

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 23, 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, Councilmen Evert Comer, Jr., Spencer Donaldson, Kenneth Ahlin, Dr. Jonathan Goodman, II and Larry Haynes. **Others Present:** Joey R. Preston, T.M. Thomas, Richard Ness, Gina Smith, Kenneth Bamberg, Chip Maier, Alisha Moore, Mark Carter, Cheri Goodman, Shannon L. Gill, Jerome Boyce, Rev. Judy Turner, Harriet Coker, Ginger Godley, Adrienne C. Blume, Gary Pickering, Mike Landof, Yvonne Sease and four additional visitors.

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

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

Chairwoman Hammond called for public comments on an ordinance to adopt the operating and capital budgets of Bamberg County for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2025 and ending June 30, 2026, and to make appropriations for such Bamberg County budgets 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-purchase financings and general obligation bonds of the county. The following ten citizens made public comments toward the final passing of the Fiscal Year '25-'26 Budget: Mark Carter, Shannon L. Gill, Jerome Boyce, Rev. Judy Turner, Harriet Coker, Ginger Godley, Adrienne C. Blume, Gary Pickering, Mike Landof and Yvonne Sease. All residents that signed up to speak during this portion, spoke against the passing of the budget and asked council to consider their decision prior voting for the budget and the fact that the taxes are too high in Bamberg County.

Chairwoman Hammond called for third reading of an ordinance to adopt the operating and capital budgets of Bamberg County for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2025 and ending June 30, 2026, and to make appropriations for such Bamberg County budgets 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-purchase financings and general obligation bonds of the county. Councilman Ahlin

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proposed a motion seconded by Councilwoman Martin that council adopt the current FY '24-'25 budget instead of what was presented. The parliamentary procedure of the motion was questioned. The Council continued to vote on the original FY '25-'26 budget with a 4-3 vote of which the motion failed. Voting in favor of original motion presented: Councilman Haynes, Dr. Goodman and Councilman Comer. Voting not in favor: Councilman Ahlin, Councilman Donaldson, Councilwomen Martin and Hammond.

Administrator Preston addressed the Council to remind them of the legal requirement to have an adopted budget by July 1st. A short discussion was acknowledged and on a 5-2 vote, a Budget Workshop was set for 12 noon on Friday, June 27th to reconsider third reading of the proposed budget for FY "25-'26.

Chairwoman Hammond called for Council comments before the conclusion of the meeting. Comments were made to the attending residents thanking them for their attendance, comments and concerns. Council also made additional comments informing the public of their commitment to them.

On motion by Councilwoman Martin, seconded by Councilman Donaldson, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Rose R. Shepherd, CCC