

December 28, 2023

The Eastman City Council met in a regularly scheduled meeting on the above date at 6:00 p.m. The following members were present: Buddy Pittman, Sebrina Williams, Raymond Mullis, Jermayne Hamilton, and Ronnie Woodard. Others present were City Attorney Rita Llop, City Manager Spencer Barron, Police Chief Billy Cooper, City Clerk April Sheffield, Admin Assistant Dayna Winslette, City Inspector Jack White, and Department Heads Wynnon Pittman and Paul McCranie. Present from the community were Graham Snyder, Debra Sheffield, Jesse Bearden, Sharon Cobb and Mike Flanagan, EM Harrington III, Steve Harrison, Opera Jordan, Emory Tuff, Mark and Daina Peacock, and Edward Wright. Also in attendance was Larry Hanson, CEO of the Georgia Municipal Association. In support of their family members, Bethany, Megan, and Wendy Pittman, and Jason, Mary, Jonathan, and Michelle Mullis were present.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Pittman.

The invocation was given by Councilor Hamilton.

Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

COUNCILOR PITTMAN: First item of business is to approve the agenda unless Spence has got anything to add to it?

CITY MANAGER BARRON: No Sir. There's no changes.

COUNCILOR PITTMAN: All right, I'll entertain a motion then to approve the agenda as it stands.

COUNCILOR MULLIS: So moved.

COUNCILOR PITTMAN: I 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.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

COUNCILOR PITTMAN: Next on the agenda is to approve the minutes of the December 11, 2023, regular meeting. Council, y'all got those in your emails and all. Do y'all have any questions about them? If not, I need a motion to approve the minutes of the December 11, 2023, regular meeting.

COUNCILOR MULLIS: So moved.

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

COUNCILOR WOODARD: Second.

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

NO UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

NEW BUSINESS:

BID OUT 2024 GRASS CONTRACT:

COUNCILOR PITTMAN: We will move right into new business and the first item is to bid out the 2024 grass contract.

JACK WHITE: We request permission to bid out the grass contract for the 2024 season. It covers Eastman Cemetery, Woodlawn Cemetery, Senior Citizens Center and 911 Center, Sunset Park, Veterans Park, Eastman Gateway area near Walmart, the Club and Peabody Complex.

COUNCILOR PITTMAN: All right. Council y'all have any questions for Jack? If not, then we are approving y'all's advertising to take bids for this and they'll be read aloud on January 19th.

CITY MANAGER BARRON: Yes Sir. Here at City Hall.

COUNCILOR PITTMAN: **All right. I need a motion to approve to advertise to take bids for the 2024 grass contract.**

COUNCILOR MULLIS: **So moved.**

COUNCILOR PITTMAN: I have 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.**

VACUUM EXCAVATOR BID:

COUNCILOR PITTMAN: Next on the agenda is to bid out for a vacuum excavator.

WYNNON PITTMAN: We would like to ask for permission from City Council to bid out a vacuum excavator. Upon looking over some of the stuff coming forth in 2024, the EPD has required us as a city to do a lead and copper inventory throughout our whole town of 2800 meters. We've got to pretty much get a complete inventory on both sides of the meter of what is in the ground. And upon trying to change these meters out the last few weeks, we realized that not changing out lines and meters, there are stumps and roots. It would be a whole lot more efficient if we had this piece of machine to work with for this lead and copper inventory. On top of this, you know that we feel like we could utilize it to fix our leaks a lot better. Not tearing up peoples yard as much because this machine is basically a pressure washer. That is, you are pressure washing dirt with a vacuum cleaner sitting there beside it that's doing 100% clean work and you bring clean sand back. It would just be a whole lot easier. The other thing is we've looked at Georgia Rural Water and there are bids that are up to \$500,000 for people to come in and do this for us. And we would like to try to do this in-house and that is the reason we want to put this out for bid. Just for us to look at.

CITY MANAGER BARRON: And the information we've got right now is that GEFA will reimburse us 50% for this purchase.

COUNCILOR MULLIS: You can't beat that.

COUNCILOR HAMILTON: Yeah.

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

COUNCILOR MULLIS: No. Sounds good.

COUNCILOR PITTMAN: All right. Thank you, Sir. With that being said and no other questions, **I'll entertain a motion to approve to bid out for a vacuum excavator piece of equipment.**

COUNCILOR MULLIS: **So moved.**

COUNCILOR PITTMAN: I 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.**

INDUSTRIAL PARK LIFT STATION:

COUNCILOR PITTMAN: Next on the agenda is the Industrial Park Lift Station.

CITY MANAGER BARRON: Yes, the Council previously approved bids for the Industrial Park Pump Station. We received 3 responses. One from Ricketson Construction in the amount of \$535,921.97. Another one from Lakeshore Engineering in the amount of \$1,089,350. And then the third one is from Popco in the amount of \$569,840. We got a letter of recommendation from Hofstadter and Associates to go with the \$535,921.97 bid from the Ricketson Construction Company. And again, that's to repair the Industrial Park Pump Station.

COUNCILOR MULLIS: Where is that located at?

CITY MANAGER BARRON: In the Industrial Park, to put it bluntly. But I think it's a 30- or 40-year-old. Is Jesse back there? He might remember.

JESSE BEARDEN: It ain't how old I am. I graduated high school in '71. That pump station was installed in 1971. But if you go in, and before you get to the jail, take a left and it turns and goes back. So, it's really behind the jail. And it's been there, like I say, 53 years now. Almost. Much needed. There's only one motor operating right now. So if it goes out, the city could have a potential spill. So, I highly recommend that we go with the low bid on this. It's very important. Because this services the jail, Arconic, and everything else out there in the Industrial Park.

COUNCILOR MULLIS: The YDC?

JESSE BEARDEN: No. The old YDC but not the new one. The new one has its own pump station at WPA Rd.

COUNCILOR PITTMAN: I know that you and I have talked about this. This could be shot tomorrow. It could be shot next week. So, according to them, they're waiting on us for approval and then they'll get with them, get the paperwork done and get started on it. Council, with all of that being said, **I'll take a motion to approve the Industrial Park Lift Station on Hofstadter's recommendation of Ricketson Construction Company for a cost of \$535,921.97.**

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.**

APPROVE MONTHLY BILLS:

COUNCILOR PITTMAN: Next on the agenda is to approve monthly bills for December the 12th through the 28th, 2023. And y'all got those in your packets and all so. Do y'all have any questions about them? If not, **I'll need a motion to approve the monthly bills for December 12th through the 28th.**

COUNCILOR MULLIS: So moved.

COUNCILOR PITTMAN: I have 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.**

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT:

CITY MANAGER BARRON: Just briefly, I want to thank everyone for a successful Holly Jolly Christmas Festival. I've heard nothing but compliments and I think everyone had a great time downtown. Particularly, I would like to thank of course the Council, but the County Commissioners, the Chamber of Commerce, the Downtown Development Authority and the Leave It Better group for their donation of funds and the hours of work to pull it all together, thank you.

OTHER BUSINESS FROM COUNCIL:

COUNCILOR HAMILTON: Same thing with Mr. Spence. I don't want to leave anybody out, so I don't want to name names, but it's been a success over the last couple of months here in the city of Eastman. And I think we ended it well. Especially with the skate park and everything. And the gatherings that we are having. It's looking good for 2024. Thank you.

COUNCILOR WILLIAMS: I don't have anything other than to wish everyone a happy New Year and thank you for all your support.

COUNCILOR MULLIS: Jermayne, you don't have nothing to say about the park?

COUNCILOR HAMILTON: The park? Yes, definitely. I have a lot to say, well, I wanted to wait. Me and Mr. Jack have been talking about that for a minute. But I appreciate everything that's going on with the park and everything, but it's a special moment in time for that.

COUNCILOR MULLIS: I think it's right now it's a good time. I went and looked at it today. It looks good. That's all I got.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

OPERA JORDAN: I would like to say thank you to the City Council for everything that you have been doing around here. It is looking good, and we greatly appreciate it. I would like to know if y'all would take into consideration getting a grant in here to help people fix their homes, also. Just asking.

CITY MANAGER BARRON: She's referring to the CHIP program and we do need to look into that in the coming year. That's an option. Cochran has made great use of it.

VIA FACEBOOK:

JESSIE JONES: The cemeteries have never looked this good. Thanks to the current grass company.

CITY MANAGER BARRON: We feel the same way. They are doing a great job.

LARRY HANSON, GMA:

COUNCILOR PITTMAN: We will move on to Mr. Larry Hanson. The CEO, the leader, our fearless leader with the Georgia Municipal Association that is actually taking time out of his busy schedule to come down from Atlanta and see us tonight.

LARRY HANSON: Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman. It's certainly a pleasure to be here with you all tonight. And thank you for giving me a few minutes on your agenda to come and recognize some of your officials. As the Chairman said, I am Larry Hanson. I'm the CEO of the Georgia Municipal Association. I'm very proud that we work on behalf of all 537 cities in Georgia. And we're pleased that the city of Eastman has been one of our members for many years. Since GMA was created 90 years ago, our sole reason has been to advocate for cities and provide the services and resources and training that they need to operate efficiently and effectively and provide a great quality of life for the residents. And just hearing comments tonight, I know that you all are doing that. At GMA, we have a staff of 115 employees. But the real strength of our association is actually our members. It is the elected officials and the staff in our cities. Throughout our history, we've been blessed to have great elected officials throughout this state. And many of them are actively involved in GMA. And we'd like to take the opportunity to recognize particularly those that have held office for a significant amount of time and had contributions not just to their city but to the entire state. So I know three of you are leaving office tonight and two of those have actually met the criteria to receive an award recognition from GMA and I'd like to take a moment to recognize and honor those two. The first is Chairman Buddy Pittman. I've known the Chairman for many years. Prior to me coming to GMA six years ago, I was a city manager in

Valdosta for over 22 years and have had the opportunity to serve with him as a member of GMA on various boards and councils and always found him to be someone who was very caring, giving of his time and always trying to serve in the best interest of this city, but also all cities. I know that he served 16 years in office, and he has served GMA in many capacities during that time. Among those included serving as a member of our Board of Directors for many years, serving as a member of our Municipal Training Board. Our training board is a partnership between GMA and the Carl Vinson Institute of Government at the University of Georgia. Our training program is actually recognized as the goal standard of training programs in the United States. So the fact that he served on that board for many years and helped shape that training program, says a great deal about it. He also served on our Legislative Policy Council. That's a group of about 50 leaders who meet four times a year and every Monday morning during the session to help shape our legislative agenda of what we advocate for and against on your behalf at the Georgia General Assembly. He also served as a member of our Children and Youth Advisory Council. The Chairman completed 411 hours of training through our Harold L. Holtz Municipal Training Institute, and he earned a Certificate of Dedication which is the highest level a municipal official can achieve. He faithfully attended district meetings over the course of his career, annual conferences and made himself available any time we called on him for assistance and guidance. And so in recognition of his service to the City of Eastman and to GMA, I'd like to present Chairman Pittman with a Certificate of Distinguished Public Service.

LARRY HANSON: And next, it's my pleasure to recognize Council Member Raymond Mullis. Like Chairman Pittman, Council Member Mullis has been a great supporter of GMA during his 20 years as a member of the City Council. In fact, I cannot recall attending a GMA Convention or Cities United Summit, which used to be Mayor's Day, when he was not present. He is also active, serving his district as well. I've always admired Councilman Mullis for his commitment to lifelong learning. He has earned 400 training hours and also received a Certificate of Dedication from the Municipal Training Institute. Like Chairman Pittman, he has taken just about every class that GMA has offered to elected officials over the years. In fact, our staff recently checked the training records, and we found that there are less than 10 city officials in the entire state of Georgia that have earned as many training hours as these two gentlemen have earned. So in recognition of his service to the city of Eastman and his longtime support of GMA, and remarkable commitment to training, it's my pleasure to present Councilmember Mullis with a Certificate of Public Service as well.

LARRY HANSON: So thank you all for the opportunity to be here tonight. I thoroughly enjoyed it and got to spend some time here this afternoon looking at your beautiful city. So keep doing great things.

PRESENTATION TO COUNCIL:

CITY MANAGER BARRON: I can't go into thanking y'all enough for all you have done for the city of Eastman. For leaving it better than you found it. I truly believe that y'all have accomplished some amazing things. So on behalf of the citizens of Eastman, the employees here in City Hall and throughout all the other departments, we just want to tell you thank you for what you're doing. And we do have some small tokens of our appreciation. This one is presented to Mr. Ronnie Woodard in sincere appreciation for your dedicated years of service, January 1, 2016, to December 31st, 2023. City Council member of District 4. Congratulations on your retirement.

CITY MANAGER BARRON: Y'all said You wanted a gavel. We got you a gavel. So this is presented to Buddy Pittman, Eastman Council Member District 2. January 1, 2008, to December 31st, 2023.

Presented in sincere appreciation for your 16 years of dedicated service to the City of Eastman. Thank you.

COUNCILOR PITTMAN: Thank y'all.

CITY MANAGER BARRON: And this one is presented to Mr. Raymond Mullis, Eastman City Council Member District 3. January 1, 2000, to December 31st, 2007. And then he came back again for more punishment, right? January 1, 2012, to December 31st, 2023. Presented in sincere appreciation for your 20 years of dedicated service to the City of Eastman. Thank you.

COUNCILOR PITTMAN: I would like to thank everybody for this, and I will give you the opportunity. Mr. Ronnie, would you like to say anything.

COUNCILOR WOODARD: No Sir.

COUNCILOR PITTMAN: Just saying thank you. Mr. Raymond?

COUNCILOR MULLIS: I appreciate the City of Eastman. I feel like I've done a good job. And I love what it did. That's all I got to say.

COUNCILOR PITTMAN: I would like to say it has been a very good 16 years. It's been fun at times. It's been challenging at times. But through thick, thin, the wind and the storm and all, I think and feel like we have accomplished a lot. You come through town now like you were saying earlier, and I've heard other people, especially the past few years. Town is cleaner. It looks better. It's nicer looking. Cemeteries, let me tell y'all what, if you do nothing, keep that grass at the cemetery cut. I got more calls and fussed at about cemeteries than you will ever believe. I would like to thank my family for coming and putting up with this for a long, long time. And it's been an honor and a pleasure serving with y'all. And I honestly feel like we really, I know me and Ms. Sebrina were talking today, were a good council. We may not always agree on something, but you know we didn't get mad at each other. We talked about it and discussed it and came to a viable solution at the end that for the whole purpose benefited the city and the citizens of town. Now, have we made everybody happy? I learned a long time ago. If everybody happy, somebody lying. So if you're keeping somebody mad at you, you must be doing something right? So. But it has been a pleasure. Larry, again, thank you for coming down. Y'all, this fellow here, sitting at that table one day at one of those board meetings and all. When I first got elected, the first year I went to convention in Atlanta and went to the convention that summer in Savannah. But I was watching these folks getting these awards and certificates and all this stuff, and I was like, man, I want me some of that. So, I started and like you said, 411 hours of training. That's almost 4 college degrees in the last 15 years. But I told Larry, I watched him. He was the city manager in Valdosta and Larry was really involved. He was participating in everything and all and I told him. I said, man I've watched you and I said I'm just hanging onto your belt loop and following you. And will I accomplish as much as you? Probably not, but I'm going to ride with you and we're going to accomplish some stuff. So Larry, again, thank you for that mentorship, that role model and all. With that being said and before I bang this gavel for the last time. I know that I have talked to Graham, and I have talked to Mark. If y'all ever need anything, y'all got my number and I ain't far. Just holler. I'd be glad to help or give some advice or whatever.

ADJOURNMENT:

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

CHAIRMAN

CITY CLERK