

MINUTES OF BAMBERG COUNTY COUNCIL VIRTUAL MEETING - February 1, 2021

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*, 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., February 1, 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, Jonathan Goodman, Phil Myers, Jr., and Clint Carter. **Others Present:** Joey R. Preston, T.M. Thomas, Richard Ness, Alice Johnson, Gina Smith, Mary Tilton, Chip Maier, Dolton Williams, Dionne Gleaton, Paul Eubanks, Melinda Johnson, Kay Maxwell, Walt Inabinet, Bill Johnson, Bill Molnar, Jaela Tyler, Ruthie Brown, Richard, Clarence Bonnette, A. Clifton Myles, Jamecia Murray, Harriet Coker, Sue Weiler Greenberg, Lamar White, Clayton Sandifer, Tia Wright-Richards, Karen O'Byrne, Nina Haynes, Mayert, Kerry Kinard, Sarah G. Noel, and five 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 Clint Carter, followed with the pledge of allegiance by Councilwoman Sharon Hammond.

On motion by Councilman Comer, seconded by Councilwoman Hammonds, council approved the minutes from the January 11, 2021 meeting.

On motion by Councilwoman Hammond, seconded by Councilman Comer, council approved the agenda as submitted.

Dr. Willie L. Todd, Jr., President of Denmark Technical College gave an update on the college. The campus has recently experienced numerous renovations and one major item was the installation of ramps to various buildings, therefore, making the campus accommodating with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Denmark Technical College has taken on partnership with the SCA start ManuFirst certification training for 100 community members by trying to provide job possibilities, meet the requirements and needs for the manufacturing plants and their offering chances for public job opportunities. The enrollment has increased and they are continuing to work on it. There are 40 students enrolled in the Nursing Program and DTC is expecting to increase their courses for other enrollment. Dr. Todd continued by reporting that they had a clean audit for last fiscal year. They are looking at enhancing the entrance into the school from U.S. Highway 78, further study will be done toward that venture. The Council thanked Dr. Todd for enlightening them on their projects and progress.

A power point presentation of SouthernCarolina Alliance's quarterly report was given by SouthernCarolina Alliance Vice President of Marketing Kay Maxwell. Presently, Bamberg County is among the seven counties they serve. SCA announced they had made 13 industrial announcement in 2020 for a total capital investment of \$369,440,000 and 1,938 jobs. Ms. Maxwell said, "One of the good thing about being in the SCA is the shared tax revenue. Bamberg County always gets 10 percent of the tax revenue from any project that is landed in any of the other six counties". There are currently 60 active projects in the SCA's pipeline. She continued by reporting that SCA has a partnership with Savannah River Nuclear Solutions and the South Carolina Technical College System to create 300 new registered apprenticeship opportunities in the seven county area beginning this year. This report was accepted as information.

Public Hearing was given to ordinance #6-21-12, to reduce the assessment ration applicable to general aviation aircraft subject to Bamberg County property tax to a four percent (4%) rate based on the fair market

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value of the aircraft; and other matters related thereto. Chairman Haynes called for comments, no public comments were made.

Public Hearing was given to ordinance #6-21-13, to authorize the leasing of certain Bamberg County Airport space and facilities; the granting of certain privileges to limited fixed-based operators; the sale of aviation fuel at bulk rates; and other matters related thereto. No public comments were made.

Committee and Staff Reports;

Bamberg County Treasurer Alice Johnson reported the December financial report noting that the county's income stood at \$835,317. Expenses came in at \$953,674, leaving a negative balance of \$118,357. Combined with a negative balance at the end of November of \$690,752, the total deficit stood at \$809,109. This report was received as information.

Finance Director T.M. Thomas reported the general fund generated \$3,614,662 at the end of December. Expenditures stood at \$3,740,053, leaving a negative balance of \$125,391. All departments are continuing to operate within their budgets. This report was received as information.

Administrator Preston reported on the COVID-19 death total in Bamberg County as being 44 as of February. Appointments for Phase 1A of the vaccine for COVID-19 can be made 9:30 a.m. until 4:30 p.m., Mondays and Fridays at Dr. McAlhane's office. Vaccines can also be received at Denmark Family Practice between 2:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. Information can be obtained from SCDHEC at (803) 866-1810. The C-Fund Committee will meet in February and will announce a list of county road projects to be completed. Also, Lower Savannah COG will host a public hearing on a needs assessment for the county on February 8, at 6 p.m. This is necessary for them to be able to apply for Community Development Block Grant funding. The hearing will be conducted via teleconference, with individuals requested to dial in at 1-480-297-0773 and enter the access code 820 5139, followed by the pound sign, to participate. Dedication for the new Rivers Bridge Fire Station will be held at 1 p.m. Wednesday, February 10. This will give the homeowners in that area a more economical insurance rate. The next fire substation is looking to be in the Holman's Bridge area. The Council received this report as information.

On motion by Councilman Comer, seconded by Councilwoman Hammond, council approved on third reading, Ordinance #6-21-12, to reduce the assessment ration applicable to general aviation aircraft subject to Bamberg County property tax to a 4% rate based on the fair market value of the aircraft; and other matters related thereto.

On motion by Councilman Comer, seconded by Councilwoman Hammond, council approved on second reading, Ordinance #6-21-13, to authorize the leasing of certain Bamberg County Airport space and facilities, the granting of certain privileges to limited fixed-base operators; the sale of aviation fuel at bulk rates; and other matters related thereto.

The calendar of events was reviewed and approved as submitted.

On motion by Councilwoman Hammond, seconded by Councilman Carter the following Bamberg County 2021 Standing Committees were approved as follows: Administrative/Finance: Larry Haynes, chairman; Sharon Hammond; Spencer Donaldson. Personnel/Education, Recreation, Health & Welfare/Intergovernmental Relations: Sharon Hammond, chairman; Evert Comer, Jr.; Larry Haynes. Public Service/County Planning: Evert Comer, Jr., chairman; Phil Myers; Dr. Jonathan Goodman, II.

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Justice and Public Safety: Clint Carter, chairman; Phil Myers; Spencer Donaldson. Solid Waste/Recycling: Larry Haynes, chairman; Clint Carter; Dr. Jonathan Goodman.

On motion by Councilwoman Hammond, seconded by Councilman Myers, council approved the appointment of Mr. Marvin Dueck to the Lower Savannah Council of Governments Board as a District 7 representative.

Appointments need to be made to the Bamberg County Planning Commission, information will be sent to council for appointment consideration.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, two written public comments were received at this time. Administrator Preston read the comments from Bamberg County residents Sue Clayton and Ken Ahlin. Mr. Ahlin was concerned about high property taxes and to please consider resolving this issue for the betterment of the county and citizens. Ms. Clayton had concerns regarding the administrator's contract and also asked the new members of council to put the needs of the county first in all of their actions. Anyone with concerns had the opportunity to email to info@bambergcounty.sc.gov no later than Monday, February 1, 2021 at 12:00 noon.

At this time, Chairman Haynes asked for comments from the council. Council thanked all the employees for what they do and all hoped for a better year.

There being no further business for discussion, on motion by Councilman Comer, seconded by Councilman Carter, the meeting was adjourned at 7:54 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rose R. Shepherd, CCC