

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., May 5, 2026 in Council Chambers with limited seating for the public alongside live streaming of the meeting provided for public view. **Present:** Vice Chairman Larry Haynes, Councilmen Evert Comer, Jr., Ken Ahlin, Spencer Donaldson and Dr. Jonathan Goodman. **Absent:** Council Chairwoman Michelle Martin and Councilwoman Sharon Hammond. **Others Present:** Joey R. Preston, T.M. Thomas, Aaron Ness, Gina Smith, Chip Maier, Alisha Moore, Kenneth Bamberg, Shawn Hanks, Adrienne Blume, Andrea' Rahn, Lee Hernden, Kathy Rhoad, Dr. Youlanda Gibbs, Lawrence Ford, Donald Kirby and three additional visitors.

Bamberg County Council meeting was called to order by Vice Chairman Larry Haynes 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 Comer, seconded by Dr. Goodman, the minutes from the April 14, 2026 meeting were approved with necessary corrections should there be any.

Vice Chairman Haynes called for approval of the agenda. At this time, Councilman Ahlin moved to strike the public hearing section of the agenda, due to it not meeting the stated statute or law, we're supposed to have a public hearing. The requirements say a notification should be in the paper not less than 15 days and he proceeded to state additional facts regarding the public hearing for a budget. Administrator Preston answered with all due respect, the public hearing for the budget was advertised in the *Times and Democrat* newspaper and everything was done legal. We normally do public hearings on third reading, but this situation, the county council voted on the schedule for the budget which had the public hearing scheduled at the second reading. After giving clarity of Councilman Ahlin's concern, on motion by Councilman Donaldson, seconded by Councilman Comer, council approved the agenda as presented.

Dr. Youlanda Gibbs, Executive Director of the Palmetto Palace, North Charleston, SC shared information about a day of hope for a free dental day in the community. This will be the second annual free dental day held that they are expanding oral health access across South Carolina and supporting uninsured and underinsured adults. Share the message that the Palmetto Palace is having its second annual with Representative Gilda Cobb-Hunter, title sponsored Dr. Solomon, with Solomon Family Dentistry, July 9th and 10th on the Orangeburg County Fairgrounds. X ray and registration will take place at that time. The following week, July 17th and 18th, there will be a 15,000 square foot tent with 60 dental chairs, and they will be there to provide free treatment. You only need to show up, the services offered are free. The doors will open at 6 a.m. and it will be first come first serve. You must have your ID and proof of who you are. The CDC reports that there are 92 million work hours lost per year because of oral health issues. 34 million school hours lost every year for children because of oral health issues. Palmetto Palace is a nonprofit, 501C3 out of North Charleston. Dr. Gibbs was requesting if the County, unions, associations, churches or other groups that have buses where they could provide transportation to assist the people with getting to Orangeburg for the free dental service day. A power point presentation and handouts were shared as well. Many positive comments were made in favor of this service. Dr. Goodman responded if we can get those vehicles on the road, he would give his word tonight that we will make the accommodation for Bamberg County. Contact will be made with

Council on Aging Director Ms. Kay Clary, regarding the possibility of providing transportation from the agency for those needing a ride to the dental clinic. An abundance of information was given and

May 5, 2026....continue

Council thanked Dr. Gibbs and her colleagues for their generosity and concern for Bamberg County and other surrounding communities.

Permission was asked to postpone until the June meeting, the public hearing and third reading of an ordinance authorizing the execution and delivery of the first amendment to special source revenue credit agreement by and among Bamberg County, South Carolina; Lowcountry Properties, LLC and Delavan Spray, LLC; and other matters relating thereto. This item will be placed on the June 2nd, County Council meeting.

Public hearing was given to 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.

COMMITTEE AND STAFF REPORTS:

SOUTHERN CAROLINA ALLIANCE UPDATE:

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

- . Continuing to develop the plans for the Crossroads speculative building number three.
- . 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, where we will have a graduation ceremony celebrating the first welding and CDL classes that will take place at the Advanced Manufacturing Innovation Center in Fairfax, and that will be held on May 15 at 2 p.m.
- . 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 collective 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.

On motion by Councilman Comer, seconded by Councilman Donaldson, council approved the calendar of events.

Bamberg County Administrator - Monthly Report

Administrator Preston reported on the following: 1) Rabies Clinic was held Saturday - 69 dogs and 30 cats, 89 rabies vaccines were given and 46 microchips were in place; 2) Road reports were passed out to the Council (listing of district numbers, roads graded, etc.); 3) Ribbon cutting to be scheduled soon for Riley Drive; 4) Major projects underway - Church Street in the Denmark community and Apache Road in the Bamberg community; 5) Received an overview briefing on the FEMA proceeds that we were awarded for the Emergency Operations Center and for the partner's office. There will be another meeting where they will be coming down on site to take a look at the

May 5, 2026....continue

area that DSS is going to be located in; 6) 1st Rodeo was held in Ehrhardt this past weekend with an attendance of approximately 2,000 and it was really successful; and 7) Groundbreaking for Broadband will be held soon. All information was accepted by council.

On motion by Councilman Ahin, seconded by Councilman Comer, council approved a proclamation for June 2026 as “Forging Strong Fathers Month” in Bamberg County. Dr. Lawrence Ford was present to receive the proclamation. On behalf of The South Carolina Center for fathers and families, they have presented a campaign every year for proclamations around South Carolina where they were established in 2002. Dr. Ford stated that they want to make sure that fathers, whatever their circumstance in life, that they can receive education and job training. They can receive legal guidance to help them navigate issues they may face. Money is not given to fathers, but the monies that they receive from federal, state and local agencies, foundations, private individuals that goes to provide daily ministry with a faith based organization. Presently, they have 15 offices. This year their theme is forging strong fathers and families. That means when the dad is strong, that child and that family is strong. A wide variety of activities are offered through this program. Dr. Ford again thanked the Council for their support.

On motion by Councilman Comer, seconded by Councilman Donaldson, council approved second reading in title only, 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. Voting in favor: Councilmen Comer, Donaldson, Haynes and Goodman. Voting not in favor: Councilman Ahlin. Absent from the vote: Councilwomen Martin and Hammond. Controller Gina Smith presented a power point presentation of various items within the proposed FY 26-27 Budget. The proposed Budget FY 26-27 general fund totals \$13,917,448 an increase of \$1,383,003 from last year’s budget. Controller Smith emphasized on departments and areas that are proposing increases within certain line items. Answers and justifications were pointed out throughout the presentation. Those that had questions and concerns voiced them and answers were provided accordingly. Bamberg County Council Budget Work Sessions will be scheduled shortly for additional information and clarification.

On motion by Councilman Comer, seconded by Councilman Donaldson, council approved the calendar of events.

Public Comments: Public comments were made by Andrea Rahn and Adrienne Blume. Stated concerns: 1) Asked that the Council undertake one project at a time; 2) Budget needs to be tighten; 3) Need to get larger industries; 4) Cost of projects listed on the Dashboard were being questioned; and 5) Treasurer reports are not being seen. All information was taken under advisement.

At this time, Vice Chairman Haynes asked for comments from council. All made similar comments as thanking the public for being in attendance along with Dr. Gibbs and Dr. Ford. Happy Mother’s Day was extended to the Mothers and all were told to have a safe Memorial Day. Administrator Preston and employees were thanked for their hard work.

There being no further business for discussion, on motion by Dr. Goodman, seconded by Councilman Donaldson, the meeting was adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Rose R. Shepherd, CCC