

**MINUTES
CITY COMMISSION WORK SESSION
OCTOBER 5, 2021 AT 4:30 PM**

The Cordele City Commission held a Work Session on October 5th, 4:30 p.m., Cordele City Hall Courtroom, 501 North 7th Street, Cordele, Georgia with the following present:

John Wiggins, Commission Chair
Royce Reeves, Commissioner
Vesta Beal-Shephard, Commissioner
Finn Coleman, Attorney

Jeanie Bartee, Vice Chair
Wesley Rainey, Commissioner
Roland McCarthy, City Manager
Janice Mumphery, Recording Secretary

Absent: Tommy Coleman, City Attorney.

Staff present: Det. Chief Scott Farrow, Irene Cantrell, Fire Chief Augusta Telfair, Debra Perry, Jack Wood, Sr., Debbie Wright, David Wade, Mike Hathaway, Steve Fulford.

Others Present: Don Cole, Milton Holly, Ricky Dawson, Jeff Sinnott.

Media present: Ricky Smarr – South GA TV; Cordele Dispatch – Neil McGaHee.

Call to Order: Commission Chair John Wiggins called the Work Session to order.

Invocation: Prayer was rendered by Stan Bowen.

Pledge Allegiance to the United States Flag: The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Swearing In – City of Cordele Police Chief: Police Chief Mike Hathaway was sworn in as Cordele Police Department Chief, by Municipal Court Judge Russell Wright.

Approval of Meeting Minutes, September 21, 2021: Commissioner Reeves moved to approve the called meeting minutes of September 21, 2021; seconded by Commissioner Bartee; the minutes were approved unanimously by the Commission.

DEPARTMENTAL HEAD REPORTS:

Finance Director – N/A

Roland McCarthy reported – All work for the Auditors have been completed; the Auditors are due to arrive on October 18, 2021.

Fire Chief – Augusta Telfair reported – July 29 – September 2, 2021

6 fire alarm calls, 1 medical assistance call, 1 medical call, 3 smoke investigation, 2 rubbish fire, 1 odor investigation, 1 structure fire, 2 gas leaks, 1 canceled en-route call, 1 vehicle fire, 4 miscellaneous. Fire Prevention Week October 3-9, 2021.

*****Please see report submitted for additional information.**

Housing and Urban Development – Irene Cantrell reported.

- **CDBG 2020** – With the assistance of Commissioner Vesta Beal Shephard, we have contacted several property owners and tenants located within the McLeod Subdivision in

CITY COMMISSION WORK SESSION MINUTES

OCTOBER 5, 2021

PAGE 2

an effort to complete the needed Household Surveys for the CDBG Grant Application's proposed number of 59 sewer system connections.

- **CHIP 2018** – Due to the COVID pandemic there yet remains an extended delay in the progress of the housing rehab program per the Grant Administration Manager with Southwest Georgia Regional Commission.
- **BZA** – The BZA board met on Thursday, September 30, 2021, to consider a variance request from Ms. Minnie Fletcher (manufactured home owner) and Mr. & Mrs. Winfred Greene the property owners to locate a 1990 manufactured home at 715 West 21st Avenue, Block 208, Lots 1-3, Cordele, Georgia. This area's Zoning designation is R-7.5, One and Two-Family Residential District. There were several property owners from the neighborhood present for the public hearing. After a thorough discussion concerning the number of manufactured homes that would be placed upon these three (3) lots. The group also was concerned about the condition of the manufactured home; underpinning, lawn care, etc. The Mrs. Brenda Greene and Mrs. Katrisha Williams (daughters of Mrs. Minnie Fletcher) answered all questions pertaining to the satisfaction of the group. The Codes Official, Mr. Lin Mercer answered the group's questions concerning Lot size and what could be placed on the lots. After which there were no objections to this manufactured home being located at 715 West 21st Avenue. The Board of Zoning Appeals voted unanimously to recommend to the Cordele City Commission that this request be granted to located a manufactured home at 715 West 21st Avenue, Cordele, Georgia.

*****Please see report submitted for additional information.**

Chief Codes Official – Jack Wood, Sr. reported.

Total of Job Valuations: \$5,412,835.00 Permit Fees: \$14,977.00

*****Please see report submitted for additional information.**

Personnel Director – David Wade reported

Mr. Wade stated the City has received the cost study from the Georgia Municipal Association for the enhance retirement study for Public Safety, along with the regular employees; Mr. Wade stated this information will be reported at the next Work Session, which will be on Tuesday, November 2, 2021.

*****Please see report that was submitted for information.**

Cordele Police Department – Det. Sammy Farrow reported – Sept. 2-29, 2021

- **Part I Crimes - 33:** Homicide/Murder – 0; Rape – 0; Robberies – (3) 1 bank/1 arrested, 1 armed/highway 1 arrested, 1 sudden snatching warrant issued; Motor Vehicle Thefts – (2) 2 recovered; Aggravated Assault – (6); Larceny – (22) 7 shoplifting w/4 arrested, 5 entering autos, 10 other thefts; Arson – 0; Burglary – (3) 3 residential.
- **Part II Crimes – 118:** Incidents Reported – 161; Family Violence Incident Reported – (7) 0 arrests; Miscellaneous Incidents – 77; Motor Vehicle Crashes – (45) 31 roadway, 14 private property; Arrests Made from Incidents – 77; Citations Issued – 218; Warnings Issued – 75.
- **Total Calls – 1,269**

CITY COMMISSION WORK SESSION MINUTES

OCTOBER 5, 2021

PAGE 3

Public Works – Steve Fulford reported.

All the LMIG resurfacing projects have been completed, except for the striping, the 8th Street sidewalk and storm draining project on South 24th Avenue, this project will start at any time now.

*****Please see report that was submitted for information.**

UC&T – Debbie Wright reported.

- Pumped almost 59,000,000 gallons of water for the month of September.
- Treated 70.67 million gallons of water at the Treatment Plant.
- Trickling Filter #2 completed, we will put it in service to make sure everything operates correctly.
- Received two new sludge pumps, one has been installed and the other will be installed in the next few days.

*****Please see report that was submitted for information.**

CITY MANAGER UPDATE: Roland McCarthy reported.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION:

- **Holiday Recognized:** The City of Cordele will observe Columbus Day on Monday, October 11, 2021, all non-essential personnel will be given the day off.
- **SPLOST Funds received:** Received July SPLOST in the amount of \$116,199.13.
- **GMA District 8 Fall Meeting:** District 8 Officers will have a Fall Meeting on Wednesday, October 13, 2021, 5:30 – 7:30 PM, at Reeds Park Economic Development Center, 409 Elm Avenue, Americus, GA. City Manager Roland McCarthy will register the Commissioners, please advise him if you plan on attending.
- **Community Park at Williams Field, East 15th Avenue:** The architect is requesting to have some meetings to discuss the designs of the Community Park. The first meeting will be held on November 4, 2021 at the Main Street Office, 10:00 AM – 12:00 Noon, this is for the City and County Commissioners, City Manager and Public Works.

ADMINISTRATION – FISCAL MATTER – N/A

ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS – N/A

WORK SESSION OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Mr. Milton Holly: Cordele Resident, had two concerns

1. Mr. Holly inquired about the WIFI reception on the West side of town, he stated the WIFI is very weak, especially on the Northside of the Community. He is requesting for the City to assist with the WIFI situation in this area because there are a lot of children who need to access WIFI for their school needs. Commissioner Shepherd stated that there are a lot of children in the area that need WIFI for their schooling, we as Commissioners need to find a solution, especially for the younger people in that neighborhood. Commissioner Shepherd stated that she understands that we have a contract with Mediacom, we as Commissioners might need to address Mediacom to see

CITY COMMISSION WORK SESSION MINUTES

OCTOBER 5, 2021

PAGE 4

how they can assist the City with this issue. Commission Chair John Wiggins asked the City Manager to contact Mediacom and Southern Fiber Work to see if they can assist with this issue.

2. Mr. Holly also inquired about old water bills that had not been paid and the customers cannot open an account until the bill is paid. Does the City forgive or respect the statute of limitations, which is seven years? Commission Chair John Wiggins stated that he does not know of any statute of limitations; Commission Chair John Wiggins asked, if there is a statute of limitation for old utility bills? Attorney Finn Coleman stated the statute of limitations for collections on old accounts is seven years, you cannot take them to Court to sue them for the money and collect; that does not mean that the City cannot refuse to open an account until the bill is paid. City Manager Roland McCarthy stated that the customer can make payment arrangements with their old bill and have their water turn on, then the old bill will be added to the new bill, but if they do not keep the payment arrangement with their old bill, their water will be turned off. Commission Chair John Wiggins told Mr. Holly to tell the customer to come in and make payment arrangements on their old bill to start their new service.

OLD BUSINESS:

American Rescue Plan Act: The City of Cordele has received the initial payment of \$1,964,462.00 dollars in Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds. The Commission will need to discuss and decide how to spend these funds, within the parameters set by the Federal Government.

As City Manager I am proposing to the Commission to expend the funds as follows:

1. To discuss applying \$100.00 to each active water/sewer/gas customer. This would amount to approximately \$501,200.00
2. To discuss giving every full-time city employee premium pay in the amount of \$2,500.00. This would amount to approximately \$315,000.00.
3. To discuss the request to contract with Southeast Pipe for the Sewer upgrades to the infrastructure as described in the attached. This would amount to approximately \$825,225.00
4. If all three of the above proposals were approved there would be a balance of \$323,037.00 remaining to be obligated in this initial payment. I am requesting the Commission to discuss allowing the City to incentivize the City employees to get vaccinated for the COVID-19 virus. As of today, we have 126 full-time and 2 part-time employees, if we offered \$1,000.00 once to the employees that showed proof of receiving their two shots, the cost would be approximately \$128,000.00, leaving a balance of \$195,037.00.
5. To discuss applying the \$1,964,462.00 to be received in 2022 be committed to Sewer infrastructure. If the Commission agrees to this, the city can apply as matching funds for the State Grant being submitted, which would make the city match 50%.

After a lengthy discussion, the Commission agreed to the proposals with amending item #2 to be increased, utilizing the balance of \$195,037.00 and also to include the permanent part-time employees. The Commission will approval the above items at their Regular Scheduled Meeting on Tuesday, October 19, 2021 at 5:30 p.m.

CITY COMMISSION WORK SESSION MINUTES

OCTOBER 5, 2021

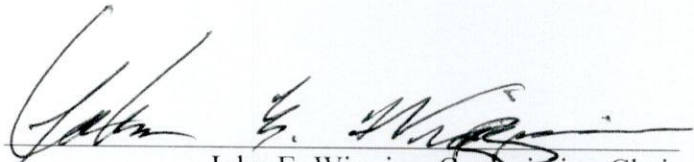
PAGE 5

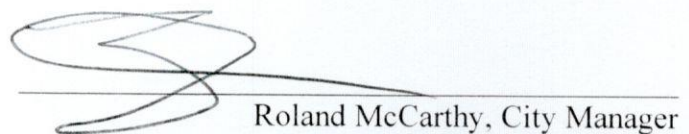
Commissioner Reeves had concerns about the Holding Ponds on the East and West side of the City. Commissioner Reeves stated that there have been some complaints with the Holding Ponds, snakes are in the Holding Pond on West 18th Avenue and South 10th Street and he has received several complaints. Commissioner Reeves stated he would like for the Commission to look at the Holding Ponds, he would like for the Holding Ponds to be maintained, especially on 19th and 20th West. Commission Chair John Wiggins asked Steve Fulford, Public Works Director, to have the ponds maintained, especially for the snakes.

NEW BUSINESS:

Georgia ARPA Grant Funds: The state has received ARPA funds which they are making available for water/sewer infrastructure only. The funds need to be applied for by October 31, 2021. I am proposing submitting a request for \$10,000,000.00. The application will be processed with the assistance of the River Valley Regional Commission. For this request to be made more viable the city needs to apply some matching funds to this request. So, that is why I proposed #3 above, the city can also include the GEFA Loan Project costs and the SPLOST project cost. This will give the city a match of \$3,025,025.00, which is a 30% match.

Adjourn: Commissioner Bartee moved to adjourn the meeting at 5:45 p.m. and go into Executive Session.


John E. Wiggins, Commission Chair


Roland McCarthy, City Manager

October 19, 2021
Date