

**MINUTES
CITY COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING
December 20, 2022**

The Regular Meeting of the Cordele City Commission was held on December 20th, 5:30 p.m., Cordele City Hall Courtroom, 501 North 7th Street, Cordele, Georgia with the following present:

Joshua Deriso, Commission Chair	Royce Reeves, Sr., Commission Vice Chair
Vesta Beal-Shepard, Commissioner	Wesley Rainey, Commissioner
Isaac Owens, Commissioner	Angela Redding, City Manager
Tommy Coleman – City Attorney	Janice Mumphery, Recording Secretary

Staff present: Fire Chief Augustus Telfair, Irene Cantrell – HUA Director, Jack Wood, Sr. – Chief Codes Official, David Wade – Human Resources Director, Captain Justin West – Patrol Commander, Koby Worley – Street Superintendent, Debbie Wright – UC&T Director.

Staff absent: Steve Fulford, Police Chief Jalon Heard, Rusty Bridgers.

Media Present: Deepayah Sinha - South GA TV; Cordele Dispatch – Chris Lewis.

Call to Order: Commission Chair Joshua Deriso called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

Invocation: Prayer was rendered by Irene Cantrell.

Pledge Allegiance to the United States Flag: The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Commissioner Rainey.

Roll Call: A quorum was established.

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

APPROVAL OF AGENDA – December 20, 2022: Commission Vice Chair Reeves moved to approve the Agenda for December 20, 2022; seconded by Commissioner Shephard; the motion was approved by the Commission.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – December 6, 2022: Commission Vice Chair Reeves moved to approve the Minutes for December 6 2022; seconded by Commissioner Shephard; the motion was approved by the Commission.

SPEAKERS APPEARANCES: Speakers will have five (5) minutes: No Requests.

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

DEPARTMENT HEADS GOALS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

1. Finance Department: City Manager Angela Redding Reported.

Property Taxes

2021 Tax Digest	\$ 2,735,931.54
2021 Taxes Collected	\$ 2,486,774.60
% Of Taxes Collected	91%
Taxes not Collected	\$ 249,156.80

Property Taxes were mailed out on Friday, December 16, 2022; one of the requirements for this year is past due property taxes will have to be paid before the current is paid. The customer can pay them in full and/or make payment arrangements.

2. Fire Department Report: Fire Chief Augusta Telfair Reported.

Goals:

- a. Would like to get a second set of firefighter turnout gear for all fire department personnel.
- b. Working to fill the three firefighter positions in the fire department.
- c. To replace the fire department 31-year-old ladder truck.
- d. Although we are continuing to work on and achieve goals from February 2022 we have had to deviate and/postpone from our original plan(s) to be able to operate within the current budget.

Accomplishments:

- a. The fire department has completed painting the new replace fire hydrant that have been replace by Public Works Department.
- b. The fire department received the four new 6000 PSI Cascade Tanks Cylinder. To replace the old 4000 PSI cylinders that were unable to be hydro tested.

3. Housing and Urban Development – Irene Cantrell Reported.

Goal - CDBG 2020 – McLeod Subdivision Project:

Our New Goal for next month is: For the Construction Contractor (RPI Underground, Inc.) to be ready to start the ground work in the McLeod Subdivision on October 10, 2022.

4. Codes Report: Jack Wood, Sr. Reported.

Goals are the same.

5. Human Resources: David Wade Reported.

Recruitment

Exchanged a text message with Susan Fuller regarding Work Based Learning. After the first of Year, the children should be back in the classroom and then this will be revisited.

Succession Planning

Have a Captain vacancy in the Fire Department, receiving in house applications, this position is now closed.

In house vacancy in the Police Department for Detective. We are now taking applications.

Leveraging H.R. Technology

Continuing to compile information for the Benefit Administration Module in Paychex along Starting steps for the Onboarding Module.

Positions Filled

City Manager Angela Redding stated that there are three authorized positions in the City Manager/Executive Office, but there has been a title change in those positions. Ms. Mumphery will become Executive Assistant/City Clerk; Alisha Williams the new Assistant City Clerk.

6. Police Department – Captain Justin West Reported.

Goals

- a. Our department has plans to increase the morale and manpower in the department. This is an ongoing goal.
- b. We will continue community policing thru events and public contacts.

Accomplishments

- a. The Shop with a Cop was a huge success this year. We were able to accomplish this utilizing the generous donations received from our community.
- b. On Thursday, December 15th we visited three exceptional student education classes and provided gifts for each student. We enjoyed meeting with them and joining in on their Christmas parties.
- c. On Friday, December 16th, we held the second part of Shop with a Cop. We escorted 40 students from the primary school to Walmart. They were given \$100 to shop with. Each student was also given a T-Shirt. Our officers enjoyed the time shopping with each student.
- d. Due to the generous donations given this year, we were able to increase the amount from \$50 to \$100.00 per students. Also, 40 students were able to participate this year instead of 30 students in past few years.
- e. The department was honored to be a part of Adopt an Angel this year. Adopt an Angel provided toys for almost 700 kids in our community. A lot of work is put into making this happen. During the seven days of the Toy Drive, volunteers sort the toys collected by gender and age. Then a bag is filled with toys for each child/family. Bicycles and toys are placed in numeric order and ready for pick up by the seventh day of the event. Lisa Odom, ACO Brandi Akin, ACO Michelle Rountree, ACO Alyssa Herndon, Cpl Amy Stokes, Cadet Tim Arnette, Cadet Ethan Jones, Cadet John Courtney, Lt Chuck Pheil, Captain Justin West, and myself enjoyed the time we worked.

7. Public Works – Koby Worley Reported.

Goal 4: To perform the leak survey for natural gas distribution and transmission lines by the end of the year.

- a. Project is 100% complete.

Goal 5: Complete the Annual Report (AR) Stormwater Management Program.

- a. Stormwater Technical Advisory Committee meeting held on 10/27/22.
- b. Dry weather screenings of outfalls on 11/02/22.
- c. Issued LDP (Land Disturbance Permit) for QuikTrip Store #7076 on 10/17/22.
- d. Applied for (1) GDOT permit each for both the water and gas departments.
- e. Construction started at Foam Works Auto Spa on 10/24/22.

f. Construction started at McLeod (grinder pump installs) on 10/31/22.

8. UC&T – Debbie Wright Reported.

a. Our fourth samples at the WWTP for Heptaclor and Cyanide came back as Not Detected.

AGENDA ITEMS

1. Seconding Reading of an Ordinance Adopting Hearing Procedures for the Removal of Officers from The Cordele City Commission; Repealing All Ordinances In Conflict Herewith; and for Other Purposes. Commissioner Rainey moved to approve the Second Reading of an Ordinance; seconded by Commissioner Shephard. After a lengthy discussion, a vote was taken. Commission Chair Royce Reeves, Sr. voted nay; Commissioner Owens voted nay; Commissioner Shephard voted aye; Commissioner Rainey voted aye. Commission Chair Joshua Deriso stated, it has been two ayes and two nays, Agenda Item #1 will not carry.
2. Consider a Resolution of the Chairman and Members of the Cordele City Commission Requesting the Georgia General Assembly to Amend HB 529 Act No. 109 Approved by the Governor on April 13, 2013 to Provide for the Expenditure of 1% of the Current Hotel/Motel Tax for the Purpose of Funding Construction and Operation of A Railroad Viewing Platform by the City of Cordele: Repealing All Resolutions In Conflict Herewith; And for Other Purposes. Commission Vice Chair Reeves moved to approve the Resolution; seconded by Commissioner Shephard; the motion was approved by the Commission.
3. Consider a Resolution of The City Commission of the City of Cordele Requesting the General Assembly to Pass a Local Act Authorizing a Referendum on the Relocation of the Confederate Monument Currently Situated at the Community Clubhouse: Repealing All Resolutions In Conflict Herewith; and for Other Purposes. – **Vice-Chairman Royce Reeves, Sr.** Commission Vice Chair Reeves moved to approve the Resolution; seconded by Commissioner Owens; Commission Vice Chair Reeves voted aye; Commissioner Owens voted aye; Commissioner Shephard voted aye; Commissioner Rainey voted nay. The Resolution was approved with a 3/1 vote.
4. Consider and Approve the Contract with Hygienic Clean Janitorial Services, LLC to provide Janitorial Services at City Hall and the Employee Clinic. Commissioner Shephard moved to approve the Contract; seconded by Commission Vice Chair Reeves; the motion was approved by the Commission.
5. Discussion of the City of Cordele to End Their Prison Labor Agreements/Arrangements or Pay Prisoners A Minimum Wage – **Chairman Deriso**
Background: Commission Chair Deriso stated after conducting research and studies, the justice system is very much inequitable and people who are locked up are sitting in jail because they cannot afford bail or bond money; it is a form of deinstitutionalized slavery, where you pay the people nothing or pay them very low wages. Commission Chair Deriso stated, he does not think, with the racial dynamics of the prison system, people getting locked up for small amounts of weed or whatever it maybe, I do not think, the authority that we have, we should keep supporting

a system such as this. Will there be a motion for Agenda Item #5 or to discuss Agenda Item #5?

Commissioner Shephard moved to discuss this item; seconded by Commissioner Owens.

Commissioner Shephard stated in the past with the Penal System Workers coming to Cordele, it was very little work done and half of the time they did not show up to work; with COVID 19, I think they stopped completely. Commissioner Shephard stated he would like for the City of Cordele to hire two or three people to do what they were doing, opposition to getting Wilcox County Penal System to provide labor services.

Commissioner Owens stated there were some concerns with illegal things that were going on with the prisoners when they were coming.

Commission Vice Chair Reeves stated he has the same concern as Commissioner Owens, illegal things going on with the prisoners when they were coming and a lot of the prisoners are not eligible for prison detail.

Commissioner Rainey stated he does not want the City to get totally dependent on the prisoners, he would prefer to keep the City contractors, in addition to the prisoners.

Commission Chair Deriso stated he thinks the City should not use and prison laborers at all, the City should not entertain using the prisoners, this is the reason I requested it to be on the Agenda.

Commissioner Owens moved to discontinue using prison laborers period; seconded by Commissioner Shephard; the motion was approved by the Commission.

Shephard

6. Discussion of a Water Bill Assistance Program – Chairman Deriso

Background: Commission Chair Deriso stated he believes the City has more money than the majority of citizens and the City can do somethings from a City perspective, i.e., taking money from his monthly payment to start a Water Bill Assistance Fund or anyway it can be done to assist people who are struggling to pay their water bills. He suggested, putting something in writing, in which, they can get the assistance once a year, not the same persons over and over.

Commissioner Shephard stated, there is a West Central GA Community Action Council and she serves as a City Representative; there is assistance through West Central for water bills. She said, it is approximately \$300 a year, according to a person's income, a lot of citizens have not utilized this resource. It is on the application when they apply for assistance or they can call West Central GA at (478) 472-3607.

Commission Chair Deriso suggested putting this information on the monthly water bills.

Commission Vice Chair Reeves suggested offering the customers another extension, which will make three extension per year on their water bills and also to offer forgiveness for outstanding water bills that have not been paid in a certain number of years.

Commission Vice Chair Reeves moved to give City of Cordele customers another extension on their water bill, which will make three extensions per year, starting January 1, 2023; seconded by Commissioner Shephard; the motion was approved by the Commission

7. Discussion of Creating a Study Committee to Improve Community Safety and Reduce Youth Involved Crimes – Chairman Deriso

Commissioner Owens moved to discuss this item; seconded by Commission Vice Chair Reeves.

Background: Commission Chair Deriso stated the City Commission need to get some people together that have experience in looking at the issues, (Social Workers, Police, Courts) to look at ways to improve community safety, but also in doing that reduce youth involved crimes. This

group will look at Cordele specifically, to put together things, come back and report to the Commission with some recommended solutions.

Commissioner Owens moved to create the Study Committee; seconded by Commissioner Shephard; the motion was approved by the Commission,

8. Consider and Approve the Revocation of D&R Auto Repair Business License and to Deny D&R Auto Repair a Business License for the Year 2023.

Background: City Manager Angela Redding stated the City Attorney Tommy Coleman requested for this item to be table until the next Meeting, to allow the City Attorney to look into the State of Georgia Occupational Tax Law regarding revocation of an Occupational Tax License and Denial. Commissioner Shephard moved to table this item until the next meeting, which is January 23, 2023; seconded by Commissioner Rainey; motion was approved by the Commission.

9. Discussion to Change the Titles of the Governing Body from Chairman to Mayor and from City Commissioners to City Councilmembers – **Vice-Chairman Royce Reeves, Sr.**

Background: Commission Vice Chair Reeves stated he wants to keep the government structure the way that it is, this is only to change the name to Mayor and Council.

Commissioner Shephard moved to discuss this item; seconded by Commission Vice Chair Reeves.

Commission Vice Chair Reeves stated, not changing the government structure, to keep the structure the same.

Commissioner Rainey stated a Federal Lawsuit gave the City of Cordele, the structure that we currently have, I think our Attorney needs to look into the ruling to see if we can do that or if that is a step we have to take to the General Assembly.

Commission Chair Deriso stated he has two issues; (1) The Commission cannot do this on our own because the City Charter says Chairman and Commission; this should be done by a Resolution because the Commission is asking for a name change; (2) Commission Chair Deriso stated he believes the people are asking for a strong Mayor type government; he thinks the people wants somebody who will direct Department Heads and we will have the authority to make those decisions, put on the ballot to see what the people wants.

Commission Vice Chair Reeves stated he would like to table this until the City Attorney can let the Commission, how many Cities in the State of Georgia, have a strong Major type government.

Amend Agenda: Commission Vice Chair Reeves moved to Amend the Agenda to extend the Contract of the City Manager and to extend the Contract of the City Attorney.

City Attorney Tommy Coleman states he does not have a Contract.

Commission Chair Deriso stated he thinks the Commission have to wait until the first of the year to renew the City Manager's Contract at the Organizational Meeting.

10. **CITY MANAGER'S REPORT:** City Manager Angela Redding Reported.

Property Taxes

Property tax bills will be mailed in the next two weeks.

Business License Renewals

Business license renewals have been mailed and we are receiving payments for renewals.

Alcohol License Renewals

The application to renew an alcohol license is due by 5 PM on Wednesday, December 14, 2022 to be placed on the December 20th agenda for approval. All alcohol licenses expire on December 31, 2022.

Planning Commission

The Planning Commission will hold a Public Hearing on December 15, 2022 to amend the Zoning from Office/Institutional to Highway Commercial for property on East 16th Avenue and December 22, 2022 to amend the zoning from Office/Institutional to Highway Commercial on East 16th Avenue from 5th Street to Fleming and to receive comments on the Loft Ordinance for the Central Business District, respectively.

Approval of 2023 Holiday Schedule. (Schedule is attached).

Commission Vice Chair moved to approve the 2023 Holiday Schedule; seconded by Commissioner Owens; 2023 Holiday Schedule is approved by the Commission.

Approval of request to Donate Labor and Equipment from Crisp County Power Commission – Standard Field (Attached):

Commissioner Owens moved to send the letter requesting the Crisp County Power To donate labor and equipment; seconded by Commission Vice Chair Reeves; the motion was approved by the Commission.

Christmas Holidays

The City of Cordele will be closed Friday, December 22, 2022 and Monday, December 26, 2022 For Christmas Holidays.

- 11. CITY ATTORNEY’S REPORT:** City Attorney Tommy Coleman requested to go into Executive Assistant for privacy consideration and personnel.
Motion: Commission Vice Chair Reeves moved to go into Executive Session at 8:35 p.m. for privacy consideration and personnel; seconded by Commissioner Shephard; the motion was approved by the Commission.
- 12. REGULAR MEETING RECONVENED:** Commissioner Owens moved to reconvene the Meeting at 9:34 p.m., seconded by Commission Vice Chair Reeves; the motion was approved by the Commission.
- 13. ADJOURNMENT:** Commissioner Owens moved to adjourn the Meeting at 9:35 p.m.; seconded by Commission Vice Chair Reeves; the motion was approved by the Commission.