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MINUTES OF BAMBERG COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING - September 18, 2017

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*, SouthernCarolina 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., September 18, 2017 in the chamber of the Bamberg County Courthouse Annex. **Present:** Chairman Evert Comer, Jr., Rev. Isaiah Odom, Councilwoman Sharon Hammond, Councilmen Trent Kinard, Joe Guess, Jr. and Larry Haynes. **Absent:** Councilman Clint Carter. **Others Present:** Joey R. Preston, T.M. Thomas, Richard Ness, Gina Smith, Dionne Gleaton, Jerry Halmon, Alice Johnson, Sarah Noel, Rufus Jamison, Robert Thomas, Patti Guess and Jerry Bell.

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

On motion by Councilman Kinard, seconded by Councilman Haynes, council approved the minutes from the August 7, 2017 meeting.

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

On motion by Councilman Guess, seconded by Councilman Kinard, the agenda was amended at the request of Chairman Comer that a resolution in support of Voorhees College submission of an application to host the Smithsonian Institute Exhibit.

SouthernCarolina Alliance Senior Project Manager Darrell Booker updated council of SCA activities. Mr. Booker reported there are eight active projects in our region. Two of the projects are solar- related projects. They will not add any jobs but tax revenue will be added to the county. SCA has communicated with two of the remaining six with the other four submitting requests for information. SCA serves Bamberg, Allendale, Barnwell, Colleton, Hampton and Jasper counties and they are presenting the entire region to prospects. Project Cell, based out of Illinois is a metal stamping operation that plans to create 99 jobs. Project Moda is a company from the Czech Republic that manufactures bathroom mats. They have requested that SCA come to Columbia on October 4th, to present to them Bamberg and Barnwell counties. Roc-Lon Industries has expanded with the addition of a third fabric coating range. This expansion will create 15 new jobs. There will be a lot of motion going on around the spec building at Cross-Rhodes with landscaping, etc. Councilman Kinard said he is concerned that Allendale keeps getting industry and we are not getting any jobs. He further stated Bamberg County has had only one industry announcement over

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the five years he has served on council compared to 19 made in Allendale County in that time span. Mr. Booker said, "We don't push one county over the other. We present to each involved prospect, what properties you have available in your county. More property is needed, more buildings and the buildings need adequate infrastructure. Councilwoman Hammond asked, "Is there any way that you could do some sort of a study to show us if there is something we need to do on our end?" Mr. Booker proposed it may be helpful if the county hired a site consultant to identify what the county needs to do to make it more attractive to recruiting industry. Councilman Odom complimented SCA on the job they were doing and invited council to the SCA meetings to become better informed. Administrator Preston said, "You have to have sites, you've got to have buildings, structures already in place. You have got one we've tried to sell. We are getting state money to try to market it to make it more appealing to prospects that are coming in.

Jerry Bell, Bamberg County Chamber of Commerce Director gave an update on upcoming events within the county. The Bamberg County Chamber of Commerce is scheduled to meet on Tuesday evening, September 19. Burger King of Bamberg, McDonald of Denmark and Rusty & Paula's of Bamberg are new members of the Chamber. Those present were reminded of the 51st Annual Bamberg County Chamber Banquet to be held Thursday, November 2 at 6:00 p.m., at the Bamberg Civic Center. Flyers listing additional events in the community were distributed to the citizens present. Mr. Bell encouraged everyone to support the events. The update was accepted as information.

Treasurer Alice Johnson reported the county's total income for July was \$152,065. Expenses came in at \$765,131.

Finance Director T.M. Thomas reported the county's general fund had generated \$109,080 in year-to-date revenue as of the end of July. Expenditures stood at \$412,506. Overall all departments are operating within budget and within expected bounds.

County Administrator Preston announced the demolition of the modular units on the grounds of the old Bamberg County Hospital is underway. One of the units will be relocated to the public works site and used for office space. Pilots are calling and wanting to house their planes in Bamberg County, we don't have any room to accommodate them. There are at least 7 planes registered to Bamberg County, only 4 or 5 can be found. We are trying to market our community and Administrator Preston hopes to secure a grant with the help of the city of Denmark to renovate the water tank. Denmark qualifies for grant money that Bamberg County would not qualify for. It is going to cost approximately \$200,000 to paint and do required maintenance on the water tank. The tank belongs to Bamberg County, but the Denmark buys the water from the Bamberg Board of Public Works. The County received notification from the State of a \$90,000 grant for use at Bobcat Landing. The C-Fund committee met about 2 weeks ago and voted to rescind the \$700,000 for state roads and use it to do county roads. The committee designated \$200,000 of those funds be designated for Dally Road. The posting of delinquent property started today and it will take about a week for it to be done. The Property Appeals Board will be meeting tomorrow (9/19). The Town of Ehrhardt wants to transport the caboos back to Bamberg and the county will look

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at the possibility of restoring it and making it a museum. A letter accompanied with a resolution adopted by Kershaw County was sent to the county requesting our support for consideration of alternate locations for the annual SCAC Summer Conference held in Hilton Head Island. A letter was written by Councilman Kinard to Gov. McMaster regarding employee retirement. Councilman Kinard read the letter in its entirety to council and the public. Administrator Preston announced the County Council Coalition to be held in Columbia at the Embassy Suites October 18-19, 2017. During Hurricane Irma, Bamberg County had excellent coverage and communication through our Emergency Services Department. Employees and volunteers were on hand to assist in any way possible.

REPORTS FROM COUNTY COUNCIL

- 1) SCA (Haynes, Comer & Odom) -Trying to get another county to join in the alliance.
- 2) LSCOG -Experienced a blackout. A DOT update was given

On motion by Councilman Odom, seconded by Councilman Haynes, council passed a resolution in support of Voorhees College submission of an application to host the Smithsonian Institute Exhibit.

On motion by Councilman Odom, seconded by Councilman Haynes, council approved the calendar of events after adding the Property Maintenance Appeals Board meeting for September 19 at 6:00 p.m., in Council Chambers and SC Coalition on October 19 in Columbia at the Embassy Suites.

On motion by Councilman Haynes, seconded by Councilman Kinard, council approved the appointment of Chairman Evert Comer., Jr., to serve on the SCAC Legislative Committee as a member of the Land Use, Natural Resources and Transportation Steering Committee.

On motion by Councilman Odom, seconded by Councilman Guess, council approved the appointment of Ms. Jewel Davis to the Thoroughbred Country Tourism Advisory Committee with term expiring January 2021.

At this time, Chairman Comer called for public comments. Rev. Rufus Jamison had a complaint regarding being lumped in with the city and he was previously just county, now he is paying taxes in city and county. Requested to be placed back only in the county. County will look at situation.

The council thanked the administrator and employees for their hard work and thanked the public for attending the meeting and encouraged them to keep coming.

On motion by Councilman Guess, seconded by Councilman Odom, council voted to enter in executive session to discuss a contractual matter concerning SC Regional Housing Authority.

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Council re-entered open session to announce no action taken. On motion by Councilman Guess, seconded by Councilman Haynes, the meeting was adjourned at 9:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rose R. Shepherd, CCC