**May 22, 2023**

The Eastman City Council met in a regularly scheduled meeting on the above date at 6:00 p.m. The following members were present: Jermayne Hamilton, Raymond Mullis, Buddy Pittman, Sebrina Williams, and Ronnie Woodard. Others present were Attorney Rita Llop, Police Chief Billy Cooper, City Manager Spencer Barron, Water Department Head Paul McCranie, City Inspector Jack White, and City Clerk April Sheffield. Present from the community were Susan and Mitchell Coffee, Sharon Cobb Flanagan, Martin Kehayes, John Battle, and Ken Rogers.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Pittman.

The invocation was given by Chaplain Hamilton.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by all.

***APPROVAL OF AGENDA:***

**COUNCILOR PITTMAN:** The first item on the agenda is to approve the agenda.

**CITY MANAGER BARRON:** Nothing from me**.**

**COUNCILOR** **PITTMAN:** With nothing to add to it, Council, do y’all have anything to add to it? If not then, **I'll entertain a motion to approve the agenda as it stands.**

**COUNCILOR MULLIS: So moved.**

**COUNCILOR PITTMAN:** We have a motion from Councilman Mullis. I need a second.

**COUNCILOR WILLIAMS/HAMILTON: Second.**

**COUNCILOR PITTMAN:** Have a second from Councilman Hamilton and Ms. Sebrina. All in favor, show of hands. **Motion carried unanimous.**

***APPROVAL OF MINUTES:***

**COUNCILOR PITTMAN:** Next on the agenda is to approve the minutes of the May 8, 2023, regularmeeting. I think all of you got those in your packets over the weekend. Do y’all have any questions about those? If not, **I will entertain a motion to approve the minutes of the May 8, 2023, meeting.**

**COUNCILOR MULLIS: So moved.**

**COUNCILOR PITTMAN:** I have a motion from Councilman Mullis. I need a second.

**COUNCILOR WOODARD: Second.**

**COUNCILOR PITTMAN:** I have a second from Councilman Woodard. All in favor, show of hands. **Motion carried unanimous.**

***NO UNFINISHED BUSINESS:***

***NEW BUSINESS:***

***KEN ROGERS, DODGE ARTS GUILD:***

**COUNCILOR PITTMAN:** First item under new business is Ken Rogers with the Dodge Arts Guild.

**KEN ROGERS:** On behalf of the Arts Guild of Dodge County, we would like to request a road closure on Main Street in front of the Outdoor Theater, on Saturday, June 3 from 5pm to 10 pm. We will be having our outdoor concert that we do as our annual fundraiser.

**COUNCILOR MULLIS:** What time did you say that was going to be, Ken?

**KEN ROGERS:** It’s 5pm to 10pm.

**COUNCILOR HAMILTON:** What day again?

**KEN ROGERS:** It is Saturday, June 3rd.

**COUNCILOR MULLIS:** Do you know what kind of entertainment that y’all are going to have?

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**KEN ROGERS:** Yeah, we are going to have the Mid-Life Chryslers. And then Abbey White and Charlie Johnson are going to open the show.

**COUNCILOR PITTMAN:** Council, do y'all have any other questions for Ken? If not, then **I'll entertain a motion to close the road in that section of Main Street for the Arts Guild and Music on Saturday, June 3 from 5pm to 10pm.**

**COUNCILOR MULLIS: So moved.**

**COUNCILOR PITTMAN:** Have a motion from Councilman Mullis. I need a second.

**COUNCILOR HAMILTON: Second.**

**COUNCILOR PITTMAN:** Have a second from Councilman Hamilton. All in favor show of hands. **Motion carried unanimous.**

***FIRST READING OF NEW ZONING ORDINANCE:***

**COUNCILOR PITTMAN:** Next on the agenda is the first reading of the new Zoning Ordinance

**CITY MANAGER BARRON:** Just to remind everyone, this change will allow us to designate the zoning of new areas that are annexed into the city. Previously and currently, anything that we annex in automatically comes in as an R-1. We have found that to be a deterrent to some business interests and some annexation goals. If y’all approve this and the public doesn’t object too much, we would actually be able to bring them in as a B-1 or I-1 or something along those lines.

**COUNCILOR PITTMAN:** And looking over it, Rita, I reckon it is all good? It has done gone before Planning and Zoning and they have approved it and everything. This will be the first reading. **And I will entertain a motion for the first reading of the new zoning ordinance.**

**COUNCILOR MULLIS:** **So moved.**

**COUNCILOR PITTMAN:** I have a motion from Councilman Mullis. Council, do y’all have any other questions about it? If not, I need a second.

**COUNCILOR HAMILTON: Second.**

**COUNCILOR PITTMAN:** I have a second from Councilman Hamilton. All in favor, show of hands. **Motion carried unanimous.**

***APPROVE PURCHASE OF POLICE DEPARTMENT EQUIPMENT:***

**COUNCILOR PITTMAN:** Next on the agenda is approve purchase of police department equipment.

**CHIEF COOPER:** I have prepared a statement so I could get all of my thoughts out, so I am going to read from it. The items that I am asking for are patrol rifles with sights and suppressors, ballistic helmets, and ballistic shields. We knew these items were needed in the department before the incident occurred at the high school. That really pointed out how really under-equipped we are. If there had been an active shooter on scene, there is a really good chance that we would have been outgunned. So, to prepare for such future calls, which I hope doesn’t ever happen, I am requesting that these items be approved. We have already got ballistic vests that we mandatory wear. We have for years. But, by adding the helmets, it would give the protection of the officers a little bit better. I also requested 4 pistol rated ballistic shields and one rifle ballistic shield which would give every supervisor a shield in the car so they could go in on point for something. Currently most of our officers do have rifles, but they are personal rifles that they qualify on the range. It is not department issued rifles. It would be nice if the department could furnish those to protect the officers and the citizens.

**COUNCILOR PITTMAN:** In short English terms, y’all are going to a gunfight with a knife.

**CHIEF COOPER:** About like a BB gun, yes. If somebody has got a rifle and you have a pistol, you are really outgunned.

**COUNCILOR PITTMAN:** I know that we were talking about it the other day. It’s like by the time that y’all got close enough to use a pistol, you might as well just pistol whip them while you are there. I was going

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to call you today and see if you had any pictures. Are some of these like an AR15 style, like the Sheriff’s department?

**CHIEF COOPER:** They are. They are AR15 style, they also have suppressors on them. If you have fired rifles very often outside, a rifle is very loud. If you fired in a building, say at the school, or somewhere else inside, it is deafening. You will actually have hearing loss. With suppressors, it should prevent two things. One would be hearing loss of the officers which would be a worker’s comp case. Two, would be hearing loss to citizens. But yeah, they are AR style rifles except for one. One is an MP5, which is a 9mm version. And that is basically if you go somewhere, and you are worried about penetration. You wouldn’t want to use an AR if you are worried about open penetration.

**COUNCILOR PITTMAN:** The world that we are living in now.

**CHIEF COOPER:** It’s scary, and it’s getting worse.

**COUNCILOR PITTMAN:** Council, do y’all have any other questions? Now I know I asked Spence and he told me, but y’all have talked with Brian and y’all are going to train?

**CHIEF COOPER:** Yeah, my goal is, and we actually have Homeland Security in on it too, is we are hoping to train all together at each of the schools. If you are talking about for active shooters. That is our goal. And they are supposed to be working on getting the training up. But I mean we don’t need to stop there. I believe in training. Our officers need better training. A lot of us haven’t had some of this training. Training costs money. We need training. But we don’t need to stop at the schools. A lot of active shooters have happened at Walmart. We need to get in cooperation with them and train in areas like that. Nursing homes, hospitals, anywhere where there is a group of people. That is where these bad guys are going to attack.

**COUNCILOR HAMILTON:** I know that you said as far as the suppressor goes, is that like a $9,000 purchase there?

**CHIEF COOPER:** I think it’s like $600 per suppressor.

**COUNCILOR HAMILTON**: Per suppressor? And you are looking at 15 of them?

**CHIEF COOPER:** Yes.

**COUNCILOR HAMILTON:** Now the suppressor, that is to reduce the noise?

**CHIEF COOPER:** Yes. Basically, a pistol is really loud. When you go to the range, you wear hearing protection. If you are in an active shooter situation, you ain’t going to put hearing protection on. You have got to be able to hear your surroundings. So, you know how loud a pistol is, you have been to the range. And I am sure that you know how loud a rifle is. Do one in this building. It’s like 10 times louder. And imagine having it right here to your head while you are shooting at 10 times louder. You are going to have hearing loss. And that is why most of your teams and stuff have suppressors on them. It ain’t so the bad guys can ‘t hear you shooting, even though there are times where that helps. It quiets it don’t so your ears aren’t ringing.

**CITY MANAGER BARRON:** And this allows us to standardize too. Instead of the officer bringing this caliber weapon and this one bringing this other caliber of weapon, everybody will be uniform so they could even swap our magazines if they need to.

**COUNCILOR PITTMAN:** Alright, any other questions? And this is $56,675?

**CHIEF COOPER:** Yes Sir. And I know that that is a lot of money. It is. But what is the outcome otherwise?

**COUNCILOR PITTMAN:** I know that I was up there the other day with all of that going on. The Sheriff’s department gets out and they are like ready to go. And then y’all get out and *demonstrates holding a wimpy gun.*

**CHIEF COOPER:** I have told them that my hope and prayer, other than training, is that this equipment never leaves the ground or leaves the house. That is my hope. But if it gets that bad, do you want your officers to go into a building with a pistol and somebody has a machine gun?

**COUNCILOR MULLIS:** Amen.

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**COUNCILOR PITTMAN:** Alright Council, do y’all have any more questions? **I will entertain a motion then to approve this equipment for the police department.**

**COUNCILOR MULLIS: So moved, gladly.**

**COUNCILOR PITTMAN:** Have a motion to approve. I need a second.

**COUNCILOR HAMILTON: Second.**

**COUNCILOR PITTMAN:** I have a second from Councilman Hamilton. All in favor, show of hands. **Motion carried unanimous.**

**CHIEF COOPER:** Thank you.

**COUNCILOR PITTMAN:** Like I said, it’s kind of like homeowner’s insurance, you hope that you never need it.

**CHIEF COOPER:**  You are right.

**SUSAN COFFEE:** Where is the money coming from?

**CITY MANAGER BARRON:** It is eligible for SPLOST. My intent is to take it from SPLOST. Unless I am told otherwise.

***WATER DEPARTMENT EQUIPMENT:***

**COUNCILOR PITTMAN:** Next on the agenda is approve purchase of water department equipment.

**CITY MANAGER BARRON:** Paul, you want to come up here and tell that what you need?

**PAUL MCCRANIE:** It is a Milwaukee jackhammer. April can tote it with one hand. It is lightweight. The noise that we have with the one we have got, it won’t be as bad.

**CITY MANAGER BARRON:** One of the complaints we get is that our only 4, which I am proud that we have them, our 4 water department employees are standing around while only one person is using the jackhammer. While now we can divide those teams up if we have got 2 different leaks going on instead of all 4 going to one.

**PAUL MCCRANIE:** Yeah, and it comes with a cart and chisels, a battery, charger and all of that.

**COUNCILOR MULLIS:** So, it is battery powered? That’s good.

**PAUL MCCRANIE:** Yes, it is battery powered.

**CITY MANAGER BARRON:** We have had some injuries with that old one, so hopefully this one will be easier to manage and cut down on some of that worker’s comp stuff.

**COUNCILOR PITTMAN:** Alright, do y’all have any questions for Paul? If not, this bid is from Consolidated Pipe and Supply company. Alright, **I'll entertain a motion then to approve the jackhammer purchase at a cost of $2,695 with all of the accessories.**

**COUNCILOR MULLIS: So moved.**

**COUNCILOR PITTMAN:** Have a motion from Councilman Mullis. I need a second.

**COUNCILOR WILLIAMS: Second.**

**COUNCILOR PITTMAN:** Have a second from Councilwoman Williams and Councilman Woodard. All in favor, show of hands. **Motion carried unanimous.**

**SUSAN COFFEE:** Is this SPLOST too?

**CITY MANAGER BARRON:** Yes ma’am. Which I may actually take this out of ARPA. It qualifies under the storm water and drinking water. It will come out of SPLOST or ARPA one. Let me just look at the bank accounts and I will let you know.

***MONTHLY BILLS:***

**COUNCILOR PITTMAN:** Next on the agenda is to approve the monthly bills for May 8 - 22. Y’all got those in your packets. Do you have any questions about any of them? If not then **I need a motion to approve the monthly bills for May 8 - 22.**

**COUNCILOR MULLIS: So moved.**

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**COUNCILOR PITTMAN**: Have a motion from Councilman Mullis. I need a second.

**COUNCILOR HAMILTON: Second.**

**COUNCILOR PITTMAN:** Have a second from Councilman Hamilton. All in favor, show of hands. **Motion carried unanimous.**

***CITY MANAGER’S REPORT:***

**CITY MANAGER BARRON:** I would just like to remind everyone that the County Commissioners are hosting a tire disposal event June 10 – 17, 8am to 6pm. That’s Monday through Saturday from 8am to 6pm, Sunday 1pm to 5pm. And that is at the Dodge County Transfer Station off Dodge Avenue. We are going to have these flyers put up on the city’s Facebook page and we will also have them posted here. If you have any questions, please reach out to County Manager Conner Bearden, Commissioner Sharon Flanagan, or Alan Mills.

***OTHER BUSINESS FROM COUNCIL:***

**COUNCILOR HAMILTON:** We were talking at the last meeting, about that stage over there on the hill. Peabody. Can we bring that back up on the next meeting?

**CITY MANAGER BARRON:** Yes Sir, we can. Right now the plan is to have a rental stage put in place to get them through this one. We will have it on the next agenda.

***NO PUBLIC COMMENTS:***

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

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**CHAIRMAN CITY CLERK**