

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, Bamberg County Courthouse Annex and a copy posted on the bulletin board in the main hallway of the County Courthouse.

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, Bamberg County Council met 6:00 p.m., August 9, 2021 in Council Chambers with limited seating for the public alongside live streaming of the meeting provided for public view. **Present:** Chairman Larry Haynes, Councilwoman Sharon Hammond, Councilmen Evert Comer, Jr., Spencer Donaldson, Phil Myers, Jr., Clint Carter and Dr. Jonathan Goodman, II. **Others Present:** Joey R. Preston, T.M. Thomas, Richard Ness, Alice Johnson, Gina Smith, Chip Maier, Brandi Napier, Tiffany Kemmerlin, Miriam Beard, Samella Porter, William Molnar, Sue Clayton, Susan Clayton, Kay Maxwell, Garrett Dragano, Willie Todd, Kenneth Bamberg, Roger Hughes and several additional attendees.

Bamberg County Council meeting was called to order by Chairman Larry Haynes at 6:00 p.m. Invocation was rendered by Dr. Jonathan Goodman, II, followed with the pledge of allegiance repeated in unison.

On motion by Dr. Goodman, seconded by Councilwoman Hammond, council approved the minutes from the following meetings: June 7, 2021 regular meeting, June 21, 2021, June 23, 2021 and June 30, 2021 called meetings.

On motion by Councilman Comer, seconded by Dr. Goodman, the agenda was approved as submitted.

Denmark Technical College President Dr. Willie L. Todd, Jr., updated the council on activities and events that are taking place and will be taking place on the campus. Vigilant safety methods are still being practiced on the campus. With the coronavirus pandemic still being rampant, students, faculty and staff are urged to wear masks, but at this time are not required to do so. Vaccinations are being offered at the campus on Monday and Wednesday (August 17-19), for those that have not yet been vaccinated. The college is offering free tuition for students that are interested in attending. Classes are scheduled to begin on August 17. In order to accommodate the students a third residence hall has been opened. A new men and women's soccer team will get started this upcoming semester. Dr. Todd further stated that several programs are now provided at the college, namely, building construction, HVAC, EMT and lineman and plumbing programs. All of the campus classrooms have been updated technologically. Also, each classroom is set up and able to do synchronous or asynchronous instruction. Denmark Technical College has received a State Apprenticeship Expansion grant, which is fashioned to provide \$3,000 per student. The college has received a \$290,000 grant that will allow for 90 apprentices. Several companies have signed up to work alongside DTC with this program. Looking toward enhancing the entranceway to the college along Highway 78, a new design is being created for that purpose. Dr. Todd said that it is his goal to put the tech back in Denmark Tech. Dr. Todd was thanked for appearing and updating the council on the happenings at DTC.

Lower Savannah Council of Governments Executive Director William Molnar gave an update on their work in Bamberg County since 2019. LSCOG is presently working with Bamberg County Emergency Services to update the county hazardous Mitigation plan. The plan is presently being studied by FEMA. Dr. Molnar informed everyone that when COVID came about in 2019, LSCOG received some money from the Economic Development Administration to do a flexibility plan for the region. LSCOG is in the process of completing a contract and doing a Labor Market Needs Analysis for the region. Also, they are providing assistance to individuals that need help with the completion of their paperwork during

August 9, 2021....continued

the annual Medicare enrollment period. Individuals were offered to call (803) 508-7033 for further assistance. Dr. Molnar was thanked for sharing the update with the public.

Chairman Haynes called for public comments on Ordinance #2-21-2, adopting and enacting a new code of ordinance for the county of Bamberg, South Carolina; providing for the repeal of certain ordinances not included therein; providing a penalty for the violation thereof; providing for the manner of amending such code; and providing when such code and this ordinance shall become effective. No public comments were given at this time; therefore, the public notice came to a close.

Committee and Staff Reports:

SouthernCarolina Alliance Project Manager Garrett Dragano gave an update on economic development in the region. The region consist of Bamberg, Allendale, Barnwell, Beaufort, Colleton, Hampton and Jasper counties. Through July 23, 2021, SCA brought \$87.3 million in private investment to the region and 125 new jobs. To date, there are 84 active projects, 261 properties have been submitted with 62 site visits. In Bamberg County, the SCA has 10 active projects and has had two site visits from 23 site submittals for 2021. SCA is working with ReadySC to support training and the hiring program for Pegasus Home Fashions. They are currently working on setting up a new production line and hiring additional employees. Project Manager Dragano reported that the Bamberg marketing campaign is progressing. A mural is planned to be painted downtown Bamberg. According to SCA Vice President of Marketing Kay Maxwell, SouthernCarolina Alliance has developed a "Behind the Golden Shovel" podcast. The first podcast has already been taped and it is about the regional workforce study that SCA has completed. Mr. Dragano and Ms. Maxwell were thanked for giving an update on economic development.

Bamberg County Treasurer Alice Johnson reported the May and June. For the month of May, the county had \$890,236.76 in income and the expenditures were \$711,372.84, leaving a positive balance of \$178,863.92. After adding the positive bank balance at the end of April of \$118,521.89 the county's regular account stood at a positive \$297,385.81. The county's regular account stood at a positive \$616,695.38. For June, the county had \$1,032,376 in income and expenditures of \$713,067.35, leaving a positive balance of \$319,309.57. After adding the positive bank balance at the end of May, \$297,385.81 the county's regular account stood at a positive \$616,695.38. This report was received as information.

Finance Director T.M. Thomas reported the general fund had year-to-date revenues of \$9,238,486, at the end of May. Expenditures stood at \$6,698,184, for a positive general fund balance of \$2,270,303. He further reported that general fund revenues reflected the \$1,366,078 the county received in federal American Rescue Plan funds in May. All departments are continuing to operate within their budgets. This report was received as information.

Controller Gina Smith reported that things have made a turn around. Treasurer Alice Johnson is transferring the funds more often. Also, we are still expecting to secure additional funds through the COVID-19 program.

Administrator Preston reported on the COVID-19 death total in Bamberg County and encouraged individuals to get vaccinated. In Bamberg County, 47.4 percent of residents have had at least one vaccine, while 41.2 percent have completed the vaccination. A tour of the renovations at the old hospital site was conducted and the contractors are expecting to be complete by May 2022. Additional tours will be continued throughout the construction process. Administrator Preston said other projects that were approved under the CPST referendum are being included in this year's budget. A fire department site is being planned for the Holman's Bridge Road in the Sweden area. Since May, Bamberg County had 73 airplanes from all over the country land at our airport and fuel up. We want to be able to offer airplane

August 9, 2021....continued

oil changes and to be able to work on planes. Also, we are expecting a super jet to come to Bamberg and the taxes are estimated to be between \$5,000 - \$8,000. We were reminded that our bid bond issue is soon approaching. Bamberg County received an \$8,755 state grant for its used oil program, as well as a \$13,675 grant to deal with the illegal tire dumping. This report was received as information.

On motion by Councilman Comer, seconded by Councilwoman Hammond, council approved ordinance #2-21-2 adopting and enacting a new code of ordinances for the county of Bamberg, South Carolina; providing for the repeal of certain ordinances not included therein; providing a penalty for the violation thereof; providing a penalty for the violation therefore; providing for the manner of amending such code; and providing when such code and this ordinance shall become effective. Voting in favor of the ordinance: Councilwoman Hammond and Councilmen Haynes, Donaldson, Myers, Goodman, Comer and Carter.

On motion by Councilman Comer, seconded by Councilwoman Hammond, council approved an amendment to amended and restated master agreement for the established of the Quad-County Industrial Park I, Park II, and Park III (Project Echo). The following counties involved, Bamberg, Barnwell, Aiken and Allendale, the revenue sharing portion will be Barnwell will receive 70% and the remaining counties will receive 10% each.

On motion by Councilwoman Hammond, seconded by Councilman Carter, council passed a resolution to amend the amended and restated master agreement for the establishment of the Quad County Industrial Park I, Park II, and Park III dated as of May 6, 2013 by and among Allendale County, South Carolina, Bamberg County, South Carolina, Barnwell County, South Carolina, and Hampton County, South Carolina. Providing for the development of certain Multi-County Industrial Parks, so as to include additional property in that portion of the Parks geographically located in Barnwell County, South Carolina, and other matters related thereto.

On motion by Councilwoman Hammond, seconded by Councilman Carter, council approved an agreement and assumption of fee agreement.

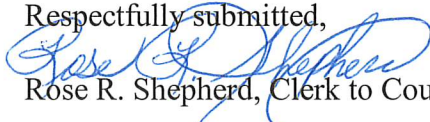
On motion by Councilwoman Hammond, seconded by Councilman Carter, council approved a resolution ratifying the County's Acknowledgement of Consent to the assignment of that certain fee in lieu of an ad valorem taxes agreement dated August 13, 2012 between Tobul Accumulator Incorporated and Bamberg County, South Carolina to Arnett Engineered Solutions, LLC in accordance with and satisfaction of the requirements of Title 12, Chapter 44 of the South Carolina Code and such agreement; and other matters related thereto.

On motion by Councilman Carter, seconded by Councilwoman Hammond, the Calendar of Events was approved as submitted.

During this time, Chairman Haynes called for public comments. County resident Sue Clayton read comments to council and urged them to reread its mission among other requests (see attached comments).

Council members made various comments to include a few: thanking the staff for their hard work; to stay safe and continue wearing their masks, thanked the public for coming out to the in person meeting and pray for those with COVID and those recovering.

There being no further business for discussion, on motion by Dr. Goodman, seconded by Councilman Myers, council voted that the meeting be adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Rose R. Shepherd, Clerk to Council

(ATTACHMENT – PUBLIC COMMENTS)

**Submitted by: Bamberg County Concerned Citizens Chairperson Sue Clayton
Bamberg County Council Meeting
August 9, 2021**

Dear County Council,

Welcome back. It's been a long time since we've been together, and there are new faces since our last visit. We look forward to getting to know you and to have an open dialogue about our concerns for the county.

I reviewed the budget presentation from the June meeting. On the fourth slide the County Council Mission states:

BAMBERG COUNTY'S MISSION IS TO BE A FINANCIALLY STABLE AND FISCALLY-RESPONSIBLE GOVERNMENT THAT WILL UTILIZE TECHNOLOGY, COMMUNICATION, AND INGENUITY TO PROVIDE THE OPPORTUNITY FOR A HIGH QUALITY OF LIFE BY ENSURING THAT EXCELLENT INFRASTRUCTURE IS AVAILABLE TO ITS CITIZENS; WHERE CITIZENS AND PUBLIC SAFETY AGENCIES HAVE THE RESOURCES TO WORK TOGETHER TO PROVIDE A SAFE COMMUNITY TO LIVE AND DO BUSINESS IN; WHERE QUALITY HOUSING AND HEALTHCARE OPTIONS ARE FOUND; WHERE FIRST-CLASS RECREATION FACILITIES PROVIDE A PHYSICAL OUTLET FOR INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES; AND WHERE THERE IS A FAVORABLE BUSINESS CLIMATE THAT PROVIDES JOB OPPORTUNITIES TO PRESENT AND FUTURE GENERATIONS.

As you know unless you've been living under a rock the past few weeks, the concerned citizens of the county are not happy with your new budget. We don't understand how you can increase the budget by 737k and the general fund increase by almost a million. True – you are using American Rescue Plan monies this year, and probably for part of next year. And don't forget that although it is out of your control the school board consolidation is probably going to make our taxes skyrocket. But then what happens when that money is gone? Will you drop the budget back to the 2020-2021 total? Or will you leave it at the current level and raise our taxes to cover it? We entrusted you to look out for us, the citizens. This doesn't sound like you are looking out for us. If you look closely it appears you're interested in looking out for Anderson County with the Administrator salary, expenses, and perks, the Medshore agreement, the use of Anderson and Greenville lawyers, a Union accounting firm, and that's just what I can think of off the top of my head. And it doesn't bode well for your promise of financial stability.

And Quality housing? I'm not even going there. We're getting people coming in from other areas; many are expressing buyers' remorse and looking to relocate.

Business Climate? SouthernCarolina Alliance either needs to do better or to correct our impression that we're paying them just because we have extra funds in the budget. We are consistently in the top counties in SC for unemployment rates.

Healthcare? Bamberg Family Practice is good. Hospital? Gone with the Wind. Head to Lexington. Or Colleton. Or Hampton. Standalone ER? I'm fortunate enough not to have needed it but I'm hearing mixed reviews about it.

First Class Recreation? Floating down the river – Jerry Bell is doing a good job on that. Ness Complex – haven't been there since my boys grew up but it was very good then and either is first class now or can be first class if maintained properly and run properly.

I would like to suggest you reread your mission statement. And either work toward that goal or change it to read our mission is to rape and pillage the residents of the county as long as you can. And that might not be much longer.