

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 15, 2025 in Council Chambers with limited seating for the public alongside live streaming of the meeting provided for public view. **Present:** Chairwoman Sharon Hammond, Councilwoman Michelle Martin and Councilmen Evert Comer, Jr., Larry Haynes, Kenneth Ahlin and Spencer Donaldson. **Absent:** Dr. Jonathan Goodman, II. **Others Present:** Joey R. Preston, T.M. Thomas, Kenneth Bamberg, Bob Snead, Enterick Lee, Blanche Meeks, Corey Ramsey, Shawn Hanks, Chip Maier, Andy, Kathy Rhoad, Moses Cheatham, Alisha Moore, Aaron Ness, Times and Democrat journalist, and two additional visitors.

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Bamberg County Council meeting was called to order by Council Chairwoman Sharon Hammond, at 6:00 p.m. Invocation was rendered by Councilwoman Michelle Martin, followed with the pledge of allegiance in unison.

On motion by Councilman Haynes, seconded by Councilman Donaldson, council approved the minutes from the November 3, 2025, meeting with any necessary corrections.

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

Bob Snead, President and CEO of the Southern Palmetto Chamber of Commerce and Enterick Lee, Vice President of Operation and Programs/Southern Palmetto Regional Chamber/Propel Business Lab, introduced this year's Propel Business Lab Program that concluded in a \$10,000 pitch competition. The 12-week program was held on the Voorhees University campus, where Bamberg County resident Blanche Meeks was the successful competition winner. Ms. Meeks is the owner of Meeks Grand Treats in Bamberg. Also, Ms. Meeks is looking forward to opening a bakery in the near future in Bamberg. Applications for next year's Propel Business Lab will open mid-year 2026. Each dollar that is raised from the program goes back into Bamberg County, supporting entrepreneurs, workforce development, and community growth. Mr. Snead and Mr. Lee requested support for a proposed resolution encouraging collaboration between the Bamberg County Chamber of Commerce and the Southern Palmetto Chamber of Commerce through the formation of a regional alliance. This would be endorsement and commitment to a partnership for economic development – especially among rural communities that flourish when they work together. Several events were elaborated on and the Southern Palmetto Chamber is working to add a board seat to represent Bamberg County. The proposed alliance would not diminish the Bamberg County Chamber of Commerce but instead enhance its impact. They encouraged Bamberg County that we all could be strengthened by partnering and working together even more. Council thanked the gentlemen for the presentation and congratulated Ms. Meeks on her successful endeavor.

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**COMMITTEE AND STAFF REPORTS:**

Update of Proceedings by Southern Carolina Alliance Representative. Kathy Rhoad of Southern Carolina Alliance, reported on upcoming Trades training programs starting in February. More information will be shared at the January 2026 Bamberg County Council meeting.

**Bamberg County Administrator – Monthly Report**

Administrator Preston reported on the following: 1) EMS Committee met on November 18<sup>th</sup>; 2) Met with Southern Palmetto Regional Chamber on November 10<sup>th</sup>; 3) Attended an event at Voorhees University that a \$10,000 grant was awarded to Blanche Meeks; 4) Water Tower ribbon cutting – November 20<sup>th</sup>; 5) Meetings with Courthouse engineers and officials; 6) Groundbreaking for Tractor Supply in Denmark - December 9<sup>th</sup>; 7) Groundbreaking for Riley Drive – December 9<sup>th</sup>; 8) Preparing for bid package opening for EOC in January or February; 9) Bamberg-Ehrhardt High School Football Champions – won 3 championship in one year; 10) Christmas Tree Lighting – December 7<sup>th</sup>; 11) CDL Training and 11) Dashboard Kickoff in January. The loss of Denmark Technical College as a certified training facility has hurt recruitment and availability of new staff. Orangeburg Calhoun Technical College has maintained its Certification for EMT's and was endorsed as a local program of direct students to enter to an important career. Council accepted this report as information.

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On motion by Councilman Comer, seconded by Councilwoman Martin, council approved a proposed resolution encouraging Bamberg County Chamber of Commerce to form a Regional Alliance. Bob Snead and Enterick Lee was present earlier during the meeting and explained particulars concerning the partnership with Southern Palmetto Chamber of Commerce and Bamberg County Chamber of Commerce..

On motion by Councilman Comer, seconded by Councilman Haynes, council approved a proposed resolution requesting the General Assembly and SCOT to place signs at all county entrance ways announcing the Bamberg-Ehrhardt High School Red Raiders as SCHSL Class A State Champions.

On motion by Councilman Comer, seconded by Council Haynes, council approved second reading, title only, an ordinance authorizing the execution and delivery of a fee-in-lieu of tax agreement by and among Bamberg County, South Carolina and one or more affiliates known for the time being as "Project Inspiration" providing for both fee-in-lieu of ad valorem taxes and special source revenue credit incentives providing for an amendment to the amended and restated master agreement for the establishment of the Quad-County Industrial Park I, Park II, and Park III dated as of May 6, 2013 by and among Allendale County, South Carolina, Bamberg County, South Carolina, Barnwell County, South Carolina, and Hampton County, South Carolina, providing for the development of certain multi-county industrial parks, so as to include additional property in that portion of the parks geographically located in Bamberg County, South Carolina; and other matters related thereto.

On motion by Councilman Haynes, seconded by Councilman Comer, council approved second reading, in title only, an ordinance authorizing the execution and delivery of an amended and restated solid waste service agreement with the Three Rivers Solid Waste Authority ("Authority") to extend the term thereof through 2050, update tonnage commitments and the increase annual tipping fees; authorizing the issuance by the authority of its revenue bonds in an amount not to exceed \$30 million to fund the

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construction of a new phase; and other matters relating thereto. *Voting in favor:* Haynes, Donaldson, Martin, Comer and Hammond. *Voting not in favor:* Ahlin. Councilman Goodman was absent.

On motion by Councilman Comer, seconded by Councilman Haynes, council approved the calendar of events as submitted.

Public comments were called for at this time. Mayor Corey Ramsey informed the Council and ask that they join in with the City that had opened a shelter in order to accommodate those that were without heat during the rigid cold that we have been facing (overnight – Monday, December 15). The shelter is located at the Bamberg-Ehrhardt Football clubhouse.

Chairwoman Hammond called for council comments. Some of the following comments were made: 1) All were wished to have a good holiday; 2) The public was thanked for their attendance; 3) Councilman Ahlin requested budget information in electronic form; and 3) All were reminded not to forget the reason for the season.

There being no further business for discussion, on motion by Councilman Comer, seconded by Councilman Donaldson, council voted to adjourn at 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rose R. Shepherd, CCC