

**MINUTES OF BAMBERG COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING  
2023**

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**July 10,**

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., July 10, 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 Clint Carter. **Absent:** Larry Haynes. **Others Present:** Joey R. Preston, Richard Ness, T.M. Thomas, Alice Johnson, Chip Maier, Donald Kirby, Kenneth Bamberg, Tiffany Cooks, Miriam Beard, Alisha Moore, Virginia Mitchell, Dave Clayton, Sue Clayton, Josh Urwick and two 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 Evert Comer, Jr.

On motion by Councilman Myers, seconded by Councilman Donaldson, council approved the minutes from the June 5, 2023 meeting with necessary corrections should there be any. On motion by Councilman Carter, seconded by Councilwoman Hammond, council approved the minutes from the June 12 special called meeting with necessary corrections should there be any.

On motion by Councilman Myers, seconded by Councilwoman Hammond, the agenda was approved as submitted.

Dr. Tiffany Cooks, Estill Town Administrator, presented information to council on Project Green Spark. Estill is working with Palm City, Florida-based facility on this project. Plans are being developed to build modular shipping container homes and they are looking to generate proceeds for the town and provide affordable workforce abilities. There are three other projects that are being viewed by the Estill Town Council as well. It has been tested that the homes can withstand up to a category 4. Monthly cost of rent could range from \$700 to \$850 monthly. The homes come in 20 and 40 foot containers with a price range of \$35,000 to \$85,000. A model of the home is located in Estill and citizens and other interested visitors are invited to tour if desired. Dr. Cooks informed that with the establishment of tire manufacturer Tin Thanh Group - being located in Allendale County and more than 1,000 jobs will be available, that would mean there will be a great need for housing in the area. She added that the Estill town Council voted to proceed with the investors to develop the cost and income

projection for the four projects and they will allow her and the mayor to sign an agreement with the investor. Dr. Goodman thanked Dr. Cooks for her presentation and said he would like to take a look at the model container home before council makes any decisions. Dr. Cooks welcomed his visitation along with others.

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

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

Southern Carolina Alliance Project Manager Josh Urwick reported they had three site visits since the last council meeting. Also, SCA is working with an existing industry that is looking to expand its operations. Mr. Urwick reported that they have put out a Request For Quote for the design of the new spec building at the CrossRhodes Park and proposals should be back in the next couple of weeks. Additional information will be shared at the next council meeting. Council accepted this report as information.

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

County Treasurer Alice Johnson gave the May financial report, stating they had \$334,127.76 in income and expenditures of \$995,463.52, leaving a negative balance of \$661,335.76. When the positive bank balance at the end of April (\$905,844.87) was added, the county's regular account stood at a positive \$244,509.11. Treasurer Johnson's report was received as information.

#### **Bamberg County Finance - Monthly Report**

Finance Director T.M. Thomas reported the general fund had year-to-date revenues of \$8,444,445, as of the end of April. Expenditures stood at \$8,019,596, for a positive general fund balance of \$424,849. Administrator Preston replied that Mr. Thomas' report should be listed as a budget report instead of a financial report. The county departments are continuing to operate within their budgets. This report was received as information.

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

Administrator Preston reported that the law enforcement center has moved and will officially open on July 28<sup>th</sup>, at 12 noon. Emails announcing the dedication ceremony will begin going out Tuesday, July 11<sup>th</sup>. In the absence of Councilman Haynes, congratulations were extended toward his appointment to the South Carolina Association of Counties Board of Directors, serving as a representative from Bamberg County. Since the inception of SCAC, Councilman Haynes is the second council member ever to serve on the SCAC Board of Directors from Bamberg County and the other was

Councilwoman Alzena Robinson, she also served as SCAC President in 1997. During this time Administrator Preston introduced Ms. Alisha Moore as the county's new public information officer and Keep Bamberg County Beautiful coordinator. Ms. Moore said she is very happy to be here in Bamberg County and looking forward to getting to know everyone. She has extensive training in digital media and marketing as a professional freelancer. Ms. Virginia Mitchell was then introduced as the Bamberg County Animal Control Officer. She announced animals as being her passion and she loves doing it. Mr. Preston said her first month on the job, she answered 31 complaints, safely removed 39 animals (with 34 being released to MAMAS) and one cat was released to the SPCA in Orangeburg. Ms. Mitchell will enroll at the S.C. Criminal Justice Academy class for Class 3 Basic Officer training. Further reported was Airport Road has been widened and Denmark Technical College is working on the parking lots and trying to fix things the best they can with the limited funds they have. Also, street lights are being considered to be a project DTC can work together with Allendale. This report was received as information.

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On motion by Councilman Carter, seconded by Councilwoman Hammond, council gave first reading to a proposed ordinance enlarging the boundaries of the Quad-County Industrial Park, Park II, and Park III between Bamberg County, South Carolina, Allendale County, South Carolina, Barnwell County, South Carolina and Hampton County, South Carolina to include property owned or operated by or to be owned or operated by Project Homegrown; and other matters related thereto.

On motion by Councilwoman Hammond, seconded by Councilman Donaldson, the calendar of events was approved.

At this time Chairman Goodman called for public comments. Bamberg County resident Miriam Beard asked council to address the following issues: 1) allocation of some money to the Cheez "N" Cracker Box toward the purchase of a much needed air conditioning unit; 2) thankful for the County hiring an animal control officer, but a facility is also needed to house the stray animals; and 3) a baby shower will be held at Cornerstone Community Church's Bamberg Campus on August 5. Ms. Beard asked that the Council take her comments into account. Bamberg resident Sue Clayton asked that the following items be noted: 1) asked council to be more transparent with publishing the budget and the handling of the money; and 2) why is another spec building being constructed and there is still one that appears to be vacant. She went on to request that the taxpayers money be spent wisely.

Chairman Goodman called for comments from council. During comments from council, all were thanked for their attendance, the new employees were welcomed, the employees were also acknowledged for their diligence and hard work.

There being no further business for discussion, on motion by Councilwoman Hammond, seconded by Councilman Donaldson, the meeting was adjourned at 7:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rose R. Shepherd, CCC