City of Eatonton Council Meeting
September 18, 2017 at 7:00 PM
Putnam County Commissioners’ Meeting Room #203
117 Putnam Drive
Eatonton, Georgia 31024

Elected Officials Present:
Mayor Walter C. Rocker, Jr.
Mayor Pro-Tem Harvey (Chip) Walker, Jr.
Councilwoman Teresa Doster
Councilman James A. Gorley
Councilman Charles R. Haley
Councilman William Mangum, Jr.
Councilwoman Alma Stokes

Elected Officials Absent:
Councilman Alvin Butts

Staff Members Present:
City Administrator, Gary Sanders
City Attorney, Christopher Huskins
City Clerk, Sarah Abrams
Police Chief, William K. Lawrence
City Marshal, Dianne Veal

Mayor Walter C. Rocker, Jr. called the Council meeting to order at 7:00 PM
Councilwoman Alma Stokes called for a Moment of Silence for the Invocation.
Mayor Rocker advised we have two sets of minutes to approve tonight.
Motion was made by Doster and seconded by Gorley to approve the minutes from the Special Called meeting held on September 7, 2017 on the FY 2018 Budget. Motion carried by a unanimous vote 6-0.
Motion was made by Stokes and seconded by Walker to approve the minutes from the Council meeting held on September 5, 2017. Motion carried by a unanimous vote 6-0.

**Public Comments: Mrs. Georgia Smith-Blighted Areas and Mr. Charles Hurt - Codes**

Motion was made by Doster and seconded by Gorley to hear from those wishing to make public comments. Motion carried by a unanimous vote of 6-0.

**Reading of the Rules for Public Comments: Omitted**

Mrs. Georgia Smith commended Mayor and Council on action taken to reduce blighted areas in the City. Mrs. Smith talked about dilapidated houses that are in her neighborhood where she grew up and continues to live. Smith advised some progress has been made, but she asked Council members to drive around town and look at other blighted property in the City of Eatonton.

Mayor Rocker called on Mr. Charles Hurt to speak. Mr. Hurt advised Mayor Rocker his question had been answered by the City Administrator.

**Old Business: None**

**New Business:**

**Presentation by Middle Georgia Regional Commission on the Service Delivery Strategy**

Ms. Kimberley Lowe from Middle Georgia Regional Commission updated Mayor and Council on the Service Delivery Strategy between Putnam County and the City of Eatonton. The Service Delivery Strategy must be officially adopted and verified by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs by October 31, 2017.

Ms. Kimberley Lowe advised Council in her presentation that the following Services are included in the existing Service Delivery Strategy that are being extended without change: Ambulance, Animal Control, Cemetery, Code Enforcement, courts, hospital, indigent Defense, Jail Operations, Library, Public Transportation, Recreation, Rescue Services, Solid Waste Collection/Recycling, Solid Waste Disposal, and Street Lighting.

Services that are being revised or added in this submittal: Building Inspection, E-911, Economic development, Emergency Management, Fire Protection, Golf Course, Inert Landfill-deletion of service, Law Enforcement, Roads and Bridges, Senior Center, Sewage Collection/Treatment, Stormwater Management, Water Services, and Building Inspection/Zoning.

After much discussion by Council on the Services Delivery Strategy, Motion was made by Doster and seconded by Gorley to Table. Motion carried by a unanimous vote of 6-0.
Proposed Resolution to Accept a Bid Response for the FY 2016 community Development Block Grant Project Attachment #6B

Councilman Mangum reported the committee met today with Charlie Bridges, Project Manager with Carter and Sloope, Inc. and approved the project. Councilman Gorley asked about the cost overrun on this project and others. Mr. Charlie Bridges, Project Manager discussed the three bids received by the City on the FY 2016 CDBG -Storm Drainage and Street Improvements – Church Street Area C&S File: D8700.001 The lowest bid received was from Sellers Contracting Services at $815,000. Bids received came in over our budget expectation of $690,000. The over run came about due to the Economy picking up and more work is available to contractors. Also, the use of bid data from 2015 to project today’s cost. The City of Eatonton CDBG award was for $500,000.

City Administrator Sanders advised we are working with the contractor and our Street Supervisor Hawkins to see what can be done to lower the cost of the project.

Motion was made by Mangum and seconded by Gorley to approve the proposed Resolution to accept a bid response from Sellers Contracting Service for the FY 2016 Community Development Block Grant Project and authorize Mayor Rocker to sign contracts, change orders, letters and other supporting and related documents as may be necessary to accomplish the goal of this Resolution. Motion carried by a unanimous vote of 6-0.

Proposed Resolution to Authorize the Mayor to Sign an Amendment to the Area Agency on Aging Contract for SFY 2018 Attachment #6C

Motion was made by Stokes and seconded by Haley to approve the proposed Resolution Authorizing the Mayor to sign an Amendment to the Area Agency on Aging Contract. Motion carried by a unanimous vote of 6-0.

Councilwoman Alma Stokes requested Ms. Maddox, Director of the Senior Program submit periodic reports to Council on the Senior Citizens Program.

Proposed Resolution to authorize the Mayor to Execute a Memorandum of Understanding with the Downtown Development Authority Attachment #6D

Motion was made by Gorley and seconded by Walker to approve the proposed Resolution and authorize Mayor Rocker to Execute a Memorandum of Understanding with the Downtown Development Authority. Motion carried by a unanimous vote of 6-0.
Contract amount not to exceed $34,030.00.

Proposed Resolution to Authorize the Mayor to Execute a Contract with the Plaza Arts Center, Inc. Attachment #6E

Motion was made by Doster and seconded by Mangum to approve the proposed Resolution and authorize Mayor Rocker to Execute a contract with the Plaza Arts Center, Inc. Motion carried by a unanimous vote of 6-0.
City will pay the contractor an amount not to exceed $42,330.00

Proposed Resolution to Authorize the Mayor to Execute a Contract with the Eatonton - Putnam Chamber of Commerce Attachment #6F

Motion was made by Haley and seconded by Doster to approve the proposed Resolution to authorize the Mayor to Execute a Contract with the Eatonton - Putnam Chamber of Commerce. Motion carried by a unanimous vote of 6-0.

City will pay contractor an amount equal to 62.5% of hotel-motel excise tax collections for the City Fiscal Year 2018 (September 1, 2017 - August 31, 2018)

Historic Preservation - Request by Gale Prince for a Certificate of Appropriateness at 407 North Madison Avenue Attachment #6G

Motion was made by Doster and seconded by Haley to accept the recommendation received from Historic Preservation approving the request by Gale Prince for a Certificate of Appropriateness at 407 North Madison Avenue to install a covered carport behind their home. Motion carried by a unanimous vote of 6-0.

Discussion on Distressed Properties in the City of Eatonton

Council discussed distressed and dilapidated properties located in the City of Eatonton. Councilman Haley asked if the City had written procedures on hand when they are looking at these properties because this is a real issue. Councilwoman Doster advised Councilman Haley we have laws in our Code of Ordinance which address this.

City Attorney Huskins explained the circumstances under which the local government can take an individual property. Georgia Legislature allows a government to charge a Blight Tax, better known as clean it or lien it. Attorney Huskins suggested working with the City Marshal on filing paperwork and meeting date deadline when taking a person to court for property maintenance.

Councilman Mangum suggested helping individuals fix up their houses by setting aside funding to help financially.

Councilman Gorley advised in the late 90’s and early 2000’s the fire department burned some old dilapidated houses. This helped to get rid of dilapidated houses and also provided training for the fire department.

Mayor Rocker suggested pursuing the Blight Tax. Councilman Haley offered City Marshal Dianne Veal an apology on comments made in reference to how she is handling dilapidated property if she does not have clear procedures to follow.

Zoning: None

Committee Reports:
Councilman Walker complemented Police Chief Lawrence, his department and the City crew on a job well done when hurricane Irma hit last week. Councilman Walker thanked Chief Lawrence for keeping everyone safe.

Motion was made by Walker and seconded by Doster to pay the bills if and when the fund become available. Motion carried by a unanimous vote of 6-0.

Councilwoman Doster advised she and her committee would work on the Blight Tax.

Councilman Haley expressed words of thanks to City employees for job well done, during the storm.

Councilman Gorley expressed words of thanks and applauded City Administrator Sanders for communicating and keep him informed throughout the storm.

City Administrator Gary Sanders reported that the City’s LMIG resurfacing projects on Madelyn Avenue, Dickey Drive, and Godfrey Road have been completed.

Mr. Sanders reminded Council of the upcoming Briar Patch Arts Festival on Saturday, September 30 from 9:00AM – 3:00PM on and around the courthouse lawn. Mr. Simpson has done a tremendous job in recruiting a great group of vendors. He has also coordinated an exciting new element called the “Adventure Zone.”

Mr. Sanders also publicly thanked the Public Works, Police, Fire, Gas Departments and all others involved in the preparation, response, and cleanup following Hurricane Irma. These Departments have done an outstanding job and have put in a lot of extra work.

Mayor Rocker asked if there was any other business to be conducted before we adjourn. There being none, motion was made by Haley and seconded by Doster to adjourn. Motion carried by a unanimous vote of 6-0. Council adjourned at 8:00PM.

ATTEST:

Walter C. Rocker, Jr., Mayor

Sarah E. Abrams, City Clerk