

November 25, 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, Dwayne Burney, 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 Wynnott Pittman, and Assistant Police Chief Wesley Dyal. Audience members included EM Harrington III, Susan and Mitchell Coffee, Commissioner Sharon Cobb Flanagan, Charlotte Hopkins, Adele and Steve Harrison, John Battle, and Becky Mullis.

Invocation was given by Councilor Burney.

Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

On a motion from Councilor Williams and a second from Councilor Burney, the minutes of the November 12, 2024, meeting were unanimously approved.

NO UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

NEW BUSINESS:

APPROVAL OF MONTHLY BILLS:

On a motion from Councilor Peacock and seconded by Councilor Sheffield, the monthly bills for November 13 - 25, 2024, were unanimously approved.

WORKERS COMPENSATION BIDS:

Clerk Sheffield approached the council to present the bids received for Workers Compensation. Two bids were received. GMA \$83,147 and Marsh McLennan Agency (Encova) at \$63,515. There is a huge difference in price but not in added benefits such as safety training, coordination, and training. GMA is unable to use the lower MOD that Marsh can. GMA does have an accurate detail of our previous history after at least a 30-year partnership where Marsh only has a small summary. 2019 was loaded with claims and that should fall off next year and hopefully help decrease our premiums. GMA offers a lot of safety training, site visits, HR training etc. at no extra cost. Classes outside of those offered could range up to \$300 each person. There is also the safety grant offered through GMA that we have received the past several years of close to \$10,000. The City Clerk, Payroll Clerk, and Assistant City Manager request to remain with GMA. **Considering the added benefits of GMA, Councilor Peacock made a motion to remain with GMA for 2025. On a second from Councilor Burney, it was unanimously voted to remain with GMA at \$83,147.**

PLANNING & ZONING BOARD APPLICATIONS:

Only one application was received for the District 5 position, James L. Burney. According to Manager Barron, he meets all of the requirements. **With Councilor Burney abstaining from the vote, Councilor Sheffield seconded the motion made by Councilor Peacock. With a vote of 4 in favor, James L Burney was appointed to the vacant position on the Planning & Zoning Board.**

EMPLOYEE HEALTH INSURANCE:

Barron presented the terms for next year's renewal summary with Capstone. Currently the maximum costs are around \$948,355 maximum. Next year's projections are increased to a maximum of

\$1,064,219. This is the same policy as before with no carveouts or changes. There has not been enough time to negotiate any major changes. This figure is not set in stone. Meritain may come in at a slightly lower percentage. The figures can also change with a change in the number of employees. Councilor Snyder asks about the reasoning of the increase. It is most likely due to the rising economy and the higher claim numbers in our history. Clerk Sheffield reminds them that some of the surplus is used to reduce what the city has to pay out of pocket. It is explained to Councilor Burney that the city provides insurance for its employees and the employees pay a flat rate to have family or spousal coverage. Barron promises to have more options and detailed changes for next year's renewal. **Councilor Peacock made a motion to renew our current policy as it stands. On a second from Councilor Williams, it was unanimously approved to continue with Capstone.**

DR MARTIN LUTHER KING JR PARADE:

John Battle approached to request permission to have the annual Dr. Martin Luther King Parade on Monday, January 20, 2025, at 1 PM. The route was changed last year to begin at the old Dodge County Courthouse and turn down College Street and continue down 2nd Avenue to end at the Old Peabody School on MLK Drive. **The parade was unanimously approved on a motion from Councilor Graham and seconded by Councilor Burney.**

GRANT UPDATES:

Assistant Manager Winslette approached to give updates on the grants that she has been working on. We were not awarded anything from this year's Thriving Communities, or Weyerheuser grant applications, nor this quarter's T-Mobile grant. She does plan to continue to tweak the T-Mobile grant and reapply next quarter. We did receive \$5,000 from the Safety First Grant from Norfolk Southern for the fire department to purchase safety equipment, supplies, and community educational materials. She is currently working with FEMA/GEMA on the Hurricane Helene reimbursements. FEMA also has the Assistance to Firefighter's Grant coming up that she and Derl are making some decisions on what to apply for. There is a maximum of \$1 million with a 5% match. The microgrant is smaller with no match. She is working on the GEMA Cybersecurity Grant with a 20% match. Possibilities are Windows conversion, .GOV conversion, etc. There is a possibility of applying for another GEFA Lead Service Line Replacement grant. Waiting on final legislation to decide how to move forward. There is some Congressionally Directed Spending through Ossoff and Warnock's offices. They have possibly released some more funding through Hazard Mitigation. This could possibly help with generators, etc. Also, working on the GMA Capital Needs Survey. The Edmunds software conversion is underway. Several programs should be live by August at the latest. Complete conversion by the end of the year.

PLANNING & ZONING RECOMMENDATION:

205 FOSTER STREET:

Hal Smith Jr./Elaina Lockhart have applied for a special use permit at 205 Foster Street, otherwise known as the old Three Rivers Home Health building. They plan to turn it into a 4-unit multi-family residential unit. The application has already been through the public hearing phase and was approved by the Planning & Zoning Board. **On a motion from Councilor Burney and seconded by Councilor Peacock, it was unanimously approved by the Council.**

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT:

Christmas lights are going up this week. Please be patient and on the lookout for the workers. Paving has finally began. The council did vote to purchase the ice-skating rink along with donations from Dennis Robinson, the Arts Guild, the Chamber of Commerce, and the DCEDA. The DDA will manage it. Thanks to the Lions Club for the upcoming Christmas parade on Saturday, December 14. The rink and all of the Christmas decorations should be up and able to be enjoyed by then.

OTHER BUSINESS FROM COUNCIL:

Councilor Peacock explained that he was approached by a small child that was upset that the skating rink had been denied and we would not have it this year. The city had no intentions not to purchase the skating rink. It was the county that turned down the request to help fund it.

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

COUNCIL CHAIRMAN

CITY CLERK