

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

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

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

Staff present: Police Chief Jalon Heard, Lt. Lucius Bagley – Fire Department, Rusty Bridges – Finance Director, Lin Mercer - Codes Official, David Wade – Human Resources Director, Debbie Wright – UT&C Director, Bobby Stennett – Information Technology, Koby Worley – Street Superintendent.

Staff absent: Fire Chief Augusta Telfair, David Wade – Human Resource Director, Jack Wood, Sr. – Chief Codes Official, Steve Fulford – Public Works Director/Asst. City Manager.

Media present: Ricky Smarr - South GA TV; Cordele Dispatch – Kerri Klatt.

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

Invocation: Prayer was rendered by Dr. Ruby Jackson.

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 | | ✓ |
| Vesta Beal-Shephard | Commissioner Ward 1 | | ✓ |
| Isaac Owens | Commissioner Ward 3 | | ✓ |
| Wesley Rainey | Commissioner Ward 4 | | ✓ |

Approval of Agenda – September 20, 2022: Commissioner Rainey moved to approve the Agenda for September 20, 2022; seconded by Commissioner Reeves; the motion was approved by the Commission.

Approval of Meeting Minutes – August 2, 2022: The Minutes of August 2, 2022 were not addressed by Chair Joshua Deriso.

Approval of Meeting Minutes - August 16, 2022: Commissioner Rainey moved to approve the Minutes from August 16, 2022; seconded by Commissioner Shephard; the minutes were approved by the Commission.

Approval of Meeting Minutes – September 6, 2022: The Minutes of September 6, 2022 were not addressed by Chair Joshua Deriso.

Speakers Appearances: Speakers will have five (5) minutes

Mr. Don Cole: Board of Ethics: “Mr. Cole stated, he is on the Board of Ethics, along with Mr. Hunt and there are three (3) matters before the Board that have been put off and they have not held a meeting yet, I see there is something on the Agenda. One of the reasons we have not held a meeting because we knew that was some considerations to make, some changes in some way. In the event, that there are no changes on it, I just come before you to say that the Board is ready to move forward with any claims, ending what ever takes place tonight, if there is no change in the Ordinance that affects the way we are going. These three (3) cases have been around for awhile and it is not fair to plaintiff, it is not fair to the person who is being complain about, to just let it drag on and not do anything about it. So, we are prepared to go ahead and do something, as soon as the Board resolves the question which way, we can go on it. I do not know what the Ordinance change would be on this, I just see you got something on the Agenda.”

Commission Chair Joshua Deriso – “So some of those matters that you are concern about, addresses me as the Chair, Ethics complaint people filed against me, one being Commissioner Shephard. The contingent about that is we had some people on the Ethics Committee that did not qualify, they did not live in the City. The first thing on the Charter says, that they must reside in the City, so that is what held it up. This Commission did not held that up, we had to make a wrong, right. The second thing is you should not hear my case because you wrote an article saying I’m racist and published it. The next thing that is holding it up, you need to recuse yourself because you have already shown bias, as to how you would lean towards me. So, if you are going to address this, the public and challenge this Commission, let’s put all the facts out there.”

Mr. Cole: “Okay, let me clarify one thing, please, I am not complaining about the Commission doing anything, it is actually up to the Board to take action and the Board is the one that is responsible for this and we have not taken any action, so if there is any dereliction of duty, it is the part of the Board. I appreciate your concerns as well, but I will not recuse myself.”

Commission Chair Joshua Deriso: “You will, you can have your seat, Thank you.”

Proclamation: Mrs. Cathy Mygrant Retirement – Did not present; Mrs. Mygrant was not present.

DEPARTMEN HEADS GOALS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

1. Finance Department: City Manager Angela Redding Reported.

- An email was sent to the Department Heads, stating that we will transition and provide training on the time card and clock. But due to a configuration issue with the City’s fire wall, we had to put implementing the time card back until that issue has been resolved.
- City Manager Angela Redding introduced the Finance Director Rusty Bridges. Mrs. Redding stated Mr. Bridges is well qualified for the position, he is a CPA, has experience in utilities, which the City has utilities, as well as fund accounting and he is familiar with the Pay Check System, we recently transitioned to.

2. Fire Department Report: Lt. Lucius Bagley Reported.

Goals

- To fill the four (4) Firefighter positions and promote from within the Department to fill the captain position on Shift A.

Accomplishment

- There are two vacant positions in the Fire Department.

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.

CDBG 2020 Existing Goal is: - Prior to the end of the year 2022 we would like to start and complete the ground installation of the Sewer Pumps and Sewer Line Improvements/Activities within the Mcleod Subdivision for the forty-eight (48) households.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

On August 3, 2022, the Project Engineers conducted the Pre-Construction Conference, and on August 9, 2022, the Project Engineers issued the “Notice to Proceed” to the Contractor, RPI Underground, Inc.

Progress is being made.... Bidding Process completed; contract documents have been reviewed; we are steadily moving forward.

• **GOAL- CHIP 2018 – HOME REHABILITATION:**

To start and complete the home improvements work for at least three (3) of the four (4) homes with the CHIP 2018 Grant Funds and be prepared to start the Application Process for additional chip funds in the next funding year.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

Two of the home owners have signed loan and grant agreement documents this month and one of the Certified Housing Rehab Contractors have signed contracts and have purchased building permits and is ready to proceed with the housing rehab work on two homes sometime this month.

The DCA Office has approved three (3) of the four (4) homes for rehab contracts; Certified Housing Rehab Contractors are preparing updated bids due to the spike in the prices of building materials.

4. Codes Report: Lin Mercer, Sr. Reported.

Goal Accomplished Year-to-Date

- Reviewed and approved for permits, fifteen (15) larger scale construction jobs.
- Seven dilapidated houses torn down by owner at owner’s expense.
- Five more demolitions pending at owner’s expense.

5. Human Resources: City Manager Angela Redding Reported.

Recruitment

- Hosted a tour of City facilities for Work Based Learning students and members of the Cordele-Crisp IDC on August 22, 2022.
- Participated in the City of Cordele Job Fair on September 12, 2022. Sixteen people attended.

Succession Planning

- Attending a Succession Planning Seminar hosted by GA on September 27, 2022 in Thomasville.

Leveraging H.R. Technology

- Training dates for the Paychex Time and Attendance modules are set for late September.

6. Municipal Court: No Report

7. Police Chief – Chief Heard Reported

Accomplishments:

Hired two (2) detectives: Detective Gary has over six years of law enforcement experience and has held many roles as a booking officer, shift supervisor, school resource officer, and field training officer. She has worked with Perry Police Department and Warner Robins PD. Det. Gary is currently working towards her associate's degree.

Detective NeeSmith has been in law enforcement for six years and has worked with both the Twiggs County Sheriff's Office and Centerville PD. Det. NeeSmith has experience in the narcotics division and detective divisions. He has also been a k-9 handler and field training officer.

Hired new patrol officer Ethan Jones who is just starting his career in law enforcement. We have two cadets who will starting police mandate at the end of September.

Faith & Blue:

Blood Drive on October 7th 2022, from 11am - 4pm at the Community Clubhouse with Greater Morris Tabernacle Baptist Church.

Sobriety Walk October 8th 2022, 9am – 11am. The walking route will be from Cross Culture Church 1508 S 6th St. up 7th St. to 16th Ave and then back.

United in Faith October 9th, 3pm – 5pm: Mt. Calvary Missionary Baptist Church at Cordele Supermarket, 311 W. 24th Ave.

8. Public Works – Koby Worley Reported

Goal 2: Increase revenue and reduce the lost and unaccounted for gas numbers.

Meter testing is 95% complete.

Goal 6: To make our Street Department a more productive department within the City, and Improve the overall function and aesthetics of our streets, alleys and rights-of-ways.

Culvert Pipe Replacement on 6th Avenue at Norfolk Southern RR – Asphalt work at 6th Ave. and RR has been completed and shoulders of 6th Ave have been re-hydro seeded.

9. UC&T – Debbie Wright Reported.

Accomplishments:

1. The 48” Main Trunk Line into the WWTP is FINISHED.
2. The rehab on both Digesters is FINISHED. They are both back in service.
3. The Inspection of the WWTP by EPD went well. We need to install 1 more life preserver at the Secondary Clarifiers. The comment about the duckweed on the Secondary Clarifiers is just that a “comment”. You can’t control that and you certainly cannot spray week killer in an Activated Sludge system.

10. Information Technology Update – Bobby Stennett Reported: No Report

AGENDA ITEMS

1. Create an Office of the Chair which reports to the Chairperson with a budget of \$500,000 for four positions: Community Advancement Manager (CAM), Business Development Manager (BDM), Administrative Assistant, and Marketing and Social Media Manager.

Commission Chair Joshua Deriso gave background on this item: Since the month of February, I have been asking for the City to restructure the government to invest in the future of Cordele and not just a stagnated, into what we are now. If you look at other Cities and how they are growing, they created some key positions inside their departments, as well as, restructuring before their growth took off. I have asked the Commission to do the same thing, it has not been highly favored, so I am asking that the Commission put faith in me as the people did in leading four positions with salaries, not to be six figures, as some rumors have gotten out, but salaries to be comparable to other positions around and operating costs. The last bullet point under Chairman duties: The Commission has the authority to provide for such an office or give the Chairperson any other authorities that they see fit. So, that is what I am asking the Commission for growth and engagement, as far as, when the Police Department have community events, the Manager could take the lead on promoting that with the social media and Marketing to get more people. That is the way it works; you work in partnership with them and you point people to make events happen. The Police Department, the Chief is busy with their day to day, they should not be tasked with other things. So that would be one of the goals of the Community Advancement Manager is to engage each department in the events that the City has and also working with the City and non-profits groups to provide better coordination and exposure. Because the City of Cordele does have a lot going on, but sometimes people do not know about it. The Commitment to this would only be for a year to see how it goes, it will be like a pilot program, if it does not work, we dissolve, just that simple. So, this is on the Agenda for a motion, will there be a for it?

Commission Vice Chair – Royce Reeves: I have looked over this, I don’t think it will be fair to not to vote on it, but I need a little bit more information, because it is a lot. I would like to ask for a Work Shop on this ASAP, so I can get more detail and get input from the Public, we are talking about \$500,000.

Commissioner Isaac Owens: I think the Work Shop will be good because as we have seen for the last couple of months, as we have had other things presented to us, we saw that there could be a need for it; and the restructuring side of it will not hurt, especially if we set a goal that after a year's time, if it is not functioning, as we need it to function, there will be a way to just simply dissolve it. But I think we owe it to ourselves, to at least make an attempt to see where we can go with it, I think with further discussion, we will be able to open it up and get more community input as well to see what avenues we need to take on it.

Motion: Commission Vice Chair Royce Reeves moved to have a Work Shop, Tuesday, September 27, 2022 at 5:00 PM to discuss the Chair position; seconded by Commissioner Owens; the Commission approved the motion to have a Work Shop, Tuesday, September 27th at 5:00 PM, to discuss the Office of Chair, the four positions and a budget of \$500,000.

2. First Reading of an Ordinance Repealing Article XII of Chapter 2 of the City Code of the City of Cordele in its Entirety and Adopting a New Article XII of Chapter Entitled "Ethics"; Repealing All Ordinances in Conflict Herewith; and for Other Purposes.

Commissioner Rainey moved to approve an Ordinance Repealing Article XII of Chapter 2 and adopting a New Article XII of Chapter Entitled "Ethics"; seconded by Commission Vice Chair Reeves.

Commission Vice Chair Reeves stated he would like to see an Independent Ethics Committee, someone outside of this community. Commission Vice Chair Reeves stated this is his recommendation.

Commissioner Shephard stated she thinks the person will be more unbiased than a local person. Commissioner Shephard stated that she has no opposition to an independent agent to come in and evaluate the situation, as far as the Ethics Complaints.

Commission Chair Deriso stated, this is not temporary, this is replacing; that all our cases be heard by an Ethics Officer. This is an Attorney and the City will pay this person. Commission Chair Deriso stated the City is adding someone that the City does not need. He stated the Codes in the Charter should not be changed. He stated the City a permanent thing for a temporary situation.

Commission Vice Chair Reeves stated, it does not have to be an Officer, it can be a three-member board from outside the Community; the number of members that currently sits on the board, we can have the same number that sits outside the Community.

Commission Vice Chair Reeves moved to rescind the motion to approve an Ordinance Repealing Article XII of Chapter 2 and adopting a New Article XII of Chapter Entitled "Ethics"; seconded by Commissioner Rainey; the motion was rescinded by the Commission.

Commission Vice Chair Reeves moved to form an Ethics Board of three-members outside of this Community; seconded by Commissioner Owens; the motion was approved for an Ethics Committee to be formed with three-members, outside the Community, Cordele Crisp County, Georgia to hear the current Ethics complaints.

3. First Reading of an Ordinance of the City of Cordele, Georgia Adopted Pursuant to the Provisions of O.C.G.A. § 36-35-4.1 Reapportioning the Election Districts from Which Members of the Governing Authority of the City of Cordele are Elected; Providing an Effective Date; Repealing Prior Ordinance and Charter Provisions In Conflict Herewith; and For Other Purposes.

Commission Chair Deriso stated this is the voting map. Commissioner Rainey moved to adopt Draft One of the voting maps.

Commissioner Owens stated, "I really think that to be fair to each of us, is that we wait before we make a decision upon this, because it has been some months, since we talked and looked at this, these plans we have not had before us; our original plan is that we will would come together in a Work Session, that we would discuss these and I think when we planned the original Work Session, Commissioner Reeves was not here. Commissioner Owens stated, since Commissioner Reeves is back now and we have already scheduled a Work Session for next Tuesday that we can attach this and do the Work Session for this as well, instead of voting and making a decision on this now."

City Attorney Tommy Coleman stated, this is the First Reading of a home rule Ordinance, so there will have to be an advertisement in the newspaper and have to be adopted in two weeks.

The motion was seconded by Commission Vice Chair Reeves. The motion was approved for Draft One Voting Map for Reapportioning the Election Districts with Commission Vice Chair Royce Reeves, Sr. voted aye; Commissioners Shephard and Rainey vote aye.

City Attorney Tommy Coleman stated, Draft One will be attached to the Ordinance, probably an advertisement before the next meeting, it will have to be read twice, once at the next meeting and once at the meeting after; reason being the advertisement has be advertised three weeks before finally adopting.

4. Discuss Proposed Amendments to the Code of Ordinances, Chapter 12.1 – Property Maintenance, Article III, Section 12 1-44 Regulating the Boarding of Doors and Windows.

City Manager Angela Redding stated at the last meeting she mentioned bring forward an Ordinance regulating the boarding up of windows and doors. Article III of the City of Cordele Property Maintenance Code, Section 12 1-44 exterior and interior structure is before the Commission. There is additional language that the City Commission needs to consider for the Ordinance; the first is to allow boarding up of buildings for up to ten days in the event of a temporary, emergency situation, including, but not limited to damage caused by vandalism, theft or weather, this is not included in our current Property Maintenance, as well as, included in what is being proposed. To consider language for any properties that are currently boarded up to allow them ample time to replace the windows and doors based on the update to the Ordinance. These are the two things that the Mrs. Redding was bringing before the Commission for consideration before the Ordinance is completely updated. Mrs. Redding did state she included in the language, in the event an emergency situation requires a building or structure to be boarded up for more than ten days, then the owner of the building or structure must notify the Chief Codes Official. List of emergencies that will qualify: including, but not limited to damage caused by vandalism, theft or weather. Commissioner Owens stated to add fire to the qualified emergencies. City Manager Angela Redding stated that the same can be done, if it is the desire of the City Commission; for properties that are currently boarded up, right now, the language is to allow them thirty days to bring the property into compliance. City Manager will bring back an Ordinance for a first and second reading.

5. CITY MANAGER’S REPORT: Angela Redding Reported.

311 Service

The 311 Service has been terminated. Calls to 311 will now be redirected to the main number at City Hall.

CSX Railroad Crossing Closed

Due to a defect in the rail that needs to be fixed, the crossing at 2nd Street will be closed tomorrow at 10 AM and remain closed until Friday, September 23rd at 5 PM.

Public Hearing – Solar Ordinance

City Commission need to schedule a Public Hearing on the Solar Panel Ordinance. This item will be added to the Work Session.

Grapple Truck

Grapple Truck is back in service.

Bench – Edward Beach

The bench for former City Manager Edward Beach has been installed.

Board Appointments

The following Boards need Board members:

- Board of Zoning Appeals – Board member appointed in February is unable to attend meetings due to his work schedule
- Community Clubhouse Coordination Board
- DDA Board

This item will be added to the Work Session.

Logo Contest Guidelines

Logo Flyer included in packet.

Public Safety Appreciation Dinner

Commission Vice Chair Royce Reeves and Angela Redding attended the Public Safety Appreciation Dinner last Thursday at the Fairgrounds. The Fire and Police Department represented the City of Cordele well.

Additional Items for the Work Session

Waste Management Contract
PTO Accrual for Police and Fire
Discuss 5 Year History and Tax Levy
Preliminary Budget Figures

6. **CITY ATTORNEY’S REPORT:** City Attorney Tommy Coleman needs a short Executive Session on the Sims and Wiggins cases.
Commissioner Shephard inquired about the Gin on 11th Street. City Manager stated there is a new owner for the Gin. The process will have to started over again.
7. **EXECUTIVE SESSION:** (For Personal, Litigation, Real Estate and Legal Matters).

Commission Vice Chair Reeves moved to go into Executive Session at 6:54 PM for litigation and personnel matters; seconded by Commissioner Shephard; the motion was approved by the Commission.

8. **MEETING RECONVENED:** Commission Vice Chair Reeves moved to reconvene the Regular Meeting at 8:04 PM; seconded by Commissioner Shephard; the motion was approved by the Commission.
9. **RESCIND MOTION:** Commissioner Owens moved to rescind the motion that Frances Clay be the legal representative for Commission Chair Joshua Deriso in the Sims case; seconded by Commission Vice Chair Royce Reeves; the motion was approved by the Commission.
MOTION: Commissioner Owens moved for Mr. Kurk Kastorf to be the legal representative for Commission Chair Joshua Deriso in the Sims case; seconded by Commission Vice Chair Royce Reeves, Sr.
Commission Vice Chair Reeves inquired about Mr. Kurk Kastorf representing the Commission Chair in both cases, Sims and Wiggins.
AMENDED MOTION: Commissioner Owens amended the motion for Mr. Kurk Kastorf to be the legal representative for Commission Chair Joshua Deriso in both cases, Sims and Wiggins, and the City will be responsible for paying his fees; seconded by Commissioner Reeves; the motion was approved with a 3/1 vote, Commission Vice Chair Reeves – aye, Commissioners Shephard and Owens – aye, Commissioner Rainey – nay.
10. **ADJOURNMENT:** Commission Vice Chair Reeves moved to adjourn at 8:07 p.m.; seconded by Commissioner Rainey; the motion was approved by the Commission.