

MINUTES OF BAMBERG COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING

- July 2, 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*, Southern Carolina 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., July 2, 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, Adam Ness, Dionne Gleaton, Kristen Beckham, Detra' Bruce, Samella Porter, Jerry Bell, Gina Smith, Alice Johnson, Wes McArden, Sidney Evering, Ruthie Brown, Donald Parler, Willa Dean Mathis, Barbara Beard, Ken Ahlin, Jackson Price, Greg Kears, Candace Fralix, David Harley, William Molnar, Jeff Black, Gayle Black and Robin Chavis.

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Bamberg County Council meeting was called to order by Vice Chairman Trent Kinard at 6:31 p.m., in the Chamber of the Bamberg County Courthouse Annex. Invocation was rendered by Councilman Evert Comer, Jr, followed with the pledge of allegiance by Councilwoman Sharon Hammond.

On motion by Councilman Comer, seconded by Reverend Odom, council approved the minutes from the June 4, 2018 regular meeting and June 11 and 28, 2018 called meetings with future corrections should there be any.

On motion by Councilman Comer, seconded by Reverend Odom, council approved the agenda after the request to remove J-1, an inducement resolution, K-3, a joint park agreement and K-4, a fee-in-lieu of ad valorem taxes agreement.

Kristen Beckham, external affairs manager for Dominion Energy South Carolina, gave a fifteen minute presentation to council regarding her company. Ms. Beckham said they are a Virginia-based energy company and they are still in the process of trying to finalize its proposed purchase of SCANA Corporation and South Carolina Electric & Gas Company. SCE&G has filed a federal lawsuit against the S.C. Public Service Commission, which recently approved following the General Assembly's passage of a law to temporarily cut the bills of Cayce-based customers by 15 percent. The 15 percent short-term rate reduction, with the Dominion's proposal includes customers seeing an immediate 7 percent electric rate reduction and no rate increases for a least three years. Ms. Beckham further stated that average residential electric customers would receive a \$1,000 cash payment and \$1.7 billion in existing debt from the unsuccessful nuclear construction project would be absorbed by the company. Some of the industrial customers will be receiving payments of millions in cash payments. State agencies are going to get \$36 million back.

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Municipalities are going to get \$22 million back and churches will get approximately \$2.6 million. Contingent on how the state PSC rules in a hearing on SCE&G's permanent nuclear rates in December, SCE&G customers could possibly have to pay billions of dollars more to pay off the unsuccessful nuclear project's remaining debt. Ms. Beckham continued on to say that they can't fix what has happened in the past, but they are trying to move South Carolina forward and a decision has to be made by the South Carolina Public Service Commission by December 21, 2018.

Mr. Wes McArden, membership manager of the AirMedCare Network, an air ambulance company, shared information with the members of council. Handouts were passed out to those present. Mr. McArden said, "Our standard rates start at \$85 a year for a household, with discounted memberships also available and members having no out-of-pocket expense if flown by an AMCN provider. Anyone in the county seeking additional information on the member-based program can reach Mr. McArden at 843-708-6192.

A public hearing was given to an ordinance to levy and re-impose a one percent sales and use tax, subject to a referendum in Bamberg County pursuant to the Capital Project Sales Tax Act, South Carolina Code annotated section 4-10-300, ET SEQ. There are 10 projects that are requested to be funded by the capital projects sales tax with the amount not exceeding the aggregate of \$5,600,000. One public comment was made by Ms. Candice Fralix, a Bamberg County employee.

Under Committee and Staff Reports no representative was present from SouthernCarolina Alliance to give a report. Councilman Trent Kinard stated that SCRDA is our prime source of economic development and for this year they have attended about two meeting.

Bamberg County Chamber President Jerry Bell gave an update on upcoming events within the county. A four-mile river trip is scheduled to begin at 9:30 a.m., Saturday, August 4, beginning at Brabham Landing on Cannon Bridge Road. The Dog Paddle will benefit the Mary Ann Morris Animal Shelter (MAMAS), and donations of dog supplies are welcome. Flyers listing additional events in the community were distributed to the citizens present. Mr. Bell encouraged everyone to support the events within the county. The update was accepted as information.

Treasurer Alice Johnson reported that the county's total income in May was \$606,834, with expenditures coming in at \$741,028, leaving a negative balance of \$134,194.

Finance Director T.M. Thomas reported the general fund generated \$6,239,336 in year-to-date revenue as of the end of May. Expenditures stood at almost \$6,218,001, leaving a positive balance of \$21,336. The county departments continue to operate within their budget and bounds.

Administrator Preston reported on the county's approval of a loan from the USDA's Rural Development Facilities Program for a fire service substation in the Rivers Bridge community of \$150,000. We are in hopes of having a ground breaking by the end of this year. A Broadband grant application with USDA for \$3 million in the Hunters Chapel area has been submitted. We are looking to work with Orangeburg County on this project. If we are successful with the grant, it goes on as a revenue. Gethsemane Baptist Church is the pilot church used for this project. We

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have been awarded \$453,949 from the Department of Commerce to complete the upgrades for the Cross Rhodes Industrial Park. The C-Fund committee has signed off on contract for roadwork on Gum Tree Road and a couple of others. There are a few more trees to be cut down on the backside along the apron of the runway at the airport.

**REPORTS FROM COUNTY COUNCIL**

- 1) SCA (Haynes, Comer & Odom) -No report.
  - 2) LSCOG -Meeting was held in Aiken. \$225,000 was turned over to 2 other regions. Councilman Haynes was named the new chairman.
  - 3) Lower Savannah COG (TAC) -Working with Mayor Nancy Foster to write a letter requesting the reopening of Bridge Street.
  - 3) LSCOG Housing Consortium - No report.
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On motion by Councilman Guess, seconded by Councilwoman Hammond and Councilman Comer, council approved third and final reading of an ordinance to levy and re-impose a one percent sales and use tax, subject to a referendum in Bamberg County pursuant to the Capital Project Sales Tax Act, South Carolina Code annotated section 4-10-300, ET SEQ. There are 10 projects that are requested to be funded by the capital projects sales tax with the amount not exceeding the aggregate of \$5,600,000.

On motion by Reverend Odom, seconded by Councilmen Haynes and Comer, council approved second reading of an ordinance amending Bamberg County Ordinance #1-13-8, dated December 2, 2013, as codified, in certain limited regards and particulars only, pertaining to the appointment and composition of the advisory board of the Keep America Beautiful of Bamberg County; and other matters related thereto.

The calendar of events was discussed and approved with no additions.

Council made various comments regarding the public being in attendance and encouraged them to become more involved with the county.

There being no further business to be discussed, on motion by Councilman Guess, seconded by Councilwoman Hammond, council agreed and the meeting was adjourned at 8:21 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rose R. Shepherd, CCC