

**MINUTES OF BAMBERG COUNTY COUNCIL SPECIAL CALLED MEETING - May 22, 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., May 22, 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., Spencer Donaldson and Larry Haynes. **Absent:** Councilman Clint Carter. **Others Present:** Joey R. Preston, T.M. Thomas, Gina Smith, Chip Maier and Kenneth Bamberg,

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Bamberg County Council Special Called meeting was called to order by Dr. Jonathan Goodman, II at 6:00 p.m.

Invocation was rendered by Councilman Phil Myers followed with the pledge of allegiance led by Councilman Evert Comer, Jr.

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

On motion by Councilman Haynes, seconded by Councilman Donaldson, council agreed to, in title only, first reading of an ordinance to adopt the operating and capital budgets of Bamberg County for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2023 and ending June 30, 2024, and to make appropriations for such Bamberg County budgets for county ordinary purposes for which the county may levy a tax; to provide for the levy of taxes on all taxable personal and real estate 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. Voting in favor: Councilwoman Hammond, Councilmen Phil Myers, Spencer Donaldson, Evert Comer, Jr., Larry Haynes and Chairman Dr. Jonathan Goodman, II. Councilman Clint Carter was absent from this meeting. At this time Controller Gina Smith presented the proposed budget to the council. The proposed budget reflects a \$2.5 million decrease from last year's spending plan. The budget presented for FY 23-24 was a \$27.5 million spending plan with no tax increase expected. The budget calls for a general fund of \$10.4 million, along with separate accounts set up for: special revenue, \$6.8 million; enterprise, \$1.5 million, debt service, \$448,150, and capital projects, \$8.4 million. Controller Smith pointed out health insurance cost will increase by \$165,332 over the previous fiscal year, with the total county-wide cost of \$1.2 million. Retirement contribution costs are expected to total \$836,127, an increase of \$85,635 in excess of last year. The new budget has no new positions proposed. Personnel requests have been made, including a part-time tax clerk in the county auditor's office, the treasurer's office and a full-time fire fighter. It is still being proposed that the county continue its practice of

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matching a minimum \$1,000 contribution employees make to their 401-K plan. The budget also includes funding for Denmark Technical College. Last year, Bamberg County budgeted one mil plus \$25,000 and the same is being proposed for this budget. Sheriff Kenneth Bamberg has requested an additional \$71,117 for salary increases for sheriff's office employees, along with an additional \$43,615 for dispatch employees. Magistrate Craig Threat has requested \$2,000 for salary increases for his department. Handouts were distributed to the council with all projected figures for FY 23-24.

It was announced that second reading of the budget is slated for Monday, June 5, at 6:00 p.m.

There being no further business for discussion, on motion by Councilman Donaldson, seconded by Councilwoman Hammond, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by,

Rose R. Shepherd, CCC