

MINUTES OF BAMBERG COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING

- April 4, 2016

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., April 4, 2016, in the courtroom of the Bamberg County Courthouse. **Present:** Chairman Rev. Isaiah Odom, Councilmen Trent Kinard, Evert Comer, Jr., Joe Guess, Jr., and Larry Haynes. **Absent:** Councilwoman Alzena Robinson and Councilman Clint Carter. **Others Present:** Administrator Joey R. Preston, T.M. Thomas, Richard Ness, Dionne Gleaton, Jerry Halmon, Jerry Bell, Alice Johnson, Rufus Jamison, Kell Anderson, Sarah Noel, Mallory Biering, Lessie Meeks, Frances Milhouse, Bill Johnson, David Harley, Ruthie Brown, Doretta Elliott, LaTarcha Wilson, Christopher Napier, Isaac Jackson, Shannon Glover, LaTonya Broxton and Lewis Brown.

Bamberg County Council meeting was called to order by Chairman Isaiah Odom at 6:30 p.m., in the Bamberg County Courtroom. Invocation was rendered by Councilman Joe Guess, Jr., followed with the pledge of allegiance by Councilman Larry Haynes.

On motion by Councilman Haynes, seconded by Councilman Kinard, council approved the minutes from the March 7, 2016 meeting with future corrections should there be any.

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

Council presented a framed resolution to retired County Emergency Services Director Sharon Hammond recognizing her 15 years of service. The sponsorship of the resolution was done by and at the request of Councilman Kinard. Ms. Hammond was praised for her outstanding commitment to Bamberg County.

On motion by Councilman Guess, seconded by Councilman Haynes, council approved a resolution supporting artist Jim Harrison's Denmark Coca-Cola Sign Project, which will include Coco-Cola outdoor advertisements and wall bulletins that visitors and residents can view and study on an easy walking tour. This resolution was sponsored by Councilmen Comer, Guess and Odom.

Dr. William Molnar, executive director of the Lower Savannah Council of Governments, updated council on LSCOG activities. He said the agency had sought funds to maintain its mobility management program, which includes its service as mobility manager for the county's "Handy Ride" public transit system. The COG has previously received state funding from the South Carolina Department of Transportation and now that funding has gone away. They are in the

process of seeking other avenues to make sure that the program runs. Procurement of additional CDBG grant funds is being targeted, with CDBG grant funds to be used to complete Denmark April 4, 2016....continued

projects including the upgrade of undersized water lines. Through the Bamberg County Office on Aging, 1,500 group dining meals have been served during the first quarter of this year, with almost 3,000 home delivery meals sent to 72 county residents. Council thanked Dr. Molnar for his in depth report.

Presentation of the Bamberg County fiscal year 2015 audit was given by Dawn Strickland, CPA of McGregor & Company of Orangeburg. Bamberg County received an unmodified (clean), opinion on its fiscal year 2015 audit. The report showed that as of June 30, 2015, Bamberg County had total assets of \$20,199,135 versus total liabilities of \$17,222,045, resulting in a positive net position of \$2,977,090. Ms. Strickland said that financial statements are fairly presented in all material respects. In the past, there have been qualifications, but the county staff worked to get those issues resolved. Bamberg County Controller Gina Smith reported the county had begun adhering to new accounting rules adopted by the Government Accounting Standards Board (GASB) to account for retiree health care costs as it worked toward a clean audit opinion, which we hadn't achieved since FY '08 or '09. The county's current net pension liability stands at \$4,174,814, along with a Net Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB) Obligation of \$47,080. Ms. Strickland said the county had two material weaknesses, including deficiencies in the county's accounting and financial reporting system and preparation of financial statements. Controller Smith further stated that the liabilities were not a bill the county had to pay now, but they were going to be on the county's financial statements and result in a reduction in its fund balance. Everyone has worked hard to reduce the number of yearend audit adjustments that have to be made. The county's finance staff will have to receive additional training while searching for a true governmental general ledger accountant. The road maintenance fee is a concern due to running a deficit of \$9,372 in the FY '15 audit. It is likely that the county will have to consider either a tax levy or an increase in the \$30 road user fee in the future. Ms. Smith said no one likes either of those options. Administrator Preston said while the county's solid waste/landfill deficit had been decreased from as high as \$676,426 in FY '11 to \$13,474 in FY '15, the remaining deficit is still being worked on. It's being addressed right now.

On motion by Councilman Guess, seconded by Councilman Kinard, council approved a resolution to amend the agreement for a joint county industrial park shared among Allendale, Bamberg, Barnwell and Hampton counties so as to enlarge the park to include project property for Lily Solar, LLC; and other matters thereto related.

On motion by Councilman Guess, seconded by Councilman Kinard, council approved a resolution to amend the agreement for a joint county industrial park shared among Allendale, Bamberg, Barnwell and Hampton counties so as to enlarge the park to include project property for Haley Solar, LLC; and other matters thereto related.

On motion by Councilman Haynes, seconded by Councilman Kinard, council approved a resolution to amend the agreement for a joint county industrial park shared among Allendale, Bamberg, Barnwell and Hampton counties so as to enlarge the park to include project property for

Barnwell Solar, LLC, Blackville Solar I, LLC; Blackville Solar II, LLC; Richardson Solar, LLC; Elko Solar, LLC; Edison Solar, LLC; and other matters thereto related.
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Kell Anderson, SouthernCarolina Regional Development Alliance project manager, reported that work continues on Project New, which is expected to bring in 83 jobs and \$43 million in capital investment; and Project Cowboy which is slated to bring in 137 jobs and \$9.45 million in capital investment.

Jerry Bell, Bamberg County Chamber Director, distributed flyers of upcoming events in Bamberg County and encouraged those present to support them. Mr. Bell reminded everyone if they have community announcements to be advertised, please forward them to him and they would be placed in the flyer for the public.

Bamberg County Treasurer Alice Johnson reported the county's total income for February 2016 was \$285,566. Expenses totaled \$594,027 reflecting a negative balance of \$308,461.

Finance Director Thomas reported the county's general fund had generated \$4,979,099 in year-to-date revenue as of the end of February. Expenditures stood at \$4,479,955, reflecting a positive balance of \$499,144.

Administrator Preston reported that the work on the courthouse annex and the county airport was moving forward. The parking lots have been bided out. Also, the county is still in the process of acquiring rights of ways. The C Fund committee met and the legislative delegation informed them of the importance of meeting and getting things done in a timely manner. Also, the Keep Bamberg County Beautiful program had 17 volunteer groups working to remove litter, with more than 1,400 pounds cleared during a recent countywide cleanup day. Also, the KBCB program received the President's Circle Award at the 2016 KAB National Conference.

REPORTS FROM COUNTY COUNCIL

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| 1) Lower Savannah COG | -Last meeting was held in Denmark at Denmark-Technical College. |
| 2) LSCOG (TAC) (Kinard) | -Reported that the Denmark Downtown Project has now been completed. Councilman Kinard was present at the ribbon cutting in Denmark. |
| 3) LSCOG Housing Consortium | -Meeting was held in Aiken on March 10. Several projects were reviewed and approved. |
| 4) SCA | -Last meeting was held in Walterboro. |
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On motion by Councilman Guess, seconded by Councilman Kinard, council approved a resolution to adopt the Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan for 2016.

On motion by Councilman Guess, seconded by Councilman Kinard, council proclaimed April as Fair Housing Month in Bamberg County.

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On motion by Councilman Comer, seconded by Councilman Guess, at the request of Chairman Odom, council amended the agenda to add a resolution proclaiming April as County Government Month in Bamberg County.

On motion by Councilman Kinard, seconded by Councilman Guess, council approved a resolution to proclaim County Government Month in Bamberg County.

On motion by Councilman Comer, seconded by Councilman Kinard, the calendar of events was approved after rescheduling the June 6 meeting until Monday, June 13, 2016, due to the graduation scheduled for Administrator Preston's son.

Chairman Odom called for public comments. Rev. Rufus Jamison had concerns with roadwork on Dally Road and McKenna Road. He also had questions as to receiving 2 tickets within a short amount of time, with one ticket fee of \$200. Both tickets were for transporting uncovered loads.

District 90 State Rep. Justin Bamberg, who is being challenged for the seat, said he will continue to address constituency concerns, including industry recruitment and continuing the fight for the local government fund to be fully funded. He further stated that he is one of a handful that's fighting for the fund.

At this time, Chairman Odom called for comments from the council members.

Haynes	:	Thanked Administrator Preston, Controller Smith, Treasurer Johnson and Finance Director Thomas for their hard work.
Carter	:	Commended the employees for their dedication and thanked Administrator Preston and Assessor Elliott. Also, stated he will be running for re-election.
Kinard	:	Thanked Administrator Preston and other employees. We have got to move forward.
Comer	:	Requested that everyone keep moving forward.
Guess	:	We need to start thinking of Bamberg County as a community.
Odom	:	Has seen good days and bad days. We still have issues.

There being no further business for discussion, on motion by Councilman Comer, seconded by Councilman Haynes, the meeting was adjourned a 8:54 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rose R. Shepherd, Clerk to Council