

MINUTES OF BAMBERG COUNTY COUNCIL VIRTUAL MEETING - June 15, 2020

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.

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, Bamberg County Council met 12:00 p.m., June 15, 2020 in various 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:** Chairwoman Sharon Hammond, Reverend Isaiah Odom, Councilmen Kerry Trent Kinard, Evert Comer, Jr., Larry Haynes, Clint Carter and Joe Guess, Jr. **Others Present:** Joey R. Preston, T.M. Thomas, Richard Ness, Adam Ness, Alice Johnson, Gina Smith, Mary Tilton, Chip Maier, Paul Eubanks, Ruthie Brown, William Molnar, Susan Greenberg, Rosa Verner, Dionne Gleaton, Bill Johnson, Sue, Harold Shepherd, and Walt Inabinet.

Bamberg County Council Virtual meeting was called to order by Chairwoman Sharon Hammond at 12:00 p.m., followed with a moment of silence in memory of those that loss the battle to COVID-19 and to the ones that are trying to recover and overcome the virus. Invocation was rendered by Councilman Evert Comer, Jr., followed with the pledge of allegiance by Councilman Larry Haynes.

On motion by Councilman Comer, seconded by Councilman Guess, council approved the agenda as submitted Those voting in favor of the motion were: Councilmen Kinard – Dist. 1; Haynes - Dist. 3; Guess – Dist. 4; Odom – Dist. 5; Comer – Dist. 6 and Chairwoman Hammond – Dist. 2. Councilman Carter – Dist. 7 was absent during the vote.

On motion by Councilman Guess, seconded by Rev. Odom, council approved a request from Committee Chairman Curtis Tyler and the Bamberg County Recreation Committee for reopening the process to apply for Fiscal Year 2019-2020 Bamberg County Recreation Grants with the deadline being June 23 at 12 noon. Giving consideration to the overwhelming COVID-19 pandemic, the extended time will allow another opportunity for groups to submit applications. Those voting in favor of the motion were: Councilmen Kinard – Dist. 1; Haynes - Dist. 3; Guess – Dist. 4; Odom – Dist. 5; Comer – Dist. 6 and Chairwoman Hammond – Dist. 2. Councilman Carter – Dist. 7 voted yes, only for groups applying for basketball and football grants.

On motion by Councilman Kinard, seconded by Councilmen Comer and Guess, council gave second reading approval by title only to an ordinance to adopt the operating and capital budgets of Bamberg County for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2020 and ending June 30, 2021, 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 for 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. The proposed budget total amounted to \$26,802,595 for Fiscal Year 2020-2019 with no tax increase. Controller Smith reported that no tax increases are being proposed neither any fee increases. The proposed budget calls for a general fund of \$8,277,120 along with separate accounts set up for special revenue, \$8,237,090; enterprise, \$1,391,660; debt service, \$397,685 and capital projects \$8,499,040. The county has 91 full-time employees and 31 part-time employees. It was also pointed out that the health insurance and retirement costs are expected to total \$83,200 more than last year. With insurance continuing to be an issue, our health insurance will total \$1,111,600 for FY 2020-2021. Those voting in favor of the Budget were: Those voting against the budget were: Chairwoman Hammond – Dist. 2. Councilman Carter – Dist. 7. Chairwoman Hammond stated that she did not receive budget information until Friday and there

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were things that were not listed and she could not understand what she could not see. Councilman Carter agreed with Chairwoman Hammond's statement.

Administrator Preston reported that they are monitoring closely to make certain that our revenues are going to be what they think they are. Everyone was reminded to read the reports that are sent out by Mary Tilton regarding COVID-19 information, etc. To date, Bamberg County has 45 cases of the coronavirus. Several sites are being set up in the County for free testing. Testing is also being done at Dr. McAlhany's office by appointment. Bamberg County has had one employee to test positive with the coronavirus, and the employee is not allowed to return to work until they are released from the doctor. The annual SCAC Conference this year is scheduled August 1 – August 3, 2020.

At this time, Chairwoman Hammond asked for comments from the council. Thanks was given to Administrator Preston, Controller Smith and their staff for doing a lot with a little. Council expressed their condolences to Councilman Carter during the passing of his father.

There being no further business for discussion, on motion by Councilman Haynes, seconded by Reverend Odom, council adjourned at 1:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rose R. Shepherd, CCC