

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., August 11, 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, Councilwoman Sharon Hammond, Councilmen Larry Haynes, Evert Comer, Jr., Ken Ahlin, Spencer Donaldson and Dr. Jonathan Goodman, II. **Others Present:** Joey R. Preston, T.M. Thomas, Aaron Ness, Chip Maier, Alisha Moore, Shawn Hanks, Kenneth Bamberg, Betty Singleton, Bob Snead, Enterick Lee, Kathy Rhoad, Candace Fralix, Gene Fralix, Sharon Carter, Dwayne Smiling, and five 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 Ken Ahlin.

On motion by Councilman Haynes, seconded by Councilman Goodman, II, the minutes from the July 14, 2026 meeting were approved with necessary corrections should there be any.

On motion by Councilman Goodman, II, seconded by Councilman Haynes, the agenda was approved after Dr. Goodman, II requested that his name be changed as listed on the agenda from Dr. Jonathan Goodman, III to Dr. Jonathan Goodman, II.

Mr. Bob Snead, President and CEO of Southern Palmetto Regional Chamber/Propel Business Lab, along with Mr. Enterick Lee, Vice President of Operations & Programs/Southern Palmetto Regional Chamber/ Propel Business Lab and City of Blackville Councilman, gave highlights on local business support and upcoming events like the Grow Spark Summit and State of the Region Event. A two-day event focusing on business, education, healthcare, and housing, will be held at Denmark Technical College. The summit will feature breakout sessions, a networking reception, and a keynote workshop. There will be a Regional Mayors Alliance at the Grow Spark Summit, focusing on mayors from the three-county region. The State of the Region event will be held at USC Salkehatchie in Allendale on August 27, featuring the newly elected mayor of Allendale and a panel discussion with local businesses. The new Propel cohort at the Barnwell campus starts mid-September with classes beginning on schedule at Voorhees University. At the end of the classes, a \$5,000 grant pitch competition will be held after the 12-week Propel course and one business will be selected as the winning business. The Regional Chamber is currently working with graduates of the Propel Business Lab, including a sweet shop called Sweet Treats. Business cards were distributed to the public for the support of a new business of the self-service dog wash in Allendale. Concerns were discussed about the effectiveness of the Bamberg County Chamber of Commerce and its ability to provide support for the local businesses. Administrator Preston clarified that the Bamberg County Chamber of Commerce is a separate nonprofit entity from county government. The Southern Palmetto Regional Chamber is working to support businesses in Bamberg, Barnwell and Allendale and discussions are ongoing about a potential relationship with the local chamber. Importance of marketing the regional chamber's events and initiatives on the county's website was emphasized. The Council thanked Mr. Snead and Mr. Lee for coming and sharing this information with the public.

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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.
 - . The 3rd graduation ceremony, celebrating 18 welding graduates with NCCER certifications.
 - . Hampton Lumber recently held a hiring event at the Advanced Manufacturing Innovation Center, receiving 360 applications and offering 80 jobs.
 - . SCA is doing ongoing work with Delavan of Bamberg.
- Additional information on business activities will be provided at the next council meeting. The Southern Carolina Alliance report was accepted as information.

Bamberg County Treasurer's Office

Additional information will be provided from that department.

Bamberg County Budget Report

Finance Director T.M. Thomas reported the general fund revenues for FY 26 is \$11,882,727. Special Revenue Funds, E911/Emergency Management, Road Maintenance, Rural Fire Service, on the expenditure side all three of these departments have collectively spent \$1,004,516. The FY26 annual budget for special revenue fund is \$1,471,600. The Enterprise Fund/Solid Waste Department, regarding the expenditure side, the Enterprise Fund has spent 82.69% with June 2026 YTD total of \$1,515,498. The FY26 annual budget for Enterprise fund is \$1,832,810. 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) Introduction of Candace Fralix - Bamberg County Interim Treasurer Candace Fralix was present to introduce herself to council and the public. Ms. Fralix has been employed in the Treasurer's Office for the last 15 years. She provided a partial update on the South State bank balance and July collections and accounts payables. Unveiling of the monument at the SC 250 ceremony in the next three weeks at 11 a.m.; 2) Congratulations to Chip Miaer for helping Bamberg County obtain a Storm Water grant; 3) Groundbreaking for Riley Road on Friday at 1 p.m.; 4) Expression of clarity about the role of the Bamberg County Chamber of Commerce and its relationship with the regional chamber; 5) The need for a conference call with the state engineer to discuss the DSS office relocation and the additional funding required; 6) Courthouse project received \$17.6 million in state funding - special thanks to Sen. Brad Hutto and Rep. Justin Bamberg; 7) Feasibility study to determine the cost of providing fire and police protection; 8) Voter Registration Director Athena Moorer graduated from Level 1 & 2 at the SCAC Conference in July; 9) Send the updated Junkyard Fence Project bid specifications to Councilman Comer; 10) Collect names from council for Holly Hayes for the opioid recovery project she is working on; and 11) Alisha Moore, KBCB Director/PIO will coordinate events with Southern Palmetto Regional Chamber events and add them to the Bamberg County site. Council accepted this report as information.

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On motion by Councilman Haynes, seconded by Councilman Donaldson, council approved the calendar of events after adding the Adopt-A-Dog event to be held at Tractor Supply in Denmark on Saturday morning at 8 a.m.

Public Comments:

Public comments were made by resident Sharon Carter. Her greatest concern was the absence of a Chamber of Commerce.

At this time, Chairwoman Martin called for comments from council. The following things were mentioned: 1) The cost of FOIA requests needs to be capped; 2) Several comments thanking everyone for coming; and 3) Councilwoman Hammond was welcomed back to the meeting; 4) Councilwoman thanked Council for their prayers and well wishes and all were encouraged to work together. Administrator Preston and employees were thanked for their hard work.

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,