

MINUTES OF BAMBERG COUNTY COUNCIL VIRTUAL MEETING - August 10, 2020

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 6:00 p.m., August 10, 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, Joe Guess, Jr., and Clint Carter. **Others Present:** Joey R. Preston, T.M. Thomas, Richard Ness, Alice Johnson, Gina Smith, Mary Tilton, Chip Maier, Dolton Williams, Ruthie Brown, Sidney Evering, Sue Greenberg, Sarah Noel, Gary Morris, Dionne Gleaton, Harold Shepherd, Jamecia Murray, Walt Inabinet, Jaela Tyler, William Molnar, Eva and three additional attendants.

Bamberg County Council Virtual meeting was called to order by Chairwoman Sharon Hammond at 6:00 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 Councilman Evert Comer, Jr., followed with the pledge of allegiance by Reverend Isaiah Odom.

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 Guess, seconded by Reverend Odom, council approved the minutes from the July 13, 2020 meeting. 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 Reverend Odom, seconded by Councilman Comer, 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.

On motion by Councilman Guess, seconded by Councilman Comer, council voted to approve an ordinance making Bamberg County Council Declaration of a State of Emergency in Bamberg County, South Carolina in response to the public safety and health threat of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19), effective July 13, 2020; and other matters relating thereto including implementation of measures dealing with the State of Emergency. This ordinance is valid for sixty-one days from date of being passed. 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.

Committee and Staff Reports:

Bamberg County Treasurer Alice Johnson reported the June financial report noting that the county income stood at \$628,238, with expenses coming in at \$706,132, leaving a negative balance of \$77,894. Treasurer Johnson also reported that the county's bank balance stood at a positive \$402,850 at the end of June.

Finance Director T.M. Thomas reported the general fund generated \$7,643,351 in year-to-date revenues at the end of June. Expenditures stood at \$7,629,821, leaving a positive balance of \$13,530. All departments are continuing to operate within their budgets. This report was received as information.

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Controller Gina Smith reported that the county's cash balance compared from June 2019 to June 2020 shows a positive increase of \$469,738. Ms. Smith said the county is seeking to be reimbursed by the state for expenditures made in addressing the coronavirus, including payment for personal protective equipment. At this point, we have approximately \$30,000 of expenditures that Bamberg County has expended for COVID-19 expenses. The period for reimbursement that is being sort if from March 1 to June 30, 2020. It is possible that we could be reimbursed in September. The next period that we can file for reimbursement of expenditures would be from July 1 through December 2020. When submitting overtime for reimbursement, the state will only reimburse for overtime hours used, no regular time will be eligible.

Administrator Preston reported that under the CARES Act, SCAC has asked for an estimate of what the county's expenses would be. Mr. Preston advised the council to encourage the towns and cities in their districts to apply for their own reimbursements from the state for COVID-19 expenditures. Not a single city has submitted any information to the Ways and Means Committee to be considered to be reimbursed for any money expended during COVID. They have until Saturday, August 15, to submit. Administrator Preston presented figures from the state Department of Health and Environmental Control as it related to how the virus was impacting the county. There are 479 total positive cases and 22 deaths in the county as of August 10, with Bamberg County being #1 in the state as it relates to the infection rate. The council was encouraged to inform their districts about the importance of taking the 2020 Census. So far, Bamberg County has only participated 47%. Beginning mid-August census takers will start going door-to-door. If the census takers shows up at the door, they need to answer it and answer the questions. The surveying process will end September 30, meaning that it will be cut short by one month. That will hurt small counties like Bamberg. The revenues at the landfill are down by about \$3,000 and now, Three Rivers has increased the rates for Bamberg County. Administrator Preston said that the new trash compactors have been delivered to Colston, Broxton Bridge, Hunters Chapel and Govan sites. The state has provided \$32,800 in DHEC grant funding for the county's recycling programs to include a \$20,000 solid waste reduction and recycling grant. Also received was a \$3,050 used oil recycling grant and a \$9,750 waste tire recycling grant. All of the Broadband plans are in and we should know something very soon.

On motion by Councilman Odom, seconded by Councilman Haynes, council approved second reading of an ordinance making permanent certain measures taken in response to a Bamberg County Council declaration of a state of emergency in Bamberg County, South Carolina in response to the public safety and health threat of the novel coronavirus ("COVIC-19"), and implementing certain other measures to enable more effective means of delivering government service to the citizens of Bamberg County, including, without limitation, the permanent authorization of the conduct of public meetings in Bamberg County by electronic means; and other matters relating thereto. 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 no discussion.

On motion by Councilman Carter, seconded by Reverend Odom, council gave second reading to an ordinance authorizing the execution and delivery of a fee agreement by and between Bamberg County, South Carolina and Project Joker providing for a payment of a fee in lieu of taxes and other matters related thereto. 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 – Dist. 7 and Chairwoman Hammond – Dist. 2. The state will be announcing this project on tomorrow, Tuesday, August 11, 2020.

On motion by Reverend Odom, seconded by Councilman Guess, council gave second reading to and ordinance to amend the amended and restated master agreement for the establishment of the Quad-County Industrial Park between Bamberg, Barnwell, Allendale and Hampton counties to include additional property in Bamberg County. Those voting in favor of the motion were: Councilmen Kinard – Dist. 1; Haynes –

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Dist. 3; Guess – Dist. 4; Odom – Dist. 5; Comer – Dist. 6 and Carter – Dist. 7 and Chairwoman Hammond – Dist. 2.

On motion by Reverend Odom, seconded by Councilman Haynes, the calendar of events was approved 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; Carter – Dist. 7 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 no later than Monday, August 10, 2020 at 3:00 p.m. No comments were received.

At this time, Chairwoman Hammond asked for comments from the council. Comments and gratitude were echoed regarding the hard work from Administrator Preston, Assistant Administrator Thomas, Controller Smith and the other employees.

There being no further business for discussion, on motion by Reverend Odom, seconded by Councilman Guess, council adjourned at 7:14 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rose R. Shepherd, CCC