

May 9, 2022

The Eastman City Council met in a regular scheduled meeting on the above date at 6:00 p.m. Members present were Buddy Pittman, Raymond Mullis, Sebrina Williams, Jermayne Hamilton, and Ronnie Woodard. Others present were City Manager Spencer Barron, Attorney Rita Llop, Engineer Jesse Bearden, City Clerk April Sheffield, Police Chief Becky Sheffield, Fire Chief Scotty Whitten, and Building Inspector Jack White. Present from the community were John Battle, Mitchell and Susan Coffee, Sharon Cobb Flanagan, Gail Smith-Carr, Milton Johnson, Reverend Lonnie Lewis Jr., Albert George, Opera Burns, and Melvin Edwards.

All attendees practiced social distancing guidelines due to COVID-19 restrictions. The meeting was streamed via Facebook Live, and the public was provided an opportunity to submit questions and/or comments via Facebook Live.

The meeting was called to order by Council Member Pittman.

Invocation was given by Council Member Hamilton.

Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVE AGENDA:

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: First order of business is to approve the agenda. Do we have additions to it?

CITY MANAGER BARRON: Yes Sir. We need to add an emergency sewer repair.

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: Anything else?

CITY MANAGER BARRON: Jermayne, do you want to talk about Sunset, or do you want to add it to the agenda?

COUNCIL MEMBER HAMILTON: Yes, I would like to add it to the agenda.

CITY MANAGER BARRON: Add Sunset Park.

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: Anything else? If not, then I need a motion to amend the agenda and add a #9, an emergency sewer repair, and a #10, Sunset Park to the agenda. In that motion, if we approve to make the additions, we want to make a motion to approve the new agenda as it stands.

COUNCIL MEMBER MULLIS: So moved.

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: Got a motion from Councilman Mullis. I need a second.

COUNCIL MEMBER HAMILTON: Second.

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: Got a second from Councilman Hamilton. All in favor show of hands? Motion carried unanimous.

APPROVE MINUTES:

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: Next on the agenda is to approve the minutes of the April 25, 2022, regular meeting.

COUNCIL MEMBER MULLIS: So moved.

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: Have a motion from Councilman Mullis. Council, were there any questions or anything about the minutes? If not, I need a second.

COUNCIL MEMBER WOODARD: Second.

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: Have a second from Councilman Woodard. All in favor show of hands? Motion carried unanimous.

NO UNFINISHED BUSINESS

NEW BUSINESS:**MONTHLY FIRE DEPT REPORT:**

CHIEF SCOTTY WHITTEN: For the month of April, we had 4 structure fires, 1 stove fire, 7 brush fires, 1 vehicle fire. Medical calls 9, vehicle rescues 9, cancellations 2, electrical alarm 5, smoke checks 2, power lines down 1. Total of 42 calls this month.

MONTHLY POLICE DEPT REPORT:

CHIEF BECKY SHEFFIELD: For the month of April, we used 1,117 gallons of gas, answered 1,014 calls, and worked 32 wrecks.

APPROVE MONTHLY BILLS:

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: Next on the agenda is to approve the monthly bills for April 25, 2022 – May 9, 2022.

COUNCIL MEMBER MULLIS: So moved.

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: Have a motion from Councilman Mullis to approve the bills. Council, do you have any questions about any of them? If not, I need a second.

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Second.

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: Seconded by Councilwoman Williams. All in favor show hands. Motion carried unanimous.

JUNETEENTH PROCLAMATION:

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: Next on the agenda is the Juneteenth Proclamation. I think Ms. Sebrina is going to read the proclamation.

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS reads proclamation and will be entered as part of the minutes.

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: I will entertain a motion now to approve the Juneteenth Proclamation.

COUNCIL MEMBER MULLIS: So moved.

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: Have a motion from Councilman Mullis. I need a second.

COUNCIL MEMBER HAMILTON: Second.

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: Have a motion and a second. All in favor, show of hands. Motion carried unanimous.

COLLEGE STREET SIDEWALK REPAIR:

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: Next on the agenda is the College Street sidewalk repair.

CITY MANAGER BARRON: Y'all gave us permission to reach out for bids to repair College Street. No one responded to it. This is the sidewalks there. Since no one responded to the solicitation, we actually reached out to the local concrete guy, Conrad Bennett. He said he would do 62 ft x 10 ft for a price of \$3,300. This is the sidewalk in front of Bug House on College Street coming towards 3rd. It is uneven. Have we gotten the trees took down?

INSPECTOR WHITE: The trees were taken down. We will pull the concrete up and remove the stumps and then pour the new concrete walkway.

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: Council, do y'all have any questions? If not, I need a motion to approve the College Street sidewalk repair at a cost of \$3,300.

COUNCIL MEMBER MULLIS: So moved.

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: I have a motion by Councilman Mullis. I need a second.

COUNCIL MEMBER WOODARD: Second.

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: Second from Councilman Woodard, all in favor show of hands. Motion carried unanimous.

HYDRANT REPLACEMENT PROJECT:

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: Next on the agenda is the hydrant replacement project.

CITY MANAGER BARRON: Scotty has brought it to our attention that we have a number of fire hydrants that are in need of repair or replacement. Mr. Royce has gone out and checked the m. The ones that he thought he could repair, he did. The ones that he couldn't, we have 6 that are going to have to be repaired by an outside entity. We also ask that you let us bid out the installation of insertion valves in those fire hydrants so we will have a mechanism so that we can cut them off if we ever need to work on them or if they were damaged by, say a car hitting them. So, the request is, Scotty? Is that we bid out this work, right? Jack? Is that what you want to do?

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: Alright, I need a motion to advertise for hydrant replacement of 6 fire hydrants and installation, replacing and installing insertion valves along with the hydrants.

COUNCIL MEMBER MULLIS: So moved.

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: Got a motion from Councilman Mullis. I need a second.

COUNCIL MEMBER HAMILTON: Second.

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: Second from Councilman Hamilton. All in favor. Motion carried unanimous.

GEFA/WATER METER PROJECT:

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: Next on the agenda is the GEFA/Water meter project.

CITY MANAGER BARRON: We are ready to move forward on the previously discussed water meter project and execute the loan documents. Just to refresh everyone's mind, it will be a GEFA loan for \$1,285,000. The interest rate on it is 0.07% with a forgiveness of \$578,250. This will be to replace between 2,500 and 3,000 antiquated water meters with the city of Eastman. The exact number is going to depend on what we find and what the cost is and how we go from there.

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: And this is to move forward to start on it? We got everything ready to move?

CITY MANAGER BARRON: Yes, this is to start on it. And everything is ready, just sign that paper.

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: Council, do y'all have anymore questions? This is going to be the automatic meter readers, isn't it?

CITY MANAGER BARRON: Yes. Jesse, do you have anything else to add to that?

ENGINEER BEARDEN: To save the city some money, we decided to go with AMR instead of AMI. So, basically it is a data collector or laptop that has the map of the city. Every meter shows up as red. You ride by, ding, ding, ding, the red dots turn green and populates that program. It will still have all of the functions of the AMI. Radio-read except of course, we won't have the availability to automatically have them read by the ladies sitting at their desk. We will have to go out with the laptop and populate that meter and we will program it to pick up the last 3 months and any problems with it. The reason we are doing that is the frequency that we would have to put the radios in, and repeaters we would have to do because of Morgan Creek, the Airport, North Lakes. It is just spread out. You are looking at probably \$30,000 annual maintenance on this radio frequency. So, we can save that money and decided to go with the computer populated. One person on that golf cart can read every meter here in Eastman in one day. No more paper books, no more getting out and reading the number. Just drive by and it just populates itself.

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: In the event of the next day or two and we decide to go?

ENGINEER BEARDEN: There is no additional charge to change any meters, any heads, any radios.

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: No, I am talking in the event of whoever is riding down there and reading, skips this road or skips that road.

ENGINEER BEARDEN: You don't even have to ride down the road. You just ride by it, and it will populate it. Plus, every meter will be on a map and be in red. And they will turn green when they are read. So, when he gets back in here and all of a sudden, he sees something that is still red, he can go back by it.

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: So, this is ready to go? You can pick the phone up tomorrow and this is going to happen?

ENGINEER BEARDEN: The money will be in the bank.

CITY MANAGER BARRON: We just hope the meters aren't out on a boat somewhere. But the sooner you approve it, the sooner we can order them.

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: Council, do y'all have any other questions? If not, then I need a motion to approve to move forward with the GEFA/Automatic Water Meter Project.

COUNCIL MEMBER MULLIS: **So moved.**

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: Got a motion from Councilman Mullis. I need a second.

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: **Second.**

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: Second from Councilwoman Williams. All in favor, show of hands. Motion carried unanimous.

LIBRARY BOARD APPOINTMENT:

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: Next on the agenda is library board appointment.

CITY MANAGER BARRON: We have received a request from the Ocmulgee Regional Library to reappoint Ms. Cindy Greene to their board if the council would consider that. Her first term will end on June 30, 2022.

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: I think everybody had a copy of this in your packet. Ms. Anne Bowen from the library has said that Ms. Cindy Greene's first 4-year term will end June 30, 2022. Ms. Greene serves as the Dodge County Library Board chair and holds an office on the regional board. Our bylaws allow a board member to serve 2 4-year terms back-to-back. May we please have a reappointment of Ms. Greene for a term extending into 2026? Council, do y'all have any questions? If not, I need a motion to reappoint Cindy Greene to the Dodge County Library Board.

COUNCIL MEMBER MULLIS: **So moved.**

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: I have a motion from Councilman Mullis. I need a second.

COUNCIL MEMBER HAMILTON: **Second.**

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: Second from Councilman Hamilton. All in favor, show of hands. Motion carried unanimous.

EMERGENCY SEWER REPAIR:

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: Next on the agenda is emergency sewer repair.

CITY MANAGER BARRON: Yes, Mr. Royce notified me this afternoon that we have had a sewer line collapse adjacent to Goodman's Auto Sales. It runs under 3rd Avenue. It is going to require that the street be dug up and the line replaced. It is critical and it is affecting business. So, we need to move forward on it. Blake and Mark Studstill said that they can do the repairs for \$4,000 if the council will approve it. We don't have the ability in house to dig that line up and fix it ourselves right now.

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: Council, do y'all have any questions? Collapsed means it is collapsed. Nothing is flowing.

CITY MANAGER BARRON: Correct, nothing is flowing, and it is backing up.

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: When can they get started on it?

CITY MANAGER BARRON: Not, tonight. We can't afford them. But hopefully tomorrow. Or at least the next day or so. We can't wait 2 weeks for a council meeting to bid it out. The man's restrooms aren't working.

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: Alright. Council, do y'all have any other questions? If not, I need a motion to approve this emergency sewer repair on 3rd Avenue.

COUNCIL MEMBER MULLIS: So moved.

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: Have a motion from Councilman Mullis. I need a second.

COUNCIL MEMBER WOODARD: Second.

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: Second by Councilman Woodard. All in favor show of hands. Motion approved unanimous.

SUNSET PARK:

REVEREND LEWIS: I am the pastor over at Annis Chapel Missionary Baptist Church over in Sunset. The Ministerial Alliance is asking for the park to be reopened under the guidance of Reverend Lonnie Lewis, Jr. I do have some concerns about the situation about the park. As you are aware, one size does not fit all. When it comes to the solution of Sunset Park. We want to open responsibly and stay safely. We are asking for the council to support our opening with 2 basketball goals to be put up and also for the fence to move up by 30 feet so we will have somewhere to park. We want to lock the double gates for everyone to come in the side entrance. We also need your assistance that the City of Eastman Police to ride through as well. We are asking for the park to be open from 5 to 8 pm on the weekdays, closed on Saturday unless they get permission from the manager, Sunday from 1 pm to 8 pm, daylight savings time only. This is what we propose to the council.

COUNCIL MEMBER HAMILTON: What were those times again, Pastor?

REVEREND LEWIS: Sunday, from 1 to 8 pm. Weekdays from 5pm to 8 pm. Closed on Saturdays without special permission.

OPERA BURNS: I live over in Sunset down from the park. I know that he is asking for it to be reopened. But before it be reopened, I feel like there needs to be cameras up there. And there needs to be someone there to monitor it from the time it opens up, up until it is time for the kids to leave. I don't know if some of y'all are aware, but they just had to go back up there and put locks back on the park. I don't know if it had been cut or if it was left open. But the city should know whoever went up there and repaired the lock on it. They should be able to tell you all. During the time they was up there, they weren't supposed to be there. They was parking on the parking lot where the basketball goals be. Little kids are playing around out there. 2 and 3 years old, 5, 6, 7 years old. And I felt like that was very dangerous for them to be parking up there. And those little kids are out there playing. Any one of them could have gotten in their vehicle and backed out and ran over one of those kids while they was leaving from that park. And then the first thing that one of them would have said was, oh I am sorry, I didn't know. But sorry is not going to bring somebody's child back. Somebody's sister, somebody's brother back. So if it can't be to where it can be open properly and have somebody there at all times from the hours that he presented, I don't think it should be open until it can get to that point. Cameras is the first step before it gets opened back up. There needs to be some cameras there because I know that other people have to do with their time and during the day. I don't think that nobody is going to sit up there from the time that that park opens until it closed, during that time. It's going to have to take a group to do it. One or two persons is not going to be able to do it. Somebody is always going to have some other business that they have got to take care of, or do during that day, or whatever. So, in the meantime, I think that if it is going to be opened properly, then I am for it. But if not, I am not for it. I am going to be honest with you, I am really not. I know that I was spoken to earlier, they said that during the time that they was going up there, and there was no police calls and no fights. Okay, maybe there wasn't no

police calls or no fights, but who was to say that things were being ran up there properly. For one, they shouldn't have never went over that fence, or cut that lock, or even if the lock was left open. They shouldn't have went in there. And during that time, I heard a basketball bouncing up there at about 12 something at nighttime. I know that there was things, I am not going to get into it, but there was things that was being did up there that was inappropriate. But you don't have to listen to what I say, put a camera up there and it will speak for all. Even if you put the camera up there, it will probably slowsome of the things that have been taking place up there because they know that there is a camera there and they know that they got to do right. They need some lights, brighter lights up there. Because you can barely see. Right there where that goal is, that light that is there, you can see a person up there but as far as you being able to look and tell from my distance who it actually is, you won't be able to tell. You know that somebody is there, but as far as you can say that you see them real good, no. At nighttime you can't. So, I am asking that cameras be put up there and there be someone there at all times. From the time it opens up until the time that it is time for those kids to leave, there needs to be somebody there to monitor it at all times. I am not just doing it for me, I am doing it for the little kids who can't come and speak up for themselves.

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: Now, listening to what you are saying, there are 2- and 3-year-olds up there with no parent or anybody with them?

OPERA BURNS: No, it be parents up there with the smaller kids in general, but it be 4- and 5-year-olds up there that are running around and playing. Everybody don't take their child to the park. There will be some kids up there but don't be no parents there.

COUNCIL MEMBER HAMILTON: All throughout Eastman GA and Dodge County, there is going to be all kinds of activities that is going on that we can't control. There is activities going on right now, as we speak, that in some place or some point in time throughout this city that we are missing. We can't be at every place at the same time. However, we can put people in place, like you said, to help manage and control what we can control. We can't be here and be there, but I can guarantee you that if we was to do this, it will be ran to the best of our abilities. For me speaking, it is unfair for the kids that want to go to the park and do know how to act, and they can't do it. It has been going on for so long, and I have been hearing it all the time. Officer Hamilton, when are we going to get the park going again? When are we going to get the park back open? That park actually saved my life. It kept me out of the streets. It kept me for picking up a backpack and going outside on a corner and doing God knows what. That did that for me and that can do that for another child as well. Like you said, as a community we can come together and take back over our community. We don't have to sit here and be a product of someone else's misbehaviors. All we can do is get them together and say hey this is what it is going to be. If not, I'm sorry to tell you and put it this way but we have a place for you. If we can do it decently and in order, that is why we have law enforcement.

OPERA BURNS: Excuse me, times have changed from when you were going up there. All of that wasn't going on. Yes, it was true that you could go there to get away from everything else. But you know that the sad part is now? Now the kids go up there and they running right into it because it's right there at the park waiting on them to come.

COUNCIL MEMBER HAMILTON: It was at the park when I as there. But you know what happened? The people around us said no we aren't going to allow that to happen.

OPERA BURNS: They are not saying that now.

COUNCIL MEMBER HAMILTON: Because we will have people in place.

OPERA BURNS: Okay, you are saying y'all can't have people in place now. Why open it if you can't have it in place? You say people can't be there and be here all of the time.

COUNCIL MEMBER HAMILTON: We can't have them in place now because it's not open for us to even have that conversation. Once we get it open, we sit everybody down and say hey look, this is what's

gonna happen. We got one shot. You messed up. I mean, you know that. We may close the gates back and it may not open again. But the fact that to give it an opportunity. Everybody deserves an opportunity to do right. Everybody does.

OPERA BURNS: Right. And they was given an opportunity. I feel like that was they trial when that gate was locked and when they wasn't supposed to go there. And they still choose to jump that fence. I have witnesses saw them jumping that fence. Could anybody here, who went and put the lock back on? Do y'all know who put the lock back on there? Was it cut or was it left open?

INSPECTOR WHITE: I did. It was cut.

OPERA BURNS: Okay, there you go. They have been given a chance. Why go cut it and then keep asking to give them chances after chances and they keep messing up? I'm looking out for the good kids. I know they want to go somewhere and play and have fun. But why let them mingle with the ones that don't mean they're good and are going to lead them in the wrong direction and corrupt they mind? Because they haven't had a chance in life. You don't go and mess up somebody else's life because your life didn't go right for you. And like I said, I am here because of the smaller kids. Okay, say y'all open it back up. May God forbid it. But, what if somebody's child, y'all say you gonna monitor it and it don't get monitored properly and somebody's child get hurt? The first thing that somebody will say was 'that is my bad, my fault'. Ain't nobody going to want to hear that when they child got hurt. Ain't nobody monitoring it when they was up there, knowing they wasn't supposed to be there. If it is going to get monitored so good, why didn't somebody see them children up there? Knowing they wasn't supposed to be there parked on that basketball court.

INSPECTOR WHITE: Mam, if you had listened a while ago, the big gates on the other side will be closed so you won't be able to drive up in there on the basketball courts. It's going to be a walk-through gate only. I am not defending it or denying it. I am just saying. It will be just a walk-through gate. We will keep those double gates locked because of people driving on it.

OPERA BURNS: Sir, I am listening. Y'all keep those gates locked. But look what happened, they cut that lock.

COUNCIL MEMBER HAMILTON: I am going to say this. At school, kids get hurt all of the time. So, what would be the difference if my son or my child come home and say, daddy, I was playing basketball at school, and somebody knocked me down. What am I going to do? I'm going to go up there to the PE teacher and say why did my son get hurt? Am I going to be mad with you? For my son getting knocked down? For getting a scratch on their arm? No, they was paying attention. However, when you playing those activities of such nature, things may happen. That is something that we can't control. Right now, we could step outside this door, fall, and twist our knee or twist our ankle. We can't worry about what we can't control. But we can be experts at what we can control.

OPERA BURNS: What about the kids that go home and say mama, I saw so and so and so up there smoking? Mama, so and so and so offered me this, about smoking with them or trying to give me something to smoke. So, what about that? I know kids get hurt all of the time. I didn't want to get this deep with it but you took me there. How would you handle that when your children come home from school and say, well they had this at school, and they told me to smoke some of it?

COUNCIL MEMBER HAMILTON: Under our watch? Under the administrator now's watch? That's not going to happen.

OPERA JORDAN: Okay, what about that? You can't control everything. That's what you said.

COUNCIL MEMBER HAMILTON: As far as when we got people out there watching? It's like Pastor Lewis said. That ain't going to happen.

OPERA JORDAN: I can comprehend on what he's saying about the gate. The gate's going to be locked like he said. The gate was locked before, y'all. Common sense. They went up there to unlock it. They jumped the fence. I mean, this is reality.

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: Alright, this is a good, open debate. This is what we want to hear. We got one group for and another against.

REVEREND LEWIS: Yes, on this situation, we always going to have this issue. We always going to have somebody against that. That still don't stop me from moving forward. It don't stop you from moving forward. That's why I came up with this report here, to present it to y'all. So that we will be inside of the gate. No cars, no vehicles. That is why I asked to move the fence. I have done went out there and walked. She didn't see me out there when I was out there. She don't know how long I stayed out there. Once you are against something, you really don't want nothing that take place to happen. I walked the park. I presented this. I wrote it down. I said let's move the fence 30-ft back. Nobody can't get in the park with the double gates locked. Everybody come in on the side. We will have a watchmen out there. 3 hours. We sacrifice our time because we want to see the Sunset Park back up and running again. So if we are out there, we ain't got to let nobody. Hey, if somebody come out there with some dope or something, we going to call the City Police. That's what we are going to do. I was talking to some of the folks in the community today. They said that they want their grandchildren and kids, and they can't even walk to the park. I talked to the neighbor over there. Miss Floyd over there on the front side. She said, Pastor Lewis, it's all right with me. I have been monitoring it to help people in case we see a problem or something. With that being said, if y'all will put it back in control of the ministerial alliance, we will keep it going to the best of our ability. It is like Brother Hamilton said, if we can't, we will shut it down and close it up and you ain't got to worry with it no more.

COUNCIL MEMBER MULLIS: My understanding is that you will have people scheduled to be in that park. And that is what you are looking for. If he does that. If he don't do that, then you report it and then we will do something about it. But I like the idea. The way I am looking at it. If you are going to have people scheduled to work, I don't see no problem with it.

JOHN BATTLE: To kill a long story because we are just beating a horse to death over and over. I suggested to Pastor Lewis and all of the men, if you are going to reopen the park. He has stated the conditions. I would add to that. Make sure you open under the conditions like you do when you go on a job. You go on a job, and you have maybe a 90-day probationary period. Am I right? So, if you open the park up, when they write down all of the parameters and the dos and don'ts. And if they fail, then we can go to the second option. But the choice should be given. And I add to this, instead of police riding through there, 20, 30 minutes every hour. I suggest that whoever is going to be the security over the park, get them some kind of vest. Some kind of identification. That it says on the back, Park Security. Don't just walk around like I am to blend in just like the kids. And when the kids see park security or something like that, then they might respect that and then that will help the police keep them from coming back too. And if that don't work, then you have reasons to sit down with all these peoples that is concerned about the Sunset Park. And if the Ministerial Alliance and the citizens up there fall down, then we have reasons. Suggestions to the Ministerial Alliance. There are 3 churches in that area. Cottdale, I don't know who the pastor is, but go there. The pastor at Sunset Worship Church. Get those together. Pastor Lonnie Lewis is here. Sit them down with some of the body of this council here and citizens up there and go over it with them and educate them on what is about to take place withing the 90-day trial period. She will have something to go with and the council and citizens of Dodge County and the City of Eastman. Instead of verbalizing, put it on paper and then when you break the rules, then you can be held accountable.

OPERA BURNS: I agree with what Mr. Battle just said. I also agree with what Mr. Lewis said. No, you can't see everything. He thought that I didn't see him up there at that park. I can tell you where you was parked at. You was parked back up there further from the park. You was up there. I saw you. You didn't see me. But you was up there and I saw you. You was talking to Ms. Ivey. So, what I am saying is, no, we can't see everything and that is why I asked about the camera. But I just wanted to let him know

that yes, I did see you up there. If we can get it like Mr. Battle just said, then I am all for it. Cause ain't nobody lived up there all of these years but me. I have been there 30-something years. People just come through going up there to play. They don't stay there. I know just about everything. I can walk that street with my eyes closed. I can walk that park. I can write a book on it. And the stuff that I put in my book, y'all would be so surprised. But anyway, I am not going to go back and forth, and I didn't come to ride no horse. So, with what he's saying, if it can be did like that, I am fine with it. But as far as standing up here saying what you are going to do and when is it going to take place. Actions speak louder than words. If it can be did properly, I am for it. If not, I'm not for it. I'm not sorry because I live in that neighborhood and I'm doing this for the smaller generation that is coming along. And those kids need some good role models, not just some role models that's going to lead them astray. That's all I got to say.

REVEREND LEWIS: City Councilman, just an illustration. When I go to Walmart and buy a bag of apples and I spot out that one bad apple, I just throw that bad apple away and eat the rest.

COUNCIL MEMBER HAMILTON: Well said Sir.

CITY MANAGER BARRON: Well, if the council wishes to open it, they need to make that motion. And if they wish to do it under the requirements that we install a camera system. I can check on that and try to get it. I mean, this really is a debate for the council to work out. Y'all have been on this longer than me. There are reasons for and against. There have been problems and successes. Mam, would you be okay if we do get a camera system and we do a 90-day trial period? I am just asking.

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: Are we going to sit down with the Ministerial Alliance and see what will be?

OPERA BURNS: Yes, I will be okay with it, and I am not going to be the apple that be spoiled and get throwed out. I agree with it if some cameras can be put up there. But before it get open, you need to take precaution step first, by putting that camera up there first before it reopens. And then reopen the park.

CITY MANAGER BARRON: Will the Ministerial Alliance be all right with that? To keep it closed until I can get some cameras in there.

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: We really need to sit and hear how it is going to run, and these will be the guidelines.

COUNCIL MEMBER HAMILTON: Well, the thing about that is, I think Mr. Battle has got a great plan. Because truth be told, it will take another 6 months before we get some cameras installed. I mean, that's just how it goes in our type of business. I believe that if we can make a motion for a 90-day period probation, sit down with all of the churches. The 3 churches that is available in the Sunset Community. Sit down there and get this structure. Make our time with the people. Whoever is going to be over it each day. I think if we go ahead and get that in place and get our goals repaired. That is going to brighten up the community all together. Get our goals repaired and go through it like and then work on the camera system. But I think that we should get the ball rolling and get it in place, being that this is the second time that we have done visited this situation.

INSPECTOR WHITE: School is fixing to be out. The kids in the neighborhood need somewhere to go. I don't care if you are white, black, purple, green, blue, or whatever you are. Kids need somewhere to go. If they go to that park to play basketball and get on the seesaw, let them do it. Or just bulldoze it down. It's that simple.

OPERA BURNS: And they do need somewhere to go. But they need a safe place to go.

INSPECTOR WHITE: Well, that is what we are trying to do, make this park safe.

OPERA BURNS: Yeah, okay. That is why I am asking for cameras to be put up there for them kids.

CITY MANAGER BARRON: Okay, well maybe we can make a difference. I may not be able to get my hands on a real camera system. But, if I can get my hand on some trail cams, how about that?

OPERA BURNS: It is not for me; it is for the children. Y'all gotta think about these small kids. With opening it up, the first thing that need to be did, I'm still stuck on them cameras being put up there. Because if something go wrong, then they are going to wonder, well what happened? You have got to go all around this to find out what has done happened. With them cameras up there, it is going to speak for everything. And get some cameras that has got some microphones on them so that everything can be heard that be said.

CITY MANAGER BARRON: We will have to consult with the city attorney. There are some laws that go along with that. I understand what you are asking us to do.

COUNCIL MEMBER MULLIS: I also believe that if they are going to do what he says, what you say, you the man. If you say you are going to have somebody there to monitor it, they better be there. Then I believe you.

REVEREND LEWIS: Yes Sir. We are going to make sure.

OPERA BURNS: And they need to be there from the time it opens up until it closes. Not leave. Somebody that is going to be there and make sure that things are ran right.

REVEREND LEWIS: City Councilmen, with the letter I will have some help concerning the situation about the park. I had self-explanatory explained it to you in the letter what was going on.

COUNCIL MEMBER HAMILTON: And another thing that we want to do. We want to get that from you, Pastor. So, we can make a copy of it.

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: Jermayne is wanting to make a motion to do it. He has got a copy of the letter or something that we ain't seen. We don't know what the rules and regulations are. I reckon that I am trying to put it off a little bit. But I want to make sure that if we are going to run it, we are going to run it right. I mean, we can vote to open it tonight and tomorrow, somebody is going to be down here wanting to know if we are going to do the basketball goals tomorrow. Who is going to be in charge of this thing? What is the rules going to be? That is all that I am trying to do. Make sure that we are going to do it right. Like I said, this has been a little fiery debate tonight. Y'all have got a plan that you think is going to work and stuff. We have got someone that lives right behind it. And unless this gets done and this and this is done, she is against it. That is my only thing. I just want everything to be right before we go and vote to do something. Because then we are going to go by the seat of our pants. Does that make sense when I say it? I know you are passionate about it. I understand that. Do we want to open Sunset Park up? Yeah, but we want all of the neighbors to be happy with it. We want it to be a safe place. I know she don't like to use the word but there is a bunch of dope selling going on up there, there is weed smoking and everything else. I mean let's cut to the chase, that's what it is. I just want to make sure that we got the thing right before we go vote saying let's go do it. And then we are looking at trying to find a camera. That's my only thing. I mean, we got hit with all of this tonight. That is the only thing that I am trying to do is to make sure that we get it right.

JOHN BATTLE: Can I just suggest something? School will be out on May 20. Today is May 9. If you get with the Ministerial Alliance, the neighbors and the Council, and y'all get together. See what documentation that he has. That gives y'all enough time to put together a good plan and all. So, you will just vote tonight to open it up. Then that would give y'all time to communicate and advocate whatever over it. Then come up with a solid plan. And then when school is out, before the children hit the streets, then you might have something concrete in place. That then you could open the park up and people could go. By that time, the Ministerial Alliance should have all of their documentation and have all of their people lined up to monitor the park. I would suggest that you would do that. And when you come up with that, you will have a concrete plan. Now, everybody knows what you are going to because it is in writing. Everything you verbalized is out there because I don't know if the secretary recorded it or what. But it would give y'all time to delete, add, or revise to put it the way that you want.

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: That is what I am saying. I don't want to jump in tonight and we still don't know what we are doing. They can bring all of the stuff down here tomorrow or the next day and get with Spence. They can sit down and say that this is what we are looking at and what we want to do. I am not against it. I just want us to that when we vote yes to do it, let's know where we are going. I mean, I can leave here tonight and say that I am going to Atlanta. I can go to Atlanta through Hawkinsville. I can ride to Jekyll and go and turn around and come back another way. That's all that I am wanting to do is have it right. Because I am not wanting us to jump and 2 weeks from now, we got something or chaos going on right now. And we really don't know exactly which way we are going. And then we will be like, let's shut it down again. It ain't working right. Let's get it right and open it where it's right. And it be a safe place for the community and everything and all. And for children and adults also. Let's have it where everybody can go and enjoy it.

COUNCIL MEMBER HAMILTON: I understand that. I understand that at the end of the day this is a council. I understand that. Can we make a motion to bid on the basketball goals and go ahead and get that in place? Considering that we are being optimistic about opening up, can we go ahead and get the numbers on the basketball goals and go ahead and get the ball running? That way, when we do sit down and be Pastor Lewis is going to be Monday, whoever is going to be Tuesday. Then we will already have the second part done. Because that is going to extend us out even further. And then we are going to be here next year discussing the same matter. Can we make a motion to do that tonight? To get the basketball goals or seesaw or whatever. For the 3-year-olds or whatever.

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: That is what I am talking about. What are you going to do? Pastor Lewis mentioned 2 basketball goals.

COUNCIL MEMBER HAMILTON: Well, somebody mentioned seesaw in the audience.

REVEREND LEWIS: Everything else is in good condition, fair condition. For right now, we are only asking to let's get the basketball goals fixed so that the young boys and young kids can have something to play with the basketball goals. That is the reason that I asked to move the fence back 30 feet so we wouldn't have to worry about nobody parking inside like she was complaining about and kids getting run over. I don't know who is going to let their 2-year-old out there by theyselves anyway. Like Jermayne said, we can do that and get that in place.

COUNCIL MEMBER HAMILTON: Basketball goals and moving the fence. I am sorry about the seesaw.

COUNCIL MEMBER MULLIS: Are you making that motion? Is that what you say?

COUNCIL MEMBER HAMILTON: **Yes Sir, I would like to make that motion tonight to bid out for the basketball goal repairs or replacing the basketball goals and moving the fence back 30 feet.**

CITY MANAGER BARRON: Do you want to add the camera system to that?

COUNCIL MEMBER MULLIS: I think we can wait on that.

COUNCIL MEMBER HAMILTON: I would like to make the motion to replace the basketball goals. I want to bid it out and bid for the fence to move back 30 feet.

OPERA BURNS: Why can't the cameras be gone ahead and added in?

COUNCIL MEMBER HAMILTON: I would like the cameras as well.

MITCHELL COFFEE: I don't know how you think you are going to man the cameras.

MILTON JOHNSON: Just to clarify, I do think your attorney may want to look at that because I do believe that there is some stipulations about having manned cameras versus recorded cameras. So, that may need to be delved into a little bit more to see if that is a viable option for this project. Also, for one more point of clarification, it feels like basketball goals and a gate may fall under the city's maintenance budget if that still exists for the park. I don't know if that necessarily needs to be bid out if that amount that is in that pot is an appropriate amount of money. I don't think that needs to be bid out. I think it may be just a motion to perform that maintenance.

CITY MANAGER BARRON: I am ready. Y'all just tell me what you want to do, and we will make it happen.

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: Got a motion to bid out to replace basketball goals and move back a fence 30 feet.

COUNCIL MEMBER MULLIS: **Second.**

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: Got a motion to bid out basketball goals and I am assuming that's backboards and rims. I ain't got a clue of what's up there. We are going by the seat of our pants.

COUNCIL MEMBER HAMILTON: Yes, that's the whole thing.

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: Okay, we have a motion to bid out basketball goals and move a fence back 30 feet. And I have a second? All in favor, show of hands. I'll vote yes for it. Alright, motion carried unanimous. I reckon figure out how much it costs to replace basketball goals and to move a fence back 30 feet. I am assuming and hoping that y'all are going to get with Spence and come up with some guidelines, how we are looking at running the park. Are y'all wanting to manage the park? And all of that kind of stuff.

REVEREND LEWIS: We will get with Spence about all of that.

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: Is George Fluellen back? The park ran great back when he ran it and then he left and all of that stuff just went awry.

HOME OCCUPATION LICENSE:

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: Next on the agenda is a home occupation license for Water's Edge Aquatics, Nikki Mullis @ 5445 Oak Street with aquatics, or swimming lessons.

CITY CLERK SHEFFIELD: This is the house next to the Club.

CITY MANAGER BARRON: She is going to be teaching some swimming and some other stuff there too, I think.

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: Everything is in order?

CITY MANAGER BARRON: Yes Sir.

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: Alright, I need a motion then to approve the home occupation license for Water's Edge Aquatics. Nikki Mullis will be giving swimming lessons.

COUNCIL MEMBER MULLIS: **So moved.**

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: Have a motion by Councilman Mullis. I need a second.

COUNCIL MEMBER HAMILTON: **Second.**

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: Have a second. All in favor show of hands. Motion carried unanimous.

CITY MANAGER REPORT:

CITY MANAGER BARRON: I would like to remind everyone that early voting is occurring right now. We are not advocating for any particular position. We just want to encourage everyone to exercise their constitutional rights and vote. And we are most definitely open for early voting during lunch. Early voting for the city referendum is here at City Hall.

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: County elections, statewide elections, and everything else is done at the Courthouse Annex. To early vote, you have got to hit both spaces. On May 24th, if you are going to vote in person, you have got to come here and vote and at the courthouse and vote. Or actually the Terry Coleman Center for the Lee Precinct in the county. So, you have got to make sure to vote at both places.

OTHER BUSINESS FROM COUNCIL:

COUNCIL MEMBER MULLIS: The oak trees, didn't you say that we had one bad one that needs to go?

CITY MANAGER BARRON: On Oak Street? There are several actually that needs to go. I haven't received it yet. Last I was told was there would be a report coming from GDOT, specifying which trees needed to come down. We have reached out to the Garden Club to help us make a decision on replacing them.

COUNCIL MEMBER MULLIS: I feel like that is something that needs to be sped up.

CITY MANAGER BARRON: The state arborist actually visited Eastman and walked it with me and Jesse several months back. And he evaluated them and unfortunately some of them are a hazard now and are beyond saving.

COUNCIL MEMBER MULLIS: After seeing that one fall last week, I feel like it is real dangerous.

CITY MANAGER BARRON: We will check in with GDOT and see where we are at.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

SUSAN COFFEE: I just want you to know that we took 2 steps forward. We have a stop sign and a yield sign at Pearl Bates. Except that we took a step back when they took down one of the other yield signs. So, when you talk to GDOT, remind them that we need another one for the northbound lane when they are turning right.

CITY MANAGER BARRON: I sent them an email today, actually.

OPERA BURNS: I have one more request also. As far as the old houses that's up there on the street that I live on, right across from the park. Can it be taken care of, seen or looked into where they can get torn down?

CITY MANAGER BARRON: Yes Mam. We have a new building inspector, Mr. Jack White, and he said that is going to be an initiative that he is taking on this summer. So, we are going to look at evaluating systematically all of the homes that fall under blight statute and try to get something done. There are many of them all around town.

OPERA BURNS: Okay, one more thing. Right there where I live, can a light be put on that pole right there?

CITY MANAGER BARRON: Are you talking about on the curve?

OPERA BURNS: No, I live right before you get up to the park.

CITY MANAGER BARRON: Will you get with Mr. Jack White before you leave and let him know exactly where you are talking about? And we will have somebody check it out.

OPERA BURNS: Okay, I appreciate that.

CITY MANAGER BARRON: And just to let you know that there is a delay by several months with that. We have to work through GA Power and the city with the streetlights.

MILTON JOHNSON: Good evening. I am a former member of your community, and I am a guest of your community this week. I had a chance to walk around your downtown today. Over the 5 years since I have been a member of this community, I have had a chance to travel and see a lot of downtowns in the Midwest and Southwest. I've come to discover that active downtowns are really a barometer of the city's health. I was pleasantly surprised today as I was walking around and spending money in your shops and your restaurants downtown. There is a lot of activity going on. I just want to commend you on helping to set the tone. The different buildings that are being painted. Along College Street with some of the little clothing shops and hair shops and things like that are opening. I think that is great to see that level of activity and the entrepreneurs of the community that have the trust and faith in the downtown. I definitely just want to commend you guys for continuing to just let folks know that downtown is a spotlight for the city. With the stage and enlarging the footprint of City Hall in the future Goody's building, and whatever you guys decide to do with the Fred's building. Just continuing that

focus and letting folks know that downtown is a great place to hang your shingle. I also want to thank you for your proactivity on giving the citizens of Eastman the opportunity to vote on the referendum. I know that was something that you guys have gotten beat up on over the last few years. You really were powerless to do anything and thankfully the golden dome gave you the ability to directly put that on the ballot. I commend you guys for taking that action and putting it out there and let the folks vote on it, whichever way they decide to go on it. It is definitely a great opportunity. So, I just want to encourage you to be the progressive door openers and giving that opportunity. I know a lot of times as a former councilman myself, you kind of get in that role of where you feel that you are blocking more stuff than you are allowing. I think that it is always best to take a chance on progress and opportunity. Give the community a chance to succeed versus trying to legislate it to keep it from failing and I think the community will surprise you. So, thank you for what you do. Keep on it guys and keep Forward Dodge, Forward Eastman.

SHARON COBB-FLANAGAN: I just want to bring to your attention that the next tire event is coming up. June 10-20. I brought one of these flyers to share.

On a motion from Councilman Mullis and a second from Councilman Woodard, the meeting was adjourned.

CHAIRMAN

CITY CLERK