

MINUTES OF BAMBERG COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING

- June 30, 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 5:30 p.m., June 30, 2014, in the courtroom of the Bamberg County Courthouse. **Present:** Chairman Larry Haynes, Councilwoman Alzena Robinson, Councilmen Joe Guess, Jr., Trent Kinard, Evert Comer, Jr., Clint Carter, and Rev. Isaiah Odom. **Others Present:** Administrator Joey R. Preston, T.M. Thomas, Richard Ness, Gina Humphreys, Alice Johnson, Sharon Williams, Sarah Noel, Rita Sease, Jerry Halmon and Dionne Gleaton.

Bamberg County Council meeting was called to order by Chairman Larry Haynes at 5:30 p.m., in the Bamberg County Courtroom. The invocation was rendered by Councilman Trent Kinard, followed with the pledge of allegiance by Councilman Joe Guess.

On motion by Councilman Comer, seconded by Councilman Kinard, the agenda was approved by council.

On motion by Councilperson Robinson, seconded by Councilman Odom, council approved second reading

Public hearing was given to an ordinance to adopt the operating and capital budgets of Bamberg County for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2014, and ending June 2015, and to make appropriations for such Bamberg County budgets for county ordinary purposes and for other county purposes for which the county may levy a tax; to provide for the levy of taxes on all taxable personal and real estate properties in Bamberg County for such county ordinary purposes, including sufficient tax to pay the principal and interest on outstanding indebtedness of Bamberg County maturing during said fiscal year; and to provide for other matters relating to Bamberg County. No public comments were made.

On motion by Councilman Comer, seconded by Councilperson Robinson, council approved third and final reading to an ordinance to adopt the operating and capital budgets of Bamberg County for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2014, and ending June 2015, and to make appropriations for such Bamberg County budgets for county ordinary purposes and for other county purposes for which the county may levy a tax; to provide for the levy of taxes on all taxable personal and real estate properties in Bamberg County for such county ordinary purposes, including sufficient tax to pay the principal and interest on outstanding indebtedness of Bamberg County maturing during said fiscal year; and to provide for other matters relating to Bamberg County. Included in the approved FY 2014 - 2015 budget: general fund account - \$6,128,091; special revenue - \$6,167,453; enterprise - \$1,050,951; and debt service \$213,848. Councilmen Trent Kinard, Clint Carter and Joe Guess, Jr., opposed third reading of the budget because of the increase in

June 30....continued

council's travel reimbursement. After a brief discussion, further comments were made that people are struggling to pay taxes and the council voted to increase their travel.

Administrator Preston said that overall, the budget reflects a \$715,000 decrease compared to fiscal year 2013-2014, and includes a 3 percent cost-of-living adjustment for employees. Total millage will remain the same at 171.2 mills, which includes 4 mills to service the hospital bond debt, 3 mills to service the \$500,000 Tax Anticipation Note originated in 2010 and 1.7 mills to service mini general obligation bonds. Administrator Preston also indicated the need for the council to refinance the hospital bond, as the current payments only cover interest. Councilman Guess said every year the amount that we are spending on interest is going up and this is something Bamberg County can sustain.

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE REPORT:

Councilperson Robinson reported that the personnel committee met on Monday, June 30, 2014 at 4:30 p.m. The committee concluded that the County Administrator had the authority/power to change the position of the county Keep America Beautiful coordinator from part-time to full-time.

Councilperson Robinson stated that there are three appointments to the LSCOG Workforce Development Board from Bamberg County and in order to participate on that board, you must attend the meetings. Presently, we have one member that has never attended a meeting. The council authorized Administrator Joey Preston to ask Jim Tobul of Tobul Accumulators, to represent the county on the LSCOG Workforce Development Board.

Administrator Joey Preston presented council with draft of inventory of roads in the county. Council was asked to look at the roads in their district for accuracy. The county's C-Fund Committee allocated \$55,000 for completion of the list, and they are scheduled to make a presentation at the August 11, 2014 council meeting. Mr. Preston also reported, bids for the new courthouse annex construction are slated to be sought later this year. An architectural plan of the new complex was shown. A \$25,000 PARD grant has been awarded to beautify the landscape surround the annex, including developing parking areas. The project will include crosswalks and building safety enhancements for judges.

County Attorney Richard Ness was present and reported on the Freedom of Information Act from the recent state Supreme Court decision related to the Freedom of Information Act. He said the provisions requiring public bodies to give 24 hours' notice of a meeting and provide an agenda do not prevent public bodies from changing and adding to agendas without notifying the public. The council can amend agendas for a regularly scheduled council meeting, they cannot for a special called meeting because they're for a specific purpose. No agenda is required for an emergency meeting. Also, if you have a meeting where the only issue is going to be going into executive session to talk about something in particular, you're not going to have an agenda because you don't really have a public meeting. As long as you are not going to have to vote on things and just had something to discuss, then you don't have to give public notice of that.

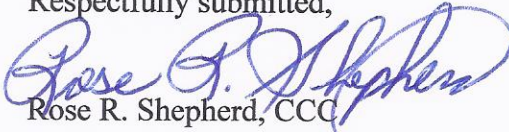
June 30, 2014....continued

REPORT FROM COUNCIL:

- 1) Robinson - Travel Reimbursement: Look at cutting reimbursement checks once a month for regular travel. Council has always had \$2,500 budgeted for travel and due to budget restraints, we cut back for the past 3 three years.
- 2) Guess - Budget: In 2008, in local government, the state gave us almost \$1million and it's now down to \$60K.
- 3) Carter - Employees: Thanked the employees for their hard work.
- 4) Kinard - Employees: Thanked the employees for their hard work and I disapprove of council's travel going from \$1,500 to \$2,500.
- 5) Odom - Travel Executive Board meetings are normally in Walterboro and gas prices are high and I can not afford it. (I think I have earned mine.)

There being no further business to be discussed at this time, on motion by Councilperson Robinson, seconded by Councilman Comer, Chairman Haynes adjourned the meeting at 6:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,


Rose R. Shepherd, CCC