

November 12, 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, Mark Peacock, Debra Sheffield, and newly elected Dwayne Burney. 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 Wynnnon Pittman, Wastewater Supervisor Matt McDaniel, Fire Chief Derl Maxwell, Street Supervisor Brandon Brisco, and Police Chief Billy Cooper. Other employees present were Gerald Fordham and Robert Lee. Audience members included EM Harrington III, Susan and Mitchell Coffee, Commissioner Sharon Cobb Flanagan, Martin, Caleb, and Mason Kehayes, Tiffany Fordham, Tyler Hernandez, and Peyton Yniguez.

Invocation was given by Councilor Dwayne Burney.

Pledge of Allegiance.

District 5 Council Member Dwayne Burney was sworn in by Attorney Rita Llop.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

On a motion from Councilor Sheffield and a second from Councilor Williams, the agenda was unanimously approved.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

On a motion from Councilor Peacock and a second from Councilor Sheffield, the minutes of the October 28, 2024, meeting were unanimously approved.

NO UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

NEW BUSINESS:

MONTHLY FIRE REPORT:

Interim Chief Whitten came forward to report the calls for the month of October. They had 1 non-working structure fire in the city and 1 working structure fire in the county. There were a total of 11 fire related calls, with 5 in the city and 6 in the county. There were 53 medical calls with 37 in the city and 16 in the county. Nine MVC's with 7 in the city and 2 in the county. Public service calls totaled 10 with 8 in the city and 2 in the county. Public service calls consists of fire alarms and trees down. They were cancelled in route twice; once in each. Eastman Fire received 1 mutual aid and gave 2. They have just finished up with Fire Prevention Week. Five schools were visited with an estimated 1500 kids reached. This coming Friday, they will have 2 graduated from the academy in Forsyth. Zak Pate and Johnathan Grayer both done well. The department has a new employee, Ryan Trimble, who is uncertified and will need to go to the academy. They are still short staffed but are currently supplementing with help from 4 part-timers from Cochran.

MONTHLY POLICE REPORT:

Chief Cooper came forward to report for their October activities. They use 1,061 gallons of gas and road 12,606 miles. The officers answered 758 calls and worked 20 traffic accidents. Citations or arrests total 153. Cooper is happy to report that part-timer Josh King will be going back to full-time next week.

DEPARTMENT HEAD REPORTS:

Jack White reported what was done in building inspection and code enforcement. He issued 2 building permits for a total of \$260. There were 8 electrical permits issued for a total of \$400 and 1 house moving permit for \$50. As far as the blight project, he has been working on the list and is waiting on legal advice before proceeding.

Wynnon Pittman presented the water report. For the month of October, they had 43 cut-ons, 24 cut-offs. They skipped cut-offs for nonpay last month due to the hurricane. They checked for 11 water leaks, fixed 17 other water leaks, performed 77 811 locates, inspected 5 meters, set 3 new meters, 1 valve inspection, added 2 meters by GPS and pulled 4, and installed a sewer tap. They cleaned 16 sewer lines out mainly due to grease and some wipes. They repaired a manhole out at the airport because of erosion. They also helped the street department get a ditch cleaned out. A total of 206 work orders were reported. There will be letters going out into the community concerning the lead and copper line inventory project. There are 1237 customers that have galvanized pipes and will receive these letters. Nothing to be concerned about. As far as the I&I, Popco has moved off of 9th Avenue and is halfway down Congo Lane. They are not necessarily on schedule, but they are moving. He received an email today concerning the paving project which includes 14th Avenue and Morgan Creek. They should be moving in around Wednesday of next week. They have until April 2025 to have the project completed.

Matt McDaniel reported for the treatment plant and wells. He calculated 533 hours spent in October with 31 for cleaning the clarifiers and filters, 154 on lab and sampling, 70 on lift station and well repair, 5 on lawn maintenance, 73 on plant maintenance, 40 doing routine rounds, 24 on education and training, 63 on management duties, and 104 on plant operation. He reported 37,376,000 gallons of water pumped from the wells, which is 1.206 MGD. There were 531,000 gallons of water used at the treatment plant. The amount of treated water released from the treatment plant into Sugar Creek was 22,490,000 gallons at 0.725 MGD. There was a significant influx of water from Hurricane Helene. Their lab charged \$5,564.95 for wastewater testing for 6 towns in the month of October.

Gerald Fordham presented the monthly report for the street department. They worked a total of 1167 hours in October due to cleanup for the hurricane. Of those hours, 16 were spent on animal calls, 15 on curbs and gutters, 41 on ditches, 615 on tree limb cutting, 144 mowing grass, 150 other things, 10 on potholes, 33 on special events, 41 for trash pickup, and 102 on limb pick-up. Brandon Brisco addressed the progress on cleanup after the hurricane and they are about 95% complete. The last measurement of the pickup pile was 20 ft high and 449 ft around. They will begin putting up Christmas lights the day after they get back from Thanksgiving.

For public comments, Susan Coffee asked if the street department could do anything about the influx of fire ants along the Hawkinsville Hwy on the ROW. Councilor Williams agrees that they are popping up everywhere and she has never seen anything like it.

APPROVAL OF MONTHLY BILLS:

The expense to Holder Security for \$56,200 for street cameras was mentioned by Councilor Snyder. Assistant Manager Winslette came forward to explain that the amount would be reimbursed by a GEMA grant that she and Chief Cooper worked on. They are going to be put out in different neighborhoods to help combat some of the gang activity and crime. The twelve cameras and cases have already been ordered. Cooper is working to try and map where to put them. Georgia Power will not allow them to go on their poles. We are looking at possible stand-alone poles. Wherever they are put will also require a transformer to be put in to lower the power down to run them. **On a**

motion from Councilor Williams and seconded by Councilor Sheffield, the monthly bills for October 29 – November 12, 2024, were unanimously approved.

QUOTE FOR PTSD INSURANCE COVERAGE:

Clerk Sheffield came forward to explain. The Governor signed HB 451 that will require Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) insurance be carried on all first responders starting in 2025. It is a 2-part component with a lifetime lump sum payout of \$3000 and a long-term disability monthly benefit for employed first responders of 60% with a max of \$5000 and \$1500 for volunteers. The estimated annual premium for all required is \$4,835 a year. The city can opt to get a higher lump sum payout for a higher premium. Assistant Manager Winslette reminded them that they budgeted \$6150 for coverage in 2025 and the total falls within the budget. **After some discussion, the council unanimously voted to stay with the minimum PTSD coverage for right now. The vote was taken on a motion from Councilor Peacock and seconded by Councilor Burney.**

CLUB RENOVATION PROJECT BIDS:

Inspector White presented the bids received for the three projects currently taking place at the Club. The first one is to spray foam insulation in the top of the gym. **The only bid received was from Wahl to Wahl in the amount of \$18,928. The council unanimously voted to accept his bid on a motion from Councilor Peacock and seconded by Councilor Sheffield.**

The second one is to replace 4 air conditioners at the gymnasium. He received 3 bids. Massingill bid \$41,724. Pruet Air was \$33,488 with a 5-yr compressor warranty and 1-yr on parts and labor. **Barlow Air bid \$36,373 with a 10-yr compressor and 10-yr parts/labor warranty. The council unanimously voted to proceed with Barlow Air on a motion from Councilor Williams and seconded by Councilor Burney.**

There were no bids received on the gutter work project. Jack says he will try and reach out to some people.

FIRST READING OF ANNEXATION OF PROPERTY AT SOPERTON HWY/JT BARLOW RD:

The city received a request from **Fizman Cheema** to annex the property referred to as **060B 022 and known as Hilltop Grocery area**. The property is contiguous to the Soperton Hwy which is considered within the city limits. Attorney Llop has drawn up a proposed ordinance to be read tonight and at a second meeting. The county will be notified tomorrow about the request and given 30 days to respond. **The first reading was unanimously approved on a motion from Councilor Peacock and seconded by Councilor Sheffield.**

POLICE DEPARTMENT RESOLUTION:

Chief Cooper came to ask for a resolution to **sale the firearms that were replaced last year** with confiscated funds. He plans to open it up for their officers to have the first chance to purchase. Any that are left will be auctioned off. It is something that the state and other agencies tend to do. **The resolution was passed unanimously on a motion from Councilor Peacock and seconded by Councilor Williams.**

MARTIN KEHAYES, COMMUNITY BASED CIVIL DEFENSE:

Martin Kehayes presented 4 copies of some information concerning Community Based Civil Defense to the council and also a book. It is a topic he feels strongly about and thinks it is important to the community and even the country. He states that there is a serious threat to our

community and way of life and we the citizens need to be prepared. Could it be possible for our community to develop our own defense system and emergency plan? He closes his presentation by encouraging the council to read through all of the materials presented. Also, take notice of Section 10 of the city's ordinances. It covers Defense and Emergency Management. Kehayes just wanted to bring it to everyone's attention because it interests him so much. Councilor Snyder thanks him and promises to look over the literature.

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT:

Manager Barron reminds everyone that the city is still taking applications for the fire department, police department and street department. He encourages those looking to come and put in an application. The Lions Club Christmas Parade will be Saturday, December 14. Check their Facebook page or reach out to them. Also, be aware that the blight initiative is in full swing now. Tomorrow is cutoff day so make sure the water bills are paid.

OTHER BUSINESS FROM COUNCIL:

All members welcomed Mr. Burney to the council.

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

COUNCIL CHAIRMAN

CITY CLERK