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MINUTES OF BAMBERG COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING - January 8, 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.

Bamberg County Council met 6:30 p.m., January 8, 2018 in the chamber of the Bamberg County Courthouse Annex. **Present:** Chairman Evert Comer, Jr., Councilmen Isaiah Odom, Trent Kinard, Clint Carter, Joe Guess, Jr. and Larry Haynes. **Absent:** Councilwoman Sharon Hammond. **Others Present:** Joey R. Preston, T.M. Thomas, Richard Ness, Phyllis Overstreet, Jerry Halmon, Alice Johnson, Mary Tilton, Jerry Bell, William Molnar, Angie Stringer, Ruthie Brown, Bill Johnson and Detra Bruce.

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

On motion by Councilmen Guess and Haynes, seconded by Councilman Carter, council approved the minutes from the December 4, 2017 meeting with future corrections should there be any.

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

On motion by Councilman Odom, seconded by Councilman Haynes, council approved the changing of the gavel from past chairman Councilman Evert Comer, Jr., to the new Chairman Councilman Clint Carter – District #7 for 2018.

On motion by Councilman Guess, seconded by Councilman Odom, council approved the selection of vice chairman Councilman Trent Kinard, District #1, for 2018 by district rotation as set forth by Bamberg County Council Policy.

After taking on the role of chairmanship, Chairman Carter presented a plaque to the past chairman, Councilman Evert Comer, Jr., recognizing his leadership as chairman for 2017. Councilman Comer accepted the plaque with honor and gratitude and said he was privileged to have served as chairman.

Mr. Darrell Booker, SCRA Senior Project Manager, reported there are approximately 10 manufactures actively contemplating Bamberg County for possible location sites. There are four solar farm entities considering locating in the county as well. Mr. Booker said the solar farms would not bring any jobs to the county. He further reported if addition information is ever needed,

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feel free to let SCRA know and they will be willing to meet and provide more in depth data on the matter.

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 present. Mr. Bell encouraged everyone to support the events within the county. 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. Also, a company by the name of Moto-Vated Sports expect to make a presentation at the Chamber board meeting with the possible intention of moving its motocross training and racing facility from Gaston, South Carolina to Bamberg County. The update was accepted as information.

Finance Director T.M. Thomas reported that the county's general fund, total budgeted revenues for FY 18 are \$7,227,010 and the actual revenues collected through November 2017 are \$1,733,721 representing 24% of the budgeted amount. Prior year revenues in FY 17 collected were \$1,599,649 which is an increase of \$134,072 compared to last year. The General Fund Departments have collectively spent 36% of their budget at \$2,585,613. The County is close to where it should be regarding its General Fund expenditures.

County Administrator Preston reported to Council that he was aware UTC Aerospace Systems in Bamberg had some ground water contamination a few years ago. Recently, notices were placed on people's doors notifying them that water samples were going to be taken. DHEC did not notify the County of the matter. Administrator Preston said he wanted to alert Council on what was going on and he knew nothing other than what was on the flier that was presented to each council member. Councilman Kinard said he had been contacted by several residents that received the notice and he discussed the matter with Rep. Justin Bamberg. Mr. Kinard expressed great concern that the notification had not come from DHEC and Rep. Bamberg will be looking into the concern. The County has received preliminary approval for three new fire trucks at a payment rate of \$48,000 per year. The water tank located between Bamberg and Denmark sprung a leak last week during the cold weather and after inspection it is in need of repairs and possibly upgrades. The cost to make repairs to the water tank are estimated to be between \$3,000 and \$15,000. It was noted that City of Denmark officials have said they have no funds to assist with repairs or needed upgrades to the tank, which is primarily used by the city to enhance its water pressure. Replacing the tank could cost up to \$500,000. Presently, we are working with the other counties served by the economic development alliance to develop a unified plan across the region regarding solar farms locating in the counties. We were informed that a c-fund committee meeting will be scheduled probably for February. The county has received its share of C-Fund money and has gone from a deficit of approximately \$200,000 to a surplus of \$955,000. The money was saved by spending the money on County roads and not on State Roads. The County is continuing to work with the Town of Govan to help them with their finances and Ordinances. All members of council were reminded to complete and submit their Ethics Forms to the Ethics Commission prior the March 15th deadline. A retirement celebration is planned for Thursday, January 11th at 4:30 p.m., for former Voter Registration and Elections Director Patti Jeffcoat, and Watson Carter, former Public Works Director/employee.

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The Codification of all County Ordinances is moving and should be completed by this summer or fall. Mr. Donald Berry was introduced as the Bamberg County Right-of-Way Clerk. The County Code Enforcement Department was awarded a \$4,221 grant through Palmetto Pride to help purchase some equipment and they received \$10,000 through an affiliate of Keep Bamberg County Beautiful. Also, a new metal detector is in place at the new courthouse annex for use when we attend council meetings.

REPORTS FROM COUNTY COUNCIL

- 1) SCA (Haynes, Comer & Odom) -A retreat is scheduled for later this month.
 - 2) LSCOG -Executive Committee Meeting is scheduled for Thursday at Denmark-Tech
 - 3) Lower Savannah COG (TAC) -Next meeting is scheduled for January 18.
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On motion by Councilman Guess, seconded by Councilman Odom, the calendar of events was approved after adding additional events.

The council thanked the administrator and employees for their dedication and hard work. Councilman Kinard asked everyone to support the USC Garnet and Gold event that's scheduled for January 15-19. Pictures were taken in support of the event.

There being no other business for discussion, on motion by Councilman Odom, seconded by Councilman Haynes, council voted to adjourn at 8:23 p.m..

Respectfully submitted,

Rose R. Shepherd, CCC