

January 26, 2023

The Eastman City Council met in a regular scheduled meeting on the above date at 6:00 p.m. The following members were present: Raymond Mullis, Buddy Pittman, Sebrina Williams, Ronnie Woodard and Jermayne Hamilton. Others present were Police Chief Billy Cooper, City Manager Spencer Barron, City Clerk April Sheffield, City Attorney Rita Llop, City Inspector Jack White and Engineer Jesse Bearden. Present from the community were Susan and Mitchell Coffee, Syble Pruett, Elouise Purvis and Paula McCain.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Pittman.

Invocation was given by Chaplain Hamilton.

Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

COUNCILOR PITTMAN: The first item of business is to approve the agenda.

CITY MANAGER BARRON: No additions.

COUNCILOR PITTMAN: No additions, so I need a motion to approve the agenda as it stands.

COUNCILOR MULLIS: So moved.

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

COUNCILOR WILLIAMS: Second.

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

COUNCILOR PITTMAN: Next is approve the minutes of the January 9 and January 18, 2023, regular meeting. Council, y'all got those in your packets of last week. Anything y'all, questions or anything about them? If not, I need a motion to approve the minutes of the January 9 meeting and the January 18 meeting.

COUNCILOR MULLIS: So moved.

COUNCILOR PITTMAN: I have a motion from Councilman Mullis, and I need a second.

COUNCILOR WOODARD: Second.

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

NO UNFINISHED BUSINESS

NEW BUSINESS:

SENIOR CITIZENS CENTER:

COUNCILOR PITTMAN: Under New Business, we will, uh Senior Citizens Center.

CITY MANAGER BARRON: Yessir, we have several ladies here that would like to address the Council, I think. If y'all just want to come up to this microphone right there.

SYBLE PRUETT: My name is Syble Pruett, and I'm at the Senior Citizens Center here, Council on Aging. And I would like to say first that I, this is a new endeavor for me. Ms. Gladys Peacock has been the Director for twelve years, and her health declined. I took on the role as a volunteer to be the Director, so I'm acting as Director now. I would like to say first that I thank you so much for what the city does for us because the other day whenever I looked at all those leaves out there, you know, as we get older, we're not able to do those things that we once did, and whenever I drove up, the crew was there blowing those leaves. You don't know how relieved I was to see that and the things that y'all provide for us. We

greatly, greatly appreciate it! At the center, I would like to ask that you consider making a donation for us. As many of the seniors are elderly, a lot of them are widows and widowers. A lot of them are not able to go out at night. They're not able to drive out of town, so their social function depends on the center for their social activities for crafts, entertainment, quilting, things that they enjoy doing. We would not, I'm being honest with you, we would not be able to provide that if the city did not help us. I would like to put before you that we would ask if you could possibly donate \$3,500 to help our operation and the things that we need. We would greatly, greatly appreciate it!

CITY MANAGER BARRON: And I would like to add to that, Council, they do provide a necessary service to the citizens of Eastman that we don't provide through City Hall directly. So, just my two cents worth for us. Rita, does that sound like it covers it?

CITY ATTORNEY LLOP: Yes.

CITY MANAGER BARRON: Okay.

COUNCILOR PITTMAN: Council, y'all have any questions for Ms. Syble? If not, I think that's what we gave y'all last year was \$3,500.

CITY MANAGER BARRON: Some years it's \$3,500. Some year, yeah, last year, \$3,500.

COUNCILOR PITTMAN: Alright.

SYBLE PRUETT: We'll take more if you'll give it to us.

COUNCILOR PITTMAN: It don't hurt to ask. Well, I will, I'll tell you what, I'll entertain a motion to, that we do as we did last year, make a \$3,500 contribution to the Senior Citizens Center.

COUNCILOR MULLIS: I second that.

COUNCILOR HAMILTON: So moved.

COUNCILOR PITTMAN: There was a motion. I've got a motion from Councilman Hamilton.

COUNCILOR MULLIS: I just wanted to hear you down there.

COUNCILOR PITTMAN: I have a second from Councilman Mullis. All in favor, show of hands. Motion carried unanimous.

SYBLE PRUETT: We thank y'all so much!

COUNCILOR PITTMAN: Yes ma'am. We thank you for stepping up and taking over.

DRAINPIPE AT THE CLUB:

COUNCILOR PITTMAN: Next on the agenda is the drainpipe at the Club.

ENGINEER BEARDEN: So, we've got several drainpipes around the Club. We have been out there repairing what we can repair. We had a pretty good crater where, and the pipe is old. It's a corrugated metal pipe with non-asphalt coating, so the life expectancy on that is about 18-20 years. I know that pipe's been there since the 1990's/early 2000's anyway. So, we had some areas that we couldn't repair. Over by the gym, we had a pretty good crater. We repaired that, but this is the main line that basically takes the Oak Street and the EMC, all up gradient from the railroad tracks down, and of course, way back in the day, that used to be a ditch. So, it was filled in, or the pipe was placed in there to cover it and have more areas to use. So, the pipe's deteriorated. You also see in your packet we've got about 300 foot of open ditch still remaining. That's pretty dangerous with the kids out there, so what I've, the price of the pipe covers enough pipe footage to cover that existing open ditch also. The pictures don't show very well, but the one with the grate, kind of the dark spots, well that's where the pipe is separated. When water runs through a pipe and it's separated or has voids in it, it pulls air, and so that, it's pulling dirt. And those holes, if you stepped in it, you would go up, I would fall all the way in it. So that's where the pipe is deteriorated in several places like that throughout that 500-foot stretch. So, it is definitely needed, it is city property. Of course, the Club is there, and we've, you know, got plans to expand that to walking paths, splash pads. So, this is just the first step to get the ball rolling, but I recommend highly that we go ahead, and we do this project. I know pipe is expensive right now. I was shocked at \$46 a foot for pipe, but with this COVID, everything's gone crazy, you know. Water meters used to cost less

than \$100; they're \$300 now. But anyway, this, with the kids out there, and like I say, this would just be a step in the right direction to get the pipe back in good shape.

COUNCILOR PITTMAN: I noticed in that pack today, I called Spence, and I said, "How does 30-inch times 20 foot equal \$24,000?" And I made it 200 foot, and I thought, "That still don't come to it." And then, this last picture is 520 foot, and I thought, "So, multiply that times that," and I said, "That's where that comes from." Y'all are, this is actually looking at doing that whole 520 foot.

ENGINEER BEARDEN: The whole 520 foot. That's right.

COUNCILOR PITTMAN: Like I said, I multiplied, subtracted, and divided.

COUNCILOR MULLIS: Are our people going to be able to put it in?

ENGINEER BEARDEN: We can put it in in-house, and that's the good thing too since y'all have bought the small excavator with the mulching head on it. Of course, we've got the bucket with it. Wynnon is a great operator. Because of him, we've repaired some of the ones already out there.

COUNCILOR MULLIS: That's good. I just wanted to let people know that.

ENGINEER BEARDEN: We hadn't been able to do it without that piece of equipment. The old backhoe just wouldn't be able to do it. So this will be, I'll set the grade, I'll be out there with the surveying equipment, and I guess me and Wynnon will put it in.

COUNCILOR MULLIS: Sounds good to me.

ENGINEER BEARDEN: So, there will be no, I mean, other than our regular salaries, there will be no additional expense for installation.

COUNCILOR MULLIS: Good. That's good.

COUNCILOR PITTMAN: Council, y'all have any other questions? If not, I will entertain a motion to approve the purchase of pipe from Macon Supply for 520 feet for \$24,148.80.

COUNCILOR MULLIS: I'll make a motion to approve.

COUNCILOR PITTMAN: I've got a motion from Councilman Mullis. I need a second.

COUNCILOR HAMILTON: Second.

COUNCILOR PITTMAN: I have a second from Councilman Hamilton. All in favor, show of hands. Motion carried unanimous.

EASTMAN POLICE DEPT/COURT:

COUNCILOR PITTMAN: Moving on, next item on the agenda is, will be Chief Cooper with the Eastman Police Department and Court, Municipal Court recommendations for us.

POLICE CHIEF COOPER: Alright, basically I spoke with our City Judge Joey Marchant a couple of weeks ago about this. What we want to do is streamline the court to add services to it, and I think it will actually come out even or maybe even possibly save the city money. We're wanting to hire a Solicitor/Prosecutor and also a Defense Attorney. The basic plan that we're trying to work up now and go with is we would have the Solicitor once a month for every court, so twelve times a year. Roughly the price for that would be somewhere between \$300-\$400. We're trying to land on \$300. We're looking at getting a Defense Attorney once every three months, so four times a year, and again, we're looking at about \$300 a month is what we're trying to land on. What this would do and how it would save money is every month we're paying officers to sit back here in the back to wait on cases, and we're paying overtime at that rate. So, the first two months before the third month, the officers wouldn't need to be here. The Solicitor would handle everything. That third month would be for trials, and that's when the officers would have to be here. So, we would save two months every third month, which is eight months out of the year of paying overtime to officers. Also, we have indigent people that come in and try to get a Defense Attorney, and we have to provide it if they fill out the paperwork. We're going to add a \$50 application fee to that, and where we normally now have to pay a Defense Attorney per case, the Defense Attorney would be hired four times a year and should handle all of that. I think it would be a great savings. It would be a great service for the court. I don't see any lose to it.

COUNCILOR PITTMAN: Very true.

POLICE CHIEF COOPER: And most courts do this already. They've been doing it for a few years now, and it seems to be working for them. We come up with that figure by calling other courts to see what they do pay their people.

COUNCILOR PITTMAN: Council, y'all have any other questions?

COUNCILOR MULLIS: Sounds good to me.

COUNCILOR HAMILTON: Did you make sure the numbers add up?

CITY MANAGER BARRON: I've checked the numbers that he's provided. Yeah, I think he's definitely going to see a cost savings. Not to mention, it's going to be more efficient for the City Attorney not having to get bogged down in that sort of thing, and hopefully, I mean, you never want to say you're running a court to make revenue. That's not what we're doing, but we would love to um...

POLICE CHIEF COOPER: I can tell you what we paid overtime Tuesday. We had officers here and adding just officers up that would be here normally, 13.5 hours of overtime. That 13.5 hours of overtime would be cut out completely.

COUNCILOR PITTMAN: That almost pays for the Solicitor there.

POLICE CHIEF COOPER: They got out at 9 o'clock that night for court. Hopefully, it will speed up court. We have gotten out of here at 11 o'clock. That's the latest I've been here, 11/11:30. That just adds to the overtime.

COUNCILOR PITTMAN: That's a busy month.

POLICE CHIEF COOPER: Yes sir.

CITY MANAGER BARRON: It's definitely a step toward a modern Municipal Court, I think, versus what we've done for many decades.

COUNCILOR PITTMAN: Any other questions? Well, if not, I'll entertain a motion to accept Chief Cooper's proposal to hire a Solicitor and a Defense Attorney for Municipal Court.

COUNCILOR MULLIS: I make a motion to approve.

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

COUNCILOR WILLIAMS: Second.

COUNCILOR PITTMAN: I have a second from Councilwoman Williams. All in favor, show of hands. Motion carried unanimous.

APPROVE MONTHLY BILLS:

COUNCILOR PITTMAN: Alright, next item on the agenda is to approve the monthly bills from January 10 through January 26. You all have them in front of you. Any questions for Ms. April? If not, I need a motion to approve the monthly bills.

COUNCILOR MULLIS: So moved.

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

COUNCILOR WOODARD: Second.

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

CITY MANAGER HAS NOTHING TO REPORT

OTHER BUSINESS FROM COUNCIL:

COUNCILOR HAMILTON: Yes sir, two things. One, I don't know if Mr. Jack was going to, okay, one thing. Next month, I won't be here for the second and fourth meeting. I have some training to do for my daytime job. I want to go on record and let everybody know and just not show up, so it's documented. It's for my daytime job.

CITY MANAGER BARRON: Mandatory training.

COUNCILOR HAMILTON: Mandatory. Can't miss this. It's for the state.

COUNCILOR MULLIS: We got another light blinking right down here, but it ain't nothing we can do about it. But if anybody asks you, tell them we can't do nothing about it.

CITY MANAGER BARRON: There's one behind the Methodist Church blinking. There's one down towards Shorty's blinking. I'll report them all, but we do just like any other citizen in the state of Georgia. We either call the 1-800 number to Georgia Power or get on the website and report it, and they fix it when they get around to fixing it. But in the future when y'all spot them or the public spots them, please call the City Hall. We'll report them for you, or just Google Georgia Power and report them as you find them.

COUNCILOR MULLIS: One more thing, are we fixing to clean the water tower, or why are they draining it?

ENGINEER BEARDON: To replace a valve that's leaking.

COUNCILOR MULLIS: Okay, in case somebody asks me, I can tell them.

ENGINEER BEARDON: Talking about at 9th Avenue and Eastman Street?

COUNCILOR MULLIS: Yeah, yeah. I followed that thing down today to make sure there wasn't a...

CITY MANAGER BARRON: You thought we had a bad leak, didn't you?

COUNCILOR MULLIS: Yeah, I thought we had a bad one.

ENGINEER BEARDON: Some people, a couple of citizens called also. That's one of the oldest water, parts of the water system in town, so the pipeline that's in that area is called pit cast. Not perfectly cylindrical. It wobbles. Valves do not sink completely in that. And when we do repairs around that section, you have to drain that whole tank. So, what we doing is draining the tank and going to replace the valve. We've replaced one in the sidewalk. I wish I could tell you it completely shuts it off, but it doesn't. Just because the nature of the beast with pit cast iron, but a much-needed valve replace in the tank.

COUNCILOR MULLIS: Okay.

ENGINEER BEARDON: That's one of the smallest tanks. That's the oldest tank, but we still depend on it to produce pressure. That tank's as old as me and you, Mr. Raymond.

COUNCILOR MULLIS: That ain't too old.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

COUNCILOR PITTMAN: Public comments?

CITY INSPECTOR WHITE: One thing from me, please sir. Last meeting, y'all discussed some playground equipment. So we reached out to a company, made 3 or 4 different attempts, but they never will respond back. So, I have another company if y'all want to pick out some new playground equipment we can go back through it and get a different price and move on. I'll let y'all see the pictures.

COUNCILOR MULLIS: How many you got of those? Would we need to make copies of them?

COUNCILOR HAMILTON: I can share this.

CITY INSPECTOR WHITE: If you pick out one you think everyone will agree on, make copies of it for them. That's the only book I have.

COUNCILOR HAMILTON: Okay.

COUNCILOR PITTMAN: Anymore comments? You going to carry that and get them to pick out several different ones, and we can go from there.

ADJOURNMENT:

On a motion from Councilor Mullis and a second from Councilor Williams, the meeting was adjourned.