

In compliance with the Freedom of Information Act, agendas for the following meeting were delivered 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., May 1, 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 Evert Comer, Jr., Spencer Donaldson and Larry Haynes. **Absent:** Councilmen Phil Myers, Jr., and Clint Carter. **Others Present:** Joey R. Preston, Richard Ness, T.M. Thomas, Gina Smith, Alice Johnson, Chip Maier, Donald Kirby, Kenneth Bamberg, Joshua Urwick, Miriam Beard and Samella Porter.

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 Haynes, seconded by Councilman Donaldson, council approved the minutes from the April 10, 2023 meeting with necessary corrections should there be any.

On motion by Councilman Haynes, seconded by Councilman Donaldson, the agenda was approved as submitted.

COMMITTEE AND STAFF REPORTS:

Southern Carolina Alliance - Monthly Report

Southern Carolina Alliance Project Manager Josh Urwick stated that SCA had two site visits in Bamberg County since the last council meeting and that they are still actively trying to get more industry to come to Bamberg County. At the present, an existing industry is considering expansion. Several council members visited SC Oak to Barrel LLC on April 24. A complete tour of the facility was witnessed by all present. Mr. Urwick further stated that it was exciting to see the unique things going on in the plant. The company has announced it will be investing \$6.8 million and creating 122 new jobs and their five-year target date should be obtainable as agreed by Oak to Barrel to Bamberg County and the state. Council accepted this report as information.

Bamberg County Treasurer - Monthly Report

County Treasurer Alice Johnson gave the March financial report, stating they had \$295,892.21 in income and expenditures of \$943,253.02, for a negative balance of \$647,360.81. When the positive bank balance at the end of February (\$1,187,321.56) was added, the county's regular account stood at a positive \$539,960.75. This report was received as information.

Bamberg County Finance - Monthly Report

Finance Director T.M. Thomas reported the general fund had year-to-date revenues of \$7,283,198 as of the end of March. Expenditures stood at \$6,405,951, for a positive general

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fund balance of \$877,247. The county departments are continuing to operate within their budgets. This report was received as information.

Bamberg County Administrator - Monthly Report

Administrator Preston reported that a grant provided through the South Carolina Rural Infrastructure Authority (SCRIA), awarded 216 South Carolina Infrastructure Investment Program (SCIIP) grants, with \$8.5 million being awarded to Bamberg County and the Bamberg Board of Public Works that partnered to serve 75 Bamberg County residents with clean water. Waterlines will extend down Hunters Chapel Road (Hwy 362), and the Family Circle Community. Several council members had the opportunity to view the transformation of the old hospital and preparations being made to move into the new law enforcement complex. Administrator Preston said there will be a meeting soon with the sheriff's department to start coordinating a move-in date. The health department is almost ready to move in - they have got to complete the parking lot area and handicapped accessibility as well. A pre-bid meeting was held on May 3 for the structural work and sealed bids will be accepted and opened in the next few weeks regarding the foundation of the old courthouse. Construction of the fire station at the Holman's Bridge location is progressing. Update on the Revolution 250. Revolution 250 explores the history of the American Revolution and the ways that this story still resonates in society today. We will be applying for a \$3,000 grant (no match is required) to help kick off that project. Administrator Preston stated that the Veterans Park, located on Main Highway, can be used for community events and gatherings. In order for any community group to be able to use that facility, they need to come to the courthouse annex building, pick up an application and complete it. The county owns the Veterans Park, and we must do that for insurance liability reasons. A deposit is required before use, and that deposit is refunded if there's no garbage left around or no damage done. Anytime the facility is utilized, we have to have an employee around on the premises. Councilman Haynes said he was told by one of the organizers of the "Stop the Violence" rally that the event was held at the railroad berm because they were not able to use the Veterans Park. Administrator Preston said that he had no knowledge of that and it was news to him. It was explained that we have not officially opened it yet and you don't want people using something that's a construction site. Councilman Comer asked if the black railing along Main Street in the downtown area could be moved. Administrator Preston replied, due to the way the funds were received (federal money received by the city) and signing of a contract, there is nothing that can be done by Bamberg County, it's locked in. This report was received as information.

On motion by Councilwoman Hammond, seconded by Councilman Haynes, council voted to enter executive session to discuss and EMS Contractual Matter.

On motion by Councilman Haynes, seconded by Councilman Comer, council voted to re-enter open session to announce no actions were taken.

On motion by Councilwoman Hammond, seconded by Councilman Donaldson, the calendar of events was approved.

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Chairman Goodman called for public comments during this section of the meeting. Comments were made by county resident Miriam Beard. Ms. Beard was concerned about:

- 1) payment plan for taxpayers;
- 2) the need for council members to be more available to the public; and
- 3) congratulations were offered for the progress on the waterline issue in the County.

During comments from council, all were thanked for their attendance, the employees were also acknowledged for their diligence and hard work and all mothers were wished a “Happy Mother’s Day”.

There being no further business for discussion, on motion by Councilman Haynes, seconded by Councilman Donaldson, the meeting was adjourned at 8:04 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rose R. Shepherd, CCC