

July 11, 2022

The Eastman City Council met in a regular scheduled meeting on the above date at 6:00 p.m. Members present were Buddy Pittman, Raymond Mullis, Sebrina Williams, Jermayne Hamilton, and Ronnie Woodard. Others present were City Manager Spencer Barron, Engineer Jesse Bearden, City Clerk April Sheffield, Police Chief Becky Sheffield, Fire Chief Scotty Whitten, Attorney Rita Llop, and Inspector Jack White. Present from the community were Justin Haley, Pastor George Fluellen, Emory Tuff, Opera Jordan, and Mitchell and Susan Coffee.

The meeting was streamed via Facebook Live, and the public was provided an opportunity to submit questions and/or comments via Facebook Live.

The meeting was called to order by Council Member Pittman.

Invocation was given by Council Member Hamilton.

Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVE AGENDA:

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: First order of business is to approve the agenda and I think we have got 2 or 3 or a few changes and additions to add to it.

CITY MANAGER BARRON: We need to add an executive session for personnel matters, and we are going to table or take off the mini-excavator and the yard sale ordinance for now until we can do a little more research.

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: Alright, I need a motion then to remove #3 and #5 for further research and add an executive session for personnel matters at the end.

COUNCIL MEMBER MULLIS: So moved.

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: Got a motion from Councilman Mullis. Council, do y'all have any questions or anything? If not, I need a second.

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Second.

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: Got a second from Councilwoman Williams. All in favor show of hands? Motion carried unanimous. Alright, I need a motion to approve the agenda with the addition of the executive session and the removal of #3 and #5.

COUNCIL MEMBER MULLIS: So moved.

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: Have a motion to approve the new agenda. I need a second.

COUNCIL MEMBER WOODARD: Second.

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: All in favor, show of hands. Motion carried unanimous.

APPROVE MINUTES:

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: Next on the agenda is to approve the minutes of the June 30, 2022, regular meeting. Council, y'all got those over the weekend. Did y'all have any questions or saw anything you needed to ask about? Alright, now I need a motion to approve the minutes of the June 30, 2022, regular meeting.

COUNCIL MEMBER MULLIS: So moved.

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: Have a motion to approve the minutes. Council, do y'all have any questions about that. If not, I need a second.

COUNCIL MEMBER HAMILTON: Second.

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: Have a second from Councilman Hamilton. All in favor show of hands? Motion carried unanimous.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH:**

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: First under unfinished business is First Baptist Church.

CITY MANAGER BARRON: As y'all remember last meeting, they came before us with a request to put in some speed humps, some new signage, and crosswalks. I have looked at it and the city engineer has looked at it. The city inspector has looked at it. We haven't seen any problems with it. I haven't been contacted by y'all with any problems. We just need the council to make a decision, one way or the other, if possible.

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: With that being said, Council do y'all have any questions about it.

COUNCIL MEMBER HAMILTON: I have a question. Including that, is that the one-way as well? With the speed bumps?

CITY MANAGER BARRON: Yes Sir. I'm sorry, do you have your copy with you as well? It's on there.

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: And that is just that one little section between the education building and Oak Street.

CITY MANAGER BARRON: Yes, that is how I understand it.

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: Council, do y'all have any other questions? If none, then I will entertain a motion to move forward with these crosswalks and the one-way street and the signage for the state law for people crossing the roads that you have to stop for. In that motion, you will coordinate with them, see what the costs, and any of their specifications for the crosswalks. Whether they got to be x number of feet wide and that kind of stuff. And get a cost of all that.

CITY MANAGER BARRON: Yes Sir and I will bring it back to council.

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: Alright, I will entertain a motion then to approve these changes and also allowing the city manager to get a cost on painting the cross walks and putting the little speed bumps and those signs and then he will bring that back to council. I will entertain a motion to approve that.

COUNCIL MEMBER MULLIS: So moved.

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: I have a motion from Councilman Mullis, I need a second.

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Second.

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: Have a second from Councilwoman Williams. All in favor show of hands. Motion carried unanimous.

CITY MANAGER BARRON: I'll get busy.

4-WAY STOP @ 3RD AVENUE & CREIGHTON:

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: Next on the agenda is the 4-way stop @ 3rd and Creighton.

CITY MANAGER BARRON: Again, this is a citizen's request to put a 4-way stop at that intersection. The city inspector, city engineer, and I have looked at it. We are all in favor of it. But ultimately it is the council's decision as to whether y'all support that or not.

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: Council, do y'all have any more questions about adding? It is already a one-way stop. This would be putting 2 stop signs to stop the other traffic.

CITY MANAGER BARRON: We would be essentially making the Creighton side a stop sign as well.

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: If no other questions, I will entertain a motion then to make the intersection at 3rd Avenue and Creighton a 4-way stop.

COUNCIL MEMBER MULLIS: So moved.

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: I have a motion from Councilman Mullis. I need a second.

COUNCIL MEMBER WOODARD: Second.

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: I have a second from Councilman Woodard. All in favor show of hands. Motion carried unanimous.

NEW BUSINESS:**MONTHLY FIRE DEPT REPORT:**

CHIEF WHITTEN: For the month of June, we ran a total of 44 calls. 30 inside the city, 14 outside the city. 1 structure fire. 1 electrical call. Brush fires 6. Power lines down 1. Gas leaks 4. Medical calls 8. Rescue vehicles 9. Electrical alarms 5. Lift assists 1. Life flight 1. Smoke check 3. Power lines down 2. Publicservice 1.

COUNCIL MEMBER MULLIS: Can I ask you a question? These brush fires, is it somebody out burning, and it just get away? I'm just asking.

CHIEF WHITTEN: No, it's very dry. It's basically burn season and it doesn't take much to spark. Before this rain, it was very dry.

MONTHLY POLICE DEPT REPORT:

CHIEF BECKY SHEFFIELD: For the month of June, we used 1,142 gallons of gas, answered 1,026 calls, and worked 29 wrecks.

DODGE COUNTY FOOD BANK:

JUSTIN HALEY: If you guys don't mind, some of you may or may not know Pastor George Fluellen. He is the chairman of our board. I would just like for him to say a couple of words and then I will quickly go over that packet and keep it short and sweet and not take up too much of your time.

PASTOR FLUELLEN: How are you all doing? My name is Pastor Fluellen, and I am just glad to be here. Just to give you a back story on the Dodge County Food Bank, it was started by a couple of members in my church and myself. We went to Ms. Sally Franklin and was talking about opening up a food bank that we needed here in Dodge County. Ms. Sally sponsored it with the first \$500. From there Ms. Sally had us get in touch with Justin's father, Mr. Larry. And me and Mr. Larry at that time began to work as a team. He got us the schoolhouse up on the hill where we started housing stuff and we started moving pretty good. At that time, when we first opened up, we called ourselves the Eastman Food Bank. But as more people pulled in from all around the county, we started saying the Dodge County Pantry. We stayed up there in the old middle school for a while until they was going to start using the facility for other events so we ended up having to come out of there. And Mr. Larry then built a small residence on the back of the Habitat building. If you could remember, he was over Habitat at that time. So, he put a small residence on the back, and we operated out of there. We always had the big food truck that come out to the ball field where we would distribute the food. Justin came on board and started handling all of the day-to-day things because Mr. Larry was getting a little older there, and myself, I was out doing pastor stuff. From there, as Mr. Larry wasn't able to do it anymore, Justin kind of took over. And me and him, working along with him, him doing the day to day and when he needed me, I just come on board. Finally, as we know, the old Habitat building got sold. We ended up coming from there and having to come down to the old Goodyear building. From there, I am going to let Justin come before you about where we are now and what we are hoping for the city to partner with us to do.

JUSTIN HALEY: I know 9 months ago I came before you guys and kind of briefly said some things. I had Ms. Marilyn, who does the day-to-day operations if I am off handling other things. She is the one that runs my food bank. I don't know if you remember her speaking or not at that meeting. She gave a bunch of numbers and I know it was kind of overwhelming at the time. At this point and time, I will try to keep it short and sweet. As I have learned through various ways, a lot of counties and a lot of cities received ARPA funds through Covid relief funds. And us being a food pantry, that would be one of those things that ARPA funds will fall under, seeing as how we are not a religious organization, and I am not tied to a church, nor am I a religious organization. I just have simply my 501©3 and a registered business name with the state. That's it. I come before you guys basically after knocking on pretty much

every door that you could possibly imagine in the city of Eastman and in the county. Whether it be businesses that offer grants. We fill out every one of those. We have been turned down for pretty much every single grant from basically every single organization here in Dodge County. The only grant we have landed, believe it or not, is one grant, believe it or not, from Laurens County. The Oconee EMC Foundation, out of Laurens County, which we do not even serve, granted us \$6,000 nine months ago to use that to purchase food as well as a one or two other things that we needed like pallet jacks, etc. inside the warehouse in order to move food around. Like I said, I go to pretty much every business. I try to knock on every door and try to get people to come look at what we are doing. Unfortunately, look at where we are doing it at and the conditions that we are trying to do it in. We meet all of the guidelines through Feeding America. That is who we partner with. We are partnered with a food bank out of Macon, as I said the last time. They service a 24-county area. That is where we buy the food at \$.19/lb. We are having to have a businessperson here who is donating his time and a cargo truck, kind of like a U-Haul truck, to go all the way to Peachtree City, 2 hours and 30 minutes one way and 2 hours and 30 minutes back, just to be able to get free food from another food pantry called the Midwest Peachtree City Food Bank. We drive essentially 5 hours or almost 6 to just get free food to serve the people that we are currently feeding because we cannot afford to go and pay just the \$.19/lb. I get in 2 private donors a month. I won't say who they are, but they donate \$100 to us. And I have one church that takes up an offering at the end of the 4th month. That fluctuates. I could get anywhere from \$50 to \$600. I have no idea what will be coming in that month. And just our 2 programs that we have, you can see on the very first page through our regular food bank. Pre-Covid versus After-Covid. We have soared to 205 households. Some months it is 250. We do it through appointments only. You have to fill out a federal TEFAP form. It doesn't go to everybody and anybody. It doesn't just go flying out the door to whoever walks up. We can check certain things, their addresses, to make sure they are telling the truth. We have them fill out information on their financials to see if they are able to receive the food. And we do the best we can and legally, as far as we can legally go, the check that and verify the information that they are giving us. It is a strenuous process. We keep that paperwork on file. We serve anywhere from 200 – 250 families a month. And I turn away 100 families easily each month on average. The other thing that we do that is absolutely free is, well it costs us to do it and it takes our time and my volunteers, we go out to the recreation department once a month and have a truck come down from Macon and the pantry that we partner with and buy this food from. We serve 300 families in once day out at the Alcoa building out at the recreation department. I have kind of looked into the ARPA thing. Unfortunately, like I said, we fill out grants but grant writing is all about key words and us not knowing how to write them. We have wrote them and only landed one out of another county surprisingly and we haven't gotten any other. Unfortunately, as of now, things have picked up as far as the need goes from 9 months ago when I was here, and things have slowed down of course money wise and the economy and anything else of that nature. Through the ARPA program, I have seen multiple, which of course I printed off on the second page, I'm not asking for that amount of money. I understand that is a crazy amount on that second page. I was just showing you because they are a way bigger county. I understand that. On the back page, I give you the exact breakdown on what it would cost for simply food, utilities, and lease to be essentially a partner. Like on the second page where the city of Statesboro and Bullock County combined to give a food bank a million dollars. There is already an established food bank there just like us, just registered with the state and not affiliated with a religious organization. They gave that to build a new facility at a million dollars and also buy food, etc. for one year with it. I actually called that food bank today to kind of figure out what their process was. Not asking anywhere near that type of money. I understand that is something completely out of it. The numbers on the back page of what I have actually given you is what it takes to operate in the city of Eastman. I feel like we do a tremendous service as far as not only our regular food bank providing for

our city of Eastman residents and also our county. I can't stress enough about that backpack program. I think several people know about it. The counselors at the school, the long and the short of it is that we feed 150 students per week per year for 9 months for the whole school system. Our contact is Ms. Jodi Brewer. She reaches out at the very beginning of the year. She reaches out to the other counselors at South Dodge, North Dodge, Middle School, High School, DAC, and Pre-K. We then get those numbers and then starting buying food and packing it and delivering it to the schools on that Thursday and the kids get it on that Friday. That is where my biggest support usually comes from, donations that we get from time to time from of course our one church that we get our donations from and some individuals at the end of the year for tax purposes. Again, I just come before you, like I said, that particular program and that particular money and we have just kicked up tremendously because of Covid. You know, I know that pretty much everybody is back in full swing. I completely understand that. But our demand hasn't cut down. Our monetary stuff has. I'm here before you to show you the numbers. It's nothing. I don't think it's something astronomical, crazy, or off the wall number to operate. But at the end of the day, if I keep going at the pace I'm going with the money that is incoming versus what I'm trying to achieve that I have been able to keep going for 6 or 7 years now after my father has passed away. I can only plug so many holes and figure out a way to keep supporting people the way I am supporting people and helping the city of Eastman. Not only the city of Eastman but as well as the county. Like I said, I understand that is maybe throwing a big number at you guys as well over on the back page. You know, I am not necessarily saying that that has to be it but I'm just showing you what it would cost and what would be ideal. If that is not something that would be achievable, I am always here for something if there is something that can be done. If anybody has any questions on any of the type of stuff, I've got an answer for you. Best I can.

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: Council, do y'all have any questions?

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: Let us take this and look at it and look over it and see if there is something that we can do. Appreciate what you do and appreciate you coming.

JUSTIN HALEY: Thank y'all very much for y'all's time.

CITY MANAGER BARRON: I will say this much, and I am not trying to weigh in on it. That backpack program is phenomenal. My wife is a counselor at one of those elementary schools and that is the food they get. Those kids do, to carry them through. Not trying to influence you, but I am letting you know that it is a valid thing.

ATTORNEY LLOP: And those ARPA funds can be used for that as long as we have something in place. Something in writing and in place. That is how Statesboro is doing it and how Athens is doing it. So, it's a viable process if we put it in place. And if y'all want to do that.

COUNCIL MEMBER MULLIS: Do we have ARPA funds?

CITY MANAGER BARRON: Yes, we do.

COUNCIL MEMBER MULLIS: What is that? I don't exactly know what you are talking about.

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: That's the money we get.

CITY MANAGER BARRON: The Covid Relief money.

COUNCIL MEMBER MULLIS: Oh okay, I know what you are talking about.

ATTORNEY LLOP: There are so many acronyms for it. It's the American Rescue Plan Act.

APPROVE MONTHLY BILLS:

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: Next on the agenda is to approve the monthly bills for July 1– July 11, 2022. Council, y'all got those with your email over the weekend. Do y'all have any questions about any of them? If not, I will entertain a motion to approve the monthly bills.

COUNCIL MEMBER MULLIS: So moved.

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: Have a motion to approve the monthly bills. I need a second.

COUNCIL MEMBER HAMILTON: Second.

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: Seconded by Councilman Hamilton. All in favor show hands. Motion approved unanimous.

CITY MANAGER REPORT HAS NOTHING TO REPORT

OTHER BUSINESS FROM COUNCIL:

COUNCIL MEMBER HAMILTON: I just appreciate y'all coming out and doing the presentation. That really meant a lot. I am pretty sure the council feel the same.

COUNCIL MEMBER MULLIS: I just want to thank everybody that helped with the fireworks this year. It was one of the best fireworks we ever had. I believe that there was 2-3 times more people from all over the county that did come to see them. I just want to thank everybody.

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: And thank you for going and knocking on doors and calling folks and beating the bushes.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

OPERA JORDAN: Hello, how is everybody doing? My name is Ms. Jordan and I come to tell you all once again about the light that I asked for before over there in Sunset. Right across there. There is a post right across from the main light pole. And a light can be put there because it can be so dark in the area at nighttime. And I didn't ask for this before, but I am going to ask now, is it possible that y'all could put some speed stoppers up there on the curve, right there at the park? And maybe one down a little further, not further than my house. Right along in there.

CITY MANAGER BARRON: I don't know if we can get 2 for you right now. We're probably what, 3 months, 4 months behind right now on 2 other neighborhoods? But we'll work towards that.

OPERA JORDAN: And that is with the speed stoppers?

CITY MANAGER BARRON: Yes, they are called speed humps. We don't use bumps because it tears the cars up. You can see there is one on MLK and over here in this neighborhood. You can see what it's like if the council agrees to that.

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: And that time frame is us getting them, not us doing them.

OPERA JORDAN: Uh huh, okay. Well, I would greatly appreciate it if that could take place. And once again, please don't forget about that light, because it be so dark in that area at night, and we need some light. There is one on down the road by Alfred's, but I would feel a whole lot better and safer if there was one right there on that pole right from my house. And the limbs that is growing up from one side of the road from a tree. It's done growed all the way across and into the light lines and they need to be cut back. So, that light is not putting out very much right now.

CITY MANAGER BARRON: We will check it. If it is on the right of way, we will get it.

OPERA JORDAN: If you could, it would be greatly appreciated. Mr. Hamilton, you had something that you wanted to say.

COUNCIL MEMBER HAMILTON: You clarified it. You said the pole right in front of your house.

OPERA JORDAN: Thank you all so much.

EXECUTIVE SESSION – PERSONNEL MATTERS:

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: I need a motion to adjourn into executive session to discuss personnel matters.

COUNCIL MEMBER MULLIS: So moved.

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: Got a motion from Councilman Mullis. I need a second.

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Second.

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COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: Have a second from Councilwoman Williams. All in favor show of hands.
Motion carried unanimous.

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: I will entertain a motion to come back into regular session.

COUNCIL MEMBER MULLIS: So moved.

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: Have a motion to come back into regular session. I need a second.

COUNCIL MEMBER HAMILTON: Second.

COUNCIL MEMBER PITTMAN: Got a second. All in favor show of hands. Motion carried unanimous.
Carry on with your personnel matters.

On a motion from Councilman Mullis and a second from Councilman Hamilton, the meeting was adjourned.

CHAIRMAN

CITY CLERK