

**MINUTES OF BAMBERG COUNTY COUNCIL VIRTUAL MEETING - October 3, 2022**

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*, SouthernCarolina 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., October 3, 2022 in Council Chambers with limited seating for the public alongside live streaming of the meeting provided for public view. Present: Chairman Spencer Donaldson, Councilmen Evert Comer, Jr., Phil Myers, Larry Haynes, and Dr. Jonathan Goodman, II. Absent: Councilwoman Sharon Hammond and Councilman Clint Carter. Others Present: Joey R. Preston, T.M. Thomas, Richard Ness, Gina Smith, Alice Johnson, Chip Maier, William Molnar, Don Kirby, Rosa Verner, Wallace Hicks, Jr., S. Monique McDaniels, Brian Warner, Sh’Kur Francis, Miranda Sapp and Miriam Beard.

---

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

On motion by Councilman Haynes, seconded by Dr. Goodman, council approved the minutes from the September 12, 2022 regular meeting with necessary corrections should there be any.

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

Chairman Donaldson recognized Ms. Monique McDaniels, vice president of community engagement for Goodwill Industries of Upstate/Midlands South Carolina, as she came forth and communicated various ways the business could facilitate and associate with Bamberg County. She started out by informing that Goodwill Industries is nonprofit and how they could provide job training, employment placement services and other community-based programs in the county. Goodwill Industries is independently owned by 155 different presidents and CEOs throughout the country and they want to meet the communities and meet them where they are. Goodwill collect gently used donated items from the community, resell them in their retail stores, take those funds and provide job services in the community. They support seniors, veterans, young people, those that are re-entering the community from being incarcerated. Anything related to job services – how to get back to work, how they can provide wrap around services, they have wonderful grant opportunities that allow them to provide transportation, technology, Wi-Fi hotspots. Ms. McDaniels informed that because there is not a retail store or donation center here, it doesn’t mean that they can’t provide services. If Bamberg County had space to house them, then Goodwill could co-locate. They have offered services virtually and remotely. Digital skills are taught and they help get apprenticeships for young people. The seniors are trained in getting them back to work. Most of the needed space is administrative, but they are really interested in community partnerships. Ms. McDaniels was thanked for attending and sharing Goodwill Industries information with Bamberg County.

The Council heard from County Coroner Wallace Hicks, Jr., as he gave an update on the status of that department. The staff consist of three deputy coroners and an administrative person. As of January 1, 2022, the county has had 125 deaths and 20 of those deaths required autopsies with 10 of those performed from July through September. The cost of each autopsy is between \$1,500 - \$1,900. Coroner Hicks informed that the budget for autopsies will probably exceed the allotted \$25,000 for the fiscal year and there are 9 additional months still remaining. Mr. Hicks thanked the council for various items provided for him to effectively do his job.

---

**Committee and Staff Reports:**

**Southern Carolina Alliance – Monthly Report**

Southern Carolina Project Manager Brian Warner, reported the purchase of Wolfe industrial site is complete at no cost to the county. Also, they are ready to begin with due diligence on that property. Mr. Warner informed that the sewer expansion on U.S. Highway 301 is complete. Bamberg Board of Public Works was able to handle that matter and was able to also assist with some of the storm water issues. In the last month, they have had two site visits to the spec building. Mr. Warner will be arranging a tour of the Barrel Company in the near future. Council thanked Mr. Warner for the update.

**Bamberg County Treasurer – Monthly Report**

Bamberg County Treasurer Alice Johnson reported the August financial report noting that the county income stood at \$605,689.38 with expenses coming in at \$740,456.88, leaving a negative balance of \$134,767.50. When the negative bank balance at the end of August (\$864,208.28) was added, the county's regular account stood at a negative \$998,975.78. Dr. Goodman, II, questioned the large deficit and recommended some type restriction on spending. This report was received as information.

**Bamberg County Finance – Monthly Report**

Finance Director T.M. Thomas reported the general fund generated \$983,552, in year-to-date revenues at the end of August. Expenditures stood at \$1,341,534, leaving a negative balance of \$357,982. Mr. Thomas informed that all departments are continuing to operate within their budgets and that the deficit will be reduced with the support of forthcoming property taxes. This report was received as information.

**Bamberg County Controller – Monthly Report**

Controller Gina Smith reminded everyone that Treasurer Johnson reports only on one of the county's many bank accounts. She proceeded to say that Bamberg County is not short on cash because other bank accounts have money in them. The general ledger is being prepared for the audit and the goal is to turn the books and the general ledger over to the auditors on October 17. This report was received as information.

**Bamberg County Administrator – Monthly Report**

Administrator Preston allowed Dr. William Molnar, Lower Savannah Council of Governments Executive Director to report on the federal American Rescue Plan Act funds allocated for water projects across the state, along with the 15 water projects for which the LSCOG put in grant proposals from its service area, including two in Bamberg County. Dr. Molnar also reported that LSCOG has received approximately \$100,000 to address brownfields, or a property whose expansion, redevelopment or reuse may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance or other contaminant.

Keep Bamberg County Beautiful Coordinator Sh'Kur Francis reported on DOT's announcement of an \$8 million litter pickup program in District 7. This program will allow for 28 miles of state highways or roadways within a designated county (your county) for them to pick up litter within a month's period. The program started in September, the contractor picked up litter from Highway 601 from intersection of 301 South to the county line. Highway 64 from Colleton-Bamberg county line to the Town of Olar – they picked up 760 pounds of litter in 2 ½ days. In October, they are scheduled to pick up from Highway 64 from the Town of Olar west to Bamberg-Barnwell county line. They will also do Guess Drive (located in Denmark) from U.S. 321 to Highway 78. They will back track through the Town of Olar north to Bamberg to the Orangeburg County line. Please contact Bill Johnson Bamberg County Director of Operations or Sh'Kur Francis if you see a need for litter pick up on a state road.

Administrator Preston asked that a shout out be given to the Emergency Operations folks for the job well done during Hurricane Ian. We are thankful to God that we didn't have anything bad or drastic happen.

October 3, 2022....continued

As a precaution and the information received about the hurricane, the County offices were closed on that Friday. The bridge replacement work on U.S. Highway 301 has begun and the land clearing coming into the county from Orangeburg County as well. We agreed to let DOT use Bobcat Landing as a place to park some of their equipment (not to block the entrance and not to keep people from utilizing it), in exchange for resurfacing the asphalt in that area. The resurfacing will be done at no cost to Bamberg County. Administrator Preston reminded everyone about a previous grant we received a couple of years ago. We have not received that money yet, but it is forthcoming plus there is other money available that can assist. There will be a tour of the new law enforcement complex on Wednesday, October 5<sup>th</sup> at 4 p.m. We are looking to the opening of the Sheriff's Department, Health Department and Veterans Affairs. A meeting is being requested with the appropriate officials regarding the DSS facility. In order to receive the improvements Bamberg County must receive a plan from DSS first. Also reported on was the submission of the water project and the grant was for approximately \$2.7 million, which will allow for the extension of Bamberg Board of Public Works water lines along Hunter's Chapel road to Crosswind Road and the Family Circle Area.

The dedication of the new fire pumper tanker for the Hunter's Chapel Fire Department has be rescheduled for 10:30 a.m., Friday, October 21 at the courthouse annex. Presently, we have five planes registered at the Bamberg Airport. We need a place to put five more planes just to be able to get the federal funding of \$100,000 to \$200,000 a year that's allocated to every airport in the state. In order to receive it, you must qualify for it. We have received a \$19,200 grant to assist with some of our repairs. Administrator Preston announced and reminded the council of the County Council Coalition to be held in Columbia at the Embassy Suites on Thursday, October 20<sup>th</sup>. The Council accepted this report as information.

---

The calendar of events was approved on motion by Councilman Comer, seconded by Councilman Haynes, after adding the tour of the law enforcement complex to the calendar.

At this time, Chairman Donaldson called for comments from the council. The members of council advised everyone to stay safe and thanked the staff and employees for their hard work. Councilman Myers thanked everyone for the cards received during his mother's death. All in attendance were thanked for attending and invited to come again.

There being no further business for discussion, on motion by Councilman Haynes, seconded by Dr. Goodman, the meeting was adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rose R. Shepherd, CCC