

**MINUTES
CITY COMMISSION CALLED MEETING
OCTOBER 10, 2023**

A Called Meeting of the Cordele City Commission was held on October 10th at 9:00 AM, Cordele Police Department Training Room, 501 North 7th Street, Cordele, Georgia with the following present:

Joshua Deriso – Chairman	Royce Reeves, Sr. – Commission Vice Chair
Vesta Beal-Shephard, Commissioner	Wesley Rainey, Commissioner
Isaac Owens, Commissioner	Angela Redding, City Manager
Janice Mumphery, Recording Secretary	

Absent: Tommy Coleman, City Attorney

Call to Order: Chairman Joshua Deriso called the Called Meeting to order at 9:02 AM.

Invocation: There was a silent moment of 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 – October 10, 2023 at 9:00 AM: Commission Vice Chairman Reeves moved to approve the Agenda for October 10, 2023; seconded by Commissioner Shephard; the motion was approved by the Commission.

PUBLIC HEARING

Millage Rate

1. Public Hearing – The City of Cordele has tentatively adopted a millage rate of 11.060 mils, which is the same millage rate the city has adopted for the past four (4) years.

City Manager Angela Redding: The valuations from the tax assessor's office increased, but the City is proposing to keep the millage rate the same at 11.060, which is the same the City has had for the past four (4) years. City Manager Angela Redding stated, remember the City had to balance the Budget with Reserves, so this is the reason to we are requesting the millage rate the same.

Chairman Deriso: With us having to balance the Budget with Reserves. I know once it was mentioned we would have to look at doing something different with the millage rate and it was

brought up that the reason it may not be done this year is because of election. Is there a need to do anything different with our millage rate?

City Manager Angela Redding: No, not at this time and the reason why I say that is because of other things that we are working on that should close the gap, e.g., we discuss gas. So, we have been meeting with the current company who is handling our gas rates, as well as, M Gas. On October 17th, one of the presenters would be Municipal Gas because as we mentioned during the Budget Hearings, we have lost out on millions of dollars, just based on the company who was handling gas for us before and the things that we in place; so that one. Another is property taxes, of course, we have become more aggressive with collecting property taxes, I have mentioned to you all, when citizens come to pay their taxes, if they have a delinquent balance, then they are required to pay that balance. Another one of the presenters on October 17th, will be a company that specializes in working with Cities to collect property taxes. So, with those initiatives in place, along with, business and alcohol license, we should be able to maintain where we are, in terms of, hopefully not having to use Reserves, because we are taking steps to collect revenue that we have missed out on in the past.

Commissioner Owens: The lost of monies that we lost in gas; is anything in place now to make sure this does not happen again?

City Manager Angela Redding: Yes, we are already working on that, with gas Municipal, they will send you the rate that you need to bill for gas every month based on the market, but with the company that we have now, they were not sending the numbers that we needed, in order to bill gas correctly. So, we have corrected that, also Interruptible those are some of our large users, sometimes we have to place them on notice, that in the Winter months, in order to continue to provide gas services to our citizens, we may have to interrupt them from time to time. Crisp Power is one example, but we have not had to do that. But we do need to look at the pricing. Another company West Frazier, the way it was set-up, they would project, we are going to use x amount of gas. Well, what they did not use, because they were utilizing our system, then the unused portion, they would bill back to the City of Cordele, so we were paying them and that should have not happened. So those are all things that we have been working on to correct and those are just some of the issues we have had in the past. The way it is set up right now, we have C gas, CMC, Blackbelt, CMC, somehow, they are related, but the way it is set up, the Former City Manager would show the rates and say this is what you need to bill for gas, Municipal Gas can do this. We do not a person who can watch the market and determine what we need to bill for gas. So, all of this started after we started looking at gas and seeing how money we were losing and basically, we have been billing the same, instead of, when the Market fluctuates then you make an adjust on your gas. Remember, last year gas prices were really high and we were billing at the lower rate and we lost money.

Commissioner Rainey: Basically, previous administration pre bought gas and when they pre bought, they bought it and it was stored, they had the understanding with the gas company, every time a rate got to certain dollar figure they bought more gas. There is gas in storage, but I am not sure we have ever been able to keep up how much pre bought gas we have ever bought.

Commissioner Owens: Where is the gas stored?

City Manager Angela Redding: Yes, we do have gas in storage. What happened is, last year when they bought the \$400,000; no, they did not reach out to the City or anything. So, the gas is in storage, when we meet with them, we said go back and show us the gas that was in storage, how it has been used. So, we have those reports, but the thing is the gas is in storage in Alabama and Louisiana, we have to pay property taxes on the gas that is stored in those Cities. With Municipal Gas you do not pay for storage. When the rates were high last year, they had bought the gas and basically that is what it is, we have pre-paid accounts with these companies.

Comments from the Public:

Mr. Milton Holly: Will it be cheaper to store the gas here in Cordele?

City Manager Angela Redding: Whatever company we use, they handle the storage. With Municipal Gas we will not be billed for storage because they are assuming the cost for storing the gas.

Mr. Holly: Do you have to pay taxes there?

City Manager Angela Redding: No, we pay taxes because the agency that we are using now, the gas is stored in tanks in Alabama and Louisiana, that is where they have their storage capacity at.

ADJOURNMENT: Commissioner Owens moved to adjourn at 9:19 AM; seconded by Commissioner Owens; the motion was approved by the Commission.