

EDGEFIELD COUNTY COUNCIL

March 22, 2012

6:00 PM

County Council Chambers

The Edgefield County Council held a special called Budget Work Session meeting at 6:00 P. M. Thursday, March 22, 2012, in the County Council Chambers, 225 Jeter Street, Edgefield.

**Members present**

Dean Campbell, Chair

Genia Blackwell, Vice Chair

Rodney Ashcraft, Councilman

Willie Bright, Councilman

**Others present**

Lynn Strom, County Administrator

Crystal Coleman, Finance Director

Jennifer Gilley, Clerk to Council

and others as per list attached

**Absent**

Norman Dorn, Councilman

Michael Medlock, County Attorney

Chairman Campbell called the meeting to order. Chairman Campbell explained that this is a Budget Work Session so no votes would be taken at tonight's meeting, but that the budget would be discussed and no changes could be made. He also explained that he was not planning (unless it was needed) on having another Budget Work Session since we would be discussing budget at the next 3 County Council meetings to be held in April, May and June 2012. He told everyone that we were starting out with a balanced budget. He told us that he would have Lynn Strom, the Administrator, go through and explain the budget and after that Chairman Campbell would open the floor to public comment starting with Elected Officials and Department Heads. He stated that after they were done, the citizens would have a chance for their comments and questions to be heard and answered. Chairman Campbell then asked Mrs. Strom to take us through the budget for Fiscal Year (FY) 2012-13.

Mrs. Strom started by saying that she would summarize the majority of the budget and go over the main points more thoroughly. She stated that with the revenues, she didn't anticipate raising the millage to maintain a balanced budget. She did state that there was an increase in the lost tax credit; it went from \$660,000 last year to a projected \$800,000 this year. She explained that the Local Government Fund (LGF) has not made any decision on what funding we will be receiving, this budget shows a \$40,000 increase and if that money is not received, we would need to go back in to make a few minor adjustments to offset that difference. She also noted that the Building and Planning Fee Increase was reflected in this budget even though it has only passed the first reading of the new ordinance. She stated that in order to balance this budget, we anticipate using \$280,900 of our fund balance. She said that even though this sounds like a large amount it is actually less than what was budgeted last year and typically we don't expend the entire budget, so we wouldn't use that full amount. Even if we did use everything that we budgeted Edgefield County would still have about 3.8 months in reserves. Chairman Campbell asked if the 3.8 months of reserves that Edgefield County would have under this proposed

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budget meets the obligation of the resolution that says we have to expend over 4 months. Mrs. Strom stated that the resolution states that we will not have more than 4 months of operating expenditures at June 30<sup>th</sup>. She said that as long as we have four or less we will be in compliance with that resolution.

Mrs. Strom moved on to the expenditures part of the budget and that it was at \$8,546,994 and this is an increase of \$253,119 over last year's expenditure budget. The increase came from several things including workers compensation insurance, employee benefits (including health insurance and state retirement), building repairs, equipment, the addition of two deputies for the Sheriff's Office, and an increase in contractual services for the County. She told us that funding for outside organizations was minimized so that the County could fund the essentials in FY 2012-13. There will be no employee raises this year and no training in the budget for Council. Most of the non-profits are going to go unfunded this year. Piedmont Technical College, Beaver Dam Creek, Aiken, Bamberg, Barnwell, and Edgefield Counties Regional Library System (ABBE), Soil & Water Conservation, Clemson Extension and the Edgefield Health Department are still going to receive their funding as it is mandated by State Law.

Mrs. Strom continued by telling us that there were several areas of savings this year including \$115,000 from the meals at the Jail. There was also a savings of \$13,000 due to the animal control shelter that was approved by Council.

Chairman Campbell asked if any of the numbers were subject to change in the expenditures section of the budget. Mrs. Strom answered by saying that some of them could slightly change but for the most part should stay the same. Councilwoman Blackwell asked Mrs. Strom to explain the \$13,000 savings from the animal control shelter. Mrs. Strom told her that what we were paying through contract to Aiken County would be more than what we will spend running our own animal control shelter.

Mrs. Strom then briefly went through the rest of the budget. She told us that under the Debt Service nothing really changed but we will have one more bond mature in April 2013. She explained that the Tri-County Solicitor's office budget and the Industrial Park budget didn't have any major changes. In the Road Maintenance budget there was one small change regarding equipment. There is one piece of equipment that is needed (a bush-hog arm) but will be paid for by reserves. The Solid Waste, E-911 Administration, and the Victim's Bill of Rights budgets were approximately the same or less than they were in FY 2011-12. The EMS millage stayed the same. They have applied for a grant of \$334,910 that they are hoping to be awarded and purchase new equipment and machines. If this grant is not received then those purchases will not be made. They will be looking into buying some new stretchers and load systems at \$44,000 each regardless of the grant mentioned. The Recreation budget had a few small changes in registration fees. They also have added year round part-time help in the Recreation Budget. She went on to say that she did have one item she would like to have Council's favor on. Every year we use the Town of Edgefield and Johnston's facilities and pay 75% of the utilities bill. They have asked that we pay 100% of the utilities bill. This would increase the budget by \$6,250 for the year. She stated that this money would come from the Recreation's reserve fund. Council had a brief discussion about this topic and decided to pull the ordinance regarding this issue and get back to Mrs. Strom before the first reading of the budget ordinance to fix any line items in this budget.

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Councilwoman Blackwell brought up the bonds and asked if anyone has looked at them to be refinanced. Mrs. Strom stated that they had been refinanced a few years ago and that it may not be cost worthy, but she would check on it and be sure.

Chairman Campbell told Council that he wasn't planning on going through another 45 minute presentation of what was just presented and asked them if they would rather go through the entire budget again at first reading. He said that he would open the floor for public comment at the first reading but didn't find it necessary to go through the entire process again. The rest of Council agreed.

**Comments from the public**

Mr. Roy Blackwell said that he believed the proposed budget sounded very well done.

**Adjourn**

Councilman Bright made the motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Blackwell. The motion carried unanimously 4-0 with Councilman Dorn absent.

Notice of this meeting was provided to Edgefielddaily.com, The Citizen News, and The Edgefield Advertiser.

**Edgefield County Council**

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**Dean Campbell, Chair**

**ATTEST**

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**Jennifer L. Gilley, Clerk to Council**