

MINUTES OF BAMBERG COUNTY COUNCIL VIRTUAL MEETING - March 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., March 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, 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, Walter Fralix, Karen O'Byrne, M.M. Tyler, Sarah G. Noel, William Molnar, Miriam Beard, Dolton Williams, Dionne Gleaton, Ruthie Brown, Bill Johnson, Harold Shepherd, Melinda Tyler, Sue Weiler Greenberg, Blake, Corb, Brandi Napier, Walt Inabinet, 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 Clint Carter, followed with the pledge of allegiance by Councilwoman Sharon Hammond.

On motion by Councilwoman Hammond, seconded by Councilman Myers, council approved the minutes from the February 1, 2021 meeting.

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

Committee and Staff Reports;

Bamberg County Treasurer Alice Johnson reported the January financial report, noting that the county's income stood at \$3,036,768.08. Expenses came in at \$924,456.43, leaving a positive \$2,112,311.65. Joined with a negative bank balance at the end of December, the total positive balance stood at \$1,303,202.15. This report was received by council as information.

Finance Director T.M. Thomas reported the county's general fund generated \$6,108,871 at the end of January. Expenditures stood at \$4,518,440, leaving a positive general fund balance of \$1,590,431. 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 death total in Bamberg County as being 48 since March 2020. This total is up by 4 since February 2021. Thanks to Administrator Preston, Bamberg County received 1,000 home COVID-19 testing kits through DHEC and the kits will be distributed to county residents at no cost. Administrator Preston inquired through DHEC about the kits and was successful in obtaining them for the citizens. Each kit cost approximately \$116 apiece and Bamberg County is the second county in the state to receive the kits at no cost to the County. The Council on Aging will be provided kits for their participants. Each household will be provided up to two kits per family. The fire departments will be assisting in the distribution of the kits. Administrator Preston provided information on where and when COVID-19 vaccines are being dispensed. Vaccines can still be received at the Family Health Center in Denmark, CVS Pharmacy in Denmark and Bamberg Family Practice in Bamberg. Mr. Preston presented the following list of county roads that the C-Fund Committee met and approved for service in February: School Drive, Hammond Street, College Street, Cave Avenue, Double K Road, Pentecostal Street and

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Lancaster Street. The C-Fund Committee will be meeting toward the end of this month (March). Also, the engineers will be preparing a list of county roads to be recommended for paving or rocking for consideration at the next C-Fund Committee's meeting. Questions were asked about an incident that occurred after an emergency call from a county resident to the Bamberg County Dispatch Center, requesting dispatching of ambulance service. After learning of the response time taken to reach the address of the resident, several members of Council made comments relative to the matter that had recently taken place. Later in the discussion, it was agreed that the Bamberg County Justice and Public Safety Committee meet promptly with Medshore officials regarding emergency concerns for Bamberg County. This report was accepted as information.

On motion by Councilman Myers, seconded by Councilwoman Hammond, council approved on first reading, in title only, 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.

On motion by Councilman Carter, seconded by Councilman Comer, council approved a proclamation designating April 30, 2021, Dr. Willie L. Todd, Jr. Day in Bamberg County, South Carolina. Dr. Todd is the ninth president of Denmark Technical College and was recently named the 2021 Shining Star by the South Carolina Commission for Minority Affairs for his commitment to revitalizing and restoring the legacy of the college.

On motion by Councilman Comer, seconded by Councilwoman Hammond, the calendar of events was approved as submitted.

On motion by Councilman Carter, seconded by Councilwoman Hammond, at the recommendation of Councilman Myers, council approved the appointment of Ms. Runelle Weeks as a representative from Council District 1, to serve on the Bamberg County Planning Commission. Councilman Carter from District 7 notified council that his appointee Mr. William Hiers, will remain on the commission until a replacement is named. Councilman Comer requested a copy of the ordinance establishing the commission and will appoint a representative as soon as possible.

At this time, Chairman Haynes called for comments from the public. Administrator Preston read emailed comments from the following residents: Ken Ahlin, Miriam Beard, Sue Clayton and Sue Greenberg. Some of the concerns were: (1) Ken Ahlin – tax rates, transparency and in-person meetings; 2) Miriam Beard – airport concerns, loans and county roads; 3) Sue Clayton – no face-to-face contact, administrator's contract, not listening to citizens and the AT&T contract. These comments were taken as information.

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.

There being no further business for discussion, on motion by Councilwoman Hammond, seconded by Councilman Carter, the meeting was adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rose R. Shepherd, CCC