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MINUTES OF BAMBERG COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING - March 13, 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*, 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 13, 2017, in the chamber of the Bamberg County Courthouse Annex. **Present:** Chairman Evert Comer, Jr., Councilwoman Sharon Hammond, Councilmen Trent Kinard, Evert Comer, Jr., Joe Guess, Jr., Larry Haynes and Clint Carter. **Absent:** Councilman Rev. Isaiah Odom. **Others Present:** Joey R. Preston, T.M. Thomas, Alison Hood, Gina Smith, Alice Johnson, Dionne Gleaton, Jerry Halmon, Mallory Biering, Detra Bruce, Norma Fisher, Nina Haynes, Eva Manigault, Additional members of the South Carolina Family and Community Organization, Lynn Wallace, Sherryl Jenkins, William Molnar, Wesley Boykin, Ruthie Brown 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 Councilwoman Sharon Hammond, followed with the pledge of allegiance by Councilman Clint Carter.

On motion by Councilman Carter, seconded by Councilman Haynes, council approved the minutes from the February 6, 2017 meeting with future corrections should there be any.

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

Director of Keep South Carolina Beautiful and grant coordinator for PalmettoPride Ms. Sherryl Jenkins, made presentations of awards to KBCB Director Mallory Biering, the Keep Bamberg County Beautiful board members and volunteers. Keep Bamberg County Beautiful received one of three Affiliate Recognition Awards given across the state. This award is given to honor the tireless efforts exemplified for the betterment of Bamberg County. A \$20,000 grant through the Keep America Beautiful/Lowe's Community Partners Grant Program to develop its Educational Experience Park was received. Detra Salley Bruce, a Volunteer Board Member of KBCB, received the Outstanding Volunteer Recognition Award for her service to KBCB. This award is given to one person across the state of South Carolina, and honors a deserving volunteer or community leader, for their efforts to create and protect a cleaner community or to enhance the beauty of a neighborhood of public space. KBCB Director Biering presented Council with the KAB Circle Award. This award indicates KBCB is active in the community, supports efforts in beautification, litter prevention and recycling. Many more positive comments were made toward the progress and commitment of the KBCB participants.

March 13, 2017....continued

Dr. William Molnar, executive director of Lower Savannah Council of Governments, reported on LSCOG activities in Bamberg County during 2016. He reported that the second phase of intersection improvement work in the U.S. 78 Corridor Improvement Project is ongoing and that 25 percent of the preliminary engineering phase of the project has been completed. The amount of \$330,000 was allocated to the Bamberg County Office on Aging in 2016, which provided for services including the provision of 105 home delivered meals. It was further stated that over 2,500 individuals visited the S.C. Works Center, with 13 having successfully completed on-the-job training contracts. LSCOG had been averaging approximately 600 calls a month while serving as mobility manager of the Handy Ride public transit system, the Office on Aging has now started taking its own calls. Dr. Molnar praised Office on Aging director Kay Clary for doing a great job with taking the calls and handling the transit system. In closing, Dr. Molnar reported that LSCOG entered a 10-year comprehensive plan and zoning ordinance update process with the county.

There was not a representative present from South Carolina Regional Alliance to give a monthly update regarding economic development for Bamberg County. It was consented by full council and requested that Administrator Preston write a letter to Executive Director Danny Black, inquiring why no representative was present at the meeting with no previous notice being provided prior the meeting.

Jerry Bell, Bamberg County Chamber of Commerce Director gave an update on events within the county. A flyer listing events in the community was distributed to the citizens present. Mr. Bell encouraged everyone to support the events and that there is an Edisto River trip scheduled for Sunday, April 2, 2017. Mr. Bell's update was accepted as information.

Treasurer Alice Johnson reported the county's total income for January was \$2,053,182. Expenses can in at \$800,452, leaving a positive balance of \$1,252,730.

Finance Director T.M. Thomas reported the county's general fund had generated \$4,957,179 year-to-date revenue as of the end of January. Expenditures stood at \$3,777,824. Overall, all departments are operating within budget and within expected bounds.

Controller Gina Smith reported on how S.C. House Bill 3726 would impact Bamberg County's FY 2018 budget. This bill affects employer and employee contributions to the South Carolina Retirement System and the Police Officers Retirement System. An amended version of the bill was sent back to the House from the Senate. If approved, the bill will become effective July 1, 2017. If this bill is approved as it is, it will cost Bamberg County \$60,250. Every year afterward, it's going to cost an additional \$30,000. July 1, 2017, every one of Bamberg County employees will be getting a pay cut. She said that a cumulative tax millage increase of 8.11 mills over six years is also expected. Administrator Preston said the state saw this coming 15 to 20 years ago and they did nothing about it, and now they are going to have to do something about it, and the solution is to pass this cost on to those that participate in the system. He further stated that the county's contribution to the SCRS would increase from 11.56 to 13.56 percent, while its contribution to the PORS would escalate from 14.24 to 16.24 percent. Councilman Guess told the

March 13, 2017....continued

public that they need to understand that the General Assembly is responsible for this. They kick things back down to us, and make the county look like the bad guys because they have to raise taxes. Councilman Kinard said that the state is limiting everything and we are going to get to the point that we can't do anything as far as recruiting or hiring. Councilwoman Hammond said that she doesn't think the people realize how this is going to affect the common worker. It really is going to hit the people in the pocket. Controller Smith further reported the county had collected \$397,210 in solid waste fees and \$301,508 in landfill tipping fees through January 2017. Also, the county is getting into compliance with the state's Unclaimed Property Act. This is where an inventory of unclaimed property is being taken to try to get money back to residents that is owed to them.

County Administrator Preston reported that the county had issued 40 building permits this year and collected \$6,200. Last year, the county issued 34 permits and collected \$1,400. It was further stated that a C-Fund Committee will meet within the next two weeks.

REPORTS FROM COUNTY COUNCIL

- 1) SCA -An issue was discussed about the situation at Denmark Tech with Sen. Matthews...he did not really give an answer. SCA will be meeting in Walterboro on Thurs.
- 2) Lower Savannah COG -LSCOG Board met in Bamberg County Court-house Annex on Thursday, February 9. Thanked the staff for assisting.
- 3) LSCOG (TAC) (Kinard) - Reported the road improvement for (Heritage Center, Hwy. 78), was cut down from approximately \$1million to about \$131,000. They are going to revisit the issue and try to see why the scope of the project was reduced.

On motion by Councilman Guess, seconded by Councilman Carter, council approved on first reading, in title only, a proposed ordinance to amend the existing Bamberg County Road Ordinance to accept Raysor Road into the road maintenance system.

Council approved the calendar of events after adding the Legislative Luncheon scheduled to be held at Denmark Technical College on March 31, 2017 from 11 a.m. until 1:00 p.m.

On motion by Councilman Kinard, seconded by Councilwoman Hammond, council approved the appointments of the following to the Lower Savannah of Governments Board: Councilman Larry Haynes (elected), Councilman Clint Carter (elected), Mayor Gerald Wright (elected) and Mr. Jerry Bell (public sector).

At this time, Chairman Comer called for public comments. 1) Ms. Eva Manigault – S.C. Family & Community Leaders. 2) Dr. Wesley Boykin – Voorhees College Center of Excellence.

March 13, 2017....continued

The council thanked the administrator and employees for their hard work. Administrator Preston, Councilwoman Hammond and Councilman Kinard were commended for traveling to Columbia regarding our retirement status for the employees. It was stated that a county/community calendar should be formed so that when things are planned, we don't impose on other community events. All were reminded of the March 25, 2017 Breast Cancer Awareness event to be held at Denmark Technical College.

There being no further business for discussion, on motion by Councilman Guess, seconded by Councilman Carter, the meeting was adjourned at 8:48 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rose R. Shepherd, CCC