

MINUTES OF BAMBERG COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING

- October 6, 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.

Bamberg County Council met 6:30 p.m., October 6, 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, Jerry Halmon, Dionne Gleaton, Alice Johnson, Justin Bamberg, Travis Avant, Kell Anderson, Robert Corlin, Ed Darnell, Jeff Black, Jerry Bell, Dena Hartzog, Bamberg-Ehrhardt Cheerleaders, Ruthie Brown, Mallory Hoffman, Jim Blackwell and Sarah Noel.

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 Evert Comer, Jr., followed with the pledge of allegiance by Councilperson Alzena Robinson.

Bamberg County Treasurer Alice Johnson reported that Bamberg County's total income for August was \$452,415. Expenses came in at \$784,329, reflecting a deficit of \$331,914. Treasurer Johnson stated that October is the month that we are collecting only delinquent taxes and vehicle taxes and increased revenue from real estate taxes is anticipated.

On motion by Councilman Odom, seconded by Councilman Kinard, council approved the minutes from the September 8, 2014 meeting.

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

Mallory Hoffman, Keep America Beautiful coordinator, presented the Bamberg-Ehrhardt High School cheerleaders and their coach, Dena Hartzog, with a \$250 check from PalmettoPride, for participating in a litter-free football game on September 19, 2014. After making the presentation of the check, Ms. Hoffman said the volunteers helped pick up more than 2,000 pounds of trash from the Cry Baby Road area. She further stated the county will be receiving 126 trees through a PalmettoPride grant. Also, DHEC granted a \$500 grant for the purchase of items such as: magnets, totes, coloring books, T-shirts and banners. Councilman Odom said Mallory has been working hard, and he sees the difference since her arrival.

Council received a report from Kell Anderson, project manager with Southern Carolina Alliance. Mr. Anderson reported on the following: **Project Color** (\$20 million capital investment with 40 jobs); **Project Fountain** (expected to be a 20 to 25 million in capital investment and will bring 30 jobs to the county; **CrossRhodes Speculative Building** (will be breaking ground

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approximately the first of next year); **Green Link Incorporated** (to date, they have hired 40 individuals); Regional Job Fair (plans are currently under development for the event to take place on October 23rd at the Southern Carolina Business Center); WorkReady Community (Bamberg County has achieved 100% of the national Work Ready Community Goals). The SCA annual appreciation event is scheduled for Thursday, October 16, 2014 at the Sweetwater Country Club. Golf and Shooting will begin at 11:00 a.m., with a reception to follow at 5:30 p.m.

An update was given by the director of Bamberg County Chamber of Commerce Jerry Bell. Mr. Bell informed everyone of the upcoming Regional Job Fair and the Chamber Banquet scheduled for Thursday, November 6 at the Denmark-Olar High School in Denmark.

Finance Director Thomas reported the county's general fund generated \$844,487 in year-to-date revenue as of the end of August. Some of the major expenses in the general fund in the first two months have been: the county not only pays the normal monthly health insurance premium for each month, but is also required to pay a full month's advance to the State. This amount is then applied against the last month's payment which will occur in June of 2015. The county budgeted \$570,000 for health insurance premiums which averages \$47,500 per month. Special revenue funds: E/911, Road Maintenance and Rural Fire Service - overall, revenues in these 3 funds through August are \$144,388 representing 17% of the budgeted amount of \$871,947. On the expenditure side, all three departments are operating within budget and within expected levels at 14%. Enterprise Fund: Solid Waste - Budgeted revenues for Landfill/Solid Waste Department are \$1,050,951. Through August we have collected \$54,763 representing 5% of the annual budget. The finance staff has been working to prepare financing options for rolling stock and heavy equipment. McGregor staff is now on site and has started the audit process for the county.

Administrator Preston reported that the county launched its overhauled Emergency 911 response system on October 1. Sheriff Darnell said the improvement in the county's emergency communications system was remarkable, the cutover went smooth and Sharon Hammond did a wonderful job. We had a lot of dead spots where deputies, EMS or fire departments in the different parts of the county. The problem has been solved. Administrator Preston reported the county received a \$20,522 JAG grant for the purchase of security cameras for the detention center. RFP's for the property located behind the courthouse have come in.

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REPORTS FROM COUNTY COUNCIL

- 1) Lower Savannah COG -Next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, @ 6:30 p.m. in the new government building.
- 2) SCA -Industry Appreciation October 16, 2014 @ 5:30 p.m. Sweetwater Country Club.
- 3) Three Rivers -Next meeting is scheduled for November.
- 4) LSCOG (TAC) -The project of U.S. 78 is running a little behind and should be completed around November.

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- 5) LSCOG Housing Consortium -Original meeting was changed from September 15 to September 25. USDA gave the go ahead with projects.
 - 6) Planning Commission -Have not heard from Denmark regarding an appointee on the commission.
 - 7) NADO -Councilman Carter gave an extensive report on the trip to Denver, CO. They toured the Wind Tower Generator and other sites of interest. The enrichment tour was informative and amazing.
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On motion by Councilman Odom, seconded by Councilperson Robinson, council approved first reading, in title only, a proposed ordinance to exchange real estate located at 392 Second Street for real estate located at 1244 North Street.

On motion by Councilman Comer, seconded by Councilman Odom, council approved first reading, in title only, a proposed ordinance for the sale and complete removal from the real estate of the structures presently located at 1244 North Street, 401 Second Street and 19 Courthouse Loop.

Bamberg County Council accepted a resolution that allowed for a proposal plan for the purchase rolling stock for the Sheriff's department.

On motion by Councilperson Robinson, seconded by Councilman Odom, the calendar of events was approved as submitted.

On motion by Councilman Carter, seconded by Councilman Guess, council proclaimed Bamberg County as a "Purple Heart County." The appropriate steps will be followed to have Bamberg County listed among other counties with the status of being a Purple Heart County. When the procedure is completed, all Bamberg County Purple Heart recipients will be given a copy of the Purple Heart resolution.

On motion by Councilman Odom, seconded by Councilman Guess, council approved the appointment of Mr. Allen Mehrzad to the Bamberg County Recreation and Tourism Committee as a community representative.

On motion by Councilman Comer, seconded by Councilman Odom, council approved the administrative services contract of Mr. Joey Preston from October 2014 until October 2015. County Attorney Richard Ness said no changes were made to the contract other than a stipulation that now entitles the administrator to merit increases/or cost of living increases equal in percentage to the amounts budgeted for all employees in the annual budget. The contract was approved for \$101,870.

Comments from the public: Comments were made from the two candidates that are running for House Seat 90, Travis Avant and Justin Bamberg.

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Comments from Council: Councilman Guess thanked Justin Bamberg for being on his hobby horse with comments he made about LGF. Councilman Kinard thanked everyone for their support of the Purple Heart Resolution.

There being no further business to be discussed in public session, on motion by Councilperson Robinson, seconded by Councilman Odom, council agreed that the meeting be adjourned at 7:53 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rose R. Shepherd, CCC