

September 8, 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, Debra Sheffield, and Dwayne Burney. Councilor Mark Peacock participated by phone. Others present were City Attorney Rita Llop, City Manager Spencer Barron, Police Chief Billy Cooper, Fire Chief Derl Maxwell, City Clerk April Sheffield, and Assistant City Manager Dayna Winslette. Department Heads Wynnon Pittman, Rodney Harrell, Matt McDaniel, Gerald Fordham, Diana Wheeler, and Brandon Brisco were also in attendance. Those present from the community were Mitchell and Susan Coffee, EM Harrington III, Sharon Cobb Flanagan, Michelle and Bodie Gray, Kim Spencer, and BJ Hartley.

The meeting was called to order by Councilor Snyder at 6:03 pm.

The invocation was given by City Manager Barron.

Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

The agenda was unanimously approved on a motion from Councilor Williams and seconded by Councilor Sheffield.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

On a motion from Councilor Burney and seconded by Councilor Sheffield, the minutes from the August 25, 2025, regular meeting were unanimously approved.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

INSURANCE BROKER RFQ:

Manager Barron thanks the council for the opportunity to bid out for an insurance broker this year. Diana Wheeler has gone above and beyond collecting information and interviewing to be able to make the best decision for the city. She has requested that we stay with Capstone another year. **Council unanimously approved to stay with Capstone on a motion from Councilor Sheffield and a second from Councilor Williams.**

NEW BUSINESS:

MONTHLY FIRE DEPT REPORT:

Chief Maxwell came forth to deliver the fire report for the month of August 2025. There was a total of 179 calls for the month. There were no non-working structure fires. There was one working structure fire in the city and one other fire-related call in the city. There were 110 medical-related calls in the city and 33 in the county. There were 4 motor vehicle accidents in the city and 6 in the county. Nineteen public service calls (alarms, smoke, trees) in the city and 4 in the county. They were cancelled in route 1 time within the county. There were 109 total in-house training hours for the month.

MONTHLY POLICE DEPT REPORT:

Chief Cooper presented the monthly report for the police department. They used 1,123 gallons of fuel in the month of August 2025 to patrol 12,803 miles. They answered 874 calls, worked 25 traffic accidents, and made 253 arrests/citations with a total number of 62 jail days. A total of \$32,648.47 was collected in cash bonds and fines.

MONTHLY DEPARTMENT HEAD REPORTS:

Wynnon Pittman came forward to give the water distribution information for the month of August. The water department had 404 work orders last month. The breakdown was as follows: 126 water cut-ons,

107 water cut-offs, 13 water leak checks, 14 water leaks, 62 locates, 3 meters set, 0 valves were inspected, 2 new items were GPS located and one was removed, 26 meters were repaired, preventative maintenance was performed on 8 valves, 1 hydrant, and 5 meters. A valve was located, completed 4 meter inspections, and they conducted maintenance on 3 vehicles. They managed to replace one lead and copper line. One sewer was investigated, one was repaired, and 11 sewer lines were cleaned out due to grease and wipes again. As far as stormwater, 3 culvert repairs were completed, and one ditch was cleaned out. The vac truck was used to clean out 10 catch basins. The department used 633 gallons of fuel this month.

As far as projects are concerned, KDUG is finished on Mt. Moriah. They have to come back and do some dressing up around the curbs and gutter. This project should be coming to a close in the next few weeks. Over in the Jessup Heights area, they closed 9th Avenue today. They should be finishing up 9th and coming across to Congo and closing it tomorrow. They are hoping to be able to tie the whole system back in from Congo to 4th by the end of the week. He doesn't have an estimated completion date yet. The contractors are trying to get a second crew here to get them caught up.

The pickleball courts at the park are on track. They are scheduled to be painted on the 15th. Wynnon is waiting on another quote for the fence, but he feels that everything should be coming together soon. Councilor Burney asked if the cracks in the concrete had been taken care of. Wynnon stated that he and Spence had gone around and checked into things. They had a lot of documentation, but the consensus was that hairline cracks were going to happen. The contractor signed a waiver for a 5-year warranty. It's not perfect but complete documentation is on file at the office. Councilor Snyder did point out that when the court gets painted, that contractor is going to put a layer of epoxy down to help with the cracks.

Matt McDaniel came forward for the month of August treatment plant report. The amount of treated water that was released into Sugar Creek was 19,300,000 gallons. That calculates to 0.624 MGD. Water usage at the plant was a total of 743,000 gallons. They spent 406 hours this past month with a breakdown as follows: cleaning clarifiers and filters 32, lab and sampling 123, belt press and sludge 35, lift station and well repair 35, lawn maintenance 28, plant maintenance 43, routine rounds 36, education and training 0, management duties 13, plant operation 93, and grease traps 0.

Rodney Harrell gave an update about the wells for the month of August. The wells pumped 33,382,000 gallons of water. That averaged out to be 1.077 MGD.

Councilor Snyder asked about the work at the Walmart pump station. Rodney confirmed that they were putting the new pump in and taking the loaner out. The pump with the propeller issue will be coming back later this week. It was covered under warranty.

Brandon Brisco came forward to deliver the street department report. His department spent 10 hours on animal calls, 27 on curbs and gutters, 0 on cleaning ditches, 27 hours limb cutting, 287 mowing grass, 39 on potholes, 10 hours on trash pick-up, and 206 on limb truck pick-up. They spent a total of 287 hours on various other projects, which mainly included cleaning up the shop and repairing things after the safety man came and did his walk-through. They had no special events last month.

Gerald Fordham came forward with his report as the code enforcer. He had 55 grease trap inspections for the month of August. He addressed 4 limb & leaf violations. There were 9 work orders for maintenance at the shop. There were 4 work orders for planning and zoning. He had one work order for code enforcement and one for a code violation. There was one building inspection completed. He has 14 nuisance and blight cases that are open right now.

Gerald elaborated on his objectives as the code enforcer. The goal is to get the city of Eastman cleaned up as a whole. He is focusing on the bad areas with overgrown vegetation, abandoned houses, etc. He is working with several homeowners right now. Attorney Llop and Wynnon are working with him on

creating one-time cleanup fees for the property owners that live out of state and don't have someone local that can do the cleanup. Councilor Snyder reminds everyone that the goal is not to be punitive but for everyone to work together. Attorney Llop states that the city could file an action, clean up the property and bill the landowner. What Gerald is trying to do is skip a step and get an agreement to clean it up. Llop is working on a written agreement with the landowner to get it paid and cut the time frame short. Gerald stated that several people have contacted him to see if the city offers to do the cleanup. Councilor Snyder thanks Gerald for thinking outside of the box and finding ways to come to an amicable agreement.

RESCHEDULE COLUMBUS DAY MEETING:

The first meeting of October falls on the holiday of Columbus Day. **The council unanimously voted to reschedule that meeting for Wednesday, October 15, 2025, at 6 pm on a motion from Councilor Burney and seconded by Councilor Sheffield.**

APPROVE BILLS:

On a motion from Councilor Peacock and seconded by Councilor Williams, the bills for August 25 – September 8, 2025, were unanimously approved.

HOUSING AUTHORITY CONTRACT:

Chief Cooper came forward and explained that as far back as he could remember, the city has had an agreement with the Eastman Housing Authority. The Authority would help subsidize an officer's pay in order to help handle security, deliver papers, and do routine safety checks throughout the facility. He has one officer that is listed as a housing authority officer. This agreement is basically renewing the contract with some updated terms. Dr. Barron states that the Authority will be reimbursing the city for **\$15,000 a year**. Attorney Llop states that it will be renewed on a yearly basis but can be cancelled at any time with a 30-day notice. She points out that the police department will maintain its integrity and independence. Cooper points out that his department has a great relationship with the housing authority. Michelle Butler, with the Housing Authority, agrees with Chief Cooper and states that they want to do whatever is needed to keep the community and town a safe place. Councilor Snyder is in complete agreement and calls for a motion. **A unanimous vote to approve the contract took place on a motion from Councilor Burney and a second from Councilor Sheffield.**

GA RECOVERS BUS TOUR RESOLUTION:

Councilor Snyder starts by thanking Lane Fountain for being instrumental in helping secure a grant in relation to providing a Narcan box for the front of City Hall. The Governor's Office is involved in it. It is bringing a resource here and the city doesn't have to spend any extra money. Several overdoses have been occurring in the city. This box holds the anecdote used on the overdose victims. We also have it in the police cars and in the fire trucks as well. As part of the agreement, they have asked us to pass a resolution. The Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities, the Georgia Council for Recovery, and the Georgia General Assembly Working Group on Addiction and Recovery have asked all residents of the State of Georgia to participate in National Recovery Month. **This resolution will recognize the City of Eastman's declaration that the month of September 2025 be named National Recovery Month. The resolution was unanimously approved by the council on a motion from Councilor Williams and seconded by Councilor Sheffield.**

LIFT STATION REPLACEMENT PARTS:

Rodney came forward about the James Avenue lift station. He recently got in new pumps but when the contractor got there to install them, they were under the impression that the volutes were equipped to be able to replace the inserts. However, that was not the case. He showed the council several pictures of

the equipment where the impeller was pitted and eaten up. Oil was leaking out. It was a metal-on-metal situation. The quote from Pro Pump Solutions is for 2 new volutes with replaceable insert rings. Even though these lasted many, many years, a cheaper solution is to only have to replace the insert ring instead of the whole volute because that is what has the wear on it. James Avenue was the original treatment plant and where 3 different lift stations are pumped into for the effluent to be pushed across town. All of the sand accumulated has basically sandblasted the parts down. Manager Barron states that the funds will come out of the Short-lived account. Councilor Burney asks about the average lifespan. Rodney said he wasn't sure, but he believes that the disposable part which is the ring runs about \$3,000 where both pieces together are almost \$17,000. **The council unanimously approved the purchase of the two volutes and inserts from Pro Pump Solutions for \$33,758. This vote was taken on a motion from Councilor Burney and seconded by Councilor Williams.**

SET MILLAGE RATE AND PUBLIC HEARINGS:

Manager Barron states that the council will need to decide to stay at the current millage rate of 9.550 or accept the rollback rate of 8.957. There are arguments for both, but it makes more sense to keep improving than to fall behind again if the rollback is accepted. Barron states that the CPI is going up at least 3 points and the city would need a 3% increase to stay in line with the inflation. Staying at a 9.55 would give the city a 6.62% increase over last year. Councilor Snyder pointed out that if the city got a surplus, they would love to give back to the community by possibly reducing some of the fees and it would help the city in paying down some of its debt. Barron reminds them of the \$6.8 million owed on the treatment plant, \$650,000 on the new water meters, and probably around a million dollars on the Jessup Heights sewer project. The committee recommended staying with the 9.55. All council members agreed. **Councilor Sheffield made a motion to accept the 9.55 millage rate. Councilor Burney seconded the motion and all members voted unanimously.**

The next step is to schedule the public hearings required with a property tax increase. **Clerk Sheffield has suggested advertising on September 10 & 17, an 11 AM & 5 PM hearing on September 22, and having a 6 PM hearing on September 29 directly before the council meeting to approve the rate. This schedule was unanimously approved on a motion from Councilor Burney and seconded by Councilor Williams.**

ALCOHOL LICENSE:

-SANDIPKUMAR PATEL @ 1527 COLLEGE STREET; CHANGE OF OWNERSHIP:

Wynnon Pittman came forward to state that all paperwork is in order and complete. **On a motion from Councilor Sheffield and seconded by Councilor Williams, the alcohol license was approved.**

HOME OCCUPATION LICENSE:

-JW FOUNDATIONS; JACOREE WILCOX @ 23 LYNDIE CIRCLE; CONSTRUCTION/FOUNDATIONS/CONTRACTING:

Wynnon stated that everything conforms with the rules. **The home occupation license was unanimously approved on a motion from Councilor Burney and seconded by Councilor Sheffield.**

EXECUTIVE SESSION – PROPERTY AND LEGAL MATTERS:

On a motion from Councilor Sheffield and a second from Councilor Williams, there was a unanimous vote to adjourn into executive session for property and legal matters.

On a motion from councilor Burney and seconded by Councilor Sheffield, there was a unanimous vote to enter back into regular session. No further action was taken.

CITY MANAGER HAS NOTHING TO REPORT:

NO OTHER BUSINESS FROM COUNCIL:

ADJOURNMENT:

On a motion from Councilor Burney and a second from Councilor Sheffield, the meeting was adjourned at 8:05 pm.

CHAIRMAN

CITY CLERK