

**MINUTES**  
**CITY COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING**  
**July 18, 2023**

The City of Cordele Commission held a Regular Meeting on July 18, 2023 at 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 |
| Wesley Rainey, Commissioner     | Vesta Beal Shephard, Commissioner        |
| Isaac Owens – Commissioner      | Angela Redding – City Manager            |
| Tommy Coleman – City Attorney   | Janice Mumphery – Recording Secretary    |

**Staff present:** Rusty Bridgers – Finance Director, Fire Chief Alligood, Lin Mercer – Codes Department, David Wade – Human Resource Director, Police Chief Jalon Heard, Steve Fulford – Asst. City Manager/Public Works Director, Debbie Wright – UC&T Director.

**Staff absent:** Jack Wood, Sr., Irene Cantrell.

**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** – July 18, 2023: Commissioner Rainey moved to approve the Agenda for July 18, 2023; seconded by Commissioner Owens; the minutes were approved by the Commission.

**APPROVAL OF REGULAR MEETING MINUTES** – July 5, 2023: Commissioner Rainey moved to approve the Minutes for July 5, 2023; seconded by Commissioner Shephard; the minutes were approved by the Commission.

**PRESENTATION:** Mauldin & Jenkins, CPAs and Advisors, Justin Elliott, CPA: FY 2022 Audit. Mr. Elliott gave a presentation on the FY 2022 Audit from the Auditor's Discussion & Analysis (A. D. & A.). He stated the City had a clean opinion and an unmodified opinion; this is the highest level of insurance that can be given for an external audit.

**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 GOALS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS:**

**1. FINANCE DEPARTMENT: Rusty Bridgers Reported.**

**Goals:**

- a. Improve Records – storage, electronic and organization.

**Achievements:**

- a. Workers Compensation Audit 06.15.2023
- b. FY 2022 Audit
- c. Cross training – utility billing, sanitation, court payments, customer service is the area in process.
- d. Three Employees are enrolled in “Introductory Governmental Accounting 1” with the Carl Vinson Institute of Government.
- e. FY 2024 Budget
- f. Reconciled garbage cart count with Waste Management

**2. FIRE DEPARTMENT REPORT: Fire Chief Todd Alligood Reported.**

**Goals**

- a. Provide best possible service to our citizens and visitors to Cordele.
- b. Continue to encourage and expand training for firefighters.
- c. Continue to evaluate and upgrade/update facilities and equipment.
- d. Planning for the Summer Fest in partnership with Cordele PD (Community Relations).

**Accomplishments:**

- a. Expanded EMS and MVA service is going well, call volume is up.
- b. Firefighter James started 7/11/23, puts Cordele Fire at full staff.
- c. Joint training with CCFD, CCSO, CCEMS, CFD, and CPD starting 7/18/23
- d. Completed stripping and waxing floors at Station 1 and Station 2.
- e. Holes in synthetic stucco at Station 1 have been repaired.
- f. Apparatus floors at Station 1 have been cleaned in preparation for new paint and we have begun painting.
- g. Looking forward to the delivery of the new ladder truck, should be here 8/4/23.

**3. HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT – City Manager Angela Redding Reported.**

**Goal: CDBG 2019/2020:** - We would like to complete the ground installation of the sewer pumps and sewer line improvements/activities within the McLeod Subdivision for the forty-eight (48) households.

**Accomplishments:**

As of March 2023, the Project Engineers estimated the percentage of contract completion is at about 85%. The Contractor, RPI Underground, Inc. has connected homes to the city’s sewer system and has properly disconnected eighteen (18) septic tanks.

**Goal: Official City Maps Updates:**

To be prepared for the upcoming U.S. Census Bureau Boundary and Annexation Survey updates.

**Accomplishments:**

All of the latest Annexations and Boundary Map changes were reported by the City and River Valley Regional Commission to the U.S. Census bureau as requested in May 2023. To date this goal has been accomplished.

**4. CODES REPORT: Lin Mercer Reported.**

There are three (3) houses in the 800 Block of East 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue that are being rehabilitated.

**Houses Pending Demolition By Owners:**

306 West 23<sup>rd</sup> Avenue Malik Rasheed (vacant and dilapidated) Demolition Permit Issued  
712 South 13<sup>th</sup> Street Tom Waters (vacant and dilapidated) Demolition Permit Issued  
714 South 13<sup>th</sup> Street Tom Waters (vacant and dilapidated) Demolition Permit Issued  
716 South 13<sup>th</sup> Street Tom Waters (vacant and dilapidated) Demolition Permit Issued  
603 North 12<sup>th</sup> Street Bonnie Harper (burned) Demolition Permit Issued

**Pecan Gin (11<sup>th</sup> Street and 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue) Progress**

Ownership of the property has been resolved and there is a little progress. The new owner is Richard Kosher and he wants to salvage the warehouse. He has a plan and he is working on the inside of the property.

**5. PERSONNEL DEPARTMENT: David Wade Reported.**

**Goal 1: Recruitment**

Recruited several employees in various positions as Patrolperson, Firefighter, Equipment Operator and Plant Operator Trainee.

**Goal 2: Improve the Employee Experience**

Received RFPs from various vendors regarding a classification and compensation study. Conducted defensive driving classes spanning a three-day period with fifty-four (54) employees attending.

**Work Force Need Assessment**

In the process of working with GMA for a Work Force Needs Assessment. This will be a two-prong program, including the Needs Assessment it will also include a Recruitment Strategy Initiative, this is in the early stages.

**Goal 3: Succession Planning**

Promoted an Equipment Operator to Foreman in the Water & Sewer Department.  
Promoted a Corporal to Sergeant and a Firefighter to Corporal in the Fire Department.  
Promoted an Animal Control Officer to Animal Shelter Manager in the Police Department.

**Goal 4: Leveraging H.R. Technology**

Began Insurance Compliance Reviews as part of the Paychex Benefit Administration Module. Attended the GLGPA Spring Conference which included a class on H.R. Records Management and Technology.

**6. MUNICIPAL COURT: No Report.**

**7. POLICE DEPARTMENT – Police Chief Jalon Heard Reported.**

**Goals**

Our department has plans to increase the morale and manpower in the department. This is an ongoing goal.

Positions for Patrol Officers are currently all filled, but still looking for Sergeants and Corporals.

We will continue community policing through events and public contacts.

We are focusing on increasing the quality of training for our officers, by offering more in-house training class which can be specific to the city's needs.

Our department will be starting the process of becoming State Certified.

**Accomplishments**

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Cordele Summerfest will be on Saturday, August 26<sup>th</sup>, from 10 AM – 2 PM. We will have games, prizes, music and loads of fun. Last year's Summerfest was well received, and we have planned for this year to be bigger and better than last year. Come join us!

Increasing the quality of the Police Department Training: The manpower issues have been addressed and training has started back. Two of the Police Department Command Staff members completed resiliency training last week.

**8. PUBLIC WORKS – Steve Fulford Reported.**

Affected Public, Non-Customer Public Awareness Mail-outs

This project is 100% complete.

Cathodic Protection Survey (New Goal)

To complete the cathodic protection survey within the next quarter.

Complete the Annual Report (AR) Stormwater Management Program.

No update at this time.

Prepare and submit Cordele's next five-year SWMP.

GAEPD SWMP Compliance Inspection scheduled for 7/26/23.

**9. UT&C – Debbie Wright Reported.**

Water restrictions are still in place since 2011. You cannot irrigate/water your property with City water from 10 am till 4 pm. This applies to residential and commercial property. If you have an automatic irrigation system, make sure your timer is set properly.

Our 11<sup>th</sup> sample at the WWTP for Heptachlor and Cyanide came back as Not Detected.

We had repairs done to the Transfer Pumps (these pump water to the new pond). We also had some electrical issues repaired at the Pump House.

The WET Test (Whole Effluent Toxicity) done at the WWTP passed. This is required annually by our NPDES Permit. This test measures the survival and reproduction rates of 2 different species. One is an invertebrate called Ceriodaphnia Dubai and a vertebrate called Pimephales promelas.

We will be sending out letters to 30 customers for Lead and Copper sampling next week. This has been required every 3 years since 1992. We have never been in violation but still have to keep sampling. This may change with the Lead Service Line Rules after 2024.

### **AGENDA ITEMS**

1. Consider and Approve an Event Permit and to use Williams Field: Name of Event – Trunk or Treat, Organizer Names, ABC Wrecker and Recovery, Cordele GA and South GA Spill Response, Warwick, GA. Event will be October 28, 2023, 12 PM – 6 PM, Williams Field, East 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue. The Event Permit was approved by Police Chief Jalon Heard on July 14, 2023. Commission Vice Chair Reeves moved to approve the Event Permit and use of Williams Field; seconded by Commissioner Shephard. Commissioner Shephard voted aye; Commissioner Owens voted aye; Commission Vice Chair Reeves voted aye; Commissioner Rainey voted aye. The motion was approved by the Commission.
2. Consider and Approve the Request for Items Listed from the Fire Department to be Declared Surplus and to Allow the City of Cordele to Dispose of the Surplus Items via GovDeals.com. Commissioner Shephard moved to approve the request for items to be declared surplus and to dispose of on GovDeals.com; seconded by Commission Vice Chair Reeves. Commissioner Rainey voted aye; Commission Vice Chair Reeves voted aye; Commissioner Owens voted aye; Commissioner Shephard vote aye. The motion was approved by the Commission.
3. Consider and Approve the First Reading of An Ordinance Establishing an Entertainment District in the City of Cordele; Providing for Specialty Cups for the Consumption of Alcoholic Beverages in the Entertainment District; Regulating the Consumption of Alcohol off Premises in the Entertainment District; Repealing all Ordinances in Conflict Herewith; and for Other Purposes. Commissioner Owens inquired about the Specialty Cup for consumption of alcoholic beverages, how will this be handled?  
City Manager Angela Redding replied; it will be tied to an event; the cup will only be available at an approved event in the Downtown District. For example, Event One, there will be a date on the cup to make us aware the cup is tied to this event and not a previous event. Mainstreet will be the responsible party for distributing the cups, the cups will only come from Mainstreet. Commission Vice Chair Reeves moved to approve the First Reading of an Ordinance; seconded by Commissioner Shephard. Commissioner Owens voted aye; Commissioner Shephard vote aye; Commission Vice Chair Reeves vote aye; Commissioner Rainey voted aye. The motion was approved by the Commission.
4. Consider and Approve Award of the Classification and Compensation Study to Condrey & Associates, Inc.

Commission Vice Chair Reeves moved to approve Award of the Classification and Compensation Study to Condrey & Associates; seconded by Commissioner Shephard. Commissioner Rainey voted aye; Commission Vice Chair Reeves vote aye; Commissioner Owens voted aye; Commissioner Shephard voted aye. The motion was approved by the Commission.

5. Consider and Approve Bank Signatories for 2023 TSPLOST Account with Ameris Bank. Commission Vice Chair Reeves moved to approve the bank signatories for 2023 TSPLOST Account with Ameris Bank; seconded by Commissioner Shephard. Commission Vice Chair Reeves voted aye; Commissioner Rainey voted aye; Commissioner Owens voted aye; Commissioner Shephard voted aye. The motion was approved by the Commission.
6. Consider Overriding Veto of Ordinance Removing All References to Ethics Tribunal and Replacing Them with Hearing Officer and Adoption of Ordinance Removing All References to Ethics Tribunal and Replacing Them with Hearing Officer. Commissioner Shephard moved to consider overriding veto of an Ordinance and adopting an Ordinance; seconded by Commissioner Rainey. Chair Joshua Deriso stated, he vetoed this item because the prior Commission was in error, putting two people on the Ethics Tribunal and as the Charter was written the Chairman gets to place two individuals. At that time, we had two individuals that was not qualified to be on the Ethics Tribunal, once I pointed this out to the Governing Body, the Governing Body decided to switch things and do the Hearing Officers. Upon more research, the City of College Park is going through this now and basically, a Hearing Officer will cost the City more money, a Hearing Officer, is also, an attempt to control the process and in my belief, it is not Democratic. The Tribunal was three citizens that would be appointed, even until their time expires. So, a chairman that is coming in and anyone else coming in does not necessarily get to replace them, unless there is a disqualification or something happens. Because we are a Democratic Society, you had three people making a decision verses one, that will volunteer their time to hearing Ethics Complaints brought to the City. I believe that is more Democratic, I believe we should not spend money on selecting a Hearing Officer, if the person on the Ethics Review have any issues does not make it apolitical, just because we have one person, it absolutely can make it even more political giving the persons background, beliefs or any relationships there of with the person selected or the person under the ethics complaint, those are the reasons, in which, I vetoed the Ordinance because I don't think you should strip power from the Chair, every other Chair in Cordele's history had that authority and you should not move it to a more anti-democratic process to hear ethics complaints brought against public officials of this City. Commissioner Rainey stated that he believes that it is not fair for you to be able to choose people to hear your ethics complaint. We can change this Ordinance again after the fact. There was nothing wrong with the original people, other than, they lived outside the City and after how this Commission body has conducted itself over the last year and a half, you can see the negative return from our finances and everything reflecting upon this Commission. This Commission is too powerful. What we need to do is revised the entire Ethics Ordinance because we have no repercussions on this Commission body for our actions. Whenever we go out, and we talk about other Commissioners, there's no repercussions. Whenever we get out of line or the Chairman sits her and say, out of order, what is the repercussion? There are no repercussions. The

Chairman does not like for people to point at him, there is no repercussions, the only repercussion, we have is from the people, and the people have that repercussion by re-electing us or not. Now, how we conduct ourselves have been horrible and it reflects by businesses not coming here, by people looking at us as a laughing stock, by everybody everywhere we go say, what's going on in Cordele? All this reflects poorly on us as a City. We need to have repercussions against Commissioners that act out of line, every last one of us, whenever we do not conduct ourselves properly. We need to have standards for us when we are elected, we really need some help looking at that, so we have repercussions as a Governing Body.

Chairman Deriso stated he does not have one ethics complaint to be heard by the Ethics Committee. Everything that was said was not the truth, because the ethics complaint I had, has been dropped. To sit there and tell the people it is wrong for the Chairman to select what was written in this Charter to do is an absolute untruth. Anyone can have an ethic complaint filed against them, the City Manager, the City Clerk, the City Attorney, can all have ethic complaints filed against them, it is not just elected officials, it is anybody.

Commission Vice Chair Reeves asked if the ethics complaint filed against him, is still active?

Chairman Deriso stated it is still active.

Commission Vice Chair Reeves stated with his ethics complaint still been active and the Chairman's comments, he is very uncomfortable with the Chairman being able to choose someone to hear his ethics complaints. Commission Vice Chair Reeves stated after his ethics complaints are over, the Board can go back to the old Ordinance.

Commissioner Shephard stated, in reference to the Ethics Tribunal as to getting a nonbiased individual to hear the complaints. Your first appointee had a law suit against the City of Cordele; your second appointee was sworn-in the same night that you appointed him, without a criminal background check. We should do a background check of the people that we put on this Ethics Committee; we had no background information on this person. Only thing I am saying, going forward let us do it properly and in order.

Commission Vice Chair Reeves – aye; Commissioners Rainey and Shephard – aye; Commissioner Owens voted nay. The motion was approved by a 3/1 vote.

7. Consider Overriding Veto of Ordinance Establishing Procedures for the Development of an Agenda and Adoption of Ordinance Establishing Procedures for the Development of an Agenda. Commissioner Vice Chair Reeves moved to consider overriding veto of an Ordinance and adopting an Ordinance; seconded by Commissioner Shephard.

Commissioner Shephard stated she thought earlier this year that the Commission had established their procedures and the Commission should submit their information on a timely manner and that date was the Wednesday or Thursday prior to the Meeting at a certain time, I thought we all had a certain timeframe to get our information in. I thought we should go with the one that is in place and until it is changed again.

Chairman Deriso stated he is confused, what does what she stated have to go with this Ordinance. Chairman Deriso stated just to correct the record, the verbiage is different from what the Commission put in place, this is going a step further.

Commissioner Shephard stated, “the procedures for development of the Agenda”, and the procedure is to present your information to the Executive Secretary or City Manager to be presented to the body on the timeframe for the Meeting. Am I right?

Chairman Deriso stated, yes you are right, but that does not replace that particular verbiage.

Commission Vice Chair Reeves made a motion that the elected officials should have their

information in on the Thursday before the Commission Meeting by 5:00 PM. This is not what this Ordinance is saying, that is still in place.

Chairman Deriso gave some clarity as to what the Ordinance is stating. He stated he vetoed this because the attempt is too silent me and it is just wrong, it is anti-democratic.

Commission Vice Chair Reeves – aye; Commissioners Rainey and Shephard – aye; Commissioner Owens voted nay. The motion was approved by a 3/1 vote.

**8. CITY MANAGER’S REPORT – City Manager Angela Redding Reported.**

**Public Announcement/Notice**

The City of Cordele’s Water Department will be making repairs to a fire hydrant located on 20<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 4<sup>th</sup> Street. The water will be turned off on Wednesday, July 19, 2023, beginning at 9:00 am. Water will remain off until repairs are completed. Water will be off at the following locations:

- 20<sup>th</sup> Avenue from 3rd Street to 5<sup>th</sup> Street
- 4<sup>th</sup> Street from 19<sup>th</sup> Avenue & 21<sup>st</sup> Avenue

Once service is restored, if you experience water discoloration, please allow water to run for 30 minutes. If discoloration persists, please contact the Water Treatment Plant at 229-273-2829.

**Insurance Renewal Proposals**

|                               |              |              |
|-------------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| City of Cordele – Gas Utility | 2022-2023    | 2023-2024    |
| General Liability             | \$16,184.00  | \$7,428.00   |
| \$5 Million Umbrella          | \$ 9,395.00  | \$7,500.00   |
| Total Gas Utility             | \$25,579.00  | \$14,928.00  |
| Total Package (Non-Gas)       | \$291,084.00 | \$343,360.00 |
| Total Insurance Package       | \$316,663.00 | \$358,288.00 |

FYI – Travelers Insurance did not offer renewal for city policies due to claims experience (Litigation).

Coverage for the Natural Gas system is down due to completion of the Griffin Expansion project.

**Motion:** Commission Vice Chair Reeves moved to approve the Insurance Renewal Proposal for General Liability; gas, automobiles and buildings; seconded by Commissioner Rainey.

Commissioner Rainey voted aye; Commission Vice Chair Reeves voted aye; Commissioner Owens vote aye; Commissioner Shephard voted aye. The motion was approved by the Commission.

**New Restaurant**

Jamaican Jerk Restaurant located at 106 16th Avenue East, Suites A & B

**9. CITY ATTORNEY’S REPORT:** City Attorney stated the Peanut Gin on 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 11<sup>th</sup> Street has been summoned to be in Court on June 24, 2023.

**10. EXECUTIVE SESSION:** (For Personnel, Litigation, Real Estate). No Executive Session.

- 11. ADJOURNMENT:** Commissioner Owens moved to adjourn the Meeting at 10:26 AM; seconded by Commissioner Shephard; the motion was approved by the Commission.

APPROVED