

October 24, 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, City Clerk April Sheffield, Attorney Rita Llop, Police Chief Becky Sheffield, City Engineer Jesse Bearden, City Inspector Jack White and Paul McCranie. Present from the community were Mitchell and Susan Coffee, John Battle, County Commissioner Sharon Cobb Flanagan, Tammy Wiggins, Clay Kirkley, Ashley Woodard, and Carla Hart.

The meeting was streamed live via Facebook.

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 unless you have anything to add or take off.

CITY MANAGER BARRON: We need to add bidding out a sewage camera please, #10. Or maybe a pipe camera? Anyway, it's a camera that you run down sewage lines to figure out where it is stopped up at.

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: Alright. Council, do y'all have anything that you need to add? If not, then I need a motion to amend the agenda and add #10 to bid out a sewage camera and also in that motion to approve the amended agenda. I will entertain a motion for that.

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: Have 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 October 13, 2022, regular meeting.

COUNCIL MEMBER MULLIS: So moved.

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: Have a motion to approve the minutes of the last meeting. Council, do y'all have any questions or anything about them? 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:

CAPSTONE BENEFITS:

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: First item under new business is Capstone Benefits.

ASHLEY WOODARD: I am Ashley Woodard with Capstone. I came to you guys before at your last work session and went over the reporting and everything that was with that. We did finally get your renewal back from Benecon. We discussed that you had some high claims the last time that I was here. So, the fact that we have got a 12.2% increase is a great increase. We were actually able, if willing to sign a 2-

year ASA contract with Meritain, who is the administrator and processes the claims. Then they will do a flat ASA renewal this year and a 2% next year. It is our recommendation to go ahead and do that. We are not going to move that processing because they are the ones that work with the network here at Dodge Select. So, we are able to lower it from 12.2 to 12.1% doing that. And we just got that approval today.

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: And then next year it goes up with a 2% increase?

ASHLEY WOODARD: Yes, so next year it would go from the 4835 to 4931. And in the handouts, we have, we just gave you a history of a 10% increase, zero, 13.5, and 12.2 which is now 12.1. And then the surpluses each year have added up to almost \$200,000 prior to this year, and we are going to use that in 2023 towards the premium. The surplus as of 7/31 for this year is \$25K but it's still early to tell what will happen with that. The next page shows that surplus that I was talking about where what will happen is it will about \$16,600 off each month's premium. And so, knowing that ahead of time, the city can budget around that and use the money that would have used for the medical premium for something else. And then we also want to add some highlights to the plan this year. There is no cost to it until it is used. Hinge Health is just virtual therapy, physical therapy. They can use it or still go see a physical therapist. We're not saying that they have to do virtual, but it saves the city money and time for the employee. So, it's just an added layer that's an option for them to use. We also want to add Prudent Rx. Right now, the city doesn't have any specialty drugs but that is where high cost comes in. We don't know if you have a new employee or a new diagnosis next year and there is a 90-day limitation period with it. So, since you guys don't have any specialty drugs, I did add a sample analysis for another government entity that had 42 employees that happen to have 2 on Humira which is a very common specialty drug, and it gives an example of what their savings are using Prudent Rx. Again, adding it now won't cost the city anything. The way they work is if you do get an employee with a specialty drug and we fill it with Prudent Rx, then it just cost the city 25% of the savings. So, you can have Prudent Rx all next year and never come across a specialty drug and it won't cost the city anything. It's just there to have it just in case. And then, there's the saving for the city and the employee because the employee wouldn't have any cost. So, before we get into the dental and vision, that's everything for the medical. Any questions? Okay, dental and vision. Dental is currently with Unum. They did come out with an increase of 12%. So, for the same benefits, we can move it to Mutual of Omaha, who is the carrier for most ancillary lines already. So, ease of billing there. And so, that's actually a decrease of what they are currently paying. The vision is already with Mutual of Omaha. That rate guarantee is through 2024. Hospital indemnity. I just threw this in there because it's currently with Unum as well. But if we move the dental to Mutual of Omaha, we will need to move the hospital indemnity as well. Which technically will have savings for the employees enrolled. There is no downside to moving to Mutual for both lines. So, those are all the decisions that we're making for open enrollment. Once they are official and signed, we'll get open enrollment going and get your employees ready for 2023.

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: Council, do y'all have any questions right now? I know that I will carry this home and dig into it. You know I will have some.

ASHLEY WOODARD: I know you will and that is fine. You have my contact information. But I am going to go ahead and leave the documents that need signed to move forward here with you so you can sign them once y'all make your mind up. And then just get it back to us as soon as possible. Because here we are in October, and we didn't get the renewal until this month anyhow. So we're just ready to move forward with the moment.

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: Okay, we will dig through this deeper and ask if we have any questions and then we can call you back and stuff.

ASHLEY WOODARD: Yeah, I'll have my cell phone. Just give me a call.

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: Probably for the next meeting, we will go through this and check it out and all. You can leave them documents.

ASHLEY WOODARD: April has got them to make sure you get them signed for me. Alright? Thank you, guys.

ANNEXATION ORDINANCE FINAL READING:

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: Next on the agenda is the annexation ordinance final reading. If y'all remember, this is the annexation of the Development Authority property out at the airport. And this will be the second reading tonight and by this and then it's done?

ATTORNEY LLOP: I will have to file with several places with the state and civil agencies, but yes.

CITY MANAGER BARRON: And we received no public comments from the first reading that I am aware of. April? No.

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: Alright, then I need a motion to approve the second and final reading of the annexation ordinance.

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

WOOD VALLEY DRIVE REPAIR:

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: Next is request bids for Wood Valley Drive repair project.

INSPECTOR WHITE: Over on Wood Valley Drive, when the road was originally constructed and then cut out to put a new drainpipe into one of the ponds. Over time, the cement and all has busted and cracked and caused a hazard for a vehicle to come across. It's made a bad dip and all. What we are proposing to do is, if y'all will let us get bids on it, is go in and tear all the cement out. Reinforce it with new matting, six-inch interstate cement, which is a 5000-psi mix and pour it back. That way the residents in Wood Valley would have safe entrances and exits.

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: Council, do y'all have any more questions for Jack? If not, then I need a motion to approve the bidding process for the Wood Valley Drive project.

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 from Councilman Woodard. All in favor show of hands. Motion carried unanimous.

MONTHLY BILLS:

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: Next on the agenda is the monthly bills for October 14, 2022 – October 24, 2022. You all got those in your packets. Did you have any questions about them? If not, I need a motion to approve the monthly bills.

COUNCIL MEMBER MULLIS: So moved.

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: Motion from Councilman Mullis to approve the monthly bills. 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.

THANKSGIVING CARDS:

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: Next on the agenda is the Thanksgiving gift cards and the luncheon.

CITY MANAGER BARRON: It has been the council's custom to feed the city employees a Thanksgiving dinner and give them a \$25 gift card to buy the family a turkey or something. So, we need to schedule a time to do it and get a vote if the council's still in favor of giving that \$25 gift card.

COUNCIL MEMBER MULLIS: I would like to see us give them \$35. If anybody's been to buy a turkey, turkeys have gone up sky high. That's what I think. And if we are wanting to do a turkey then some won't have to come out of their pocket. So, I recommend that we do \$35 cards.

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: Council, what do y'all think? I am in agreement.

COUNCIL MEMBER WOODARD: I'm in agreement.

CITY MANAGER BARRON: Just for the record, turkeys are up 73%. A turkey was 90 cent a pound in 2019. A turkey is between \$1.85 and \$1.99 a pound right now. It is unbelievable what food has gone to. It has just gone through the roof.

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: Y'all good with \$35 gift cards? Thanksgiving is the week of the 24th.

CITY MANAGER BARRON: I was thinking maybe Thursday, the 17th. Isn't that about when we did it last year?

CITY CLERK SHEFFIELD: Sometimes we do it the week before. Sometimes we do it the Monday or Tuesday of that week.

CITY MANAGER BARRON: Okay. I am good with whatever the council decides.

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: Y'all want to do that? Y'all good with the 17th, the week before? And a \$35 gift card? Alright, with that being said then, I need a motion to approve a \$35 gift card for employees and the Thanksgiving luncheon on Thursday, November 17th.

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

CHRISTMAS BONUS AND LUNCHEON:

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: Alright, while we are in the spirit of giving and eating, we will go ahead with the Christmas bonus and luncheon. I think in the past, we have normally done a \$100 bonus and then have a Christmas dinner for the employees and all. Are y'all still good with the \$100 bonus? And the Christmas luncheon, you want to do that the 15th, or you want to do it a tad earlier? What y'all think?

COUNCIL MEMBER MULLIS: The 15th is fine with me.

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: That is the Thursday before. This year, Christmas Eve will be on a Saturday, the 24th. And of course Christmas Day will be that Sunday, the 25th. Y'all want to do Christmas lunch that Thursday the 15th then? Alright, with that, I need a motion to approve the \$100 Christmas bonus for the employees and the Christmas luncheon on Thursday, December 15th.

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.

EXTENDING DHS AGREEMENT:

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: Next is extending the DHS agreement.

CITY MANAGER BARRON: The low-income household work assistance program is being extended. Is that right?

TAMMY WIGGINS: That's right, it's being extended. It is just an extension; it is not a new contract.

CITY MANAGER BARRON: The city is interested in participating in that if the council will let us continue with it. I think it has been very successful for the residents and for city hall.

TAMMY WIGGINS: It has been.

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: Council, are y'all good with that? Do you have any questions or anything?

CITY MANAGER BARRON: This if federal money helping the people of Eastman catch up their delinquent water bills.

TAMMY WIGGINS: Yes. It is for low-income households to help with their water.

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: I am good with extending it. Alright, I need a motion to extend the DHS agreement.

COUNCIL MEMBER MULLIS: **I will gladly say that I will make the motion.**

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

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: **Second.**

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

2023 GRASS CONTRACT:

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: Next on the agenda is to request bids for the 2023 grass contract.

CITY MANAGER BARRON: So, it's getting to be the time again where we need to get out our maintenance contract for the cemetery, the parks, the sidewalks, curbs, and gutters. So, currently, we have a Division A and a Division B. Division A is the cemeteries, the gateways, the Club, Peabody. Division B is the storm ways, the water ditches, the dead trees, the curb and sidewalk, and weed eat around the sidewalk. We bought the mulcher and are having great success with it. Wynnon is doing some phenomenal work with it. And this year, we spent about \$48,984. But that is what is budgeted in that contract. We've used the Bridges of Hope people with some success here. So, we want to look at maybe reducing that and increasing our use of the Bridges of Hope with the new employees we have and the new equipment that we are buying. But to make a cost analysis of it, we need to go ahead and bid out what that work would cost. To see if Dixie is still interested in it or any other competitor of Dixie's. So once we see what their cost is and then we see the cost is of what we can do in house, we would like to come back to council with a recommendation. And we are going to do it in phase approaches. We finally got this kind of working right with Division A and B. We may ask you to hold on to Division A and let us try to take Division B back over in house and see how that works. Y'all may tell us no and that is okay. But we have to have facts and then I could come back to you and give you a good sense of what it's going to cost.

COUNCIL MEMBER HAMILTON: If you don't mind, could we get a copy of what you said and where you want it?

CITY MANAGER BARRON: Absolutely. We can get you one as soon as the meeting is over. Or she may already have one in your packet. Just to give you a quick rundown. Three of the Bridges of Hope guys for one year is \$59,000 and those 3 guys, if we did that, would be under our supervision 5 days a week walking up and down Eastman roads versus the contractor that is coming in every week or two. But again, these numbers are all just preliminary not written in stone. We have got to articulate the bid, get

it sent out and get some responses to be able to come up with some numbers. If that sounds okay with everybody.

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

CITY CLERK SHEFFIELD: So you are talking about bidding both of them out?

CITY MANAGER BARRON: I say that we bid both of them out, just like we did last year and let's see what those numbers are. Dixie maybe, I think 2 or 3 others have asked, you know, if they could bid on it. Of course it is going to be an open bid. And they may be able to do it cheaper than the city can. Honestly, I don't know the answer to that. But then again, we may be able to do it cheaper ourselves. We have got to be able to compare that before we give you an answer.

COUNCIL MEMBER MULLIS: Question, when we do a contract with Dixie, is there a clause in there saying that if you're not right, then we could just let you go right then for somebody else.

CITY MANAGER BARRON: Yes Sir. There is verbiage in there. This isn't like the 25-year-old trash pickup contract. But that is coming up too.

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: Any other questions? If not, then I'll need a motion to bid out the 2023 grass contract and keep it with a Division A bid and a Division B bid. Identical to last year with each item listed with each division.

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. And then like I said, when you get those back, y'all can analyze if it is going to work for us.

WWTP BACKHOE:

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: Next on the agenda is to request for quotes for a wastewater treatment plant backhoe.

CITY MANAGER BARRON: I have been informed by Matt out at the wastewater treatment plant that our 40-year-old backhoe now will only drive in reverse. Apparently, they are very talented and very good with what they have. I think this is kind of an insurmountable hurdle. One of my pet peeves is to have people standing around not having the equipment to do their job with. So, we looked at bringing the street department backhoe to them or let them borrow the water departments, but then that just stops the street department from working or stop the water department. We finally ramped up to where we're able to really get some stuff done. I hope we are anyway. You're seeing improvement around town. So, I've talked about and if the council would let us, we would like to at least bid out for a new one to see what one would cost in the range of 65-75 hp and four-wheel drive. Now, we may come back and say we can't afford it. We may find a used one. Nobody may respond to the bid. Again, these are facts unknown until you give us permission to bid out and see how to start or see what we are starting at. I just don't see putting any money into a 40-year-old, 1970s backhoe at this point.

COUNCIL MEMBER MULLIS: There is one thing that I would like to see done if we get a new one. And that's one with the caution lights on it.

CITY MANAGER BARRON: Okay, we'll put some strobes on there. I think we made some improvement on city vehicles with getting some new strobes. So, I agree 100%. And we've got the meter readers off of the golf cart now. They're in a truck so they are compliant with Georgia law and going up and down the road checking the meters. We are making progress.

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: Any other questions? If not, then I need a motion then to request quotes for a backhoe for the wastewater treatment plant.

COUNCIL MEMBER HAMILTON: So moved.

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: Have a motion from Councilman Hamilton. 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.

SEWER PIPE CAMERA:

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: Next is the item that we added a while ago. It was a request to bid out a sewage camera system which is a CCTV system. And to be checking sewage lines and all to see whether they are clogged up or what the problem is and all.

CITY MANAGER BARRON: The last few years we have been borrowing one from Graham and Studstill and we are very grateful for their help using it. I think last week, we borrowed it from the Eastman Housing Authority. We have got the money in SPLOST. It is time for our city council to agree to it. Let's just buy our own. It'll help us. It'll save time. We'll be more effective and more efficient.

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: Anybody have any questions on that?

COUNCIL MEMBER MULLIS: Which one is this quote?

CITY MANAGER BARRON: That was just a sample quote of one. That's not necessarily what we are asking for. I just asked for a piece of paper to give me some specs and I think it was 200 feet for that range? One was at 200 ft, and this guy has a 12-inch monitor that I think we are asking. There is one with like a 6-inch monitor and maybe one that has a 10. Well, anyway, if y'all give us permission to bid it out, me and Paul and Jack, Mr. Royce and Jesse will get together and write up the specs and put it out there.

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: Any other questions, Council? If not, I need a motion to approve to bid out for a sewage camera system.

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: Have a second from Councilwoman Williams. All in favor show of hands. Motion carried unanimous.

CITY MANAGER BARRON: The Dodge County News loves us right now. A lot of bids and a lot of ads. But we are getting stuff done finally. We are able to get the equipment and have been able to hire the people to work it.

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: Keep up the good work.

CITY MANAGER REPORT:

CITY MANAGER BARRON: I just want to tell everyone thank you for coming together downtown this weekend. I think it was a fantastic event. Particularly Paula McCain, the Chamber of Commerce people. It was fantastic. Thank you to the council for helping with that and helping fund that. Again, hats off to all the Chamber volunteers, store owners, the religious and political organizations that contributed.

OTHER BUSINESS FROM COUNCIL:

COUNCIL MEMBER HAMILTON: The City Manager just took the words right out of my mouth.

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: I will just piggyback on that. I actually went and stayed till about 9:15. Ears was ringing. When it about got too cold, that's when I had to go. I believe everybody had a great time and we had a real, good turnout.

ATTORNEY LLOP: I do want to clarify that the annexation ordinance has to be filed with the state agencies before it's finalized.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

INSPECTOR JACK WHITE: If I may follow up on 3rd Avenue between College and Main. It's been poured today. All the busted-up cement and the trees have been removed. The new cement is poured now. We also added a handicap ramp on Main Street too.

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: Good job. Thank you, Sir.

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

CHAIRMAN

CITY CLERK