

**MINUTES
CITY COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING
July 5, 2022**

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

Joshua Deriso, Commission Chair
Wesley Rainey, Commissioner
Angela Redding, City Manager

Vesta Beal-Shephard, Commissioner
Isaac Owens, Commissioner
Janice Mumphery, Recording Secretary

City Attorney Absent: Tommy Coleman

Staff Absent: Steve Fulford - Public Works Director/Asst. City Manager, David Wade – Humans Resources Director.

Staff present: Police Chief Jalon Heard, Irene Cantrell – HUD Director, Fire Chief Augusta Telfair, Debra Perry – City Clerk, Jack Wood., Sr. Chief Codes Official, Melinda Spiller – H. R. Administrative Assistant, Debbie Wright – UT&C Director, Cathy Mygrant – Asst. Finance Director, Bobby Stennett – Information Technology, Jackie Walker – Municipal Court Clerk, Jimmy Jackson – Water and Sewer Superintendent, Marcia Pridgen – Public Works Administrative Assistant.

Others present: Carol Johnson, Fannie Deriso, Ronald Michael, Reggie Nance, Charlie Butts, Shon Oliver, Evette Johnson, Senecius Whitehead, Bradley Brown, Davontae Hunt, Ruby Jackson, Marie Williams, Vivian Jones, Michael Waters, Comeshia Battle.

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

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

Invocation: There was a moment of silent prayer.

Pledge Allegiance to the United States Flag: The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Commissioner Owens.

Roll Call: A quorum was established.

Attendee's Name	Title	Absent	Present
Joshua Deriso	Commission Chairman		✓
Vesta Beal-Shephard	Commissioner Ward 1		✓
Isaac Owens	Commissioner Ward 3		✓
Wesley Rainey	Commissioner Ward 4		✓

Approval of Agenda – July 5, 2022: Commissioner Shephard moved to approve the Agenda for July 5, 2022; seconded by Commissioner Rainey; the motion was approved by the Commission.

Approval of Regular Meeting Minutes – June 21, 2022: Commissioner Rainey moved to approve minutes for June 21, 2022; seconded by Commissioner Owens; the minutes were approved by the Commission.

Completed Jobs:

Love’s RV Stop \$1,300,000.00
Job Valuation: \$1,500,000.00 **Permit Fee: \$3,680.00**

Commercial Construction Projects

Total of Job Valuations: \$13,688,876.00 Total of Permit Fees: \$32,912.00

Residential Construction Projects

Total of Job Valuations: \$12,229,187.00 Permit Fees: \$27,899.00

Combined Total of Commercial/Residential: \$24,418,063.00

Note: Incorrect total was listed on the report. The correct total is \$25,918,063.00.

5. Personnel Director – Melinda Spillers Reported

May 30, 2022: Promoted Equipment Operator to Foreman in the Water and Sewer Department.

June 21, 2022: Conducted random drug and alcohol screens on CDL drivers. All results came back negative.

June 21, 2022: Participated in the Paychex kick-off conference call to set dates and agenda for training and implementation of the program.

June 24, 2022: Submitted the completed renewal applications for general liability, gas and cyber security insurance policies to Jeff Cobb and Michael Shurley of Akin Insurance Agency.

6. Municipal Court – Jackie Walker Reported

Total Court Cases	244
Bench Warrants Ordered	14
License Suspensions Ordered	35
Total fines and fees	\$23,073.50
Payments received	\$15,814.74
Defendants Incarcerated	2
Total Days Jail Sentenced	22

7. Police Chief – Chief Heard Reported

Part I Crimes 46

Homicide/Murder	1
Robberies	2
Aggravated Assault	6 (2 adult arrests and 2 juvenile arrests)
Larceny (Thefts)	33 (4 enter autos; 12 shoplifting w/11 arrest; 17 other thefts)
Burglary	4 (4 residential)

Part II Crimes 97

Incidents Reported	137
Community Contacts	33
Citations Issued	171
Warnings Issued	131
Total Call	1,369

Special Items of Interest

The Detective Division is actively working along with GA Bureau of Investigation on leads pertaining to the Homicide that occurred on June 26th.

Departmental News

- Timothy Arnette will be starting this upcoming week as a Patrol Officer. He will attend the Police Academy next week.
- Danny Hicks is hired as a Patrol Sergeant.
- Eddie Thomas, Retired Police Officer, is currently in the hiring process.
- Cordele Police and Fire Departments are hosting “Cordele Summerfest 2022”. This event will be held on August 1st, 5 – 8 PM at the Community Clubhouse.
- During the last five years, our department has received a total of \$20,661.00 reimbursement from the Bullet Proof Vest Grant.
- Upcoming Event: National Faith & Blue Weekend, October 7-10, 2022.

8. Public Works – Jimmy Jackson Reported

Engineering

2021-0107 HUNT BROTHERS PIZZA In progress.

2022 0113 POPEYES (old Wells Hardware bldg.) Waiting for a begin date.

2022-0116 FOAMWORKS Waiting for a begin date.

Gas

Work on the Cedar Creek gas main extension has begun.

Street

The Street Department began replacing the culvert pipe on 6th Ave. at Norfolk Southern Railroad on Tuesday, June 21st. We opened the road to traffic on the 28th. There is still some work to be done on the inflow and outfall, such as smoothing, hydro seeding and ditch cleaning on the downstream side. We will also need to re-asphalt this section, which we will do at the same time that we install the new road through the Bethel Cemetery Annex around the first of August.

Water/Sewer

Locate utilities for the 8th Street Sidewalk Project. This project is 100% complete.

9. UC&T – Debbie Wright Reported.

Waste Water Treated 55,000,000 gallons

Year to date 465,000,000 gallons

Well levels have dropped over 20 feet in the last two weeks

10. Information Technology Update – Bobby Stennett Reported

No Report.

AGENDA ITEMS

1. Elect a Temporary Vice Chair – Commission Chair Joshua Deriso stated, the City Charter makes no provision for such a thing.
2. Consider a Second Reading of an Ordinance to Amend the Zoning Ordinance of the City of Cordele, Georgia, to Designate Permissible Uses of Solar Electrical Systems; to Repeal all Ordinances in Conflict Therewith; and For Other Purposes. City Manager Angela Redding stated that the Planning Commission met and they wanted a definition added, where it says a principal building, the definition that would be used for that is the definition the City has in the Zoning

Ordinance. City Manager Angela Redding stated this is the only thing that would be added to the Ordinance. Commission Chair Joshua Deriso stated, since verbiage has been changed, this will need to be a First Reading of an Ordinance. Commissioner Owens moved to consider the First Reading of an Ordinance, to amend the Zoning Ordinance of the City of Cordele, to designate permissible uses of solar electrical systems; seconded by Commissioner Shephard; the Commission approved the First Reading to amend the Ordinance.

3. Consider an Event Permit for a wedding at Perlis Park, 112 West 12th Avenue, on September 24, 2022 at 5:00 PM. This is the wedding of Shaimake Woods. The permit was approved by Police Chief Heard on June 30, 2022. Commissioner Shephard moved to approve the Event Permit; seconded by Commissioner Owens; the Event Permit was approved by the Commission.
4. Consider Award to Griffin Grading & Concrete, LLC in the amount of \$297,649.92 for the 2022 LMIG Paving Project. Commissioner Shephard moved to approve this Award to Griffin Grading & Concrete, LLC; seconded by Commissioner Rainey; the motion was approved by the Commission.

Streets included in 2022 LMIG Project

15th Street beginning at 16th Avenue and ending at CSX RR
West 21st Avenue beginning at 15th Street and ending at 13th Street
West 18th Avenue beginning at 7th Street and ending at 8th Street

5. Discussion of the Downtown Minimum Maintenance Ordinance.
The Commission agreed to wait until the language is changed on this Ordinance.
6. Discussion to increase Façade Grant – This Grant is for Downtown Businesses only. The business owners of the Downtown Area would have to reach out to Monica Rentfrow Director of Downtown Development. City Manager Angela Redding stated the request for an increase in the Façade Grant would be considered in the upcoming budget.
7. Discussion to create a Small Business Development Commission: Commission Chair Joshua Deriso stated the purpose of this Commission would be to have a plan to increase small businesses and to support small businesses through some resources that this City have, working in partnership with Southwest GA Empowerment Center because Southwest GA Empowerment Center has a point person to do this. The point of this Commission would be to help out small businesses to come into marketing. After a lengthy discussion on creating a Small Business Development Commission, a motion was not made for this item.
8. Reconsider request from Chairman Deriso to create a new Commission named the “Nonprofit Westside Alliance” with the purpose to coordinate and work with nonprofit, community, civil, and faith-based organizations to enhance communities on the Westside. No motion was made to discuss this matter. Commission Chair Joshua Deriso, stated, “there is not going to be a motion, so we will move on.” Commission Chair Deriso responded to a question from the audience, “This was quick because they are not going to bring a motion.”
Dr. Ruby Jackson – “I know, but this is ridiculous, in my opinion.”
Commission Joshua Deriso – “We don’t do what the citizens ask for, I get to control the meeting, Dr. Jackson would you like to have anything to say? It’s my meeting.”

Dr. Ruby Jackson – “I think it would be beneficial for the Westside of the Community to do this and I also think that in that last discussion you all had about the DMO, you saying that we can meet with them and let them know because if they’re not doing it, is because nobody has pressured them to do so, so put the pressure on let them know what we want done, and if they don’t do it, make a motion to make the change. This is my opinion.”

Commission Chair Deriso – “Thank you for your guidance in that. You are a Pioneer in our Community; I appreciate you for that.”

Dr. Ruby Jackson – “I do think the Westside Alliance would be beneficial to the people that live on the West side, I live on the Westside.”

Commission Chair Deriso – “South GA TV said that, he alluded to being a Strong Chair, even though, he’s growing weaker political by the minute. I’m gonna do my job regardless, my job is to get things on the Agenda and push policy that should be pushed in the City, I don’t care how it looks, I can look weak, I’m going to keep the #StrongChair because Strong Chair doesn’t mean that I get everything I want up here, all the policy. It means everything that they have thrown at me, they haven’t seen me sweat yet, that’s what Strong Chair means. So, to South GA TV, who needs to get their facts straight and be more accurate, that’s what the whole point of #StrongChair. But my job is to push what I think will help this City, bring it to the Commission, because technically that’s the way it supposed to work in an efficient and effective functioning government; you bring it to the Commission, they vote for it or against it.” It’s on record that I brought it to them.

Commissioner Wesley Rainey – “Chairman may I respond on Mrs. Jackson’s comment?”

Commission Chair Deriso – “Yes sir, you are in order.”

Commissioner Rainey- “The reason why I don’t want to do or consider this is the Landbank. We are doing our best to get the Landbank going and there were some meetings and training. The Landbank is an Authority and it is actually going to have powers to do things. So, with the Landbank, if we can get functioning and get the right members on there, we are going to be able to improve the West side.”

Commission Chair Deriso – “Sir Landbank is housing, the people on the Westside have more needs than just Housing. This is about building non-profits up for the other needs. We have a DFCS Center that is half functioning, we do not have an Unemployment Center. It is about building up non-profits, you are talking about Housing, but you do not live on the Westside, you are not from the Westside, so you would not know them things, and I am sorry to cut you off, but that is pure ignorance that I cannot keep entertaining.

Commissioner Rainey – “Ignorance?”

Commission Chair Deriso – “I can’t entertain it because the Landbank is mostly about Housing, that does not solve a lot of needs, there are services that needs to be had on the Westside. As you see, it says, just like you pointed out to be me about the Griffin thing. Non-profits Community Center and faith-based organizations, it doesn’t have Housing in there. So, we are going to move on”.

9. Rename Cordele City Commission to Cordele City Council. Commission Chair Deriso stated the reason he brought this to the Commission is because technically when you have a City, most places refer their City to Council, not Commission and as I said earlier in the opening, we technically do not have a Commission form of government anyway. If you look at it on the GA Cities website, GMA website. So, it will not be changing the form of our government, it will be changing the name of our government. If we want to change the form of our government, it will

have to go through the General Assembly, but we are not changing the form of our government; we are just changing the name to reflect the that we are a City verses a County, so do we have a motion for #9?

Commissioner Owens moved to have a discussion on this item, rename Cordele City Commission to Cordele City Council; motion failed for a lack of a second.

- 10. Discussion –** Chairman request to restructure City Governmental Departments. No motion was made to discuss this item. Commission Chair Deriso stated it is not anybody’s authority to actually restructure Government, other than this body that sits up here. I did not write the Charter; the Charter was written before I got up here and most of us up here had to rewrite in 2020. But what has been pushed in email is not the correct information. It is not the City Manager’s duty to actual tell this body what to do or what can be done. It says exactly. “Except as otherwise provided in this Charter, the City Commission by Ordinance shall prescribe the functions of duties and establish, abolish, alter, consolidate, or leave vacant all nonelective offices, positions of employment, departments, and agencies of the City as necessary for the proper administration of the affairs and government of this City.” Commission Chair Deriso stated, “It is our job to make policy and I understand with Edward Beach, that wasn’t necessarily the case, but it is our job to make policy and then that policy is carried out and implemented by the City Manager in the Department Heads, which they control. But it is clear as day, in black and white, in our Charter, that is this body wants to have a more efficient and effective government, then we can consolidate departments. The plan I sent you all actually saves money, which we are already paying out more money with our new thirty and out Retirement Plan and also Health Benefits, we are about \$400,00.00 with those alone, so anything for us to save money and trim and slim our government departments down will be beneficial and healthful. So, this is the point of restructuring our government. But I do agree with the City Manager, it is best with moving forward in the budget, but I just wanted to set clear on a principle, that it is not the City Manager’s authority and it is okay to disagree with a person on principle, she’s right that the best time is when we talk about and negotiate the budget, but where it is wrong at, is not the City Manager’s authority; it is this governing body if we want to consolidate, alter or eliminate any departments”.
- Commissioner Vesta Beal Shephard** - “I would think that restructuring the departments would come as a day-to-day operation of the City, where we say she is in charge of day-to-day operations, and then she would bring it to us at the budget planning that we need to make some amendments or some recourse or some requests. I didn’t think that we would be making no direct decision as to the day-to-day operations of the City of Cordele.
- Commission Chair Joshua Deriso** – “Before this year, how many times did you read our Charter?”
- Commissioner Shephard** – “I read this what you just passed out”.
- Commission Chair Deriso** – “How many times did you read our Charter?”
- Commission Shephard** – “I don’t know how many times, sir.”
- Commission Chair Deriso** – “You have not, you admitted to me in Executive Session that you have not.”
- Commissioner Shephard** – “Yes, I have read some of it.
- Commission Chair Deriso** – “you said to me in Executive Session, you have not read our Charter.
- Commissioner Shephard** – “I did not learn it all, but I have read it.”

Commission Chair Deriso – “And in our trainings, I don’t know where you are.

Commissioner Shephard – “You circled Sec. 3.10. Administrative and service departments.

Commission Chair Deriso – “And in our trainings, with the GMA, the new elected training that I went to and Commissioner Owens went to, it tells you the responsibilities of things, of the governing body and the City Manager. She is in charge with carrying out policies that we set. Chief Telfair, a couple minutes ago, talked about us going out to the County and caused liabilities for the City. It is our authority, if we want to make that change based on what our Fire Chief is recommending to us, we have that authority, not the City Manager. The City Manager carry out what we pass.

Commissioner Shephard – “True, well what is our policy on restructuring departments? What is our policy, what is the City’s policy on restructuring? What is the City of Cordele’s policy?”

Commission Chair Deriso – “The more you talk, the more ignorant you sound.”

Commissioner Shephard – “And a good evening to you all.”

Commission Chair Deriso – “You do not have a policy on restructuring, it is clear right here that, that is what it is.”

Commissioner Shephard – “This is your meeting, Good Evening.”

Commission Chair Deriso – “Thank you, it is, you have a good one.’

Commissioner Shephard – ‘Thank you sir”

Commission Chair Deriso – The main two (Commissioners Shephard and Rainey) that are walking out, are the main two that have not done anything for years, thank you all.”

Commissioner Shephard – “And the next time when a meeting is called, please let me know, but this drama, I will not entertain.

Commission Chair Deriso – “It’s not drama, it’s the truth, but you cannot handle it.”

- 11. ADJOURNMENT:** Commissioners Shephard and Rainey left the meeting at 6:53 p.m. Commission Chair Joshua Deriso stated, “I guess we are through with the meeting; we cannot have a motion to adjourn because we do not have a quorum, but they do not know that either because they have not read their Charter.