

MINUTES OF BAMBERG COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING

- January 13, 2014

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., January 13, 2014, in the courtroom of the Bamberg County Courthouse. **Present:** Chairman Alzena Robinson, Councilmen Joe Guess, Jr., Trent Kinard, Evert Comer, Jr., Clint Carter, Larry Haynes and Rev. Isaiah Odom. **Others Present:** Administrator Joey R. Preston, T.M. Thomas, Richard Ness, Kell Anderson, Alice Johnson, Shane, Martha Guess, Sarah Noel, Ruthie Brown, Bill Johnson, Betty Singleton, Kathy Rhoad, Martha Hammett, Jerry Bell, Sharon Hammond, Dionne Gleaton and Jerry Halmon.

Bamberg County Council meeting was called to order by Chairman Robinson at 6:30 p.m., in the Bamberg County Courtroom. The invocation was rendered by Councilman Trent Kinard, followed with the pledge of allegiance by Councilman Clint Carter.

Accepted as information was the overview of Bamberg County's financial status by Treasurer Alice Johnson. Ms. Johnson updated everyone that \$1,322,215 in taxes was collected in November. The county's total income for the month stood at \$979,931. Expenses came in at \$661,355, leaving the county with a positive balance of \$318,576 for the month. Treasurer Johnson also reported that \$2,485,780 in taxes was collected in December. The county's total income for the month stood at \$548,662. Expenses came in at \$480,325, leaving a positive balance of \$68,337 for the month.

On motion by Councilman Comer, seconded by Councilman Odom, council approved the minutes from the December 2, 2013 regular meeting, with future corrections should there be any.

On motion by Councilman Comer, seconded by Councilman Odom, the agenda was approved as submitted.

The gavel was passed on to Councilman Larry Haynes (new chairman), from former Chairman Alzena Robinson outgoing chairman. Chairman Haynes will reign from January 2014 until December 31, 2014. Councilwoman Robinson thanked everyone for their support during her chairmanship.

After a lengthy discussion, on motion by Councilman Comer, seconded by Councilman Carter, council agreed to carry over to the next council meeting, selection of vice-chairman for 2014. Councilmen Guess and Kinard opposed the matter being carried over due to the way the rules were written (to be done by the order of rotation beginning January 2010 with Councilman Clint Carter from district #7 as vice chairman. Councilman Carter to become chairman January 2011

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as set forth by Council). Thereafter, the chairperson's seat would rotate from the vice chairman position in numerical order (according to district number).

Bamberg County Administrator Joey Preston presented his year-end-report to the council and others by informing them that the county had begun negotiations with the Municode company to codify all of the ordinances and make them available online. He further stated the county is moving forward with road improvements with the use of C-Fund Committee money. Also, an engineer is on board that works with and is paid for by the C-Fund Committee. A power point presentation was presented with an update of the various county departments. The county is also looking to open a new, freestanding emergency room facility by this summer and is doing well on the collection of capital projects sales taxes. The Park Shed in Olar has been completed and the renovation of the Dane Theatre in Denmark is nearing completion. The county has secured \$658,420 in grants over the past year and Bamberg County ranks 45th in the state for the value of a mill and a mill brings in \$27,620 in our County.

On motion by Councilman Comer, seconded by Councilman Odom, council approved a resolution agreeing to recognize Govan Fire Chief Michael L. Epperson, Sr., for serving 20 years as chief. Mr. Epperson will be retiring on January 14, 2014.

On motion by Councilman Comer, seconded by Councilperson Robinson, council approved to have the 2014 Bamberg County Council Retreat on Friday, February 28, 2014 beginning at 9:00 a.m., in the Hooten-Black House. A facilitator will be secured by Administrator Preston.

Kell Anderson, project manager with Southern Carolina Alliance, reported on a company that could potentially create a minimum of 75 jobs and up to \$4 million in capital investment. They (SCA) are also continuing to work Project Matinee, a company with the potential to create approximately 40 jobs and \$800,000 in capital investment.

Finance Director Thomas reported the county collected \$398,076 in its general fund in December but spent \$548,702 in accounts payable and payroll cost. The first quarter of the fiscal year, the general fund has generated \$1,928,963 in year-to-date revenue, with year-to-date expenditures totaling \$2,637,295, reflecting a year-to-date deficit of \$708,332. The county collected \$34,377 in special revenue funds and spent \$37,641. The account has a year-to-date deficit of \$94,063. Revenues collected in the county's enterprise fund totaled \$202,428, with landfill expenditures coming in at \$48,052. The enterprise fund had a surplus of \$4,654 because of solid waste fee collections.

REPORTS FROM COUNTY COUNCIL

- 1) Lower Savannah COG -Councilman Carter was recognized as chairman of the year.
- 2) Three Rivers -Meeting on 2/4/14 in Jackson.
- 3) Lower Savannah (TAC) -Next meeting in Aiken scheduled for 1/21/14.
- 4) Planning Committee Meeting -Chairman Kinard reported that the committee met and they are recommendation first reading of the building codes ordinance and first reading of the flood ordinance.

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On motion by Councilman Comer, seconded by Councilman Odom, council gave first reading to a proposed ordinance to repeal ordinance number 4-04-1 to comply with the direction of the South Carolina Building Codes Council and adopt the Administrative Provisions (Chapter 1).

On motion by Councilperson Robinson, seconded by Councilman Guess, council approved first reading of an ordinance to amend the flood damage prevention ordinance – ordinance number 19-09-01.

On motion by Councilman Guess, seconded by Councilman Carter, council approved a resolution establishing written public notice of the Bamberg County Council Meeting Schedule for calendar year 2014. The date for the June meeting was corrected to state June 2, 2014.

On motion by Councilman Odom, seconded by Councilman Kinard, council approved a resolution requesting the immediate suspension of a withdrawal request to the state Department of Environmental Control agricultural surface water withdrawal registration number 02IR025 relating to Walther Farms. Councilperson Robinson stated that this resolution should be sent to the Bamberg County Legislative Delegation for further review, and objected that it be sent directly to SCDHEC. Administrator Preston will send a cover letter with the resolution to Senator Brad Hutto and Representative Bakari Sellers. Walther Farms has made a second request for more than 3 billion gallons and the request is being analyzed by DHEC. Councilman Guess stated that we feel as citizens' rights of use have been superseded by the interests of this large corporate farm (Walther Farms). Councilman Kinard said, "There comes a point where if you don't stand up for what's right, they're going to continue to do this. The poor farmer who lives in Bamberg County are going to wither and die because he doesn't have any money. And that's not fair to the little farmer.

On motion by Councilman Odom, seconded by Councilman Comer, council approved the calendar of events. Council added a personnel meeting for Wednesday, January 22 at 4:00 p.m.

Chairman Haynes called for comments from the public, council and news media. Betty Singleton (Bamberg County resident) made comments regarding the following: low payroll, poor service at the Nursing Home, E-911 Bill, roads and the cost for codification of the ordinances.

There being no further business, on motion by Councilman Comer, seconded by Councilman Kinard, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by,

Rose R. Shepherd, CCC