

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 1, 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, Dolton Williams, Bridget Kinard, Weiler Greenberg, Ruthie Brown, Sarah Sandifer, Harold Shepherd, Bill Johnson, Walt Inabinet, Dionne Gleaton, and two additional attendants.

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 Reverend Isaiah Odom, followed with the pledge of allegiance by Councilman Joe Guess, Jr.

*Chairwoman Hammond announced that during the meeting, a roll call would be taken of each council member by district, when a vote is required on each motion made.*

On motion by Councilman Odom, seconded by Councilman Guess, council approved the minutes from the May 18, 2020 meeting. Chairwoman Hammond requested that the May 18, 2020 minutes be amended to reflect that the auditors were from Spartanburg and she was not aware that the process for selecting the new auditors had taken place. On motion by Councilman Guess, seconded by Rev. Odom, the amended motion was accepted. 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 Haynes, seconded by Reverend Odom, 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.

Bamberg County Treasurer Alice Johnson reported the April financial report noting that the county income stood at \$688,418, with expenses coming in at \$797,663, leaving a negative balance of \$109,245. At the end of April the county's bank balance stood at a positive balance of \$84,570. Chairwoman Hammond commented that each department should know what they are paying back to the general fund and council and all departments involved need to get a detailed report of it.

Finance Director T.M. Thomas reported the general fund generated \$6,827,617 in year-to-date revenues at the end of April. Expenditures stood at \$6,194,705, leaving a positive balance of \$632,912. The general, special revenue and enterprise funds each had revenues exceeding expenditures up through April. All departments are continuing to operate within their budgets. This report was received as information.

Administrator Preston reported on the following: **1)** Letter was received from South Carolina Chief Justice Beatty instructing that employees be provided with what they needed during court sessions; **2)** COVID-19 free testing is scheduled for 9 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. Monday, June 8, at the Govan, Olar and Hunters Chapel fire departments - 9 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. Wednesday, June 10 at Ehrhardt and Clear Pond

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fire departments and Denmark Technical College - 8:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. Saturday, June 16, the Regional Medical Center and SC DHEC will conduct testing at Richard Carroll Elementary School; 3) Reminded everyone to be certain to look at Mary's reports that are sent out daily regarding COVID-19 and other updated information; and 4) It is the goal to have the Rivers Bridge Fire Substation project completed by November 2. After the Administrator's report, Councilman Carter requested that Administrator Preston provide him with a copy of the three bids that were submitted during the solicitation for an audit firm to provide audit service for Bamberg County. The report was accepted as information.

On motion by Reverend Odom, seconded by Councilmen Haynes and Guess, council gave second reading to a proposed ordinance to adopt the amended Comprehensive Plan for Bamberg County in compliance with South Carolina Code §6-29-520 and §6-29-530. 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. Voting against the motion: Councilman Carter – Dist. 7 - noting his reason being for lack of information.

On motion by Rev. Odom, seconded by Councilman Haynes, council gave first 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 provisional budget appeal is 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 proposed budget of \$26,802,595 reflects a \$1,828,595 increase from FY 2019-20. Within the budget, the county's general fund is slated to increase from \$7,963,590 in 2019-20 to \$8,277,120 in FY 2020-21. Controller Gina Smith explained that increasing health insurance and retirement contribution costs are expected to total \$83,200 more than last year. Increases also came in special revenue and debt service. The enterprise budget is scheduled to decrease by \$122,460. The budget does not include a cost-of-living increase for employees. The employees with family coverage will not have to pay more this year in health insurance costs. County Administrator Preston added that the county is not anticipating having to furlough employees. Those voting in favor of the budget were: Councilmen Kinard – Dist. 1; Haynes - Dist. 3; Guess – Dist. 4; Odom – Dist. 5; Comer – Dist. 6 and Chairwoman Hammond – Dist. 2. Voting against the budget was: Councilman Carter – Dist. 7. Councilman Carter wanted to know if information on the budget was available before the presentation was given, why wasn't it shared before being asked to vote on a budget with no numbers. Chairwoman Hammond stated. "In the future, I think we need to have the reports before the presentations, before they're made." Administrator Preston said more details of the budget totals will be provided at the next meeting and hopefully have more information from the state as well.

On motion by Councilman Guess, seconded by Reverend Odom, the calendar of events was approved after adding two additional virtual meetings for second reading (June 15 at 12 p.m. and third reading along with a public hearing on June 29 at 6 p.m. Those voting in favor of the motion were: Councilmen Kinard – Dist. 1; Haynes - Dist. 3; Guess – Dist. 4; Odom – Dist. 5; Comer – Dist. 6; Carter and Chairwoman Hammond – Dist. 2.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, no public comments were received at this time because public comments concerning agenda items were to be emailed to [info@bambergcounty.sc.gov](mailto:info@bambergcounty.sc.gov) no later than Monday, June 1, 2020 at 10:00 a.m. Comments were received and read from Bamberg resident Sue Clayton (See attachment).

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At this time, Chairwoman Hammond asked for comments from the council. Chairwoman Hammond urged Council to pray for our Country and to send emails out to the constituents encouraging them to sign up and be counted in the U.S. Census, because we have to get our numbers up.

There being no further business for discussion, on motion by Councilman Haynes, seconded by Reverend Odom, council adjourned at 2:11 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rose R. Shepherd, CCC