

## MINUTES OF BAMBERG COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING

- April 7, 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.

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Bamberg County Council met 6:30 p.m., April 7, 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, Dionne Gleaton, Jerry Halmon, Ruthie Brown, Booker Patrick, Martha Guess, Dawn Strickland, Gina Humphreys, Mr. Sekinger, Johny Harelson, Kell Anderson, Alice Johnson, Sarah Noel, Taluzeita Williams, Larry Wilson, LaTarcha Wilson, Justin Bamberg, Candy Kern-Fuller, Jim Blackwell, Justin Bamberg, Jerry Bell, Ken Ahlin and Craig James.

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

Accepted as information was the overview of Bamberg County's financial status by Treasurer Alice Johnson. Ms. Johnson reported that the county's total income for the month stood at \$267,784. Expenses came in at \$645,359. County Administrator Preston, commented that the general fund budget will be increased with the adjustment of budget journal entries. We are going to start doing the entries ourselves now so we can recover whatever was owed back to the fund.

On motion by Councilwoman Robinson, seconded by Councilman Odom, council approved the minutes from the March 10, 2014 regular meeting, with future corrections if necessary.

On motion by Councilwoman Robinson, seconded by Councilman Odom, the agenda was approved by council after deleting K-1, a proposed resolution recognizing Mayor Blain Crosby and the American Red Cross during the ice storm in February 2014.

Public hearing was also given to a proposed ordinance to amend the Bamberg County Personnel Policy and Procedures. No public comments were made.

Bamberg County Soil and Water Conservation Commissioner Johny Haralson, was present to thank the council for their support over the years. Commissioner Haralson also announced the Patrick Farm being honored as "Cooperator of the Year for 2013." Mr. Booker Patrick, one of the recipients of the title, explained on the Patrick Farm, there are many conservation practices in place like Seasonal High Tunnel, bluebird nesting boxes, micro irrigation, loblolly and longleaf tree planting, supply pipeline, contour farming, pest management, nutrient management,

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conservation cover, and tree and shrub establishment. Council thanked Commissioner Haralson and the Bamberg Soil and Water Conservation District for their commitment and hard work and taking the initiative to keep them abreast of the program. Mr. Patrick was congratulated on receipt of the award recently received by him and his family.

Council received a report from Kell Anderson, project manager with Southern Carolina Alliance, stated that he did an educational outreach trip to Denmark-Olar Middle School. A grant has been submitted to the Department of Commerce and with the help of Administrator Preston, hopefully this project can be put out to bid. The USA Building was shown to a prospect on March 24. Mr. Anderson announced Mr. David Felkel, President and CEO of Edisto Electric Cooperative, was named Bamberg County's 2014 Economic Ambassador for his dedicated efforts to improve the County's ability to offer prospective industry viable, fully served sites and buildings.

Finance Director Thomas reported that the county's general fund generated \$4,198,718 in year-to-date revenue as of the end of February, with year-to-date expenditures totaling \$3,819,640 as of the end of March. The county collected \$100,581 year to date in E-911/Emergency Management revenue, with year-to-date expenditures coming at \$94,599. Year-to-date revenues collected in the county's enterprise fund totaled \$690,018, with year-to-date expenditures coming in at \$619,466. The county's road maintenance fund generated year-to-date revenues of \$229,080, with year-to-date expenditures coming in at \$234,283, reflecting a deficit of \$5,203. The county's rural fire account collected year-to-date revenues of \$360,006, with year-to-date expenditures totaling \$194,281. It was noted that the collection of road maintenance revenue -most of which comes from a \$30 road user fee - was coming in at only a 60 percent collection rate, one which he wants to increase. It was further stated that on the expense side, all three departments (E-911, road maintenance and rural fire service) are operating well below the budget at a combined percentage of 56 percent.

### **REPORTS FROM COUNTY COUNCIL**

- 1) Lower Savannah COG -Meeting will be Thursday, April 10<sup>th</sup> @ 6:30 p.m. @ Edisto Research Center (the public is invited).
- 2) Lower Savannah (TAC) -The work in Denmark continues. Approximately \$756,000 has been approved by the C-Fund Committee and \$6,000 has been spent on roadwork on Watermelon Road. Roadwork is being addressed for Peach Tree, Mulberry Lane and Trade Street.
- 3) SCA -Had annual retreat on Thurs, & Fri. - it was very effective.
- 4) Three Rivers -Reminded everyone of the Three Rivers Tour.
- 5) LSCOG Housing Consortium -Met March 13<sup>th</sup> in Orangeburg. Reviewed three projects.

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On motion by Councilwoman Robinson, seconded by Councilman Guess, council approved a resolution designating the month of April as Fair Housing Month in Bamberg County.

On motion by Councilman Odom, seconded by Councilwoman Robinson, council approved a resolution supporting the E-911 Center upgrade.

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On motion by Councilwoman Robinson, seconded by Councilman Odom, council approve submission of a resolution requesting Governor Nikki Haley and the General Assembly to provide funding for the twenty-five percent local match requirement that FEMA is requiring the counties and cities to provide to cover the cost of clean up as a result of the most recent ice storm.

On motion by Councilman Odom, seconded by Councilwoman Robinson, council approved a resolution expressing appreciation to all agencies involved during the February 2014 Ice Storm.

On motion by Councilwoman Robinson, seconded by Councilman Odom, council gave third reading to an ordinance to amend the Bamberg County Personnel Policy and Procedures.

On motion by Councilman Odom, seconded by Councilman Carter, council approved second reading of a proposed ordinance for the establishment of a lease agreement for the MAMAS (Mary Ann Morris Animal Shelter).

On motion by Councilwoman Robinson, seconded by Councilman Odom, council approved the calendar of events after adding the Three Rivers Tour to the calendar.

On motion by Councilwoman Robinson, seconded by Councilman Odom, council reappointed Mr. Jasper B. Varn, Jr., and Mr. Jerry Bell to the Lower Savannah COG Board.

Presentation of the Bamberg County Fiscal Year 2013-2014 audit report was given by Dawn Strickland of C.C. McGregor and Company of Orangeburg. Ms. Strickland reported the fund financials are materially correct, except for the effects of not determining to whom delinquent tax sale funds held are due and maintaining proper custody of the inmate funds as to determine the actual amounts that should be held in trust. The county's government-wide financial statements included a lack of records regarding the county's capital assets. Due to lack of available records, McGregor could not come up with the actual depreciation calculations at June 30, 2011, or be able to bring them forward to 2012 and 2013. There was no financial data for the Bamberg County Hospital, which is considered a legally separate component unit of the county. The county's general fund balance totaled \$6,989,474 for the year ending June 30, 2013. The total fund balance for the general fund, including a combination of all special revenue, capital projects and debt service funds, was \$7,485,288 at the end of June 30, 2013. Eight deficiencies in the county's internal control of its financial reporting were also cited in the audit, including reconciling transactions and verifying account balances. Bamberg County is now using an outside contractor to go through the complete general ledger and make any adjusting entries to correct the records for the current fiscal year.

Ms. Gina Humphreys, county internal auditor, said the county must not continue to allow the expenses of other funds to be paid for through its general fund and that balance sheet accounting must begin. She further stated that we have got to know which funds owe the general fund and how much. The books have got to be set straight according to the June 30, 2013 balance .

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Overall the county had a really good year. Some of the problems have been recognized and they are trying to fix them and do better every year but it is a process.

Chairman Haynes called for comments from the public. Persons making comments: Ken Adlin, Bamberg County resident, Jerry Bell (Chamber of Commerce), Larry Wilson, Bamberg County resident and Craig James (*S.C. Timber Association*).

Comments from Council: Councilwoman Robinson requested that the council's funds for travel be reinstated as before (\$2,500 each), and that the council continue payment for retiree insurance for the former Probate Judge. Councilman Carter thanked the county employees for their hard work. Other council members thanked the employees for their hard work and comments were made regarding the dinner that was sponsored by Bamberg County for the employees and volunteers for their commitment the February Ice Storm Pax.

There being no further business for discussion in public session, on motion by Councilwoman Robinson, seconded by Councilman Odom, the public section of the meeting was adjourned at 8:31 p.m., to enter in executive session to discuss a community development project.

Respectfully submitted,

Rose R. Shepherd, CCC