

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.

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, Bamberg County Council met 6:00 p.m., June 2, 2026 in Council Chambers with limited seating for the public alongside live streaming of the meeting provided for public view. **Present:** Council Chairwoman Michelle Martin, Councilmen Larry Haynes, Evert Comer, Jr., Ken Ahlin, Spencer Donaldson (*arrived 6:20 p.m.*), and Dr. Jonathan Goodman. **Absent:** Councilwoman Sharon Hammond. **Others Present:** Joey R. Preston, T.M. Thomas, Aaron Ness, Chip Maier, Alisha Moore, Kenneth Bamberg, Shawn Hanks, Misty Cook, Allan Cook, Rosella Cooper, Corey Ramsey, Kathy Rhoad, Moses Cheatham, Donald Kirby, and four additional visitors.

Bamberg County Council meeting was called to order by Council Chairwoman Michelle Martin at 6:00 p.m. Invocation was rendered by Dr. Jonathan Goodman, II, followed with the pledge of allegiance led by Councilman Kenneth Ahlin.

On motion by Councilman Haynes, seconded by Councilman Comer, the minutes from the May 5, 2026 meeting were approved with necessary corrections should there be any.

On motion by Councilman Haynes, seconded by Dr. Goodman, the agenda was approved as presented.

Council Chairwoman requested permission for the public to be able to speak before the council discuss and vote on the FY '26-'27 budget, with reason being that they would not have to wait until the end of the meeting to do so. It was noted that only one individual signed the roster in order to make public comments.

Bamberg County Recreation Committee Chairman Curtis Tyler, was not present to make the FY 2025-2026 committee recommendation for suggested funds for the applicants. A list of recreation programs and the suggested funds for distribution was provided in the council members packets. A total of \$14,000 was provided from the accommodation tax funds with fifteen programs meeting the qualifications and will be awarded \$933.33. On motion by Councilman Ahlin, seconded by Councilman Haynes, council voted to approve the recommendation coming from the recreation committee.

Sheriff Kenneth Bamberg introduced long-time deputy, Captain Alan Cook, for his service with the department. Captain Cook was presented with a retirement award for his 18 years of dedication and commitment throughout his career. Words of appreciation were shared by Captain Cook and thanks given to all. Sheriff Bamberg did not forget about Captain Cook's wife, Misty Cook, who stood by his side during his service to the community and mankind. A bouquet of beautiful flowers were presented to her. Congratulations were spoken by all.

A public hearing was given to an ordinance authorizing (1) The Execution and Delivery of a First Amendment to Special Source Revenue Credit Agreement by and Among Bamberg County, South Carolina' Lowcountry Properties, LLC and Delavan Spray, LLC; and (2) Other Matters Relating Thereto. No public comments were made.

June 2, 2026....continue

COMMITTEE AND STAFF REPORTS:

SOUTHERN CAROLINA ALLIANCE UPDATE:

Ms. Kathy Rhoad, Southern Carolina Alliance Director of Strategic Initiatives, reported on the following:

- Continuing to work with JDB brothers subsidiary of inner fiber and that's going to bring \$7 million in capital investment at 40 jobs on the workforce development front.
- Had industry visits recently with Black Horse Steel and Delavan. Will be meeting with Circular Composites later this week under workforce development. Denmark Technical College and Savannah River Site Nuclear Operator Apprenticeship Program is now partnering with Advanced Manufacturing Innovation Center, as well. Will be holding the second meeting of the SCA Regional Manufacturing Training Advisory Board next week. Additional information to be provided next month. The Southern Carolina Alliance report was accepted as information.

Bamberg County Budget Report

Finance Director T.M. Thomas reported the general fund revenues for FY 26 is \$12,534,004 and had actual revenues collected through January 2026 stands at \$9,678,004. The general fund department has collectively spent right at 57.72% of the budget at \$7,234,003. The revenues exceed expenditures in the general fund by \$2,444,004. This report is current up to January 2026. Administrator Preston announced Treasurer Candace Fralix is doing a good job toward getting caught up and is pleased with what is being seen. Countywide, the majority of departments continue to operate within their budget and within their expected bounds. This report was received as information.

Bamberg County Administrator - Monthly Report

Administrator Preston reported on the following: 1) June 27th will be dedication for the 250 mission memorial as 11 a.m.; 2) Thursday, June 11th we will be hosting LSCOG board - please RSVP through Rose to attend the meeting; 3) Groundbreaking for Historic Courthouse is scheduled for July 24th, time to be determined; 4) Groundbreaking for Broadband is scheduled for August 14th, time to be determined; 5) First meeting with DSS to discuss needs for the current office - now waiting for DSS to get back with us; 6) Road list was passed out of all county maintained roads; 7) Waiting for FEMA to sign off on the extension that the state previously asked for. Council accepted this report as information.

Recognition of the Bamberg-Ehrhardt High School Red Raiders Varsity Football Team for winning the 2025 SCHSL Class A State Football Championship and to appoint the players and coaches as ambassadors of Bamberg County was sponsored by Dr. Jonathan Goodman, II. The South Carolina High School League Class A state championship was captured by defeating Lamar Silver Foxes 35-21 on December 5, 2025. Head Coach Corey Crosby was present to accept the plaque and awards that were presented to each coach and player. An apology was given that the team could not be present because they were just coming off off the road and he himself had just gotten off the bus. Coach Crosby thanked the council for recognizing them and appointing them as ambassadors of Bamberg County.

On motion by Councilman Comer, seconded by Councilman Haynes, council approved third reading of an ordinance authorizing (1) The Execution and Delivery of a First Amendment to Special Source Revenue Credit Agreement by and Among Bamberg County, South Carolina

June 2, 2026....continue

Lowcountry Properties, LLC and Delavan Spray, LLC; and (2) Other Matters Relating Thereto.

On motion by Councilman Comer, seconded by Councilman Haynes, council approved third reading of an ordinance to adopt the operating and capital budgets of Bamberg County for the Fiscal Year beginning July 1, 2026 and ending June 30, 2027 to make appropriation for such Bamberg County Budget for county ordinary purposes and for other county 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, including, without limitation, certain capital expenditures and related lease-purchases. The FY 2026-2027 budget was discussed, highlighting a 2.63% increase with detailed requests from Captain Cheatham for the detention center, as well as additional staff and medical service. Sheriff Bamberg requested additional funding for his department for advanced weapons and pay increases for deputies. The council also considered a need for hiring a recreation director and accounts payable staff to progress county operations and financial management. After an extensive discussion among council about the FY 2026-2027 budget, a decision was made not to approve hire of a recreation director or accounts payable staff at this time. Concerns were expressed for the elderly not being able to pay their taxes because of increases. At this time, a vote was taken on the passing of the budget with a 2.63% tax increase. Voting in favor of the FY 2026-2027 budget: Councilmen Comer, Donaldson, Haynes and Goodman. Voting not in favor: Chairwoman Martin and Councilman Ahlin. Absent from the vote: Councilwoman Sharon Hammond.

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

Public Comments: No comments at this time.

At this time, Chairwoman Martin called comments from council. All made similar comments as thanking the public for being in attendance, doing what is best for the county, not making decisions from a personal standpoint and have a heart for the people. A Happy Father's Day was extended to the Fathers. Administrator Preston and employees were thanked for their hard work.

There being no further business for discussion, on motion by Councilman Comer, seconded by Dr. Goodman, the meeting was adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rose R. Shepherd, CCC