

December 9, 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, and Assistant Manager Dayna Winslette. Other department heads in attendance were Police Chief Billy Cooper, Water Supervisor Wynnon Pittman, and Street Laborer Gerald Fordham. Other employees attending were Firefighters Jacoree Wilcox, Ryan Trimble, Jonathan Grayer, and James Warren. Audience members included Mitchell and Susan Coffee, Paula McCain, Charlotte Hopkins, John Battle, Phil Bearden, and EM Harrington III.

The meeting was called to order by Councilor Snyder.

Invocation was given by Councilor Burney.

Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

Manager Barron asked to amend the agenda to add Paula McCain with Downtown Development Authority. **This request was approved unanimously on a motion from Councilor Sheffield and seconded by Councilor Peacock. Then on a motion from Councilor Peacock and seconded by Councilor Williams, the amended agenda was unanimously approved.**

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

On a motion from Councilor Sheffield and seconded by Councilor Burney, the minutes of the November 22, 2024, called meeting and the minutes of the November 25, 2024, regular meeting were unanimously approved.

NO UNFINISHED BUSINESS

NEW BUSINESS:

MONTHLY FIRE REPORTS:

Firefighter Jacoree Wilcox came forward to give the August 2024 monthly fire report. The department had 1 non-working structure fire in the city. There were thankfully no working structure fires last month. They did have 4 other fire related calls in the county. They ran 56 medical-related calls with 42 being in the city and 14 in the county. There were 13 motor vehicle accidents with 6 in the city and 7 in the county. They had 10 public service calls which would include fire alarms, smoke scares, and trees down. 7 were in the city and 3 in the county. The department was cancelled 4 times enroute to 1 in the city and 3 in the county. They had 1 station visit reaching 26 civilians. Firefighters Johnathan Grayer and Zak Pate successfully graduated from GPSTC. He also thank everyone that participated in their recent Toys for Tots collection

MONTHLY POLICE REPORTS:

Chief Cooper came forward to give the November 2024 monthly police report. They used 972 gallons of gas while answering 731 calls. They worked 21 traffic accidents and patrolled 13,070 miles. The number of arrests/citations for the month of August were 173. \$29,571.37 was collected in bonds and fines.

DEPARTMENT HEAD REPORTS:**BUILDING INSPECTION/CODE ENFORCEMENT:**

Jack White came forward to report for the month of November. He performed 9 electrical inspections. Six in conjunction with already purchased building permits. One sign permit was issued.

Construction of the new apartments at the airport have begun.

As far as the Club Project, the gym flooring has been removed. He has received 3 quotes on replacing the flooring and they all fall under Spence's spending limit.

They have also got the sidewalk repairs underway again.

Councilor Peacock asks if the area across from Walmart was still going to be a car wash. White answers with a yes. The car wash will get completed but the property owner may sell off some of the highway frontage lots to other developers.

WASTEWATER/WATER SUPPLY:

No one was present to give the report, but it was read by Manager Barron. For the month of November, they pumped 32,680,000 gallons of water from the wells. 723,000 gallons of water was used at the treatment plant. 17,620,000 gallons of treated water was released from the plant back into the creek.

STREET DEPARTMENT:

Gerald Fordham delivered the street jobs with the breakdown of hours spent on the projects. The department spent 14 hours on animal calls, 145 hours on curbs and gutters, 45 hours on ditches, 31 hours on cutting tree limbs, 101 hours mowing grass, 234.5 hours working on putting up Christmas lights and decorations, 23 hours on potholes, 29 hours on trash pick-up, and the limb truck spent 212.5 hours picking up.

WATER DISTRIBUTION:

Wynnon Pittman came forward to give the November recap for the water department. There were 96 cut-ons this month. The number of cut-offs were 43, not counting those for non-pay. There were 11 requests to detect water leaks. There were 24 water leaks to repair. Eleven locates were reported in Diamond Maps. There were approximately 50 more that they used Mobile 811 for. They set 1 new meter. GPS 2 meters. They pulled 6 meters that were found and not in use anymore. Ten meters were repaired including a bid one at the Airport that should start saving the city some money. There was one valve locate, 3 meter inspections, 1 manhole inspection, and investigated 2 sewers. Two sewer taps were installed, and 21 lines cleaned out. Wynnon publicly asks for everyone to keep the grease, and baby wipes out of the lines again. A manhole at the airport was also repaired. They were able to clean one stormwater ditch. There are quite a few more and as they come to them, they are stopping and trying to clean them out. They answered a total of 238 work orders. The water department used 466 gallons of fuel.

Popco is moving right along. They are on track on Congo Lane and are getting ready to cross over Buddy Pittman's pond. There was a tree missed on the engineer's plans so they will have to get it down before they can move much further.

As far as lead and copper, there was not a lot of feedback on the letters. 120 Water has suggested to go for grants because the city will most likely be responsible for replacing the area from the meter to the main. There are about 1,238 homes that have galvanized lines. Assistant Manager Winslette informed the council that there are not any more grants out there, it would all be in the form of a loan and she is not sure how eligible we are at this point. Wynnon feels that the city can make it happen without borrowing any more money. The homeowners will be responsible for the lines from the meter to their

homes. It is hard to come up with an estimated cost because each home has a different scenario. Some lines are further away from the main than others, how deep the lines are, the type of sand involved and how much pavement is involved.

APPROVE MONTHLY BILLS:

On a motion from Councilor Peacock and seconded by Councilor Sheffield, the bills for November 26 – December 9, 2024, were unanimously approved.

DODGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY:

Phil Bearden approached the council to request their yearly contribution of \$3500 for the Dodge Historical Society. He first thanks the council for their support over the last several years. Phil informed the council of a new book written by Michael Williams of Rhine and the early time of Dodge County before it was even Dodge County. He reminds everyone that the Eastman House is available at any time to tour and look around. Jane Walker of Telfair County, who wrote a book on the Dodge land wars, scheduled a visit for a guy who happened to be the great grandson of William Dodge. He is a screenwriter and has plans to do a movie about the Dodge land wars someday. A Bullock family member and brothers came down in the last few weeks to visit. They use to spend a lot of time in that house. The contribution from the city council ends up paying for their insurance of the building. To tour, contact Phil or Gary Yawn. **On a motion from Councilor Peacock and seconded by Councilor Williams, the \$3500 contribution was unanimously approved for the Dodge Historical Society.**

CYBERSECURITY GRANT MATCH:

Assistant Manager Winslette came forward to remind the council about the Cybersecurity grant for the office. The match is 20% of the total planned expenditures. The total amount of the project is just shy of \$100,000 and the city's match would be approximately \$20,000. After consulting with VC3, it was decided that the project improvements would include Windows 10 replacement, firewall implementation, M365 multi-factor authentication, .gov domain migration, backup implementation, and cybersecurity support. The due date for the application has been extended until the end of January but she has been encouraged to go ahead and get the application in. Councilor Snyder asks about VC3 continuing to be our IT after the software change. The answer was that VC3 will continue that side of it and Edmunds would only handle the software side. If less than the total is awarded, the costs can be adjusted to keep the city from spending much more. The match will be covered with SPLOST dollars. **On a motion from Councilor Peacock and seconded by Councilor Sheffield, it was unanimously decided to proceed forward with the Cybersecurity grant application.**

POLICE CARS:

Chief Cooper approaches to discuss the purchase of new vehicles. After getting quotes for Chevrolets, Fords, and Dodges, he has chosen to proceed with the Dodges. He requests 2 Durangos and a truck. The truck is \$46,315 and the Durango is \$48,687 each. The estimated cost of outfitting each would be close to \$20,000 each. That price would also include an extended 60-month warranty. Councilor Peacock asks if we can get a rotation started of replacing the older vehicles instead of getting stuck with all older vehicles. Manager Barron assures the council that they plan on implementing a plan moving forward of adding two vehicles per year. Chief Cooper says he probably has less that 6 good cars left. The repairs are starting to outweigh the cost of the vehicles. Councilor Snyder asks about the lead time on receiving the vehicles. Chief Cooper says anywhere from 3 – 6 months. **On a motion from Councilor**

Williams and seconded by Councilor Peacock the purchase of 3 new police vehicles was unanimously approved.

PAULA MCCAIN, DDA:

Downtown Development Authority member Paula McCain came forward to request blocking Main Street off this coming Friday and Saturday, December 13 -14. She firsts thanks the council and other contributors for the purchase of the skating rink. Friday, 2 – 9 PM, with skating starting at 4. Saturday, 12 – 9 skating, therefore blocking the street from 10:30 AM until 9 PM. The Christmas parade is this weekend. The DDA plans to have people there to help open the road up for the parade to come through and then close it back down. The food trucks will be set up in the parking spaces area so there will be plenty of room for the parade to pass through. Councilor Snyder asks for Chief Cooper's input. Cooper is concerned about logistics. Snyder asks Cooper to assist them. Paula assures Cooper that they will keep the area closed until right before the parade reaches them at 5th and Oak. DDA member Wynnon Pittman also promises to make sure things run smoothly. The Fire Department is also asked to help out if needed. Chief Cooper says that as long as they can keep the way clear for the parade, he has no problem with it. Cooper also asks about notifying the train. It hasn't been done so he will take care of it. **On a motion from Councilor Peacock and seconded by Councilor Sheffield, the road closure was unanimously approved.** McCain says they plan on having the same thing next weekend, however they will not need the road closure because the food trucks will be facing the sidewalk instead of the road.

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT:

Manager Barron announced that the Lions Club is still taking applications for the Christmas parade this coming Saturday. The DDA will have the skating rink open both Friday and Saturday nights and will be charging \$5/hour for skating.

Pearl Bates is newly paved and striped. Evergreen area has been marked and is ready. The crew is currently waiting on a milling machine. Hopefully next week, they can pick back up on Evergreen and also Morgan Creek Subdivision. 14th Avenue should come along shortly thereafter.

NO OTHER BUSINESS FROM COUNCIL

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was unanimously approved to adjourn on a motion from Councilor Peacock and seconded by Councilor Sheffield.

CHAIRMAN

CITY CLERK