and about safety protocols. He encouraged the body by informing us that the school system now has a better rating, how Strom Thurmond is ramping up their dual enrollment efforts with Piedmont Technical College, a public information officer has taken over their Facebook page for communication, and how recently the welding shop class built a water wheel for Old McDonald Fish Camp.

Edgefield County Planning Commission – Chairman Fab Burt stated that the Planning Commission is making progress. They have been having work sessions that are encouraging corrections to the Comprehensive Plan. He explained how development in Edgefield County is

January 30, 2023

5:30 PM

Senior Citizen Center, Edgefield, SC

growing but we need to balance the growth and the rural character. The growth in the county is on Highway 25 and the Sweetwater Road area. Mr. Burt spoke briefly about the current ordinances the Planning Commission has worked on concerning Animals, and Campgrounds & RVs. Mr. Burt expressed concerns for the water in the north of the county. He stated that now wells are being dug 1,000 feet into the ground. In his closing, Mr. Burt acknowledged Hart Clark, April Morgan, and the Planning Commission for doing a great job.

Edgefield County Water & Sewer Authority – Administrator John Hare began his remarks by acknowledging that water on the north end of the county is a huge problem, but water is a state-wide problem for South Carolina. Mr. Hare continued by informing the body that they recently submitted a \$13.5 million plan to the state to upgrade the water plant and for expansions. He stated that upgrades are needed and water infrastructure is awfully expensive. Mr. Hare continued by briefly discussing the water system master plan for the next 40 years. In his closing, Mr. Hare acknowledged that the Edgefield County Water & Sewer Authority recently was awarded the Water System of the Year Award.

County Transportation Committee – Chairman Sam Crouch opened his remarks by recognizing the members of the committee and the late Jerry Bass. Mr. Crouch informed the body that Mr. Rudy replaced Jerry Bass. Mr. Crouch continued in his remarks by saying that the CTC has a lot of funds from SRS. The committee has received \$10 million in requests for projects to be completed. Mr. Crouch stated that they will start prioritizing the projects in the next meeting to disperse the funds fairly and quickly.

Sheriff's Department – Sheriff Jody Rowland began his remarks by stating that we really needed this new Law Enforcement Center. The old Sheriff's Department does not have enough space for employees, citizens, and the jail is too small. Sheriff Rowland continued the discussion by explaining that none of this could have happened without assistance from the Delegation by cutting the cost down for the county to pay. Sheriff Rowland explained that the facility is 65,000 square feet in size. It will house the Magistrate's offices and courtroom, as well as EMS. Sheriff Rowland continued to explain how the LEC will have enough room for sex offenders registration, a training facility for staff, a detention center, inmate booking and bonding, as well as a portico for inmates transitioning into the LEC. Sheriff Rowland stated that the facility will be state of the art. He explained that an officer will have full sight of the detention facility with full access to the opening and closing of the facility doors. There will be very minimal manual opening and closing of doors. Sheriff Rowland acknowledged that the new Animal Shelter is being built next to the LEC and that Saluda County is going to partner with Edgefield County. Sheriff Rowland continued to explain that after the third reading of the Animals ordinance, we will use that ordinance guide the operation of the facility.

Town of Trenton – Administrator Roger LeDuc opened his remarks by thanking the Edgefield County Council for the many years of service he had acquired with them as the Interim Administrator. Mr. LeDuc discussed that the Town of Trenton had received PARD Funds and was using those funds to install a new air conditioning system in the gym. The Town of Trenton

January 30, 2023

5:30 PM

Senior Citizen Center, Edgefield, SC

recently received the Hometown Grant from the county. They will use those funds to fully equip and refurbish bathrooms in the gym and run a gas line into the facility. Mr. LeDuc explained the town is excited and looking forward to the renovation of the gym that will be used for community activities and Generac gatherings. Mr. LeDuc briefly discussed the cost of new fire trucks and how the cost has almost doubled. He closed his remarks by thanking the county for the training the Fire Department received.

Town of Johnston – Mayor Thomas Holmes began his remarks by informing the body that Johnston had received a grant for a new pump fire truck that cost \$450,000. He stated that the city's part was \$45,000. Mayor Holmes expressed that they were glad to receive the ARPA Funds. The town used those funds to fully outfit 18 firemen with bunker gear. We spent \$50,000 on equipment for those firemen, Mayor Holmes stated. Mayor Holmes also informed the body that by receiving those funds, they were able to upgrade the police vehicle fleet. Mayor Holmes shared that they a Hometown grant from the county in the amount of \$150,000 for a new upcoming project. He continued his remarks by acknowledging that he and Representative Clyburn toured the Adult Education Center in town. The Town of Johnston is looking to upgrade the recreation area by adding lights at the Citizen's park and digging trenches to control water flow. Mr. Holmes briefly noted that he is concerned about employee coverage at the public works facility because of the age of employees. Mr. Holmes closed his remarks by informing the body that the Town of Johnston is currently working on an art project where recently parallel parking was added.

Town of Edgefield – Mayor Ken Durham opened his remarks stating they are trying to utilize their ARPA Funds, PARD Grant, and Hometown Grant funds. He stated those funds will be used to revitalize downtown Edgefield. Mayor Durham discussed that the town will be offering business and home loans to individuals interest-free to renovate their business property in town. Mayor Durham shared that the park has a new pavilion, lights were upgraded throughout town, pickleball added to the park, an audio system added inside the town square, planned drainage for the soccer field and renovations of the Town Gym. The Town of Edgefield recently purchased the B & B building, which is to be demolished and used for parking. Mayor Durham continued his discussion of town businesses concerning Pottersville, which is an old house by the kiln. He stated that pottery is growing in Edgefield County, and they have applied for grants to help restore this area. Mayor Durham stated that he would like for it to become a living history park like the one in North Augusta. In his closing, Mayor Durham briefly discussed the need for a fire department in the Sweetwater area and possibly placing a substation, and that the Town of Edgefield has applied for a FEMA grant to help the firemen.

City of North Augusta – Manager of Human Resources J. D. McCauley acknowledged Edgefield County's new Administrator David Caddell as being a former employee of the City of North Augusta. Mr. McCauley spoke very briefly about parks concerning the old North Augusta County Club and working with Edgefield County. He continued by describing the growth at Exit 5, a new light added in front of Food Lion and a new QT convenience store opening as well as

January 30, 2023

5:30 PM

Senior Citizen Center, Edgefield, SC

the expansion on Exit 1 and Martintown Road. He said North Augusta was not pursuing any annexation in Edgefield County. He ended his remarks by noting that he loves being a good neighbor to Edgefield County.

Edgefield County Legislative Delegation

Senator Shane Massey – Senator Massey opened his remarks by noting that the Legislature has been in session for three weeks and will continue until the third week of May or longer. Senator Massey began discussing some of the topics he has been faced with recently concerning school retention for teachers and help that will be given to assist, healthcare and nurse shortages, criminal justice and the catch and release programs, economic development and workforce recruitment. He stated that they will be working with the House to help with these matters of concern.

Representative Bill Clyburn – Rep. Clyburn opened with changes in the House concerning the Speaker of the House, Ways and Means, Bruce Banister and Natural Resources, Bill Hixon, and Shane Massey. He continued his remarks by stating that he has had a lot of conversations with Mr. Hare concerning Edgefield County infrastructure. He encouraged the body to let them know that the Legislation Delegation will work with the House to get some concerns resolved if possible. He impressed this upon the body to let them know that they need to communicate with each other and with Delegation. He offered that they are welcome to contact him if they would like. Just as we communicate with each other, we need to do the same with the citizens in towns and in rural areas. Representative Clyburn ended his remarks by reminding the body that Edgefield County is a beautiful county, and that we are in better shape financially than other counties.

Representative Bill Hixon – Representative Hixon opened by referencing himself and the other members of the Delegation on how they work together as brothers. He continued his remarks concerning working with North Augusta and the old North Augusta County Club, PARD Funds for Recreation, the Election Commissioner possibly retiring and how he is in agreement with Senator Massey concerning communication. Representative Hixon spoke briefly about his new position as Agriculture Chairman, and that it is a lot of responsibility. Representative Hixon closed his remarks by reminding the body that he is always ready to communicate.

Voter Registration – Commissioner David Satcher thanked the Delegation for their attendance and remarks with encouragement.

Closing Remarks – Donna Livingston announced the fundraiser “Bags of Love” for the senior citizens of the county.

Chairman Campbell - With no further business to discuss, we can adjourn this meeting.

Meeting adjourned: 7:29 PM.

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Edgefield County Council



Dean Campbell, Council Chairman

ATTEST



Aretha Eubanks, Clerk to Council