

**MINUTES OF BAMBERG COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING - November 7, 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.

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Bamberg County Council met 6:30 p.m., November 7, 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., Clint Carter and Councilman Larry Haynes. **Others Present:** Joey R. Preston, T.M. Thomas, Richard Ness, Dionne Gleaton, Jerry Halmon, Mallory Biering, Alice Johnson, Detra Bruce, Robert Corlin, Nina Haynes, Nannie Manigault, Paul Eubanks, Gina Smith, Andrew Jackson Academy Cheerleaders, Denmark-Olar Cheerleaders, Deanna Berry, Jerry Bell, Danny Black, Kay Clary, Glenda Barton and Sandra Humphries.

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 Trent Kinard, followed with the pledge of allegiance by Councilman Joe Guess, Jr.

On motion by Councilman Guess, seconded by Councilman Carter, council approved the minutes from the October 3, 2016 meeting after correcting the word wither, changing it to the word **will**.

On motion by Councilman Carter, seconded by Councilman Kinard, council approved the agenda after adding two additional items as requested by Chairman Odom: 1) Board appointment to the LSCOG board; and 2) Board appointments to the Property Maintenance Appeals Board.

Mallory Biering, Keep Bamberg County Beautiful Director, along with the KBCB Board, presented checks recognizing cheerleaders from Andrew Jackson Academy and Denmark-Olar High School and the Bamberg-Ehrhardt High student council for participating in the litter-free game program. The funds were provided by Palmetto Pride as follows: Andrew Jackson Academy received \$300, Denmark-Olar cheerleaders and Bamberg-Ehrhardt student council received \$250 each.

Accepted as information was a presentation from Kearston Bryant, a representation from South Carolina DHEC. Ms. Bryant asked the council to complete a survey concerning South Carolina Public Health Care. She said her goal is to share information gathered to help improve health care for everyone in Bamberg County. The completed survey will play a major role in assisting and helping SC DHEC Lowcountry to understand the needs and wants in Bamberg County. Chairman Odom thanked Ms. Bryant for her presentation.

A public hearing was conducted concerning an ordinance restating and affirming the Bamberg County Fire Service Area, the Bamberg County Fire Service Coordinator, and the Bamberg County

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Fire Advisory Board; repealing and revoking all prior ordinances and resolutions inconsistent therewith; and other matters pertaining thereto. No public comments were made.

SouthernCarolina Alliance Executive Director Danny Black updated Bamberg County Council on the economic development group's work to improve the quality of life in the region. To date, SCA has brought \$105 million in private investment to the region and a little over 260 new jobs. Blackwater Barrels, the new barrel making company in Bamberg, celebrated their grand opening on September 21, 2016 and Governor Nikki Haley was present during the grand opening. Bamberg County is one of six Promise Zones, where the federal government partners with local leaders to address priorities. Forty-one grant applications have already been submitted through the Promise Zone to provide services in Bamberg County and across the region. Mr. Black further stated that a lot of the applications have to do with health care, with crime prevention, broadband access and workforce training among the other service targets. SouthenCarolina Alliance has applied for a \$1 million grant from the U.S. Department of Energy, along with a \$4 million U.S. Department of Labor grant, to address the region's needs, mainly after a welding school that addressed workforce needs closed. Additionally, they are trying to get some money to offer the welding school issue again, noting there were 146 participants who went through the welding training program and found employment.

Jerry Bell, Bamberg County Chamber of Commerce Director gave an update on events within the county. He announced the Chamber's 50<sup>th</sup> Annual Banquet will be held at 6 p.m., Thursday, November 17, at the Olar Fire Department and the county's Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony is scheduled for 6 p.m. Sunday, December 4, at the county courthouse. Three of the four nominees for Citizen of the Year were present and introduced to the public: Glenda Barton, Sandra Zorn Humphries and Trent Kinard. The fourth nominee, Nancy Reed Jones was absent.

Treasurer Alice Johnson reported the county's income for September was \$399,252. Expenses came in at \$795,030, leaving a negative balance of \$395,818.

Finance Director T.M. Thomas reported the county's general fund had generated \$1,113,414 in year-to-date revenue as of the end of September. Expenditures stood at \$1,702,923, reflecting a negative balance of \$589,509. Overall, all departments are operating within budget and within expected bounds. Councilman Kinard requested that council receive copies of the county's financial reports before they arrive at the meeting so that they will have adequate time to study them.

Controller Gina Smith informed that the county's books have been turned over to the auditors in mid-October, pointing out that she had built a spread sheet of all the county's cash balances for the past three years. Her goal is to keep audit fees down and reduce material weaknesses that may appear in the audit report. It was further stated that it is not a simple task because the county has 12 funds which carry their own set of books, balance sheets, income statements and rules and nuances. Ms. Smith proceeded to state that consistent work is being done to reduce deficiencies in the county's accounting and financial reporting system.

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County Administrator Preston reported that there are some matters to be reviewed regarding the fire departments. He said approval of the ordinance was important in letting fire departments know what their job responsibilities are. A potential deal is being considered between the Colston and Ehrhardt fire departments regarding a territory swap. At this time, there are no plans for the creation of a new fire department. On motion by Councilman Carter, seconded by Councilman Guess, council agreed to send the request regarding territory swap to the Public Safety Committee for additional discussion. Administrator Preston reminded everyone of the ribbon-cutting ceremony for the new courthouse annex at 3:30 p.m. on Friday, November 18. He said that we are anticipating 200 to 400 people to be in attendance. Revenues are coming in, the courthouse annex parking lot is complete. Most of the penny sales tax projects are nearing completion. Mr. Preston said the county is in the planning stage of creating a veterans' memorial. The county will need thousands more dollars than the \$75,000 allocated through the penny sales tax to make the proposed memorial the tourist destination it deserves to be.

#### **REPORTS FROM COUNTY COUNCIL**

- 1) SCA -No report.
  - 2) Lower Savannah COG -Next meeting is scheduled to be held in Myrtle Beach, SC. Last meeting was held in St. Matthews.
  - 3) LSCOG (TAC) (Kinard) -Work has started on the parking lot at Calhoun Street and Bi-Lo Shopping Center in Bamberg.
  - 4) LSCOG Housing Consortium -The December meeting is scheduled to be held in Bamberg County Courthouse Annex Council Chamber on Thursday, December 1 at 10:00 a.m.
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On motion by Councilman Carter, seconded by Councilman Kinard, council approved on third reading, an ordinance restating and affirming the Bamberg County Fire Service Area, the Bamberg County Fire Service Coordinator, and the Bamberg County Fire Advisory Board; repealing and revoking all prior ordinances and resolutions inconsistent therewith; and other matters pertaining thereto.

On motion by Councilman Guess, seconded by Councilman Haynes, council approved the calendar of events after adding to it the FEMA Meeting for Monday, November 14<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 a.m. in the council chamber.

On motion by Councilman Comer, seconded by Councilman Kinard, council approved the appointment of Shawn Hanks, pastor of Colston Branch Baptist Church, to the Lower Savannah Council of Governments board, replacing the late Jasper Varn.

On motion by Councilman Haynes, seconded by Councilman Kinard, council approved the appointment of Jeff Deibel (Dist. #1), James Harold Barnwell, Jr. (Dist. #3), and Cindy Hurst (Dist. #4) to the Bamberg County Property Maintenance Code Appeals Board. Council discussed and thought it would be more profitable to appoint a citizen to the board from each district. It was

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decided that the remaining council members will appoint at a later date, a representative to serve on the board from each district.

At this time, Chairman Odom called for public comments. No public comments were made.

The council thanked the administrator and employees for their hard work. Councilman Kinard said he received a call from Ms. Barbara Varn, Gen. Jasper Varn's wife, thanking everyone for everything that was done during his death.

There being no further business for discussion, on motion by Councilman Guess, seconded by Councilman Haynes, council voted to adjourn at 7:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rose R. Shepherd, CCC