

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 Advertiser-Herald*, *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.

Bamberg County Council met 6:30 p.m., September 9, 2019 in the chamber of the Bamberg County Courthouse Annex. **Present:** Chairman Kerry Trent Kinard, Reverend Isaiah Odom. Councilwoman Sharon Hammond, Councilmen Evert Comer, Jr., Joe Guess, Jr. Clint Carter and Larry Haynes. . **Others Present:** Joey R. Preston, T.M. Thomas, Richard Ness, Adam Ness, Jerry Halmon, Dionne Gleaton, Gina Smith, Alice Johnson, Dawn Strickland, Mary Tilton, Sharon Zion, Nancy Hiers, Donna Brown, Brad Hudson, Miriam Beard, John Gleaton, Booker Patrick, Jerry Bell, Ruthie Brown, Jeannette Driggers, Dean Fralix, Harriet Coker, Ken Ahlin, Gail Ellis, Bill Johnson, Ben Hay and approximately 15 additional people.

Bamberg County Council meeting was called to order by Chairman Kerry Trent Kinard at 6:30 p.m., in the Chamber of the Bamberg County Courthouse Annex. Invocation was rendered by Reverend Isaiah Odom, followed with the pledge of allegiance by Councilwoman Sharon Hammond.

On motion by Councilman Guess, seconded by Councilman Haynes, council approved the minutes from the August 12, 2019, meeting with future corrections should there be any.

On motion by Councilwoman Hammond, seconded by Councilman Guess, council approved the agenda after agreeing to move the public comments items from N-1 to E-1.

At this time, Chairman Kinard opened the floor for public comments. Eight citizens signed in at the beginning of the meeting to make public comments. Citizens speaking were: Harriett Coker (concerned about Bamberg Rescue Squad being replaced by Medshore; Ken Ahlin (courthouse renovations); Gail Ellis (track record for accomplishments); Sharon Zion (what was the reason for getting a new rescue squad); John Gleaton (county taxes); Lynn Wallace (who's paying for services for Medshore and Bamberg Rescue Squad); Brad Hudson (new ambulance service and FOIA requests); and Dean Fralix (delay renovations of the courthouse). The citizens were thanked for their comments and concerns.

Dawn Strickland, CPA for McGregor and Company, LLP of Orangeburg, presented the Bamberg County FY 2017-2018 CAPR Audit. Ms. Strickland said Bamberg County has received an unmodified (clean) audit opinion, with there being 4 material weaknesses and 4 deficiencies that she pointed out and explained. The material weaknesses were: 1) Material audit adjustments that had to be made to improve the county's compliance to government auditing standards; 2) Lack of control over capital assets; 3) Lack of adequate internal controls over family court collections; and 4) The improper recording of expenditures and receivables for the general fund and capital reserve capital projects fund. The county responded to these 4 weaknesses that were cited. The 4 deficiencies included: 1) Delinquent sales tax funds – funds held in the bank account from past delinquent tax sales for parcels with unresolved balances or deficits owned; 2) Magistrate Court collections – recommended that the bank account be reconciled monthly to the receipts collected and the balance held to the funds required to be disbursed; 3) Clerk of Courts office – several accounts were cited to either hold unidentified overages, or have deficits so that sufficient funds are not on hand to cover all funds to be dispersed; 4) County's purchasing policy – It was recommended that changes to all county policies including the purchasing policy should be brought before, reviewed and approved by

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Council prior to implementation. Each of the deficiencies cited by McGregor were addressed by the county.

Controller Gina Smith emphasized highlights in a follow up presentation to the audit, pointing out that the county demonstrated good fiscal stewardship earning an unmodified opinion on the audit. Ms. Smith said there was a decrease in general fund revenue because of reduced collections from vehicle taxes, the local options sales tax credit and delinquent taxes. Controller Smith further stated that we had other positives in other areas that made up for the decrease.

Kay Maxwell, SCA Vice President of Marketing, gave a quarterly report on what SCA has been doing to advance the region. SCA started the year with 44 projects. Fifty-four new projects came through and out of those 46 projects have closed or been reclassified. Project Peach is an investment by North Signal Capital. They are a development company that plans to rebuild distribution and light industrial buildings at RiverPort in Jasper County. SCA has a marketing mission coming up in upstate New York and in Ontario and Ms. Maxwell said they have already reviewed some profiles of those companies that they will be meeting with. It was further reported that SCA is now accepting applications for the Leaders Salkehatchie Program for the 2019-2020 year and that it has been meeting with DHEC on several projects in the region, including some utility expansion in Bamberg County. Councilman Guess asked when will construction begin for the solar farm. The reply was construction is scheduled to begin in October.

Bamberg County Chamber of Commerce Director Jerry Bell gave an update on the upcoming events for Bamberg County. Sheriff Ed Darnell, Bob Smoak and Robert Thomas are the nominees for Bamberg County Chamber of Commerce Citizen of the Year Award. The banquet is scheduled for Thursday, November 7, 2019 at 6 p.m. – Bamberg City Civic Center. Flyers were distributed to the audience and all present were encouraged to attend the events.

Finance Director T.M. Thomas reported the general fund had \$7,963,590 in year-to-date revenue as of the end of July. All departments are continuing to operate within their budgets.

Administrator Preston reported on several projects regarding Bamberg County's involvement. Scheduled for Tuesday, September 24th is a dinner meeting at Denmark Technical College at 6:00 p.m. On October 3, 2019, the Historic Society will sponsor dedication of a historical marker on the Courthouse grounds with Mr. Jeremiah Hammond as one of the featured speakers. Mr. Hammond was one of the employees involved in the moving of the courthouse to its current location. He is also the only known living member of the moving team for the Bamberg County Courthouse. Medshore is scheduled to be present at the October 7, 2019 council meeting. The granite for the Veterans Memorial has been delivered to the site. The first order for the engraved bricks went out approximately 2 weeks ago. AT&T will be moving the lines across the street and landscaping will be done along the trail. Chairman Kinard has been appointed by SCA as a member on the Land Use Committee. A letter was written to Broadband from Senator Brad Hutto in behalf of Bamberg County. Senator Hutto will be meeting with Congressman Jim Clyburn's office in the near future. Significant progress has been made with talking with a grocery store. Will be meeting with the City of Bamberg and hoping something will take place within the next few weeks. No promises are being made regarding the grocery store. During Hurricane Dorian, Council Chambers were used significantly. Thanks to the staff for the 48 people served at the shelter operated at Voorhees College. A retreat of CTC was held and the committee talked about the allocation of the money. Would like to delegate 75% of the CTC money to county roads. A low bid came in for Dally Road of \$629,773.75 by R&T Grading, Inc. Councilman Guess was elated to hear the information regarding Dally Road and said that we have to get started on Church Street. The Codification Project is progressing and Administrator Preston is working with the attorney every Friday. The TAC Committee will be meeting on Thursday, September 19. A downtown master plan is being developed for Bamberg. The lanes at the Emergency Freestanding facility are being considered for widening.

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Administrator Preston's report was accepted as information.

REPORTS FROM COUNTY COUNCIL

- 1) SCA (Haynes, Comer & Odom) -No report
- 2) LSCOG -Last meeting held was cancelled.
- 3) Lower Savannah COG (TAC) -Meeting on November 19 in Calhoun County.
- 4) LSCOG Housing Consortium -Next meeting is scheduled for September 18 in Blackville at Miller's Bread Basket.

On motion by Councilman Guess, seconded by Councilman Comer, council approved a proposed resolution recognizing Alex Ahlin's achievements as the 2019 USA Shooting National Junior Olympics Champion Alex will be invited to the October 7, 2019 council meeting to be presented a framed copy of the resolution.

On motion by Councilman Guess, seconded by Councilman Carter, the calendar of events was approved after adding additional events.

On motion by Councilman Comer, seconded by Councilwoman Hammond, council approved the appointment of Ms. Ruth McMillan to the Bamberg County Office on Aging Board as a District 3 representative.

Chairman Kinard called for comments from the Council. Councilwoman Hammond requested prayer for the Bahamians, the staff of EOC while serving through hurricane Dorian. Ms. Hammond requested an apology from Chairman Kinard for his conduct during a meeting they attended on August 28th. She stated that she was embarrassed by his behavior and was upset with herself for not coming forward earlier. Councilwoman proceeded to say that she will not be bullied, harassed, intimidated, and will not be cussed out. Chairman Kinard said the he won't either. Councilman Haynes thanked everyone for attending the meeting. Councilman Carter asked about a missing motor grader. Controller Smith explained that the old motor grader was disposed of before she came to Bamberg County. Councilman Guess thanked the staff, the public and especially the financial staff. Councilman Comer voiced that as a council, they do what they think is best for the people.

There being no further business for discussion, on motion by Councilman Guess, seconded by Councilman Haynes, council adjourned at 9:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rose R. Shepherd, Clerk to Council