

In compliance with the Freedom of Information Act, agendas for the following meeting were delivered to all members of Council, County Attorney Richard Ness, Lower Savannah COG, The Bamberg Leader, The Times and Democrat, Southern Carolina Regional Alliance, Bamberg County Library, Bamberg County Website and Bamberg County Courthouse Annex.

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, Bamberg County Council met 6:00 p.m., September 9, 2024 in Council Chambers with limited seating for the public alongside live streaming of the meeting provided for public view. **Present:** Chairman Evert Comer, Jr., Councilwoman Sharon Hammond, Councilmen Clint Carter, Larry Haynes, Phil Myers and Dr. Jonathan Goodman, II. **Absent:** Councilman Spencer Donaldson. **Others Present:** Joey R. Preston, T.M. Thomas, Richard Ness, Gina Smith, Alice Johnson, Chip Maier, Alisha Moore, Kenneth Bamberg, Ken Ahlin, Dr. William Molnar, Corey Ramsey, Lessie Meeks, Marilyn Meeks Haynes, Josh Urwick and two additional visitors.

Bamberg County Council meeting was called to order by Chairman Evert Comer, Jr., at 6:00 p.m. Invocation was rendered by Councilman Phil Myers, followed with the pledge of allegiance led by Councilman Clint Carter.

On motion by Councilman Carter, seconded by Councilwoman Hammond, the minutes from the September 9, 2024 meeting were approved with necessary corrections should there be any.

On motion by Councilwoman Hammond, seconded by Councilman Haynes, council approved the agenda as presented.

COMMITTEE AND STAFF REPORTS:

Southern Carolina Development Alliance - Monthly Report

Project Director Joshua Urwick reported that SCA had two site visits in Bamberg County since the last council meeting. Mr. Urwick stated that the Barrel Company has started meeting with contractors and expect to provide favorable results from the meetings. Council thanked Mr. Urwick for his report.

Bamberg County Treasurer – Monthly Report

County Treasurer Alice Johnson gave the July financial report, stating they had \$477,599.36 in income and expenditures of \$1,008,640.75, leaving a negative balance of -\$86,480.74. This report was accepted as information.

Bamberg County Finance – Monthly Report

Finance Director T.M. Thomas reported the general fund had year-to-date revenues of \$968,979 as of the end of September. Expenditures stood at \$656,780, for a positive general fund balance of \$312,199. This report was received as information.

Bamberg County Administrator – Monthly Report

Administrator Preston reported on some issues that impacted Bamberg County as a result of Hurricane Helene. Due to the Sheriff's Department and other county departments being unable to obtain fuel for their vehicles, Administrator Preston was notified of the misfortune and he made calls to get the issue resolved. Three-hundred roads were inspected and cleared. Crews are working diligently to improve road conditions following cleanup and repair of the majority of damaged roadways. Sweet Pea and Half Moon roads are still closed and some engineering assistance will be needed for those roadways.

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There are 19 damage reports in Bamberg, 13 in Denmark, one in Olar and two in Ehrhardt. Individuals can call 803-245-3013 to report damage in Bamberg County. Damage can also be reported through SCEMD's Crisis Track system, which can be accessed through the county website at www.bambergcountysc.gov. Thanks was given to SCDOT and the dispatching of gas that was delivered to Bamberg County from Louisiana. During Helene, MUSC Health Bamberg-Barnwell Emergency & Imaging Center had to shut down because of a lack of water pressure. The renovation of the county's water tank will help, but won't solve the problem. Multiple questions were asked regarding the water line connection between Bamberg and Denmark. On October 4, 2024 FEMA will be located in the lobby of the Courthouse Annex from 10 a.m. until 4 p.m., to assist residents by answering their questions regarding individual assistance programs. The county is working to put a new roof on the county's Kearsce Building and is set to bid out the construction of the Little Swamp Community Center as well. A meeting has been scheduled with the Department of Revenue at 1 p.m. on October 15th, in Council Chambers. Also, a C-Fund Committee meeting is scheduled for 6 p.m. on Wednesday, November 6th, in Council Chambers. Council thanked Administrator Preston for the update issues of the county.

On motion by Dr. Goodman, II, seconded by Councilman Haynes, council approved the calendar of events as submitted.

Chairman Comer called for public comments. 1) Ken Ahlin – Bamberg resident, asked several questions, one being transparency of council – operating budget is not posted on the county website. Why is Bamberg Facilities Corporation separate from the general fund and operating budget? Mr. Ahlin spoke against the three-minute limit on public comments. He also mentioned that the people are saying they cannot hear clearly during the live streaming of the meetings. These issues will be looked into. 2) Lessie Meeks and Marilyn Meeks Haynes – residents of Carlisle Street in Bamberg, discussed their concerns about extreme flooding when it rains and the problem with bad potholes. They stated that it is one way in to their homes and one way out and also when it rains they have to stay at home because the road floods out and the ditch runs over. Ms. Meeks said she has lived on Carlisle Street for 42 years and Ms. Haynes has lived there for 20 plus years. Chairman Comer asked Councilman Haynes to check on their road situation and to report back on the condition.

At this time, Chairman Comer asked for comments from council. Condolences were given to Councilwoman Hammond in memory of her mother. All were asked to support Breast Cancer Awareness and remember Domestic Violence Month during the month of October. The public received thanks for being in attendance and all employees were thanked for their hard work.

There being no further business for discussion Chairman Comer asked Councilman Carter for a closing prayer. On motion by Councilwoman Hammond, seconded by Councilman Haynes, the meeting was adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rose R. Shepherd, CCC

