

MINUTES OF BAMBERG COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING - March 5, 2018

In compliance with the Freedom of Information Act, agendas for the following meeting were mailed to all members of Council, County Attorney Richard Ness, Lower Savannah COG, *The Advertiser-Herald*, *The Times and Democrat*, Southern Carolina Regional Alliance, Bamberg County Library, Bamberg County Website, Bamberg County Courthouse Annex and a copy posted on the bulletin board in the main hallway of the County Courthouse.

Bamberg County Council met 6:30 p.m., March 5, 2018 in the chamber of the Bamberg County Courthouse Annex. **Present:** Chairman Clint Carter, Councilwoman Sharon Hammond, Councilmen Isaiah Odom, Trent Kinard, Evert Comer, Jr., Joe Guess, Jr. and Larry Haynes. **Others Present:** Joey R. Preston, T.M. Thomas, Richard Ness, Dionne Gleaton, Jerry Halmon, Alice Johnson, Mary Tilton, Jerry Bell, Gina Smith, Charles E. Williams, Kathy Rhoad, Mallory Biering, Barbara P. Beard, William Molnar, Nina Haynes, Lee Davis, Chris Wilson, Farrell Pulaski, Bill Johnson, Dancy Foster Sidney Evering, Sarah Noel, Patti Guess, Thomas Barlet, Mary Barlet, Anna McCollum, Megan Barlet, Ruthie Brown and Ricky Islar.

Bamberg County Council meeting was called to order by Chairman Clint Carter, at 6:30 p.m., in the Chamber of the Bamberg County Courthouse Annex. Invocation was rendered by Rev. Isaiah Odom, followed with the pledge of allegiance by Councilman Evert Comer, Jr.

On motion by Councilman Haynes, seconded by Rev. Odom, council approved the minutes from the February 5, 2018 meeting with future corrections should there be any.

On motion by Rev. Odom, seconded by Councilman Guess, council approved the agenda as submitted.

Charles E. Williams, President and CEO of the Regional Medical Center of Orangeburg, introduced himself to the members of council. Mr. Williams informed that the project for the 24-hour, freestanding emergency department is going well and construction is underway at the site. Once the facility is complete, it will have 24/7 physician coverage. It is in the plan to have the facility open and operating before the end of the year around November, no later than December. Mr. Williams stated they are already working with the ED physicians to start recruiting and staffing. There are plans for a helipad to be at the facility. The public should know if they come to the facility and it's a major emergency, you can be flown to the main hospital. He thanked Sen. Brad Hutto, and Rep. Lonnie Hosey for their assistance with the hospital to get the project operative. Appreciation was shown to Mr. Williams for introducing himself and providing an update on the progress of the freestanding emergency department. Councilwoman Hammond asked that Mr. Williams inform the council when they being hiring staff for the facility so that our citizens will have an opportunity to take advantage of applying for the jobs. Mr. Williams agreed to the request.

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Ms. Barbara P. Beard, a Denmark resident and a representative of the Rosenwald Restoration Foundation, reported on the non-profit groups' efforts to secure a restoration grant for the preservation of the Denmark Rosenwald School. It was further stated that the Denmark site, built in 1931, is the only surviving Rosenwald School out of the three built in Bamberg County. Ms. Beard had high hopes to get this project up and going on behalf of the late County Councilwoman Alzena Robinson. Ms. Robinson worked tirelessly on the Rosenwald project and in her memory, the non-profit group would like to keep it going. Positive remarks were stated about the project. Councilman Guess said, "I'm glad you're doing what you are doing."

Keep South Carolina Beautiful Director Mallory Biering presented County Litter Enforcement Officer Farrell Pulaski with the Lower Region Individual Leadership Award on behalf of the state Litter Control Association. The short period of time since being employed with Bamberg County, Officer Pulaski worked 35 cases. He has issued 30 tickets, totaling close to \$12,000 in fines. Those tickets have resulted in more than 20 tons of litter being removed from the roadway in Bamberg County. Also, Ms. Biering presented County Chamber of Commerce President Jerry Bell with an Outstanding Performance Award on behalf of Keep South Carolina Beautiful for the chamber's implementation of Edisto River canoe/kayak Paddle trips every fourth Saturday. This award is given to a program that creates, protects and promotes a cleaner community and enhances the beauty of a neighborhood or public space.

Representation called to report that no one would be present at tonight's meeting because of a conference being attended, but would be present at the April meeting.

Jerry Bell, Bamberg County Chamber of Commerce Director gave an update on upcoming events within the county. Flyers listing additional events in the community were distributed to the citizens present. Mr. Bell encouraged everyone to support the events within the county. Again, river rides will be taking place soon and an invitation was given for participation and a request was made for transporters to transport participants to the events. The update was accepted as information.

Treasurer Alice Johnson reported the county's total income for January was \$2.3 million. Expenses came in at \$866,495, leaving a positive balance of about \$1.4 million. Councilwoman Sharon Hammond questioned how can we get caught up? Administrator Preston said that is the purpose we have a fund balance. You build it up to take care of these months. Presently, we are collecting taxes and January's collection is normally big. The funds will kind of balance out when the other funds start to pay the general fund back, then you will see the deficit start to go away.

Finance Director T.M. Thomas reported the general fund generated \$4.5 million in year-to-date revenue as of the end of January. Expenditures stood at almost \$4 million, leaving a positive balance of \$509,846. The county continues to operate within our budget, and the departments continue to assist with that effort.

Administrator Preston reported on the following: 1) 2018 County Council Retreat – possibly to be held at the Bamberg County Chamber of Commerce; 2) Received approximately \$150,000

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roads soon...next step will be a c-funds committee meeting; 5) Closing on the fire trucks for Zones 3 and 4 will be March 21...Rose will coordinate (with 4 council members) the USDA closing for signatures.

REPORTS FROM COUNTY COUNCIL

- 1) SCA (Haynes, Comer & Odom) -A meeting was held last week in Walterboro. Talked About jobs and a resolution for keeping DTC open. operations of Denmark-Tech.
 - 2) LSCOG -Meeting was scheduled in St. Matthews @ the Museum – 6:00 p.m.
 - 3) LSCOG Housing Consortium -Meeting is scheduled for March 22, 2018.
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Mr. Sidney Evering of the Parker Poe Law Firm in Columbia, was present to elaborate and explain any concerns regarding the fee-in-lieu agreement regarding the solar project. On motion by Councilman Haynes, seconded by Rev. Odom, council approved second reading authorizing a fee-in-lieu agreement between Bamberg County and a solar panel project (Project Mary Guess), along with special source revenue credits. The 55 megawatt solar farm is expected to create approximately \$63 million in capital investment.

On motion by Councilman Comer, seconded by Councilman Haynes, Council approved a resolution to appoint or accept the appointment of six individuals to the 2018 Capital Projects Sales and Use Tax Commission. Persons appointed to the Commission: Council members Sharon Hammond and Clint Carter along with County Chamber of Commerce President Jerry Bell. Two additional commission members will be selected by the cities of Bamberg and Denmark, with the commission as a whole to decide on the final sixth member.

On motion by Councilman Guess, seconded by Rev. Odom, council approved a resolution sponsored by Councilwoman Hammond, recognizing March as National Women's History Month in Bamberg County. Theme: Nevertheless, She Persisted: Honoring Women Who Fight All Forms Of Discrimination Against Women. Councilwoman Hammond read the resolution in its entirety and asked that everyone support the cause.

The calendar was approved after adding the signing of the USDA documents for the new fire trucks for Zones 3 and 4.

Received as information was the following council member standing committee appointments for 2018: **Administrative/Finance** – Chairman Clint Carter, Trent Kinard and Evert Comer, Jr.; **Personnel/Education, Recreation, Health and Welfare/Intergovernmental Relations** – Chairman Trent Kinard, Joe Guess, Jr. and Sharon Hammond; **Public Service/County Planning** - Chairman Larry Haynes, Joe Guess, Jr. and Rev Isaiah Odom; **Justice and Public Safety** - Chairman Sharon Hammond, Evert Comer, Jr. and Trent Kinard; **Solid Waste/Recycling** - Chairman Evert Comer, Jr., Larry Haynes and Rev. Odom.

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Chairman Carter called for public comments at this time. Thomas and Mary Barlet from Hampton County spoke regarding plans to create an educational equine farm and ranch in Ehrhardt. Among the facilities there would be a petting zoo and a campground. They are seeking a place for the facility and Bamberg County seems to be the right location for it. More plans and details will follow.

Chairman Carter called for Council comments. Everyone had favorable comments. Councilman Kinard asked that we speak with our senator and representative about the water level problem we are having with the Edisto River. Also, we need to come up with a plan to collect fans for the elderly 65 or older. Some fans have already been donated, but according to the demand we need to collect more.

There being no other business for public discussion, council motioned to go in executive session to discuss a contractual matter at 8:40 p.m.

Council re-entered in public session to announce no actions were taken.

Respectfully submitted,

Rose R. Shepherd, CCC