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TOP STORY

CITY

County giving \$100K to Arts Center

By PRINCESS B. WILLIAMS T&D Staff Writer Dec 10, 2015



Orangeburg County is providing \$100,000 toward the renovation of the Orangeburg County Fine Arts Center at Edisto Memorial Gardens.

The money is being pledged by Orangeburg County Councilman Clyde Livingston from the Community Resources Enhancement Sites Trust. Funding comes from the county's 1 percent capital projects sales tax.

County Council Clerk Faith Carter presented the \$100,000 pledge during Orangeburg City Council's meeting Tuesday. Livingston was unable to attend the meeting due to medical reasons.

Fine Arts Center Executive Director Beth Thomas said the contribution is wonderful.

"We are so appreciative of (Livingston's) concern and consideration for the arts. We see wonderful events happening in our future with the renovation of this building," she said.

The center is located in the most beautiful spot in South Carolina, Fine Arts Center board member Dr. Leo Twiggs said.

“The problem is that the building isn’t so hot. This (contribution) will make it hot,” he said.

Sen. John Matthews, D-Bowman, was able to secure \$100,000 for the project. The city of Orangeburg gave \$50,000.

Orangeburg Mayor Michael C. Butler says he is appreciative of the relationship that has been fostered between Orangeburg County and the City of Orangeburg.

They are working together to make Orangeburg a beautiful place to live and raise children, he said.

Also during the meeting, city council approved the purchase of an approximately \$600,000 PAL 800 Radio System for the Orangeburg Department of Public Safety.

According to ODPS Chief Mike Adams, the PAL 800 radio system is a public safety grade radio system that is used throughout the state.

“It’s used extensively here in the Orangeburg area. The Orangeburg County Sheriff’s Office, who is our closest agency that we rely on for assistance, also the Orangeburg Country Fire Service, Orangeburg County EMS, Orangeburg County Emergency Services – they all operate on the PAL 800 system,” Adams said.

After Dec. 31, the Department of Public Safety’s radio system will no longer be supported by Motorola.

“We felt that it was important to move on to a new radio system that was public safety grade. Public safety grade is a radio system that is redundant,” Adams said.

The new radio system has a lot of advantages over the old system, he noted.

“If our radio system failed, people could die. That could be citizens or officers – whether they are in a fire situation or a law enforcement call, or a citizen calling for help,” he said.

The PAL 800 radio system will give the ODPS officers the ability to speak to law enforcement agencies in different counties, Adams added. Officers will also be able to speak directly to the South Carolina Highway Patrol and State Law Enforcement Division.

“It’s a force multiplier that we’re able to communicate with so many different folks,” Adams said.

The PAL 800 radio system will also have encrypted communication, which will prevent anyone from overhearing conversations when officers are working undercover, he said. It uses the same encryption system that is used by the FBI and the DEA.

“This system is state of the art. It’s tried, it’s true and it’s proven, and it’s used by the overwhelming majority of sheriff’s offices and law enforcement agencies in South Carolina,” he said.

In other business:

- Council gave third reading to an ordinance authorizing the reconveyance of a half-acre tract to the Okonite Company for the purpose expanding the Okonite facility located near Prosperity Drive in Orangeburg County.
- Butler proclaimed “humility” as the character trait of the month for December 2015.
- Council held an executive session to discuss legal matters pertaining to a grant with the Development Loan Program, the City of Orangeburg vs. Earl Brooks and City of Orangeburg vs. Kenneth Middleton.

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PRINCESS WILLIAMS

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