

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*, 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.

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Bamberg County Council met 6:30 p.m., February 3, 2020 in the chamber of the Bamberg County Courthouse Annex. **Present:** Chairwoman Sharon Hammond, Reverend Isaiah Odom, Councilmen Kerry Trent Kinard, Evert Comer, Jr., Joe Guess, Jr., Larry Haynes and Clint Carter. **Others Present:** Joey R. Preston, T.M. Thomas, Richard Ness, Gail Ellis, Matthew Hinckle, Charles Williams, Emory Langston, Dolton Williams, Al Jenkins, Willie Todd, Carrie McMillan, Clarence McMillan, Ruthie Brown, Dionne Gleaton, Missy Quattlebaum, Donald Kirby, Miriam Beard, Jeanette Driggers, Eva Manigault, Jannie Johnson, Clifton Miles, Juanita Murdock, Phil Clarke, Booker Patrick, Jerry Bell, Martha Hammett, Candice Fralix, Dean Fralix, Ken Ahlin, Danny Singleton, John Gleaton, Betty Singleton and approximately 10 additional people.

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Bamberg County Council meeting was called to order by Chairwoman Sharon Hammond at 6:30 p.m., in the Chamber of the Bamberg County Courthouse Annex. Invocation was rendered by Councilman Evert Comer, Jr., followed with the pledge of allegiance by Councilman Larry Haynes.

On motion by Councilman Kinard, seconded by Councilman Haynes, council approved the minutes from the January 6, 2020 meeting with future corrections should there be any.

On motion by Councilman Kinard, seconded by Reverend Odom, council approved the agenda as submitted.

Updating the members of Council on the Bamberg-Barnwell Emergency Medical Center was Regional Medical Center President and CEO Charles Williams. Mr. Williams stated that the patient volume has been higher than expected but overall everything has been a success. The Regional Medical Center projected the BBEM Center would experience 6,034 visits from April 2019 to September 2019. Over that period of time 7,691 patients were seen. From October 2019 to November 2019, the center had 3,019 patients, 707 more than was budgeted. The patients seen at the Center, approximately 61 percent are on Medicaid or Medicare. RMC will be considering ways to cover operational costs, due to repayment of the Medicare percentage begin about 85 to 87 percent on the dollar and Medicaid is somewhat lower. The government does not pay medical facilities dollar for dollar for patient services only a percentage. Even there was a loss at the center, not nearly as much as anticipated, Mr. Williams mentioned outsourcing of staff prevented the hospital from having to use contract staff and it has saved them money because contract employees are more expensive for the hospital than its regular employees. RMC has been discussing more outsourcing and trying to do things a little different than traditionally and want things to be a workable solution for the community. Also, Administrator Preston along with the council, presented Mr. Williams and Vice President for Operations Matthew Hinckle with a framed award from the National Association of Counties, recognizing the RMC as a NACo 2019 Achievement Award winner for its work in the development of the newly constructed freestanding Emergency Medical Center in Denmark. Administrator Preston said RMC was cited as helping build, "a regional solution to a health care desert".

Dr. Willie Todd, Jr., President of Denmark Technical College was present to give an update of the college. Dr. Todd said the college is working to increase enrollment of students. They are re-engaging with organizations in the community that they have worked with that were very successful for the

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college. Also, they recently signed a memorandum of understanding with Bamberg Job Corps Center. The fact was stated that poverty has no color and it is Dr. Todd's hope that all of the citizens in their service area will realize the benefit that Denmark Technical College can provide for them. The DTC employees started a fundraising drive and have raised over \$20,000. Presently, the college is on probation with Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS), and the administration is working on progressing past its governance and financial issues. Dr. Todd announced the college has opened the Highway 78 entrance and has completed some building repairs to improve the appeal of the campus. All academic programs and other areas that are not generating revenue are being evaluated in order to see how a more fiscally sound college DTC can be. The community will be invited to be involved in focus groups as DTC devise a strategic plan. The Council gave positive comments toward the enthusiastic presentation shared by Dr. Todd.

Captain Phil Clarke of MedShore Ambulance Services reported that a meeting was held January 23, 2020 with Bamberg County Fire Department Chiefs. During the month of January 275 calls were received with 208 being transported to various medical facilities. An Emergency Medical Responder class is scheduled to begin February 18, at the Govan Fire Department. All of the county's fire departments can attend free of charge. MedShore is expecting to purchase a third ambulance in March. There will be an ambulance stationed in Ehrhardt, but it will not be on the premises 24 hours a day and it won't be there everyday. Capt. Clarke said he would like to reach out to Denmark Technical College regarding their EMT program and there is an instructor that he knows is interested in teaching.

Ms. Emory Langston, planning, community and economic development administrator for Lower Savannah Council of Governments, gave a presentation on the federal Community Development Block Grant program that LSCOG governs. Surveys to determine the county's priorities (needs) are being conducted. LSCOG will be conducting a public hearing on Wednesday, February 12<sup>th</sup>, in the county council chambers at 5:00 p.m. Also, a follow up public hearing will be held on Thursday, February 27<sup>th</sup>, at 5:00 p.m. at the same location. Surveys are available online at [www.lscog.org](http://www.lscog.org) or at the Bamberg County Administrator's office.

Mr. Dolton Williams, project manager for the SouthernCarolina Alliance, updated the county that there are 13 active projects, including one that could bring a \$10 million investment and 100 jobs.

Bamberg County Chamber of Commerce Director Jerry Bell gave an update on the upcoming events for Bamberg County. Flyer were available for those present. Mr. Bell encouraged the public to support sponsored events throughout Bamberg County.

Bamberg County Treasurer Alice Johnson's report was omitted due to her being ill and not able to be in attendance.

Finance Director T.M. Thomas reported the general fund generated \$3,542,076 in year-to-date revenues at the end of October. Expenditures stood at \$3,459,845, leaving a positive balance of \$82,231. All departments are continuing to operate within their budgets.

Administrator Preston reported on the following: **1)** C-Fund Committee is scheduled to meet on Wednesday, February 5 at 6:30 p.m., in the council chambers; **2)** SCDMV will be in the annex from 10 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. to issue Real Ids to the public; **3)** Certificate has been issued from Senators Lindsey Graham and Tim Scott and construction to begin within 60 days on the downtown property; **4)** Passed a resolution for the formation of the Correct Count Committee for the Census – names are needed from council; **5)** Received a grant from Palmetto Pride – to date we have received \$80,000; **6)** Broadband meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, February 25<sup>th</sup> with Robert Thomas; **7)** Denmark

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Technical College is being considered for the Bamberg County 2020 Retreat; and 8) Special thanks to Sen. Graham and Sen. Scott for their assistance toward getting the downtown property cleaned up. Also a special shout out to Attorney Richard Ness and his staff for their work. The Council accepted this report as information.

### **REPORTS FROM COUNTY COUNCIL**

- 1) SCA (Haynes, Comer & Odom) - Retreat to be held later this month in Hilton Head Island.
- 2) LSCOG - Meeting scheduled for next Thursday.
- 3) Lower Savannah COG (TAC) - No meeting.
- 4) LSCOG Housing Consortium - Met in Orangeburg Jan. 29. Funding has been cut for housing.

On motion by Councilman Kinard, seconded by Councilman Haynes, council approved proposed resolution H-20-4, authorizing Bamberg County continued renewal membership with the Lower Savannah Regional Housing Consortium as agreed through 2021. This is a standard procedure that is approved yearly.

On motion by Reverend Odom, seconded by Councilman Haynes, council approved proposed resolution B-20-5, recognizing and honoring February 2020 as Black History Month.

On motion by Reverend Odom, seconded by Councilman Haynes, council approved the calendar of events after adding a public hearing for LCOG scheduled for Wednesday, February 12<sup>th</sup> to be located in the council chambers.

On motion by Councilman Carter, seconded by Councilman Guess, council approved and accepted the appointment of the Bamberg County Council 2020 Standing Committees. The committees are as follows: **Administrative/Finance**: Sharon Hammond, chairperson; Larry Haynes, Clint Carter. **Personnel/Education, Recreation, Health & Welfare/Intergovernmental Relations**: ; Clint Carter, chairman; Sharon Hammond, Larry Haynes. **Public Service/County Planning**: Joe Guess, Jr., chairman; Evert Comer, Jr., Rev. Isaiah Odom. **Justice and Public Safety**: Evert Comer, Jr., chairman; Trent Kinard, Joe Guess, Jr. **Solid Waste/Recycling**: Trent Kinard, chairman; Larry Haynes, Rev. Isaiah Odom.

On motion by Councilman Comer, seconded by Councilman Haynes, council approved re-appointment of Rev. Odom to the SouthernCarolina Alliance Board as a representative from Bamberg County.

At this time, Chairwoman Hammond recognized the public that had signed up prior the beginning of the meeting to make public comments. The following six citizens made comments: John Gleaton (requesting information on who is John Perry and Shane Bruce); Jeanette Driggers (microphones turned down too low and the condition of Spring Branch Road); Ken Ahlin (possibility of placing public hearings on the website); Judy Sandifer (her car was stolen out of her yard on January 10); Gail Ellis (letter received from Administrator Preston); and Dean Fralix (two persons making \$80,000). Brad Hudson did not sign up at the beginning of the meeting, but was allowed to speak (paid 25% deposit on FOIA information and have not received it). All statements and concerns were taken under consideration.

Chairwoman Hammond called for comments from the Council and the news media. All were thanked for attending the meeting and voicing their concerns

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There being no further business for discussion, on motion by Councilman Guess, seconded by Councilman Haynes, council adjourned at 9:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rose R. Shepherd, CCC