

EDGEFIELD COUNTY COUNCIL

September 27, 2016

6:00 PM

County Council Chambers

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201600003658 OR      1599 248

The Edgefield County Council held it's a called meeting at 6:00 P. M. Tuesday, September 27, 2016, in the County Council Chambers, 225 Jeter Street, Edgefield, SC. Notice of this meeting was provided to Edgefielddaily.com, The Edgefield Advertiser and others as requested.

**Members present**

Dean Campbell, Chairman  
Genia Blackwell, Vice Chairwoman  
Rodney Ashcraft, Councilman  
Betty Butler, Councilwoman  
Albert Talbert, Councilman

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**Others present**

Tommy Paradise, County Administrator  
Jennifer Gilley, Clerk to Council  
and others as per list attached

**Others absent**

Bruce Cooley, Assistant Administrator/Finance Director  
Andrew Marine, County Attorney

Chairman Campbell called the meeting to order. He explained this meeting would be to start planning ahead for issues that are ongoing or that will need to be dealt with short and long term. He went on to say that in 2017 Council would also revisit the Strategic Plan to be sure that is it being kept up to date and tasks are getting completed. He then introduced Roger LeDuc as the meeting facilitator.

**Planning Session**

Mr. LeDuc started by telling everyone that Mr. Paradise has presented a list of items he believes will need to be addressed by Council at some point in the near future. Mr. LeDuc stated that he would be reviewing the items on the list as well as receiving comments from County Council and the public. He went on to say that at the end of the meeting Council would be grouping the items discussed by priority.

Mr. LeDuc started with the first five items.

1. **Emergency Medical Service** – Mr. LeDuc explained that over the last two years calls are up 24% and transports are up 54% causing expenses to rise dramatically. Staff will review future challenges and options to meet the needs of the County.

Councilman Ashcraft stated the Edgefield County Hospital has recently contracted with an ambulance company for non-emergent transports. He asked Mr. John Pettigrew, a member of the Hospital Board who was sitting in the audience, to tell Council more about that contract. Mr. Pettigrew stated Edgefield County Hospital is contracted with 2 additional ambulance services but that they will be calling Edgefield County ambulances to transport first and then if they are busy they will contact one of the two other services. Councilwoman Blackwell asked Mr. Paradise how many ambulances are in service at any given time. Mr. Paradise stated there are two ambulances 24

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hours a day 7 days a week and one ambulance that is in service 12 hours at the time during the peaks hours of 7AM to 7PM. Mr. Paradise stated that when an Edgefield County ambulance is transporting a non-emergent patient they are unable to take emergency calls for 2 hours. He went on to say that last month Edgefield County Hospital called Edgefield County Emergency Medical Service to make 24 non emergent transport. Mr. Paradise explained that these calls alone pulled an emergency ambulance out of service for a total of 48 hours. Mr. Pettigrew said Edgefield County Hospital will be calling Edgefield County Emergency Medical Service first to see if they can do the non-emergent transport and then if they can't they will call one of the other two services. Mr. Paradise stated that due to the number of calls they would like to see Edgefield County Hospital call one of the contracted services first for the non-emergent transports. He explained this would leave the emergency ambulances ready to take emergency calls from the citizens of Edgefield County.

2. **Auditor's Office** – Mr. LeDuc explained the current Auditor's office will become vacant after the completion of the Kneece Building. Council will need to decide if the building is going continue to be used as County office space or if the property should be sold.

Chairman Campbell stated that he believes this building would be best utilized if it was sold and added back to the tax rolls. He stated he didn't think the County would need the space since the goal is to move everyone to the Kneece Building.

3. **Sweetwater Community Center** – Mr. LeDuc told Council the Sweetwater Community Center has exceeded expectations with demand for rentals. He stated Council may wish to review options and limitations concerning the Center's availability to the public.

Chairman Campbell asked Council if they should change this heading to Recreation and put Sweetwater Community Center under that heading along with any other Recreation items that may need to be addressed in the future. Council agreed.

4. **Planning for the County's Future Growth** – Mr. LeDuc stated Edgefield County is poised for growth in the coming years. Council may wish to provide the Planning Commission with direction concerning the review of the zoning and development standards for the County. Other issues that Council may be concerned about should also be addressed.

Councilman Ashcraft asked Mr. Dan Bergtholdt, a member of Planning Commission who was sitting in the audience, if he believed the Planning Commission would appreciate some direction from Council on what they expect of the Planning Commission as a whole. Mr. Bergtholdt stated that approximately one and a half years ago County Council and Planning Commission held a joint meeting. He stated that he believed that meeting was valuable to both parties. He stated Planning Commission understood what was important to Council for them to be working towards and County Council understood how the Planning Commission makes some decisions. He stated that he would like to see these joint meetings takes place on a regular basis. Councilwoman Blackwell asked if the

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Planning Commission has enough knowledge at this point to make plans for the future for Edgefield County. Mr. LeDuc stated that he believed with some direction and professional guidance he thought they would be able to plan for the growth. He went on to explain Planning Commission members get 3 hours of education each year so they don't necessarily have the institutional knowledge needed to make those decisions. He stated they are more of an advisory board to Council but they also need to know what Council expects them to be working towards.

Councilwoman Butler stated that she believes the joint meeting is very important and she would like to see those more often. She went on to say that Council needs to determine what they need to provide the Planning Commission with to give them the knowledge that they need to plan for the County effectively. Mr. LeDuc suggested starting out by having a joint meeting once a year so that both parties can be sure they are heading in the same direction.

5. **Garage** – Mr. LeDuc stated the maintenance garage has an annual payroll of \$86,154. Council may want to have staff track the productivity of the garage so that they can determine if this is the most economical use of these funds.

Chairman Campbell said he believes Mr. Paradise should just track the work and run the numbers. He said he believes Council will need to see what the most cost efficient method is for this particular subject. He stated the numbers will tell Council if it is more cost efficient to keep the County Shop or out-source the work.

Chairman Campbell then stated he was going to take public comments regarding the first five items that have been discussed. He stated he would have another public comments section after the next set of five.

1. Suzy Spurgeon stated that she believed that when Council looked at Emergency Medical Service they would need to look at equipment as well as additional personnel.
2. Fred Peterson told Council he believes they will need to consider the funding that will be needed as Edgefield County grows for the different services provided to the citizens.
3. Linda Anderson stated that she believes the Planning Commission is doing everything they can to plan for the County's future growth. She went on to say that she believes it is time for Council to decide if they are going to invest in Edgefield County.
4. Virginia Hartwig stated that she would like to see stricter zoning laws in place to control the way Edgefield County grows.
5. Art Biggs told Council that he doesn't think it is too late to start planning and preparing for the growth that is headed to Edgefield County. He believes the planning will need to start with zoning and believes the communication between staff and various committees, commission and boards will have to increase. He stated that staff should start by determining what all is in place

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and then devise a plan for how the County should be headed. He said at that point the County would be able to tell the Citizens the plan.

6. Scott Cooper stated that he believes "Planning for the County's Future Growth" should be the highest priority on this list.

Councilman Ashcraft stated that he would like to see the Edgefield County and North Augusta City Planning Commissions hold a joint meeting.

Mr. LeDuc started with the next five items.

6. **Computer Technology** – Mr. LeDuc stated Edgefield County has 64% of its computers at or exceeding 5 years of age. Council may want to determine a replacement schedule for this equipment. They may also want to review the IT support that Edgefield County receives from EDTS.
7. **Economic Development** – Mr. LeDuc explained that Council may wish to discuss the two-pronged approach for economic development of the County as well as additional ways this program can be enhanced.
8. **Storm Water Management** – Mr. LeDuc stated one of the most common complaints from the citizens is about storm water run-off. He stated Council may wish to discuss ways that the County can facilitate and fund projects to alleviate these issues.
9. **Sheriff Department/Jail Magistrate Court Complex** – Mr. LeDuc told Council the current Law Enforcement Center was constructed in 1980 and renovated in 2002. He explained the facility does not have adequate space for the present law enforcement needs and that the detention center needs renovations and upgrades. He went on to say the Magistrate's Court also does not have adequate space and lacks a public courtroom. He stated Council may wish to develop a plan for a long-term solution to this issue.
10. **County Maintained Roads** – Mr. LeDuc explained Edgefield County has 150 miles of unpaved roads and 50 miles of paved roads in the County system. He stated Council may wish to discuss methods that staff can use to facilitate bringing existing paved roads into the system and ways to encourage new developments to have their roads dedicated to the County. Mr. LeDuc encouraged a regularly scheduled joint meeting between County Council and the County Transportation Committee. He explained CTC receives approximately \$800,000 each year to maintain roads. He stated that 25% of that money has to be used on State Roads but that 75% of that money can be used where CTC believes it to be most beneficial. This includes County Roads. He said they typically

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will use the money in 3 main areas including building new roads, paving/resurfacing roads and fixing safety issues.

Chairman Campbell stated the County residents pay a \$20 road maintenance fee on each vehicle they have registered in Edgefield County. This money goes into a separate fund. Mr. LeDuc stated this money goes to the Road Crew for scraping dirt roads, pipe and rock. He stated this fund receives approximately \$475,000 to \$480,000 per year. Mr. LeDuc went on to say that the County's objective probably won't be to pave all of the roads so much as maintain the roads that are already paved.

Chairman Campbell then stated he was going to take public comments regarding the second five items that have been discussed. He stated Council would then discuss any issues they thought needed to be added to the list.

1. Art Biggs stated he believes the County Maintained Roads is a high priority issue. He asked if there is a formula to determine which roads take priority over other roads. He also asked the cost of maintaining (resurfacing) a road versus paving a road.  
Mr. LeDuc stated the road priority is decided on by CTC. He went on to say that paving a road cost approximately \$1,000,000 per mile and resurfacing a road cost approximately \$100,000 per mile. He told Mr. Biggs the State formula for the money being divided up by county is 33% population, 33% area and 33% roadway relative to the State.
2. Fred Peterson thanked County Council, CTC, Mr. LeDuc, and Mr. Paradise for the work done on Longleaf Drive and Timberland Lane. He went on to ask if the County would consider implementing a 1 cent per gallon gas tax to go towards the County Roads. Mr. Paradise told him the County doesn't have the authority to implement a gas tax. Mr. LeDuc went on to say the County has looked into adding a 1% local option sales tax.
3. John Pettigrew said he believes the Economic Development can be improved by evaluating the County's relationship with the Economic Development Partnership. He stated that we may be able to spend that money elsewhere and get better results.
4. Suzy Spurgeon spoke about the Computer Technology and the internet issues. She would like to see stronger internet signals throughout the County.
5. Linda Anderson said she believes Economic Development should be a high priority issue. She said she would like to see the County focus on business development rather than industrial development.
6. Scott Cooper said he believes the Computer Technology is an important issue. He asked how far Comcast internet is available up Hwy 25 into Edgefield County. The consensus of the audience was that it comes into Trenton.
7. Fred Peterson stated that he believes Storm Water Management should be a high priority issue. He told Council that he was told Aiken County has policies on each piece of property regarding storm water management for developers to follow when developing a piece of property. He stated that if Edgefield County were to have these policies there could be zero storm water runoff

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for newly developed properties. He went on to say this would be at the developer's expense.

Mr. LeDuc stated that the policies in Aiken County are location specific and not on every piece of property. He said policies such as these are an option for Edgefield County.

8. Suzy Spurgeon stated she too believes Storm Water Management is an important issue. She said would like to see the County plan ahead in the event of flooding.

Chairman Campbell stated Council would now be discussing the issues they would like to add to the list presented.

1. **Fire Water Supply** - Councilwoman Blackwell stated there are no fire hydrants on Martintown Road from Woodlawn Road to the County Line. She stated there are other areas in the County without fire hydrants as well and she would like to see this issue researched.  
Mr. LeDuc stated approximately 75% of the County doesn't have water. He went on to explain that in order to have fire hydrants you must have them join into a 6 inch or larger water line. He stated there may not be fire hydrants throughout areas of the County due to insufficient lines. He went on to say this is something staff can meet with Edgefield County Water and Sewer to research.
2. **Bettis Academy Narrow for Trucks** - Councilwoman Butler stated that she would like to see staff work with South Carolina Department of Transportation to see what can be done about the narrowness of Bettis Academy Road. She explained that with the widening of Hwy 25 there would be danger in the narrowness of Bettis Academy Road when the tractor trailers are turning. She stated there isn't enough room for the eighteen wheelers to turn while other cars are at the intersection.
3. **Water for Northside** – Councilman Talbert stated that he would like for staff to review the study regarding water in Northside from 2009.
4. **More effective/efficient Government** – Chairman Campbell stated that he would like for staff to look into the effects of implementing user fees and building permit fees. He stated he would also like to look more into having policies regarding developers and retention/detention ponds.

Chairman Campbell then stated he was going to take public comments regarding the items Council added to the discussion.

1. Dan Bergtholdt stated that he sits on the Planning Commission. He explained that approximately 2 months ago he asked the Planning Commission to review the Comprehensive Plan and at that time business licenses came up as a way to bring in additional funding.
2. Suzy Spurgeon stated that she would like to see staff focus on better communication between emergency services as well as the system that is being used.
3. Art Biggs stated that he believes Law Enforcement should be a high priority. He also brought up implementing a special purpose tax to help alleviate some of the costs regarding law enforcement

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and their necessities. He also asked if this would be handled in a regular budget process or through the strategic plan. He finished by saying he doesn't want to see a project like the Sheriff Department/Jail Magistrate Court Complex pieced together.

4. Linda Anderson told Council that she would like to see the County focus on long term planning.
5. A gentleman from the audience believed the County should build relationships with surrounding counties that have already been through some of these growth spurts to see what they recommend as far as process. He said we may be able to learn from some of their mistakes.

Council then put all of the items into a list by priority.

**High Priority**

1. Emergency Medical Service
2. Planning for the County's Future Growth
3. Economic Development
4. User Fees
5. County-wide Emergency Communication System

**Medium Priority**

6. Recreation/Sweetwater Community Center
7. Computer Technology
8. Storm Water Management
9. Sheriff Department/Jail Magistrate Court Complex
10. County Maintained Roads
11. Expand Water System to the Northern Part of County
12. More effective/efficient Government

**Low Priority**

13. Auditor's Office
14. Garage
15. Fire water supply for fire
16. Partner with SCDOT on making Bettis Academy Road safer for everyone

**Adjourn**

Councilwoman Butler made the motion to adjourn, seconded by Councilwoman Blackwell. Motion passed unanimously.

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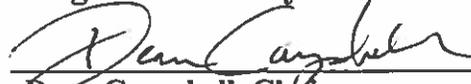
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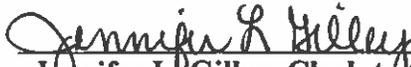
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**Edgefield County Council**

  
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Dean Campbell, Chairman

**ATTEST**

  
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Jennifer L. Gilley, Clerk to Council