

EDGEFIELD COUNTY COUNCIL

October 4, 2011

6:00 PM

County Council Chambers

The Edgefield County Council held its regular meeting at 6:00 P. M. Tuesday, October 4, 2011, in the County Council Chambers, 225 Jeter Street, Edgefield.

**Members present**

Dean Campbell, Chair

Genia Blackwell, Vice Chair

Rodney Ashcraft, Councilman

Willie Bright, Councilman

Norman Dorn, Councilman

**Others present**

Roger LeDuc, Interim County Administrator

Michael Medlock, County Attorney

Lynn Strom, Finance Director/Assistant Administrator

Jennifer Gilley, Clerk to Council

and others as per list attached

Chairman Campbell called the meeting to order and the invocation was given by County Attorney Michael Medlock. The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag was then recited.

**Approval of the October 4, 2011 Council Agenda**

Before approval of the October 4, 2011 agenda, the chairman asked to move the public hearing and the second reading of Ordinance No. 11-12-648 (redistricting) to be presented after the last item of new business. Motion was made by Councilman Ashcraft, seconded by Councilwoman Blackwell, to approve the agenda with the movement of the public hearing and the second reading of Ordinance No. 11-12-648 (redistricting). Motion carried unanimously.

**Approval of Minutes**

Motion to approve the September 6, 2011 Called Meeting of Council was made by Councilman Bright, seconded by Councilman Ashcraft. Motion carried unanimously.

The September 6, 2011 County Council Minutes (Regular Meeting) were approved by a motion made by Councilwoman Blackwell, seconded by Councilman Ashcraft. Motion carried unanimously.

The motion to approve the September 22, 2011 Called Meeting of Council (Strategic Planning Meeting) was made by Councilman Bright, seconded by Councilwoman Blackwell. Motion carried unanimously.

**Comments from the public**

Randy Parks of Summer Lake Subdivision expressed his opposition to any increase in the millage rate. He stated that he believes that Council should find another way (other than raising the millage rate) to make up any shortage of the budget. He suggested that any non-essential services be looked at first to see if the budget could be cut to make up for any shortfall. Second, he suggested for Council to look for a corporate tax-break or incentives to bring in more business and industry to increase the tax base and possibly avoid future problems.

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Bob Timmerman spoke second and stated his opposition to any increase in the millage rate and that he too believes we need to bring industry to Edgefield County.

Next, Arthur Biggs addressed Council with questions about the millage rate and how the millage rate is changed. Bill Gilchrist stated that due to our CPI increasing we could also increase the millage rate. Mr. Biggs stated that he is against an increase in the millage rate. He said we need to look at decreasing the budget instead of raising the millage rate.

Finally, Jennifer Hyams expressed concerns with increasing taxes. She had comments and concerns about the school levy. Bill Gilchrist got her contact information and stated that he would speak with her the following business day.

**Reports**

No comments.

**Old Business**

1. Second reading of Ordinance No. 11-12-646, "An Ordinance Adopting and Enacting a New Code for the County of Edgefield, SC; Providing for the Repeal of Certain Ordinances Not Included Therein; Providing a Penalty for the Violation Thereof; Providing for the Manner of Amending Such Code; and Providing When Such code and This Ordinance Shall Become Effective." The Administrator had no comments. County Council had no comments. Councilwoman Blackwell made the motion for to approve Ordinance No. 11-12-646. The motion was seconded by Councilman Dorn. The motion carried unanimously.
2. Second reading of Ordinance No. 11-12-647,"An Ordinance Approving and Authorizing the Sale of Real Estate Owned by the County of Edgefield Known as a Portion of Beaver Run Court to Randall E. Thompson, II, in Exchange for a Deed from Mr. Thompson as to Neighboring Land." The Administrator had no comments. County Council had no comments. Councilman Dorn made the motion to approve Ordinance No. 11-12-647. The motion was seconded by Councilman Bright. The motion carried unanimously.

**New Business**

1. Consideration of the Millage Rate for fiscal year 2011/2012. Bill Gilchrist, Auditor, presented his recommendation for the 2011/2012 millage rate. The current value of a mill in Edgefield County is \$71,142. From 2010 to 2011, a reassessment year, the value of a mill went up 1.45%. He stated that last year's millage rate of 74.9 will cover the budget. He explained that the increase in millage rate would help offset the loss in revenue from property tax due to depreciation in manufacturing and vehicle assessments. Mr. Gilchrist stated that in order to recover the same amount of taxes received last year, \$5,344,668 plus the growth

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from new construction the millage rate would need to be set at 76.5 and that if we left it at 74.9 we would have a loss of approximately \$122,000.

Councilwoman Blackwell made the motion to approve the millage rate at 74.9. The motion was seconded by Councilman Ashcraft. The motion carried unanimously with Councilman Bright abstaining.

2. Madeleine Marshall with the Edgefield Regional Arts requested the County's permission to install "Dave the Potter Mural" on the Tompkins Alley side of the County Library. She explained that they have already installed one mural on Potter's Alley. Mrs. Marshall wanted permission to install the second mural on the side of the County Library on Tompkins Alley. There is no cost to the County.

Councilman Bright made the motion to install "Dave the Potter Mural" on the Tompkins Alley side of the County Library. The motion was seconded by Councilman Dorn. The motion carried unanimously.

3. Council consideration of the following request concerning hiring freeze:

LaKeisha Bryant asked County Council to unfreeze two appraiser positions in her office to be filled. Council agreed to open one position and she could return in January to ask to re-open the second one.

Councilman Campbell made the motion to open one appraiser position in the Tax Assessor's Office. The motion was seconded by Councilman Dorn. The motion carried unanimously.

4. Approval of Ambulance bid

Mr. LeDuc commented that this is a non-budgetary item and that the two new ambulances costing \$245,990 (for both) will come out of a reserve fund that has \$385,000. There were three bids taken and MEDTEC was the lowest. After the ambulances are received they will also be equipping them with the proper hydraulic lift for loading and unloading patients. Jewel Plaxco then commented on the two ambulances that will be replaced. They will be used elsewhere in the County for non-emergency transport vehicles, possibly with the fire department or to haul the EMA mass casualty trailer.

Councilwoman Blackwell made the motion to accept the bid from MEDTEC and purchase two new ambulances. The motion was seconded by Councilman Ashcraft. The motion carried unanimously.

Chairman Campbell then stated we would go back to the Public Hearing and Second reading of Ordinance No. 11-12-648 (redistricting) that was moved to the bottom of the New Business section of the Agenda.

**Public Hearing**

This public hearing is being held to receive written and/or oral comments on Ordinance No. 11-12- 648 (re-districting). "An ordinance establishing new electoral districts for the election of members of

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Edgefield County Council pursuant to the United States Census of 2010 and in compliance with Section 4-9-90, South Carolina Code of Laws, 1976, as amended.”

No one made comments on Ordinance No. 11-12-648 (re-districting).

Chairman Campbell then closed that portion of the meeting.

**OLD BUSINESS**

Second reading of Ordinance No. 11-12- 648 (re-districting). “An ordinance establishing new electoral districts for the election of members of Edgefield County Council pursuant to the United States Census of 2010 and in compliance with Section 4-9-90, South Carolina Code of Laws, 1976, as amended.”

Mr. Wayne Gilbert of the Budget and Control Board and the Office of Research and Statistics spoke briefly about the process of redistricting. Councilman Campbell recognized Mayor Durham, who requested to speak. Mayor Durham made the comment that he would like to see the towns represented by Council members as undivided as possible instead of breaking up the towns into multiple districts. Mr. Gilbert tried to move the lines around to meet this request. He worked with the lines until the towns of Edgefield and Johnston were divided among only two districts each and Trenton was all in one district. He also made sure that the lines were in compliance with the Voting Rights Act of 1965. He stated that he would go back to his office and clean it up, if necessary, and present it to Council on October 25, 2011 at the Special Called Meeting.

Councilwoman Blackwell made the motion to accept the latest version of the map created at the October 4, 2011 meeting, this map will be e-mailed to County Council by the end of the week. The motion was seconded by Councilman Ashcraft. The motion carried out 4-1 with Councilman Dorn voting against.

After the vote was taken, Chairman Campbell announced that there would be a called meeting on October 25, 2011 at 6:00 PM for the purpose of giving the third reading to the re-districting map.

**Recognition of guests**

No guests.

**Comments from public**

None.

**County Administrator report**

Mr. Leduc spoke briefly about the status of the 911 Center and stated that at next month’s meeting they should have more information about costs and reimbursements. They are moving forward with this project and hopefully they can start construction by the end of the year. Mr. LeDuc also stated that he has been out with the Sheriff’s Department and looked at several shelters throughout the state and even though there is more research to be done we have basically come up with an idea for a design on a potential new animal shelter. He stated that he would be able to give Council building costs, maintenance costs, operating costs, and other necessary information hopefully by December. He stated that at the next meeting we will be having our annual audit and that so far everything looks good. The road assessment is complete and Mr. LeDuc will be meeting with the County Transportation Committee. More information about the cost to maintain the roads in the county will be available hopefully by December. They are also going to try and determine some long term solutions for maintenance of the roads in Edgefield County. Mr. LeDuc also reminded Council that another Strategic Planning Session

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will be held on September 21, 2011 at Piedmont Technical College, Edgefield Campus from 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM. He also spoke briefly about Clerks and the possible changes in their pay scale pending results from a salary survey. More than likely any adjustments would be looked at in next year's budget. Mr. LeDuc also stated that hopefully at the next meeting he would be able to present a safety suggestions program. Mr. LeDuc spoke about the Building and Maintenance Personnel and that even though he only recently started; he has already fixed items in the Courthouse and everyone seems to be happy with this new addition. Mr. LeDuc addressed Council with the issue of the State informing us that the health insurance premiums would be increasing n January 1, 2012 by about 4.5% increase for the County and about 4.5% for the employees. He mentioned that the retirement system may be changing as well. Mr. LeDuc then stated that by the end of the year, the County should have a depreciation schedule on all of the equipment and vehicles. We do not have one now. We will also be doing an assessment of our future building needs. Lastly, Mr. LeDuc spoke about the sewage problems that occurred and that it had been fixed permanently. Insurance will be covering the majority of the cost for the sewage problems. Mr. LeDuc told Chairman Campbell that we would be getting the district maps out to Council, on the internet, and to the public by the end of the week.

**Comments by County Council Members**

None.

**Comments by County Council Chair**

The chairman stated that two more meetings are coming up one with the School District on October 11, 2011 at 7:00 PM at the Edgefield County School District Administrative Office and one with the Edgefield County Legislative Delegation on November 17, 2011 at 6:00 PM to be held in the Edgefield County Council Chambers.

Mr. Medlock then addressed Council with information about the Open Meetings Act. This was just information on procedures to properly handle County business.

**Executive Session.**

Councilman Campbell asked for a motion to convene in executive session to receive legal advice on a contractual matter related to a local industry. Councilman Bright made the motion to convene in executive session. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Blackwell. The motion carried unanimously.

When Council returned from executive session, Chairman Campbell stated that we were back in open session and that no action was taken in executive session. He then moved to authorize the Tax Collector, Linda Priest, to declare a default in the Trenton Plastics fee in lieu of agreement at her discretion. The motion was seconded by Councilman Bright. The motion carried unanimously 4-0; Councilman Dorn was not present.

**Adjourn**

Councilwoman Blackwell made the motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Councilman Bright. The motion carried unanimously.

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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

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Genia Blackwell, Vice Chair

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Rodney Ashcraft, Council Member

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Willie C. Bright, Council Member

\_\_\_\_\_  
Norman Dorn, Council Member

**ATTEST**

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Jennifer L. Gilley, Clerk to Council