

November 24, 2025

The Eastman City Council met in a regularly scheduled meeting on the above date at 6:00 p.m. The following members were present: Sebrina Williams, Graham Snyder, Dwayne Burney, Debra Sheffield, and Mark Peacock. Others present were City Manager Spencer Barron, Attorney Rita Llop, Assistant Police Chief Wesley Dyal, City Clerk April Sheffield, Assistant City Manager Dayna Winslette, HR Clerk Diana Wheeler, Fire Chief Derl Maxwell, Code Enforcer Gerald Fordham, and Special Project Director Wynnnon Pittman. Also in attendance were BJ Hartley, Tennyson Fordham, Karen Hodge, Mary J Sparrow, and Albert George.

The meeting was called to order by Councilor Snyder.

The invocation was given by Councilor Burney.

Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

There were no changes to the agenda. **On a motion from Councilor Peacock and seconded by Councilor Sheffield, the agenda was unanimously approved.**

APPROVE MINUTES:

A motion was made by Councilor Burney and seconded by Councilor Williams to approve the minutes of the November 24, 2025, regular meeting. The motion was approved unanimously.

NO UNFINISHED BUSINESS

PLANNING & ZONING:

LIVING 7, LLC @ AIRPORT ROAD AND LIVING DRIVE (060 024A):

A request was made by Living 7, LLC, for a variance on the setbacks in order to secure financing. The townhouses are already built on one large parcel of land. The intent is to separate the large parcel into smaller ones with a townhome on each. Gerald stated that everything had already been built and this was the best way to handle the need and the situation. Attorney Llop asks the property owner to explain the details. He stated that in order to end the construction loan and transfer it to a regular loan, they are requiring him to split it up into smaller parcels. There is no plan to sell the individual homes, just refinance and turn it into a regular mortgage. He will continue to use them as they are now. **Councilor Peacock makes the motion with a second from Councilor Sheffield and it is unanimously approved for Living 7, LLC to receive a variance on the setbacks on this particular property.**

FORDHAM RENTAL PROPERTIES, LLC @ 401 2ND AVENUE:

Mr. Fordham has requested a rezoning of parcel E12 053 from an R-2 to a P-zone in order to build a business on the lot and still accommodate the rest of the block that is residential. The surrounding area consists of both businesses and residences. When questioned, Attorney Llop stated that Mr. Fordham doesn't already have to have a specific plan in place before his application is approved. Audience member, Karen Hodge, asked a question of what is exactly allowed in that area as a P-zone because she lives next to that particular property. Gerald stated that in a P-zone professional businesses, offices, and residences are allowed. Nothing industrial or manufacturing is allowed. Ms. Hodge is concerned about if Mr. Fordham chooses to build rental property, what the rental rate will be. She feels that because of the airport students, the cost of rent has increased too much. She also doesn't want anything built there that will bring down the value of her property. Even though the neighborhood isn't the best, it doesn't need to go downhill more. Councilor Snyder feels that any investment into that property would only

enhance the quality of the area. Ms. Hodge is concerned that an alcohol store would not be beneficial to the area. She also asks for the area to be more policed. Manager Barron agrees and states that her concerns are on the record and he is appreciative. **With no other comments, Councilor Burney makes a motion to approve the rezoning. Councilor Peacock seconds the motion and it is unanimously approved.**

BUILDING PERMIT:

MORGAN T FORDHAM ON 2ND AVENUE:

Mr. Fordham has also applied for a building permit to erect a metal building to house a gym on the opposite side of the beforementioned property. **This property is at the corner of 2nd Avenue and Plum Street.** Gerald comes forward again to state that he has looked over the paperwork, and it all appears to be in compliance. Attorney Llop states that it is in the correct zone. **On a motion from Councilor Peacock and seconded by Councilor Sheffield, the building permit was unanimously approved.**

EXECUTIVE SESSION: PERSONNEL, PROPERTY, & LEGAL MATTERS:

Council unanimously voted to enter into executive session for personnel, legal, and property matters. This was done on a motion from Councilor Peacock and seconded by Councilor Sheffield.

Council then returned and with a motion from Councilor Peacock and a second from Councilor Burney, they entered back into regular session. No votes were taken.

NEW BUSINESS:

APPROVE BILLS:

On a motion from Councilor Peacock and seconded by Councilor Williams, the bills for 9/17/25 – 11/13/25 were approved.

APPROVE LIONS CLUB CHRISTMAS PARADE:

The Lions Club has requested permission to conduct their annual Christmas parade on Saturday, December 13, 2025, at 6:30 PM. They will use the same route as years past that begins at the post office and ends at the old courthouse. We have already applied and received permission from GDOT. Manager Barron states that the fire, police, water, and street departments are all willing to help with blocking off the roads. **Councilor Burney made that motion and Councilor Sheffield seconded it in order to unanimously approve of having the 2025 Christmas parade.**

WETLAND STUDY:

Manager Barron asks permission to spend \$12,000 to conduct a wetland study on land that the city owns on the Soperton Hwy. This could be a potential limb and leaf debris site. We have used this company previously to conduct one on another piece of property and they did an outstanding job. Attorney Llop states that the recent title search shows that we own about 60 acres of land. A topography has already been done by Mr. Hartley showing that a lot of the land is indeed usable. A wetland study will help finalize the decision on how to use the property. **Councilor Peacock made the motion to spend \$12,000 for Environmental Delineations LLC, to move forward with the wetland study on the Soperton Hwy property. The motion was seconded by Councilor Sheffield and approved unanimously by all.**

PRESENT 2026 BUDGET AND SCHEDULE PUBLIC HEARING:

Clerk Sheffield presented the 2026 budget and requested to schedule the public hearing for the next council meeting on December 8, 2025, at 6:00 PM. If approved to proceed, the budget will be in the

paper and on the city's website. **The hearing will take place on the 8th, and the 2026 Budget can be approved at the final council meeting on Monday, December 22, 2025, at 6:00 PM.** Councilor Snyder thanks all of those involved in preparing the new budget. Manager Barron states that the budget is a little higher than last year but feels that there should be no problem meeting the numbers. Councilor Burney also thanks everyone. **On a motion from Councilor Williams and a second from Councilor Peacock, the 2026 Budget is unanimously presented and the public hearing is set for the next council meeting.**

APPROVE HEALTH INSURANCE:

Manager Barron says that they have met with our current broker and discussed changing to a different insurance company versus staying with our current one. It is their and his recommendation to stay with Veris Benecon. In doing that, the premium is going up approximately \$189,000, a 16.6% increase. However, if approved, he wants to use \$200,000 of the surplus to offset that increase. It will still leave about \$280,000 in the reserve fund. **Councilor Peacock made a motion and was seconded by Councilor Sheffield to approve staying with Capstone and Benecon. This was unanimously approved. Councilor Peacock then made a motion to use the \$200,000 surplus to offset the increased premium. This motion was seconded by Councilor Williams and unanimously approved.**

APPROVE BID FOR 2026 WORKERS COMPENSATION:

Clerk Sheffield presents the bids for the 2026 Workers' Compensation. **GMA came with a quote of \$91,327. That includes \$2 million liability limits and a \$2500 deductible.** Stamps Walker gave a quote of \$68,698 and included \$1 million liability limits with no deductible. Asst Manager Winslette mentions the Safety and Liability grant that we can apply for every year as long as we have coverage. This past year we received a little over \$12K. Preference of the office administration is to stay with GMA due to relationship and knowledge of history. Councilor Snyder asks for a preference. Councilor Peacock makes a motion to stay with GMA. Snyder then calls for a vote to approve. **Councilor Sheffield made the motion which was seconded by Councilor Peacock to remain with GMA Workers Compensation for the 2026 year.**

CITY MANAGER REPORT:

Manager Barron reminded everyone about the Christmas parade on Saturday, December 13, 2025, at 6:30 PM. They plan on setting up the skating rink next week at the open-air amphitheater. The Christmas lights have been set up at the Club also, so be sure and check those out. Outdoor pickleball is open during daylight hours at the Park. They are still working on the outside lighting situation and also getting the gym fire safety ready and approved. Last thing, when you rake up leaves, they do not need to be in any type of bag. Just pile them up and the truck will come by and pick them up.

THERE WAS NO OTHER BUSINESS FROM COUNCIL

On a motion from Councilor Peacock, a second from Councilor Williams, and a unanimous vote, the meeting was adjourned.

CHAIRMAN

CITY CLERK