

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., June 3, 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 Phil Myers, Jr., Clint Carter, Larry Haynes, Dr. Jonathan Goodman, II and Spencer Donaldson. **Absent:** Councilwoman Sharon Hammond. **Others Present:** Joey R. Preston, T.M. Thomas, Richard Ness, Gina Smith, Alisha Moore, Kenneth Bamberg, Joshua Urwick, Moses Cheatham, Curtis Tyler, William Molnar and Ken Ahlin.

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

On motion by Councilman Haynes, seconded by Dr. Goodman, approved the minutes from the May 6, 2024 regular meeting with necessary corrections should there be any.

On motion by Councilman Haynes, seconded by Councilman Donaldson, council approved the agenda after removing the Project Lightning fee-in-lieu of tax agreement until the July meeting.

On motion by Councilman Myers, seconded by Councilman Haynes, council approved the distribution of Fiscal Year 2023-2024 Accommodations Tax (ATAX) Funds for participating Bamberg County recreation groups as presented by Bamberg County Recreation Committee Chairman Curtis Tyler. The following 11 groups were approved: Bamberg Youth Baseball (6 & under girls & boys); Bamberg Youth Softball (7&8 girls); Bamberg You Baseball (11 & 12 boys); Bamberg Youth Baseball League (9 & 10 boys); Bamberg Youth Baseball League (7 & 8 boys); Bamberg Youth Softball (11 & 12 girls); Bamberg Youth Softball (9 & 10 girls); Bamberg Youth Baseball (13 & 14 boys); Bamberg County 4-H (5-18); Summer Enrichment/Recreation Program (10 – 16); Bamberg County First Steps (Pre-School and Parents). A total of \$13,999.00 was granted. A total of 12 groups applied, but one group did not meet the qualifications.

Dr. William Molnar, LSCOG Executive Director, shared a power point review of efforts and improvements for Bamberg County during 2023. Their mission is to improve the quality of life for residents in the Lower Savannah Region. LSCOG is part of a network of 10 different council of government here in the state of South Carolina. Lower Savannah administers aging, disability and transportation programs funded by the federal Older Americans Act. There were 179 seniors in the county for Older American Act services such as meals, homemaker services and transportation. Also, 23,353 home delivered meals were provided to 162 homebound seniors in the county, 4,835 meals were served at congregate meal sites in the county. LSCOG administers the Community Development

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Block program, which provided a \$4,950,903 grant for a new well and the upgrade of existing wells in the City of Denmark. The agency has received \$3.8 million from the American Rescue Plan Act to help combat homelessness in the region. Further stated was contractors are needed for housing rehab projects. The City of Denmark received a \$5.2 million Community Impact Grant to upgrade its sewer system. The matching portion for that grant was \$475,000. Looking at workforce development, SC Works Lower Savannah mobile unit made 28 visits to Bamberg County and served 67 county residences. It was announced that the next LSCOG Board meeting is scheduled for October 10th to be hosted in Bamberg County. Council thanked Dr. Molnar for the thorough update that included Bamberg County.

COMMITTEE AND STAFF REPORTS:

Southern Carolina Regional Development Alliance - Monthly Report

Mr. Joshua Urwick, SCA Project Director, reported that they had 3 site visits since the May council meeting. There has been a little delay with the barrel plant and he looks to have additional information by the next meeting. Council accepted this report as information.

Bamberg County Administrator – Monthly Report

Administrator Preston reported to council on: 1) Doors are being put up this week at the Holman's Bridge Fire Department; 2) Work will begin next week at the 601 Junkyard; c3) Broadband is still in the environmental phase location in Bamberg and will be located next to Paula's. The Denmark location has not been named yet, but Denmark Tech is being looked at for location; 4) Announced the receipt of five body armor vests from the state funded Body Armor Assistance Grant; 5) A low bid of \$475,270 from Palmetto Site-work Services LLC had been accepted for graveling work on Lazy Lane and Salty Road. The C-Fund Committee was thanked for providing approximately \$80,000 in additional funding to help the county secure the bid. July 9th is the bid opening for McGee Street sidewalk project. Council accepted this report as information.

On motion by Councilman Haynes, seconded by Councilman Donaldson, council approved a proclamation to proclaim the month of June 2024 as the Joy of Fatherhood Month in Bamberg County, South Carolina.

On motion by Councilman Haynes, seconded by Councilman Donaldson, council approved a resolution to recognize Douglas Stokes as a 2023 Voorhees University Hall of Fame Inductee and Bamberg County Ambassador.

On motion by Councilman Carter, seconded by Councilman Haynes, council gave second reading to an Ordinance to Certify the Rockland Industries Property as a Textile Mill under the South Carolina Textiles Communities Revitalization Act.

On motion by Dr. Goodman, II, seconded by Councilman Donaldson, council gave second reading (title only), to an ordinance for approval in title only, to adopt the operating and capital budgets of Bamberg County for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2024 and ending June 30, 2025, and to make appropriations for such Bamberg County budgets for county ordinary purposes and for other county purposes for which the county may levy a tax; to provide for the levy of taxes on all taxable personal and real estate

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properties in Bamberg County for such county ordinary purposes, including sufficient tax to pay the principal and interest on outstanding indebtedness of Bamberg County maturing during said fiscal year; and to provide for other matters relating to Bamberg County and Bamberg County budgetary matters, including, without limitation, certain capital expenditures and related lease-purchase financings and general obligation bonds of the county. Bamberg County Controller Gina Smith addressed council by informing them that within the proposed budget there is a three percent cost of living increase to be implemented after first full payroll in July. Retirement at \$985,910; Required increase the general fund from \$10,389,475 to \$11,505,955, totaling a variance of \$1,116,480. Total budget for 2024: \$27,487,595 and for 2025: \$25,883,905. Value of a mill is \$32,150 (countywide for 2025). Public hearing and third reading of the budget is scheduled for Monday, June 24, 2024 at 6 p.m.

On motion by Councilman Haynes, seconded by Dr. Goodman, II, the calendar of events passed after adding a July 13th event.

On motion by Councilman Carter, seconded by Councilman Haynes, council approved program year 2024 Memorandum of Understanding/Infrastructure Funding Agreement (MOU/IFA) covering SC Works Center Activities for the Lower Savannah Region.

On motion by Councilman Carter, seconded by Councilman Haynes, council approved the appointment of Mr. Rob Eubanks to the Council on Aging Board as a representative from Council District #5, Dr. Jonathan Goodman, II.

Mr. Ken Ahlin was present and made a request that the FY 2024-2025 budget be placed online as soon as possible, so that the public will have the opportunity to view it before third reading. Chairman Comer acknowledged his request.

At this time, Chairman Comer asked for comments from council. All members of council thanked the public for being in attendance. The employees were thanked for their hard work. Condolences were given to Administrator Preston in the loss of his brother (Gary Preston). Administrator Preston and Controller Smith were especially thanked for their hard work that was done on the budget.

Respectfully submitted,

Rose R. Shepherd, CCC