COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
(Standing Committee of Berkeley County Council)
Chairman: Mr. Dennis L. Fish, District No. 5

The **COMMITTEE ON FINANCE** met on Monday, October 20, 2003, Berkeley County Office Building, 223 North Live Oak Drive, Moncks Corner, South Carolina, at 6:33 p.m.

PRESENT: Mr. Dennis L. Fish, Councilmember District No. 5, Chairman; Mr. Milton Farley, Councilmember District No. 1; Mrs. Judith K. Spooner, Councilmember District No. 2; Mr. William E. Crosby, Councilmember District No. 3; Mrs. Judy C. Mims, Councilmember District No. 6; Mr. Caldwell Pinckney, Jr., Councilmember District No. 7; Mr. Steve C. Davis, Councilmember District No. 8; Mr. James H. Rozier, Jr., Supervisor, ex officio; Mr. D. Mark Stokes, County Attorney; and Ms. Barbara Austin, Clerk to County Council, Mr. Charles E. Davis, Councilmember District No. 4; was excused from this meeting.

Pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act, notice of the meeting date, time, place and agenda was posted on the bulletin board at the entrance of the County Office Building, 223 N. Live Oak Drive, Moncks Corner, South Carolina and the Berkeley County Library, and mailed to the newspapers, radio stations, television stations and concerned citizens.

Chairman Fish called the meeting to order and asked the Committee's approval of the minutes for the Finance Meeting held on September 15, 2003.

It was moved by Councilmember Mims and seconded by Councilmember Farley to approve the Minutes as presented. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote of the Committee.

Chairman Fish referenced **Item A, Ms. Elaine Morgan, CEO Berkeley Chamber of Commerce,** Re: Accommodations Tax.

Mr. Oliver Buckles, representing the Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee, provided the Committee with brochures of information and stated he appreciated the opportunity to bring the annual report from the Committee. Mr. Buckles continued, "We consider our promotion to be terrific resources for the tourism public. Page 1 depicts the Financial Report for 2002-2003 reflecting the starting balance of accommodation monies that were disbursed for promotional efforts. It was 17.6 million dollars of direct motel rooms' sales that created these funds. An individual breakdown of the expenditure in the amount of $293,812.69 is shown on Page 2. The individual breakdown of activities that generate the 17.6 million dollars of direct room sales is shown on Page 3. The county is promoted in the industry as a DMO (a destination), covering all areas serving all of the people. Items listed under Trade shows bring in a terrific return. This is the second year we have targeted the African American Travel Council and groups are coming in because of the heritage and culture of this area. Since terrorism has become a real issue with tourist, the flying and bus travel is not as lucrative as it once was; however, the drive-ins are. The drive markets have benefited in bringing people to the area. By blitzing North Carolina, South Carolina and Georgia, they have been able to attract a tremendous

number of sports teams and groups. From March 2003 to November 2003 there were 259 teams booked into the Summerville motels. Each team averages 13 rooms and stays two nights. Also, for your information we have provided a list of several bookings for next year. Page 5 showed an increase in accommodations tax fees from 1997 to 2003. In 2003 an 18 percent increase was recorded in accommodations tax fees, which were derived from motel rooms. Within the region there had been a two to three percent decrease for the same period of time that Berkeley County experienced an 18 percent increase."

Councilmember Pinckney asked what the increase was attributed to versus the other areas?

Mr. Buckles stated that they have a comprehensive promotional effort that targets every group they could reach.

Councilmember Steve Davis asked for clarity on the community drive markets?

Mr. Buckles stated this addresses families that drive their cars on trips for a long weekend. There is a comfort factor that you are in control of your travel agenda.

Councilmember Steve Davis stated Mr. Buckles had indicated that the African American Travel Council had been targeted and that is no mystery, but there was a great migration of African American up north. Mr. Davis said, "It behooves us that those markets be extended to some extent. For example, Washington, DC, New York, etc."

Mr. Buckles stated they are able to make contact with those states.

Councilmember Steve Davis asked were the Black Expos highlighted in regard to the Trade Shows?

Mr. Buckles stated they did not put an exhibit in but would certainly consider it because they find it to be a very lucrative market.

Mr. Buckles stated there is one motel that can positively track $78,000 worth of business to the sports and religious groups, and to reunions.

Councilmember Crosby asked if Golf Tournaments had ever been brought in as a result of the advertisements?

Mr. Buckles stated he is often questioned in regard to golfing opportunities available in this area. There is a new and exciting opportunity in Goose Creek that could be promoted and they are going to see a lot more groups coming in, staying at the motels and golfing at that golf course.

Councilmember Crosby asked what means did they have to track groups that stay at the motels due to their promotion?

Mr. Buckles stated in the past they have used color-coded packets; some were returned and some were not. They found that was not a positive tracking of those visits. Some motels would track groups and would give the Chamber their feedback. They found that buses would much rather stay in Berkeley County and access the gardens on the Ashley River.

Councilmember Crosby stated that when he sees the amount of money listed he could not help but wonder if that amount of expenditures could be accounted for.

Mr. Buckles stated they wished they could account for every tourist that comes into the county. They receive information from some motels because they have a tracking system. By using the South Carolina Department of Park Recreation Tourism accommodations returns, they know the total amount of increase. They are experiencing the 17.6 million dollars income for Berkeley County because of the motel stays. Based upon PRT figures they have seen an 18 percent increase this year and feel they are on the right track. When they started the Accommodations Tax Fee, the Berkeley Motel was averaging between 20 and 30 percent occupancy. Currently, within the range of that motel the occupancy is 80 to 90 percent.

Councilmember Pinckney stated it was indicated that a quarter of a million dollars was spent, which brought in 17.6 million.

Supervisor Rozier stated it couldn't be said that it brought in 17.6 million because they don't have hard figures.

Councilmember Pinckney asked would it be fair to say that it brought in the majority of the 17.6 million with the contributing factor mentioned?

Mr. Buckles indicated he could not answer directly but when other areas are showing a two to three percent decrease and they are showing an 18 percent increase it is because of more than normal growth.

Councilmember Spooner asked why they did not advertise in Family Circle?

Mr. Buckles stated some of the magazines are extremely expensive and he did not know what the cost was for Family Circle.

Supervisor Rozier stated the Family Circle Tennis Tournament comes to the area once a year and everybody that attends reads the Family Circle magazine. He stated he could make that claim if Mr. Buckles claimed the entire 17.6 million came from the Accommodations Tax.

Mr. Buckles stated there were a lot of people at the Maryland show that was curious about the facilities on Daniel Island.

Chairman Fish asked what was he referring to when he mentioned Goose Creek's Golf Course?

Mr. Buckles stated he was referring to the Crowfield Course.

Chairman Fish indicated that Kemper Sports owned the course and they do a lot of advertising. Did they indicate they were going to advertise, or does Kemper no longer own it?

Mr. Buckles stated that it was owned by the City of Goose Creek and it is incumbent upon Berkeley County to assist in promoting that venture. He stated he was delighted to get this input from Council.

Mr. Buckles stated in the Committee's packet was a proposal for expenditures for 2003/2004 and the Accommodations Advisory Committee recommends that County Council adopt that proposal.

Chairman Fish asked if the budget proposed was $387,000? He stated there is balance of $82,000 shown. Tax & Fee monies in the amount of $282,963.61, which would be about $20,000 short. He asked if they were anticipating a large increase in accommodations funds?

Mr. Buckles stated he was sure they would see an increase in accommodation funds coming in unless there was a terrorist attack locally that could affect it.

Chairman Fish asked what items would they cut back on if the money were not there?

Mr. Buckles stated they would probably cut back on some of the expensive magazine ads and Trade shows that are of some distance away. Immediately after 911 they pulled back on the Trade shows that were some distance away.

Councilmember Crosby stated this is October and the ending balance shown in the amount of $82,953.92 was as of June 30, 2003. This amount is leftover and you are asking for an increase for next year.

Mr. Buckles stated the balance left over was as a result of the funds being transferred from the County. He stated he questioned the carryover and was told it was because the check comes in so close to the end of the year and there are contractual requirements that are on going that they need to keep a balance to meet those requirements.

Supervisor Rozier stated they had a balance of $93,591.67 last year and an $83,953.92 balance this year, while the county is struggling trying to determine a way to advertise other events.

Mr. Buckles stated that if the check comes on June 30, they don't spend it by July 10.

Supervisor Rozier indicated that every year so far, they've had a fund balance.

Mr. Buckles stated, "I would like to see that figure down to around $30,000."

Supervisor Rozier stated, "I could help you with that; and I plan to help you with that, to be honest with you."

Mr. Buckles concluded his report with no further action required.

Item B. Ms. Janet Jurosko, Berkeley County Auditor, Re: Additional funds (extension) temporary employee.

Ms. Janet explained to the Committee that in her letter dated October 14 she had requested $1,549.14 to be transferred from Contingency to Temporary Employment because of an open position in her department.

Supervisor Rozier stated there is a six-week limit on a temporary employee to provide that time to hire someone in that position. The six-week was concrete with every department. He indicated that Human Resources sent applications to Ms. Jurosko but she has not scheduled interviews.

Ms. Jurosko stated she had been busy working with Bond Attorneys for County and School Bonds, working with fee-in-lieu auditing, and only she does the hiring in her department. She stated there are three people qualified for the position but she has not had time to conduct interviews.

Supervisor Rozier stated one of the main problems with keeping temporary personnel on is that they build credits for unemployment. And when the temporary employment ended, they could go to the Unemployment Office and the County would become responsible for the Unemployment. That is the reason for holding temporary positions to six weeks and attempt to make an effort within the six-week period to fill the vacant position. The six-week rule has been effective for about three years.

It was moved by Councilmember Mims and seconded by Councilmember Steve Davis to approve the extension for temporary employment in the Auditor's Office.

Councilmember Spooner asked Ms. Jurosko when did she anticipate interviewing applicants? If she began interviews tomorrow how long would it take to hire someone?

Ms. Jurosko stated it would be within six weeks before she could start the interview process. However, if she were to interview tomorrow it could still take four weeks because the person selected would have to give their employer a two-weeks notice. She stated she is saving a lot of money because the vacant position pays a lot more than $6.00 an hour.

Chairman Fish asked if the funds would come from her budget?

Ms. Jurosko explained the funds would not come from her budget; it is not set up that way. She has money for personnel that would be left over in her budget but she has no temporary employment money.

Supervisor Rozier stated he needs direction from Council if they want to allow longer than six weeks for temporary employment. He stated he was not against it but he needs to know what Council wants to accomplish.

Councilmember Steve Davis suggested they do it on a case-by-case basis. And asked, "Has there had been a floodgate of this situation?"

Supervisor Rozier stated, no, because everyone else has had to stay within the six weeks. There have been many times departments asked to extend beyond the six weeks but it has not been allowed.

Councilmember Farley asked if the temporary employee would be qualified for the position, and is she doing the job?

Ms. Jurosko stated she was not qualified but she is doing what has to be done. Some of the procedures that entail auditing businesses, etc., are currently not being done.

Supervisor Rozier asked, "What is the person doing if the position is not being filled?"

Ms. Jurosko stated she was working on the accounts that submitted returns, which could be calculated in the office.

Supervisor Rozier stated that position was designed to audit businesses. He asked was anyone currently auditing businesses?

Ms. Jurosko stated no; actually, the auditing season has just begun. This position requires accounting, record keeping, bookkeeping, filing returns, and an Associates Degree. Therefore, the training would be minimal.

<u>The motion passed by unanimous voice vote of the Committee.</u>

Supervisor Rozier indicated that according to the vote, the six-week rule for Temporary Employment has been eliminated.

Chairman Fish stated he would agree that it should be a case-by-case situation.

Supervisor Rozier asked did they want those cases to come to Council?

Mr. Pinckney stated there could be extenuating circumstances that Council would have to look into. He stated he didn't think that was a bad idea because no two cases have to be the

same, that's why they were there. "Yes, bring them before Council and let us make that decision on a case-by-case basis."

Supervisor Rozier, "That's exactly what I was looking for Mr. Pinckney."

Item C. Consideration of a **Resolution** approving and authorizing the execution and delivery of an inducement and millage rate agreement by and between **Berkeley County, South Carolina** (the "county"), and **Van Smith Block Company, LLC** (the "company"), whereby, under certain conditions, the County will (a) either acquire title to certain industrial property for lease to the company or will enter into a fee agreement with the company with respect to such property and covenant in such lease or fee agreement to accept certain fees in lieu of A*d Valorem* taxes with respect to such property and (b) agree to place such property in a multi-county industrial park.

It was moved by Councilmember Crosby and seconded by Councilmember Spooner to send the Van Smith Block Company LLC Resolution to Council for adoption. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote of the Committee.

Item D. Consideration prior to **First Reading** of the following:

1. An **Ordinance** to reduce the assessment ratio applicable to general aviation aircraft subject to property tax in Berkeley County to four percent (4%) of the fair market value of the aircraft.

Mr. Kip Pratt, Air Port Director, explained to the Committee that earlier this year the Legislature passed a bill allowing South Carolina counties to reduce the property tax assessment on aircraft to four (4%) percent, and he was asking Council to consider the reduction. South Carolina was second only to Arkansas in property taxes for aircraft in the nation. In South Carolina a $100,000 aircraft, with the average millage rate, would run about $2,846 per year. In North Carolina that same aircraft would be $1,100; Georgia, $1,200; and in Florida, zero. In Berkeley County the aircraft would be $2,425.50; reducing it to four (4%) percent would be $924.00. It is an owner's tax that is unfair to aircraft owners and they are being punished for owning an airplane.

Supervisor Rozier stated there are people/businesses who have their airplanes registered in other states. They are parked in Berkeley County part of the year, move to other states for a day or two, pay their taxes there and bring them back to our airport. If Berkeley County reduced the millage rate to four (4%) percent on aircraft more money would be accumulated because planes would register here and domicile here. At the same time fuel would be sold and Berkeley County would gather revenues from other areas. It is not unusual for a business not to have an airplane registered in South Carolina because of the 10-½ percent assessment. For the record, Supervisor Rozier stated, "I don't own an airplane anymore; I used to, and I will never own another."

Mr. Pratt stated there are approximately 40 airplanes parked at our airport. He stated he could not differentiate which ones pay taxes and which ones do not. Several have indicated they would register elsewhere. Delaware for instance, where there are no property taxes.

Supervisor Rozier explained the Corporate Airplanes are not registered here because of the tax.

Councilmember Crosby asked how much revenue did Mr. Pratt estimate would be lost by reducing to four percent?

Mr. Pratt stated it is estimated to be approximately $15,000 but would add fuel sales. However, to bring in one $2 million dollar airplane would yield $16,000.

Councilmember Mims asked what was the percentage of tax on boats?

Supervisor Rozier responded it was 10 ½ percent. He stated aircraft fuel averages $2.20 per gallon.

It was moved by Councilmember Pinckney and seconded by Councilmember Mims to send the Ordinance Re: General Aviation Aircraft subject to property tax in Berkeley County to four (4%) of the fair market value of the aircraft to Council for First Reading. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote of the Committee.

2. An **Ordinance** to amend the **Agreement** for Development of a **Joint County Industrial Park** executed April 24, 1995, by and among **Berkeley County, South Carolina, and Williamsburg County, South Carolina**, providing for the development of a jointly owned and operated industrial/business park so as to include additional property in both Berkeley County and Williamsburg County as part of the joint County Industrial Park, and other matters relating thereto.

It was moved by Councilmember Spooner and seconded by Councilmember Crosby to send the Ordinance to Council for First Reading. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote of the Committee.

3. An **Ordinance** authorizing, pursuant to Chapter 44 of Title 12, South Carolina Code of Laws, 1976, as amended, the execution and delivery of a fee agreement between Berkeley County, South Carolina and **DJL Land Company, LLC;** and matters relating thereto.

It was moved by Councilmember Crosby and seconded by Councilmember Farley to send the Ordinance Re: DJL Land Company, LLC to Council for First Reading. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote of the Committee.

4. An **Ordinance** authorizing: (1) acquisition by Berkeley County, South Carolina (the "county") of certain real and personal property; (2) a lease purchase agreement between the County, as lessor, and **Van Smith Block Company, LLC** as lessee, with respect to the personal

and real property so acquired; (3) payment by such lessee of certain fees in lieu of *Ad Valorem* taxes; (4) the reconveyance of such property pursuant to the terms of such lease purchase agreement; (5) the placement of such real property into a multi-county industrial park and (6) certain other matters related thereto.

It was moved by Councilmember Crosby and seconded by Councilmember Farley to send the Ordinance Re: Van Smith Block Company, LLC to Council for First Reading. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote of the Committee.

5. An **Ordinance** to amend the Budget of the **Berkeley County Special Fire Tax District**, Ordinance Number 03-06-37, by providing for distribution other than those previously approved.

Chairman Fish stated after several meetings with the County Fire Advisory Committee and the Fire Districts, it had been recommended that instead of the $8.00/$2.00 split, previously agreed upon, the fire fee distribution would be changed to $5.00 to the fire district and $5.00 to the Commission for the next two budget years. In the third budget year and continuing, $9.00 would go to the fire districts and $1.00 to the Fire Advisory Committee to be disbursed according to any emergencies that may arise or to the Contingency Fund. The change would become effective immediately upon adoption of the amendment.

It was moved by Councilmember Crosby and seconded by Councilmember Farley to approve the amendment to the budget for the Berkeley County Special Fire Tax District and to send it to Council for First Reading. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote of the Committee.

6. An **Ordinance** to amend **Section VII** of **Ordinance No. 03-06-38**, The Berkeley County Budget Ordinance for 2003-2004, to eliminate the express provisions regarding rates and **per diem** for travel expense reimbursement and to provide for the establishment of rates by resolution.

It was moved by Councilmember Crosby and seconded by Councilmember Farley to send the Ordinance Re: per diem and travel expense reimbursement to Council for First Reading.

Supervisor Rozier addressed the Committee in regard to removing travel reimbursements, wherein a county employee used a personal car for county business, and per diem amounts for meals, from the annual budget ordinance and placing those items in a resolution. Supervisor Rozier further explained it would simplify the process when changes for approved amounts were required. Of course, Council would still make the decisions for any proposed changes. Supervisor Rozier stated the travel reimbursement amount paid by the County would be increased to $.36 ½ per mile, which is the Federal Government's amount. The per diem for meals would change as follows:

In State:			Out of State and Hilton Head	
	From	To	From	To
Breakfast:	$ 7.00	$ 8.00	$ 9.00	$12.00
Lunch:	$ 9.00	$10.00	$ 11.00	$14.00
Dinner:	$19.00	$22.00	$ 24.00	$29.00

Supervisor Rozier stated it would take three readings and a public hearing to amend the Ordinance and then to adopt the Resolution changing the mileage amount and per diem amounts. The changes would go into effect about December or January.

The motion passed by unanimous voice vote of the Committee.

E. **Review** prior to **Third Reading** of **Bill No. 03-55**, an **Ordinance** granting a franchise for the construction, acquisition, operation, and maintenance of a cable television system within the specific unincorporated areas of the County of Berkeley to Berkeley Cable Television, Inc. and to repeal Ordinance Number 95-10-37 in its entirety.

It was moved by Councilmember Pinckney and seconded by Councilmember Spooner to send Bill No. 03-55 to Council for Third Reading. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote of the Committee.

F. REPORTS FROM STANDING COMMITTEES:

1. COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE AND PUBLIC SAFETY, Mrs. Judy C. Mims, Chairman.

Councilmember Mims stated the Committee met on October 13 and on recommendation of the Committee she moved to approve the redesignation of funds for the purchase of three vehicles for the Sheriff's Department. (***No Second Required***)

The motion passed by unanimous voice vote of the Committee.

On recommendation of the Committee Councilmember Mims moved to approve improvements for the Magistrate's Department totaling $18,200 to come from Contingency. (***No Second Required***)

The motion passed by unanimous voice vote of the Committee. (That concluded Mrs. Mims' report.)

2. COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY SERVICES, Mrs. Judith K. Spooner, Chairman.

On recommendation of the Committee Councilmember Spooner moved to approve replacement of the carpet for the Hanahan Library and the counter top for a total of $11,801.43 to come from Contingency.

Supervisor Rozier stated he had been authorized to find a more reasonable price locally and deny the State's bid in the amount of $11,762.00. He recommended that the carpet could be purchased from Oliver-Clarke Furniture Company in the amount of $8,198, for a savings of $3,564, plus the cost of the desk in the amount of $625 for a grand total of $8,823.

Councilmember Spooner indicated that her motion would stand amended by the information as presented by Supervisor Rozier. (***No Second Required***)

The motion passed by unanimous voice vote of the Committee.

It was moved by Councilmember Crosby and seconded by Councilmember Mims to adjourn. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote of the Committee.

The Meeting adjourned at 7:25 p.m.

November 17, 2003
Date approved

ADDENDUM

FINANCE
(Standing Committee of Berkeley County Council)

Chairman: Mr. Dennis L. Fish, District No. 5

Members: Mr. Milton Farley, District No. 1
Mrs. Judith K. Spooner, District No. 2
Mr. William E. Crosby, District No. 3
Mr. Charles E. Davis, District No. 4
Mrs. Judy C. Mims, District No. 6
Mr. Caldwell Pinckney, Jr., District No. 7
Mr. Steve C. Davis, District No. 8
Mr. James H. Rozier, Jr., Supervisor, ex officio

A **Meeting** of the **COMMITTEE ON FINANCE**, Standing Committee of Berkeley County Council, will be held on Monday October 20, 2003, in the Assembly Room, Berkeley County Office Building, 223 North Live Oak Drive, Moncks Corner, South Carolina, following the meeting of the Committee on Land Use at 6:00 pm.

AGENDA

ADD:

D: **Consideration** prior to **First Reading** of the following:

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October 17, 2003
S/Barbara B. Austin
Clerk of County Council

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AGENDA

APPROVAL OF MINUTES **September 15, 2003**

A. **Ms. Elaine Morgan, CEO Berkeley Chamber of Commerce**, Re: Accommodations Tax.

B. **Ms. Janet Jurosko, Berkeley County Auditor**, Re: Additional funds (extension) for temporary employee.

C. **Consideration** of a **Resolution** approving and authorizing the execution and delivery of an inducement and millage rate agreement by and between **Berkeley County, South Carolina** (the "county"), and **Van Smith Block Company, LLC** (the "company"), whereby, under certain conditions, the County will (a) either acquire title to certain industrial property for lease to the company or will enter into a fee agreement with the company with respect to such property and covenant in such lease or fee agreement to accept certain fees in lieu of A*d Valorem* taxes with respect to such property and (b) agree to place such property in a multi-county industrial park.

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F. REPORTS FROM STANDING COMMITTEES:

1. Committee on Justice and Public Safety
Council Member Mrs. Judy C. Mims, Chairman
Sheriff's Department: Redesignation of funds within department
Magistrate's Department: Additional funds for Department.

2. Committee on Community Service
Council Member Judith K. Spooner, Chairman
Berkeley County Library: Additional funds for Hanahan Library

October 15, 2003
S/Barbara B. Austin
Clerk of County Council