

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., June 7, 2021 in several locations within the Bamberg County Courthouse Annex and some participated by way of teleconference. The public joined the meeting by various means of technology. **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, Mary Tilton, Curtis Tyler, Phil Clarke, Alison Dennis Hood, Garrett Dragano, Kay Maxwell, Josh Shore, Jaela Tyler, Harold Shepherd, Ruthie Brown, Candace Fralix, Brandi Napier, Laura McKenzie, Walter Fralix, Sue Weiler Greenberg, Miriam Beard, William Molnar, Walt Inabinet, Dionne Gleaton, Jannie Johnson, Demetra Stevenson, Bill Johnson and three additional callers.

Bamberg County Council Virtual meeting was called to order by Chairman Larry Haynes at 6:00 p.m. Invocation was rendered by Councilman Evert Comer, Jr., followed with the pledge of allegiance led by Councilwoman Sharon Hammond.

On motion by Councilman Comer, seconded by Dr. Goodman, council approved the minutes from the May 3, 2021 meeting.

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

On motion by Councilman Comer, seconded by Councilwoman Hammond, council approved Fiscal Year 2020-2021 Accommodations Tax (ATAX) Funds for participating Bamberg County Recreation Groups as presented by Committee Chairman Curtis Tyler. The following groups were awarded funds: 1) Bamberg County First Steps - \$1,859.50; 2) Bamberg County 4-H - \$550.00; 3) Denmark Cares/Kamp Future (Ages 7-8) - \$600.00; 4) Denmark Cares/Kamp Future (Ages 9-10) - \$600.00; 5) Denmark Cares/Kamp Future (Ages 11-12) - \$600.00 and 6) Bamberg Pony League (Ages 13-14) - \$1,500.00. This year only seven groups applied for funds prior the deadline, with one of the groups not meeting the qualifications. The amount of \$14,000.00 was earmarked for the recreation program and after awarding funds, the amount of \$8,290.50 remained in the budget. Councilman Myers requested the application process be extended, to include those that had not previously applied and met the established deadline. Council agreed to allow the extension of one week.

General Manager Josh Shore and Ambulance Operations Manager Captain Phil Clarke of Medshore Ambulance Service, were present to discuss and update everyone on techniques being used to advance ambulance service in Bamberg County, with one being the addition of another ambulance. Mr. Shore informed that Medshore is working with the Regional Medical Center on a contract to possibly attain a third truck for Bamberg County. The appointed emergency services committee for Bamberg County will be informed as this process develops. Medshore is working diligently to partner with RMC so we don't have to impose a tax increase to the taxpayers in Bamberg County. Captain Clarke reported that it's not uncommon that they get requests from Orangeburg County and Allendale County. Bamberg and Barnwell units are being utilized for those different operations as mutual aid. The discussed EMT academy will be held at Denmark Technical College and the first class is scheduled to begin June 21,

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2021. The goal is to complete the class by the end of August. There are 54 applicants that are being reviewed for EMT's. The successful students will become Medshore employees and will be paid for 40 hours a week. Classes are being held three days a week, eight hours a day. The tuition, books and testing is paid 100 percent through the South Carolina apprenticeship program. Mr. Shore said they are moving to Mobilis, pointing out that it's a better GPS/AVL system. Once the system is installed in Medshore's units, both E-911 piece apps will have that access.

Committee and Staff Reports:

Southern Carolina Alliance Vice President of Marketing Kay Maxwell introduced the new project manager Garrett Dragano. He has replaced the previous project manager Dolton Williams. Mr. Dragano's area of concentration is Urban Planning and Management and he will be working with Bamberg County and the surrounding counties with various projects toward advancement of those involved. Council welcomed Mr. Dragano to Bamberg County.

Bamberg County Treasurer Alice Johnson reported the April financial report pointing out that the county's income stood at \$875,900.49. Expenses came in at \$884,719.47, leaving a negative balance of \$8,818.98. At the end of March, the positive bank balance of \$127,340.87 was added to the county's regular account and it stood at a positive balance of \$118,521.89. This report was received as information.

Finance Director T.M. Thomas reported the general fund had year-to-date revenues of \$7,598,612, at the end of April. Expenditures stood at \$6,320,654, for a positive general fund balance of \$1,277,959. All departments are continuing to operate within their budgets. This report was received as information.

Controller Gina Smith reported the county received approximately \$155,000 in federal CARES Act funding, along with approximately \$69,000 in federal FEMA money in April. These funds have been placed into the county general fund. We are still expecting to secure more funds through the COVID-19 program.

Administrator Preston reported on the COVID-19 death total in Bamberg County as being 51 as of June. In excess of 4,819 county residents have received at least one COVID-19 vaccination. Mr. Preston requested everyone to encourage the citizens to take their vaccines. Statewide, DHEC reports 45 percent of South Carolina residents have begun the vaccination process and 38 percent have completed the process. There has been 31.42 percent in Bamberg County that have received both shots. Construction at the old hospital is scheduled to resume Tuesday, June 8 and completion of the project is scheduled for May 2022. Presently, to be housed at that site will be departments of the following: Sheriff, Coroner/Morgue, Health Services, Veterans Affairs and EOC. Additional space is being sought for Voter Registration. Bids came in for CPST projects and probably within the next six months funds will be allocated. Govan was granted \$50,000 toward their new city hall and Denmark was allocated \$400,000 for refurbishing the old city hall. It was further reported that over 19 sales for fuel had been made at the Bamberg County Airport. Applications are being accepted for a Voter Registration and Election director. Broadband met with ORS in Columbia and was making sure Bamberg County's application was included for consideration. Also, it was learned that Allendale County is not fiber and they only have one tower and one bar. This report was received as information.

On motion by Councilman Comer, seconded by Councilwoman Hammond, council approved and gave second reading to 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

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such code and this ordinance shall become effective. Voting in favor: Councilwoman Hammond and Councilmen Myers, Donaldson, Goodman, Comer, Carter and Haynes.

During this time Chairman Haynes read the following:

Consideration Regarding: An ordinance to adopt the operating and capital budgets of Bamberg County for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2021 and ending June 30, 2022, and to make appropriations for such Bamberg County Budgets for county ordinary purposes for which the county may levy a tax; to provide for the levy of taxes on all taxable personal and real estate properties in Bamberg County of such county ordinary purposes, including sufficient tax to pay the principal and interest on outstanding indebtedness of Bamberg County maturing during said fiscal year; and to provide for other matters relating to Bamberg County and Bamberg County budgetary matters. Council, title only – first reading.

Councilman Comer: I so move we approve it just to get it to discussion.

Chairman Haynes: Do I get a second?

Councilman Donaldson: I second it.

Chairman Haynes: Properly moved and seconded - all in favor by the usual sign of aye.

Council: Aye.

Chairman Haynes: All oppose have the same right.

Councilwoman Hammond: I oppose.

The fiscal year 2021-2022 was explained how the proposed \$27.5 million is allocated and expected to be utilized by Bamberg County: (general fund - \$9.2 million; special revenue - \$8.6 million; enterprise - \$1.4 million; debt service - \$410,460 and capital projects - \$7.8 million. Controller Smith reported some increases that would be taking place (health insurance – no cost to the employee, but would reflect a cost to the County, 2 percent cost of living increase for employees, retirement contribution cost to name a few). All included, there is no tax increase for the taxpayers. Councilwoman Hammond and some other council members requested additional itemized budget information, alongside a list of employees and their salaries. Second reading of the budget is scheduled for Monday, June 21, 2021.

On motion by Councilwoman Hammond, seconded by Councilman Comer, council approved a proposed resolution establishing and agreeing to participate in the Lower Savannah Regional Home Consortium. Voting in favor: Councilwoman Hammond, Councilmen: Donaldson, Goodman, Comer, Carter and Haynes. Voting not in favor: Councilman Myers.

On motion by Councilman Comer, seconded by Councilwoman Hammond, council approved the calendar of events as submitted.

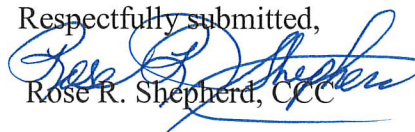
On motion by Councilman Comer, seconded by Councilwoman Hammond, council approved the appointment of Dr. Dorian Newton to the Workforce Development Board.

During this time, Chairman Haynes called for public comments. Administrator Preston read two emailed documents from Bamberg County residents: 1) Sue Clayton and 2) Miriam Beard. (*See Attachment 1 and Attachment 2*)

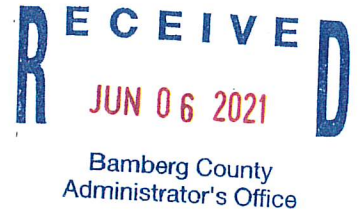
Council members made various comments to include: thanking the staff for their hard work; to stay safe and continue wearing their masks, pray for those with COVID and those recovering and Happy Father's Day to all fathers.

There being no further business for discussion, on motion by Councilwoman Hammond, seconded by Councilman Comer, council voted that the meeting be adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,


Rose R. Shepherd, CCC

Attachment (1)



Dear Council:

I'm pretty sure I'm wasting my time in writing this but I refuse to go away.

The world is opening up; I'm not ever asked to wear a mask anywhere I go. Yet you still feel the need to continue to hide from us. We aren't the bad guys; we sincerely want to work with you to restore our lovely county to the prosperous area it once was. But you run from us, you ignore us, and even worse, the lawyer paid for with county funds (translated our tax dollars) to look after the interests of the county advises you that you don't have to answer to us.

We are the Concerned Citizens of Bamberg County. We are tired of being ignored. And we wish you would join us in our concern.

Respectfully,
Sue Clayton
Concerned Citizens of Bamberg County
Chairperson



Bamberg County
Administrator's Office

From: Miriam Beard <miriambear307@gmail.com>
Date: June 7, 2021 at 7:16:18 AM EDT
To: info@bambergcounty.sc.gov
Subject: *EXTERNAL*Ordinances #1 & 2.

County Council members be careful what you are voting for! If you don't understand this budget, delay the vote especially on Ordinance #2. Bamberg County residents will be very concerned that you voted for them to have increased taxes on property in the upcoming year. Citizens are already worrying about who you really represent here! It is obvious to residents that legal representation by Mr Ness for county legal needs are more for him and Mr Preston than Bamberg County. Why are you not being transparent about indebtedness of Bamberg County? Why are you still going ahead with projects not sanctioned by County Council members? We understand Mr Preston that you have the same agenda that ruined the last county you were engaged as administrator. County Council members, we are taking notes on who is voting for the benefit of Bamberg County.

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