

## MINUTES OF BAMBERG COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING

- December 4, 2023

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., December 4, 2023 in Council Chambers with limited seating for the public alongside live streaming of the meeting provided for public view. **Present:** Chairman Dr. Jonathan Goodman, II, Councilwoman Sharon Hammond, Councilmen Evert Comer, Jr., Phil Myers, Jr., Larry Haynes and Spencer Donaldson. **Absent:** Clint Carter. **Others Present:** Joey R. Preston, Richard Ness, T.M. Thomas, Gina Smith, Chip Maier, Alisha Moore, Kenneth Bamberg, Joshua Urwick, Joy Haynes, Dr. William Molnar, Nina Haynes, Ken Ahlin, Ruth McMillon, William McMillon, Corey Ramsey and five additional visitors.

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

On motion by Councilman Haynes, seconded by Councilwoman Hammond, council approved the minutes from the November 6, 2023 meeting with necessary corrections should there be any.

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

Ms. Joy Haynes, owner of Shop Her Closet Outreach Community Center located at 3722 Main Highway in Bamberg, reported on what is offered to individuals at the center and extended an invitation for all to come to see what is taking place. She informed that they are primarily a food pantry and so far this year about 6,000 people have been fed. Also at the center, COVID testing and vaccines are provided to the public alongside other requested services for the public if we have them available. The center is continuing to pursue additional resources for funding and operational purposes. Dr. Goodman requested Ms. Haynes send the council a calendar of events so that they will be aware of what's going on and to participate whenever possible. Council thanked Ms. Haynes for sharing the information.

In the absence of Mr. Nicholas Terry, the new Community and Economic Development Manager for Lower Savannah Council of Governments, Dr. William Molnar, executive director for LSCOG filled in with the update on the scheduled public hearing for the Needs Assessment in Bamberg County scheduled for Tuesday, January 23, 2024 at 5 p.m. in the County Courthouse Annex. This is an opportunity for the community to come together and deliberate on what they consider to be needs and priorities in the communities in Bamberg County. The focus is generally in the area of housing, infrastructure, economic development, public safety, public facilities and neighborhood revitalization. All are welcome to attend.

No public comments were made regarding a proposed ordinance to amend Bamberg County Ordinance #18-17-4 limited regards and particulars, only, so as to add an erroneously omitted

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road to the County Road List; and other matters related thereto. The name of the road that is proposed to be added is Old Town Lane Road, located in Denmark.

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

#### **Southern Carolina Regional Development Alliance - Monthly Report**

Southern Carolina Regional Development Alliance Project Director Joshua Urwick reported SCA had six site visits since the November council meeting. Mr. Urwick further stated that Project Knox with this being a \$6 million capital investment, it is an expansion project where they expect to expand by bringing in approximately 12 plus jobs in the area. Also, SCA are expecting greater things next year to take place. There are two big projects here that are looking for a substantial amount of land for addition growth in the community. Mr. Urwick said that he is expecting to have more information at the beginning of next year on said projects. Council thanked Mr. Urwick for the update.

#### **Bamberg County Treasurer - Monthly Report** - Absent

**Bamberg County Budget - Monthly Report** - Postponed until January 2024 (this report is generated from treasurer's report).

On motion by Councilwoman Hammond, seconded by Councilman Comer, Council voted to forego the monthly reports from the office of the Bamberg County Treasurer and the report for Bamberg County's budget information after being requested by Finance Director Thomas. These reports will be presented at the January 2024 meeting.

#### **Bamberg County Administrator - Monthly Report**

Administrator Preston reported to council on: 1) the grand opening of the county's new health department and veterans' affairs offices to be held 11 a.m. Friday, December 8. 2) It was announced that Lower Savannah COG will sponsor their Christmas dinner on Thursday, December 14<sup>th</sup> at 6 p.m. 3) The closing for Salty Road and Lazy Lane is scheduled for December 14, 2023. 4) An EMS Committee meeting has been scheduled for Thursday, January 11<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 p.m., in the Council Chambers. 5) The 250 Committee meeting was held with Committee Chairman Bill Davies on Monday, November 20<sup>th</sup> and all went well. 6) The contractors are scheduled to complete the foundation stabilization of the old courthouse by December 22, 2023. This report was accepted as information.

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On motion by Councilman Comer, seconded by Councilman Haynes, council gave third reading to a proposed ordinance to amend Bamberg County Ordinance #18-17-4 limited regards and particulars, only, so as to add an erroneously omitted road to the County Road List; and other matters related thereto. The name of the road that is proposed to be added is Old Town Lane Road, located in Denmark.

On motion by Councilwoman Hammond, seconded by Councilman Haynes, council gave first reading to an ordinance authorizing the execution and delivery of a special source revenue credit agreement by and between Bamberg County, South Carolina and Rockberg, LLC with

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respect to certain economic development property in the county, whereby such property will receive certain special source revenue credits in respect of investment in infrastructure.

On motion by Councilwoman Hammond, seconded by Councilman Myers, council approved the calendar of events after adding an event for Denmark Technical College scheduled for Friday, December 8<sup>th</sup>, at 9:00 a.m. on the campus.

Chairman Goodman called for public comments. 1) Mr. Ken Ahlin stated that he had questions about the submission of public comments concerning agenda items by email then having the comments provided to council for review. What happens if you're not able to send them and are you still allowed to speak at the meeting? Chairman Goodman said that the purpose was for if someone could not attend the meeting. Chairman Goodman and Administrator Preston will address Mr. Ahlin's written request. 2) Mr. William McMillon inquired about the condition of his road, Oak Grove Road (9/10 mile) - being impassable when it rains and has been on the list for roadwork at least 10 years. Chairman Goodman told Mr. McMillon that he and Administrator Preston would communicate and respond back to him.

At this time, Dr. Goodman asked for comments from council. All present were thanked for their attendance, employees were thanked for their hard work, appreciation was given to Administrator Preston and staff and all were wished a safe holiday. Chairman Goodman thanked everyone for attending the Christmas Tree lighting and for their support for the year.

There being no further business for discussion, on motion by Councilwoman Hammond, seconded by Councilman Carter, the meeting was adjourned at 7:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rose R. Shepherd, Clerk to Council