

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 Bamberg Leader*, *The Times and Democrat*, Southern Carolina Regional Alliance, Bamberg County Library, Bamberg County Website and Bamberg County Courthouse Annex.

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, Bamberg County Council met 6:00 p.m., February 6, 2023 in Council Chambers with limited seating for the public alongside live streaming of the meeting provided for public view. **Present:** Chairman Dr. Jonathan Goodman, II, Councilwoman Sharon Hammond, Councilmen Phil Myers, Jr., Evert Comer, Jr., Spencer Donaldson, Larry Haynes (*arrived 6:04 p.m.*), and Clint Carter (*arrived 6:09 p.m.*). **Others Present:** Joey R. Preston, T.M. Thomas, Richard Ness, Gina Smith, Alice Johnson, Chip Maier, Donald Kirby, Kenneth Bamberg, John Fleming, Josh Urwick, Sue Clayton, Dave Clayton, Miriam Beard, Al Jenkins, Dr. Ronnie Hopkins and two additional visitors.

Bamberg County Council meeting was called to order by Dr. Jonathan Goodman, II at 6:00 p.m. Invocation was rendered by Councilwoman Sharon Hammond, followed with the pledge of allegiance led by Councilman Spencer Donaldson.

On motion by Councilman Donaldson, seconded by Councilwoman Hammond, council approved the minutes from the January 9 and January 26, 2023 meetings with necessary corrections should there be any.

On motion by Councilman Comer, seconded by Councilwoman Hammond, the agenda was approved after adding as requested by Councilman Comer, that Dr. Ronnie Hopkins (President of Voorhees University) and Mr. Al Jenkins (representative from the office of Senator Tim Scott) be added to the agenda.

At this time, Dr. Goodman called on Bamberg County Sheriff Kenneth Bamberg for an update of his department. Sheriff Bamberg thanked the Council for allowing him to address them and to have the opportunity to restate the commitment to serve all residents equally and with respect. He stated that the Sheriff's Department and all the county's Police Departments work together to assist and respond and back each other up. Sheriff Bamberg further stated that the Sheriff's Office comes with great responsibilities and he neither his deputies will never shy away from their obligations and responsibilities. He wanted to clear up false assumptions that Bamberg County Sheriff's Office is negligent in supporting and assisting the Denmark Police Department and the Citizens of Denmark – this is farthest from the truth. They will do nothing to tarnish their badges and they will not give in to threats. Additional comments were made and the Sheriff Bamberg assured everyone that the Sheriff's Office will continue to serve and protect all the citizens of Bamberg County. All were extended the invitation to speak directly to him if they needed to, his door is always open. The Council thanked Sheriff Bamberg for the service provided by the Bamberg County Sheriff's Department.

Gary Bailey, CPA of Love Bailey & Associates, gave an overview of the Bamberg County finances for fiscal year July 1, 2021 ending June 30, 2022. Mr. Bailey said there were no findings as far as the audit went. Once again, Bamberg County has received an unmodified opinion on its audit. Controller Gina Smith and her staff were praised for doing a great job with the records. Mr. Bailey informed that full cooperation was given throughout the audit procedure from the Bamberg County staff. The single noteworthy deficiency found dealt with the untimely reconciliation of funds collected in the magistrates' office. The county responded that the county finance staff prepared an annual summary of activity for each of the magistrates' accounts and also reconciled the bank statements at the end of the year. It also said there were minimal overages remaining and that the county will continue to work with the chief magistrate to

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resolve them. Controller Smith said this has been an ongoing issue and the staff will continue to work with the magistrates' office to resolve the issue. Councilwoman Hammond said that she hears the same thing year after year and the magistrate's department needs to come to the meeting to hear the outcome of the audit - we need to do something different than what is being done. The audit included the county having a total positive net of \$15,081,392, increasing \$1,909,084 over the previous year. The county's total assets came in at \$47,449,978, with liabilities standing at \$32,421,622. The general fund reported a fund balance of \$6,312,899, an increase from the 2021 fiscal year of \$1,256,207. Controller Smith stated that the county demonstrated good fiscal stewardship with obtaining a clean audit.

Controller Smith reported on the S.C. Department of Revenue's Capital Project Sales Tax Audit for period May 1, 2013 to June 30, 2020. The Department of Revenue audited the county regarding the expenditures and collection of the Bamberg County Capital Project Sales tax. Actual revenues totaled \$9,698,643, with actual expenditures coming in at \$8,442,436. She further reported that The County was found to be in compliance with the Capital Projects Sales and Use Tax Act (audit period extending from May 1, 2013 to June 20, 2020).

Dr. Goodman called for comments from Dr. Ronnie Hopkins, President of Voorhees University and Mr. Al Jenkins, representative from Senator Tim Scott's office. Dr. Hopkins responded that he was not at the meeting to speak only to observe. He thanked the Council and told them that he looks forward to their partnership. Mr. Jenkins said he was also present to observe and he had a young man shadowing him for the evening. Council thanked them for attending the meeting.

COMMITTEE AND STAFF REPORTS:

Southern Carolina Alliance – Monthly Report

Southern Carolina Alliance Development Director John Fleming, after introducing Josh Urwick as the new Project Director at SCA and replacement for Brian Warner, he announced that a second existing industry is planning to expand in Bamberg County. SCA had a site visit on a site in Denmark, the Wolfe site and a project visit for the spec building. The Council thanked Mr. Fleming for the report.

Bamberg County Treasurer – Monthly Report

County Treasurer Alice Johnson gave the December financial report, stating they had \$1,147,193.45 in income and expenditures of \$1,015,549.63, leaving a positive balance of \$131,643.82. When the negative bank balance at the end of November (\$35,957.90) was added, the county's regular account stood at a positive \$95,685.92. This report was accepted as information.

Bamberg County Finance – Monthly Report

Finance Director T.M. Thomas reported the general fund had year-to-date revenues of \$4,502,843 as of the end of December. Expenditures stood at \$4,145,350, for a positive general fund balance of \$357,493. With tax notices being mailed out, revenues in December and January 30, 2023 should increase. The county departments are continuing to operate within their budgets. This report was received as information.

Bamberg County Administrator – Monthly Report

Administrator Preston distributed Ethics Forms to the Council for their completion. An update was given on the courthouse renovation project, and the status of the old hospital complex. The courthouse

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engineers are in town next week to inspect the courthouse again and afterward will design the specs for the foundation work so it can be bid out. The furniture will be arriving in two weeks at the law enforcement center. The county is preparing to move into the new law enforcement complex the third week of March, weather permitting. The site work behind the complex for access to the Health Department and Veterans Affairs is expected to extend into April. The council thanked Administrator Preston for his report.

On motion by Councilman Comer, seconded by Councilman Haynes, council approved second reading of a proposed ordinance authorizing the execution and delivery of an infrastructure credit agreement to provide for infrastructure credits to Project Homegrown; and other related matters.

On motion by Councilman Carter, seconded by Councilman Donaldson, the calendar of events was approved after adding the LSCOG meeting for Thursday, February 8, 2023.

On motion by Councilman Carter, seconded by Councilman Haynes, Council gave approval of the Bamberg County Council Standing Committee Appointments for 2023: Administrative/Finance – Chairman Dr. Jonathan Goodman II, Spencer Donaldson and Evert Comer, Jr.; Personnel/Education, Recreation, Health and Welfare/Intergovernmental Relations – Chairman Sharon Hammond, Evert Comer, Jr. and Larry Haynes; Public Service/County Planning – Chairman Evert Comer, Jr., Phil Myers and Dr. Jonathan Goodman, II; Justice and Public Safety – Chairman Clint Carter, Phil Myers and Spencer Donaldson; Solid Waste/Recycling – Chairman Larry Haynes, Clint Carter and Spencer Donaldson.

Chairman Goodman called for public comments during this section of the meeting. Public comments were made by county residents Sue Clayton and Miriam Beard. Sue Clayton: 1) Asking that the budget be approached with an analytical mind – what’s needed and what can be cut. Miriam Beard: 1) Need to make budget adjustments – there are funds that were received for the last budget that won’t be available this budget; 2) consider an installment plan for payment of delinquent taxes.

During comments from council, they thanked the public for attending, thanked the employees for their diligence and hard work, and looking forward to working together, congratulations were extended to those responsible for the audit and all were told to stay safe.

There being no further business for discussion, on motion by Councilman Haynes, seconded by Councilwoman Hammond, the meeting was adjourned at 825 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rose R. Shepherd, CCC