August 24, 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, 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, Fire Chief Derl Maxwell, Water Operator Rodney Harrell, and Park Director Tanijia Hughes. Present from the community were Susan and Mitchell Coffee, EM Harrington III, Mark Studstill, Loraine Aguayo, Derek Sutton, Anna & Marvin Mann, Paula McCain, and Deputy Mark Sheffield.

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 Sheffield and seconded by Councilor Battle, the agenda was unanimously amended to strike #4, First Net at the Police Department off of the agenda. The amended agenda was then unanimously approved on a motion from Councilor Sheffield and seconded by Councilor Burney.

APPROVE MINUTES:

A motion was made by Councilor Burney and seconded by Councilor Battle to approve the minutes of the August 10, 2026, regular meeting. Motion was approved unanimously.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: PERSONNEL, LEGAL, AND PROPERTY:

On a motion from Councilor Battle and a second from Councilor Sheffield, all members exited out of regular session and into executive session after a unanimous approval. The reason for the executive session was to discuss personnel, property, and legal matters.
On a motion from Councilor Burney 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.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

CITY HALL ADA BATHROOM BIDS:

A request for bids ran for the second two weeks in order to be able to get some reliable quotes on making the City Hall bathrooms handicap accessible. There are 2 bathrooms on the city hall side and 2 on the council chamber side. Contractors were allowed to bid on remodeling 2 of the 4 bathrooms or all four. McWright LLC bid $26,500 for two and $52,400 for four. Altamaha Building Systems bid $56,000 for two and $112,000 for four. Lastly, Graham & Studstill bid $15,812 for two and $34,866 for four. Manager Barron recommended going with Graham & Studstill for the total conversion of all 4 bathrooms. Not only were G&S the lowest bidder, but they have done a lot of work on this building over the years and are already very familiar with it. **Councilor Burney made a motion to approve Graham & Studstill for a total conversion of 4 bathrooms for the cost of $34,866. Councilor Battle added the second motion and all members approved.**

PARK AIR CONDITIONING BIDS:

Wynnon Pittman came forward to recommend Barlow Air to be awarded the A/C project for the gym at the park. Two bids were received for the project, which was removing and replacing a 5-Ton Bard Unit in the Park gym. Pruett AC was $16,878 with a 5-year warranty on the compressor and 1-year on parts and labor. **Barlow Air proposed $18,540.40. The total would go down to $17,358 after taking the taxes off. Their proposal included a 10-year warranty on parts, compressor, and labor.** Barlow is slightly higher but a much longer warranty. That is why they were chosen to install the last 3 that were replaced in the gym. Both companies had a lead time of 6-8 weeks. **Council members discussed the bigger need for the warranty and Councilor Battle made a motion to approve the Barlow Air bid and Councilor Burney gave a second. Barlow was unanimously approved to proceed with the project.**

NEW BUSINESS:

PAULA MCCAIN, MUSIC ON MAIN:

Paula is here to make a request to get the streets closed for Music on Main this year. She thinks that it's going to be even bigger, so her recommendation is just to close off all of downtown. She thinks that she will still be able to use the Hometown Furniture parking lot for the kid's zone. Quantum Kids will be partnering with the Chamber this year for the event. They will have a lot of kid activities, and they plan to be up and running by 2:00 PM. The VIP tent will go back up in front of the theater. She would like to close off that area around 9 in the morning. She requests closing off the rest of the streets by 12 Noon for all of the other vendors to get in and get set up. The request is for both sides of Main Street between 3rd and 5th Avenue. Councilor Snyder asks if Ms. McCain has talked to all the downtown businesses regarding her plan to see if they are aware of the extra foot traffic. Ms. Aguayo states that she has talked to some of her business neighbors because of the flatbed truck that they will have parked on the street between 3rd and 4th Avenue for the Quantum Kids. After some more discussion, **Councilor Snyder proposes road closures from 12 Noon to 11 PM to be able to accommodate setup as well as cleanup afterwards. Councilor Burney made the motion, and Councilor Sheffield gave the second with no one opposing. Motion carried.**

FIRST READING OF PROPERTY MAINTENANCE ORDINANCE AMENDMENT:

Code Enforcer Gerald Fordham came forward to explain the reasoning behind the ordinance rewrite. The city recently adopted the current IPMC codes & standards. It is stated that any updates to the code will be reflected in the city ordinances as it changes and updates and will not require an ordinance rewrite. This specific amendment will outline the best way to handle any derelict property, abandoned property, or dilapidated properties that are not maintained and up to code. This step will hopefully take care of a lot of properties before they get qualified as a blighted property. It opens the opportunity to handle it as a code violation and gives the ability to be taken to court. Attorney Gordon states that he has reviewed the amendment and made some tweaks. He feels that it provides the constitutional protections that everyone should be provided. If the city does have to take action to abate the nuisance it may get costly. The cost shall be cast back towards the property owner. The city will now be allowed to place a lien on the property to be able to force some action to be taken. Susan Coffee asks how anyone would report an issue or complaint. Gerald stated to call the main office number and request that a work order be put in. All steps from the beginning and through inspection and onward will be tracked through the city's work order system. **Councilor Battle made the motion to approve the first reading of the Property Maintenance Ordinance Amendment. Councilor Sheffield answered with a second and all members approved.**

FIRST READING OF WEED AND VEGETATION GROWTH ORDINANCE AMENDMENT:

Gerald pointed out the three major changes that this amendment covers. First, the original ordinance stated that grass height should be less than 6 inches. They have amended that to be 12 inches. Definitions were also added so there would be no miscommunication or anything. Lastly, the responsibility of maintaining the right-of-way in front of someone's property reverts back to the property owner. In the past, the street department has tried to keep the ROW maintained but with the shortage of help that they have had, it has become extremely difficult. The city does not technically own the ROW; the property owners do. The city just has an easement. The ROW is usually identified as the area between the sidewalk and the road. Some areas do not have a sidewalk but most ROW's fall between 30 and 50 ft from the center line of the road. If the property owner does not adhere to the ordinance and a violation is found, there is an abatement process that will take place. Any cost to the city will revert back to be the property owner's responsibility. The city will continue to help keep trees out of the roadway during storms but the fallen tree will still be the responsibility of the property owner. Manager Barron asks for people to try and be neighborly. The are many elderly people out there that do not have the family or financial stability to get things like this taken care of. When asked, it was confirmed that a section of the ordinance does address any decorative or ornamental shrubbery or variety. The purpose of the amendment is to be able to address issues such as grass growing over some homes, a tree on a home or even growing out of a swimming pool. Those will be the types of areas that will be addressed first. **Councilor Battle made the motion to approve the first reading of the Weed and Vegetation Growth Ordinance Amendment and Councilor Sheffield offered the second motion. All members approved.**

POLICE DEPARTMENT MOU WITH DODGE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE:

Chief Cooper came forward to ask the council to agree to an **MOU with the Dodge County Sheriff's Department**. It states that as long as the Sheriff's Department keeps SROs in the schools, the Sheriff's Office would be primary law enforcement for those schools. If the Sheriff's office at any point has to pull their SROs from the schools, the responsibility of law enforcement would fall back to the Eastman Police Department. Any complaints about something that happened at the school would be handled by the SROs during school hours and by the DCSO after hours. The EPD would just route all complaints and calls to the DCSO. The MOU just clears up the language to designate who is in charge at all times at the schools. Councilor Snyder reconfirms that this MOU would mean that DCSO has jurisdiction over the schools. EPD would be available to assist in any emergency situation of course. Attorney Gordon has reviewed the document. He says that it was drafted by the County Attorney, and he added a provision at the end that says if there's any reason that SROs are removed from the school, jurisdiction would vest back with the Eastman Police Department but otherwise this is very limited in scope and comes at the recommendation of both jurisdictions chief law enforcement officer. **Councilor Burney made a motion for approval of the MOU and Council Battle offered the second with all members approving.**

PLAYGROUND BIDS FOR PARK:

Assistant Manager Winslette shared the bids received for the park playground project. They received 7 bids in a range from $96,000 to $285,000. She, Spence, and Wynnon all sat down individually to rate the bids and then got together to compare their decisions. They looked at not just the bid amount but the actual footprint of the play area and the ADA requests and sensory play that was a selling point in the grant application. They agreed to recommend KorKat at the price of $151,049. Even though they were not the lowest bidders, they did offer more slides, more and larger options for sensory play, more shade options, more climbing options, and more structure options compared

to the other vendors at around the same price. Councilor Snyder asks about the funds to pay for this project. Winslette confirmed that the grant would cover half of the cost and the city would match the rest out of SPLOST. With no other comments or questions, **Council unanimously agreed to choose KorKat for the Playground project at a cost of $151,049. This vote was taken on a motion from Councilor Burney and seconded by Councilor Battle.**

AIRPORT LIFT STATION PUMP:

Rodney Harrell came forward with his request for the Airport Lift Station Pump. One of the 2 pumps at the lift station went out back in May. It was sent off to get a quote for how much it would cost to repair. That cost came back from WACO at $15,720. Repair time would be lengthy due to lack of help. It took 3 months just to get a quote. The pump has already been rebuilt twice and has been in operation for more than 11 years, if not more. Rodney acquired a quote for the cost of a new one from Hydra Service. The city had purchased one from them last year. The price is $14,472.87, which is about $1200 more than last year but still less than repairing. This new pump would be the same type used to replace the other pump at that lift station last year. It comes with a 5-year warranty with parts and labor included at 100% for the first 3 years. It is also a slightly bigger pump with more horsepower than the previous one. The price does not include freight but after some discussion and attorney approval to proceed, **Councilor Sheffield made a motion to approve purchasing the new pump from Hydra Service, Inc. at the price of $14,472.87 plus the cost of freight (which should be well below the City Manager spending limit). Councilor Battle seconded the motion and all members approved.**

IGA WITH DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY:

The council had a chance to discuss the IGA in depth and based on that; **Councilor Snyder asks for a motion to cancel the 2015 and 2025 agreements with the DDA and approve a new 2026 IGA agreement.** Councilor Gordon states that he will notify them pursuant to the terms in those agreements and then this 2026 agreement will be a separate standalone agreement that the council would approve and authorize him to extend to the DDA. **Councilor Sheffield made the motion to proceed with seconds from Councilors Battle and Burney and was unanimously approved.**

ALCOHOL LICENSE:

CASA BRUNCH: MELINA CRUZ @ 5114 1ST AVENUE; BEER & WINE CONSUMPTION IN RESTAURANT:

Clerk Sheffield states that Ms. Cruz has submitted her application for a beer and wine license to be able to serve alcohol in her restaurant. She has completed all her steps and met the necessary requirements including her approval from Mr. Fordham concerning the footage rules. With no other questions, **Councilor Snyder asked for approval of a serving license for Casa Brunch @ 5114 1st Avenue. The motion was made by Councilor Battle and seconded by Councilor Sheffield. The license was then unanimously approved.**

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT:

Barron commented that as we move forward on some of these derelict properties and these blight projects, they're going to be situations with elderly people or people with no family they're just not able to keep their yard up or they're not able to improve the house the way they need to. According to what the attorneys are saying, the city can't step in and do it for them. He asks the public to try to be a good neighbor and if you've got someone that needs help in your neighborhood, maybe cut the grass for them or help them drag off some tree limbs. Possibly some churches or civic groups could maybe get involved and volunteer for some hours. Most people will be able to comply but there will

be some situations that will be difficult. City Hall may even be able to provide a list of some of these properties that may be in this sort of situation.

NO OTHER BUSINESS FROM COUNCIL:

On a motion from Councilor Burney and seconds from Councilors Battle and Sheffield, the meeting was adjourned with a unanimous vote.

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CHAIRMAN **CITY CLERK**