

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 and Bamberg County Courthouse Annex.

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, Bamberg County Council met 6:00 p.m., April 4, 2022 in Council Chambers with limited seating for the public alongside livestreaming of the meeting provided for public view. **Present:** Chairman Spencer Donaldson, Councilwoman Sharon Hammond, Councilmen Evert Comer, Jr., Clint Carter, Larry Haynes, Phil Myers, Jr. and Dr. Jonathan Goodman, II. **Others Present:** Joey R. Preston, T.M. Thomas, Richard Ness, Alice Johnson, Gina Smith, Chip Maier, Donald Kirby, Sh'Kur Francis, Kay Maxwell, Graci Hiers, Garrett Dragano, Emory Langston, Miriam Beard, Kenneth Bamberg and Al Jenkins.

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

On motion by Councilman Carter, seconded by Councilwoman Hammond, council approved the minutes from March 7, 2022 regular meeting and March 29, 2022 special called meeting with necessary corrections should there be any.

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

Southern Carolina Alliance Vice President of Marketing Kay Maxwell, introduced Graci Hiers as SCA's new regional beautification marketing coordinator. Ms. Hiers will be working with SCA for the next 24 months through a pilot program with Palmetto Pride. Also announced was the forthcoming placement of a mural illustrating a view down the Edisto River. The mural will be located on the historic Brooker Hardware LLC building at the corner of U.S. Highways 78 and 301 across from Hardee's and Radio Station WBSC in Bamberg. Ms. Hiers stated that she is excited about her appointment and the opportunity to work in the capacity in which she was hired.

Ms. Emory Langston, Lower Savannah Council of Governments Planning Community and Economic Development Administrator, was present to explain the Bamberg County multi-mitigation plan for compliance with the federal hazard mitigation planning requirements contained in 44 CFR 201.6(b)-(d). Documents were previously provided to the council with in depth information concerning the plan. Ms. Langston was acknowledged for being present to provide additional clarity of the plan.

COMMITTEE AND STAFF REPORTS:

Southern Carolina Alliance - Monthly Report

Southern Carolina Regional Development Alliance Project Manager Garrett Dragano, updated the council on 75 active projects and leads throughout the service area. In Bamberg County, there are currently 12 active projects and leads. SC Oak to Barrel LLC is operating with approximately 13 employees with expectations of employing the full projected 122 over a five year period. Improvements on infrastructure for Wolf industrial site is still being pursued. Regrettably, Project Canvas that was to be located in Denmark, will not be completed anytime soon. It appears that it is because of finances of the company that was looking at locating here along with negative criticism from Bamberg County citizens and other reasons. Administrator Preston announced the need for an executive session before the next council meeting.

April 4, 2022....continued

After this report was given, council thanked Mr. Dragano for this report.

Bamberg County Treasurer - Monthly Report

Bamberg County Treasurer Alice Johnson reported for the month of January. The county had \$529,983.14 in income and the expenditures were \$959,761.32, leaving a negative balance of \$429,778.18. After adding the positive bank balance at the end of January (\$1,515,230.09), the county's regular account was a positive balance of \$1,085,451.91. Treasurer Johnson's report was accepted as information.

Bamberg County Finance - Monthly Report

Finance Director T.M. Thomas reported the general fund had year-to-date revenues of \$6,329,768, at the end of February. Expenditures stood at \$5,271,145, for a positive general fund balance of \$1,058,623. This report was received as information.

Bamberg County Administrator – Monthly Report

Administrator Preston extended the coordinator of Keep Bamberg County Beautiful Sh'Kur Francis, the opportunity to report on the various activities referencing litter in the county. The County participated along with the City of Bamberg and the local schools in a successful cleanup effort known as "The Super Duper Cleanup", that was held during Super Bowl weekend. Mr. Francis elaborated on the upcoming Great American Cleanup that's scheduled to take place in Bamberg County on Friday and Saturday, April 22 and April 23, from 8 a.m. until 12 p.m. Anyone interested in participating in the cleanup can register online at www.bambergcounty.sc.gov/sign-up-to-volunteer. Registration and supply pickup will be held at the County Courthouse Annex at the Gazebo and at the Denmark City Hall. Keep South Carolina Beautiful/Palmetto Pride recently awarded KBCB a \$7,000 grant. This money will be used to help purchase supplies and other needed items for cleanup purposes. Mr. Francis announced the first official KBCB meeting this year was held with the board members on Friday, April 1. Additional happenings will be forthcoming.

Administrator Preston reported on the poor results of the broadband internet survey that's being handled by the South Carolina Office of Regulatory Staff. To date, only 46 households have responded out of 6,830. The surveys are being done to compile information from citizens as to whether they would like to have high-speed internet in their homes. Mr. Preston informed council on Palmetto Rural Telephone's effort on broadband service installation completion along the roads of Ashton, Pocketville, Orange Grove and Lodge. Forthcoming for implementation of work on Hadwin Road is scheduled to begin April 15 and Clear Pond Road to begin May 1. Administrator Preston announced that the clerk of court, family court and the office of the probate judge have moved to a modular unit located in the parking lot of the detention center. He thanked the courthouse employees for assisting those involved with the move by helping it to be a smooth transition. The Bamberg Board of Public Works was thanked as well for their help. The hospital project is going well. It's optimistic that the veteran's affairs office, the health department and the sheriff's department will be opening up in September. As it relates to taxes, it is hoped that the county's millage rate would not go too high because of the consolidation of the two school districts. The council accepted Administrator Preston's report as information.

On motion by Councilman Comer, seconded by Councilwoman Hammond, council approved first reading in title only, a proposed ordinance to amend the existing Bamberg County Road Ordinance to accept Cardinal Road into the road maintenance system. This ordinance was sponsored by Chairman Donaldson.

On motion by Councilman Comer, seconded by Councilman Haynes, council approved a resolution from Bamberg County Council adopting the Bamberg County Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan. This plan is the updated version and it is a mandate by the state of South Carolina and FEMA. If Bamberg County anticipates applying for certain grants, this update has to be in place. Every five years FEMA and SCEMD request an update of the hazard mitigation plan for counties.

April 4, 2022....continued

On motion by Councilman Haynes, and seconded by Councilwoman Hammond, council proclaimed April 2022 as Child Abuse Prevention Month throughout Bamberg County and encourage all South Carolinians to dedicate themselves to protecting the quality of life for every child. This proclamation was sponsored and presented by Dr. Goodman.

On motion by Councilman Comer, seconded by Councilman Haynes, council approved a resolution for fair housing in Bamberg County. Bamberg County supports this cause on a yearly basis.

On motion by Councilman Comer, seconded by Councilman Haynes, council approved a resolution of Bamberg County supporting the South Carolina American Revolution Sestercentennial Commission and recognizing and approving of the Bamberg County 250 Committee. This resolution was sponsored by Dr. Goodman.

On motion by Councilman Comer, seconded by Councilwoman Hammond, council approved the calendar of events after adding three additional items.

Councilman Myers inquired about the sale of alcohol on Sundays in Bamberg County. It was reported that a referendum has to be sought as well as additional information from the Department of Revenue. Additional information will be pursued and reported at the May meeting.

On motion by Councilman Comer, seconded by Councilman Carter, the appointment of Anthony Harley was made to the Bamberg County Economic Development Board, to serve as a representative from Council District #3 – Councilman Haynes.

Al Jenkins from Senator Tim Scott's office in Charleston was present and informed Council if they need his assistance for anything to let him know. Also, Senator Scott will be sponsoring a program for the veterans for Memorial Day. Mr. Jenkins was thanked for attending the meeting.

Chairman Donaldson called for public comments. No comments were available/submitted.

During comments from council, the following statements were pointed out: 1) thanks given to the staff for their hard work; 2) requested that all stay safe and continue wearing their masks; 3) reminded everyone to complete the Broadband survey; 4) thanks to all in attendance; and 5) have a good Easter.

There being no further business for discussion, on motion by Councilwoman Hammond, seconded by Councilman Haynes, council voted to adjourn at 8:14 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rose R. Shepherd. Clerk to Council