

In compliance with the Freedom of Information Act, agendas for the following meeting were delivered to all members of Council, County Attorney Aaron 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., September 15, 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, Councilwoman Sharon Hammond, Councilmen Evert Comer, Jr., Ken Ahlin, Spencer Donaldson and Dr. Jonathan Goodman, II. **Absent:** Council Chairwoman Michelle Martin. **Others Present:** Joey R. Preston, T.M. Thomas, Aaron Ness, Rep. Justin Bamberg, Chip Maier, Alisha Moore, Shawn Hanks, Kenneth Bamberg, Candace Fralix, Kay Clary, Russ Hurst, Kathy Rhoad, Deputy Anderson, Ida Hipkins, Richard Hipkins, Kenny Anderson, Ms. Anderson, Dwayne Smiling, and approximately thirty additional visitors from Phoenix Specialty Manufacturing.

Bamberg County Council meeting was called to order by Vice Chairman Larry Haynes 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 Comer, seconded by Councilman Donaldson, the minutes from the August 11, 2026 meeting were approved with necessary corrections should there be any.

On motion by Councilman Comer, seconded by Councilman Donaldson, the agenda was approved as submitted.

The council listened to a very in depth presentation from Representative Justin Bamberg regarding the allocation the earmarked funds of \$500,000 for security cameras for the Bamberg County. This money was fought for in the General Assembly so that law enforcement can utilize these tools in ways that the people in this county need. This money will cover equipment only and the county would be responsible for all other costs. Representative Bamberg spoke of benefits of security cameras and the need of them. He stated a government that is powerful enough to protect its people from everything is also powerful enough to control it. Representative Bamberg emphasized the importance and benefits of cameras in dissuading crime and assisting law enforcement in being able to check time to try and find missing people and said in investigation of crimes. We have heard about flock cameras, but Flock is a manufacturer of cameras that make various types of cameras. He addressed concerns about privacy and data management, and it will be extremely restrictive as to who has access to the cameras. Representative Bamberg explained the options for managing the cameras, including purchasing or leasing. The plan is to use state dollars to avoid raising local taxes The cameras would be purposely placed in the county as well as specific locations within the cities or the towns, and it is going to serve as a crime deterrent. Officials would have to determine how many cameras you can afford as well as the consideration of your contract that would be established. There have been several shootings and killings in the county and we have had no cameras to possibly have recordings of any commotion. Citizens that live in the area that own home cameras are afraid to get involved by providing law enforcement with footage on a crime. Also, it was pointed out during storms, instead of having to actually send citizens who work for county government out into inclement weather from emergency management would be

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able to view the cameras and see what is going on. Representative Bamberg was thanked for securing the funds to help Bamberg County and attending the meeting to update everyone as well.

Bamberg County Council recognized Mr. Russell Hurst, CEO of Phoenix Specialty Manufacturing Company, and the employees for being named GE Aerospace 2026 Supplier of the Year and its outstanding contributions to manufacturing excellence, economic development, and the citizens of Bamberg County. Approximately 30 employees were present and representing each department, were present to accept the framed resolution presented to Phoenix Specialty. The resolution recognized the company's achievements and its positive impact on the community. Phoenix Specialty manufacturing Company is a fourth-generation family-owned manufacturing company founded in 1907 and has called Bamberg County Home since 1967. Mr. Hurst acknowledged being named GE Aerospace 2026 Supplier of the Year would not have happened without everybody at Phoenix working together. Appreciation was expressed to the Council for the kindness shown to Phoenix Specialty and the employees.

Dr. William Molnar, Executive Director of LSCOG, reported on regional road transit service delivery issues in Bamberg, Allendale and Barnwell Counties. A visual presentation was given so that the public could view the service that was being discussed. The challenges faced in rural transit service were pointed out. Also, in the presentation the crisis in institutional capacity, community impact and demographic pressures in the tri-county area, statistics on population decline, poverty rates and the need for reliable transportation was indicated and discussed at length. Dr. Molnar suggested regionalized nutrition and transit services as a potential solution to the current challenges to include support from the South Carolina Department on Aging, the Department of Transportation, and the state and federal delegation. A further discussion is needed on the benefits of regional collaboration and the need for a study to determine the best alternative. Dr. Molnar emphasized the importance of finding sustainable funding and addressing the needs of the community. Council thanked him for the presentation.

Sheriff Kenneth Bamberg introduced his new deputy Kenny Anderson to the council. The Sheriff emphasized the importance of community engagement and the role of law enforcement in protecting property and citizens. He discussed the benefits of having cameras in the county and the strategic placement of the cameras. The community members were encouraged to reach out with questions or concerns that they might have.

COMMITTEE AND STAFF REPORTS:

SOUTHERN CAROLINA ALLIANCE UPDATE:

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

- . Recognition of Phoenix Specialty Manufacturing Company - named GE Aerospace 2026 of the Year.
- . New company, Hull and Husk, which will invest \$3.175 million and create 19 jobs in Bamberg County.
- . Upcoming workforce development events and career fairs with a focus on promoting job opportunities in the region.
- . Reminder of the 30th annual celebration and the recognition of Danny Black with the Order of the Palmetto. The Southern Carolina Alliance report was accepted as information.

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Bamberg County Budget Report

Finance Director T.M. Thomas reported the general fund revenues for FY 27 is \$13,917,448. Special Revenue Funds, E911/Emergency Management, Road Maintenance, Rural Fire Service, on the expenditure side all three of these departments have collectively spent \$1,859,809 and are within expected levels at 59.08%. The Enterprise Fund/Solid Waste Department, regarding the expenditure side, the Enterprise Fund has spent 3.35% with July 2026 year-to-date total of \$62,275. Countywide, the majority of all departments continue to operate within their budget and expected bounds. This report was received as information.

Bamberg County Administrator - Monthly Report

Administrator Preston reported on the following: 1) Groundbreaking and dedication on EOC - Friday, September 18th at 2 p.m. - will include the dedication of the state's first true first responders memorial and the unveiling of a historic park; 2) \$12 million grant for broadband, mentioning the procurement process and the arrival of materials - county to submit quarterly reports. Broadband is essential for camera systems; 3) County road grading report was distributed; 4) County is working on cleaning up properties, including a site with over 1,000 tires; 5) Mayor Harold Johnson is collaborating with the county on economic development opportunities; 6) Working on legal processes to clean up properties, including those owned by the Portland Commission; 7) C-Fund meeting will be scheduled soon; 8) QS1 implementation, which modernize the system from on premise servers to a cloud-based system. The treasurer's office was involved in the transition; 9) Orangeburg is currently using our county's transfer station - we will generate funds at about \$15 per ton; 10) Law enforcement consolidation between the city of Bamberg and the County - noting other arrangements will have to be discussed and worked out; 11) KBCB Director Alisha Moore attended a conference in Myrtle Beach on last week. Scheduling of ribbon cutting for Riley Drive in August; and 12) Dwayne Smiling announced Homecoming 2026 for Voorhees University, with a parade on November 14th and a theme of "The Right Way to Celebrate." Grand Marshall is Administrator Joey Preston and council members are invited to participate in the parade. Council accepted this report as information.

On motion by Councilman Comer, seconded by Councilman Donaldson, council gave first reading in title only, to a proposed ordinance revising and re-codifying Bamberg County Ordinance #19-14-2 entitled the "Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance".

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

Public Comments:

Public comments were made by resident Ida Hipkins regarding animal concerns at the Animal Shelter.

At this time, Chairwoman Martin called for comments from council. All made similar comments as thanking the public for being in attendance. Special thanks went to Rep. Justin Bamberg for attending the meeting and to Kathy Rhoad for staying throughout the meeting. An additional comment was made that we can get more done if we work together. Administrator Preston and employees were thanked for their hard work.

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There being no further business for discussion, on motion by Councilman Donaldson, seconded by Councilman Haynes, the meeting was adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rose R. Shepherd, CCC