

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., January 10, 2022 in Council Chambers with limited seating for the public alongside livestreaming of the meeting provided for public view. **Present:** Chairman Larry Haynes, Councilmen Evert Comer, Jr., Spencer Donaldson, Phil Myers, Jr. and Dr. Jonathan Goodman, II. **Absent:** Councilwoman Sharon Hammond and Councilman Clint Carter. **Others Present:** Joey R. Preston, T.M. Thomas, Richard Ness, Alice Johnson, Gina Smith, Chip Maier, Garrett Dragano, Donald Kirby, Sh'Kur Francis, Miriam Beard, Sue Clayton, Kenneth Bamberg, William Molnar and two additional persons.

Bamberg County Council 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 Dr. Jonathan Goodman, II.

On motion by Dr. Goodman, seconded by Councilman Comer, council approved the minutes from the December 6, 2021 meeting with necessary corrections should there be any.

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

In the absence of the 2020 past Chairwoman Sharon Hammond, Chairman Larry Haynes read the printed wording from the plaque that recognized her service during her tenure as chairwoman. The plaque will be delivered to Councilwoman Hammond at a later date.

At this time, outgoing Chairman Haynes expressed gratitude to the council for their support and teamwork shown during his term while serving as chairman. The gavel was now presented to the council's new chairman for 2022 Councilman Spencer Donaldson, Council District #4.

According to the Organizational and Procedural Rules for Bamberg County Council, the office of vice chairman shall (the same as for chairman) be numerically rotated on a one year basis from district to district following the district of the elected chairman for the term. Dr. Jonathan Goodman, II (Council District #5) will serve in the capacity as vice chairman for 2022.

COMMITTEE AND STAFF REPORTS:

Southern Carolina Alliance - Monthly Report

Southern Carolina Alliance Project Manager Garrett Dragano reported that SCA brought \$121 million in private investment to the region and 615 new jobs in 2021. Presently, the region has 65 active projects. Mr. Dragano stated that he is still working with SC Oak to Barrel to get them fully functioning. They are expected to be operating very shortly. SCA has been awarded a grant to fund a Palmetto Pride litter coordinator. More information will be posted on SCA's website pertaining to the litter coordinator. Council thanked Mr. Dragano for his appearance and for keeping them abreast on business activities involving Bamberg County.

Bamberg County Treasurer - Monthly Report

Bamberg County Treasurer Alice Johnson reported for the month of November. The county had \$1,174,684.29 in income and the expenditures were \$894,533.30, leaving a positive balance of \$280,150.99.

January 10, 2022....continued

After adding the negative bank balance at the end of October (\$177,652.77), the county's regular account stood at a positive \$102,498.22. 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 \$2,417,216, at the end of November. Expenditures stood at \$3,398,353, for a negative general fund balance of \$981,137 This report was received as information.

Bamberg County Controller - Monthly Report

Controller Gina Smith explained to everyone that even though a negative balance in the general fund, the county will have a fund balance on hand due to the fact that the majority of the county's income is taxes, which basically come in during December and January. Ms. Smith reported that Bamberg County received an "A-minus" credit rating from Standard & Poor's as the county prepares for the issuance of a bond to refinance the 2015 installment purchase revenue bonds along with the issuance for the courthouse renovation. Administrator Preston said that's a big deal for us, especially for a county our size. This will allow us to borrow money at a lower interest rate. Controller Smith explained the process and reasoning for pursuing the new credit rating for Bamberg County. Strategic planning played a huge part in pursuing opportunities to benefit Bamberg County and the possible tax savings to the taxpayers. Also, with the plan of finance taken by the county, it allowed the option for the county to go forth with the renovation of the courthouse. This report was received as information.

Bamberg County Administrator – Monthly Report

Administrator Preston reported on the COVID-19 figures for the county. Bamberg County has reported that 60.8 percent of Bamberg County residents have had at least one COVID-19 vaccination, and 53 percent have had their second vaccine. Dr. Goodman introduced that he is working with the Medical University of South Carolina to try to bring a vaccination clinic to the county, where shots would be free. Administrator Preston received a call from the state highway Department on Friday, January 7, 2022 at 4:35 p.m. regarding the closure of two bridges scheduled to be closed on Monday, January 10. We are being told by SCDOT that they plan to have all of the bridge repairs completed by April. It was reported that some Courthouse renovations have been planned and Sh'Kur Francis (KBCB Coordinator/PIO Officer) and Rose Shepherd (Clerk to Council) will be keeping the public informed. Administrator Preston announced that he would be scheduling another tour of the Law Enforcement Complex soon. The council was updated on the passing of former Clerk of Court James "Pedie" Hiers. Mr. Hiers who had retired in 2021 was the oldest Clerk of Court in South Carolina and had served in that capacity for 32 years. Information timeline sheets for elected officials had been received from the SC State Election Commission and will be distributed to the elected officials. Administrator Preston's report was received as information.

On motion by Councilman Myers, seconded by Councilman Haynes, council approved a proclamation honoring county resident John L. Haralson for his contributions to conservation, tree farming and forestry education in Bamberg County. A presentation of the proclamation to Mr. Haralson and his family will be arranged at a later date.

On motion by Councilman Haynes, seconded by Dr. Goodman, council approved a proposed resolution to adopt and establish written public notice of the Bamberg County Council meeting schedule for the calendar year 2022. The council regularly meets at 6 p.m. on the first Monday of every month.

Calendar of Events:

On motion by Dr. Goodman, seconded by Councilman Haynes, council approved the calendar of events after adding Saturday, January 15 at 2 p.m., for recognition of the Bamberg-Ehrhardt Baseball Team which will be held at the gazebo at the Bamberg County Courthouse Annex – Isaiah Odom Building.

January 10, 2022....continued

Chairman Donaldson called for public comments. County resident and Bamberg County Concerned Citizens chairperson Sue Clayton was present and read to council some of the following concerns: **1)** More accountability is needed from council; **2)** Residents are paying the highest tax in SC; **3)** Residents not getting answers to their questions; **4)** Bamberg County is one of the poorest counties and money continue to be spent; **5)** \$7 million being spent for the courthouse; and **6)** Is now the appropriate time to consider the project. Council accepted these comments as information.

During comments from council, the following statements were pointed out: 1) thanks to the staff for their hard work; 2) requested that all stay safe and continue wearing their masks; 3) reminded everyone to get their COVID-19 vaccines; 4) please look into the animal problem; and 5) continue to pray.

There being no further business for discussion, on motion by Councilman Haynes, seconded by Dr. Goodman, council voted to adjourn at 7:13 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rose R. Shepherd. Clerk to Council

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., February 7, 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 Larry Haynes, Evert Comer, Jr., Clint Carter and Dr. Jonathan Goodman, II. **Absent:** Councilman Phil Myers, Jr. **Others Present:** Joey R. Preston, T.M. Thomas, Adam Ness, Alice Johnson, Gina Smith, Chip Maier, Garrett Dragano, Donald Kirby, Sh'Kur Francis, Miriam Beard, Kenneth Bamberg, and two additional persons.

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

Inadvertently, the minutes from the January 10, 2022 meeting were not addressed for approval and will be placed on the March 7, 2022 agenda for approval.

On motion by Dr. Goodman, seconded by Councilwoman Hammond, the agenda was approved as submitted.

COMMITTEE AND STAFF REPORTS:

Southern Carolina Alliance - Monthly Report

Southern Carolina Alliance Project Manager Garrett Dragano reported that SCA has 67 active projects and leads in the service area as of 2022. To date, there are 14 new projects and leads in the served region. In Bamberg County there are 11 active projects and leads that derived from 2021 until now. Also, SC Oak to Barrel LLC is in the process of interviewing for jobs and they anticipate beginnings operations by the end of February. Infrastructure enhancements are being pursued at the Wolf industrial site. Mr. Dragano reminded all that SCA is still accepting applications for a Palmetto Pride litter coordinator. Additional information can be found on their website. The Council thanked Mr. Dragano for his report and requested a printed copy of future reports. Mr. Dragano positively acknowledged the request.

Bamberg County Treasurer - Monthly Report

Bamberg County Treasurer Alice Johnson reported for the month of December. The county had \$470,187.58 in income and the expenditures were \$1,007,465.35, leaving a negative balance of \$537,277.77. After adding the negative bank balance at the end of November (\$102,498.22), the county's regular account stood at a negative \$434,779.55. 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 \$3,752,647, at the end of December. Expenditures stood at \$4,012,974, for a negative general fund balance of \$260,327. Finance Director Thomas stated that it is not unusual for a negative general fund balance this time of year. This report was received as information.

Bamberg County Controller - Monthly Report

Controller Gina Smith reported that the county funds should be increasing in January and upcoming months as well. Ms. Smith reported on a refund of \$27,146.74 the county had to make to CSX Transportation, Inc. following the outcome of the state Supreme Court case: CSX Transportation, Inc. vs. S.C. Department of Revenue. The SC DOR is responsible for placing values on railroad property. Therefore, CSX sued the DOR (this went on for about five years). Finally the Supreme Court issued a ruling basically saying that the methods used to appraise certain properties were wrong and that these counties would have to go back and refund CSX. Successfully Controller Smith was able to negotiate the payment of the county's refund with CSX attorneys. Administrator Preston pointed out that having to refund CSX was not specific to Bamberg County – this was a statewide appeal. Every county in South Carolina that had a CSX railroad is what they appealed and every county in the state had to go back and comply with what DOR said. This report was received as information.

Bamberg County Administrator – Monthly Report

Administrator Preston reported on the COVID-19 figures for the county. 1) Bamberg County has reported that 61.6 percent of Bamberg County residents have had at least one COVID-19 vaccination, and 54 percent have had their second vaccine. Children ages 5 to 11 are now eligible to receive the Pfizer vaccine. Booster shots are also permitted and recommended for those 12 and older. Eighty-six percent of the county notice employees have been vaccinated; 2) Regarding the work on the bridges along U.S. Highway 601, Contractors are working toward completing the Little Salkehatchie River Bridge by the end of this month, or the beginning of March. The next bridge scheduled for work is the Lemon Creek Bridge. We are Receptions supposed to be given notice prior beginning work on that bridge; 3) South Carolina Department of Commerce awarded Bamberg County a \$1.5 million grant to assist toward the old hospital project (law enforcement/health and human services complex); 4) Administrator Preston presented the council with maps of some state roads that the C-Fund committee has approved work on. The committee also approved \$100,000 for graveling of roads. There is some state money (approximately \$1.2) that we are to be coming to us and that is going to allow us to be able to resurface all the streets within the campus of Denmark Technical College; 5) A clean-up on Bamberg Street has been scheduled between the City of Bamberg and KBCB for Saturday, February 12 from 10 a.m. – 12 noon. Participants are to meet at the Main Street Methodist Church for supplies and directives; 6) The modular unit will be arriving by the end of the month and will house the offices within the courthouse. Department heads have been talked to about the transition and the county is working with the SC Court Administration concerning court scheduling; and 7) Crosswinds Aviation has hired a pilot and he has been stationed in Bamberg. Administrator Preston's report was received as information.

On motion by Councilwoman Hammond, seconded by Councilman Haynes, council ratified a resolution to express the deepest sympathy of the Bamberg County Council of the State of South Carolina to the family and many friends of Willard "Billy" H. Duncan – Businessman, Military Veteran, Philanthropist and Prominent Official – Upon His Death as of January 17, 2022. Mr. Duncan served in the capacity as Bamberg County Coroner for 32 years. A framed resolution was presented to the family in his memory.

On motion by Dr. Goodman, seconded by Councilman Haynes, the members of council passed a resolution honoring February 2022 as Black History Month.

On motion by Dr. Goodman, seconded by Councilman Haynes, council approved the calendar of events as submitted.

On motion by Councilman Carter, seconded by Councilman Haynes, council approved the following committee appointments for 2022 as appointed by Council Chairman Donaldson: Administrative/Finance – Chairman Spencer Donaldson, Dr. Jonathan Good, II and Larry Haynes; Personnel/Education, Recreation, Health and Welfare/Intergovernmental Relations – Chairperson Sharon Hammond, Evert Comer, Jr. and

February 7, 2022....continued

Larry Haynes; Public Service/County Planning – Chairman Evert Comer, Jr., Phil Myers and Dr. Goodman, II; Justice and Public Safety – Chairman Clint Carter, Phil Myers and Spencer Donaldson; Solid Waste/ Recycling – Chairman Larry Haynes, Clint Carter and Dr. Jonathan Goodman, II.

Discussion of the following roads will be taken up at the C-Fund Committee meeting at its meeting on next week: 1) 193 Circle Drive - Denmark; 2) 29 Cardinal Drive – Denmark and 3) 100 Rome Street – Denmark. It was pointed out that Cardinal Drive is paved.

Chairman Donaldson called for public comments – no public comments were made.

At this time Chairman Donaldson extended the opportunity to council to make comments. Some of the comments were: 1) Thanking those for being in attendance; 2) Thanking the employees; 3) Take a look at our projects to see if we can collaborate with other counties to see how we can possibly save money; 4) Come together and put our head together to see how we can move our county forward; 5) Thanks to the Administrator for following through with the projects and 6) Happy Valentine's Day to all.

There being no further business for discussion, on motion by Councilman Haynes, seconded by Councilwoman Hammond, council voted to adjourn at 7:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rose R. Shepherd. Clerk to Council