

**MINUTES OF BAMBERG COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING**

- February 5, 2018

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., February 5, 2018 in the chamber of the Bamberg County Courthouse Annex. **Present:** Chairman Clint Carter, Councilwoman Sharon Hammond, Councilmen Isaiah Odom, Trent Kinard, Evert Comer, Jr., Joe Guess, Jr. and Larry Haynes. **Others Present:** Joey R. Preston, T.M. Thomas, Richard Ness, Dionne Gleaton, Jerry Halmon, Alice Johnson, Mary Tilton, Jerry Bell, Gina Smith, Detra Bruce, Morgan Reuis, Craig Threatt, Candace Fralix, Sarah Noel and Ruthie Brown.

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

On motion by Councilmen Guess, seconded by Councilman Odom, council approved the minutes from the January 8, 2018 meeting with future corrections should there be any.

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

Candace Fralix, Bamberg County Deputy Treasurer, was selected as the first Bamberg County Employee of the Quarter. Ms. Fralix was nominated for setting a “great example of what Bamberg County employees should be.” The nominations for her highlighted her exemplary service to both her coworkers and the public. In particular, when Treasurer Alice Johnson was out of the office because of surgery, Candace was dependable, reliable, and ensured that the office continued to run smoothly. In addition to thanking her for her service, she was presented with a plaque and a monetary gift card. Ms. Fralix accepted the awards with honor.

The members of Council received a case management report from Bamberg County Chief Magistrate Craig Threatt. He stated that for the first and second quarters of FY 2018 (July 1 – December 31), combined, the court filed 1,317 criminal and traffic cases. There were 220 civil cases filed and 1,416 of them were disposed of. A total of 207 bond hearings were conducted on charges resulting in incarceration. A total of \$95,156 was collected in criminal and traffic fines and assessments, along with \$13,605 in civil filing fees.

SouthernCarolina Alliance Marketing Associate Morgan Reuis presented its quarterly report on the economic status. Ms. Reuis reported SCA worked on 173 projects region wide in 2017, with

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Bamberg County being considered as a possible location for 27 projects last year. Thirteen announcements were made, generating a total of \$169,050,000 in private investment and 308 jobs across the region. Roc-Lon Industries of Bamberg was among the region's expansions, creating a \$10 million capital investment and 15 jobs for Bamberg County. In product development, the SCA has also made improvements at the CrossRhodes Industrial Park with signage, wetland delineation and land clearing and has also coordinated with Palmetto Rural Telephone Cooperative, Inc., on future fiber optic routing and extensions to industrial parks in the region. In the marketing field, the SCA Lead Generation program had meetings with 134 companies in 2017. Comments were made from Councilman Kinard, stating he would like to see Bamberg County land more new projects. With SCA serving Allendale, Bamberg, Barnwell, Beaufort, Colleton, Hampton and Jasper counties, Bamberg county receives no benefit from industry locating in Jasper, Colleton and Beaufort counties because we have no revenue sharing agreements with those counties. Concern was displayed that more creative ways have not been sought to bring more industry into the county. Ms. Reuis agreed that we need to get more creative and go beyond what has been shown. Also, the announcement was made that the regional office has opened in Hampton. The council received the SCA's quarterly report as information with the expectation of receiving more positive results for Bamberg County.

On motion by Councilman Haynes, seconded by Councilman Comer, council at the request of Lower Savannah COG gave approval of county council members(s) for emeritus status participation on the Lower Savannah Council of Governments Board of Directors.

Jerry Bell, Bamberg County Chamber of Commerce Director gave an update on upcoming events within the county. Flyers listing additional events in the community were distributed to the citizens that were present. Mr. Bell encouraged everyone to support the events within the county. Again, river rides will be taking place soon and an invitation was given for participation and a request was made for transporters to transport participants to the events. The update was accepted as information.

Treasurer Alice Johnson reported the county's total income for December was \$859,769. Expenses came in at \$902,099, leaving a negative balance of \$42,330. Councilwoman Sharon Hammond questioned how can we get caught up? Administrator Preston said that is the purpose we have a fund balance. You build it up to take care of these kinds of months. Presently, we are collecting taxes and January's collection is normally big. The funds will kind of balance out when the other funds start to pay the general fund back, then you will see the deficit start to go away.

Controller Gina Smith reported on the county's cash flow status. She said the county regular account is making every payroll and the bills for all of the other accounts. The other accounts pay back the general fund at different intervals during the course of the year. Relating to the FY 2019 budget, the Retirement Funding and Administration Act of 2017, the retirement fund is requiring higher contributions from the county and the employees. Currently, FY 2018, regular retirement system employees are paying 9 percent of their salary to the system. The county is paying 13.56 percent. Police officers are paying in 9.75 percent and the police officers' employer, which is the county, is paying 16.24 percent. Controller Smith continued to report that last year the new law

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did cap the employee contributions at 9 percent and 9.75 percent. Also, the county should expect increases in the cost of property and liability insurance, along with health insurance.

Finance Director T.M. Thomas reported that the general fund had generated \$2,718,536 in year-to-date revenue at the end of December. Expenditures stood at \$3,141,499, leaving a negative balance of \$422,963. The county continue to operate within the budget, and the departments continue to assist with that effort.

County Administrator Preston reported to Council that a resolution to establish guidelines to be used for providing economic development incentives for solar power projects has been postponed in order to give Hampton County and Barnwell County an opportunity to review it. A letter was mailed to Waste Management informing them that Bamberg County would be seeking RFP's for our waste handling. The water tank located at the Bamberg County Airport had been repaired for \$3,400. KBCB Director reported the county received its new roll-off truck and noted that all eight of the county's convenience and recycling centers could now accept plastics for recycling. Also, she reported that KBCB started "Make a Difference Monday" cleanups, for one hour, in various parts of the county. Administrator Preston reminded Council not to forget to complete and turn in their Ethics Forms.

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

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| 1) SCA (Haynes, Comer & Odom) | -A retreat was held in Hilton Head – last week. There was discussion that O-C Tech was contemplating taking over operations of Denmark-Tech. Also, discussion of O-C Tech having permission to recruit students from Bamberg Ehrhardt, but Denmark-Tech was not allowed the same. |
| 2) LSCOG                      | -Executive Committee Meeting is scheduled for Thursday In St. Matthews @ the Museum – 6:00 p.m.   |
| 3) Lower Savannah COG (TAC)   | -Meeting was held in January. No new money will be available for road construction until 2022.  |

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Councilman Kinard initiated a discussion regarding Bamberg County allowing the City of Denmark to use the Bamberg County water tank without having a contract. He proceeded to say that there were a number of complaints from some of Denmark's citizens questioning the water quality and that the water in the tank should be tested. After an extensive discussion, Council agreed that Administrator Preston go forward to get the water in the tank tested and report back to them.

On motion by Councilman Comer, seconded by Councilwoman Hammond, Council approved a resolution establishing written public notice of Bamberg County Council meeting schedule for calendar year 2018.

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Council agreed to postpone until March, a resolution establishing guidelines to be used for providing Bamberg County Economic Development incentives for solar power projects.

On motion by Councilman Odom, seconded by Councilman Haynes, with necessary corrections, council approved a resolution endorsing and supporting the changing of and re-designation of the mission of Denmark Technical College but opposing the South Carolina Technical College System's current proposal to have Orangeburg-Calhoun Tech take Over Denmark Technical College; and other matters related thereto.

On motion by Councilman Comer, seconded by Councilman Haynes, the calendar of events was approved after adding an additional event.

On motion by Councilman Odom, seconded by Councilman Haynes, council approved the reappointment of Councilman Evert Comer to the SCA board for a three-year term beginning April 2018.

Chairman Carter called for public comments at this time. Dean Fralix, a Bamberg County citizen, expressed concern about the finances of Bamberg County.

Chairman Carter called for Council comments.

- 1) Hammond - February is recognized as Black History Month and I would like to recognize the "First Black Women" in Bamberg County that held the following positions:
  - Ms. Inez Harley - 1<sup>st</sup> Bamberg County Courthouse Employee (Custodian)
  - Ms. Alzena Robinson - 1<sup>st</sup> Black Bamberg County Councilwoman – Dist. #2.
- 2) Comer - Thanked Administrator Preston and his staff. We have a good relationship... let's keep it that way.
- 3) Guess - Asked Mr. Dean Fralix did he know what an unfunded mandate was? The Federal Government owe us (Bamberg County), \$2 million for over the past 8 years...we are paying taxes twice.
- 4) Odom - Thanked everyone for what they are doing.
- 5) Haynes - Thanked everyone for coming out to the meeting and encouraged that others come.
- 6) Carter - Thanked County Administrator Preston and the employees.
- 7) Kinard - Made various comments regarding people in the political arena and reminded everyone of their commitment to the citizens in which they serve.

There being no other business for public discussion, council motioned to go in executive session to discuss a legal matter at 9:20 p.m.

Council re-entered in public session to announce no actions were taken.

Respectfully submitted,

Rose R. Shepherd, CCC