

MINUTES OF BAMBERG COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING

- August 10, 2015

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*, Bamberg County Library, Bamberg County Website, and a copy posted on the bulletin board in the main hallway of the County Courthouse.

Bamberg County Council met 6:30 p.m., August 10, 2015, in the courtroom of the Bamberg County Courthouse. **Present:** Chairman Joe Guess, Jr., Councilwoman Alzena Robinson, Councilmen Trent Kinard, Evert Comer, Jr. and Larry Haynes. **Absent:** Rev. Isaiah Odom and Councilman Clint Carter. **Others Present:** Administrator Joey R. Preston, T.M. Thomas, Richard Ness, Dionne Gleaton, Jerry Halmon, Kell Anderson, Mallory Biering, Jerry Bell, Patsy Blume, Patti Jeffcoat, Dorothy Lee, Eva Manigault, Nannie Manigault, Chris Wilson, Ted Robertson, Sarah Visser, Janie Johnson, Jimmy Brickle, Alice Johnson, Sherryl Jenkins, Brad Samuel Wanda Delk, Mr. Delk and Sandy Fowler.

Bamberg County Council meeting was called to order by Chairman Joe Guess at 6:30 p.m., in the Bamberg County Courtroom. Invocation was rendered by Councilman Evert Comer, Jr., followed with the pledge of allegiance by Councilwoman Alzena Robinson.

On motion by Councilman Kinard, seconded by Councilwoman Robinson, council approved the minutes from the June 2, 2015, June 9, 2015 - *called meeting*, June 30, 2015 – *called meeting* and July 20, 2015 regular meeting as submitted.

On motion by Councilman Kinard, seconded by Councilman Comer, council approved the agenda as submitted.

Public hearing was given to an ordinance authorizing the execution and delivery of a fee agreement by and between Bamberg County, South Carolina and Project Green providing for a payment of a fee in lieu of taxes and other matters related thereto. No public comments were made

Ms. Patti Jeffcoat and the Bamberg County Board of Voter Registration and Elections Commission came before the members of County Council to discuss a concern regarding additional personnel in the Voter Registration Department. Commission Chairman Patsy Blume said that the local office is getting ready to implement a new voter registration system, and the state Election Commission now has in place where if your office is not operating like it should, they will come in and take over the office. She further stated that it is hard to run the office like it should with only one person as it's done now. Councilwoman Robinson commented that the elections are now more difficult and most of the offices have at least a fulltime director and a part-time employee. Councilman Kinard spoke on one of the problems was due to budget constraints and cuts in the state's Local Government Fund and did the committee talk to the delegation (Sen. Brad Hutto and Rep. Justin Bamberg). Chairman Guess stated that the general assembly has put more and more on the county. After further discussion, the Council agreed to consider and look at the possibility

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of adding money (November or December 2015) to the budget for at least a part-time position in the Voter Registration Department.

Keep Georgia Beautiful Executive Director Sarah Visser was present to present Keep Bamberg County Beautiful program with an award, officially certifying it as an affiliate of Keep America Beautiful, Incorporated. Ms. Visser said Bamberg County should be proud of Keep Bamberg County Beautiful Director Mallory Biering, along with the KAB Board for what they have accomplished, they have worked really hard. KBCB Director Biering said they have between 450 and 500 volunteers under the age of 18 working together picking up trash throughout the county. Ms. Sherryl Jenkins, grants coordinator for Palmetto Pride and state leader of Keep South Carolina Beautiful, presented KBCB with a \$7,000 check to implement beautification programs around the county. It was further stated by Ms. Jenkins that Ms. Biering and the board worked tirelessly to complete the affiliation certification process. The council congratulated all involved with this program.

Council heard a report from Kell Anderson, Southern Carolina Alliance project manager and Sandy Fowler, a consultant with the Souther Carolina Alliance. They were updated on the county's inclusion in the federal Promise Zone in high-poverty communities where the federal government partners with local leaders to increase economic activity. The benefit of it is that anyone within the Promise Zone that is applying for a federal grant to any of the 12 federal agencies that recognize the Promise Zone and are participating in that those grant applications receive priority points, putting them at an increased advantage for consideration. A website has been created at www.scpromisezone.org, where the public can access more information on submitting grants for approval under the federal Promise Zone designation.

Jerry Bell, Executive Director of the Bamberg County Chamber of Commerce, reported on upcoming events and passed out flyers for upcoming events

Bamberg County Treasurer Alice Johnson reported that Bamberg County's total income for May April was \$578,531. Expenses came in at \$798,893, reflecting a deficit of \$220,362. Treasurer Johnson said June proved to be a better month financially because the county had been reimbursed by some of the county departments for which it had paid bills.

Finance Director Thomas reported the county's general fund generated \$6.6 million in year-to-date revenue as of the end of May. Expenditures stood at \$5.9 million. A solid and good finish is anticipated for this fiscal year as stated by Finance Director Thomas.

Administrator Preston informed the Council that the county has completed its roadway visual assessment report and will hold a public hearing to address any public concerns. Also, the county C-Fund Committee will meet at 9:30 a.m. Wednesday, August 19 at the Hooten-Black House to discuss road projects they are set to complete, including one on Dally Road in Denmark. Councilman Haynes has additional roads to be added to the road list and Councilwoman Robinson ask that Easy Street be included on the list from her district. Also, the Detention Center received the best follow up report (7 months) from the Fire Marshall's inspection with no deficiencies. The

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Detention Center Staff and Maintenance are to be commended for this great accomplishment. The survey/questionnaire for the Bamberg Tourism and Recreation Committee has been placed on the website and the Chamber of Commerce is promoting the completion of the survey/questionnaire as well.

REPORTS FROM COUNTY COUNCIL

- 1) Lower Savannah COG -Meeting scheduled for August 13 @ 6:30 p.m. in Calhoun County Museum.
 - 2) LSCOG (TAC) -Meeting is scheduled for August 11 @ Denmark Depot. Sen. John Matthews and others will be present. Progress continue to be made on U.S. HWY. 78 project.
 - 3) LSCOG Housing Consortium -Meeting was held in Orangeburg on Thursday...was unable to be in attendance.
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On motion by Councilman Comer, seconded by Councilman Kinard, council gave third reading to an ordinance authorizing the execution and delivery of a fee agreement by and between Bamberg County, South Carolina and Project Green providing for a payment of a fee in lieu of taxes and other matters related thereto.

On motion by Councilman Comer, seconded by Councilman Kinard, council gave first reading, in title only, to an ordinance amending the Bamberg County Code of Ordinances in certain limited regards and particulars pertaining to litter officers and code enforcement officers of the county and uniform ordinance summons; and other matters related thereto. Administrator Preston said we have an ordinance that was previously adopted, and now we have litter officers that have to write tickets, we have to have this ordinance in place so that they can actually write a summons and so that we can send them to the police academy to get their certification.

On motion by Councilman Haynes, seconded by Councilman Kinard, council passed a resolution advocating all local governments who receive support pursuant to the State Aid to Subdivision Act file a joint lawsuit against the state of South Carolina to require it to appropriate general fund revenue to the local government fund in accordance with the act's funding formula. Chairman Guess said that this is the act that was passed under Home Rule. It has a specific formula, and the General Assembly has chosen to pass provisos allowing them to ignore this for the past six years. The result has been that Bamberg County has been shorted a little more than \$2 million.

On motion by Councilman Comer, seconded by Councilman Kinard, council approved the calendar of events after adding the grand opening of Rite Aide scheduled for Thursday, August 20, at 11:00 a.m., and consideration of use of Massachusetts Hall (Voorhees College) for hosting of the LSCOG Board Meeting (October 8 at 6:30 p.m.).

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At this time, Chairman Guess called for public comments. Rev. Ted Robertson reminded the council that he was given permission about two years ago to make litter signs and place them various places in the county. Within that time, twenty-three signs were made for the county and now four of which are damaged and need to be replaced. Council praised Rev. Robertson for his hard work and consistence.

Chairman Guess called for comments from the council and news media.

Haynes: Thanked Administrator Preston and everyone else for their hard work.

Kinard: Thanked everyone for their hard work. Informed all that he received a call from Councilman Carter to say that his brother's home was destroyed by fire and that was why he was unable to attend tonight's meeting. All present were concerned of his loss.

Guess: Stated that we are finally getting the ship out of the port by moving forward with The passing of the LGF Resolution and the plan to get other counties to join Forces with Bamberg County. The employees were thanked for their hard work.

No comments were made from the media.

There being no further business for public discussion, on motion by Councilman Kinard, seconded by Councilwoman Robinson, the meeting was adjourned at 8:12 p.m., to enter in executive session to discuss the county/Hughes property. After coming out of executive session, no decision was made.

Respectfully submitted,

Rose R. Shepherd, CCC