

**MINUTES
CITY COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING
September 19, 2023**

The City of Cordele Commission held a Regular Meeting on September 19, 2023 at 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
Wesley Rainey, Commissioner	Vesta Beal Shephard, Commissioner
Isaac Owens, Commissioner	Angela Redding, City Manager
Tommy Coleman, City Attorney	Genivieve Mumphery, Recording Secretary

Staff present: Sonya Alexander – Staff Accountant, Fire Chief Todd Alligood, David Wade – Human Resource Director, Police Chief Jalon Heard, Koby Worley – Street Superintendent, Teddy Hubbard – UC&T Superintendent of Operations, Irene Cantrell – HUA Director, Jackie Walker – Chief Municipal Court Clerk.

Staff absent: Rusty Bridgers – Finance Director, Steve Fulford – Asst. City Manager/Public Works Director, Debbie Wright – UC&T Director.

Media Present: Deepayan Sinha - 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 silence.

PLEDGE ALLEGIANCE TO THE UNITED STATES FLAG: The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Commission Vice Chair Rainey.

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 – September 19, 2023: Commissioner Shephard moved to approve the Agenda for September 19 2023; seconded by Commission Vice Chair Reeves; the minutes were approved by the Commission.

APPROVAL OF REGULAR MEETING MINUTES – September 5, 2023: Commissioner Rainey moved to approve the Minutes for September 5, 2023; seconded by Commissioner Shephard; the minutes 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: Mr. Michael Waters requested to address his concerns regarding Agenda Item #8, Old Boys and Girls Club when the Agenda Item comes up for discussion.

DEPARTMENT HEADS GOALS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

1. FINANCE DIRECTOR: Sonya Alexander Reported.

Ms. Alexander gave an update on the Financial Summary; she stated under the Cash amount of the Financial Summary, which is \$2,025,187.72, half of the amount went toward the new Ladder Truck in the Fire Department.

ACHIEVEMENTS

- a. Customer Relations Clerk position filled - LeAnn Brown
- b. Jarmiah Burks - Customer Relations Clerk, Christy Temples - Payroll & Utility Billing, Sonya Alexander - Staff Accountant completed Introductory Accounting I with the Carl Vinson Institute of Government. This is their first step in completing the Finance Officer Certification.

GOALS

- a. Improve Records - storage, electronic, organization
- b. Replace manual documents with spreadsheets - purchasing/payables, daily activity/cash
- c. Improve purchasing process with better accountability - in process
- d. Purge files - reorganize storage

DEPARTMENTAL REPORTING

- a. Monthly expenses with budget v/s actual
- b. Identify key metrics for managers

Property taxes will be mailed in October and will be due in December.

2. FIRE DEPARTMENT REPORT: Fire Chief 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. Have plans to paint the outside of Station 1 in Oct.
- d. Hope to complete the pole barn structure that will house extra Ladder 3 soon.
- e. Fire Prevention Week is Oct. 8-14. Theme: Cooking Safety Starts with You!
We will present programs to local schools
Smoke detector blitz is scheduled for Oct. 7th

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- a. Ladder 1 Push-in went well and Ladder 1 is in service
- b. Deputy Chief Bullington has been Appointed and the Pinning Ceremony was held Friday September 15th
- c. Engine 1 and Ladder 1 attended 9/11 ceremony @ Crisp Co. High School hosted by ROTC
- d. Summer Fest was a success and look forward to next year

- e. We have two firefighters attending Basic Firefighter Certification Class at GPSTC 9/1/23 – 11/10/23. We wish them luck earning their certification. They both scored high on last week's test.

3. HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT – Irene Cantrell Reported.

- a. **CDBG 2019 / 2020 EXISTING GOAL:** We would like to complete the ground installation of the Sewer Pumps and Sewer Line Improvements within the Mcleod Subdivision for the forty-eight (48) households

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

Lanier Engineering Firm has advised that the Mcleod Subdivision Sewer Line Improvements Project is complete. they are waiting on the close-out paperwork from the contractor, RPI Underground, Inc. This Project has been completed.

- b. **GOAL - CHIP 2018 – HOME REHABILITATION:**

To start and complete the home improvements work for at least three (3) of the four 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:

Our accomplishment is that we have completed the rehabilitation home repairs on two of the three homes and are preparing to start on the third home as soon as DCA gives the okay. (No changes as of this date).

- c. **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.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

The EDRLF Committee discussed one particular solution to offer loan applicants prior to applying for a loan such as contacting the University of Georgia's Small Business Center regarding their "business consulting services" at no cost to Georgia Business Owners and Entrepreneurs (see the attached pamphlet).

This Goal of the EDRLF Committee has been accomplished.

4. HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT: David Wade Reported.

Goal for the Human Resources Department: To effectively manage the life cycle of all employees by providing fair and equable employment opportunities.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- a. Going through a Classification and Compensation Study with Condrey and Associates: The written assessments were submitted. As of yesterday, September 18, 2023, the telephone interviews were started and they are ongoing, they should be completed by tomorrow, September 19, 2023 and after that we will know of any additional information needed by Condrey and Associates to start the assessment process.
- b. Spoke with Artiffany Stanley, Georgia Municipal Association, the City signed into a MOU with GMA and Georgia Cities Solution for a Work Force Development and Recruitment

Analysis; this has been pushed back until the assessment with Condrey and Associates is completed because the City wants to get the best possible outcome from both of these programs. After the City knows where we stand with Condrey and Associates Assessment, we will begin the process of the Work Force Assessment.

c. Succession Planning:

Hired a new Deputy Fire Chief, along with three Patrolpersons that were promoted to Corporals in the Police Department.

5. MUNICIPAL COURT: Jackie Walker Reported.

GOALS FOR CORDELE MUNICIPAL COURT

- a. Report accurate and complete information for the court and public.
- b. Complete court docket for the judge in a timely manner.
- c. Complete all mandatory training for court personnel for year ending 2023.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR CORDELE MUNICIPAL COURT

- a. Training was completed for GCIC and Court Clerk recertification by both Chief and Deputy Clerk for the past year.
- b. All dockets and court dispositions were turned into the state on time.

6. CODES/POLICE DEPARTMENT– Police Chief Jalon Heard Reported.

CODES DEPARTMENT GOALS

- a. Our overall goal is to strive to make our city more attractive and presentable to current citizens, workers and travelers. The aim is to attract new businesses and potential residents to the city.
- b. We are planning on scheduling each official for updated training opportunities by allowing them to attend seminars and classes which are code enforcement related. This will provide them with the latest updates on laws and regulations.
- c. We want to educate the public on code violations and assist them with correcting the issue as opposed to being heavy-handed. We also strive to have voluntary compliance with code-related issues and not forced compliance.
- d. The department will be utilizing social media to announce code issues and problems that they will be focusing on. Our plans are to educate our citizens on Local City Ordinances and State Laws through social media.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- a. We are in the process of physically moving code enforcement offices to the police department. The office space at the police department has been completed. The office has been freshly painted, and four desks with computers and filing cabinets were added.
- b. We are working on creating door hangers with a list of the top code enforcement violations they have been seeing. If there is a violation at a residence, a door hanger will be left identifying the code violation(s), a 14-day notice to correct the code violation, and contact information should there be any questions.

POLICE DEPARTMENT GOALS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS
GOALS:

- a. Our department has plans to increase the morale and manpower in the department. This is an ongoing goal.
(We hired one new officer who will start the police academy at the end of the month. We currently have two in our hiring process.)
- b. We will continue community policing thru events and public contacts.
(The department has two events scheduled for National Faith and Blue Weekend. The first event is a Coat Drive. We are currently collecting gently used to new coats, jackets, etc. of all sizes. We will be partnering with Northern Heights Church on October 7th to distribute the items to our community. We will also be attending a National Faith and Blue Worship Service on October 8th at Cross Culture Church. We invite the community to join us in food and fellowship after the service.)
- c. 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.
(Increased our manpower and have resumed sending officers to training. Two officers completed seep detection class and there are more officers going to classes next month.)
- d. Our department will be starting the process of becoming State Certified.
(A code enforcement/state certification LT was chosen; however, he will take over his new role once his replacement has been selected.)

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- a. We are excited to announce that Sgt Amy Stokes will be transferring to the Detective Division on September 18, 2023.
- b. Our department held a promotions/awards ceremony on September 7th. Ptl Joshua Stubbs, Ptl Austin Wells and Ptl Hope Sanders were promoted to Corporal. Capt. Justin West, Sgt Danny Hicks, Sgt Michael Middleton, Ptl Jonathon Courtney, Ptl Kenan Raines and Ptl Austin Wells received the "Act of Valor" Award for their heroic acts during the Deputy Tyee Browne incident.

7. PUBLIC WORKS – Koby Worley Reported.

On September 7, 2023 there was a Bid Opening for the 2023 LMIG Projects, this item will appear on the next Agenda, October 5, 2023.

8. UT&C – Teddy Hubbard Reported.

- a. 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.
- b. Our 12th sample at the WWTP for Heptachlor and Cyanide came back as Not Detected. We received notice from EPD that we will no longer have to test for these 2 analytes. This is a savings of \$225 a month.

- c. We sampled 24th Ave Well and 2nd St Well for PFAS and Lithium. We have received the results of this testing and all results were Not Detected.
- d. We have had 2 Effluent Service Pumps built for us and have installed them and they are working great.
- e. We sent out letters to 30 customers for Lead and Copper sampling. We will be delivering the sample bottles on Monday the 18th and will be picking them up on Tuesday the 19th. We really appreciate everyone's participation in this program.
- f. We will be having a major Water Lab inspection on October 3rd. We have already sent in all the required data that was requested before the inspection.

AGENDA ITEMS

1. Consider and Approve an Alcohol License: Owner - Mrugeshkumar Patel, Name of Business – 7th Street Cordele Inc, 1702 South 7th Street, Cordele, GA 31015. Beer & Wine Consumed Off Premises. Chief Heard approved the application on September 12, 2023. Commissioner Shephard moved to approve the Alcohol License; seconded by Commission Vice Chair Reeves.
Commissioner Owens voted aye; Commissioner Shephard voted aye; Commission Vice Chair Reeves voted – aye; Commissioner Rainey voted aye.
The motion was approved by the Commission.
2. Consider and Approve the Second Reading of An Ordinance Amending the Zoning Code of the City of Cordele to Provide for Notice of Hearing before the Board of Zoning Appeals; Repealing all Ordinances in Conflict Herewith; and For Other Purposes.
Commissioner Shephard moved to approve the Second Reading of an Ordinance; seconded by Commission Vice Chair Reeves.
Commissioner Rainey voted aye; Commission Vice Chair Reeves voted aye; Commissioner Owens voted aye; Commissioner Shephard voted aye.
The motion was approved by the Commission.
3. Consider and Approve the First Reading of the Revised Ordinance Regulating Mobile Food Vendors within the Corporate Limits of the City; Repealing all Ordinances in Conflict Herewith; and For Other Purposes.
Commission Vice Chair Reeves moved to approve the First Reading of the Revised Ordinance; seconded by Commissioner Shephard.
Commissioner Owens voted aye; Commissioner Shephard voted aye; Commissioner Rainey voted aye; Commission Vice Chair Reeves voted aye
The motion was approved by the Commission.
4. Consider and Approve the Addendum to the Agreement and Acceptance between Granicus and the City of Cordele, Georgia.
Commissioner Owens moved to approve the Addendum to the Agreement; seconded by Commissioner Shephard.
Commissioner Owens voted aye; Commission Vice Chair Reeves voted aye; Commissioner Rainey voted aye; Commissioner Shephard voted aye.
The motion was approved by the Commission.

5. Consider and Approve the Safety Cloud Proposal from HAAS Alert Service for the Fire Department.

Background Information

The Fire Department is requesting to enter into an agreement with HAAS Alert. HAAS Alert sends alerts to oncoming traffic via their vehicle system or popular mobile navigation application such as Waze that emergency vehicles are approaching and/or on the side of the road.

Commissioner Shephard moved to approve the Safety Cloud Proposal from HAAS; seconded by Commission Vice Chair Reeves.

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

6. Consider and Approve the Agreement between the Fire Department and ImageTrend for Reporting Software.

Background Information

The Fire Department Fire/EMS reporting tool is not working. ImageTrend is free reporting software offered by the State Fire Marshal’s Office with preloaded incident reports that will load directly into NFIRS. The attached agreement is the annual fee for the CAD interface with ImageTrend.

Commissioner Rainey moved to approve the Agreement; seconded by Commissioner Shephard.

Discussion: Commissioner Owens asked, will the City have to get new equipment?

Fire Chief Alligood replied, “no”. ImageTrend is a free reporting software offered by the State Fire Marshal’s Office.

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

The motion was approved by the Commission.

7. Consider Appointment of Milton Holly to the Board of Zoning Appeals.
City Manager Angela Redding stated there was an advertisement placed in the Cordele Dispatch. Commissioner Owens moved to approve the appointment of Mr. Milton Holly. The motion failed for a lack of a second.

8. Discussion: Old Boys and girls Club Building - 212 N 2nd Street.

Mr. Michael Waters – Founder and CEO of EJB Family and Outreach Service; 2310 Truman Street, Cordele Georgia: Mr. Waters had concerns regarding his present contract with the City of Cordele in use of the Old Boys and Girls Club Building at 212 N. 2nd Street.

Mr. Waters stated, he does not believe he has been treated fairly or given the same equal opportunity as other Contractors. He stated that the Agreement that was made, it was for a year, but the language that was used in the Agreement states that he has the option to renew. He stated, he was not given that option to renew. Mr. Waters questioned, if this is standard procedure for every Contract, after a year the Contract is opened to the public or is it just his Contract. According to documentation from the Department of Community Affairs that states, “should the

City plan to reoccupy the facility for eligible CBG usage other than the Agreement that was made, the City must hold a Public Hearing to offer effective citizens an opportunity to comment on the propose change.” Mr. Waters wanted to know, “if he did something wrong, to let him know, we could have sat down and had a communication to see what is going on; if I have not done anything wrong, I do not understand why it went the direction it went.”

“The background of that building in 2006, the City was awarded a half of a million dollars to build that building and it was to be used for 70% low to moderate income households. Well, 71% of Cordele is Black, not to bring race in the issue, but we represent over half of that 70% that the building is supposed to be used for and I think we are doing a good job. When we started, we had twenty-three (23) families, now we have forty-three (43) families and over a hundred (100) students that participate in our program.”

Commissioner Shephard: “What are your long-term plans?”

Mr. Waters: My plan is to use it as long as I can, but my future goal is to build my own building, but the building is for us and I want to utilize it.”

Commissioner Owens:” Along with your mentoring program, are you partnering with other agencies to bring other people in or how are you handling your mentoring, what are the qualifications for the ones that tutor?”

Mr. Waters: “usually we partner with the schools and have high school students to teach the younger students. But I m open to all partnerships and network with any organization to help out.”

Chairman Joshua Deriso: “Are you saying you feel, as if, the City has not granted you the same privileges that other occupants had of the build?” “Are you saying you feel, as if, the City should renew your Contract because you only had the contract a year?”

Mr. Waters: “No, I am not saying they should award me another year. But the previous organization was the first occupants of the building during the first inception, Southwest Georgia United. I am willing to partner with them in any way I can, but it only stayed open six (6) months and was closed for three (3) years due to financial reasons.”

Chairman Joshus Deriso: “It states that in our Charter, we have to and we should; in the past there have been some problems with people understanding the Charter. Every contract supposed to come back to the City under the Charter.

Commission Vice Chairman Royce Reeves, Sr.: “Has any of the Commissioners visited you?”

Mr. Waters: “Chairman Deriso visited us at the Juneteenth Celebration.”

Commission Vice Chairman Royce Reeves, Sr.: “You asked me to come over and watch a game and I asked you if this will go in your quarterly report and we did not go over there. I never came because people would come to me and want to know, why they had to pay to rent your building for an Event. I talked with you and asked you; I did not know the fullness of the Contract; I did not read it. But according to the City Manager, my issue is, a building that cost you nothing, no utilities and somebody in this Community need to use this building, why would they be charged for that building?” “Citizens want to know how can you lease that building out for parties?”

Mr. Waters: “First of all, I have never leased the building out for parties; we hosted the party. Now, I do rent space to families that are enrolled in my program that want to have baby showers or something and they come to me and ask if they can utilize the building, I am always present; so, I do not rent or give the building to no body.”

Commission Vice Chair Reeves: “So, what you are saying is, you have not collected any money for the use of that building?”

Mr. Waters: “What I am telling you is, as a fundraiser and other organizations do this, as a fundraiser, people that is enrolled in my program, they come to me and tell me they cannot find another building for a baby shower and they say that they cannot find another building and they come to me to utilize that building to have our event and as a donation to the program, we use this as a fundraiser, to keep our program going and to cover our operating cost.

Commission Vice Chair Reeves: “You said when you opened up that if you have done something wrong, that we can come to the table and get these things worked out. My question to you was, the reason I am asking you this because we have receipts, where that building as been rented out; we have knowledge of teenage parties where alcohol, we have not been there, these are reports. This is what I am asking you is, that’s one of the things moving forward, I am not against the program because in all programs you will have some good and bad. Moving forward if awarded this building for a second year, I just need to hear from you that there will be no extended lease agreements.

Commissioner Rainey stated he would like to hear from the other organization because he feels there is an opportunity to share the facility.

After a lengthy discussion on this item, the City Manager Angela Redding recommended to allow Julia Byron, Representative of Bridging the Gap Educational Services, Inc. to come and make a presentation; she sent in a letter of interest for the building.

- 9. CITY MANAGER’S REPORT** – City Manager Angela Redding did not make a report.
- 10. CITY ATTORNEY’S REPORT:** City Attorney Coleman did not make a report.
- 11. EXECUTIVE SESSION:** (For Personnel, Litigation, Real Estate): No Executive Session.
- 12. ADJOURNMENT:** Commissioner Owens moved to adjourn the Meeting at 10:45 AM; seconded by Commissioner Shephard; the motion was approved by the Commission.