

MINUTES OF BAMBERG COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING - December 5, 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, 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., December 5, 2016, in the chamber of the Bamberg County Courthouse Annex. **Present:** Chairman Rev. Isaiah Odom, Councilwoman Sharon Hammond, Councilmen Trent Kinard, Evert Comer, Jr., Joe Guess, Jr., and Larry Haynes. **Absent:** Councilman Clint Carter. **Others Present:** Joey R. Preston, T.M. Thomas, Richard Ness, Dionne Gleaton, Jerry Halmon, Mallory Biering, Detra Bruce, Sarah Noel, Patti Guess, Yvette McDaniel, Ruthie Brown and Darrell Booker.

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

On motion by Councilman Comer, seconded by Councilman Guess, council approved the minutes from the November 7, 2016 meeting with future corrections should there be any.

On motion by Councilman Comer, seconded by Councilman Kinard, council approved the agenda after adding two names to Item I (Reports from Bamberg County Council Members).

SouthernCarolina Alliance Senior Project Manager Darrell Booker, did not give an update on the economic development projects for this region. When he was questioned by Councilman Kinard why an update was not being provided, Mr. Booker emphasized the fact that nothing else had transpired since Executive Director Danny Black gave an extensive update at the November County Council meeting. Also, due to the holiday activities, the pace slowed down and they will be back on schedule in January.

Jerry Bell, Bamberg County Chamber of Commerce Director gave an update on events within the county. He announced that the Chamber's 50th Annual Banquet was held at 6 p.m., Thursday, November 17, at the Olar Fire Department. Councilman Trent Kinard was the recipient of the Waddy Thompson Citizen of the Year Award. Director Bell encouraged everyone to support the County Events.

In the absence of Treasurer Alice Johnson, Councilman Kinard disseminated her monthly report to the members of council.

Finance Director T.M. Thomas reported the county's general fund had generated \$1,297,014 in year-to-date revenue as of the end of October. Expenditures stood at \$2,119,028, reflecting a

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negative balance of \$822,014. Overall, all departments are operating within budget and within expected bounds.

Controller Gina Smith presented the report for fiscal year 2015-2016, defining the reconciled balances for each of the county's accounts. She further stated that we are getting better. The fund balances are going up and at the end of October of FY 2015 the county funds stood at a negative \$790,000 as compared to a negative \$392,000 for the same time in FY 2016. All were apprised that we still need to focus on building a larger and better fund balance even though we have made progress there is still work to be done. Administrator Preston said that when we started we had a negative fund balance of close to \$2 million to \$3 million. We then made a turnaround with the goal being to get the fund balance up approximately \$2.5 million to \$3 million. Additionally, he stated by monitoring our expenses and making sure we pay our bills on time and don't pay penalties is a revenue source right there. Controller Smith said we are tracking our budget, but our budget is built so that we are spending basically 100 percent of what we are collecting and that is why we are not able to build that fund balance like we would want to.

County Administrator Preston reported that the county has secured a private contractor to provide medical services at the Detention Center. Services will begin in January and there is enough money (\$40,000), in this year's budget to cover for a doctor and a nurse. The nurse will come periodically to administer medication to the inmates. Mental health will also be offered as part of the continuing improvements at the detention center. They will be at the facility periodically. Administrator Preston said the county now owns Bobcat Landing and we were successful in securing \$200,000 in state funding to make improvements to Bobcat Landing in the spring of 2017. Plans are still being worked on for renovations of the old Bamberg County Courthouse. In addition, road improvements on Crouch Circle Road have been completed, with work now beginning to address some right-of-way-issues on Panther Road.

REPORTS FROM COUNTY COUNCIL

- 1) SCA -Christmas dinner @ 6:00 12/8 in Blackville at Clemson Extension. Chairman Odom asked that Councilman Comer's name be added as a committee member on the agenda.
- 2) Lower Savannah COG -Chairman Odom asked that Councilwoman Hammond's name be added as a committee member on the agenda.
- 3) LSCOG (TAC) (Kinard) - Reported nothing was done that was talked about at the Bi-Lo Shopping Center in Bamberg. Approximately \$700,000 was spent on that project. Two curbs, three stop signs and a telegram pole and that was about that. Bamberg County did not receive what we should have regarding road improvement work at Calhoun Street and U.S. 78 in front of the Heritage Center shopping center. Councilman Kinard said that he is ticked-off and he will let it be known at the next TAC Committee meeting.

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- 4) LSCOG Housing Consortium -The December meeting was held in Orangeburg on Dec. 1. Next meeting is scheduled for March 2, in Bamberg County Courthouse Annex Council Chamber. The committee approved \$74,000 for habitat. Approximately \$25,000 is being proposed to be spent in Orangeburg for new construction.
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On motion by Councilman Guess, seconded by Councilman Kinard, council approved a proposed resolution to amend the amended and restated master agreement for the established of the Quad-County Industrial Park I, Park II, and Park III, dated as of May 6, 2013 by and among Allendale County, South Carolina, Bamberg County, South Carolina, Barnwell County, South Carolina, and Hampton County, South Carolina, providing for the development of certain multi-county industrial parks, so as to include additional property in that portion of the parks geographically located in Allendale county, South Carolina, and other matters related thereto. This resolution is for the inclusion of Thunderbolt Biomass Incorporated, along with special source revenue credits. The company is expected to create 35 jobs and approximately \$9 million in capital investments.

On motion by Councilman Haynes, seconded by Councilman Guess, council approved the calendar of events as submitted.

At this time, Chairman Odom called for public comments. Dr. Yvette McDaniel, introduced herself as the chairperson of the newly-formed Bamberg County Community Rural Arts Work League as designated by the South Carolina Arts Commission. She stated that the Bamberg County Chamber of Commerce is the fiscal agent for the grassroots organization. The organization is planning to come before council at the January meeting to talk about some of the things they will be doing countywide. She continued by saying that the children involved will be making holiday ornaments on Monday, December 19 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m at the Denmark pocket park. The Rural Arts Work League includes two members from Denmark, One from Allendale and two from Orangeburg as approved by the state Arts Commission. Councilman Kinard said his only question is why did we start a new Bamberg County community arts league when you've got a Bamberg County Arts Council already? Dr. McDaniel said the arts council did not necessarily use rural arts and the S.C. Arts Commission wanted to shift to a new concept in arts called creative place-making. "We're going to use arts and culture to deal with workforce development, entrepreneurship and other aspects of creative place-making. "We were approached by the South Carolina Arts Commission. Denmark had nothing to do with it. We go before them just like we come before you. We were asked to start in Denmark. We are trying to do advisory councils, and we have had citizens from Bamberg, Ehrhardt, Olar and Govan to come to those meetings. We hope that we will be able to work together because we're not trying to tax the citizenry, but to go after some major grants on creative place-making. We will need all of you to help us help the entire county." Also during public comments, Ms. Sarah G. Noel thanked the council for all that they do and for being courageous by helping the County Administrator watch the county be built

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From the bottom up. She asked who is responsible for Interstate 77 moving through to Savannah? The answer was one of the persons would be Rep. Tim Scott. Ms. Noel requested that the county look at improving sewer and water system. Also, consider the possibility of banding as a region with Barnwell, Allendale and Hampton to get industries to come to Bamberg County.

The council thanked the administrator and employees for their hard work. Councilman Kinard said we have got to come together and work together. Councilwoman Hammond said we have got to take chances and start listening to our peers and we must work on a regional basis and on a broadband.

There being no further business for discussion, on motion by Councilman Guess, seconded by Councilman Haynes, council voted to adjourn at 8:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rose R. Shepherd, CCC