

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., April 5, 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, Clint Carter, Phil Myers, Jr., and Dr. Jonathan Goodman, II. **Others Present:** Joey R. Preston, T.M. Thomas, Richard Ness, Alice Johnson, Gina Smith, Mary Tilton, Chip Maier, Gary Bailey, Will Walls, William Molnar, Harold Shepherd, Danny Black, Walt Inabinet, Ruthie Brown, Dionne Gleaton, Candace Fralix, Mellinda Tyler, Adrienne Blume and two 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 Spencer Donaldson, followed with the pledge of allegiance by Councilman Evert Comer, Jr.

On motion by Councilman Comer, seconded by Councilman Donaldson, council approved the minutes from the March 1, 2021 meeting.

During this segment, Chairman Haynes called for the approval of the agenda. Chairwoman Hammond motioned, seconded by Councilman Carter, for discussion, that the following three items be tabled: **1)** Fiscal Year 2020 audit presentation; **2)** Second Reading of Ordinance 6-21-14, authorizing the leasing of hangar space at the county airport to Crosswind Aviation LLC and **3)** First reading of ordinance 2-21-2, adopting and enacting a new code of ordinances for Bamberg County. The motion failed. After a lengthy discussion, and on motion by Councilman Carter and seconded by Dr. Goodman, the agenda was approved and a vote was taken to allow the codification of ordinances be tabled. Voting in favor of tabling the codification ordinance: Councilwoman Hammond, Councilmen Myers, Donaldson, Goodman and Carter. Voting against tabling the codification ordinance: Councilmen Haynes and Comer.

Certified Public Accountants Mr. Gary Bailey and Will Walls of Love Bailey & Associates of Laurens, SC, gave a presentation of the audit for Bamberg County, year ending June 30, 2020. Mr. Bailey announced that they had issued the county an unmodified opinion, meaning that Bamberg County had received a clean opinion and that's the best opinion you would receive for an audit. Two main deficiencies were found while conducting the audit. One being the magistrate department and the clerk of court – with both departments needing to reconcile the bank statements in a more opportune manner. The clerk of court has since corrected that deficiency. In reply to the finding, the county responded that the finance staff has prepared an annual summary of account activity for the magistrate office. The staff has also reconciled the bank statements for the end of the year. The county further responded that the magistrate is aware of the overages and has operated to clear them by submitting funds to the state Unclaimed Funds Program. The second important deficiency consisted of the absence of monitoring funds in the clerk of court's office, which led to ongoing overages or arrears in several bank accounts. The county responded that its finance staff prepared an annual summary of activity for each of the office's accounts. The clerk of court followed up on the suggestions for resolving the problems. With these practices being followed the finance staff trusts that the account overages/shortages have been eradicated as associated to fiscal year ending June 30, 2020. The final report states the county having a total positive net position of \$10,491,687, increasing \$3,141,438 over the preceding year. The county's total assets came in at \$30,700,098, with total liabilities at \$22,202,269.

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Controller Gina Smith gave a power point presentation that emphasized good matters within the audit report. One important detail that Controller Smith expounded on to the Council, was the fact that the county demonstrated good fiscal stewardship by earning an unmodified opinion on the audit. In the general fund summary actual revenues totaled \$7,756,177, and actual expenditures came in at \$7,588,044. During the presentation, it was also stated that it was unique with experiencing the pandemic and unbudgeted expenses, \$1,859,633 was added to the county's capital assets during fiscal year 2020. Councilman Carter requested a detailed report of the Capital Penny Sales Tax. Councilwoman Hammond requested a copy of Controller Smith's report.

Committee and Staff Reports;

Bamberg County Treasurer Alice Johnson reported the February financial report, noting that the county had income of \$58,262. Expenses came in at \$738,449, leaving a negative balance of \$680,186. Joined with a positive bank balance at the end of January, the total positive balance stood at \$623,016. This report was received by council as information.

Finance Director T.M. Thomas reported the county's general fund generated \$6,454,206 at the end of February. Expenses came in at \$5,122,577, resulting in a positive general fund balance of \$1,331,630. Finance Director Thomas confirmed all departments are continuing to operate within their budgets. This report was received as information.

Administrator Preston reported on the COVID-19 total in Bamberg County as being 1,401 positive cases and 38 new cases since March 1 and 51 deaths so far. So far, the County has had about 3,500 persons to receive the vaccine. Two sites are scheduled from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., Monday, April 19, at the Bamberg County Courthouse Annex and the other on Tuesday, April 20, at Denmark Technical College. No appointment is required. Administrator Preston reported that a Public Safety Body Camera Grant has been applied for. He alongside the sheriff have submitted the request to the South Carolina Department of Public Safety. It would be \$15,000 per year for five years. Bamberg County has received a \$5,315 grant from the state for litter enforcement. The ribbon cutting ceremony for the South Carolina State 1890 Research and Demonstration Farm Program, located at 1678 Alligator Road – Olar, SC on Friday, March 26 at 11 a.m. and an invitation was extended to the council. This report was accepted as information.

On motion by Councilman Comer, seconded by Councilman Comer, council approved second reading, of Ordinance #6-21-14, to authorize the leasing of certain Bamberg County airport real property, space, improvements, and facilities (Crosswind Aviation, LLC Project); the granting of certain privileges to limited fixed-based operators; the sale of aviation fuel at bulk rates; the ratification of certain other leases and grants of rights at the airport; and other matters related thereto. Voting in favor: Councilmen Myers, Donaldson, Goodman, Comer, Carter and Haynes. Voting not in favor: Councilwoman Hammond.

On motion by Councilman Comer, seconded by Councilwoman Hammond, council approved a proclamation designating the month of April as Fair Housing Month in Bamberg County.

On motion by Councilman Carter, seconded by Councilwoman Hammond, the calendar of events was approved after adding the Lower Savannah COG's board meeting, scheduled for Thursday, April 8.

On motion by Councilman Comer, seconded by Councilwoman Hammond, council approved the recommendation for appointment of Mark D. Tyler to serve on the Bamberg County Planning Commission as a representative of District 6 (*Councilman Comer*).

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On motion by Councilman Comer, seconded by Councilwoman Hammond, council approved the recommendation for appointment of Richard Stanfield to serve on the Bamberg County Planning Commission as a representative of District 7 (*Councilman Carter*).

On motion by Councilman Comer, seconded by Councilman Myers, council approved the appointment of Dr. Jonathan Goodman, II for the replacement of former Councilman Rev. Isaiah Odom, to serve on the SouthernCarolina Board of Directors.

On motion by Councilman Carter, seconded by Councilman Comer, council approved the appointment of Councilman Spencer Donaldson for the replacement of former Councilman Joe Guess, Jr., to serve on the Lower Savannah Council of Governments Housing Consortium.

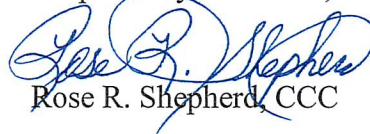
Recommended by Chairman Haynes, the council approved appointments to the newly created Bamberg County Emergency Services Committee. **PURPOSE:** 1) Provide a pathway of communication between MedShore and Bamberg County, to include county emergency services, agencies, county government and the public. 2) Review EMS monthly or quarterly reports that review national standard data: such as response time compliance; quality of care, quality improvement, mutual aid, customer feedback, risk management/safety occurrences, etc. 3) Formulate recommendations on issues pertaining to EMS service in Bamberg County. Members: District 1 Councilman Phil Myers; County Sheriff Kenneth Bamberg; County EMS Director Tiffany Kemmerlin; Ehrhardt Public Safety Chief Chad Dilling; Govan Fire Chief Kenneth Utz, County Fire Coordinator Paul Eubanks; Medshore General Manager Josh Shore; Dr. John Ross, medical practitioner; Medshore Ambulance Services Captain Phil Clarke and District 4 and Committee Chairman Councilman Spencer Donaldson.

At this time, Chairman Haynes called for comments from the public. Administrator Preston read an emailed letter from Sue Clayton, chairperson of the Concerned Citizens of Bamberg County. The greatest concern stated in the letter seemed to have been the discontentment of the council not holding face-to-face meetings and the public not being able to adequately have their concerns addressed.

Brief comments were made by council in thanking the employees for their dedication and hard work and advising everyone to continue to be safe during this COVID-19 pandemic. Comments were also shared that a plan be looked into for the possibility of returning to opened meetings.

There being no further business for discussion, on motion by Councilman Donaldson, seconded by Councilman Comer, the meeting was adjourned at 9:03 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,


Rose R. Shepherd, CCC