

**MINUTES
CITY COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING
March 5, 2024**

The Regular Meeting of the Cordele City Commission was held on March 5th, 9:00 AM, Cordele City Hall Courtroom, 501 North 7th 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, Teddy Hubbard – Water/Sewer Superintendent.

Staff absent: 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 – March 5, 2024: Commission Vice Chair Reeves moved to approve the Agenda for March 5, 2024; seconded by Commissioner Shephard; the Agenda was approved by the Commission.

APPROVAL OF REGULAR MEETING MINUTES – February 6, 2024: Commissioner Owens moved to approve the Minutes for February 6, 2024; seconded by Commissioner Rainey; the Minutes for February 6, 2024 were approved by the Commission.

APPROVAL OF REGULAR MEETING MINUTES – February 20, 2024: Commissioner Owens moved to approve the Minutes for February 20, 2024; seconded by Commissioner Shephard; the Minutes for February 20, 2024 were approved by the Commission.

SPEAKERS APPEARANCES: Speakers will have five (5) minutes: No Requests.

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

RIVER VALLEY REGIONAL COMMISSION UPDATE: Mr. Jim Livingston – Executive Director:

Mr. Livingston gave an update on River Valley to the City Commission. River Valley covers sixteen (16) Counties in West Central Georgia, Cordele Crisp County is one of the Counties. They offer Regional Planning, Economic Development, Community Development, Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning, Environment Planning, Transit and Historic Preservation.

DEPARTMENT HEADS REPORTS:

1. Community Advancement Manager – Maurice Hill Reported.

- Attended the Downtown Development Authority meeting and contacted a restaurant developer about property downtown.
- Met with the Peanut Gin owner, walked the facility and discussed a possible mixed used development project to include lofts, retail and restaurant space in the building.
- Attended (2) Comprehensive Plan meetings to discuss Land Use and Housing.
- Visited with multiple home builders, renovation professionals and manufactured home providers gathering information for housing initiatives.
- Met with The Fuller Center to discuss their current housing projects and potential to collaborate on housing future projects.
- Met with multiple homeowners at their properties to discuss CDFI and other resources available to renovate their homes.
- Met with a local business owner to discuss setting up a nonprofit to assist At-Risk-Youth.
- Talked with a company that provides Robotics and other STEM related services.
- Attended the Slammin Sami’s Ribbon Cutting

We have started to work on the Housing Summit with the staff members of Southwest Georgia United for April 20th and developing a marketing strategy to bolster attendance.

2. Finance Department: Rusty Bridgers Reported.

Sales Tax Receipts

LOCAL OPTION SALES TAX (LOST)

Received 02.28.2024 \$213,408.03 Collected – January

SPECIAL PURPOSE LOCAL OPTION SALES TAX (SPLOST)

Received 02.23.2024 \$231,681.86 Collected – December

TRANSPORTATION SPECIAL PURPOSE LOCAL OPTION SALES TAX (TSPLOST)

Received 02.29.2024 \$27,552.78 Collected – January

TOTAL \$472,642.67

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

Reporting Period: January 29, 2024 – February 27, 2024

Calls for Service:	Total 56
Structure Fire/Cooking	4
Gas Leak	4
Electrical Short	7
Smoke Scare	6
Fire Alarm	10
Medical Assist	21
Motor Vehicle Accident	2
Other	2

Department News

- We appointed Sgt. Jared Averill to be our Fire Training Officer. His first official day in that capacity is Monday 3/4/24.
- Rookie Jon Watson starts Basic Firefighter/Haz-mat training at GPSTC Friday 3/1/24. It is a 10-week class to earn his Firefighter 1 and Haz-mat Operations certifications.
- Had the pleasure of interacting with two of our Animal Control Officers. Brandi (Shelter Manager) and Alyssa were both very professional when they picked up a dog that showed up at Station 1. I visited the shelter later to check in on the dog and the facility was organized and spotless. Would like to commend them and Chief Heard for the work they do!

4. Housing and Urban Development – Irene Cantrell Reported.

Cordele Board of Zoning & Appeals:

The Board of Zoning Appeals will meet on Friday, March 8th at 10:00 a.m., regarding a request from Crisp Regional Hospital, Inc. to locate a double-faced free-standing sign at 1701 East 16th Avenue.

Cordele Planning and Zoning Commission:

There are no public hearings scheduled for the Planning and Zoning Commission Board at this time.

CHIP 2024 Grant Program:

The Community Housing Program Manager with the Georgia Department of Community Affairs Office has advised that the 2024 CHIP Grant Applications Awards will be announced on or before April 16, 2024.

Cordele Historic Preservation Commission:

The Historic Preservation Commission has not received any Applications for Certificates for Preservation for the month of March 2024.

Stakeholder Group Meetings:

We are working with the River Valley Regional Commission Stakeholder Group Meetings which started on February 22, 2024, regarding “Land Use” community needs, opportunities, goals, etc.

Economic Development Revolving Loan Fund:

List of Loans Recipients

Hobo Café' – First Loan
Hobo Café' – Second Loan
Ray Ray's Restaurant
The Grant Building
R & D Lawncare

Economic Development Revolving Loan Fund:

Loan Applications are available to Qualified Loan recipients.

5. Human Resources – David Wade Reported.

February 01, 2024 Began accepting in-house applications for the vacant Training Officer position in the Fire Department. Position was filled on March 4th, with Sgt. Jared Averill.

February 02, 2024 Extended a conditional offer of employment to an Equipment Operator (Backhoe) in the Gas Department.

February 05, 2024 Hired a Community Advancement Manager in the Administration Department.

February 08, 2024 Hired a Sergeant in the Police Department.

February 09, 2024 Began accepting in-house applications for the vacant Captain position in the Police Department.

February 20, 2024 Received the restated Adoption Agreement from GMEBS which will require approval by the City Commission.

February 19, 2024 Promoted an in-house applicant to Corporal in the Police Department.

February 22, 2024 Held interviews for the vacant Plant Operator position in U, C & T. A conditional job offer was extended to the candidate.

6. Municipal Court: Jackie Walker Reported.

City of Cordele Municipal Court 40-50 – Monthly Court Summary Report

Traffic Cases	130
Criminal Cases	<u>30</u>
Total Court Cases	160
Bench Warrants Ordered	7
License Suspension Ordered	13
Total of All Payments	\$28,626.23 (cash bonds, fines, collected, deposits, etc.)
Total Court Ordered Refunds	\$2,375.00
Total Defendants Incarcerated	1
Total days in jail sentenced	30

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

Chief Heard expressed his concerns regarding false accusations against him and the Department. Please see below:

“There have been some questions about the accuracy of the statistics I provide for the Cordele police department at the first commission meeting of each month. In addition to questions, falsehoods have been spread, calling into question my integrity when presenting these stats. I have not been told what individuals or organizations are behind these erroneous claims, but let me be unequivocally clear. The statistics I provide to the commission each month are accurate and solely that of the Cordele police department. They are not combined from different agencies as the rumors would have you believe.

To begin with, the Cordele police department doesn't have access to other agencies' call information. We use the same system; however, we are locked out of other agencies' information and can't enter or edit their information. We only have access to our data. The statistics are pulled from what we can see on our system.

Secondly, when the statistics are compiled for this report, they are authenticated to ensure they are linked with a specific case number. All this information, including every case number accounted for in these reports, is kept on file.

Third, The Cordele Police Department is responsible for law enforcement services within the city of Cordele, and we answer our calls for service. We often provide backup to other agencies, and they do the same for us, but again, we answer our calls for service.

Finally, we do not control the 911 system. Another agency does. When a call is received, the agency responsible for the 911 system enters the call into the CAD, and we are dispatched.

They control how the information is entered and what units are assigned to a call. We do not. I urge you to consider the source of these rumors and question their motives. Do not be swayed by misinformation, confusion, or deceit. I invite anyone who would like to discuss this matter and view the information for themselves to meet with me.

I am and will continue to be committed to transparency, honesty, and integrity in everything I do. Make no mistake, I am the chief of this department, and I lead this agency. I will not allow lies to undermine my character, credibility, or the hard work of all the men and women working for this department.”

Chief Heard continued with his Goals and Accomplishments for Codes Compliance and the Police Department.

Part I Crimes	26
Robberies	1 (armed)
Motor Vehicle Thefts	5 (4 recovered)
Aggravated Assault	2
Larceny	16 (1 entering auto, 6 shoplifting with 4 adult arrests, 9 others thefts)
Burglary	2 (1 residential, 1 mini storage)
Part II Crimes	117
Incidents Reported	94
Community Contacts	55
Citations Issued	135

Warnings Issued	52
Total Calls	1,082

Departmental News

We will be hosting the egg hunt for SAM Shortline’s Easter Express on March 30th. If anyone would like to participate, they need to contact SAM Shortline. There will be three (3) rides beginning at 11:00 AM. The ride will travel from the Depot to ADM Animal Nutrition (open field at the corner of Midway Road and 13th Ave). Children will have the opportunity to get off the train and hunt for eggs. They will then return to the Depot for Easter Activities sponsored by the Crisp Area Arts Alliance. We are inviting everyone to come out and ride the train and hunt for eggs with some of our Police Officers.

Our Event Committee is raffling off a customized fire pit made by P & P Metal Works and Designs. This item is valued at \$550.00. All proceeds will go to community events. Contact the Police Department if you would like to purchase a ticket. The deadline is April 5, 2024.

The Police Department along with Cordele Mainstreet will be hosting the Annual Autism Awareness Stroll on April 20th at 10:00 AM, at the Perry Busbee Walking Track at Crisp Regional Hospital.

**Code Compliance Division Report:
Reporting Period: January 30 - February 26, 2024**

Abandoned Vehicle	22
Inspections	28
Weeds, Junk, Etc. Prohibited	64

Departmental News:

The Code Compliance Division continues to work hard to addressing the Codes related issues throughout the City.

8. Public Works – Steve Fulford Reported.

2023 L.M.I.G. – S.A.P. has begun and as of 2/23, it was about 40% complete on stop sign/post replacement and 100% complete on RR crossing symbols and stop bars.

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

Website Update:

There was a Website Committee Meeting held on Friday, March 1, 2024. The front page of the website was completed, we will now start with launching the other pages of the website.

Social Media Marketing Department has attended and posted the following local events:

Crisp County Pre-K Transportation Day (2.9.2024)

Git In My Belly Ribbon Cutting (2.9.24)

Downtown BBQ Bash Awards Ceremony (10.24)

Coffee with a Cop (2.22.24)

Slammin Sami’s Ribbon Cutting (2.29.24)

Profile featuring Mrs. Rosie Watkins – Family Development Task Force (2.23.24)

Cordele City Commission Regular Meetings (2.6.24 and 2.20.24)

Attended the Crisp Community Collaborative Meeting (2.22.24)

10. UC&T – Debbie Wright Reported.

UTILITIES TREATMENT & CONTROL REPORT FOR MONTH OF FEBRUARY 2024

Water Treated	56,510,700 gallons	1,822,926 MGD average *
Year to Date	56,510,700 gallons	1,822,926 MGD average *
Wastewater Treated	100,360,000 gallons	3,240,000 MGD average *
Year to Date	100,360,000 gallons	3,240,000 MGD average *
Sludge to Landfill	95.10 tons of sludge via Dump Truck *	
Total Sludge 2024	95.10 tons of sludge via Dump Truck	
Grit to Landfill	0.00 tons	

Rainfall for the month of February was
Total Rainfall for 2024 is 3.20” *

**These numbers should be updated by the Commission Meeting.

Water restrictions put in place in 2010 are still in effect and have not changed. This allows for daily outdoor watering between the hours of 4pm and 10am.

We received the results from the second sampling of the UCMR5 and all 30 analytes were not detected. This is 2 rounds of sampling with nothing detected! We had to sample 24th Ave & 2nd St Wells.

We received 2.5” of rain the first Monday of the month. We were deluged with water at the WWTP. This caused a major setback after just getting the plant back almost back to normal. We will be out of permit for Ammonia (NH3) and BOD5. We have to get this I & I problem under control.

We have revised our Penia Water Lab Quality Control and SOP Manuals. This is required by EPD to keep up our Water Lab Certification. I also completed the annual Water Audit for 2023. This is also required by the Water Stewardship Act of 2010.

We will be starting our annual Fire Hydrant Testing Program in March. Please slow down when you see water flowing across the road. Please take precautions when doing laundry during this period.

Debbie Wright and Hal Little attended a Zoom Class on EPA Region 4 Power Resilience Workshop.

AGENDA ITEMS

1. Consider and Approve an Event Permit: A Cross Walk Event: Organizer’s Name is Sandi Carenes, 1205 S. 7th St., Cordele, GA. Date of Event is March 29, 2024 at 10:00 AM – 12:00 Noon. Route of walk: the walk will start at 1205 South 7th Street, down to 16th Avenue, turning

right on Central Ave., stopping at Home Depot. Police escort is requested from 1205 South 7th Street to Home Depot. Approved by Police Chief Jalon Heard on February 26, 2024.

Commissioner Shephard moved to approve the Event Permit; seconded by Commissioner Owens.

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

The Event Permit for A Cross Walk Event was approved by the Commission.

2. Consider and Approve an Event Permit: Bunny Hunt by Little Blessings Daycare, 2604 S. 10th St., Cordele, GA. Event will be held on March 30, 2024; 11:00 AM – 2:00 PM. The event will take place at the Cordele Community Clubhouse. Special Request: block off 6th St. to 15th Ave. Approved by Police Chief Jalon Heard on February 26, 2024.

Commissioner Owens moved to approve the Event Permit; seconded by Commissioner Shephard.

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

The Event Permit for A Bunny Hunt by Little Blessings Daycare was approved by the Commission.

3. Consider and Approve an Event Permit: Family Event - Easter Fest and Easter Express: Sponsors are Crisp Area Arts Alliance, SAM Shortline and Main Street, March 30, 2024, 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM at 105 East 9th Avenue. Special Request to block off, 9th Avenue from 6th and 7th Street, we have our own barricades.

Commissioner Shephard moved to approve the Event Permit; seconded by Commissioner Owens.

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

The Event Permit for An Easter Fest and Easter Express was approved by the Commission.

4. Consider and Approve an Event Permit: Family Event – Mother’s Day Festival: Sponsored by Cordele Main Street and La Calandria Mexican Truck, 105 East 9th Avenue, May 11, 2024, 12:00 Noon – 7:00 PM.

Commission Vice Chair Reeves moved to approve the Event Permit; seconded by Commissioner Rainey.

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

The Event Permit for A Mother’s Day Festival was approved by the Commission.

5. Consider and Approve Alcoholic Beverage License (No Exceptions Noted):
Beer & Wine Consumed Off Premises – Approved by Police Chief Heard 2.27.2024
16th Ave Inc.
416 W 16th Ave.
Cordele, GA 31015

Reloveme A. Patel – Owner

Liquor by the drink – Approved by Police Chief Heard 2.27.2024
El-Girasol, LLC
102 E 14th Ave. Ste. F
Cordele, GA 31015
Yolanda Medina – Owner

Commission Vice Chair Reeves moved to approve Alcoholic Beverage Licenses for 16th Ave Inc. and El Girasol; seconded by Commissioner Shephard.

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

The Alcoholic Beverage License for 16th Ave Inc. and El Girasol was approved by the Commission.

6. Consider a First Reading of an Ordinance to amend and restate the Retirement Plan for the Employees of the City of Cordele, Georgia, in accordance with and subject to the terms and conditions set forth in the attached Adoption Agreement, any Addendum to the Adoption Agreement, the Georgia Municipal Employees Benefit System (GMEBS) Basic Plan Document, and the GMEBS Trust Agreement. When accepted by the authorized officers of the City and GMEBS, the foregoing shall constitute a contract between the City and GMEBS, all as authorized and provided by O.C.G.A. § 47-5-1 et seq.

Background Summary Information:

GMEBS recently received a favorable determination letter from the IRS for the Defined Benefit Retirement Plan. The Plan, as approved, incorporates required federal law updates, as well as administrative updates adopted by the Board of Trustees of GMEBS over the last several years. To ensure continued tax-qualified status for all GMEBS-member retirement plans, all participating employers must readopt their plans using the most recent IRS-approved Adoption Agreement.

Commissioner Rainey moved to consider a First Reading of an Ordinance to amend and restate the Retirement Plan For Employees of the City of Cordele, Georgia; seconded by Commission Vice Chair Reeves.

A vote was not taken on this Agenda Item.

7. Appoint a Voting Delegate to vote for the Participating Local Government at a Regional, In-person Meeting for Consideration of Three Statewide Georgia Opioid Settlement Advisory Commission Members (GOSAC) and Regional Advisory Council (RAC) Members.

Background Summary Information:

The Memorandum of Understanding between the State of Georgia and Participating Local Governments as part of Georgia's participation in the national Opioid Settlement requires the creation of the Georgia Opioid Settlement Advisory Commission (GOSAC) and Regional Advisory Councils (RACs) to assess grant applications and recommend funding for the regional portion of the opioid settlement funds.

Each Participating Local Government will receive one vote as part of this process and must select a Voting Delegate to vote on the three (3) remaining GOSAC members to represent local governments and RAC members for their respective region. The Voting Delegate will represent the entity at the Regional, in-person meeting. The Voting Delegate can be an elected official or staff member. Cordele is in Region 6. The Region 6 meeting will be held on March 27th at 10:00 AM at the Harris County Library. Additional information on the regional meetings will be emailed to the voting delegates.

Commission Shephard moved to approve a Voting Delegate to vote for the Participating Local Government as part of Georgia's participation in the national Opioid Settlement; seconded by Commissioner Owens.

Commissioner Rainey moved to nominate Commission Vice Chair Reeves for the Voting Delegate; seconded by Commissioner Shephard.

Commissioner Shephard voted aye; Commissioner Owens voted aye; Commissioner Rainey voted aye. Chairman Deriso stated he will not ask Commission Vice Chair Reeves to vote because he is the nominee.

The Commission selected Commission Vice Chair Reeves to be the Voting Delegate to vote for the City of Cordele at the Regional, in person meeting..

8. CITY MANAGER'S REPORT: City Manager Angela Redding Reported.
Deadline for Occupation & Property Taxes

Occupation Tax (Business License) Renewal

Occupation license (Business license) expire at the end of the year and become delinquent if not paid by April 1st. A penalty is imposed for occupation licenses not renewed prior to April 1st. The penalty is ten (10) percent of the regulatory and administrative 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 1st. Businesses operating without an occupation license will receive a summons to appear in Municipal Court for nonpayment.

Property Taxes were due February 12, 2024. The City Clerk will begin mailing FIFA letters on March 11, 2024.

Important Service Update For Our Valued Customers

Please make sure your Express Disposal carts are placed wheels-to-the-curb, with their lids – not the cart handles – facing the street.

This enables all contents to empty into the truck when the hydraulic arm lifts and tilts the carts. Also, please remember to keep the carts three (3) feet from mailboxes, cars and each other.

Public Notice

The City of Cordele Water Department will be replacing a fire hydrant, Friday, March 8th, at 15th Avenue and 5Th Street. Water will be turned off from 9:00 AM until the work is completed.

Comprehensive Plan Meeting

There will be a Comprehensive Plan Update Planning Meeting on Thursday, March 7th, 5:30 PM at South Georgia Technical College Cordele Campus. The meeting will focus on Transportation.

Employee Retirement

Beverly Vance retired February 22, 2024, with forty-two years of dedicated service to the City of Cordele.

New Businesses

Anointed Angelic Boutique
Christian Item Sales
1112 South 7th Street

Slammin Samis
Sandwich Shop
102 North 7th Street

Git In My Belly
Casual Dining
302 W 16th Avenue

Soul Shine Studio
Yoga & Training Studio
3002 Frontage Road

Inspired Wealth Planning
Financial Planning
2021 Central Avenue

The Plug
Retail Clothing Store
401 S Pecan Street

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 7th Street, Room 103

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.

9. CITY ATTORNEY’S REPORT: No Report.

10. EXECUTIVE SESSION: (For Personnel, Litigation, Real Estate):

Commission Vice Chair Reeves moved to go into Executive Session at 9:59 AM to discuss Litigation and Real Estate; seconded by Commissioner Owens.

The Commission approved to go into Executive Session to discuss Litigation and Real Estate.

11. REGULAR MEETING RECONVENED:

Commission Vice Chair Reeves moved to Reconvene the Regular Meeting at 10:20 AM; seconded by Commission Vice Chair Shephard; The Commission approved to reconvene the Meeting.

12. ADJOURNMENT: Commission Vice Chair Reeves moved to adjourn the Meeting at 10:20 AM; seconded by Commissioner Owens; the motion was approved by the Commission.