

May 27, 2026

The Eastman City Council met in a regularly scheduled meeting on the above date at 6:00 p.m. The following members were present: Graham Snyder, John Battle II, Dwayne Burney, Mark Peacock, and Debra Sheffield. Others present were City Attorney Chris Gordon, City Manager Spencer Barron, Police Chief Billy Cooper, City Clerk April Sheffield, Assistant City Manager Dayna Winslette, Code Enforcer Gerald Fordham, Public Works Director Wynnon Pittman, and Fire Chief Derl Maxwell. Other employees present were Firefighters Jacoree Wilcox and Tyler Smith. Present from the community were Susan and Mitchell Coffee, Judy & Shanaye Tuff, Angel and Doug Gray, Pastor George Fluellen, and Ashley Randall.

The meeting was called to order by Councilor Snyder.

Invocation was given by Councilor Burney.

Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

On a motion from Councilor Burney and seconded by Councilor Sheffield, the agenda was unanimously amended to add an Executive Session. The amended agenda was then unanimously approved on a motion from Councilor Peacock and seconded by Councilor Battle.

APPROVE MINUTES:

A motion was made by Councilor Peacock and seconded by Councilor Sheffield to approve the minutes of the May 11, 2026, regular meeting. Motion was approved unanimously.

NO UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

NEW BUSINESS:

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, ROAD CLOSURE:

First Baptist Church is hosting a Family Fun Night on Thursday, June 4, 2026, from 5 – 9 PM. They are requesting permission to close Pine Street down between 6th and 7th Avenues to protect everyone going between the buildings and the play area. Manager Barron states that there have not been any complaints or problems when they have done them in the past. Councilor Peacock states that it would be the last night of VBS that they requested for. He mentions approving it for every night of Vacation Bible School. That time frame would be Sunday, May 31 – Thursday, June 4, 2026. Chief Cooper doesn't see any problems with the request. Peacock says that the church has its on barrels and security to take care of it. **So, on a motion from Councilor Burney and a second from Councilor Sheffield, the council unanimously voted to approve the amended request of closing down Pine Street between the hours of 5 and 9 PM for FBC's VBS happening May 31 – June 4, 2026.**

AIRPORT REQUEST:

Councilor Battle presented the Airport Authority's request for funds to help pay for cutting down some trees. On the backside of the runway, there is a section of trees that they wanted to get cut down and it's swampy back there. They said it's going to cost \$14,000. They said that Allen's Tree Service had come down there and started, but they couldn't get all the equipment in there. Ms. Flanagan, representing the county, said that the county would kick in some money, hopefully. The Authority said that they could absorb some of the cost, but they never gave a number. Council Snyder said that before we make any decision, they need to come back with numbers so we can

understand what the county's willing to do and what the airport's willing to do before we even decide what we are willing to do, if anything. They haven't given us concrete numbers from either of the parties. It is his suggestion to table the request until the airport, or the county comes to us saying what they're willing to do. **Councilor Peacock makes a motion to table the request.** Councilor Battle feels that the project hasn't been planned out thoroughly. Manager Barron states that they're going to have to do it, regardless. They're looking for supplemental funding from the county, or the city to help them cover the cost of bringing those trees down. Councilor Snyder would like to know that the county is committed to contributing that way before the city commits to anything. Councilor Peacock says he would like to see more than one bid. **After Peacock made the motion to table, Councilor Battle made a second, and approval was given by all.**

DRUG TASK FORCE AGREEMENT:

Chief Cooper and the sheriff have come to an agreement on funding for the Drug Task Force to get the city an agent. Chief Cooper explains that the Drug Task Force is now operated by the GBI. They're going to come in and really help us with our drug issues. So now that they're under the GBI, each agency must supply their own agents for the area. They go get all the training and then they have all the support from GBI and all the agents from all over. So rather than us provide one person or the county provide one person, we decided let's go in together. and provide one agent and we will help split cover the cost. There is a grant through the task force that will cover up to \$45,000. Beyond that, we have to cover it. Between us and the county, we would be covering \$14,000 and the county would be covering \$24,900. It will basically help supplement his pay, insurance, and retirement. It will be an increase over what we have paid in years past, but we will get more service as well. It has already been accounted for in the 2026 budget. **There was a motion to approve from Councilman Peacock and a second from Councilman Battle. Motion carries unanimously.**

APPROVE QUARTER 1 BILLS:

A list of paid bills from January 1 to March 31, 2026, that were over \$10,000 were presented to the council for approval. With no other questions, **they were unanimously approved on a motion from Councilor Peacock and seconded by Councilor Burney.**

APPROVAL OF SPLASH PAD DESIGN:

Spence, Wynnon, and Dayna came up with some plans for the splashpad. The council was in approval of the proposed plan. KorKat has done a good job at designing the pad how we laid it out. The total would be around \$201K. Approval is needed so they can go ahead and order the parts to get the ball rolling. We're trying to get it in by the end of the summer. Councilor Snyder gives congratulations and good jobs to Wynnon and Dayna and all those involved. He is glad to see some things finally happening. Someone from the audience asked what is the total size of the splash pad? 48 ft by 40 ft total. Another asks if the water is going to be recycled? Manager Barron answered that it will be going into the sewer. It will not be recycled. There's been a lot of problems with some recycled splash pads, so to avoid that, we're going to use fresh supply. It would be more expensive in terms of labor, daily testing, issues if we have contamination. We've looked at it from both sides, and the safety profile is better on fresh water. Wynnon said that upon designing it, the only thing that's going to be a massive inflow is one of the larger buckets. Most of the water cannons and other things are light per gallon per minute design. It would not affect that at all. The engineers have investigated that. **Councilman Peacock made a motion to proceed with the proposed plan. A second was made**

by Councilman Battle. Motion carried unanimously. Just for clarity, the funds for this project will come from a grant that was acquired by Ms. Winslette in the amount of \$500,000.

SCHEDULE A WORK SESSION:

After checking their schedules, Council voted unanimously to hold a work session on Thursday, June 11, 2026, at 6 PM. The vote was taken on a motion from Councilor Burney and a second from Councilor Sheffield. Barron requests to invite the downtown merchants, the DDA, and Leave it Better to have a roundtable discussion.

HOME OCCUPATION LICENSE:

Judy & Shanaye Tuff came to request a home occupation license for their mobile food truck. The business will be called **Ladybug's Italian Ice & Concessions**. Their goal is to bring something downtown for the kids and even adults. They will offer Italian Ice, sausage dogs, hot dogs, and stuff like that. The truck is currently set up in the food truck park at the corner of 3rd Avenue and Main Street. Inspector Fordham stated that in order to have the food truck, they must have a home base. Their home base would be 551 Lawndale Drive. Lawndale is a residential area and therefore requires a home occupation approval. Gerald has met with them and the health department to ensure that all standards have been met by the health department and the city. Mitchell Coffee asks when they plan on opening. Shanaye responded with this coming Saturday around 11 AM. With no other comments, Council unanimously approved the license on a motion from Councilors Battle and Burney and seconds from Councilors Peacock and Sheffield.

CODE CONSULT BRIEFING:

Ms. Angel Gray, the owner of Code Consult 360 and the president of the Georgia Association for Code Enforcement, comes forward to explain the consulting work that she will be doing for the city. After a career as an environmental educator, she realized that her calling was for communities to be better stewards of the places that we live and call home. She began her career in code enforcement and is currently the Deputy Director of Planning & Development. She plans on taking the ordinances and making sure that the citizens of Eastman are able to go to them and say that the council has taken the time to get rid of the conflicts of property maintenance. There's been some lost intent with people's personal properties. Probably due to some lax relationships of people, property owners and the powers that be. You don't always have to be on the same page as to what the ordinance says or how you interpret it. You have a city attorney for that. But when it comes to your code enforcement officer, they are the person who's going to be responsible for interpreting that, making sure the citizen understands it. And then when they go before the judge, they've got to be able to be that professional, ready to present because you don't want to take your citizens to court. That is the last step in code enforcement. The first step is courtesy reminders that the council has taken an interest in running your city and wants its citizens to be just as effective as you are sitting in your seats. Councilor Snyder gets confirmation that there is language in the current ordinances that conflict with each other. Snyder states that several people have asked why the city hasn't enforced certain things. He asks Ms. Grey to elaborate on why Gerald is currently unable to push as hard as he would like. Currently Chapter 22 that was recently revised conflicts with several other ordinances. It is basically in the 'weeds and the grass.' If a restriction is put on something, then there is also a distance requirement. Unless the property is surveyed, the officer can't pinpoint where that point begins. Also, in the case of nuisance and grass height requirements, there are not enough officers to be able to enforce that ordinance if you must take a tape measure and physically go measure along with the possibility of rain one day and grass growth the next day. You have an issue with conflict and

the fact that it's unobtainable for a citizen to be able to comply with certain ordinances. So not only do you have conflicting ordinances, but you also have those that are almost impossible to comply with. Many terms need to be more defined. No code enforcement officer should stand in the streets or with a resident or citizen and cite a code verbatim. The reason why is because every code under the sun is easily upheld or not upheld in a court of law. So, you want to make sure that the message is the same and consistent. Attorney Gordon spoke up. In a perfect world, this is just the beginning of redoing all our ordinances, not just the blight and nuisance. If we have to go all the way back to the charter and work it forward, we've got stuff we're trying to follow from the 70s, stuff from the 60s that doesn't even pertain. We've got a state level expert to guide us through this part and then the attorneys to help us get the other chapters. What has been done to date is just kind of put out fires as they pop up and address emergencies. This is a far more efficient way to do it because we just need to overhaul the whole thing. This process is going to streamline a lot of the overall processes. It will be easier for Gerald to go by as well as the average person who is having an issue understanding what needs to be achieved. Angel will start with the courtesy letter and work all the way down to the date that Gerald takes them to court. It is not an overnight fix. Heir properties, foreclosures, and bankruptcies will cause some problems. Code enforcement is not the fix all of a city's plight, but it is a very good mechanism and probably one of the most handholding situations for residents to change their mindset about their community. Citizens are going to talk about Gerald. They are going to say they don't like the way his attitude is but understand his letters should be consistent. His letter should be very inviting for people to find the right answer, to understand, to do the right thing. And then when they haven't, the judge gets to make the rest of the decisions for you based on what the city of Eastman has put forward to be enforced. As far as turnaround time is concerned, she hopes to have at least a rough draft by the end of July.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: PERSONNEL, LEGAL, AND PROPERTY:

On a motion from Councilor Peacock and a second from Councilors Burney and Battle. All members exited into executive session after a unanimous approval. Chief Cooper was also asked to join the session.

On a motion from Councilor Peacock and a second from Councilor Battle, it was unanimously approved for Council to exit out of Executive Session and back into regular session. No further action was taken.

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT:

Barron wanted to thank the police department, the fire department, street, and water for all their hard work on the Memorial Day event. It went well. The Chamber of Commerce is taking applications for the July 4th parade. It's going to be a big event. And thanks to Chasmar and the Board of Ed for working with the city on probably the biggest fireworks in the history of Eastman this year.

NO OTHER BUSINESS FROM COUNCIL:

On a motion from Councilor Peacock and a second from Councilor Battle and Burney, the meeting was adjourned with a unanimous vote.

CHAIRMAN

CITY CLERK