

October 28, 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, and Debra Sheffield. Others present were City Manager Spencer Barron, City Clerk April Sheffield, City Attorney Rita Llop, City Inspector Jack White, Assistant Manager Dayna Winslette, Water Supervisor Wynnon Pittman, and Police Chief Billy Cooper. Audience members included Loraine and Ellery Aguayo, Paula McCain, EM Harrington III, Susan and Mitchell Coffee, Commissioner Sharon Cobb Flanagan, Dr. Vishal Sharma, and Brian Dennis.

Invocation was given by Manager Barron.

Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

Manager Barron asked to add #7, Paula McCain/Chamber of Commerce and a #8, Wynnon with a water department request. The agenda was amended by a unanimous vote on a motion from Councilor Sheffield and a second from Councilor Williams. On a motion from Councilor Williams and a second from Councilor Sheffield, the amended agenda was unanimously approved.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

On a motion from Councilor Sheffield and a second from Councilor Williams, the minutes of the October 16, 2024, meeting were unanimously approved.

NO UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

NEW BUSINESS:

APPROVAL OF MONTHLY BILLS:

On a motion from Councilor Williams and seconded by Councilor Sheffield, the monthly bills for October 16 - 28, 2024, were unanimously approved.

HOUSING AUTHORITY BOARD APPOINTMENTS:

Michelle Butler, Executive Director of the Eastman Housing Authority, has reached out for consideration of the reappointment of 3 of their board members. **Mr. Mike Pruett, Ms. Lindsey G. Wilkes, and Ms. Faye Oxford** are all willing to continue to serve. **Council unanimously voted to reappoint all three to the Housing Authority Board on a motion from Councilor Sheffield and seconded by Councilor Williams.**

RESCHEDULE NOVEMBER 11 MEETING:

Due to November 11, 2024, being a holiday (Veterans Day) and the city hall is closed, there is a need to reschedule the first meeting of the month. **After discussion and a motion from Councilor Williams and seconded by Councilor Sheffield, it was unanimously approved to move the meeting to Tuesday, November 12, 2024, at 6 PM.**

LWCF GRANT RESOLUTION:

Assistant Manager Winslette presented the information for the LWCF Grant. It is a grant opportunity from the Department of Natural Resources. It is based upon Land and Water Conservation. She plans to use the Club project and park renovations. As discussed at a previous work session, it was decided that \$250,000 was an appropriate grant match from the city. This would allow the city to apply for a grant of \$250,000. That would give \$500,000 towards moving and recreating the

playground along with the addition of a splash pad. The application for this grant requires a letter and resolution from the council. **On a motion from Councilor Williams and seconded by Councilor Sheffield, it was unanimously decided to approve the resolution and move forward with the grant application.**

WATER FEE SCHEDULE:

Clerk Sheffield presented some changes to the current water fees that are charged. The first change would be to **increase the deposit amount to \$100**. It is currently at \$75 and is no longer sufficient to cover a minimum bill. The last change to the deposit amount was more than 15 years ago. The second proposed change would be **increasing the 2wk cleanup charge from \$25 to \$45**. This would help cover the cost of the employee making 2 trips to the meter/address and also cover any water used. The third proposed change is an **increase in the reconnect fee of \$25 to \$35** in order to help cover costs. Wynnon does feel that at the current rate, the city is losing money. Those last fees have not been raised in approximately 3 years. **On a motion from Councilor Sheffield and seconded by Councilor Williams, the proposed fee changes were unanimously approved.**

DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY:

Paula McCain and Loraine Aguayo approach to follow up on the conversation about the purchase of an ice-skating rink. Paula has an estimate to the total cost of the rink, skates, sharpener, and the rubber mat leading on and off of the rink. They were told that the cleanup would include sweeping each night after use and pressure washing before long-term storage. They plan on setting it up in the amphitheater. Longevity is estimated 10-15 years. They have approached the county about paying for half of the total cost, which is approximately \$40,000. Ownership would be in the hands of the DDA. They will be in charge of storage, maintenance, and rental as they would like. It would be something that could be used more than once a year. Expanding the time frame of usage would require someone to be present to man it at all times. **The \$20,000 contribution was unanimously approved on a motion from Councilor Sheffield and seconded by Councilor Williams.**

PLANNING & ZONING RESIGNATION:

Board member **Dwayne Burney** has presented his resignation as a Planning and Zoning board member in anticipation of taking his position on the city council after November's election certification. **The resignation was accepted unanimously on a motion from Councilor Williams and seconded by Councilor Sheffield. Then the decision was made to advertise to fill the District 5 P&Z Board position until November 22, 2024. This was done on a motion from Councilor Sheffield and seconded by Councilor Williams.**

PAULA MCCAIN, CHAMBER OF COMMERCE:

Tucker from the Tres Hombres band has contacted her about doing a Hurricane Relief Concert along with another band. They want to take up donations and give half of the proceeds to the local Christian Life Center and half to Samaritan's Purse. **They plan on doing this event Saturday, November 16, 2024, from 4 – 9 PM. The request is to shut down the road between 4th and 5th Avenue from 2 – 11 PM.** This will give adequate time to set up any food trucks and for the bands to set up and then tear down afterwards. **The request was unanimously approved on a motion from Councilor Sheffield and seconded by Councilor Williams.**

WYNNON PITTMAN, WATER DEPARTMENT:

The I&I Project currently underway has come across a problem that will require some change orders as to where the sewer line needs to be placed. Wynnon approached the council requesting permission to

skip the bid process and seek quotes to remove trees on the side of Congo Lane. There are two property owners that are willing to sign permission to take the trees and lay the sewer line. Popco, the current contractor, has given a quote but Wynnon has been able to find someone local for a lesser price. There is a need to move quickly on this because Popco is about to be at a standstill until the trees can be removed. **Due to the urgency, the council unanimously voted to skip the bid advertisement period and have Manager Barron approve the lowest quote given as long as it remains in his budget. The vote was taken on a motion from Councilor Williams and seconded by Councilor Sheffield.**

BEER/WINE LICENSE:

Al Khaliq 330 LLC is the new owner of 330 Oak Street. The owner, Jessica Bardai, has applied for a beer/wine license. Fees have been paid and all paperwork is in order. **The license was unanimously approved on a motion from Councilor Sheffield and seconded by Councilor Williams.**

PLANNING & ZONING RECOMMENDATION:

Brian Dennis has applied for a rezoning of **215 Bethel Street**. He has requested to go from an **R-1 to an R-2**. In this particular block, there are already 3 properties being used as multi-family. This would get the whole block zoned correctly. Everything is in order and the Planning & Zoning Board has already approved. **Council unanimously agrees on a motion from Councilor Williams and seconded by Councilor Sheffield.**

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT:

Manager Barron reminds everyone that the city is still taking applications for the fire department, police department and street department. Also, check the city Facebook page to see what local Trick or Trunk or Treats are happening and the time and places.

Dr. Sharma approached to address the council. He had purchased the former Sugarberry's on Main Street several years ago. Construction has already began but at a very slow pace. Sharma has found himself in need of more funding. He has been in contact with Sherri Bennett with the Georgia Downtown Association. She claims there is some state funding, but the local DDA would need to get involved. Going through the local DDA would help to give a lower interest rate. That is something that the local DDA has not done before. It is said that they are having trouble contacting someone local. Perhaps Andrea McCranie, the DDA chair, has been contacted already. Councilor Snyder suggests Dr. Sharma approach one of the DDA members himself as there are three in the audience currently.

NO OTHER BUSINESS FROM COUNCIL:

On a motion from Councilor Sheffield and seconded by Councilor Williams, the meeting was adjourned.

COUNCIL CHAIRMAN

CITY CLERK