

MINUTES OF BAMBERG COUNTY COUNCIL VIRTUAL MEETING - November 2, 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., November 2, 2020 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:** Chairwoman Sharon Hammond, Reverend Isaiah Odom, Councilmen Evert Comer, Jr., Larry Haynes, Joe Guess, Jr., and Clint Carter.

Absent: Councilman Trent Kinard. **Others Present:** Joey R. Preston, T.M. Thomas, Richard Ness, Alice Johnson, Gina Smith, Mary Tilton, Chip Maier, Dolton Williams, Ruthie Brown, David Miller, Tami Reed, Michelle Lindenburg, Bakari Sellers, Anthony Harley, David Smith, Sue Greenberg, Walt Inabinet, William Molnar, Kevin Sandifer, Glenda Lebby, Bill Johnson, Jamie Dyches, Dionne Gleaton, Todd Schatzman, Paul Eubanks, Phil Myers, Sarah Noel, 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 and that we pray for the President of the United States. Invocation was rendered by Councilman Evert Comer, Jr., followed with the pledge of allegiance by Reverend Isaiah Odom.

On motion by Councilman Comer, seconded by Reverend Odom, council approved the minutes from the October 5, 2020 meeting. Those voting in favor of the motion were: Councilmen Haynes – Dist. 3; Guess – Dist. 4; Odom – Dist. 5; Comer – Dist. 6; Carter – Dist. 7 and Chairwoman Hammond – Dist. 2.

On motion by Councilman Comer, seconded by Reverend Odom, council approved the agenda as submitted. Those voting in favor of the motion were: Councilmen Haynes – Dist. 3; Guess – Dist. 4; Odom – Dist. 5; Comer – Dist. 6; Carter – Dist. 7 and Chairwoman Hammond – Dist. 2.

Captain Phil Clarke, Ambulance Operations Manager for MedShore reported on the service's performance since inception. MedShore has answered to a total of 2,977 calls since being on board with Bamberg County. An average of 12.2 minutes per call, with their time on task being approximately 59 minutes. Captain Clarke noted that they are still working with Denmark Technical College as it relates to the EMT program. The first responder course is on hold due to the COVID-19 pandemic and will remain that way until it is safer to continue. The ambulance service received free equipment through a grant that the Medical University of South Carolina obtained. Cameras are being placed in the back of all of their ambulances so that when they have to transport a stroke patient, they will be able to contact the Regional Medical Center, then RMC will be able to join in with MUSC to determine the best place for the patient to be transported. Chairwoman Hammond asked that MedShore make certain that all of the dispatchers in Bamberg County have access to MedShore's Automatic Vehicle Locator system. Captain Clarke said that they are still working through that, and their goal is to give the dispatchers access to know where the trucks are all the time. The members of council accepted this report as information.

Project Manager Dolton Williams of SouthernCarolina Alliance, gave an update of recent projects that have been created within the region. Rockland Industries is still maintaining 35 to 40 employees. Blackwater Barrels have potential investors that have made contact with them. Boeing Aircraft is charted to be coming to Charleston soon. The most recent project that will be added to the Multi-County Industrial Parks (MCIP) is Project Clean – Brunson Laundry and will be located in Hampton County, South Carolina. They are scheduled to re-open January 2021 and will retain 42 jobs. Bamberg County will receive 10% of property tax revenues as part of the MCIP agreement. This report was received as information.

Committee and Staff Reports;

Bamberg County Treasurer Alice Johnson reported the September financial report noting that the county income stood at \$282,987, with expenses coming in at \$645,597, leaving a negative balance of \$362,610. However, when the county's negative bank balance of \$414,806.08 as of August, the total negative balance totaled \$777,417.05 as of September 30, 2020. After entertaining several question, this report was received as information.

Finance Director T.M. Thomas reported the general fund generated \$1,267.042, in year-to-date revenues at the end of September. Expenditures stood at \$1,623,983, leaving a negative balance of \$356,941. All departments are continuing to operate within their budgets. Revenues are expected to increase since the real estate tax notices were mailed out in October. This report was received as information.

Controller Gina Smith reported that other county funds that owed the general fund money, and that the county's cash balance from September 2020 as compared to September 2019 actually shows an increase of \$332,759 in spite of the county's regular account shortfall balance. The independent auditors will soon begin conducting the audit for the county and Controller Smith said that it is her goal to get the county books to them by Thanksgiving. The County received on October 25, a portion of a COVID reimbursement check for \$3,122. More is expected to come forth. Also reported, the deadline for Phase 2 for the second round of CARES Act is November 15, 2020. Presently, we have over \$141,000 in COVID expenditures.

Administrator Preston reported that cases for COVID-19 are steadily rising. Currently, the county has a total of 693 positive cases as of November 1, and 34 related deaths to date. Another item reported on was the new Rivers Bridge fire station, and hopefully it will be able to have a ribbon cutting in January. The county has partnered with the Olar Fire Department to set up classes for potential firefighters. Thus far, 13 volunteers have signed up for 113 hours of training. Progress is being made for plans for the law enforcement and health and human services complex. Pre-qualification for general contractors to participate in the bidding is scheduled for November 17. After that process, specs will be published. As things continue to progress a tour of the facility will be arranged. Administrator Preston stated that he is communicating with state officials, with DSS and the Health and Human Services Department to see if they can be brought to the table so that they can possibly provide some sort of funding to go towards their portion of the project. Everyone was invited to attend the Veterans Memorial dedication that is scheduled for Wednesday, November 11, 2020 at 11a.m. Highlights were given as to what will transpire during the dedication. Plans are in being developed in order to schedule a zoom meeting soon, with the C-Fund Committee. Administrator Preston announced Controller Gina Smith's appointment to the NACo Finance Committee. The Council accepted the Administrator's report as information.

On motion by Councilman Guess, seconded by Reverend Odom and Councilman Haynes, council approved a resolution to amend the amended and restated master agreement for the establishment of the Quad-County Industrial Park I, Park II, and Park III dated as of May 6, 2013 by and among Allendale County, South Carolina, Bamberg County, South Carolina, Barnwell County, South Carolina, and Hampton County, South Carolina, providing for the development of certain multi-county industrial parks, so as to include additional property in that portion of the parks geographically located in Hampton County, South Carolina, and other matters related thereto. Councilmen Haynes – Dist. 3; Guess – Dist. 4; Odom – Dist. 5; Carter – Dist. 7 and Chairwoman Hammond – Dist. 2. Councilman Comer – Dist. 6 was absent during the vote.

On motion by Councilman Haynes, seconded by Councilman Guess, the calendar of events was approved as submitted. Those voting in favor of the motion were: Councilmen Haynes - Dist. 3; Guess – Dist. 4; Odom – Dist. 5; and Chairwoman Hammond – Dist. 2. Councilmen Comer – Dist. 6; and Carter – Dist. 7 were absent during the vote.

November 2, 2020.....continued

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, no public comments were received at this time. Anyone with concerns had the opportunity to email to info@bambergcounty.sc.gov no later than Monday, November 2, 2020 at 12:00 p.m. One written comment was submitted for public comments during this appointed time. 1) Bamberg resident Richard Ness, submitted positive comments toward the county's development of the new veteran's memorial. Mentioning the many people from out of state and from the Charleston area stopping to view the memorial.

At this time, Chairwoman Hammond asked for comments from the council. All were encouraged to vote on Tuesday, November 3rd.

There being no further business for discussion, on motion by Councilman Guess, seconded by Reverend Odom, council adjourned at 7:38 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rose R. Shepherd, CCC