

EDGEFIELD COUNTY COUNCIL

December 6, 2022

6:00 PM

County Council Chambers

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

Andrew Marine, County Attorney

Chairman Campbell called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM. Chairman asked for a moment of silence in memory of Terrence Culbreath, former mayor of Johnston. The invocation was given by Steve Davis, Lead Pastor of True North Church located in North Augusta, South Carolina.

**Approval of Agenda**

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

**Approval of Minutes**

Chairman Campbell asked for approval of November 1, 2022, regular meeting minutes. Councilwoman Ireland made the motion and Councilwoman Kennion seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

**Special Recognition**

Chairman Campbell said he appreciated everyone for being here tonight for the special recognitions. We have multiple special recognitions to be acknowledged this evening. First, I will ask our Recreation Director, Nick Wates to present the Youth 9 – 10-year old's Football League Champions.

Nick Wates: Our Edgefield County Youth 9 – 10-year old's Football League team had a great season. This was due to some great kids, coaches and parents. This team won the league championship, and we are here to recognize them tonight. We will recognize them by presenting them with a championship ring.

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Councilwoman Kennion: First I would like to say congratulations to our 9 – 10-year-old champions. But before I really acknowledge them, I would like for all parents to please stand. I would like to say something to you, the parents.

I know you give up your time season after season. Bringing your child to practice, games, and tournaments. It's not always easy, trust me, I understand. I know you constantly remind them over and over do they have their sport bag, helmet, and water bottle that they keep forgetting to fill. And after every practice or game, we remove grass stains from their uniforms and that takes magic. Your child may not say it, but they thank you for being on their sidelines, cheering their names. It makes all the difference in the world. I know, I was there. You have a front row seat to see them win, lose, get knocked down and stand back up. You are there to see them grow and preserve. Some of you may get a little intense at times, I know, I'm a parent. I've done it. You can't help it because you are all your child's biggest fan. And we are your biggest fan. With that being said, I want to take my hat off to all you parents.

Congratulations to the 9 – 10-year old's on being Edgefield County champions. You put up a valid effort as a group and you made us proud. What I mean by us is the Recreation Committee, County Council and Edgefield County as a whole. Mere words cannot express how proud we are of you guys. I heard this statement from one of the football coaches at Strom Thurmond as I was passing through the halls telling his players that confidence with determination matters to face the challenges. You have done it and congratulations again because we are so proud to announce that we have 9 – 10-year olds from Edgefield County that are our champions.

Championship rings were given to each member of the football team that was present by Mr. Nick Wates and Coach Kennard Taylor.

Chairman Campbell thanked Dr. Kennion for the kind words and the Recreation Department for all of their hard work. Chairman Campbell informed the citizens that we will recognize the 11 – 12-year old's football league next month in the January meeting. For the second recognition, he spoke about Roger LeDuc. If you combined all the time he has served as Administrator, he has served longer than some County Council members and past permanent Administrators. Mr. LeDuc has done a great job and County Council would like to recognize you. Chairman Campbell read the inscription on the plaque acknowledging Mr. LeDuc for his service. The third recognition of the evening is for Vice Chairman Albert Talbert who graduated last month from the South Carolina Department of Commerce Economic Development Institute. We would like to congratulate you on this accomplishment.

Councilman Talbert stated that he was shocked with this recognition. Councilman Talbert thanked the members of Council for their encouragement and support as well as everyone for congratulating him on this accomplishment.

Chairman Campbell asked Councilman Talbert to present the next special recognition.

Councilman Talbert presented Councilman Scott Cooper with his plaque for his 6 years of service to the citizens of Edgefield County. Councilman Talbert acknowledged that Councilman Cooper has been a great asset as he has served on many different committee's as well as being

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past Chairman for Edgefield County Council. As much as I hate to see him leave, I understand that we must go on to better things. May God continue to bless you wherever you go.

**Comments from the Public**

Karl Lown: He owns the RV Park on Highway 25 near County Line Fire Department. He discussed what is allowed in his RV Park and what he would like to suggest to the County Council from what he has learned concerning RV Parks. He gave suggestions such as that RVs should always remain mobile, do not allow aged RVs, and do not allow underpinning or permanent structures in the park. He stated, this causes the area to become a slum.

Due to no further comments from the public, 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.

**Public Hearing**

Chairman Campbell opened the Public Hearing on the two ordinances listed on the agenda. Chairman Campbell began with Ordinance 21-22-787, an ordinance to modify section 24-79 Recreational Vehicle Parks and 24-91 Campgrounds of the Code of Ordinance. No one spoke from the public. Chairman Campbell closed the public hearing for ordinance 21-22-787.

Chairman Campbell opened the floor to the public for ordinance 21-22-791, to rezone parcel number 145-09-00-044-000 from General Residential (GR) to General Commercial (GC). No one spoke from the public. Chairman Campbell closed that Public Hearing.

**Old Business**

1. Consideration of approval of the third reading of ordinance 21-22-790 to modify section 24-79 Recreation Vehicles Parks and 24-91 Campgrounds of the Code of Ordinance.

Chairman Campbell: I will ask Administrator Caddell if they have anything else we need to know tonight?

Administrator Caddell: No, there are no comments.

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

2. Consideration of approval of the third 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 Caddell if there anything new we need to know concerning this ordinance?

Administrator Caddell: No, there are no comments.

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Chairman Campbell asked Council if they had any questions or comments on this ordinance. Hearing none, Councilwoman Kennion made the motion and Councilman Cooper seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

**New Business**

1. Consideration of approval of resolution number 21-22-1152, a contract to acquire 5.24 acres of property on Barton Road (parcel 144-00-01-003-000) for \$155,000.00 contingent on receiving grant funding for the project.

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

Administrator Caddell: Barton Road located off of Brighthop Road on Highway 25 has experienced flooding for many years during intense rain or long duration of rainfall events. The flooding is caused by storm water runoff from local industries, from impervious soils and Highway 25. Edgefield County has been involved in several lawsuits over the years concerning this issue. The barrier to solving this problem has been the room needed to implement a solution. The solution to this case is a detention pond. A suitable property has been identified for the location of a detention pond. The property owner is willing to sell the property for \$155,000.00. The property owners' home of which is a mobile home is currently on the property. We obtained an appraisal of the property valued at \$124,000. The estimated cost to complete the stormwater project is \$1,118,000 that includes the land purchase. The construction of the detention pond, piping leading to and from the pond as well as the cost of the property. We have submitted a grant request to the state towards funding 85% of the project. We do believe we will receive that grant. Our share of cost after the grant is \$167, 779. We would initially purchase the property with the intent to reimburse that money with grant funds. We would attempt to make our match using County resources. We should know if we have received the grant hopefully within a month or two, but no later than April 1, 2023. What we are asking Council to approve is the purchase agreement in contingent on receiving funding for the project. We have a contract that acknowledge that we will not proceed with the purchase unless we receive the grant funding.

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

Councilman Cooper: Is the cost roughly \$30,000 an acre?

Administrator Caddell: Correct.

Councilman Cooper: Did we run some comps on previous sales in that neighborhood?

Administrator Caddell: That was included in the appraisal.

Councilman Cooper: I see the property is located close to Highway 25. Did that elevate the cost per acre?

Administrator Caddell: Yes.

Councilwoman Ireland: What are we going to do with the mobile home? Are going to sell the mobile home on Gov Deals?

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Administrator Caddell: Yes. We have also thought about relocating it to a corner of the lot and then selling that corner as a set up for residence. That may be possible once we get into the engineering but is not definite.

Councilman Cooper: In reference to the retention pond, will you try to do that towards the back of the property so it won't be so noticeable?

Administrator Caddell: The detention pond is roughly centered in the center of the property. It is a dug pond and it is infiltration based. Given the soil type there, the water should infiltrate rather than leave the pond.

Councilwoman Ireland: I know I heard a person gasp at the cost for this. And yes, it is costly. I would like to remind the citizens that this project has been discussed for many years. I have seen grown men cry as they asked Council for help because of the issues that their homes were facing due to this issue. We as a County could not do anything due to not having access to funds. Now, we are blessed to have this option and the availability that this will hopefully go through to solve this issue. Administrator Caddell, will this alleviate the problems we have been having on Barton Road? Or are we eliminating the problems?

Administrator Caddell: I will ask Assistant Administrator Hart Clark to answer that question.

Assistant Administrator Clark: About 84% of the problem comes from the industrial properties on Highway 25. The Highway 25 corridors drainage was originally designed to have a retention pond about 500 feet from where we are planning to put this one. That retention pond was never created. The effects of that are all of the drainage from Highway 25 is shedding right into the entryway of Barton Road as well as all of the water shed from the four industries that are at the very beginning of that road. This pond would catch all the water from the industries and Highway 25. The only thing it would not is the rain water that falls directly onto the affected properties themselves. The pond will catch 85%.

Councilwoman Kennion: Even the nursery?

Assistant Administrator Clark: The nursery is a little further away located on Timberland. We have a fix in the plans but not part of this project. The state is working with Costa on a plan to enlarge the retention pond that is at one of our recycling centers sites which should address the Costa Farms water issues.

Interim Administrator LeDuc: In 2011, I went out to that site of which it had several feet of water. Residents had to get around in boats. We looked at three different options and this is the third. We feel this will satisfy the problem.

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

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

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

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Administrator Caddell: The Chapter 6 Animals portion of our current Code of Ordinances is very outdated and doesn't address the operation of an Animal Control Facility. We appreciate the work of staff, the PC, Council Members, and members of the public on developing a comprehensive animal control ordinance that addresses the operation of our soon to be constructed facility. One that is protective of animals, and facilitates adoptions. I do want to point out to Council that the new ordinance language references a separate fee schedule. That schedule will be developed over the next few months based on quoted veterinarian fees and presented to Council in the Spring.

Chairman Campbell: Do we have any questions or comments from Council? My comment is I encourage any members of the county to get a copy of this ordinance and read it. We would like your input concerning this ordinance. Council is there a motion to approve first reading of ordinance 21-22-792? Councilman Talbert made the motion and Councilman Cooper seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

3. Consideration of entering into a consulting contract with Roger LeDuc from January 1, 2023 to June 1, 2023.

Chairman Campbell: Council, we have discussed this many times concerning Mr. LeDuc's contract expiring at the end of December. We left it in place so he could work in a coordinated fashion with Administrator Caddell who began in October. We wanted to make sure that the Administrator Caddell would have the opportunity to have Mr. LeDuc available on a contract so that he could be called upon as needed during budget season. I will ask Administrator Caddell to discuss this with us.

Administrator Caddell: This contract will extend through County budget preparation (1/1/23 – 6/1/23) and reflects an "as needed" schedule of approximately 5-10 hours per week at \$70 per hour. There are no substantive changes in this contract versus his previous except he is now designated as a consultant.

Chairman Campbell: Any questions or comments from Council? Hearing none. Councilman Cooper made the motion and Councilwoman Kennion seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

4. Consideration of approval for a rental rate increase for the Sweetwater Community Center and the Bettis Park Picnic Shelter.

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

Administrator Caddell: We reviewed rental rates for both facilities. Comparable facility rates in surrounding areas are significantly higher. Our goal isn't to compete with other rentals but to raise rates to cover more of the maintenance (including cleaning), utilities, and upkeep while still keeping them very affordable for the community.

Chairman Campbell: If I am not mistaken, the current rates are the same rates when it was opened for Sweetwater Community Center?

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Administrator Caddell: Yes.

Councilwoman Ireland: I did ask Aretha Eubanks to pull some surrounding area ballpark rentals as well as community center rentals. We are still well below market in rental rates even by raising these fees. I was in there one day in her office and there was a gentleman from Augusta renting a ball field. I know why they are coming from Augusta to rent the ball fields. It is because when I looked at the Augusta field fees, they are astronomical compared to our fees. Even though we are doubling in essence the fees, we are still well below the market rate. We have made substantial improvements to the Sweetwater Community Center and are continuing to make more for accessibility to renters. I think this is definitely warranted. I thank you for working on this.

Councilman Talbert: I would like to add to what Councilwoman Ireland just spoke about. If we have to make a change in rates, we have to start somewhere. This is a start and maybe in the next couple of years we will continue to raise it a little at a time until we finally get it close to market rate fees. I really appreciate all your hard work on this. It means a lot.

Chairman Campbell: Any other questions or comments from Council? Hearing none.  
Councilman Talbert made the motion and Councilman Cooper seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

**Comments from the Public**

John Hudson: He spoke a word of correction to the Council concerning stewardship and the upcoming new year.

Louise Settles: I am here to represent GLEAMNS and let you know that we are going to our statewide retreat on this coming Thursday in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. We will be attending to gain information that will benefit Edgefield County.

Chairman Campbell closed this public comment period.

Chairman Campbell: Councilman Cooper, would you like to speak at this time?

Councilman Cooper: It has been a privilege and honor to serve with you on Council. I was pleasure to serve with Mr. Pettigrew on the Hospital Board and those that served on the Tax Appeals Board during my season. I have invested a fair amount of time thinking about what I say that will add value to our future. I'm confident that Chairman Campbell is going to list our accomplishments of this year. Many of which were a culmination of years of effort. Please indulge me as I share two concepts which come to mind as I think of the future history. The first is momentum and the second is status quo.

Momentum - In the last several years we have drastically added the number of taxpayers to our County. Industrial taxpayers, small business taxpayers and residential taxpayers. This has helped create the financial momentum that we need to execute many of the projects we have closed on in the last couple of years. It's critically important from my view that we continue to capitalize on that momentum and continue to grow it so that we can continue to improve the

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services that our constituents want as well as continue to improve the compensation that our county team members desire and deserve.

Status quo – My first year on Council I spoke quite a bit about rotational leadership on all of the boards which serve our county. As our region continues to grow and continues to be under tremendous financial pressure due to the demographic shifts taking place in our country. The growing industries in our region which results in our growing population. It is my hope that we will continue to look for fresh faces to serve on our boards and County Council. Rotational leadership is paramount in my opinion if one wants to capitalize on these trends and not fall victim to the status quo.

So, in closing, I chose to rotate myself off of this board. Please know that I will still continue to be involved. I will do all I can to assist the Sweetwater Community Center and Edgefield County as we progress further into our future. It has been an honor and privilege to serve the citizens of Edgefield County alongside each of you. I look forward to a great future.

**County Administrator's Report**

1. **Fire Departments** – I attended a Fire Board meeting on Nov. 21<sup>st</sup> and presented a draft incentive program to encourage non certified firefighters to pursue certification. The attendees expressed support for this program. I will bring a proposal to Council in January that the County incentivize firefighters to obtain their certifications by paying \$10 per training hour. It takes 171 hours to achieve Level I. We would also like to include Emergency Medical Responder Certification which is 51 hours for firefighters. Our EMA Director, Foster Crowder, can teach this class. No money would be paid until certification is achieved. We will propose at least 3 stipends for each certification per Fire Department.
2. **Animal Control Facility** – The building for the ACF has been ordered and work will begin this month. There will be a Groundbreaking December 19 at 2pm. The site can be accessed from Rabbit Trail just below Star rd. There will be a Deputy guiding people in.
3. **Edgefield Soccer Field drainage** – The town of Edgefield received a Park and Recreation Development fund (PARD) grant for drainage. The County will contribute an equipment operator and dump truck to install French drain followed by aeration and heavy top dressing. We will begin with the larger field (for the older age groups) in early Spring.
4. **Bettis Park** – We have received a PARD grant to repair (and upgrade) the electrical at the Bettis Park picnic shelter and to put a new roof on the bathroom in the amount of \$8,000. Those projects are out for bid. Repairs will be completed in the Spring.
5. **Christmas Lunch** – We will be holding a BBQ Christmas lunch next week on the 14<sup>th</sup> for all County employees and look forward to seeing them.

**Comments by County Council Chairman**

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I want to start by thanking Mr. Cooper for his service to our County.

Since this is the final meeting of 2022, I wanted to take just a moment to remind Council what we've accomplished this year. I've found that sometimes, it's good to take a breath and reflect on what we have done to help the citizens of Edgefield County.

First, I think the most important thing we could do is hire an Administrator who I think will do a great job for us. And our new Clerk to Council began her time with us in January, and she's proven to be a tremendous asset.

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

We broke ground on the new Law Enforcement Center last month. It's pretty amazing that 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 control facility. It will be built on the same land as the LEC. We plan to break ground on that facility this month, and it should be ready to operate by the late summer. That's another success story.

I've talked about 2 very big projects in Edgefield County – with the Law Enforcement Center being the largest ever. And there's one more very large and important project: You approved earlier this year more than \$2 million for a complete overhaul of our emergency communications system. We have spots in our county that police, fire, EMS and others can't communicate. We've tried to patch it over the years, but that has 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 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, animal control facility, and 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

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sincerely appreciate his efforts. I also want to thank the Roger and 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 finished our council redistricting after the census.
- We approved a tax incentive to give developers a chance to breathe new life into Kendall Mill in Edgefield.
- We renamed the Edgefield County Airfield for Linda and Johnny Anderson.
- 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.
- 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 these citizens.
- 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, like the one we did tonight.
- We worked with the Hospital to help procure a new ambulance, and we've also ordered another ambulance since it takes about a year or more to get one.
- We have also increased our School Resource Officers from 4 to 8.

As I mention, these are just 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.

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That's all in the rearview mirror.

Now, looking forward, I want to announce that County Council will have a retreat on January 10, 5 p.m., here in Council Chambers. We will discuss the work we want to accomplish in the next several years. If anyone in the public has information, you'd like us to consider, please send it to the Administrator prior to January 10. The Administrator will also be soliciting input from County employees, Department Heads, and elected officials. Let me say for clarity that we are asking for all this input in advance, not at the meeting. While this meeting, like all our meetings, is open to the public and we encourage you to attend, we need to be able to consider all input ahead of time.

**Adjourn**

Chairman Campbell: I don't have any additional comments, and there is no business left to conduct, so I'd be happy to entertain a motion to adjourn, if Mr. Cooper would like to make his final motion. Councilman Cooper made the motion and Councilwoman Kennion seconded. Motion passed unanimously. County Council meeting adjourned at 7:33 P.M.

**Edgefield County Council**

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**Dean Campbell, Council Chairman**

**ATTEST**

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**Aretha Eubanks, Clerk to Council**