

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.

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In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, Bamberg County Council met 6:00 p.m., September 11, 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., Phil Myers, Jr., Larry Haynes, and Spencer Donaldson. **Absent:** Clint Carter. **Others Present:** Joey R. Preston, Richard Ness, T.M. Thomas, Gina Smith, Chip Maier, Alisha Moore, Kenneth Bamberg, Walter Bennett, II, Joshua Urwick, Cathy Booker, Regina Jackson, Dr. William Molnar and two additional guests.

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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 Phil Myers.

On motion by Councilman Haynes, seconded by Councilwoman Hammond, council approved the minutes from the September 11, 2023 meeting with necessary corrections should there be any.

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

Council Chairman Dr. Goodman, II acknowledged a presentation coming from MUSC Health - Orangeburg CEO Walter N. Bennett, III. Mr. Bennett said their free-standing emergency department located in Denmark, has been a huge addition and they've been doing unlimited services as part of MUSC Health-Orangeburg. Part of a strategy to address community needs and to minimize ER wait times, service programs will be expanded and added as a possible solution. He pointed out that it is going to take time. It was reported that MUSC Health-Orangeburg has hired two oncologists and two podiatrists and added a cardiology program. The Express Care center has been closed so that a new orthopedic urgent care clinic can be opened. Patients from age 4 and older with orthopedic injuries or conditions will be served. An emergency center strategy team has been employed and they are dedicated to improving patient experience, quantity, waiting, culture and education at the main hospital's emergency department at the Denmark location. Mr. Bennett stated that they are working on increasing the hospital's capacity by opening additional beds and they too are recruiting new providers to the area. Council thanked Mr. Bennett and his staff for attending the meeting and enriching them with additional and upcoming changes for the betterment for all.

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Council heard a report from Lower Savannah Regional Housing Consortium Housing Coordinator Regina Jackson. She informed that their home program is a federal Housing and Urban Development program, and it is an investment partnership program. They are working to increase affordable housing opportunities for the area in which they serve. For fiscal year 2023, they were allowed \$1,187,579 by HUD. With this home program, they are providing home ownership rehabilitation, homebuyer activities and rental housing development. Ms. Jackson said, "HUD also provided the HOME-ARP (HOME Investment Partnerships American Rescue Plan Program). The agency is reaching out to community development corporations and other nonprofits to that known of the agency's activities. Anyone seeking more information on the regional housing consortium's activities and what they may qualify for from home rehabilitation to wheelchair ramps can call 803-649-7981. Council was grateful for the resourceful information.

### **COMMITTEE AND STAFF REPORTS:**

#### **Southern Carolina Regional Development Alliance - Monthly Report**

Southern Carolina Regional Development Alliance Project Director Joshua Urwick said officials from five prospective industrial projects have visited the county's CrossRhodes Industrial Park. Mr. Urwick further stated that they need to get the right fit for that building because it is a great building. He also reported on the expansion of an existing industry, with the county waiting on further information from the state Department of Commerce. The Holland Hitch Industrial Building in Denmark has received a site visit. The building was shown a couple of months ago and they have been negotiating with the owner. Council thanked Mr. Urwick for the update.

#### **Bamberg County Treasurer - Monthly Report**

County Treasurer Alice Johnson was absent and July and August financial reports will be presented at the November meeting.

#### **Bamberg County Budget - Monthly Report**

Finance Director T.M. Thomas reported the general fund had year-to-date revenues of \$954,966, as of the end of August. Expenditures stood at \$1,288,840, for a negative general fund balance of \$333,874. The county departments are continuing to operate within their budgets. This report was received as information.

#### **Bamberg County Controller - Monthly Report**

Controller Smith updated that they are getting the year-end-books closed out and their goal is to turn the general ledger and the books over to the auditors by October 17. She further stated that the finance department is busy balancing accounts and reconciling accounts and making sure that everything on the books is accurate. This report was accepted as information.

#### **Bamberg County Administrator - Monthly Report**

Administrator Preston reported to council of the grand opening of the county's new health department and veterans' affairs offices will be held 11 a.m. Friday, December 8. Invitations

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will be going out soon. Also reported that Dickinson Street, which runs in front of the new county health department and VA offices, will be resurfaced and have a sidewalk installed alongside if as approved by the C-Fund Committee. The county is working with the state Department of Health and Environmental Control in seeking grant funding to purchase the LUCAS (Lund University Cardiopulmonary Assist System), devise for placement in ambulance vehicles. The device provides automatic mechanical chest compressions to patients in cardiac arrest. The cost of the device is \$22,000. Administrator Preston further stated that the building for Holman's Bridge substation was ordered last week. It was updated as well that the old courthouse is trying to stabilize. This report was accepted as information.

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On motion by Councilman Comer, seconded by Councilman Haynes, council gave first reading to a proposed ordinance to amend Bamberg County Ordinance #18-17-4 limited regards and particulars, only, so as to add an erroneously omitted road to the County Road List; and other matters related thereto. The name of the road that is proposed to be added is Old Town Lane Road, located in Denmark,

On motion by Councilman Comer, seconded by Councilman Haynes, council approved a resolution recognizing October 2023 as Breast Cancer Awareness Month. This resolution was sponsored by Councilwoman Hammond.

On motion by Councilman Haynes, seconded by Councilwoman Hammond, council approved the calendar of events after adding the LSCOG meeting, scheduled for Thursday, October 12<sup>th</sup>, at 6 p.m. in Calhoun County.

Chairman Goodman called for comments from council. During comments from council, all present were thanked for their attendance, employees were thanked for their hard work, thanks was given to Administrator Preston for moving the county forward.

There being no further business for discussion, on motion by Councilman Donaldson, seconded by Councilman Haynes, the meeting was adjourned at 7:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rose R. Shepherd, Clerk to Council