

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., August 12, 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, Dr. Jonathan Goodman, II and Spencer Donaldson. **Others Present:** Joey R. Preston, T.M. Thomas, Richard Ness, Gina Smith, Donald Kirby, Kenneth Bamberg, Joshua Urwick, Moses Cheatham, Chip Maier, Dr. Willie L. Todd, Jr., Dr. Myles, Dr. William Molnar, Bill Johnson and Eric Turner.

Bamberg County Council meeting was called to order by Chairman Evert Comer, Jr., at 6:00 p.m. Invocation was rendered by Dr. Jonathan Goodman, II, followed with the pledge of allegiance led by Councilman Larry Haynes.

On motion by Councilman Carter, seconded by Councilwoman Hammond, the minutes from the July 1st, and July 18th, meetings were approved with necessary corrections should there be any.

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

Dr. Willie Todd, Jr., President and CEO of Denmark Technical College commenced an update of the college by saying the school is emphasizing student success, continued growth and innovation. "Our goal is to be an exemplary historically Black college, providing premier technical education that exceeds industry standards. Dr. Todd stated that their motto this year is "A Strategy to Win: Imagining the Possibilities." Further stated that his mission is to put the tech back in Denmark Tech, through the creation of workforce programs. The Nursing program has been very successful with an excellent pass rate. The Lineman and Commercial Driver Courses lead directly to employment after graduation. Some lineman graduates having been hired, by Dominion, earning over \$90,000 their first year. These two programs require a student to only pay \$200 of the course cost which are over \$5,000 for the CDL program and \$8,000 for the lineman program. Dr. Todd emphasized that the college served everyone in the county although it was an HBCU institution and was seeking more funding using that status. The college has a dual enrollment program. High school students can take college courses tuition-free while getting up to a two-year degree worth of college credits. Five students from Denmark-Olar High School, obtained an associate's degree last year. The college recently signed up its first dual enrollment student from Andrew Jackson Academy – him stating- we're here for everybody. A new apprenticeship is coming with the HBCU Community Development Action Coalition. The focal point will be on electrical, solar, wind, batter storage and hydrogen. The first graduating unit from Allendale Correctional Facility has been completed. Dr. Todd continued to point out the great things happening at the college and he thanked the Council for the appropriation made to the school last year. Council voiced their appreciation for the update presented regarding the school.

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Mr. Eric Turner, Region Six emergency manager at the S.C. Emergency Management Division and County Administrator Preston reported on how the County managed during hurricane Debby. It was stated that the county received more than 14 inches of rain over the time span of five days. There was a state of emergency signed on August 4, and the president granted the emergency declaration. This authorizes FEMA to release funds to the county for emergency protective measures. This means the assessor's office will have to inspect the county to see what has been damaged and rate as Category B.

Mr. Turner was asked what kind of help the citizens can receive for individual damages. The reply was if we can get up to about a dozen homes, then we can request that Small Business Administration loan and possibly some other substance. To report Bamberg County damage, call 803-245-3013. Damage can also be reported through SCEMD's Crisis Track system, which can be accessed via the county website at www.bambergcountysc.gov. Administrator Preston said the county had a lot of storm drainage issues. Mr. Turner assured he would assist with the county's ongoing recovery from the tropical storm. Mr. Preston said the county is also going to work through the state's Office of Resiliency.

COMMITTEE AND STAFF REPORTS:

Southern Carolina Development Alliance - Monthly Report

Project Director Joshua Urwick reported that SCA had a tour of the Bamberg County Emergency Center. They are still working with the Department of Commerce regarding some standing projects. Project Lightning has slowed down and hopefully will have something before long. Council thanked Mr. Urwick for his report.

Bamberg County Administrator – Monthly Report

Administrator Preston reported to council on: **1)** A mandatory pre-bid conference is scheduled for August 29 regarding the county courthouse renovation; **2)** September 12th, is the deadline for acceptance of bids on the county courthouse renovation Courthouse renovation. **3)** The completion of the graveling on Lazy Lane and Salty Road; **4)** A public safety committee meeting is scheduled for Thursday, August 15; **5)** Ribbon cutting for the new Holman Bridge Fire Department will probably be in the next couple of months; **6)** The VA Cemetery is still on the waiting for the feds to fund – Bamberg County is first on the list. Council accepted Administrator Preston's monthly report.

On motion by Councilman Carter, seconded by Councilwoman Hammond, council approved a resolution to recognize and honor the members of the South Carolina State Guard and commending their all-volunteer force for their work during disaster and to declare September as "South Carolina State Guard Month" in Bamberg County. This resolution was sponsored by Dr. Jonathan Goodman, II.

On motion by Councilman Myers, seconded by Councilwoman Hammond, council approved a resolution honoring Denmark Fire Department Chief Charles Breland, Jr., who is retiring, for his 51 years of loyal service.

On motion by Councilman Carter, seconded by Dr. Goodman, council approved the calendar of events as presented.

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Chairman Comer called for public comments. No public comments at this time.

At his time, Chairman Comer asked for comments from council. All thanked the public for being in attendance. The employees were thanked for their hard work. The public works staff, emergency services staff and all others involved were especially thanked for hard work and dedication during hurricane Debby. All were wished a safe and happy Labor Day.

There being no further business for discussion, on motion by Councilwoman Hammond, seconded by Dr. Goodman, the meeting was adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rose R. Shepherd