

**MINUTES  
CITY COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING  
February 20, 2024**

The Regular Meeting of the Cordele City Commission was held on February 20<sup>th</sup>, 9:00 AM, Cordele City Hall Courtroom, 501 North 7<sup>th</sup> Street, Cordele, Georgia with the following present:

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

**Staff present:** Maurice Hill – Community Advancement Director, Rusty Bridgers – Finance Director, Fire Chief Todd Alligood, Irene Cantrell – HUA Director, David Wade – Human Resources Director, Jackie Walker – Chief Municipal Court Clerk, Police Chief Jalon Heard, Steve Fulford – Asst. City Manager/Public Works Director, Rick Smarr – Social Media Marketing Manager, Debbie Wright – UC&T Director.

**Media Present:** Cordele Dispatch – Sarah Brown.

**Call to Order:** Commission Chair Joshua Deriso called the Regular Meeting to order at 9:00 AM.

**Invocation:** There was a moment of silent prayer.

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

**Roll Call:** A quorum was established.

Attendee's Name	Title	Absent	Present
Joshua Deriso	Commission Chairman		✓
Royce Reeves, Sr.	Commission Vice Chairman Ward 2		✓
Vesta Beal-Shephard	Commissioner Ward 1		✓
Isaac Owens	Commissioner Ward 3		✓
Wesley Rainey	Commissioner Ward 4		✓

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA** – February 20 2024: Commissioner Shephard moved to approve the Agenda for February 20, 2024; seconded by Commissioner Owens; the Agenda was approved by the Commission.

**APPROVAL OF REGULAR MEETING MINUTES** – February 6, 2024: The Minutes for February 6, 2024 was not available.

**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 HEAD GOALS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS:**

- 1. Community Advancement Manager – Maurice Hill Reported.**

**GOAL #1:** Met with the various departments/homeowners/landlords to understand their roles and identify resources.

### **ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

In the past two weeks, I met with the Housing and Urban Development Director re: CHIP, Code Enforcement re: Options for homeowners facing code violations, received lists of demolition properties to assess, conducted site visits with current homeowners and landlords with multiple properties to discuss housing options, repair/renovation, new construction ideas.

Per the City Manager, I am organizing a Housing Summit for April 20<sup>th</sup> and identifying programs like: Georgia Dream, Teacher Next Door, USDA, Investor Loan Entities, etc. to provide funding to realize these objectives.

**GOAL #2:** Meet with participants and organizations to discuss efficient measures and best practices for the Land Bank

### **ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

Attended monthly Zoom call with Georgia Association of Land Bank Authorities, added Cordele to 31-member, list of Georgia Land Banks, spoke with Macon, Atlanta and Savannah Chapters.

Scheduled a meeting with the County Manager Clark Harrell, also talked with City Commissioner Rainey about the Land Bank and some processes going forward.

**GOAL #3:** To Participate in the Comprehensive Plan

I plan to attend the Meeting on February 22, 2024.

**GOAL #4:** Engagement with the Downtown Development Authority

I met with Monica of the DDA, and we discussed the SAM Shortline, Monthly and Annual Events scheduled for 2024, current and past property projects in the Downtown Corridor, Property owned by DDA and possible strategies for development.

We discussed DDA Board participation and work on the goals for the Downtown Corridor, and how to attract Boutique and Large Sector businesses to the city.

Additional Business and Economic Development projects in the city would attract residents of nearby towns and cities like: Arabi, Vienna, Cobb, Warwick and others to patronize businesses and seek employment opportunities in Cordele.

**GOAL #5:** Engagement with the School System and other Community based organizations to bring STEM Activities

I met with the Gateway Center and agreed to participate in learning events with students at the center with a concentration on interactive STEM related activities.

While attending the Pre-K Transportation Day Event, I met the Administrators where we discussed STEM programming, and I was invited to read to the students for Dr. Suess Week.

Attending the Propel Meeting at the Middel School on 2/15/24 at noon to get more information on the initiative.

**GOAL #6:** Meeting with Peanut Gin owner on Joe Wright Drive for Community Code Related Initiatives.

I have a meeting scheduled for Tuesday 2/20/24 to meet with the owner of the Peanut Mill to discuss various options and resources available to assist him in the repairs or renovation to the facility.

After Mr. Hill presented his report, Chairman Deriso asked if there were any questions from the Commission.

Commissioner Owens asked what are the plans for the Summit, what are the particulars? meeting with community members?

Mr. Hill stated the goal is to provide resources, like DCA that does the Georgia Dream, it is also a program called, the Teacher Next Door, having people like that available to talk to participants that are interested in buying homes, building homes or renovating homes. USDA has a program for Seniors and Mr. Hill stated he is trying to engage them, this is actually a Grant Program, if you are over 65 years old, they will give the Seniors a Grant.

## **2. Finance Department: Rusty Bridgers Reported.**

### **Goals and Accomplishments:**

- a. Working on the Utility Billing Clerk and Accounting Clerk position to get the job description in order and filled soon.
- b. Property taxes reflected almost a \$1,000,000 in January.

## **3. Fire Department Report: Fire Chief Todd Bullington Reported.**

### **Goals**

- a. February was chosen to complete CPR and AED recertification for all firefighters.
- b. Needs assessment for 2025 budget.
- c. Apply for Fireworks Grant through GFSTC for SCBA's. This Grant is up to \$25,000 and we will sue to start updating our SCBS's.
- d. Provide best possible service to the citizens and visitors of Cordele.

### **Accomplishments**

- a. Attended first annual Fire Service Summit at GPSTC.
- b. Attending Leadership Crisp through May 2024.
- c. Attended the Fire Service Legislative Day and appreciation dinner at the State Capitol.

- d. Attended Crisp County Disaster Recovery Planning session at EOC.
- e. Lt. Cook and Engine 2 attended the TIM (Traffic Incident Management) class at the EOC and presented our After-Action Report for the incident involving Engine 2 on I-75.
- f. The kitchen at Station 2 has been updated. Firefighters rehabbed and painted the cabinets, backsplash, and walls.

**4. Housing and Urban Development – Irene Cantrell Reported.**

**Accomplishment:**

- a. The Chip 2024 documents have been submitted to DCA Atlanta Office for review and consideration. We are looking forward to the approval of our CHIP 2024 Application.

**Goal:**

- a. To improve training and attendance for the following boards:
- b. Cordele Board of Zoning and Appeals
- c. Cordele Planning and Zoning Commission
- d. Cordele Historic Preservation Commission

**5. Human Resources – David Wade Reported.**

The goal to the Human Resource Department is to effectively manage the life cycle of all employees while providing fair and equitable employment opportunities.

**Goals for 2024**

**Improve Recruitment and Retention** – Transition from a recruitment strategy, which is focused on current or upcoming hiring needs, to a marketing strategy with aims to promote the City as an appealing employer to facilitate future hiring.

- a. Completed parts I and II of the Workforce Needs Assessment. The final report was received February 12, 2024. Phase 2, which focuses on branding and recruitment was started on February 02, 2024 with Cheryl Musial of Mopdog.
- b. Participated in mock interview at Crisp County High School for CTAE students enrolled in Business and Technology, Teaching as a Profession, Early Childhood Education and Nutrition and Food Sciences pathways.
- c. Two key positions, Community Advancement Manager and Social Media and Marketing Manager, positions were filled. Currently accepting in-house applications for Fire Training Officer and Police Patrol Division Commander.

**Enhance Performance Management** – Implement a more effective performance appraisal system that encourages an increase in employee performance.

- a. Job descriptions for all positions have been re-written to include job summary, primary duties, job knowledge and guidelines.

Chairman Deriso asked if evaluations were back on schedule.

Mr. Wade responded, “yes”, we are in the process of revamping that, as well, with the job classification study.

Chairman Deriso asked when was the last evaluations done.

Mr. Wade responded, about a year, the annual evaluations.

**6. Municipal Court: Jackie Walker Reported.**

**GOALS FOR CORDELE MUNICIPAL COURT**

- a. Report accurate and complete information for the court and public.
- b. Complete court docket for the judge in a timely manner.
- c. Update the seating in the Courtroom. Ms. Walker stated that the chairs needed to be replaced in the courtroom.

**ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR CORDELE MUNICIPAL COURT**

- a. All dockets and court dispositions were turned into the state on time.

**7. Codes/Police Department – Police Chief Jalon Heard Reported.**

**Code Compliance Division  
Goals & Accomplishments**

- a. The Department will engage the community with knowledge and enforcement to increase code compliance in all wards. This will provide more attractive and presentable neighborhoods for the current citizens, future citizens, workers and travelers. The ultimate plan is to attract new businesses, industry and potential residents to the city.
- b. The Department plans to continue training and certification for all officers through the ICC and the Georgia Association of Code Enforcement. Certification in Codes and multiple inspection categories is the goal.
- c. Address blighted commercial and residential properties through education, code enforcement, private funding, DCA grants and working relationships with reliable, certified contractors.
- d. The Department will utilize social media to announce code issues and problems. To educate our citizens on our local city ordinances and state laws thru social media and local news outlets.

**Note:** Codes was transferred to the department in October of last year, during that time they have worked hard to streamline some of the processes, educate the public and enforce some of the Code related issues throughout the City.

Commission Vic Chair Reeves stated he has seen improvement in Code Enforcement.

**The Cordele Police Departments  
Goals & Accomplishments**

- a. We will continue to provide professional law enforcement service through our hiring process, training, and self-accountability. (Corporals and Sergeants will be given the

opportunity to be involved in the interview portion of the hiring process and provide feedback on the candidates.)

- b. Develop strategies to attract more experienced officers. (A heavier, updated social media presence to include flyers and videos.)
- c. We will continue to connect with the community through community related events, increasing public contacts and through partnering with local groups and businesses. (Woodvale Valentine's Day Bingo, February 14<sup>th</sup>, Coffee with a Cop, February 22nd, 8am-9am. Continued public contacts.)
- d. We will continue to make advancements towards becoming state certified. (Fill key open positions and promote a certification Lt.)
- e. Chief Heard mentioned new in car cameras were being installed.

**8. Public Works – Steve Fulford Reported.**

- a. Continue to make progress in cleaning up the City's alleys. Employees are working overtime to clean up the alleys.
- b. GDOT has a new LMIG Program, they will double up this year without the match.
- c. We have had several preconstruction conferences and will have some in the future.

Commissioner Rainey asked if the City is the only one that is cleaning the City and not Express Disposal.

City Manager Angela stated, it is just City crews right now. The City did receive a proposal from Express Disposal, this will involve some adjustment, and adjustment from the last Invoice from Waste Management. Once we get that amount, we will start that process. They bring in one time crews to clean up the alleys and everything.

**9. Social Media/Marketing Report: Rick Smarr Reported.**

**GOAL #3: ASSIST IN THE REBUILDING OF THE CITY OF CORDELE WEBSITE**

As I mentioned at the last commission meeting, we had a good introductory call with Kian with Granicus. Our long-range goal is to have the website up and running by December. Currently, we are in the discovery phase of the project. The local information derived from the discovery phase gives Granicus direction on the framework of the site as suggested by the website committee and city leadership.

**GOAL #4: ASSIST IN THE PRODUCTION OF THE COMMUNITY VIDEO PROGRAM THROUGH CGI DIGITAL**

So far, we have had two calls with representatives from CGI Digital as we are getting this project underway, with another call scheduled soon with our producer. February 5<sup>th</sup> was our introductory call with Andrea Tempio, and February 8<sup>th</sup> was a call with Casey Frangipane, our project manager. At the last commission meeting, Chairman Deriso asked about the different

categories we may choose from...those include but are not limited too – Education, Healthcare, Real Estate/Relocation, Quality of Life, Economic Development, Tourism (regional or local). Industry, Parks & Recreation, Things to Do, Arts & Entertainment, Healthy Living, Agriculture, Shopping & Dining, Professional Services, Manufacturing, Eco-Tourism, Technology, Testimonials, Chamber of Commerce Benefits, Member Benefits, Events, Networking, Member Testimonials, Resources, and Tourism.

**10. UC&T – Debbie Wright Reported.**

- a. We have some valves to change out in 3 clarifiers. But with the 3” of rain we got first of this week has halted that work. We had to put everything in service and are running over 6.0 MGD.
- b. Fire hydrant flushing will start in a couple of weeks.

**AGENDA ITEMS**

1. Consider and Approve the Request for Items Listed from the Department of Public Works to be Declared Surplus and to Allow the City of Cordele to Dispose of the Surplus Items via GovDeals.com  
Commission Vice Chair Reeves moved to approve the Request; seconded by Commissioner Shephard.  
Commissioner Shephard voted aye; Commissioner Owens voted aye; Commission Vice Chair Reeves move aye; Commissioner Rainey voted aye.  
The Request for Items Listed from the Department of Public Works to be Declared Surplus and to Allow the City of Cordele to Dispose of the Surplus Items Via GovDeals.com was approved by the Commission.
2. Consider and Approve the National Museum of the United States Air Force Renewal Package for the Titan I Missile.

**Background Information:**

The city has received the 2024-2029 loan renewal package for the Titan I Missile. The loan renewal period has been extended to a five-year cycle, renewing the 4<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> year of each decade. There will be no requirement for a signed loan agreement on the four non-cycle years, 2025 - 2028.

Commission Vice Chair Reeves moved to approve the Renewal Package for the Titan I Missile; seconded by Commissioner Owens.

Commissioner Rainey voted aye; Commission Vice Chair Reeves voted aye; Commissioner Owens voted aye; Commissioner Shephard voted aye.

The National Museum of the United States Air Force Renewal Package for the Titan I Missile was approved by the Commission.

3. **CITY MANAGER’S REPORT:** City Manager Angela Redding Reported.  
**Deadline For Occupation Tax & Property Taxes**

**Occupation Tax (Business License) Renewal**

Occupational license (Business license) expires at the end of the year and become delinquent, if not paid by April 1<sup>st</sup>. A penalty is imposed for occupation licenses not renewed prior to April 1<sup>st</sup>. The penalty is ten (10) percent of the regulatory and administration fee and occupational tax determined to be due. The delinquency will accrue interest at the rate of one (1) percent for each month or partial month of such delinquency.

There is no grace period after April 1<sup>st</sup>. Businesses operating without an occupation license will receive a summons to appear in Municipal Court for nonpayment.

**Property Taxes**

The deadline for property taxes was February 12<sup>th</sup>.

**Upcoming Funding Opportunities**

**Georgia Opioid Settlement**

The State of Georgia entered into a Settlement Agreement with manufacturers and distributors of opioids that will bring payments of \$638 million to Georgia over 18 years.

- State's share is 75% - \$479 million
- 40% allocated to Local Government (Cities, Counties, Sheriffs, Hospitals/Hospital Authorities, Community Service Boards, and one School District) - \$191.6 million.

The MOU between the State of Georgia and Participating Local Government requires the creation of Regional Advisory Councils (RAC). These members must be approved by the local government. Local governments will vote on appointees to the Georgia Opioid Settlement Advisory Commission and Regional Advisory Council. The local government will assign a voting delegate who must attend a Regional Advisory meeting to vote. There are requirements for members of the Regional Advisory Council.

The RAC's will help to direct regional funding allocations. Funding will be available through the Grant portal in late Spring or early Summer.

**LMIG Funding**

Governor Kemp is setting aside additional funding for LMIG.

- No match
- Current funding level

**Presidential Preference Primary Election Information**

Advanced In Person Voting

Monday, February 19, 2024 – Friday, March 8, 2024

8:00 AM – 6:00 PM

Elections Office -210 S 7<sup>th</sup> Street, Room 103

Saturday Voting

February 24, 2024

March 2, 2024

9:00 AM – 5:00 PM



Last Day to Submit an Application for an Absentee Ballot by Mail  
March 1, 2024

Election Day  
March 12, 2024  
7:00 AM – 7:00 PM  
Vote in your assigned precincts.

For additional information, please contact the Elections Office at (229) 276-2611.

Goal 1 – Enhancing Employee Experience

✓Employee Interest Groups

- Reading Club Group
- Walking Group
- Arts and Crafts Group
- Outdoor Adventure Group – David Wade – Human Resources Director will lead this group

Goal 2 – Revenue Recovery

✓Increased collection of delinquent property taxes – as you can see from the Finance Director’s Report \$86,336.86 was collected in December and \$27,716.79 was collected in January.

Goal 4 – Neighborhood Sustainability

✓Housing Forum– April 20, 2024, this will kick start Georgia Cities Week

City Manager Angela Redding congratulated Commissioner Owens on receiving a Certificate of Recognition from GMA for completing forty-two (42) Training Hours, his certificate was presented at the Cities United Summit in January.

4. **CITY ATTORNEY’S REPORT:** No Report.
5. **EXECUTIVE SESSION:** (For Personnel, Litigation, Real Estate): No Executive Session.
6. **ADJOURNMENT:** Commissioner Shephard moved to adjourn the Meeting at 9:44 AM; seconded by Commissioner Owens; the motion was approved by the Commission.