

July 22, 2024

The Eastman City Council met in a regularly scheduled meeting on the above date at 6:00 p.m. The following members were present: Sebrina Williams, Graham Snyder, Debra Sheffield, and Mark Peacock. Others present were City Manager Spencer Barron, City Clerk April Sheffield, City Attorney Rita Llop, Assistant City Manager Dayna Winslette, City Inspector Jack White, and Water Supervisor Wynn Pittman. Audience members included EM Harrington III, Susan and Mitchell Coffee, Ellery & Loraine Aguayo, Justin & Nicole Barnett and kids, John Battle, and Christina Hawkins.

The meeting was called to order by Councilor Snyder.

Invocation was given by Councilor Peacock.

Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

Scotty Whitten requested to be removed from the agenda. **The agenda was amended on a motion from Councilor Peacock and seconded by Councilor Williams.** City Manager Barron reminded everyone about the work session with DCA on Tuesday and announced the time to be 12 noon. **On a motion from Councilor Sheffield and seconded by Councilor Peacock, the amended agenda was approved.**

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

The minutes of the regular meeting of July 8, 2024, and the called meeting with the county on July 11, 2024, were presented and approved on a motion from Councilor Williams and seconded by Councilor Sheffield.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

ALCOHOL ORDINANCE:

The Alcohol Ordinance Amendment 2024-011-A was presented for its second reading. The requested changes have been made. Those changes include further defining the downtown district and residential footage requirement in reference to the serving of alcohol in said district. Also, the redefining of the definition of a church to make it more specific when measuring the distance between a church and a restaurant wanting to serve alcohol. The new alcohol ordinance was approved on a motion from Councilor Peacock and seconded by Councilor Williams.

NEW BUSINESS:

MONTHLY BILLS:

On a motion from Councilor Sheffield and a second from Councilor Williams, the monthly bills for July 9 – 22, 2024, were approved.

DCHS POW WOW REQUEST:

Christina Hawkins, the DCHS Student Council advisor, approached the council requesting to use Main Street and the amphitheater for the Homecoming POW WOW. In the past, it has been held at the middle school track. There have been issues and have also had requests to make it more community oriented. The student council and advisors met and want to have it downtown this year in order to involve the community. They are wanting to get rid of the obstacle course and make it more like a festival. It will still be a school event and they would be particular about what kind of vendors that they would allow. The skits would be done at the amphitheater. Restrooms at the theater would be used. She is wanting to start small with just Main Street between 4th and 5th between the hours of 6 and 9. The date will be Thursday, October 17. They will try to keep it within the block and maybe the side of 4th

Avenue. The police or fire chief will have the ability to shut down a section if necessary. Hopefully, this will keep them from having to notify the railroad.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: LORAIN AGUAYO: She speaks about notifying the store owners downtown in case they would like to open up that evening since there will be more traffic downtown. Mrs. Hawkins agreed to advertise and let them know what is going on.

On a motion from Councilor Peacock and seconded by Councilor Sheffield, the POW WOW request was unanimously approved.

ACCEPT ANY GOODY'S BIDS:

Clerk Sheffield stated that no bids were received. Manager Barron mentioned reaching out to commercial realtors that might be interested in handling this. Council agreed to move forward with this. Approval has already been given to seek out bids, so a vote will not be taken until more information is provided.

LEAVE IT BETTER ALLEY:

Wynnon Pittman approached the council about putting out for bid the location and replacement of all utilities in the alley that runs from 3rd to 4th and parallel between Main and King St. Manager Barron explains that they are trying to improve that alley and make it more useful. Before any work is done, the hundred-year-old infrastructure needs to be taken care of and the city does not have the right equipment to locate all of the lines. Once the bids come in, a decision can be made to move forward or not. Technically, the city does not own the alley. We are in negotiation with the DDA, Leave it Better, and store owners for some sort of easement to the alley before any work is done.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: LORAIN AGUAYO: She totally agrees with the improvement of the infrastructure. She asks that the alley is paved and made safe after any work before Leave it Better does some more work back there. Council agreed that the alley will be properly taken care of.

On a motion from Councilor Williams and seconded by Councilor Peacock, the council unanimously approved to seek bids on identifying all of the utilities in the Leave It Better alley, and also a quote to replace the water and sewer lines there.

REQUEST FOR LIFT STATION PUMP:

Terry Hardeman, the water supply operator, has asked for a new pump at the Legion Drive Lift Station. The two in the ground are 15+ years old. We need to get one in for either replacement or standby. He has requested to put this out for bid according to the current specifications. **Council voted for him to move ahead on a motion from Councilor Peacock and seconded by Councilor Williams.**

SOFTWARE PROPOSAL:

We are currently using an outdated software called QS1. We have been searching for a software that would help improve both the front end, department head involvement, and also interaction with the public and customer service. We have gone through several demos with Springbrook, who purchased QS1, and Edmunds and then compared the costs. As far as yearly costs are concerned, they are both at \$29,000 to provide the software and updates yearly. Where the difference comes in is the implementation process. Springbrook comes in at \$97,020. This includes bringing over 2-3 years of current information to the new software. The pricing is locked in for 3 years and the potential increase could be up to 7%. Edmunds quoted \$55,000 for 3 years of information and \$64,300 for 5 years. The pricing is locked in for 5 years with an increase of no more than 4%. We do not know if we will be able to retain any of our information from QS1 once we change over. Because of this, the 5-year quote is recommended. Both Cochran and Hawkinsville use Edmunds. Edmunds also uses Diamond maps which is some mapping and work order software that we already use. With Edmunds, it can be used in the field and remotely. It also appears easier to use than our current one. We are not sure if Edmunds will

link into the credit card software that we just implemented. However, they do have their own so we would not lose that service. There is also an email or text message notification that we can use to notify residents of emergency situations. We have heard that Edmunds customer service is very good. They have been very responsive so far in helping and answering questions. Councilor Sheffield asks if we have reached out to the surrounding cities about how they like it. Councilor Snyder assured her that he and others had spoken to several people.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: JOHN BATTLE: He asks about the safety and security of this. Councilor Snyder assures them that Edmunds does have their own IT support system.

LORAIN AGUAYO: She asks if the city itself has its own IT people. Barron assures her that we do, VC3. **Councilor Peacock made a motion to proceed with Edmunds with the 5-year plan. Councilor Sheffield seconded the motion and all approved.**

INCREASE CREDIT CARD LIMIT:

A request has been submitted to increase credit card limits on the city manager, assistant city manager, and also the addition of the rest of the department heads. The reason for this is because sometimes more expensive items are needed by a department and put on the city manager's card and then the card is at the maximum limit and cannot be used for the rest of the month. This will also keep the department heads from borrowing someone else's card in case of certain emergencies. There will be a checks and balances. Department heads will still PO each purchase and keep receipts. The bill will come to the clerk to check and sign off on, then go to the city manager to approve before paying.

This change will be amending the current credit card policy of 2016 by resolution for the reason of adding additional authorized users with a monthly cap. **This resolution was approved on a motion from Councilor Peacock and seconded by Councilor Sheffield.**

DOC AGREEMENT FOR WORK AT THE CLUB:

Manager Barron is excited about this. This will be the first substantial work done in reference to the new city park. Inspector White states that everyone has met together to come up with a game plan. The DOC has offered to do all of the work on the proposed scope for free. It will be approximately \$50,000 in labor. The city has certain things that is required of them to do including providing all of the necessary materials. Jack anticipates between \$30-40,000 in materials. Barron has set aside \$150,000 in SPLOST money to help with this project.

On a motion from Councilor Peacock and seconded by Councilor Sheffield, the council agreed to an agreement for the Department of Corrections to provide labor for some repair work at The Club.

ANNEXATION OF 048A 021 AT 120 CONGO LANE:

Gene Johnson, the executive of the Addie Mae Johnson estate, has submitted a petition to annex the property at 120 Congo Lane into the city. He has requested an R-2A because the current use of the property is for a house and a trailer. The property is contiguous to the city.

The council voted to accept the petition for annexation and approve the first reading of the annexation ordinance for 048A 021 at 120 Congo Lane for Gene Johnson.

SPEED HUMP AT 5725 PINE STREET:

Sixteen of the neighbors of 5725 Pine Street have requested a speed hump because of the traffic coming through from the middle school. The worst area is between 12th and 14th Avenue.

Council approved a speed hump for Pine Street on a motion from Councilor Peacock and seconded by Councilor Sheffield.

CITY MANAGER REPORT:

Thanks the citizens for their patience during the water main repair and the boil water advisory. Also, a reminder of the work being done on the sewer lines between Jessup Heights and the Pine Drive area.

OTHER BUSINESS FROM COUNCIL:

Councilor Peacock thanks those that have made input on the SPLOST negotiations. They are still ongoing. Please pay attention and take part in them because they do involve the city and the surrounding area.

Councilor Snyder also comments on the SPLOST negotiations that have taken place between the city, county, surrounding municipalities, and some authorities. He has become very disheartened. He feels the county should be more forthcoming. They are looking at cutting the hospital and the city itself. The upcoming SPLOST decisions are very vital to what we can do to help the community. Cutting SPLOST could have a negative impact. Snyder wishes for everyone to attend these meetings and to contact your councilors or commissioners. Know what is going on in the community and voice your concerns. The next SPLOST meeting is scheduled for Monday, July 29, 2024, at 6 PM.

ADJOURNMENT:

On a motion from Councilor Williams, a second from Councilor Sheffield, and a unanimous vote, the meeting was adjourned.

CHAIRMAN

CITY CLERK