

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., September 13, 2021 in Council Chambers with limited seating for the public alongside live streaming of the meeting provided for public view. **Present:** Chairman Larry Haynes, Councilwoman Sharon Hammond, Councilmen Evert Comer, Jr., Spencer Donaldson, Phil Myers, Jr., Clint Carter and Dr. Jonathan Goodman, II. **Others Present:** Joey R. Preston, T.M. Thomas, Richard Ness, Alice Johnson, Gina Smith, Chip Maier, Tiffany Kemmerlin, Curtis Tyler, Jr., Athena Moorer, Sue Clayton, Laura McKenzie, Kenneth Bamberg, Jessica Collins, Garrett Dragano, Roger Hughes, Yvette McDaniel, Ashley Jordan and several additional attendees.

Bamberg County Council meeting was called to order by Chairman Larry Haynes at 6:00 p.m. Invocation was rendered by Councilman Spencer Donaldson, followed with the pledge of allegiance repeated in unison.

On motion by Councilman Myers, seconded by Councilman Donaldson, the council approved the minutes from the August 9, 2021 meeting with necessary corrections should there be any.

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

Chairman Curtis Tyler, Jr. of the Bamberg County Voter Registration and Elections Commission, introduced Athena Moorer as the new director. Mr. Tyler spoke highly of Ms. Moorer's character. Ms. Moorer addressed the council by saying that the mission of the South Carolina boards of voter registration and elections is to ensure that every eligible voter is allowed to register to vote and vote in fair and impartial elections and went on to state that her job is to make sure that they have the assurance that their vote is counted. Ms. Moorer was welcomed to Bamberg County by the Council.

Laura J. McKenzie, the SouthernCarolina Alliance Be Bamberg Coordinator, was present to ask the support and participation of Bamberg County toward an upcoming county-wide campaign for cleaning up throughout the County. Be Bamberg is sponsoring the project in order to encourage and endorse pride, progress and unity in Bamberg County. The event is scheduled for Saturday, October 23, 2021 from 8 a.m. to 12 noon. Volunteers are very much needed such as individuals, community teams, churches, families, school groups and civic groups. Ms. McKenzie further stated that all participants will receive free clean-up supplies, free t-shirts and free water. Persons can preregister their teams, select a cleanup site and get supplies for the event by calling Ms. McKenzie at (803) 943-6587. Flyers of the event were distributed to the Council and the public in attendance. Ms. McKenzie asked each member of council if they would please solicit the cleanup within their districts because this is a county-wide effort. After the presentation to the council, Ms. McKenzie was acknowledged for her attendance and willingness to serve in the capacity of helping with a clean-up for Bamberg County.

COMMITTEE AND STAFF REPRORTS:

SouthernCarolina Alliance - Monthly Report

SouthernCarolina Alliance Project Manager Garrett Dragano stated that he did not have a report for this evening's meeting, an update was reported and given at the September 13, 2021 meeting. There are projects still in the making, but are not ready for additional information to be publicly proclaimed.

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Bamberg County Treasurer - Monthly Report

Bamberg County Treasurer Alice Johnson reported for the month of July. The county had \$228,274.62 in income and the expenditures were \$1,035,852.28, leaving a negative balance of \$807,577.66. After adding the positive bank balance at the end of June 616,695.38 the county's regular account stood at a negative \$190,882.28. Treasurer Johnson said the expenses were high because the county had three payrolls in July. She further pointed out that the funds would probably be stronger when real estate taxes start to be collected. This report was received as information.

Bamberg County Finance - Monthly Report

Finance Director T.M. Thomas reported the general fund had year-to-date revenues of \$493,090, at the end of July. Expenditures stood at \$446,854, for a positive general fund balance of \$46,235. Mr. Thomas said all departments are continuing to operate within their budgets. This report was received as information.

Bamberg County Controller - Monthly Report

Controller Gina Smith reported that the county closed on its 2021 capital project sales tax bond issue on September 9, 2021. Three bids were received and the prevailing bidder was Zions Bank with an interest rate of 1.02 percent. Controller Smith further reported that the 1.02 percent received is the lowest interest rate that Bamberg County has ever received in any debt issuance. The council was elated to receive a report of this standing. Among projects included in the CPST Bond: City of Denmark Renovations of Old City Hall - \$400,000; Town of Olar Water System - \$71,000; Little Swamp Community Center - \$15,000; Town of Govan Town Hall - \$50,000; Town of Ehrhardt; and City of Bamberg.

Bamberg County Administrator – Monthly Report

Administrator Preston reported on the COVID-19 figures. Bamberg County had a total number of 1,735 confirmed COVID-19 cases, with a seven-day moving average of 13.9 new cases per day. Fifty-eight Bamberg County residents have died, and four new deaths have been reported since the August update. There are 54.6% of county residents who have had at least one vaccine, up from 47.4% in August. There were 45.8% of county residents who have received both vaccines, up from 41.2% since the last report in August. Administrator Preston said employees have been asked to tell us if they've been vaccinated or not. We asked about 30 days ago and will be asking them again shortly. We are encouraging the employees to get vaccinated. As of now we do not have mandatory testing. With Bamberg County receiving federal funds, Mr. Preston has the question being researched whether or not we can mandate vaccinations. It was also reported that the Sheriff's Department has received a \$14,000 grant from the state Department of Public Safety to purchase body-worn cameras that will be used by the deputies. The Glass WRX SC Company out of Beaufort, will be collecting mixed glass for recycling. They will be using it to create little stones that can mix in concrete. Administrator Preston reported on the SC Stay Plus program through which county residents can apply for rental assistance. Residents can apply from 9:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Saturday, September 18, at the First Baptist Church Activity Center at 161 Allen Street in Barnwell. Appointments can be made by calling (803) 255-5594. The Code of Ordinance are complete and are now on line for all to be able to view them. The 2021 Retreat is scheduled for the Council on Friday, October 29th, beginning at 9:00 p.m. A tour of the renovations of the old hospital is scheduled for Tuesday, September 21, at 5:00 p.m., all are invited to the tour. Also, we are averaging approximately two airplanes per day and they are purchasing fuel from our airport. This report was received as information.

On motion by Councilman Carter, seconded by Councilman Myers, council approved resolution #B-21-12, honoring the Bamberg State Champion Baseball Team for their success at the Dixie Youth Division 2 Baseball World Series and recognized the team members as Bamberg County Ambassadors. Dr. Goodman was responsible for offering this resolution in honor of the deserved baseball team.

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On motion by Councilman Comer, seconded by Councilman Myers, council approved a resolution that names the field of the Bamberg County Airport Tobul Field in recognition of the Tobul family. The family will be recognized at a later date alongside sponsoring a fly honoring the occasion.

On motion by Councilman Comer, seconded by Councilwoman Hammond, council approved the calendar of events after adding a tour of the old hospital scheduled for September 21, 2021 at 5:00 p.m., and Bamberg County Council Retreat to be held on Friday, October 29th, beginning 9:00 p.m.

Council heard from Dr. Yvette McDaniel of the Community Rural Arts Work League (CRAWL) of Bamberg County, about its upcoming Muscadine Festival to be held from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Saturday, September 25, at Saltcatcher Farms in Denmark. Dr. McDaniel invited all and passed out flyers for the attendance of the Muscadine Festival. Additional information can be found at www.allthingsmuscadine.com.

During this time, Chairman Haynes called for public comments. County resident Sue Clayton addressed council and commented that “As concerned citizens, we’ve entrusted our county to you and hope you’ll be good stewards of it. We want a financially stable and fiscally responsible government, but so far the jury is still out on whether or not you all are actually going to come through with that. I’m hoping that you’re going to prove public opinion wrong.

Council members made various comments to include a few: thanking the staff for their hard work; to stay safe and continue wearing their masks, get your COVID-19 vaccines, continue to pray.

On motion by Councilman Donaldson, seconded by Councilwoman Hammond, council agreed to enter in executive session to discuss an economic development matter.

After coming out of executive session, Chairman Haynes in opened session, no action was taken and there being no further business for discussion the meeting be adjourned 8:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rose R. Shepherd, Clerk to Council