

**MINUTES  
CITY COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING  
February 21, 2023**

The City of Cordele Commission held a Regular Meeting on February 21, 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
Vesta Beal-Shepard, Commissioner	Wesley Rainey, Commissioner
Isaac Owens, Commissioner	Tommy Coleman – City Attorney
Janice Mumphery – Recording Secretary	Steve Fulford – Asst. City Manager
Angela Redding, City Manager – Via Telephone	

**Staff present:** Rusty Bridgers – Finance Director, Fire Chief Augusta Telfair, Irene Cantrell – HUA Director, Lin Mercer - Codes Official, David Wade – Human Resources Director, Jackie Walker – Municipal Court Clerk, Police Chief Jalon Heard, Koby Worley – Street Superintendent, Debbie Wright – UC&T Director.

**Staff absent:** Jack Wood, Sr. – Chief Codes Official.

**Media Present:** Ricky Smarr - South GA TV; Chris Lewis – Cordele Dispatch

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

**INVOCATION:** Prayer was rendered by Mr. Don Cole.

**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-Shepard	Commissioner Ward 1		✓
Isaac Owens	Commissioner Ward 3		✓
Wesley Rainey	Commissioner Ward 4		✓

**APPROVAL OF AMENDED AGENDA** – February 21, 2023: Commission Vice Chair Reeves moved to approve the Agenda for February 21, 2023; seconded by Commissioner Shephard; the motion was approved by the Commission.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES** – February 7, 2023: Commission Vice Chair Royce Reeves, Sr. moved to approve the Minutes for February 7, 2023; seconded by Commissioner Rainey; the motion was approved by the Commission.

**PUBLIC HEARING**

**ARTICLE VI. USE PROVISIONS BY DISTRICT:** Section 660.3 Area regulations: Maximum Height: 45 ft. This request is for a variance to accommodate a 100-foot building height. The City Codes' regulations maximum building height is forty-five (45) feet. The building will be used as

a storage warehouse for agricultural commodities for distribution. The site consists of seventy (70) acres and is zoned (HI), Heavy Industrial District. The Crisp County-Cordele Industrial Development Authority is the property owner and applicant.

A presentation was made by Grant Buckley – IDA Executive Director. Mr. Buckley stated this is an Agricultural Related Business, the site is in the city, on the eastside of the Industrial Park (Old Nesbitt Road); it is seventy acres (70) of land that Crisp IDC owns, it is already zoned heavy industrial. This will be a warehouse, which will collect agricultural commodity that is grown in this area. Once enough of this commodity has been collected and purchased, then it will be shipped by train to California. This is a nice bread and butter project, approximately several million dollars, seven to ten employees, the warehouse will be about sixty (60) to seventy (70) thousand square feet. Mr. Buckley stated he is here today because it is over the height that the City requires, restriction for the City is 45 feet, this building will need to go up to approximately 90 feet. Mr. Buckley also stated he conversed with the neighbor, Mr. Sam Crenshaw; and Mr. Buckley said Mr. Crenshaw stated he does not have any problem with the height variance or development of the property. Mr. Buckley stated he did speak with Fire Chief Telfair regarding the height of the building.

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

- a. Mr. Don Cole, 610 Cardinal Avenue, Cordele, GA 31015: Adoption of Agenda and City Charter:

Mr. Cole voiced his concerns and gave suggestions on how to rectify the issues: (1) Approving the Agenda; (2) Change the Charter to provide that the Chair be selected by the Commissioners.

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

**PRESENTATION:** Embrace Civility: Freddie Broome, Director of Equity and Inclusion from the Georgia Municipal Association (GMA).

Mr. Broome stated that Embrace Civility is a new program that GMA offers; this program falls under GMA's overall Embrace Initiative, which is the Equity Inclusion Program, which is offered at GMA. Mr. Broome discussed the nine (9) Pillars of Civility: (1) Be considerate of others' opinions; (2) Get curious instead of furious; (3) A silent voice is not always a weak voice; (4) Be kind; (5) Actively listen; (6) Think about the impact; (7) Ask questions to learn; (8) Remember the acronym QTIP (Quit Taking It Personal); (9) Have empathy! Mr. Broome stated that this is something where the Commission will hold themselves accountable, pledging to be civil to one another, so the work of the Commission will be done for the community. The next step will be to adopt a Resolution, and then send it to GMA, GMA staff will review the Resolution, and once it has been reviewed and approved, City of Cordele will become a City of Civility. This program just came out in February. The City has to renew every two (2) years.

### **DEPARTMENT HEADS GOALS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS:**

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

##### **ACHIEVEMENTS**

- a. Delivery of Report of Local Government Finance to Georgia Community Affairs
- b. Began removing clutter per record retention guidelines - 75 boxes to shred

- c. Began department meetings
- d. Misc. reporting requirements - W2s, 1099s, Revolving Loan Fund

**GOALS**

- a. Cross training
- b. Hire Staff Accountant & Customer Service Team Member
- c. Complete FY2022 Audit
- d. Improve Records - storage, electronic, organization
- e. Replace manual documents with spreadsheets
- f. Improve purchasing process with better accountability

**2. FIRE DEPARTMENT REPORT: Fire Chief Augusta Telfair Reported.**

**GOALS**

- a. To Fill four (4) Firefighters positions.
- b. To purchase new turnout gear.

**ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

- a. Cordele Fire Department filled the captain position on A- Shift. Sgt. Reginald Patrick who has been employed with the Cordele Fire Department for thirty-eight (38) years and thirty-two (32) Years as Sergeant.
- b. Fire Chief Augusta Telfair will retire on March 3, 2023 with 49 (forty-nine) years of service to the City of Cordele.

**3. HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT – Irene Cantrell Reported.**

**GOAL: CDBG 2019/2020 EXISTING GOAL:** - 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 January 5, 2023, the Project Engineers estimated a completion date of April 2023. the Contractor, RPI Underground, Inc. is near completion.

**GOAL: EDRLF COMMITTEE:**

To discuss ways to better serve loan recipients that may need some assistance in properly managing their income, debts and assets prior to obtaining an EDRLF loan.

The EDRLF Committee will conduct a meeting in March or April 2023 to review the loan application process.

**ACCOMPLISHMENT:**

The EDRLF committee will continue to work on these goals.

**GOAL: OFFICIAL CITY MAPS UPDATES:**

To complete the official city maps by including additional annexation and to update the City's Zoning Map with recent zoning amendments.

**ACCOMPLISHMENTS:**

Progress is being made in placing current annexations on the city's official map and in placing zoning amendments on the city's zoning map.

**4. CODES REPORT: Lin Mercer Reported.**  
**Goals Accomplished Year-To-Date**

- a. Twelve structures pending demolition at owner's expense.
- b. Four vacant single-family homes placarded as condemned due to dilapidation and unsanitary conditions.
- c. Working to encourage the re-habilitation of any vacant houses that might be saved before they get too far gone.

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

**Recruiting**

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. Utilize youth programs as Work Based Learning along with career days, job shadowing and summer youth internships. Expand the City's branding.

**Succession Planning**

- a. Promoted a Distribution Mechanic to Assistant Superintendent in the Gas Department
- b. Promoted a Sergeant to Captain in the Fire Department.
- c. Began accepting in-house and external applications for the pending Fire Chief vacancy.

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

**Goals**

- a. We will continue community policing thru events and public contacts.
- b. 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.
- c. Our department will be starting the process of becoming State Certified.

**Accomplishments**

- a. We are in the process of working on the destruction of old evidence. This will make room for evidence in the future. Currently, there are 6 locations where evidence is being stored. Our plan is to consolidate down to three evidence rooms.
- b. Our office staff has been "spring cleaning" the supply rooms, closet areas, and filing cabinets and repainting to police department.
- c. The public is invited to a community forum. Chief Heard along with my command staff will be in an open forum. This will be an opportunity for the community to ask us questions and get answers. February 28, 2023 from 7:00 pm to 8:00 pm at the community clubhouse and will be moderated by Ricky Smarr.
- d. We still have three cadets in mandate. They completed firearms week and have five more weeks left.
- e. Chief Heard has registered and will be attending a national conference for Professionalizing Law Enforcement-Community Engagement Training in May. The purpose of the conference is to equip community engagement officers with best-in-class skills to maximize their impact in community engagement.

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

Complete the Annual Report (AR) Stormwater Management Program. Submitted the Annual Report to GSWCC on 1/24/23.

**9. UC&T – Debbie Wright Reported.**

Rain fall for the last week of January was approximately 4”.

**AGENDA ITEMS**

1. First Reading of an Ordinance to Establish and Designate Food Truck Zones (areas in which Food Trucks are allowed to use throughout the year by completing an annual form). Commission Vice Chair Reeves moved to discuss the First Reading of an Ordinance to Establish and Designate Food Truck Zones; seconded by Commissioner Shephard. Commission Chair Deriso inquired about particular zones where Food Trucks can set up. City Attorney Tommy Coleman stated, “no”, this Ordinance does not give particular zones where Food Trucks can set up. City Attorney Tommy Coleman stated he will add particular zones where Food Trucks can park. Mr. Coleman stated the Commission can adopt the First Reading and amend the Ordinance for the Second Reading. The First Reading of an Ordinance to Establish and Designate Food Truck Zones was approved by the Commission.
2. Consider and Approve New Board Member:  
 Cordele Carnegie Library – 3-year term Mr. Randy West  
  
 Mr. West will replace Mr. William Chandler, Mr. Chandler moved out of town. Recommended by Alicia Parker – Chair of the Cordele Carnegie Library. Commissioner Shephard moved to approve the board appointment; seconded by Commission Vice Chair Reeves; the motion was approved by the Commission.
3. Consider and Approve an Alcohol License Application: L & B Wings and More, 507 South Joe Wright Drive, Bobby Rogers – Owner. Requesting the Commission’s approval for a Beer Only Consumed Off Premises. Application was approved by Police Chief Heard on February 13, 2023. Commission Vice Chair Reeves moved to approve the Alcohol License; seconded by Commissioner Shephard; the motion was approved by the Commission.
4. Consider and Approve an Alcohol License Application. American Legion Post 542, 610 South 10th Street, Charles A. Felton, Commander. Requesting the Commission’s approval For a Beer Only Consumed On Premises. Application was approved By Police Chief Heard on February 17, 2023. Commission Vice Chair Reeves moved to approve the Alcohol License; seconded by Commissioner Shephard; the motion was approved by the Commission.
5. Consider and Approve Alcohol License Renewals. No exceptions noted.

NAME	ADDRESS	TYPE OF LICENSE
Your Supermarket	605 W 16 <sup>th</sup> Ave. Suite C	Beer Only – Consumed Off Premises
Sunoco	1808 E 16 <sup>th</sup> Ave.	Beer Only – Consumed Off Premises

Hurling Hatchets	2010 Central Ave. Suite A	Beer Only – Consumed On Premises
Happy Mart	513 E 5 <sup>th</sup> Ave. Unit A	Beer Only – Consumed Off Premises

Commission Vice Chair Reeves moved to approve the Alcohol License Renewals; seconded by Commissioner Shephard; the motion was approved by the Commission.

6. Consider and Approval of an Event Permit for a Cross Walk Event: Organizer’s Name is Scott Bryant, 420 South 6th Street, Vienna, GA 31092. Date of Event is April 7, 2023 at 10:00 AM. Route of walk: the walk will start at 1205 South 7th Street, down to 16th Avenue, then proceed to Pilot. Police escort is requested from 1205 South 7th Street to Pilot on West 280. Approved by Police Chief Jalon Heard on February 14, 2023. Commissioner Owens moved to approve the Event Permit; seconded by Commission Vice Chair Reeves; the motion was approved by the Commission.
7. Consider and Approve an Event Permit for a Food Truck: Organizer Monica Rentfrow, Downtown Director, 105 East 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue. The Event will be held at the Community Clubhouse on March 17, 2023, 11:00 AM – 6:00 PM. Commissioner Shephard moved to approve the Event Permit for a Food Truck; seconded by Commission Vice Chair Reeves; the motion was approved by the Commission.
8. Consider and Approve the Work Based Learning Educational Training Agreement with Crisp County High School. Commissioner Rainey moved to approve the Work Base Learning Educational Training Agreement; seconded by Commission Vice Chair Reeves; the motion was approved by the Commission.
9. Discussion of amending the city criminal codes to include affray for juvenile fighting and create a pre-trial diversion court (program) for youth fighting. Commissioner Owens moved to approve amend the City Criminal Codes to include affray for juvenile fighting and create a pre-trial diversion court (program) for youth fighting; seconded by Commission Vice Chair Reeves. Commissioner Owens stated, he thinks this is something that the Commission need to look at doing, but having more discussion to implement it, so it can work best for all involved. The motion was approved by the Commission.
10. Discussion of Cordele hotels’ policy denying city’s residents a stay because they live in the city. Commissioner Owens moved to discuss this item; seconded by Commission Vice Chair Reeves. Commissioner Owens stated that there are some extenuating circumstances that are wise, and the Commission needs to be fully considerate of those things before the Commission says, we cannot change a person’s thought process on that, maybe the Commission can work with the Chamber to come up with a listing of businesses that would accommodate residents in need. Commissioner Owens will lead in developing a plan.
11. Discussion of adding mandatory training for City Police (trainings around implicit racial bias, conflict resolution, de-escalation, etc.) to provide better public safety for all our residents.  
**Background:** Commission Chair Deriso stated being the governing body, the Commission can always build an extra layer and ask for more expertise to come in to train and prepare our Police

Officers. As a policy maker, the goal is to make sure the Commission is giving the Police Officers all the skills they need to be able to access those things as much as possible. Commissioner Owens moved to discuss adding mandatory training for the City Police; the motion failed for a lack of a second.

12. Discussion of specifying the years in which City Manager's contract can be extended for three (3) years. (Background: law states that one governing body cannot legally bind another. There is an election at the end of year 2023... there could be new commissioners starting year 2024...we would bind that commission to a City Manager which they could not vote for until 2 years after they serve (half of their terms). There is a call to specify our charter to make clear when we can offer a three (3) year contract. We should establish that a City Manager's contract could only be extended for three (3) years starting the year when no regular city elections will be held within those years. There was no motion made to discuss this item.
13. Discussion Resolution to create Public Safety Improvement Study Commission.  
Commission Chair Deriso stated this item has already been approved and a Resolution should have been created. He asked for Ms. Mumphery, Recording Secretary, to check the minutes of when this item was approved by the Commission.
14. Discussion of a Responsible Banking Ordinance (Background: some cities have starting passing ordinance to require any banks that hold city funds or money to provide reports of which areas and business they approve and deny loans). Commissioner Owens moved to discuss a Responsible Banking Ordinance; the motion failed for a lack of a second.
15. Discussion of Resolution to declare that the City of Cordele is a city of Equity (seeking to provide and assist in developing resources to help all residents succeed). Commissioner Owens moved to discuss a Resolution to declare that the City of Cordele is a City of Equity; the motion failed for a lack of a second.
16. Consider a request for a variance from the Crisp County Cordele Industrial Development Authority to accommodate a 100-foot building to be used as a storage warehouse for Agricultural Commodities for Distribution. Commission Chair Reeves moved to consider a request for a variance from the Crisp County Industrial Development Authority; seconded by Commissioner Owens.  
Consider to approve a request for a variance from the Crisp County Cordele Industrial Development Authority to accommodate a 100-foot building to be used as a storage warehouse for Agricultural Commodities for Distribution. Commissioner Shephard moved to approve a request for a variance from the Crisp County Cordele Industrial Development Authority; seconded by Commissioner Owens; the motion was approved by the Commission.
17. **CITY MANAGER'S REPORT: Steve Fulford Reported.**

**AED Training**

AED training sessions are underway. Fire Department employees Captain Mixon and Lt. Justin Cook are the instructors for AED Training.

**Standard Field**

The electrical work at Standard Field is ninety-five (95) percent complete.

**Janitorial Service**

Hygienic Clean Janitorial Services, LLC began servicing City Hall and the Employee Clinic on Wednesday, February 1, 2023.

**2023 LMIG (Local Maintenance & Improvement Grant)**

The 2023 LMIG Application has been approved by GDOT.

**State of the City Address**

Chairman Deriso will give a State of the City Address on Wednesday, February 22, 2023, at 6:00 PM in the courtroom at City Hall

18. **CITY ATTORNEY’S REPORT:** No Report.
19. **EXECUTIVE SESSION:** (For Personnel, Litigation, Real Estate): No Executive Session Requested.
20. **COMMENTS BY THE GOVERNING BODY:**

Commissioner Shephard stated an invitation was received from “Fine Art” by Henrimae. The reception will be held Thursday, February 23, 2023 from 5:30-7:30 p.m. at Gallery at 41, which is located on the corner of 7<sup>th</sup> Street North and 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Mrs. Henrymae is a native of Cordele and she is a renowned artist.

Commission Chair Joshua Deriso stated he will give the State of the City Address, tomorrow, February 22, 2023 at 6:00 PM in the Courtroom at City Hall.
21. **ADJOURNMENT:** Commission Vice Reeves moved to adjourn the Meeting at 10:42 a.m.; seconded by Commissioner Rainey; the motion was approved by the Commission.