

**December 23, 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: Mark Peacock, Dwayne Burney, and Debra Sheffield representing a quorum. Members Sebrina Williams and Graham Snyder were out due to illness. Others present were City Manager Spencer Barron, City Clerk April Sheffield, City Attorney Rita Llop, City Inspector Jack White, Assistant Manager Dayna Winslette, Police Chief Billy Cooper, Officer Jason Shawcroft, and Firefighters Colt Rogers and Jonathan Grayer. Audience members included EM Harrington III, Susan and Mitchell Coffee, Commissioner Sharon Cobb Flanagan, Charlotte Hopkins, and Auditor Frank Erwin.

Meeting was called to order by City Manager Barron. He then asked for a motion to appoint a Chairman Pro Tem in order to conduct the meeting. **On a motion from Councilor Burney and seconded by Councilor Sheffield, Councilor Peacock was unanimously appointed to conduct the night's meeting.**

Invocation was given by Councilor Burney.

Pledge of Allegiance.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA:**

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

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

**On a motion from Councilor Burney and a second from Councilor Sheffield, the minutes of the December 9, 2024, meeting were unanimously approved.**

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

**SECOND READING OF ANNEXATION ORDINANCE 2024-015 FOR MAP/PARCEL 060B 022:**

Fizaan Cheema initiated a request to annex his property into the city. The first reading was presented and passed on November 12, 2024. A letter was then sent to the county giving the required 30-day notice. There has been no response from the county, and it has been over 40 days. With no objection from the County, Attorney Llop says the city can move forward with its approval. The property in question is the map/parcel 060B 022, located at JT Barlow Rd and Soperton Hwy, known as the old Hilltop Grocery. **On a motion from Councilor Sheffield and seconded by Councilor Burney, the second reading was unanimously approved to annex map/parcel 060B 022 into the city.**

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**APPROVAL OF MONTHLY BILLS:**

**On a motion from Councilor Burney and seconded by Councilor Sheffield, the monthly bills for December 10 - 23, 2024, were unanimously approved.**

**FRANK ERWIN, 2023 FINANCIAL AUDIT:**

Auditor Erwin approaches to recap the most recently completed audit for 2023. There are 3 reports that Erwin adds as his part of the audit. The first being the Independent Audit Report which is where Frank gives his opinion on the city as a whole concerning all departments, programs, and funding. That opinion is an unmodified or clean opinion. The second report details the two things that are audited, the financial statements and gaining an understanding of the internal controls concerning policies and procedures and compliance control. His finding included unsecured cash balances. This is the bank not having enough collateral pledged to cover the money in the bank. It was noted that this was a repeat problem from the year before. It is a problem that is basically out of the city's hands. The third portion is the schedule of expenditures for federal awards. The city spent \$798,000 in federal award

money in 2023 with most of that being ARPA money. Expenditures of more than \$750,000 require the city to have a single audit. The other finding deals with internal controls for a single audit. The city does have a document, but it does not have enough detail of the purchasing policy required for federal money and a single audit. There has been no need in the past to have specific internal controls concerning the federal money as the city has never exceeded the limit to require a single audit until ARPA money came into the picture. There will likely not be another reason to have it after the ARPA has all been spent. Manager Barron did reiterate that there was no evidence found of theft or loss. **On a motion from Councilor Sheffield and seconded by Councilor Burney, the 2023 Financial Audit Report and Findings were unanimously accepted and approved.**

**DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY RESIGNATION:**

Board member Roy Grenade has submitted his resignation. Manager Barron seeks acceptance and then permission to seek a replacement. **On a motion from Councilor Burney and seconded by Councilor Sheffield, the resignation of DDA Board member Roy Grenade was unanimously accepted and the advertisement of the open position would begin.**

**SAMSARA TRACKING:**

Manager Barron presents the idea of putting tracking devices on city vehicles in order to monitor their whereabouts. Chief Cooper has tracked down a company and we have done a pilot study with a few vehicles and have been well pleased. The purpose of the tracking is to know the speeds, locations, and even any maintenance issues that may arise. This will help with fleet maintenance, accountability, and safety. There is an administrative version and a worker version. Everyone will be able to use it. Even 911. First year payment is \$10,264.64 and then year 2 and so forth would be \$10,160.64. It would be a 3-year contract. Councilor Peacock asks if there would be any savings with the insurance company if we proceed with this implementation. Barron admits that is something to look into. Councilor Burney asks how long the data is stored. Cooper says he knows at least 30 days. When Peacock asks about the funding, Barron admits that he is not sure that it is SPLOST eligible, but there is a surplus in General to cover the expense if needed. **On a motion from Councilor Sheffield and seconded by Councilor Burney, it was unanimously agreed to sign a 3-year contract with Samsara Tracking \$10,264.64.**

**2025 LAWN MAINTENANCE:**

This is the contract that takes care of the cemeteries, parks, and other city properties. Normally, it is bid out for at least 2 weeks. Firefighter Rogers asked about making sure that fire hydrants are being cut around. Manager Barron say he will get with the Street Department and contractor. Inspector White reminds them that in the past, the fire department has taken care of keeping the areas around the hydrants cut. **On a motion from Councilor Burney and seconded by Councilor Sheffield, it was unanimously approved to bid out the 2025 Lawn Maintenance Contract.**

**2025 LIMB AND LEAF DISPOSAL:**

The city picks it up, but we have no way to dispose of it. It must be an EPD approved site and disposal plan. **On a motion from Councilor Sheffield and seconded by Councilor Burney, it was unanimously approved to solicit bids for ideas to dispose of all limbs and leaf disposal.**

**CITY MANAGER'S REPORT:**

Thanks everyone involved in the Christmas festivities so far. The Lions Club Christmas parade, the DDA, the Chamber of Commerce, city employees, police and firefighters. Thanks to the council for helping fund the festivities. Thankful to the volunteers that gave their time to make it a successful weekend. The city hopes to be able to continue to do things like this downtown. Councilor Peacock also thanks everyone who helped in the festivities. He would love to continue to grow things downtown.

**NO OTHER BUSINESS FROM COUNCIL:**

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

---

**COUNCIL CHAIRMAN**

---

**CITY CLERK**