

**MINUTES
CITY COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING
May 16, 2023**

The City of Cordele Commission held a Regular Meeting on May 16, 2023 at 9:00 AM, Cordele City Hall Courtroom, 501 North 7th Street, Cordele, Georgia with the following present:

Joshua Deriso, Commission Chair	Royce Reeves, Sr., Commission Vice Chair
Wesley Rainey, Commissioner	Vesta Beal Shephard, Commissioner
Isaac Owens – Commissioner	Angela Redding – City Manager
Tommy Coleman – City Attorney	Alisha Williams – Asst. City Clerk

Absent: Janice Mumphery – Recording Secretary

Staff present: Rusty Bridgers – Finance Director, Fire Chief Alligood, Jack Wood, Sr. – Chief Codes Official, David Wade – Human Resources Director, Police Chief Jalon Heard, Steve Fulford – Asst. City Manager/Public Works Director, Debbie Wright – UC&T Director, Jackie Walker-Municipal Court Clerk.

Absent: Irene Cantrell – HUA Director

Media Present: Ricky Smarr - South GA TV; Sarah Brown – Cordele Dispatch

Call to Order: Commission Chair Joshua Deriso called the Meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

INVOCATION: There was a moment of silent prayer.

PLEDGE ALLEGIANCE TO THE UNITED STATES FLAG: The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Commissioner Owens.

ROLL CALL: A quorum was established.

Attendee's Name	Title	Absent	Present
Joshua Deriso	Commission Chairman		✓
Royce Reeves, Sr.	Commission Vice Chairman		✓
Vesta Beal-Shephard	Commissioner Ward 1		✓
Isaac Owens	Commissioner Ward 3		✓
Wesley Rainey	Commissioner Ward 4		✓

APPROVAL OF AGENDA – May 16, 2023: Commission Vice Chair Reeves moved to approve the Agenda for May 16, 2023; seconded by Commissioner Owens; the motion was approved by the Commission.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – May 2, 2023: Commission Vice Chair Reeves moved to approve the Minutes for May 2, 2023; seconded by Commissioner Shephard; the motion was approved by the Commission.

SPEAKERS APPEARANCES: Speakers will have five (5) minutes:

- a. Mr. Jeff Sinnott, 302 East 14th Ave., Cordele, GA – Stop Work Order: Mr. Sinnott appeared before the Commission to request a Work Session because the information he has regarding his

situation is a lot. He stated the reason he has a stop work order is because he put up a brick wall and he asked for permission, there was two letters he turned in and the information was cut off the letters. Mr. Sinnott showed the Commission the work he is doing on his house. Mr. Sinnott stated all his worked was approved by Former City Manager Roland McCarthy and Jack Wood, Chief Codes Official on December 17, 2021.

Commissioner Shephard asked Mr. Sinnott, "Who gave him permission to put up the concrete wall?"

Mr. Sinnott: "I requested it from Jack Wood.

Commissioner Shephard: "Do you have it in writing?"

Mr. Sinnott: "No".

Commissioner Owens: "You talked about what you were building and the neighbor got upset". "Were you talking about three buildings on your property?"

Mr. Sinnott: "I had contractors build the roof, I showed Jack Wood what they did and how they build it and Jack said all that had to be torn down and he told me I can sue the City."

Commissioner Owens: "Did he tell you it had to be torn down because it was not erected correctly?"

Mr. Sinnott: "Just one section of it."

Commissioner Owens: "So this has been a project you've been working on since?"

Mr. Sinnott: "We bought the house in October of 2017.

Commissioner Owens: "So it's an ongoing project?"

Mr. Sinnott: "Yes, sir"

Commissioner Owens: "Do you have an estimated time of completion?"

Mr. Sinnott: "No", I have been down for nearly seven (7) months now, which I could have had a lot done."

City Manager Angela Redding: "As you all can see this has been going on since 2017, and I did issue a Stop Work Order last year because this is in the O'Neal Historic District, anything that is done to the structure has to go before the Historic Preservation Commission." "The staff and I, we did meet with Mr. Sinnott, we went through everything, relative to what he is trying to do; the last instructions were, he had agreed to deconstruct a wall and I assigned Jack Wood to this and I told him once that it is completed, Mr. Sinnott needs to come back before he does anything else because whatever the next step is, if it is something that has to go before the Historic Preservation Commission, then this is what we need to do. This is the last information I have. You have a letter that was issued on April 17th, advising Mr. Sinnott that any work going forward, any construction, will need to be presented in writing to the Historic Preservation Commission." "Also, regarding the concrete wall, I did receive information, that after we had the meeting, a wall was being constructed; I sent Jack over there just to verify and Jack said that Mr. Sinnott requested to just stack the concrete blocks because they were all over the ground, he gave him permission to do that, but not to build the wall, again, any construction at that location will need to be presented in writing to the Historic Preservation Commission.

Mr. Sinnott: "On December 17th, Mr. Roland approved everything at my house and on March 4th, he told me I did not have to ever go back to the Historic Society Meeting.

Commissioner Rainey: "It is my understanding that the original application for this was in your name to the Historic Society, when the problem hit, the application was in your name, but you are not the land owner, so that's what held it up with the Historic Society, that's been the problem from day one." "And then there is also from my understanding, that a portion of the house is on the City right-of-way."

Mr. Sinnott: “That’s also been approved by Mr. McCarthy and Jack Wood, all of it, we discussed this in that last meeting”.

Commissioner Rainey: “How many dogs do you have?”

Mr. Sinnott: “We have eight (8) dogs now.”

Commission Chair Joshua Deriso: “How can this Commission remedy this situation in your mind?”

Mr. Sinnott: “I would drop all my case, I would stop everything, if we can stop this right now.”

Commission Chair Deriso: “When you say, stop this right now, what do you mean?”

Mr. Sinnott: “The situation I am going through right now with the bricks, the wall, I will walk away. I will still deconstruct a huge portion of my front building.”

Commission Chair Joshua Deriso: “So you originally asked the Commission for Work Session for this issue. So, this is in the hands of the Commission, if they would like to add to the agenda, a motion will be made to have a Work Session to discuss the issues, that will come to a vote with the Commission. Just give the Commission some time.

Mr. Sinnott: “If they do not want to have a Work Session, what do I do?”

Commission Chair Deriso: “It looks like you have exhausted all of your remedies. You will have to work with Codes, the City Manager and I will assume the City Attorney to resolve your issues.

b. Mr. Robert Butts, Sr. – New Apartments on 15th Avenue West:

City Manager Angela Redding stated she did speak with Mr. Butts and that she would speak with Mr. Dravian McGill for answers. City Manager Angela stated Mr. Butts will not appear before the Commission at this time.

SPEAKERS ON A SPECIFIC AGENDA ITEM: Speaker will have three (3) minutes: No Requests.

PRESENTATION: Winston Denmark, Fincher Denmark, LLC, College Park, Georgia
City Charter

Mr. Denmark is a Managing Partner of Fincher Denmark, LLC. Fincher Denmark is a Local Government Law Firm in the Atlanta area. Mr. Denmark stated he represents a number of cities, counties, school districts and independent authorities throughout the State of Georgia.

Mr. Denmark stated that Fincher Denmark was asked by the City Manager to look at an issue related to the Cordele Charter. Mr. Denmark stated he has been doing this for over twenty something odd years, over the years I have been asked from time to time to provide a second set of eyes to serve as an Independent Counsel to look at some issues for a particular community. He stated when he do that, he is always aware that there are political realities in every community, but those are not my concern. I think the most effect lawyers in the great state of Georgia are the ones that can focus like a laser on the x’s and o’s of the law and look narrowly at the legal issues presented to them and not pay any mind to whatever political realities that might be prevailing in any particular community and that is what I scrupulously did in this case. Mr. Denmark stated he is not aware of what the factions, if there are factions on this Commission, what the issues are in this community. He also stated he think he would be most effective in my role if he was completely unaware of those issues. I am not aware of any conduct of any members of the Commission before today and so my opinion is purely objective. I look narrowly at the legal issues. I do not know what the implications might be for one individual or another. The Firm has rendered a legal opinion; Mr. Denmark stated his opinion is purely objective, he

looks narrowly at the legal issues, he does not know what the implications might be for one individual or another, one faction or another. He stated one of his Associates worked with him on this, and we looked at it and it is a strictly a clinical review of the Charter and the laws of the City of Cordele.

The issues that were presented were two:

1. Does the Chairman have the ability to present the budget to the City Commission or does that reside with the City Manager?
2. Can the City create an Office of the Chairman and staff it with employees who report to the Chairman directly rather than the City Manager?

The issue related to the Budget: There is an internal inconsistency in the text of your Charter, I am referring to the most recently adopted Charter from 2020.

In Section 6.27A, it says that the Chairman will submit the Budget for review to the Commission. In Section 2.29, it proposes that duty to the City Manager. This is an inconsistency that cannot be reconciled. Most times when you look at a Charter, a piece of legislation, you try to reconcile or harmonize those inconsistencies. This says A and B, you cannot harmonize this, they are directly opposite, they are incompatible, one has to prevail and one has to yield. So, who submits the Budget, it is the Chairman or is it the City Manager? Mr. Denmark stated that they looked at the history, going back fifty years in iterations of the Charter. The 1969 Charter, speaks very clearly and indicates that both the capital budget and operating budget are submitted to the Commission by the City Manager, no ambiguity there, it speaks with one clear voice. Fast forward to the 2020 Charter revision, the inconsistencies between Section 2.29, which say the City Manager and Section 6.27, which says it is the Chair, that provision is an outlier, it is an anomaly, the provision in regards to the Chair. Everywhere else in the Charter, it proposes that to the City Manager. In the enumerated duties of the City Manager, in Section 2.29, it says the City Manager submits the Budget. No where in Section 2.29, where it talks about the duties and powers of the Chair, it does not say that the Chair submits the Budget, only in the one provision, 6.27, which refers to the submission of the Budget, does it say that the Chairman submits the Budget. Mr. Denmark stated, he contends that this is a scrupulous error, it's an outlier and that should not be a given fact, that it is just a simple mistake in the Charter. Mr. Denmark encouraged the Commission to give full force and effect to Section 2.29, which says that the City Manager submits the Budget, this is consistent with the fifty-year history of budgets in Cordele and different iterations in the Charter and to disregard the anomalous, outlier and scrupulous error, which is 6.27, which give that duty to the Chair. Mr. Denmark states he does not think it was the intentions of the General Assembly to divest that power from the City Manager, which has happened for over fifty-years, it would have been in clear language or if it were to give the Chairman that duty, which he has never had before; Mr. Denmark stated, he thinks it would have stated that in the duties of the Chairman, but it does not say that, it does not say that in the duties and the powers of the Chair, only that one place, 6.27, where talks about the actual Budget Process it says that the duties and powers reside with the Chair and he believes that is clearly a scrupulous error that is clearly out of step with the history of the different areas of the Charter, as well as the current Charter, which was adopted in 2020. Mr. Denmark stated that he thinks that is an error that should be corrected. So, Mr. Denmark's recommendation to the Commission is to have the Legislative Delegation at the next session, correct this, which is clearly an error, to avoid this internal consistency, so that efficient government can continue to prevail in Cordele.

The Office of the Chair: Mr. Denmark stated that he believes that this is possible within the frame of both, the Charter and the Code of Ordinances. He stated, the Commission can create an Office of the Chair, he has seen other communities do this, as well, the Mayor or the County Manager, Chairman of the Board of Commissioners to have a staff. The problem is that, in Cordele the Charter says, the Commission has one employee, the City Manager, everybody else works for the City Manager. So, it

will be inconsistent with that theory of government, as it is in your Charter, to create an employee structure where, you have City employees who do not report to the City Manager. Mr. Denmark stated, this cannot be done by Ordinance, however, if you were so inclined, you can certainly amend your Charter to curve out a feature for the Chair, where the Chair will have employees that reports directly to him, that will have to be a Charter change. The Charter cannot be inconsistent with himself. So, if the Charter says all City employees report to the City Manager, except, however, set forth in Section, to create a Section B, these employees can report to the Chair. This can be done with a Charter Amendment, but not by a regular Ordinance because the Ordinance cannot be inconsistent with the Charter. These are my opinions I have set forth, my legal opinion.

Commission Chair Joshua Deriso stated, "the Law Firm was contacted only by the City Manager, it was not agreed upon by all of us, what areas and what issues that would be discussed in reviewing with this Law Firm. This issue did not officially come before the City Commission to agree to use this Law Firm or only those two items."

Commission Vice Chair Reeves stated, "at the Retreat, we agreed, if I am wrong, the rest of you all correct me. We agreed that the City Manager would reach out to somebody."

Commission Chair Deriso stated, "You are wrong, we agreed that we will have someone to look at the Charter, but we did not go as far as to say that it will be specifically to the City Manager and that the City Manager will do it and because the seats that we sit in, it is also important that our input is given. Because from a leadership standpoint, if you want people to digest something, you will want they input and not just throwing it to them and say this is what I have done."

Commission Vice Chair Reeves: "We gave her the input when we put it in her hands to hire an Attorney."

Commission Chair Deriso: "We did not agree to that and we had no idea that it was being put in motion for anyone to object or add any other items, because we did not say that those were the only two issues that we had with the Charter. Because there were a few other items, I am sure that most of us, also would have like the Law Firm to look at as well, so it was limited also, but if everybody would have had input, then I believe we would have had a more thorough review of our Charter. Office of the Chair and the Budget, 6.27, was definitely two of the main issues, there were other small issues, we bicker and fight about here. But again, my thing is, there should have been communication to us, saying this is the Law Firm I selected in these are the issues that we will review. That was not in writing, saying specifically that it would be those two issues. There was no consensus, it would only those two issues, so that the quarrel I have with the process. I don't sit in a seat, to not make decisions, I sit in a seat to help make decisions and so do the rest of you all."

Commissioner Owens: "I think based on our conversation, we assumed that we will leave that in the hands of the City Manager to come up with a Law Firm. Now, I will agree that maybe there is some other issues that we might needed to add, which is, I don't know if we will still have more opportunities to speak with the Law Firm to get more information to get input on some other items that we had, because there are still somethings we need to come to a point of clarity on because there have still been some overwhelming issues, that keep coming up, the Charter still come to an issue. Now, as far as the choosing of the Law Firm, I think we were all in the agreement that the City Manager would come up with somebody, we did not specify, but I think that was the assumption."

Commission Chair Deriso: "You can't say all because all would include me and I did not agree with that, you can say majority."

Commissioner Owens: "The majority of us then."

Commission Chair Deriso: "For me, I have an issue with how things happen amongst this board with the relation with the City Manager and the City Attorney. Again, when something is happening that

impacts myself as Chair, then I respect that seat, then I expect some kind of communication before a decision is made, it doesn't mean it's going to go my way, but I do not like being blindsided with nothing and the first I heard of this was an email a week ago, it does not work like that, and if we are going to continue to have a problem with how it works, there will be some changes. My expectation is before any decision is made about the Charter, about my position as Chair, I need to be in a situation where my input and opinion is given, not that you tell me what has been done and for me to just swallow it like I have no authority to object to anything, so for me it was the process, as a lot of other things have been. As I always say, every day and right now in this nation, you have lawyers going to Court, you have one believe one side and others believe the other side, and both of them passionately believe that they are right, but at the end of the day someone makes a determination that one is right and one is wrong and I believe it might have to come to that, that a Judge might have to decide this issue. Because our Charter changed and if we go off history and laws, some of us...if we just go off laws and what laws used to be, we will still be in chains, women would not be able to vote, so laws do change, and our Charter changed, and the authority and how the Chairperson gets this seat was changed in 1998; and as Mr. Denmark spoke, there's always a ledge here and elsewhere that a difference between submit, propose and prepare. The Charter does not say, at any point the City Manager proposes the operating budget, it only says prepare and submit. But again, you had a Law Firm look at the Charter, with his paralegals and associates, you had him come before this Commission to approval, so that's additional four or five people; then you sent it up to Atlanta to have 180 State Representatives and 56 Senators look at it and pass it, as well as, the Governor and they all missed that mistake. I need a little bit more convincing, that about 300 people missed that mistake and if they did that just tell you what type of people running our government. That's a case in which you don't want something to be so, that's the problem. This Commission along with the City Manager and City Attorney, from day one has been...the powers of the Chairman; the Ethics Committee, instead of us doing right, when two people didn't belong on the Ethics Committee, instead of us doing what every other Chairman got the opportunity to do, this Commission stroke the power from the Chairman to appoint Ethics members, it is no difference. So, you can...me with what is right and what is wrong because I don't think this Commission has the right motive and understanding what to apply, only when it is convenient in their favor, will they agree to it. I would like that word for word in our minutes."

PRESENTATION: Monica Simmons and Tim Powers
UGA & USDA PROPEL Program

Mrs. Simmons and Mr. Powers conversed regarding PROPEL (Planning Rural Opportunities for Prosperity and Economic Leadership). Mr. Powers stated that they came before the Commission in February, 2023 requesting the Commission support of a Resolution in support of our application for the Connected Resilient Community Program through the University of Georgia Archway Program, which the Commission graciously provided for us. In the response of the submission of our application, the University of Georgia has come back to us and suggested that there is a more comprehensive program that would be better fit for Cordele and Crisp County for us to participate in. It is known as the PROPEL, which is an acronym for Planning Rural Opportunities for Prosperity and Economic Leadership, its funded by a Grant from the USDA and from the University of Georgia Foundation. There will be some cost involved on a community level that will be approximately \$5,000 to \$7,000 per year for the two years that we are in the program. However, we are not requesting any funding from the City or County to support that at this time. We will be committed to raising those funds through private industry in our community to support this program. Our proposal this morning,

because it is partially funded through this USDA Grant, they have requested that the City consider and approve the Assurance Agreement, which basically states that we will show no favoritism in the use of this program in our community. We will begin this program officially in January 2024 and will start planning meetings in August and September of this year, still utilize the Committee of the community at-large that was presented in the application. After a question and answers of the program, the Commission will have the opportunity to approve or disapprove this item.

DEPARTMENT HEADS GOALS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

1. FINANCE DEPARTMENT: Rusty Bridgers Reported.

Goals and Achievements

Cross Training - utility billing, sanitation, court payments, customer service are areas in process.

Complete FY2022 audit – reports currently being drafted and reviewed
FY2024 Budgeting Process has begun

Improve Records - storage, electronic, organization

Replace manual documents with spreadsheets - in process

Improve purchasing process with better accountability - in process

Departmental Reporting

Monthly expenses with budget v/s actual - to be implemented FY2024

Identify key metrics for managers

2. FIRE DEPARTMENT REPORT: Fire Chief Todd Alligood

Goals:

- a. Provide best possible service to our stakeholders.
- b. Complete 2024 Budget process.
- c. Interview/Fill vacant Sergeant position.
- d. Interview/Fill (3) vacant firefighter positions.
- e. Expand training for firefighters.
- f. Identify, document, and remove damaged, expired, and unusable surplus equipment.
- g. Develop and write a Standard Operating Guideline for our department.
- h. **Personal Goal:** Meet personally with Cordele Police Chief, Crisp County Sherriff, Crisp County Fire Chief, Crisp County EMS Director, Crisp County E-911 Director, Crisp County High School, and Crisp/Cordele Industrial Development Council.
- i. **Personal Goal:** Evaluate current trucks, equipment, department needs.

Accomplishments:

- a. Expanded EMS and MVA service.
- b. Met with Rusty (Finance Director) to work on budget 5/11/23.
- c. Completed interviews and Command Staff recommended a candidate for the Sergeant promotion.
- d. Completed interviews and Command Staff recommended two (2) candidates for the vacant firefighter positions.

- e. Twelve (12) firefighters that have signed up for classes at GPSTC: Interior Search and Rescue, Leadership in Supervision, Fire Ground Hydraulics, Pressurized Container Fire Control, Flammable and Combustible Liquids Incidents, Acting Officer in Charge.
- f. Turned in a list of equipment and gear that can be moved to surplus.
- g. SOG's are a work in progress.
- h. Attended Job fair at Crisp County High School 5/12/23.

3. HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT – Irene Cantrell was absent.

City Manager Angela Redding stated there is no update to Mrs. Cantrell's report.

4. CODES REPORT: Jack Wood, Sr. Reported.

Codes Department is working to encourage people to rehabilitate their property before it is too far gone.

Foam Works Care Wash expected time for completion is the end of June or the first of July.

5. PERSONNEL DEPARTMENT: No Report.

6. MUNICIPAL COURT: No Report.

7. POLICE DEPARTMENT – Police Chief Jalon Heard Reported.

Goals

- a. Our department will continue to increase the morale and manpower within the department. This is an ongoing goal.
- b. We will continue community policing through events and public contacts.
- c. We are focusing on increasing the quality of training for our officers, and now are offering more in-house training class which are specific to the city's and department's needs.
- d. Our department will be starting the process of becoming State Certified.

Accomplishments

- a. On Friday, May 12th, the Police Department attended a job fair at Crisp County High School. We will be having an Officer Appreciation Meal in celebration for Police Week in our training room, located inside of the Police Department, upstairs on Wednesday, May 17th, starting at 5 PM. We will recognize Officers and civilian staff for various accomplishments during this event.
- b. Chief Heard attended the Professional Law Enforcement Community Engagement Training (PLECET) Conference. It was a wonderful Conference and I thank the City for offering me the opportunity to attend.

8. PUBLIC WORKS – Steve Fulford Reported.

Goal:

To improve the working order and functionality of the seven (7) holding ponds.

- a. Work has been completed on the holding pond at 20th Avenue and 9th Street.
- b. LMIG Projects should go out for bid next May.
- c. The Waste Disposal Site is open and operating.

9. UT&C – Debbie Wright Reported.

- a. Our ninth samples at the WWTP for Heptaclor and Cyanide came back as Not Detected.
- b. We are looking into fixing some of our existing aerators in the old pond. We have several that needs the wire to be replaced and a couple my need rewinding or replacing. We have 1 back in service this week.
- c. We had to replace the fluoride pump at Hwy 90 Well and the chlorinator at Hwy 90 and 24th Ave Well.
- d. We were awarded the Gold Award by GAWP for 2022. This accomplishment was made by not having any violations in the Water System for the year 2022.
- e. We collected the quarterly Gum Creek samples as required for the Stormwater Dept. in April.

AGENDA ITEMS

1. Proclamation - National Public Works Week – May 21-27, 2023
Commissioner Owens presented the Proclamation to Steve Fulford, Public Works Director/AsstistantCity Manager.
2. Consider and Approve the First Reading of an Ordinance: The City Commission of the City of Cordele hereby ordains that pursuant to the Charter of the City of Cordele, as amended, and the Georgia Elections Code, as amended through the regular 2023 session of the Georgia General Assembly, the General Election for City Commission Ward 1 and City Commission Ward 4, as provided by O.C.G.A. § 21-2-1, et seq., to fill terms expiring on December 31, 2023, shall be held under the following terms and conditions:
Commissioner Shephard moved to approve the First Reading of an Ordinance; seconded by Commissioner Owens; the motion was approved by the Commission.
3. Consider and Approve the Assurance Agreement for the PROPEL Program.
Commissioner Rainey moved to approve the Assurance Agreement for the PROPEL Program; seconded by Commissioner Owens; the motion was approved by the Commission.
4. Consider and Approve the 2023-2024 Classic Main Street MOU
Commissioner Shephard moved to approve the 2023-2024 Classic Main Street MOU; seconded by Commission Vice Chair Reeves; the motion was approved by the Commission.
5. Discussion of the Public Defender’s contract with the City within the Municipal Court.
Background: Commission Chair Deriso: “Our Public Defender appears to think that it’s okay and just, ask people that come before the City Court whether they are related to people; and how they relating go down in the degree of questions. I don’t think that’s okay, and when I spoke with the Public Defender, the disrespect I received as Chairman, asking a simple request that he not ask anyone whether they were related. I talked to our Clerk about it and our City Judge about it. It is an issue to have someone with that personality to ask people questions that they are defending, very personal questions that are irrelevant to defending them and have the attitude, “he going to do what he wants”, as he told me. I also went and looked at the Court and I am disturbed by the lack of diversity that we have in our City Municipal Court, if you look at our City Judge, our City Solicitor and our City Public Defender. Most of the people who see these people, but our people are not happy what they get from our City Solicitor or our Public Defender.

I think it behooves us as a governing body to think twice when we appoint someone like a City Judge, also who he appoints to carry out the work. Because what this City altogether lacks in cultural competency, especially when the people that you are serving, you have no idea what they reality is and I was disgusted at how the Public Defender behaved and the Solicitor did his job, but I think some people have issues with just his like of enthusiasm of helping them or helping them understand whether they plead guilty, not guilty or nolo. Court not necessarily supposes to be speed court, similar to speed dating, if people have questions, I think us up here should help the Judge and the City Solicitor and City Public Defender understand that law can be complicated and people do have questions and they have the right to understand before they are just pressured to plead nolo, guilty or not guilty. That is not happening in our City Court. Our Judge does a good job with being reasonable and helping them understand somethings when they finally come to him, being in all fairness. However, our job is to hold people accountable and I, as well as, most of the citizens that I came in contact with are not happy with some of the representation that we have in our City Court. Specifically, Public Defender personality and attitude, as far as, his job and him not asking people personal questions where they feel attacked, when you are serving them is an issue for me.

Commissioner Owens: “you said he asked them these questions about their family; what was his reasoning for asking those questions?”

Commission Chair Deriso: “He did not provide a reason, one thing that he said was, he thinks that you have to get to know people, and I said, sure, I’m sure that’s the case.”

Commission Vice Chair Reeves: “Point of order, Point of order. Has a motion been accepted to discuss this?”

Commission Chair Deriso: “We are still in the background.”

Commission Vice Chair Reeves: “You are providing background and he is asking questions.”

Commission Vice Chair Reeves: “Third Ward Commissioner, I respect the question that you have, but a motion has not been made to discuss this item.”

This item was not discussed by the Commission.

6. CITY MANAGER’S REPORT:

Wage and Compensation Study

Five (5) Proposals were received. HR and City Manager Angela Redding will review the proposals to ensure they are responsive to the RFP.

Cordele Gateway Project – I-75 Interchanges, Exit 99 & 101 – Landscaping and Maintenance

Five (5) bids were received and are being reviewed to ensure they meet the qualifications.

Qualifications for Landscaping: Required to have a state license, a license in pest control, pesticide and herbicide. All qualifications were outlined in the RFP.

Memorial Day Holiday

City Offices will be closed Monday, May 29th in Observance of Memorial Day.

LMIG FY2023 Safety Action Plan (SAP)

GDOT notified Public Works of supplemental funds available for safety improvements. The SAP program focuses on low-cost safety improvements. Public Works submitted the attached project list yesterday (May 15th) afternoon. The projects submitted are to install larger stop signs

with break-away post on the streets listed on the application and install flashing lights at the railroad trestle on 6th Avenue West (low clearance) and the railroad trestle on 9th Avenue West (flooding). The total grant cost for the projects selected shall not exceed \$300,000. A 10% match is required and the match can come from T-SPLOST. The application deadline is May 31, 2023. City Manager Angela Redding requested approval for Public Works to submit the Projects identified for supplemental funding from GDOT. Commission Vice Chair Reeves moved to approve the LMIG FY2023 Safety Action Plan (SAP); seconded by Commissioner Shephard; the motion was approved by the Commission.

City Manager Angela Redding recognized and thanked Southwest GA United for the housing forum for families during Georgia Cities Weeks.

Upcoming Events

Night at the Museum: May 18th, 5:30 – 7:00 PM. 105 East 9th Avenue.

Cordele Crisp Chamber of Commerce “This Is Your Life” Event: Thursday, June 15th at Lake Blackshear Resort and Gulf Club. For additional information you can visit the Chamber’s website or reach out to Mrs. Monica Simmons. City Commissioners received an invitation to the event.

Fire Chief Official Swearing-In: The Official Swearing-In for the Fire Chief, as well as, promotions within the Fire Department will be held on Monday, May 22nd at 5:15 PM, at the Community Clubhouse.

7. **CITY ATTORNEY’S REPORT:** Attorney Tommy Coleman stated that the lawsuit against the GA Peanut Mill was filed on May 15, 2023.
Attorney Tommy Coleman requested an Executive Session to discuss the mediation that the Council engage in with Roland’s McCarthy lawsuit issue.
8. **EXECUTIVE SESSION:** (For Personnel, Litigation, Real Estate): Commission Vice Chair Reeves moved to go into Executive Session for Litigation at 10:32 AM; seconded by Commissioner Shephard; the motion was approved by the Commission.
9. **REGULAR MEETING RECONVENED:** Commission Vice Chair Reeves moved to reconvene the Regular Meeting at 10:46 AM.; seconded by Commissioner Shephard; the motion was approved by the Commission.
10. **COMMENTS BY THE GOVERNING BODY:** No Comments
11. **ADJOURNMENT:** Commission Vice Chair Reeves moved to adjourn the Meeting at 10:47 AM; seconded by Commissioner Rainey; the motion was approved by the Commission.