

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*, SouthernCarolina Regional Alliance, 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., March 4, 2019 in the chamber of the Bamberg County Courthouse Annex. **Present:** Chairman Kerry Trent Kinard, Councilwoman Sharon Hammond, Councilmen Isaiah Odom, Clint Carter, Evert Comer, Jr., Joe Guess, Jr., and Larry Haynes.

**Others Present:** Joey R. Preston, T.M. Thomas, Norma Jett, Jerry Halmon, Dionne Gleaton, Gina Smith, Alice Johnson, Christopher Hall, Darrell Brooker, Jeanette Driggers, Ken Ahlin, Booker Patrick, Rufus Jamison, Danny Black, Kay Maxwell, Carol Durgan, Larry Brummel, Frank Ward, Clarence McMillan, Mary Tilton, Ruthie Brown, Ben Hay, Wallace Hicks, Shirley Robinson, Kay Clary, Candace Fralix, Christopher Hall, Carrie McMillan, Ms. Moulder, Brad Hudson, Raymond DeRienzo, Dean Fralix and approximately 50 additional people.

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Bamberg County Council meeting was called to order by Chairman Kerry Trent Kinard at 6:30 p.m., in the Chamber of the Bamberg County Courthouse Annex. Invocation was rendered by Councilman Clint Carter, followed with the pledge of allegiance by Councilman Joe Guess, Jr.

On motion by Councilman Carter, seconded by Councilman Haynes, council approved the minutes from the February 4, 2019 meeting with future corrections should there be any.

On motion by Councilman Haynes and Councilwoman Hammond, seconded by Councilman Guess, the agenda was approved after agreeing to change the order of the agenda by allowing the public comments to be moved from near the end of the agenda and placed at the beginning.

The Public Comments section was placed as the first agenda item for business. The following six people signed up prior the beginning of the meeting and given the opportunity to address the Council: Ken Ahlin, Raymond DeRienzo, Jr., Carol Durgan, Dean Fralix, Brad Hudson and Rev. Rufus Jamison, Jr. Others that did not sign the roster were granted permission to address the Council during the public comments were: Larry Brummel and Frank Ward. The above noted individuals had comments and concerns regarding various issues within Bamberg County. Each citizen had three minutes to express their concern. The citizens were invited to submit their concerns in writing to the Chairman or County Administrator to be addressed. Chairman Kinard reminded everyone that the taxpayers are paying more in school taxes than they are in county taxes. It is identified on our tax bills where the county collects about twenty-two cents out of a dollar and the school collects sixty-four cents. Gratitude was expressed to the public for their appearance and communicating their concerns.

Danny Black, Executive Director of SouthernCarolina Alliance, gave an update on the economic development status of Bamberg County. Negotiating with various companies/industries, in 2018, SCA initiated the investment of over \$174 million in our region (Bamberg, Allendale, Barnwell, Beaufort, Colleton, Hampton and Jasper counties), and a total of 696 jobs were created. Mr. Black further stated that they have communicated directly with 163 companies and talked with 50 site consultants over the country. Agribusiness is on the rise and the region gained a lot of that market in 2018. It takes about nine months to get a project through the process and out of the 144 projects they have pursued, about 12% was successful. SouthernCarolina has been working with Volvo to attract possible auto merchants to the region. The group was informed of Masonite International

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Corporation located in Denmark, will be closing as of July 31, 2019. The Company has approximately 110 employees that will lose their jobs because of its closure. Mr. Black advised everyone that we have got to be able to sell positive things about what's going on in your county to get people and industry to move here. He continued by stating that our property tax in this region is high and it is difficult to locate industry in our area. Having a more enhanced workforce, transportation system and becoming better salesmen for the region would help the process. SCA is working with some consultant groups to develop a plan to try and accomplish that. The Council thanked Mr. Black for the update.

Controller Gina Smith informed the council that Bamberg County had been awarded \$1,483,490 in grant funds for Fiscal Year 2017, FY '18 and year-to-date through FY '19. Also, Bamberg County has a total of \$3.4 million in upcoming and pending grant awards.

Bamberg County Chamber President Jerry Bell gave an update on upcoming events within the county. Flyers listing additional events in the community were distributed to the citizens present.

Treasurer Alice Johnson reported for the month of January the county had income total of \$2,994,611 with expenses of \$1,194,225. After expenditures, a positive overall balance of \$1,800,385 was left.

Finance Director T.M. Thomas reported the general fund had \$5,658,455 in year-to-date revenue as of the end of January. Expenditures stood at \$4,157,860 leaving a balance of \$1,500,595. All departments are continuing to operate within their budgets.

Controller Smith gave a brief report from the Bamberg County Finance Committee meeting held on February 26. The committee discussed the possibility of an easier method for the tax payer to read their tax notice. New software to implement this method would cost approximately \$12,000, with the need to implement a payment plan for the software. This process is still in the study stage. The potential redesigning of the tax notice would include: county portion, school portion, municipality portion with each portion being color coded. The concept is to help the tax payer understand the tax notice crystal clear.

Administrator Preston informed council of the upcoming C-Fund meeting that is scheduled for Thursday, March 21 at 6:30 p.m. A closing was held on the three fire trucks last week. The Bamberg County Fire Chiefs requested a meeting with the County Council on Friday, March 8 at 6:00 p.m. Administrator Preston reported receiving a letter from CSX Railroad informing Bamberg County that they will have to share the cost of the railroad crossing on Dally Road. In the future the County will have to resume responsibility of the upkeep of that railway. Also, a Solid Waste Committee needs to be scheduled soon to discuss some outstanding issues. Administrator Preston's report was received as information.

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

- 1) SCA (Haynes, Comer & Odom) -No report.
- 2) LSCOG -No additional information.
- 3) Lower Savannah COG (TAC) -Meeting is scheduled for 3/12 @ 10:00 a.m.
- 4) LSCOG Housing Consortium -No Report.

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On motion by Reverend Odom, seconded by Councilman Haynes, council gave second reading to approve an amendment to an ordinance to the amended and restated master agreement for the establishment of the Quad-County Industrial Park I, Park II, and Park III (Project Can Can).

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On motion by Councilman Guess, seconded by Reverend Odom, council approved a proposed resolution referencing the support of Denmark Technical College. Chairman Kinard requested the record to reflect that Denmark Technical College has not been funded like the other technical colleges in the past. They have been decently funded for this year and this has been since 40 years. Reverend Odom asked that every citizen in Bamberg County get behind DTC and support them. The college has long suffered from the classes having dilapidated and out dated equipment. Now, some of the equipment has been replaced/updated, but not adequate enough.

On motion by Reverend Odom, seconded by Councilman Kinard, council approved a proclamation proclaiming March in Bamberg County for “Visionary Women: Champions of Peace & Nonviolence.” The proclamation was sponsored by Councilwoman Sharon Hammond.

On motion by Councilman Guess, seconded by Reverend Odom, the calendar of events was approved.

On motion by Councilman Comer, seconded by Councilman Carter, council approved the delinquent tax sale bank account. Controller Smith reported the amount of overages that the county will move from the delinquent tax sale bank account into the general fund will be \$49,498. The delinquent tax sale process is that after the sale is held, at times a county property may sell for more than the taxes that were owed. When that happens, that money is transferred to the county’s general fund if a property owner is notified of the overage and doesn’t claim the money after five years.

At this time, Chairman Kinard called for comments from the members of council. The members of Council commented to the public and thanked them for their attendance and becoming involved.

There being no further business for public discussion, on motion by Councilman Comer, seconded by Councilwoman Hammond, the meeting was adjourned at 10:05 p.m., to enter in executive session to discuss a legal matter.

Respectfully submitted,

Rose R. Shepherd, Clerk to Council