Mayor Walter C. Rocker, Jr. called the October 17th Council meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

Invocation was given by Councilwoman Teresa Doster.

Councilman Gorley asked has anything changed in the way the City of Eatonton acquires property. Should we vote on it before acquiring property? What has changed from the way we acquired property in the past. Gorley referenced the City acquiring the Old Putnam State Prison property on West Forrest Street, from the State of Georgia; Enterprise Hill Mill houses on Oak Street, the Trail Park property on North Jefferson Avenue/Hwy 441 North and the Masonic Lodge building (Benevolence Lodge) on Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive. Councilman Gorley advised he wanted to go on the record that he was opposed to the City acquiring Jimmy Marshall’s property on Sumter Street or any other property and using City employees to clean it up. Gorley wanted to know why we are paying for a title deed search when we have not accepted the property. Gorley advised if the City accepts donated property, this will reduce the tax digest and the city will lose income. We are setting a precedent. Will the City continue to accept property
when the owners do not wish to clean it up? It would cost around $4,000 to clean up the Marshall’s property on Sumter Street.

City Attorney Huskins advised working on a title search for the Marshall’s property. Council has always voted to accept a piece of property before the City acquires it. There is an exception in the case when someone quit-claims their property such as on Simmons Street without the City’s knowledge. Only by accident was this quit-claim deed found and the City was notified of being the owner.

Councilman Haley advised it is not fair to other property owners living next to property which is not being maintained.

Motion was made by Haley and seconded by Butts to approve the minutes of the last meeting with any necessary corrections. Motion carried by a vote of 6-0.

**Public Comments:** Mrs. Valerie Hurt - Property Maintenance Citation

**Reading of the Rules for Public Comments:** City Administrator Gary Sanders read the Rules for making Public Comments.

Mrs. Valerie Hurt who lives at 203 Tecumseh Avenue talked to Council about the City Code Enforcement Officer’s professional ethics and that of a police officer who was accompanying her, when she was served with citations on her job at the Putnam County Middle School. The citations were for Ms. Hurt and her husband, Mark Hurt. Mrs. Hurt advised not having had any direct communication with the Code Enforcement Officer in the past and according to the Code of Ordinances she should have been given 10 days to clean up her property before being given a ticket. Mrs. Hurt presented pictures of other properties in her neighborhood which are in need of maintenance, and have not been cited to her knowledge.

Mrs. Hurt reported addressing questions to the Putnam County Planning and Development office and later learned the letter should have been mailed to the City of Eatonton. The letter was delivered to the City and she is awaiting a written response from the City of Eatonton to her inquiries. City Administrator Sanders advised working on a response to Mrs. Hurt’s inquires. Hurt also advised going to court last Wednesday and is scheduled to go back December 14, 2016. Mrs. Hurt asked why her husband was not given a warning notice. Hurt asked the City to pay her and her husband $1,900.00 for court appearance/fines and attorney fees.

**Old Business:** None

**New Business:**

**Swearing-in of Municipal Court Judge**
Mayor Walter Rocker performed the swearing-in of City of Eatonton Municipal Court Judge R. Michael Gailey, Jr.

**Swearing-in of City Solicitor**
City Solicitor Russell Thomas was absent.

**Main Street Report Attachment #6C**
Andrew Simpson, Main Street Director presented the following report to Council.

**Organization**
With great regret I must announce the passing of Cheryl Culver. Ms. Culver was a great supporter of Main Street in general and was on our Merchants/Promotions Committee. Her advice and enthusiasm will be missed.

**Promotion**
The billboards on Highway 441 highlighting the Briar Patch Arts Festival and Downtown Eatonton are now up. I will continue to monitor foot traffic in downtown and crowd numbers for the Festival.

The Briar Patch Arts Festival now has a waiting list of vendors. Our Arts and Crafts Vendors are at 90% with the rest being informational and food. We have 1 commercial vendor this year.

Main Street has agreed to partner with the Recreation Dept. to purchase a big screen and projector to show movies. I have discussed this on the telephone with Mr. Waskey and will be meeting with him next week to discuss possibilities. We are looking somewhere between $5,000 and $6,000 with the Recreation Department and Main Street paying half the amount.

Eatonton Main Street is working with Woodmen Life and The Masonic Lodge to see if we can have flags donated. If not Main Street will seek to secure contributions from Veterans Organizations and solicit donations from individuals, and clubs to have flags up in Eatonton by Veterans Day. (November 11)

**Design**
The Scarecrow Contest judging begins on October 11 and finishes on October 21.

The Planters will have their Fall decorations ready between mid and the end of October.

A great number of merchants are coming on board to have their windows painted. I am in contact with both Putnam County High School and Gatewood Schools to bring this project to fruition.

**Economic Vitality**
The Pex Theater space occupied by The County Kitchen hopes to be open by mid to late October.

The Folk Art venue hopes to be open by the end of October.

Eatonton Main Street is still fielding inquiries about vacant properties.

**Summary**
Eatonton Main Street aims to have United States flags in the downtown area by Veterans Day.
Eatonton Main Street is receiving inquiries about the Arts Festival from all over Georgia. These inquiries validate the advertising costs involved.

The Scarecrow Contest is creating a great deal of enthusiasm from those participating, the merchants and general public. Eatonton Main Street has received more entries than last year and it is a great promotion for downtown with the Briar Patch Arts Festival coming up on Saturday October 29.

Two high school students are painting the downtown windows.

**Proposed Authorization of a Tootsie Roll Drive Sponsored by Special Olympics Georgia, Putnam Jasper Support Services and the Knights of Columbus Attachment #6D**

Motion was made by Gorley and seconded by Doster to approve a Tootsie Roll Drive Sponsored by Special Olympics Georgia, Putnam Jasper Support Services and the Knights of Columbus to be held on November 1 & 2, 2016. Motion carried by a unanimous vote of 6-0.

**Discussion and Possible Action on Canceling or Rescheduling the November 1, 2016 Council Meeting**

Council discussed rescheduling the November 1st Council meeting because Mayor Rocker and City Administrator Sanders would be in Savannah attending the CDBG Workshop on November 1 and 2nd.

Motion was made by Doster and seconded by Haley to hold the regular Council meeting schedule for Tuesday, November 1, 2016. Motion carried by a unanimous vote of 6-0. *The City of Eatonton regular Council meeting will be held on Tuesday, November 1, 2016 at the Hut, located at 400-A West Marion Street, Eatonton, GA.*

**Proposed Resolution to Authorize the Mayor to Sign an AT&T Repair Billing Litigation Claim Form Attachment #6F**

City Administrator Sanders advised this is a notice of a proposed Class Action Settlement in reference to James D. Hinson Electrical Contracting Co, Inc Blythe Development Company Callaway Grading, Inc. and National Utility Contractors Association, Plaintiffs v. AT&T Services, Inc. and Bellsouth Telecommunications, Inc., Defendants. The City should receive around $154.27 from this settlement.

Motion was made by Walker and seconded by Gorley to approve the Proposed Resolution Authorizing the Mayor to Sign an AT&T Repair Billing Litigation Claim Form. Motion carried by a unanimous vote of 6-0.

**Zoning: None**
Committee Reports:

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

Councilman Butts reminded Council they are invited to attend and participate in the major clean-up day in Ward #2 on Saturday, October 22, 2016, starting at 9:00AM. Butts asked members to come to the New Life Outreach Christian Center Church located at 206 Agnes Drive.

Councilwoman Stokes reported on the passing of Police Officer Willie George Macon. His funeral was held on Saturday, October 15th. Stokes asked to keep the family in prayer.

Councilman Gorley advised Officer Willie George Macon was a real people person and an asset to our community. Officer Macon will be greatly missed.

City Administrator Sanders advised the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee will meet in the Putnam County Commissioners’ Meeting Room 203 on Tuesday afternoon, October 18, 2016 at 4:30 PM. The City has 8 able and willing participants serving on the committee.

Administrator Sanders advised working with DOT on utility relocation of gas line on Hwy 44.

City Clerk Abrams advised Council due to pending surgery in the month of November one of the office staff clerks will attend the Council meeting in her absence.

Mayor Rocker asked if there was any other business to be discussed before he called for the adjournment. There being no other business to discuss. Motion was made by Haley and seconded by Walker to adjourn. Motion carried by a unanimous vote of 6-0.

_________________________
Walter C. Rocker, Jr., Mayor

ATTEST:

_________________________
Sarah E. Abrams, City Clerk