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MINUTES OF BAMBERG COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING

- May 1, 2017

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, 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., May 1, 2017, in the chamber of the Bamberg County Courthouse Annex. **Present:** Chairman Evert Comer, Jr., Rev. Isaiah Odom, Councilwoman Sharon Hammond, Councilmen Trent Kinard, Evert Comer, Jr., Joe Guess, Jr. and Larry Haynes. **Absent:** Clint Carter. **Others Present:** Joey R. Preston, T.M. Thomas, Richard Ness, Gina Smith, Alice Johnson, Dionne Gleaton, John Fleming, Jerry Bell, Sarah Noel, Detra Bruce, Edward Generette, Willie Staley, Shirley Robinson, Rep. Justin Bamberg and Nancy Foster.

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 Rev. Odom, followed with the pledge of allegiance by Councilman Trent Kinard.

On motion by Rev. Odom, seconded by Councilman Guess, council approved the minutes from the April 10, 2017 meeting with future corrections should there be any.

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

Representative Justin Bamberg appeared before Council to reflect on Senate Bill S.480, legislation restructuring the governing board of Denmark Technical College. The presentation was initiated by articulating the fact there are no plans to close Denmark Technical College, but it was agreed improvements are needed to heighten enrollment and advance programs. Rep. Bamberg pointed out the steady decline in enrollment is not how a school generates money that it needs to run. He further stated his job is not to run Denmark Technical College, but they have got a plan to fix things. The House and Senate now have to come to an agreement over the two different plans that have been proposed for the school. The House's plan calls for the State Tech board to take over the duties of the Denmark Tech Area Commission for an 18-month period, from May 2017 to November 2018. At the end of the period, full control will revert to Denmark Tech's commission. Under the House plan, the State Tech Board will be required to provide quarterly status reports about Denmark Tech to the chairman of the Senate Finance Committee and the chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee. The State Tech Board will also receive input from local government, school boards and economic development officials, and with other local community leaders. Rep. Bamberg reported a priority will be placed on upgrading dormitories and enhancing programs, such as the welding program. It is possible some consideration will be given toward elimination of some of the college's 33 course programs. Additional comments were made by

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Rep. Bamberg and other members of Council regarding Denmark Technical College exemplifying ways to assist its situation.

A public hearing was given on an ordinance to amend Bamberg County Ordinance #18-5-1 in limited regards and particulars, only, so as to add an erroneously omitted road to the county road list; and other matters related thereto. No public comments were made.

SouthernCarolina Alliance Development Director John Fleming reported that the SCA has created \$108 million in capital investment, along with 85 permanent jobs and 200 construction jobs, in the region this year. SCA serves Bamberg, Allendale, Barnwell, Colleton, Hampton and Jasper counties. There are now seven active projects that are considering Bamberg County as a possible location. CrossRhodes Industrial Park speculative building has been improved with a paved parking lot, lighting and irrigation. In addition, another 10-acre site is being cleared at the industrial park for expansion prospects. Also, the spec building is being marketed as a potential location for suppliers of Charleston's Volvo plant. Councilman Kinard requested SCA report at the June meeting, the number of industries that have gone to other counties within our region, for the past five years. Council accepted this report as information.

Jerry Bell, Bamberg County Chamber of Commerce Director gave an update on upcoming events within the county. He reported a three-mile river trip is scheduled for 10 a.m. Saturday, May 20, beginning at Claude's Landing. Flyers listing events in the community were distributed to the citizens present. Mr. Bell encouraged everyone to support the events. The update was accepted as information.

Treasurer Alice Johnson reported the county's total income for March was \$711,871. Expenses can in at \$857,512, leaving a negative balance of \$145,641.

Finance Director T.M. Thomas reported the county's general fund had generated \$5,842,335 in year-to-date revenue as of the end of March. Expenditures stood at \$4,930,587, leaving a positive balance of \$911,748. Overall all departments are operating within budget and within expected bounds.

County Administrator Preston announced the Bamberg County received USDA grant money and loan money to purchase the rest of the sheriff cars. Approximately half of them have already been replaced and this will be the other half. Also, we are working with USDA for the replacement of some of our fire trucks. Administrator Preston mentioned that the USDA has authorized the county to apply for funds for the courthouse renovation development. Also, bids for the sale of mobile office units located on the grounds of the Hospital are being taken. Interested buyers are invited to inspect the units on June 9. A meeting has been scheduled later this month with Senator Brad Hutto, to discuss possibilities for Bobcat Landing.

REPORTS FROM COUNTY COUNCIL

- 1) LSCOG (TAC) (KINARD) -Burger King project will be starting soon. July 18 - Meeting will be held at the John Ford Community

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2) LSCOG

Center in Calhoun County at 10:00 a.m.
- Upcoming meeting.

On motion by Councilman Odom, seconded by Councilman Haynes, council approved on third reading, a proposed ordinance to amend Bamberg County Ordinance #18-15-1, in limited regards and particulars, only, so as to add an erroneously omitted road to the county road list; and other matters related thereto. (*Known as Raysor Road.*)

On motion by Councilman Kinard, seconded by Councilwoman Hammond, council approved a proposed resolution for approval of the Bamberg County Council 2016-2017 planning retreat report.

On motion by Councilman Kinard, seconded by Councilwoman Hammond, council approved the calendar of events after adding the Lower Savannah Council of Governments (TAC) meeting for July 18, 2017 at the John Ford Community Center in St. Matthews.

At this time, Chairman Comer called for public comments. No public nor media comments were made.

The council thanked the administrator and employees for their hard work and thanked the public for attending the meeting and encouraged them to keep coming. Councilman Kinard noted there were problems with the fire departments. One particular department has over \$100,000 in the bank and he would like to call for an audit of that department.

There being no further business for discussion, on motion by Councilman Guess, seconded by Councilman Odom, the meeting was adjourned with no executive session at 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rose R. Shepherd, CCC