

MINUTES OF BAMBERG COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING - November 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.

Bamberg County Council met 6:30 p.m., November 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, Gina Smith, Wallace Hicks, Alice Johnson, Mary Tilton, Ruthie Brown, Candice Fralix, Ed Darnell, Detra' Salley, Farrell Pulaski, Barbara Beard, Lee Davis, Al Jenkins, Brittany Barnwell, Taurean Washington, Tiffany Kimmerlin, Jeff Black, Gail Black, Chris Wilson, Patricia Harley, Kay Maxwell, Patti Guess, Jennifer Ahlin, Harriett Coker, Donald Parler, Sarah Noel, Deanna Berry and approximately ten others.

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 Evert Comer, Jr., followed with the pledge of allegiance by Councilman Larry Haynes.

On motion by Councilman Comer, seconded by Councilman Haynes, council approved the minutes from the October 1, 2018 meeting with future corrections should there be any.

On motion by Councilman Carter, seconded by Councilman Comer, council approved the agenda after adding an executive session item to include an economic development and personnel matter with no action to be taken.

Administrator Preston requested that the presentation for Bamberg County Employee of the Quarter Award be postponed until the December meeting.

2nd Lt. Tre Bowman of the 151st Signal Battalion of the S.C. National Guard presented Emergency Services Director Brittany Barnwell and staff members, administrative assistant Tiffany Kemmerlin and addressing technician Taurean Washington with certificates of appreciation for their professionalism and willingness to support the 151st Signal Battalion during Hurricane Florence.

SouthernCarolina Regional Alliance Executive Director Danny Black updated the Bamberg County Council on the economic development within the region. He reported that the organization brought \$160 million in private investment to the region and they have also had 132 projects that they've worked this year, 187 properties have been shown and 58 visits have been made throughout the region that they serve. By way of information on the 24-hour freestanding emergency department located between Denmark and Barnwell, construction of behind schedule and hopefully it will be in full force within the first portion of next year. SCA has started an ambassador program for the region. Presently, they have 42 people and are aiming for 100 participants to get involved in marketing the good things about our region. Also, the leadership

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class sponsored by SCA is underway. The SCA has turned over a training center to Denmark Technical College to house welding classes, with the first advanced welding class to begin in January. They are using SCA's equipment and the building at no charge, except they pay for the utilities. Work is in progress at the CrossRhodes Industrial Park. Areas throughout the seven counties that a developer or an investor can come into an Opportunity Zone and invest their money and then get some tax shelter for a period of time. Mr. Black said it is definitely to our benefit if a developer comes in and has money to invest and will build a warehouse, manufacturing facility, etc. The council showed appreciation for the in depth report given by Mr. Black.

Controller Gina Smith and County Administrator Preston presented and explained to all that were present, the Bamberg County Tax Notice and gave elaborate details on how our property tax dollars are spent. After the explanation, the public understood more how the bottom line figure is calculated and what percent is allocated for the various entities.

Bamberg County Chamber President Jerry Bell gave an update on upcoming events within the county. Flyers listing additional events in the community were distributed to the citizens present. The Bamberg County Christmas Tree Lighting ceremony is scheduled for 6 p.m. Sunday, December 2, at the Bamberg County Courthouse. Ms. Cindy Hurst was named the 2018 Waddy Thompson Citizen of the Year at the chamber's Banquet. Mr. Ricky Nimmons was named the Evelyn McMillan Chamber Volunteer of the Year, and Mr. Jerry Bell received the Emma Ruth Dowling Unity Award. The update was accepted as information.

Treasurer Alice Johnson reported that the county's total income in September was \$867,397, with expenditures coming in at \$630,034, leaving a positive balance of \$237,363.

Finance Director T.M. Thomas reported the general fund had \$1,130,955 in year-to-date revenue as of the end of September. Expenditures stood at \$1,441,258, leaving a balance of \$310,303. All departments are continuing to operate within their budgets. Councilman Kinard asked Finance Director Thomas to include last year's report so that they will have the ability to compare past and current data.

Administrator Preston reported that the fire trucks will be here in March. Chairman Carter was thanked for attending the SCAC meeting. At the 118th Revenue & Finance Committee meeting, SCAC will be taking up the Health Insurance issue. The C-Fund Committee will meet on Tuesday, November 13, 2017 at 6:30 p.m. Administrator Preston will be meeting with the Highway Department in reference to Bob Cat Landing. An additional financial workshop for council's benefit is planned for January 2019. The delinquent tax sale was held today with \$160,776 collected and 106 parcels sold. The granite has been ordered for the Veterans Monument and it will include the seal, motto, history and mission of each military branch. Councilwoman Hammond requested that a detailed list of expenses that are being requested for the department head to pay back to the general fund from the special bank account, be provided to the department head. The list should be given to the treasurer and the department head for accountability so that everyone will have knowledge of how the funds are being used.

REPORTS FROM COUNTY COUNCIL

- 1) SCA (Haynes, Comer & Odom) -No Report
- 2) LSCOG -Meeting is scheduled for Nov. 8th in Santee.
- 3) Lower Savannah COG (TAC) -Meeting is scheduled to be held in Bamberg 11/13 in and Council Chambers at 10 a.m. The U.S. 78 Corridor Project right-of-way phase is continuing, with

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contact being made with property owners. Anticipated time for bids to go out and a contractor to be selected is the 4th quarter of 2019.

4) LSCOG Housing Consortium -Meeting is scheduled to be held in Orangeburg @ 10a.m.

On motion by Councilman Comer, seconded by Councilman Guess, council discussed and added events to the calendar of events. Reverend Odom requested that Clerk to Council Shepherd send an updated calendar of events to the council.

At this time, Chairman Carter called for public comments. Ms. Harriett Coker and Ms. Jennifer Ahlin spoke about the city of Bamberg not having a grocery store for the citizens. It was also a concern that some people don't have transportation to travel elsewhere to make purchases. They both voiced their concern about the county's high taxes. Marine Corps Toys for Tots director Deanna Miller Berry, stated that volunteers are needed in Bamberg, Barnwell, Allendale and Hampton counties to help make the Christmas program a success. Individuals can visit online at toysfortots.org for more information.

Council made comments to the public and thanked them for attending the meeting and showing concern.

On motion by Councilman Kinard, seconded by Councilman Comer, council entered in executive session to discuss a contractual matter and a personnel matter.

After a brief executive session, on motion by Councilman Haynes, seconded by Councilman Kinard, council voted to reconvene in public session and to act on the executive session matter.

On motion by Councilman Haynes, seconded by Councilman Kinard, council approved the renewal of Administrator Joey Preston's one-year contract for 2018-2019.

There being no further business to be discussed, on motion by Councilman Kinard, seconded by Councilwoman Hammond, council agreed and the meeting was adjourned at 10:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rose R. Shepherd, CCC