

In compliance with the Freedom of Information Act, agendas for the following meeting were delivered 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 10, 2023 in Council Chambers with limited seating for the public alongside live streaming of the meeting provided for public view. **Present:** Chairman Dr. Jonathan Goodman, II, Councilwoman Sharon Hammond (*telephone participation*), Councilmen Phil Myers, Jr., Evert Comer, Jr. (*arrived 6:25 p.m.*), Spencer Donaldson, Larry Haynes, and Clint Carter. **Others Present:** Joey R. Preston, T.M. Thomas, Gina Smith, Alice Johnson, Tiffany Kemmerlin, Donald Kirby, Kenneth Bamberg, Billy Kemp, Joshua Urwick, Dionne Gleaton, William Molnar and two additional visitors.

Bamberg County Council meeting was called to order by Dr. Jonathan Goodman, II at 6:00 p.m. Invocation was rendered by Councilman Larry Haynes, followed with the pledge of allegiance led by Councilman Clint Carter.

On motion by Councilman Haynes, seconded by Councilman Donaldson, council approved the minutes from the March 13, 2023 meeting with necessary corrections should there be any; and on motion by Councilman Haynes, seconded by Councilman Myers, council approved the minutes from April 6, 2023 special called meeting with necessary corrections should there be any.

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

Dr. William Molnar, Executive Director of Lower Savannah COG, addressed Bamberg County Council regarding the work that they provide for the seniors in our area. They provide aging, disability and transportation programs funded by the federal Older Americans Act. There were 166 seniors in the county who were reviewed by LSCOG for Older Americans Act services such as meals, homemaker services and transportation services in 2022. There were 27,326 home-delivered meals provided to 1,617 homebound seniors in the county and 2,597 meals were served to 309 seniors at the meal sites in the county. Phase Two of work on the U.S. Highway 78 corridor improvement project from Bamberg to Denmark is complete. LSCOG manages the CDBG program, which administers a \$366,300 grant for a rescue pumper in the City of Denmark. A grant totaling \$950,903 will be utilized to construct a new well for the City of Denmark, and will also provide some upgrades to an existing well. This is an ongoing project. Approximately \$3.8 million has been received of American Rescue Plan Act money in order to fight homelessness in the region. The LSCOG along with the Bamberg Board of Public Works, submitted applications for two SKIPP grants. If awarded, one grant would be for a BBPW interconnection with the Orangeburg Department of Utilities, and that's a \$4.3 million project. The other grant is for almost a \$10 million multi-faceted project to include a large-scale sewer line replacement and a water line extension to a community serving more than 70 county residences. The Thoroughbred Tourism Committee is persistently advertising the area in regards to events. There were 20,186 tourism booklets distributed in FY 2021-2022. It was

April 10, 2023....continue

reported that the SC Works Lower Savannah mobile unit made 23 visits to Bamberg County and served 48 county residences. Dr. Molnar further stated that they were forced to close the Denmark SC Work Center due to the S.C. Department of Employment and Workforce cut the agency's workforce budget by \$1.2 million over the last two years. Council thanked Dr. Molnar for the LSCOG report and update.

COMMITTEE AND STAFF REPORTS:

Southern Carolina Alliance - Monthly Report

Southern Carolina Alliance Project Manager Josh Urwick stated since the last council meeting, SCA has had three site visits. Also, Project Manager Urwick attended a job fair at Denmark Technical College. It was announced last week that Project Homegrown is now known as Innovative Poultry Products and they are expanding operations in Bamberg County with a \$2.86 million investment and will create 30 new jobs over the next 5 years. SCA - still working on a project at the Wolfe site in Denmark. SCA has another project that is still in discussion regarding a possible expansion in Bamberg. The SC Oak Barrel company has announced it will invest \$6.8 million and create 122 new jobs at the previous Black Water Barrels. Gratitude was expressed to Mr. Urwick for rendering the update.

Bamberg County Treasurer - Monthly Report

County Treasurer Alice Johnson gave the February financial report, stating they had \$244,775.17 in income and expenditures of \$840,530.97, for a negative balance of \$595,755.80. When the positive bank balance at the end of January (\$1,783,077.36) was added, the county's regular account stood at a positive \$1,187,321.56. This report was received as information.

Bamberg County Finance - Monthly Report

Finance Director T.M. Thomas reported the general fund had year-to-date revenues of \$6,881,671 as of the end of February. Expenditures stood at \$5,059,443, for a positive general fund balance of \$1,562,825. Overall, January was a good month as it relates to collections. The county departments are continuing to operate within their budgets. This report was received as information.

Bamberg County Administrator - Monthly Report

Administrator Preston reported that representatives from the Federal Communications Commission will be in the county to discuss a program through which broadband users could possibly get a \$30 reduction in their bill per month. A significant part of the Bamberg County population will probably qualify. Information will be posted on social media regarding this program so that we can reach as many people as possible. A meeting regarding grants is scheduled with Administrator Preston and officials from USDA on Tuesday, April 18th in Orangeburg. Also being gathered is more information on a new tax incentive program that the General Assembly has adopted and that county councils can pass to support the renovation of historic buildings across the county. Construction on the paving projects for Salty Road and Lazy Lane is scheduled to begin in the next 30 days. Administrator Preston is scheduled to meet with officials from the state Department of Archives and History on Friday, April 28 to seek grant money to redo roofs on several abandoned buildings within the county. Dedication of the Veterans Park is scheduled to take place on Memorial Day, more information will be given at a later date on this matter. This report was received as information.

April 10, 2023....continue

On motion by Councilman Haynes, seconded by Councilman Donaldson, council approved a resolution to amend a state-issued certificate of franchise authority filed with the State of South Carolina Office of the Secretary by Spectrum Southeast, LLC for Bamberg County. In order for construction to begin, the council must pass this resolution. Through the FCC, they have been approved for funding to do construction for up to 1,300 residences countywide.

On motion by Councilman Donaldson, seconded by Councilman Haynes, council approved a resolution endorsing the usage of the Bamberg County Recreation Committee Guidelines and grant application as set forth for the Bamberg County Recreation Program. It was approved and set in place that groups pursuing recreation funding, applications must be turned in by 5 p.m., Friday, May 5. Applicants will be notified by June 8th if council has accepted or denied their application. For those accepted, all legitimate receipts must be turned in for reimbursement by Tuesday, June 20.

On motion by Councilman Haynes, seconded by Councilman Donaldson, the calendar of events was approved with necessary changes.

Chairman Goodman called for public comments during this section of the meeting, but the public had no comments at this time.

During comments from council, all were thanked for their attendance, the employees were also acknowledged for their diligence and hard work and Councilman Carter thanked Administrator Preston for his hard work and noted that he is not shown appreciation enough for it. Councilman Carter also asked that the public get more involved in the County School Board meetings and let their voices be heard. There were 2 fatalities in Denmark within 7 days and Councilman Donaldson said that those matters need to be addressed in some manner. Councilman Comer stated that he is optimistic that we will get to where we need to be rather sooner than later and council will do what they can to make it happen. Chairman Goodman voiced that his heart goes out to those family members involved with the deaths in Denmark. We must continue to pray and he wished Councilwoman Hammond a speedy recovery. In times like these, we have to start trying to make Bamberg County a better place.

There being no further business for discussion, on motion by Councilman Donaldson, seconded by Councilman Haynes, the meeting was adjourned at 7:06 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rose R. Shepherd, CCC