

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.

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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., Councilmen Clint Carter, Larry Haynes, Phil Myers, Dr. Jonathan Goodman, II and Spencer Donaldson. **Absent:** Councilwoman Sharon Hammond. **Others Present:** Joey R. Preston, T.M. Thomas, Richard Ness, Gina Smith, Donald Kirby, Alisha Moore, Kenneth Bamberg, Chip Maier, Norris Williams, Candace Mack, Mallory Beiring, Richard Preacher, Deputy Verner, Deputy Preacher, Nina Haynes and three additional visitors.

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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 Spencer Donaldson.

On motion by Councilman Carter, seconded by Councilman Haynes, the minutes from the August 12, 2024 meeting were approved with necessary corrections should there be any.

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

Sheriff Kenneth Bamberg introduced a new program that has been spearheaded by his department that will assist and benefit the elderly, sick or disabled citizens in Bamberg County. The name of the program is "R U OK". It is operated by members of the sheriff's office staff, or volunteers, contact registered participants once a week to check on them. The sheriff's office maintains a record of when the participants were called, and notes any questions they may have asked. He explained that this program is designed for people that may have some limitations, disabilities, sicknesses, illnesses or just something that puts their health at risk. If a registered participant is not reached after three call attempts, their emergency contact will be notified. In the event the emergency cannot physically check on the individual, a deputy will be dispatched to the residence. Applications for participants to sign up for the program can be filled out online at the Bamberg County website at [www.bambergcountysc.gov](http://www.bambergcountysc.gov) or at the sheriff's office website at [www.bambergcounty.gov/sheriffs-office](http://www.bambergcounty.gov/sheriffs-office). They can also stop the sheriff's office at 509 North Street and pick up an application. Administrator Preston and the council were thanked for their support in putting the sheriff's office in the position so that will enable his department to do those things that they are doing. Sheriff Bamberg introduced some members of his staff that will be assisting with the program. Councilman Phil Myers alongside other members of council, thanked Sheriff Bamberg and his staff for what they are doing for the community.

Keep America Beautiful Director Mallory Beiring was present to give an update on the "Greatest American Cleanup" Initiative. Ms. Beiring announced that the national Greatest American Cleanup campaign aims to honor the United States' 250<sup>th</sup> birthday, which will occur on July 4, 2026, by engaging 25,000 communities and removing 25 billion pieces of litter across the nation. Bamberg County was

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the first South Carolina county to sign up. On motion by Councilman Carter, seconded by Dr. Goodman, II, council signed a Declaration of Action to join forces with the Keep America Beautiful Greatest American Cleanup initiative. Bamberg County and Keep Bamberg County Beautiful have committed to the following: 1) Organize **THREE** new community cleanups to inspire citizens of all ages to work together to remove litter from Bamberg streets, parks, waterways and public spaces; 2) Host **TWO** reduce, reuse, recycle or beautification experiences to champion responsible waste disposal and resource conservation, plant native trees, shrubs, and flowers, as well as nurture existing green spaces and 3) Host **ONE** event to celebrate Bamberg County's progress and achievements in helping America's natural beauty radiate on her 250<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration. Chairman Comer said we intend to make Bamberg County a shining example of environmental stewardship and community engagement as we work together to make our community cleaner, greener and more beautiful for generations to come.

#### **COMMITTEE AND STAFF REPORTS:**

##### **Bamberg County Administrator – Monthly Report**

Administrator Preston reported Bamberg County will join an effort to develop flooding risk reduction plans for the Salkehatchie River Basin. The program was developed to coordinate regional flooding reduction solutions within the seven counties and 34 municipalities along the Salkehatchie River Basin. They will work with 10 communities to co-produce reports that identify vulnerabilities to flooding and other hazards and develop strategies to address these risks based on the information gathered and in coordination with communities. The S.C. Resilient Coastal Communities Collaborative Program will develop the plans as a pilot program. The effort will help with future watershed-based planning efforts. Administrator Preston said that FEMA was in town today (September 9), to assess damages in the aftermath of Tropical Storm Debby. The county had to reach a threshold of \$60,280 to qualify for federal assistance for the storm's costs. A low bid of \$290,700 from Perry, Georgia based Utility Service Company, Inc., to begin work on the county's water tank. The county previously secured a \$500,000 grant from the state Department of Health and Environmental Control to make improvements to the water tower. Currently, the county is looking at the possibility of retaining an outside consulting organization to assist in redoing fire department zones. Gratitude was extended to Ms. Anna Jennings of Denmark, for her work done during the coordination of the 911 Parade that was held September 8, 2024. A mobile unit will be located at the Health Department on Monday, October 21<sup>st</sup>, to offer mammograms to the public. Due to excessive complaints about the increase of mosquitoes after Tropical Storm Debby, it was noted that the county will make it a point to spray the appropriate areas for football games. Council thanked Administrator Preston for the update issues of the county.

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On motion by Councilman Carter, seconded by Councilman Donaldson, Haynes, council approved a resolution honoring and recognizing Ms. Samella Robinson Porter for the celebration of her 90<sup>th</sup> birthday. Ms. Porter is a resident of Bamberg County, whose career with the former Bamberg School District 1 spanned more than 35 years. The presentation of the resolution was sponsored by Councilwoman Sharon Hammond, District 2 and supported by the Bamberg County Council.

On motion by Councilman Myers, seconded by Dr. Goodman, II, council approved a resolution recognizing the Bamberg Diamond Youth Softball 10U Girls Team. The team placed fourth in the nation in the Diamond Youth Girls Softball World Series on July 21 in Fairview, Tenn. The members were

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appointed Bamberg County Ambassadors. The presentation of the resolution was sponsored by Councilman Clint Carter, District 7 and supported by the Bamberg County Council.

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

Chairman Comer called for public comments. Administrator Preston read an email comment from Bamberg resident Ken Ahlin, who asked council to abolish its three-minute limit for comments at its meeting. Chairman Comer, Jr. responded that the request will be taken under advisement. Administrator Preston responded that he'd be more than happy to address a letter if needed. They were reminded that the time limit is addressed in its ordinance.

At this time, Chairman Comer asked for comments from council. All thanked the public for being in attendance. The employees were thanked for their hard work.

There being no further business for discussion, on motion by Councilwoman Hammond, seconded by Councilman Haynes, the meeting was adjourned at 8:51 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rose R. Shepherd, CCC