

March 11, 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, Debra Sheffield, and Jermayne Hamilton. Council member Mark Peacock was out of town and participated by phone. Others present were City Manager Spencer Barron, City Clerk April Sheffield, City Attorney Rita Llop, City Inspector Jack White, Administrative Assistant Dayna Winslette, and Department Head Wynnnon Pittman. Also in attendance were Fire Chief Scotty Whitten, Police Chief Billy Cooper, and water employee Zak Pate. Audience members included Mark Studstill, County Manager Conner Bearden, Commissioner Sharon Cobb Flanagan, EM Harrington III, Todd Peacock, Martin Kehayes, Eugene Brannon, Vicki Cannington, and Raymond Mullis.

The meeting was called to order by Councilor Snyder.

Invocation was given by Councilor Hamilton.

Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

Three additions were made to the agenda. #10 Waiving of Late Fees. #11 Speed Humps. #12 King Street references. **On a motion from Councilor Hamilton and seconded by Councilor Sheffield and a unanimous vote, the agenda was amended to add #10.11, & 13. The amended agenda was unanimously approved on a motion from Councilor Williams and seconded by Councilor Hamilton.**

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

On a motion from Councilor Sheffield and seconded by Councilor Hamilton, the minutes of the February 26, 2024, regular meeting was unanimously approved.

NO UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

NEW BUSINESS:

MONTHLY FIRE REPORTS:

For the month of February, Fire Chief Whitten reported a total of 53 calls, 30 inside and 23 outside. 1 stove fire, 2 electrical fires, 9 brush fires, 1 vehicle fire, 1 gas leak, 9 medical calls, 10 vehicle rescues, 5 electronic alarms, 6 lift assists, 1 life flight, 1 check smoke, 5 power line/trees, and 2 public services. Chief Whitten also announced that his department would be joining the Georgia Firefighter Burn Group Boot Drive in May. They will set up the four weekends May at Chas Mar, Harvey's, Tractor Supply, and Advanced Auto. This program will support the Burn Center in Augusta. Kids are allowed to go without having a bill to pay. Eastman Fire usually just writes a check out of their account but have decided to participate and raise money this year.

MONTHLY POLICE REPORTS:

For the month of February, Police Chief Cooper reported that they patrolled 10,820 miles. They answered 778 calls, worked 22 wrecks, and made 131 arrests.

APPROVE MONTHLY BILLS:

The monthly bills for February 27 – March 11, 2024, were unanimously approved on a motion from Councilor Sheffield and seconded by Councilor Williams.

TODD PEACOCK, 537 COLLEGE STREET:

Todd has been working on a new venue, Magnolia Place, on College Street. He put in some trees at the back of the property inside of his brick fence. They were supposed to be 12-foot trees, but they got rather thin at the top. Because of holding some weddings there, he doesn't figure that the participants would like seeing the railroad or some of those old houses in the background of their pictures. He is asking to be able to plant some Cryptomeria trees on the other side of the fence. They would be thicker and grow to at least 17 feet. His fence is only a foot away from our right of way. That is not enough area for the root ball system even though it would still leave about 7-foot clearance. After discussion from Councilor Snyder and City Manager Barron, they let Mr. Peacock know that it opens up too much liability with allowing him access to our right of way. Snyder requests he look at ways of putting them inside his fence. Todd asks about the city ordinance that limits fencing to only 6 feet high. He would like to build at least an 8-foot fence that would help block the view instead. He would prefer that to planting more trees. Barron doesn't like that rule and suggests asking for a change in that ordinance. Snyder asks for time to research the ordinance and let him know what he could do.

GEFA RESOLUTION FOR LSLI2022004:

This is another \$140,200 from GEFA to help with the Lead and Copper Line Inventory with principal forgiveness one the project is completed. Wynnon says that he feels that they are well on their way in completing this project. **The resolution was unanimously approved on a motion from Councilor Williams and seconded by Councilor Hamilton.**

COMMERCIAL DUMPSTERS:

At the last work session, the council decided to put out a bid for a single service provider for commercial front load dumpsters. **It was unanimously approved on a motion from Councilor Hamilton and seconded by Councilor Peacock.**

BUILDING AT 5110 2ND AVENUE:

This refers to a building that the city owns and is currently being rented. The tenant is currently five months behind in rent. The tenant has been there since 2015. He has not always been compliant with rent payments, nor has he signed any type of lease. The consensus at the work session was to move forward with the eviction process. **There was a unanimous vote to proceed on a motion from Councilor Hamilton and a second motion from Councilor Williams.**

TRIMBLE SUBSCRIPTION RENEWAL:

Zak Pate stepped forward for a presentation on this navigation equipment. Over the last year, the water department has used this Trimble System along with Diamond Maps to map water lines, meters, hydrants, valves, everything that they can. They have entered any additions, repairs, parts they used. Lines or meters added. This system is accurate down to less than an inch. It is accessible by their phones, tablets, etc. in the field. They have found lines that no one knew about. They have found that valves and other things that were not where they were supposed to be. This is a great improvement over the large old maps spread out on a table and is upgraded in real time. They can turn on the program and go straight to whatever they need to and not have to dig up a large space. This request is just for the renewal of this software for \$4,640 and Barron assures that the money is available. **Renewal was approved on a motion from Councilor Hamilton and seconded by Councilor Sheffield.**

WAIVING OF LATE FEES:

Request to remove late fees for the water bill for the month of March. They were mailed on the last day of February and still have not been delivered. Last information was that they are still in Atlanta and

have not even made it back to Eastman yet. A reminder was given to remember that your water bill is due every month even if you don't receive the bill. **Late fees for March were waived by a unanimous vote on a motion from Councilor Hamilton and seconded by Councilor Sheffield.**

SPEED HUMPS:

More speed humps are being requested. There are requests for two in the Wood Valley neighborhood, one in Councilor Williams' district, and one in Councilor Hamilton's district. **The approval for the purchase and installation of 4 new humps was unanimously approved on a motion from Councilor Sheffield and seconded by Councilor Williams.**

KING STREET REFERENCES:

References were requested at the last council meeting. The only contractor to return references was Southeast Landscaping. He was also the lowest bidder on the project for the sidewalks at the price of \$21,900. **It was unanimously approved for Southeast Landscaping to proceed with the project on a motion from Councilor Williams and Councilor Hamilton.**

ANNEXATION REQUEST:

ESTATE OF VIVIAN FAULK, 1015 HIDDEN ACRES DRIVE, E14 016:

We have received a request from Sheila Woodard as the administrator of the estate to annex that property in. Attorney Llop has reviewed the request and deemed it in compliance with us. The next step is the need to send a letter to the county notifying them. This will be the first reading of the ordinance to annex the property in. Attorney Llop requests signing a resolution to send it to Planning & Zoning to conduct a hearing and zone it properly, since the zone was not specified. County Manager Bearden spoke in favor of the annexation. The size of the lot does not comply with the acreage requirements in order to put a well and septic tank in. They decided to annex into the city in order to take advantage of city services.

The first reading and the resolution for annexation was unanimously approved on a motion from Councilor Hamilton and seconded by Councilor Peacock.

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT:

City Manager Barron reminds everyone that the newly adopted ordinance is in effect. If anyone has some blighted areas that they would like to report, please contact City Hall or Inspector/Enforcer Jack White and he will look into it.

NO OTHER BUSINESS FROM COUNCIL:

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

County Manager Bearden reminded the council about the ribbon cutting the next day for the new recycling program at 2:00 PM. Hopefully they will be able to get the bins put out by the end of this week. They are still looking for more places to put them.

Eugene Brannon from Nabo's BBQ commends the council for their forward thinking with the fees and ways to make money and grow the city. He asks that the city have a formal document for a list of things to do in order to have a food truck within the city. The city clerk lets him know and the council that there is a permitting process in place. Food trucks do require a business license, but not in each town. A single license has to be accepted in every town. We do require them to be in a business zone, have signed permission from the property owner, and acceptance from the health department. The office was asked to make another handout for this.

ADJOURNMENT:

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

CHAIRMAN

CITY CLERK