

August 8, 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, Engineer Jesse Bearden, City Clerk April Sheffield, Police Chief Becky Sheffield, Fire Chief Scotty Whitten, Attorney Rita Llop, and Inspector Jack White. Present from the community were Paul McCranie, Justin Haley, Reverend Rick Hamilton, County Manager Conner Bearden, County Commissioner Sharon Cobb Flanagan, John Battle, and Mitchell and Susan Coffee.

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 item on the agenda is to approve the agenda and I think we have got a couple of changes to add to it. The first one being #3 Frank Erwin. We are going to remove him and under executive session personnel matters and add pending and potential litigation. Anything else that needs to be added or taken?

CITY MANAGER BARRON: No Sir.

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: Alright, Council are y'all good with that or have anything? If not, I need a motion to amend the agenda to remove #3, Frank Erwin 2021 Audit, and under executive session, add pending and potential litigation beside personnel matters. And in that motion, to approve the amended motion as it stands.

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: Got a second from Councilwoman Williams. 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 July 25, 2022, regular meeting.

COUNCIL MEMBER MULLIS: I make a motion to approve it.

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: Have a motion to approve the minutes. Council, do y'all have any questions about them that y'all saw in your packets? 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 WHITTEN: For the month of July, we ran a total of 37 calls. 25 inside the city, 12 outside the city. 1 brush fires, 3 power lines down, natural gas leaks 5. With medical calls, we ran a total of 8. Vehicle rescue 1, electronic alarm 6, lift assists 2, power lines down 4, and public service 1.

COUNCIL MEMBER MULLIS: Question for you, electric alarms. Does some of these come every month?

CHIEF WHITTEN: The reason that they were so high this month is because of South Dodge. All of those are at South Dodge. They had a lightning strike on their system. So, they have recently gotten it fixed.

COUNCIL MEMBER MULLIS: Okay, thank you.

MONTHLY POLICE DEPT REPORT:

CHIEF BECKY SHEFFIELD: For the month of July, we used 1,102 gallons of gas, answered 943 calls, and worked 25 wrecks.

ADDITION TO CDBG PROJECT:

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: Next on the agenda is the addition to the CDBG project.

ENGINEER BEARDEN: The purpose of the CDBG project, which is new water lines in the Cottdondale area, was to increase water flow and pressure and for fire protection and for quality of water for our citizens. When we were doing our research for this CDBG, I found the subdivision plat for Sunset Subdivision. That was 14th back towards town. That subdivision was created in 1927. The houses that were built in 1927 are still there. And so the water line that was created in 1927 is still there. So it has been an interesting project. But it is going to be a very successful project. But we have had one glitch. Not to put blame on anywhere, it could probably be on me just as easy as on anybody else. To help with this pressure: pressure always works better when it doesn't stop. You can come to the dead end of a water line, or a fire hydrant, or a valve and pressure stops. Sediment increases and it is not a good thing. So, to make sure that this project is installed and works as designed, I come with my hat in my hand, asking for an additional 500 linear feet of a 6-inch PVC pipe for this project to continue this loop and one fire hydrant to go with that. When we started this project, that water line would have cost \$18-20. Well, with the world being changed by Covid, the price is \$36.40/ft instead of \$18-20. So, I come with my hat in my hand asking for \$48,458 to complete this project. It's very important that we do this for that section of town and to make sure that we have adequate fire protection, adequate pressure, and good quality of water.

CITY MANAGER BARRON: And that amount is available in SPLOST if the Council decides to approve.

COUNCIL MEMBER MULLIS: Well, I am all for it. We got to do it. We ain't got no choice.

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: Council, do y'all have any other questions for Jesse? If not, to complete this project up on 14th Avenue and Page and Cottdondale Mill area I need a motion to approve the additional cost of \$48,458 to tie the whole system into a loop. It's going from Page Street or the Chester Hwy back up to 14th Avenue.

ENGINEER BEARDEN: To be more specific, there is a 6-inch line that comes down the Chester Hwy. I always thought it came to Coley's store. Everybody thought it came to Coley's store. Well, behind Coley's store there is a fire hydrant that is directly across from Harden Street. That is where that 6-inch line stops. We did the best we could with locating all of that stuff underground. We've got sewer line over there that is still made of clay. Like I say, it's an old system. So that line stopped and did not come all of the way down to Buddy Coley's store. It stopped at that hydrant.

Who would have thought? So, I need that line to come down to Mr. Buddy's store, or use the location of the store, so we can tie in that line into it. With that whole system, water will continue to flow 24/7.

If not, the water that is coming down Lee and Livingston is going to stop on Page. And like I say, it is not the intent of this project for that to dead head right there.

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: Alright, I need a motion to approve \$48,458.

COUNCIL MEMBER MULLIS: So moved.

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: Have a motion from Councilman Mullis. Council, do y'all have any other questions for Mr. Jesse? If not, I need a second.

COUNCIL MEMBER HAMILTON: Second.

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

APPROVE MONTHLY BILLS:

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: Next on the agenda is to approve the monthly bills for July 26 – August 8, 2022. I think y'all got a copy of those in your packet over the weekend. Do y'all have any questions about any of them? If not, I need a motion to approve the monthly bills.

COUNCIL MEMBER MULLIS: So moved.

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: Have a motion from Councilman Mullis to approve the monthly bills. I need a second.

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Second.

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

EASTMAN STREET PROJECT:

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: Next on the agenda is the Eastman Street Project.

CITY MANAGER BARRON: Yes, we previously asked permission from council to bid out the replacement of about 650 linear feet of existing water main on Eastman Street, between 16th and 14th Avenue. We received permission and we bid it out. We received one response from Graham & Studstill General Contractors for \$25,500. That's \$25,500 from Graham & Studstill. They were the only responders. Jack White is here to answer any particular questions that you may have about the project, if you have any.

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: This is the road that runs down by the railroad track? Back behind REA?

INSPECTOR WHITE: It goes down behind REA, Dollar General, so forth and so on past 14th. It's in between Eastman Street and Oak Street.

CITY MANAGER BARRON: The idea being that there will be increased traffic on that road.

INSPECTOR WHITE: It is directly in line with the Popeye's exit. When they open the Popeye's up, it's going to be directly in line with their exit, and that road is going to catch a lot of traffic. We already have extensive water problems over there. If we don't go ahead and do something now, it's going to be a constant headache. If we go ahead and get this project on the way, it may be happening while they're trying to open, but it won't be too prolonged from them being open.

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: Council, do y'all have any questions? Other questions about this? If not, I need a motion then to approve this Eastman Street project with this 650 foot of existing water main, and 2" diameter water line and all of this whole page full of stuff. I won't read all of it. I need a motion for \$25,500 for Graham & Studstill to complete this.

COUNCIL MEMBER MULLIS: So moved.

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: Have a motion from Councilman Mullis to approve this bid. I need a second.

COUNCIL MEMBER WOODARD: Second.

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

SENIOR CITIZEN PROCLAMATION:

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: Next on the agenda is the Senior Citizens Proclamation.

CITY MANAGER BARRON: We received a request from the local senior citizens center asking for a proclamation. We have a draft prepared and it is in your folder now to designate August 21 as National Senior Citizens Day here in Eastman. (Reads proclamation and will be entered into the minutes.)

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: I will entertain a motion to approve this Senior Citizens 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 second from Councilman Hamilton. All in favor show of hands. Motion carried unanimous.

JUSTIN HALEY, DODGE COUNTY FOOD BANK:

JUSTIN HALEY: Thank y'all for having me again. I know some of y'all may get tired of seeing me. Thank y'all very much for putting me back on here and letting me speak. I know that is a lot of information in front of you so I'm just going to try to break it into 5-minute segments that way it don't take up too much of your time. Short and to the point. If you got more questions, I will be more that glad to answer any single one of them. Dodge County itself ranks 21st worst in the state with 26.7% property rate. Also, according to Feeding America, who we are partnered with, after we serve as well as the Christian Life Center and one other food pantry, after we serve with those 2 other programs here with over 20,000 pounds of food, there are also over 3,080 families according to Feeding America that are below the poverty line. 3,080 families that are food insecure in Dodge County, that's 14.8%. There are 700 children that are food insecure in Dodge County at 17.5%. With just our food bank side, our year-to-date total is, well our fiscal year runs from August 1st to July 31st, we have served 2,075 households. That averages out to 207.5 households, basically 208 households a month and of those 633 have children. They only get served once a month. They can't just rotate in and out and we serve the same people two or three times a month. That is not how it works. They also have to do a federal TEFAP form that is required by law. We get their name, information, we can check your address and can vet to make sure that the same families aren't living in the same household and trying to get 4 or 5 different bags for one household. We can check all of that stuff and vet it as best we can, and we do that. 16% of the people that we serve are children under 18. That's just with the food bank. 35% of the people that we serve are seniors, 65 and older. And 15% of the people we serve are disabled and homebound. So over 70% of the people that we serve really need it. Especially the kids, which is 18%, those don't really have much control over what their parents do. We started in February 2022 with different community programs. One of them is to serve each month. Like I said, those who are homebound or disabled. They cannot get out. And again, we can go to there home and vet that, and make sure they aren't telling us a story. So we deliver 51 households there each month with 156 people. Since the inception in February, we have served 306 households which would be 936 people. We have also been able to, which I will touch on here in just a minute, do a summer nutrition program for the kids. Just through our foodbank, we have served 121 households with 292 children under the age of 18. Alright I will stop and ask if anybody has any questions about our regular foodbank and what we do? I am talking about the food bank itself, not the backpack program. The foodbank houses the backpack program, which I am going to speak on in just a second, and also the foodbank program, which is for adults and kids, etc. that come through. Again, it's not just that we're passing out food left and right to whoever shows up. That's not the process. That is a popular misconception. We can vet people up to, the only thing we cannot check by law is their income. They do fill it out. That is the honor system. I look at it as if I can take the address and do everything else. I see what kind of car they drive up in. Is everybody going to

be in need of it? No, I can't stop the ones who are going to take advantage of the system. There's nothing I can do there. Can I do the best I possibly can, making sure that my numbers are correct and serving the correct people? Yes. And that's the steps that we've tried to take to make sure that we're serving actual people in this county and city that need the food, not just letting everybody run rampant through there where we're serving you know, the same family 3 times a month or so. We do appointment only. They show up by appointments only, like I said. You can only come once a month. We are averaging turning away right now, roughly 10 to 12 families a month. Not a month, I'm sorry, a week. Our demand has picked up greatly because of Covid, but as well as a bunch of other things too. It's just inflation and everything else. It's just everything in general. I understand that people are looking for a long-term solution, getting people back to work, etc. I completely understand that. But in the same retrospect, what we are doing is to identify the correct people who are actively trying and/or cannot go back to work, i.e. the senior citizens, or like the homebound or kids. And feed those particular families and those particular people through our foodbank program, the regular foodbank program. And like I said, I have got a retired nurse. She's a retired professor at Middle Georgia College. She runs my food bank. Everything is nutritional based. It's done to the best we can and like I said, she will drive to your house to make sure you are telling the truth and where you live at and that there's not four families living in the same household trying to get four bags and that should be good. We are able to do certain things. Like I say, the only thing we can't do is check out or check their income. So we do serve the people the best we can. Like I said, do some people slip through the cracks? Absolutely. I can't stop everyone, and we try our best and we have narrowed it down to the people who for the most part, essentially need it. The big thing that we do is the backpack program. This is K – 12. We get with our counselors at every school. Pre-K, North Dodge, South Dodge, Middle School, and High School. We get with those counselors, Ms. Jodi Brewer does, and at the beginning of the school year, which we are about to place a big order to get the shelves full and to get ready for that, is they will get the numbers from South Dodge and get the numbers from North Dodge and report back to Ms. Jodi Brewer. These are kids that absolutely need it. These are just we are sending out an email blast and again, you know, serving every kid in school. It's 150 kids per week out of the entire school system, which is I think, roughly 2,000 when you add everything into it including the high school. Our numbers are broken down by school. You know, generally we have the most out at South Dodge around 50 something. I apologize that I did not put that on there. I forgot. We only see about 10 or 12 at the middle school and we see about 10 or 12 at the high school. You are looking at Pre-K, South Dodge, and North Dodge where the majority of the kids come from. These kids, I can have bus drivers come up here and tell you stories. I can have counselors come up here and tell you stories where these kids are eating food on the bus, so their parents don't steal it when they get home. It's not the child's fault. It is not a four-year old's fault that their family is not taken care of. It's not any of their fault. I get it. People can argue EBT, Food Stamps, etc. Again, a four-year-old can't do anything or control if their mom or dad sells that. Or if their mom or dad take care of them. Those counselors do an amazing job of identifying the kids that absolutely need these backpack programs. Again, do some slip through the cracks? Absolutely. I am not going to sit here and say that they don't. 90% probably? Yes, we are serving the correct ones. The bus drivers can tell you that they pull over to the side of the road while some of the kids eat these meals on Fridays, so their parents won't steal it when they get home. Let's just face it, everybody's not perfect, but you know, some of us are a little worse than others when it comes to certain things unfortunately. I've had kids come up when I have been to the school. I would bring pictures and stuff but of course with the privacy for the kids. But they tell us how much it means to them. Tears in their eyes and tears in my eyes, just because I appreciate the fact of being able to do that for this community. It's a passion of mine to try to serve this community in the best way possible. Not only myself, but I think of my father who passed away, who started this. And I'm doing the best I can and to serve the

community the way that I know and the way that I have been taught how to do it. I apologize for getting a little sidetracked from necessarily the pamphlet. But that backpack program is essential to a lot of people and a lot of kids. Like I said, four-year-olds, the five, six, and seven-year-olds can't control what their parents do. And that food consists of easy, ready-made things like Vienna sausages, peanut butter and jelly, little juice cartons of apple juice, 1% whole milk, cereal bars, juice cups. We had been running low because we can't afford it. We have been doing 3 pounds of food and you know that when you throw some juice cups and soda in there, that's not much. The average standard is 8- 10 pounds and that is what I am trying to get to. But that is through the sustaining a child that cannot fix a meal by themselves to get them through the weekend and get back to school. I know that I was asked to do a 3-month, 6-month, 9-month, and one year plan. I'll just touch on that briefly.

COUNCIL MEMBER MULLIS: I have a question. It says down here, local churches and organizations help pack the food. Can you tell us who they are?

JUSTIN HALEY: I can tell some of them. Yes, Sir. I apologize for skipping that part. So what we do is, we will pack the food in bins there at the food bank. On Tuesday, DAC is one of them, First Presbyterian Church is another, First Baptist is another off the top of my head. I apologize. I cannot remember every single one of them. There are 5 in total. But what they will do is, they will come and on Wednesday afternoon after we have divided it up. I will give you an example. First Baptist does South Dodge for us. So their youth ministry will pack the bags on Thursday night. We will put into tubs. Let's say there's 60 kids at South Dodge. We'll divide the food that we need to go to South Dodge. First Baptist will then come pick it up so on Wednesday morning. They'll use their youth group on Wednesday nights to pack those bags, separate the food and pack them in individual bags, and then they'll take em to a lot of schools on Thursday. So that is who we are partnered with to help us do that. Um, a 3-month, 6-month, 9-month plan, and a one-year plan. I kind of broke it down the best I could and the bottom 2 are competitive. But that's just part of what we are asking to be able to continue to serve that amount of people. When it says a 3-month plan to have us as a satellite distribution through Midwest Food Bank, we're partnered with 2 different food banks. One in Macon that we have to buy the food at 19 cent a pound. That is your better stuff that we are able to get. Your canned goods, your meat, etc. Starches like rice, various things like that in order to actually give sustainable food to families. We drive 2 hours and 15 minutes one way to Peachtree City to pick up an additional 2 – 3,000 pounds of food and some of that may not be food. They work solely based on donations and everything there is completely free. So, we can bring back 3,000 pounds but 1,500 pounds of it is blankets, toilet paper, medicine, etc. Some of it may not be food but it's stuff that still some of these families could use. So we're not going to pass it up. We have got a great businessman volunteer his time and his truck to go over and get it for us. They have asked us to set up a satellite distribution center where they send down a semi-load and I've got it planned with the recreation department as well as a forklift donated to us to make this happen. They will come down and we will be at the recreation department once a month when we get this set up. They will bring us that same type of stuff. I don't know what is coming on the semis just depending on what they give you. We've reached out to neighboring counties. I understand that there is also a stigma that sometimes you see other cars loaded up, you know, 300 cars waiting in line at the place one day. Also at the rec department. It has nothing to do with what we are doing. Those people can come from out of town and out of county and get that food and that's the cars that you see. And again, that has nothing to do with what we are doing. This is going to help alleviate what you are seeing in that situation. We are able to. We have already partnered with a food bank in Telfair to get set up. One in Wheeler and one in Dublin. Another here in Eastman, as well as one in Hawkinsville right now. This is all free food that will be coming down to help alleviate all these people flooding to Dodge from Telfair and Wheeler trying to get the food that we give out in that 1 day. That's not my program. There is 2 different programs where they send a semi load down to give out and anybody can come get this. It's

not just Dodge County. I stopped doing that. I did that for 12 years. I stopped. But this program right here and partnership with this food bank would not only allow me to get that type of stuff in that we normally wouldn't get in Macon, which is toilet paper, medicine, etc. But also food. It would be fresh vegetables and stuff like that that needs to go out immediately. These food banks will come get us. They have a vetting system, and they have to sign a contract. They'll come get it from us. We'll get those food banks. It'll alleviate all these other people trying to flood in. We'll help alleviate Telfair, Wheeler, Pulaski flooding in trying because we're the biggest food bank in our area within five counties outside of Dublin. Dublin has got a bigger one. That's my goal that in 3 months to get that set up and get that running to help alleviate a lot of that problem and what you see and able to get their own food bank set up free of charge. That in turn, over time, would alleviate my stress but it also will allow me to buy sustainable goods like canned goods, starches like rice, etc. The stuff that actually, no offense, a family can't drink Dayquil and eat that. I mean, that is just some of the stuff that we get. It's free and I am not going to turn it down. This just alleviates a lot of the problems in general. The other problem that we currently have right now is maybe find us a new building or make the current one accommodating. I have kind of fought a battle with trying to make the one that we currently have ready. We kind of got forced out really quickly when Habitat for Humanity shut down. I did the best I could to find us a building to get us up and running. That just unfortunately has not panned out. The 6-month plan would be grant writing, which Mr. Spence has some experience in and if anybody knows about grant writing. If you don't put the right exact words in there you are not going to get that grant. And we have learned that the extremely hard way. We filled out 10 grants and didn't get one. If we had a partnership, it would allow a lot more grants to open up. We could fill those out, maybe with the right words with some help and land those grants this time. I also have a thrift store since we are non-profit, a 501©3, where you can donate and get tax write offs. Like clothes, couches, etc. I will tell you that when we had Habitat for Humanity when we were on the Soperton Highway, that thrift store would make anywhere from \$25,000 on a terrible year to \$45,000 on a good year. In a year and a half time, due to my situation that I have been in, I have not really been able to open up my thrift store. That's where the hurt has really come into play. Due to Covid, people just stopped there for about a year. And then the other 7 or 8 months has been unfortunately my building situation. So, in 6-months' time, if I am in a new building to make it accountable like I'm in now, to get that thrift store back open and that money from the thrift store which will pay for lights, utilities, etc. for years to come and get that money coming back in. 9-months' plan would be to build our online presence and make stuff more readily available to people. Get our website up, cleaner. Facebook, give it updates with exactly what we are doing, etc. I will also try to find local funding as well in partnerships with businesses. I am trying my best. I will continue to bother a lot of the businesspeople that I know. I say all of that to say this. My one-year plan, all of that stuff is hopefully allowing me to be self-sustaining again and never have to come before you guys and never have to bother anybody as far as trying to beg for money which is essentially what I feel like I am doing. Unfortunately, it's just come to a point where that is where I am at. And I do just want to make it clear for anybody that may not understand what I am asking for. At the end of it here, and I am being transparent with everything. For one year, for the food bank total, would be \$17,160. The backpack total would be \$10,944. Rent would be \$12,000. Utilities would be \$3,600 for a total of \$43,704. Monthly total, that is \$3,642. I am currently \$5,000 behind on rent. I am not ashamed to say that. I am just to the point that I need help. So, if you add that into it, that's \$48,704 which is \$4,059 monthly. I do want to say that what I am asking it out of is ARPA funds. I understand that that is my big heart. I get that from a lot of people. ARPA funds and the American Rescue Plan Act is probably going to be a once in a lifetime thing, or once in a few decades' thing. It may not ever happen again. Of course, you know that it is public record, so I am not trying to say anything. But \$1.8 million and I am asking for whichever you want to look at, \$43,000 or \$48,000 out of \$1.8

million. It's not city taxpayers' money. It's not county taxpayers' money. It's the federal government. And I get, it's taxpayers' money if you want to look at it that way. I understand it but it came from the federal government. It's not the city of Eastman that is having to pay for it or the residents of the city of Eastman. But that is who I am helping, as well as the county residents. I understand it and I have heard it. \$11 million in debt. I understand and I get that everybody is struggling at this point in time. I just feel like that if I have to stop doing what I am doing, it's going to explode as far as being even worse off. You are going to see more people in way worse shape than what it is. Like I said, I am trying to alleviate a problem short term so that maybe long term can find a solution. And all I can say is that if you have a question, I am here to answer or ramble on. I'm supposed to keep it 10 minutes, I apologize. It's kind of hard. I just want to say thank you for having me back. The fact that you guys had me back. I greatly appreciate you guys taking the time and that you care enough to let me come back and talk and to some of you guys for reaching out. I greatly appreciate it.

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: Council, do y'all have any questions?

COUNCIL MEMBER HAMILTON: We shore appreciate you coming back and explaining to us about your program and what you are trying to do for Eastman.

JUSTIN HALEY: Thank you very much for having me.

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: Justin, I reckon, I think you explained that there right there at the end. You are looking for this total to get you through August of next year? And hopefully by then you are back.

JUSTIN HALEY: Yes Sir. So, I know with ARPA funds, sometimes it is just a one time, unless I am wrong Ms. Rita. I think it is a one-time lump sum. I could be completely wrong on that. I am just asking for that one time thing and basically that would allow me to get one year to focus on the other things that I had laid out. Get my thrift store back, writing grants and landing that money, as well as we do have a great church that donates as well as 1 or 2 citizens. Like I said in the past, allowing that money to be put up and I can be self-sustaining for at least a few years to come and not have to worry about asking anybody for anything. That is the ultimate goal.

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: Alright, any other questions? Okay Justin, thank you Sir.

CITY MANAGER REPORT HAS NOTHING TO REPORT

NO OTHER BUSINESS FROM COUNCIL

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

SUSAN COFFEE: Thank you Justin for all of that information. About 10 days ago, I left to go on vacation and right before I left, I heard of your generous check of \$500 for the food bank. That at that point had not been received. I went on vacation mad as a wet hen. I was livid. So, I have been thinking for a week. I don't know, this is what I heard, okay?

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: The city wrote a check?

SUSAN COFFEE: The city offered to give Justin \$500, but the check had not been delivered. That is what I was told. I may be wrong, but the point being \$500 out of \$50,000 is nothing. I run a senior citizens center. I mean a senior living facility. My budget for my seniors for their meals three times a day, is about \$8. \$500 will get me about 5 days' worth of food for 15 – 18 people. Y'all ought to be ashamed of yourself. You go home and see what groceries are costing.

COUNCIL MEMBER MULLIS: Justin is trying to tell you something back there.

SUSAN COFFEE: I heard that, Raymond. I have been familiar with it. I was sitting here 9 months ago when they presented almost the identical program, and y'all were going to get back to him. So he has come back. And yes, I am chewing you upside down. Up one side and down the other. Because you

ought to be ashamed of yourselves. There isn't a one of you sitting up there that can't walk now, right now, and write a check or charge \$500 worth of groceries if you wanted them. You could go to Burger King and spend 20 bucks, or you can go to Zaxby's and spend 30 bucks. But there are people in this town, and I have seen them, who go to the grocery store and buy the little 6 packs of Vienna sausages, and a 50lb bag of dogfood and leave Walmart. Yeah. How long could you last on a 6-pack of Vienna sausages and multiply it times 2 for whoever is in your house? How many peanut butter and jelly sandwiches can you eat? And you got that money sitting up there. I know it's there. I am here most every Monday night. Either here or at the county. And I'm going to give them a piece of my mind too. Yeah. You dropping the hat, \$48,000 for a water project that is going to meet a need. Yes. And I don't disagree with that. But that is coming out of SPLOST funds. So why not ARPA? Why not buy a building with the ARPA funds for the food bank? Then they wouldn't have to worry about \$1,000 a month rent. I don't appreciate that you are sitting on it. You are sitting on your hands and the next time you go out to eat, or you go to the grocery store, I want you to think about only 150 kids that get food on the weekends and are working really hard to eat it on the bus on their way home, so mama or daddy or big brother or big sister don't walk off with it. They are not serving these folks filet mignon, I promise you. They are doing good to get canned beans, canned spaghetti. It is stuff that you can pop the top and eat cold. And when was the last time that you did that? And if I am not the only one fussing. I stood up in church and made the comment Sunday morning because I am furious that you are on a slow boat from China, and we know where all of the stuff. We can see the shelves at Walmart and how empty it has been. And this is not like we are given a gold mine. He's not even at. I bet; it wouldn't surprise me if your trip to Georgia Municipal Association didn't cost but maybe half of what he is asking. I don't know. But I know Savannah. The rooms down there are \$200, \$300, \$400 a night. No telling what meals are because myself, my husband, and our daughter is easily \$100 a night and we are not even going to Savannah. I am sorry folks. Get off your duff and get this started. Because hunger is not going away. Never, ever. Even the Bible says there will always be poor people and those are some of the ones we should look after. And I realize that he is not a Christian group per se because the federal government wouldn't let him be that. To be a 501©3 for this kind of program. I am embarrassed that you all have sat on your hands for 9 months on this issue. And you ought to be embarrassed and walk out of here with your head hanging low.

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: Thank you, mam. Any other comments?

REVEREND RICK HAMILTON: I am the new pastor at Eastman First United Methodist Church. If any of you want to become Methodist, see me after the meeting. I will be glad to take you in. I just want to emphasize the importance of this food bank and this backpack ministry. Hunger leads to a lot of other issues. We have a lot of issues in this country and one of them is mental health. And hunger leads to mental health issues and to other things as well. I don't have the answers. I don't know how much money you have. I don't know how long you have been sitting on it. But if you have got money and you are looking for programs that are worthwhile. It's a worthwhile program. I hope that we can keep this going. I am going to do my part to try to help as well. My hands are tied as well. But I just wanted to make sure that you understand how I feel about it and the importance of it.

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: Thank you Sir. Any other comments?

JUSTIN HALEY: I'm just going to say that I appreciate Ms. Coffee's sentiment, but I will say that the \$500 part, before I left, I had not even heard that one. That may have been just a rumor. I want to clarify that. I didn't spread that one. I didn't say anything about \$500. When I was here 9 months ago, or now it has been 11 months ago, there was something said about go ahead and write a check for \$5,000. I don't know if that was the interpretation there. That was said. That kind of got shot down due to the legal aspect. Which, if I am being honest, I've jumped through every hoop. I feel like that this is not coming from the city of Eastman. Again, it's federal grant money and I have set my 501©3 up so that I

can receive this type of money and I feel like I have done that the best I possibly could in doing that. But I did just want to clarify that maybe that was from 10 months ago, 11 months ago but it wasn't. It wasn't the other meeting. I will clarify that. I just look at it that I have jumped through every hoop. I'm tired. I am dog tired. I've been through every political game you can possibly imagine. Going to every back door. Made every phone call I could possibly make to just try to get people to understand. With all of that being said, I will clarify that on that aspect. But other than that, I mean I am tired. Like I said, I have presented all I can present. It's \$1.9 million. You got \$900,000. That's another \$900,000 coming at the end of the year I believe is how the increments work. I could be wrong on that, but I believe it's the end of the year. You can't repay the \$11 million out of the \$1.8 million. You can't. You can do it for other projects. I completely understand that. But \$48,000 out of \$1.8 million is like 2.9%. That's just where I am at. I just want to clarify the \$500 thing. But this is all I have.

SUSAN COFFEE: I stand corrected.

VIA FACEBOOK:

MILTON ISSAC JOHNSON: Go ahead and fund him for 3 months with a potential 3-month extension if specific milestones of his plan are met!

EXECUTIVE SESSION – PERSONNEL MATTERS & PENDING AND POTENTIAL LITIGATION:

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: At this point and time, I will accept a motion to go into executive session for personnel matters and pending & potential litigation.

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: Have a second from Councilman Hamilton. All in favor show of hands. Motion carried unanimous.

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: I need a motion to exit out of executive session back into regular session.

COUNCIL MEMBER MULLIS: So moved.

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

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Second.

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

OTHER:

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: Justin, can you come up here please? Alright, the city is interested in helping you. But, in order to do that, we are going to need you to come down and see Spence and Ms. Rita. There is a place of funding that we can take money out of. But we just can't write a check and say here you go. There is an agreement that we will need from you and there are some steps that you will have to take in order for us to do that. The easiest and simplest way to put it is, we do want to help you and our intent and goal is to, but I will need you to come, and they will tell you what you need and what we need to put with the paperwork and stuff. Ms. Rita will help with some of that also. Alright?

JUSTIN HALEY: Alright, thank y'all very much.

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: Is there any other business to handle?

INSPECTOR WHITE: I would like to bring something to y'all's attention. The 31st of this month is the end of government pricing on any equipment purchases or what have you. Everything that we have previously bid, will have to be rebid. And there will be significant price changes. So, if y'all have inclination to do a purchase or anything that we have discussed, we need to try and move on something.

CITY MANAGER BARRON: Such as an excavator.

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COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: Okay.

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

CHAIRMAN

CITY CLERK