

**MINUTES  
CITY COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING  
November 21, 2023**

The City of Cordele Commission held a Regular Meeting on November 21, 2023 at 9:00 AM, Cordele City Hall Courtroom, 501 North 7<sup>th</sup> Street, Cordele, Georgia with the following present:

Joshua Deriso, Commission Chair  
Vesta Beal Shephard, Commissioner  
Angela Redding, City Manager  
Alisha Williams, Asst. City Clerk

Wesley Rainey, Commissioner  
Isaac Owens, Commissioner  
Tommy Coleman, City Attorney

**Absent:** Royce Reeves, Sr., Commission Vice Chair, Genivieve Mumphery, Recording Secretary

**Staff present:** Rusty Bridgers – Finance Director, Fire Chief Todd Alligood, David Wade – Human Resource Director, Police Chief Jalon Heard, Steve Fulford – Asst. City Manager/Public Works Director, Irene Cantrell – HUA Director, Jackie Walker – Municipal Court Clerk, Debbie Wright – UC&T Director, Koby Worley – Public Works – Street Superintendent.

**Staff absent:** Steve Fulford.

**Media Present:** 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 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 – November 21, 2023:**

Commissioner Rainey moved to Amend the Agenda to remove Agenda Items number seven and eight until the next Meeting; seconded by Commissioner Shephard.

**Discussion:**

Commissioner Owens inquired regarding the reason for removing the items.

No answer was given.

**Vote:** Commissioner Rainey voted aye; Commissioner Owens voted nay; Commissioner Shephard vote aye.

Motion failed to remove Agenda Items number seven (7) and eight (8).

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Chairman Deriso asked for Approval of Agenda for November 21, 2023. There was no motion to approve the Agenda for November 21, 2023. Chairman Deriso stated, no Agenda, no Meeting, we shall leave. We cannot leave because the adjournment is on the Agenda.

Chairman asked the City Manager if she would like to say something.  
City Manager Angela Redding stated that there are items on the Agenda that needs to be approved by the Commission.

Chairman Deriso stated; “instead of being single minded and tunnell focus. This Commission needs to be above pettiness and handle business today; because you cannot get two items on this Agenda removed. I think we need to move forward because there are urgent things that the City needs.”

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA** – November 21, 2023: Commissioner Owens moved to approve the Agenda for November 21, 2023; seconded by Commissioner Rainey.  
Vote: Commissioner Shephard voted nay; Commissioner Owens voted aye; Commissioner Rainey voted aye; Chairman Deriso voted aye.  
Approval of the Agenda for November 21, 2023, was approved with a 3/1 vote by the Commission.

**APPROVAL OF REGULAR MEETING MINUTES** – November 7, 2023: Commissioner Owens moved to approve the Minutes of November 7, 2023; seconded by Commissioner Shephard; the Minutes were approved by the Commission.

**SPEAKERS APPEARANCES:** No Request.

**SPEAKERS ON A SPECIFIC AGENDA ITEM:** Speaker will have three (3) minutes:  
**Mr. Benjamin Gatliff – Agenda Item #1:** 101 East 13<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Suite A, Cordele, Georgia.  
Mr. Gatliff expressed his concern regarding the Commission granting an Alcohol License to a business near a DUI School. Mr. Gatliff asked if the Commission would reconsider granting an Alcohol License to this business.

**Commissioner Shephard:** Will this be a grocery store selling Beer and Wine on site or will the Beer and Wine be taken with the consumer?  
Does the State of Georgia certify that you are a State of Geogia Educational Facility? If so, do you have it in writing?

**Mr. Gatliff:** “We conduct a psycho-educational program called Prime for Life; it is for people convicted of DUI or other substance related charges. It is to education them about practicing good choices. I do not know fully what the circumstances of this business, my understanding, for what I have been told, is that they would be selling beer and wine to be consumed off the premises. But since it is immediately close to our business and other recovery-oriented businesses, it is potentially for people to go on to other areas consuming the beverages. This is contrary to what we are trying to do and also contrary to other recovery-oriented businesses in the immediate area.

**Commissioner Shephard:** “Do you have a certificate from the State of Georgia saying that your facility is a State of Georgia Certified Educational Facility.

**Mr. Gatliff:** “My understanding from Mr. Michael is, “yes we do.”

Commissioner Owens: How long have you all had the certification?

**Mr. Gatliff:** I have been certified, in the Prime for Life Program, since 2007 and we have had that DUI School, at that location, since 2016.

**Commissioner Owens:** If you all have been at this location since 2016; the certification we are talking about for the State, was it implied at that moment or is that something that was obtained after going into business.

**Mr. Gatliff:** We got certified by the State in 2016 to teach the Risk Reduction Classes, which as I said, “my understanding that it is a psycho-educational program for individuals convicted of substance related offenses, including, but not limited to driving under the influence.”

**Commissioner Owens:** “In our last Commissioner’s Meeting, it was explained to us by our Attorney, that it was not being viewed as a school. Is that correct?”

**City Attorney Tommy Coleman:** “Yes, this is correct.”

**Commissioner Owens:** How do we differentiate between the two, based on what you are telling us and what the State has recognized you all as being, is my question?

**Mr. Gatliff:** I can only explain the curriculum that I teach. I am certified by the State and also, the company that offers the curriculum, they view that curriculum as a psycho-educational program.

**Commissioner Owens:** The Commission biggest issues are, what the State has said that we are able to do. This is the reason we asked the City Attorney to check to see if this is the “school”, which is mentioned in the Ordinance.

**Chairman Deriso:** “While educational programs are taught at the facility, the legal definition by the State, you all are not considered a State Certified School. The Commission, legally binding, cannot approve a store near your premises, if it is a State of Georgia Certificate School. This is the issue the City Commission is having. The facility is not protected under that statue of law, because the facility is not a K-12 school.

### **DEPARTMENT GOALS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS:**

**1. FINANCE DIRECTOR: Rusty Bridgers Reported.**

Mr. Bridgers stated the Finance Department is attempting to get through the 2023 Audit.

**2. FIRE DEPARTMENT REPORT: Fire Chief Alligood Reported.**

**Goals:**

1. Provide best possible service to our citizens and visitors to Cordele.
2. Continue to encourage and expand training for firefighters.
3. Complete hydrant maintenance.
4. Complete yearly building pre-plans.

**Accomplishments:**

1. Two firefighters Conner Smith and Cody Griffin completed Basic Firefighter Certification class at GPSTC. The 428-hour class is taught over 10 weeks. After completing the class; our firefighters have achieved certifications in Firefighter 1, HAZMAT Awareness and Operations, Structural Fire Control, and Interior Search and Rescue.
2. The Blood Drive that Cordele Fire sponsored with The American Red Cross was a success. Our goal was to have 20-22 donors and we ended the day with 20 donors. Thanks to everyone that came out and donated blood. Every 2 seconds, someone in the U.S. needs blood!

**3. HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT – Irene Cantrell Reported.**

1. **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) household

**ACCOMPLISHMENTS:**

Lanier Engineering Firm has advised that the McLeod Subdivision Sewer Line Improvements Project is Complete.

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

To start and complete the home improvements work for at least three (3) of the four (4) 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).

3. **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. This goal of the EDRLF Committee has been accomplished.

4. **GOAL: OFFICIAL CITY MAPS UPDATES:**

To be prepared for the upcoming U.S Census Bureau Boundary and Annexation Survey updates.

**ACCOMPLISHMENTS:**

Progress is being made in placing current Annexations on the City's Official Map and in placing Zoning Amendments on the City's Zoning Map.

**ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

All of the latest Annexations and Boundary Map changes were reported by the City and River Valley Regional Commission to the U.S. Census Bureau as requested in May 2023. This Goal has been accomplished.

**5. GOAL - CDBG 2023 AND 2024 APPLICATIONS:**

To be prepared for the CDBG 2023 or 2024 applications for Housing Rehabilitation on the North West Section and the Gillespie Seldon Historic District of the City as the two main target areas or possibly as a City- Wide target area.

**ACCOMPLISHMENT:**

We have advised River Valley Regional Commission; Grant Administrator the City of Cordele is very interested in applying for CDBG Grant Funds for Housing Rehabilitation Assistance.

Mrs. Cantrell attended Work Shops in Augusta, Georgia and Macon, Georgia.

**6. GOAL:**

Continue organizing stored files in Community Development Department.

**ACCOMPLISHMENTS:**

The work is in progress.

**4. HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT: David Wade Reported.**

The Goal for the Human Resource Department is to effectively manage the life cycle of all employees, providing a fair employment atmosphere.

**Recruitment**

Workforce Needs Assessment and Recruitment Strategy kick-off meeting was held on October 23, 2023, with sixteen (16) participants that comprised the Panel. They were presented with four (4) with some of the issues that the City is faced with now, with employees needs and recruitment. Those questionnaires are due back on November 22, 2023, to be submitted to the Georgia Cities Solution on November 29, 2023, another meeting is scheduled for December 13, 2023.

**Improve the Employee Experience**

Still working on the Wage and Compensation Study. Last month there was a series of FLSA questionnaires that was presented to selected positions, they have been completed and submitted to Condrey and Associates for a follow-up.

**Succession Planning**

Continuous movement in upper key positions, however, we have had promotions in the Water and Sewer Department, where a Distribution Mechanic was promoted to an Equipment Operator.

**5. MUNICIPAL COURT: Jackie Walker Reported.**

**GOALS FOR CORDELE MUNICIPAL COURT**

- Report accurate and complete information for the court and public.
- Complete court docket for the judge in a timely manner.

**ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR CORDELE MUNICIPAL COURT**

- Training was completed for Court Clerk Recertification by both Chief and Deputy Clerk for November.
- All dockets and court dispositions were turned into the state on time.

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

**CODES DEPARTMENT**

**Goals & Accomplishments:**

- 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.
- We continue to address and identify code related issues within the city through education and voluntary cooperation. Again, our intentions are to keep enforcement at a minimum.
- We are continually looking for training opportunities and are working on getting each code officer certified on inspections.
- We have codes meetings every Wednesday at 8:30 to discuss new trends, ongoing cases and how we can improve.

**POLICE DEPARTMENT**

**Goals & Accomplishments:**

Our department has plans to increase the morale and manpower in the department.

**(Corey Watson is in week 9 of the police academy in Forsyth. He is scheduled to graduate December 15th. We currently have two applicants in the hiring process). We have 5 openings.**

We will continue community policing thru events and public contacts.

**(On November 17th, the Police Department joined with the Georgia State Patrol on the Toys for Tots Drive. Toys for Tots gives donations to the Adopt an Angel Toy Drive which helps children in our community. We are also collecting new, unwrapped toys for Adopt an Angel Toy Drive. A collection box has been placed in the police front lobby. We are currently receiving donations for our Annual Shop with a Cop.)**

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.

**(Officers are continuing to go to different trainings and conferences. Lt Pheil recently completed Leadership Training).**

**7. PUBLIC WORKS – Koby Worley Reported.**

**Littering Signs:** Littering Signs have been posted throughout the City. They were donated by the Chamber and Keep Crisp Beautiful. There are twenty-four (24) in different locations.

**Public Awareness:** PAP Customer Mailer is being prepared for mailout, in the Gas Department. They will be mailed out before the end of the year.

**Leak Survey:** The Leak Survey is 100% complete.

**Annual Reports:** Have begun gathering data for the PHMSA7100 and the EIA-176 Annual Reports. Reports are due March 2024.

**Street Department - 2023 L.M.I.G. Project:** Pavement has been completed, 22<sup>nd</sup> Avenue between Joe Wright and 15<sup>th</sup> Street; Midway Road between CSX Railroad and South Georgia Technical College.

**Additional Work approved by the Commission:** A crew comes in on Saturday. The first Saturday, seventeen (17) alleys were done; on November 18<sup>th</sup>, nineteen (19) alleys were done.

**8. UT&C – Debbie Wright Reported.**

Debbie Wright was reappointed to the State Board of Examiners for Water and Wastewater Operators and Laboratory Analyst for another 4-year term by the Governor.

Debbie Wright and Hal Little took an Ethics Training Class as required for the Water Lab.

Debbie Wright and Hal Little attended the mandatory state training for the Lead Service Line Inventory program. All information gathered during this process will be put in this data base with 120 Water.

We had to have PWWP #1 rewind. It is back in service.

We have had to address a problem at 24th Ave Well. The chlorine exhaust fan was corroding the transfer switch. We have had to make some modifications and are waiting on a part for the transfer switch to get it back in service.

**AGENDA ITEMS**

- 1. Consider and Approve an Alcohol License:** AJ's, 305 South 7th Street, Cordele, GA. Owner – Anand Vijay Kumar Patel, 404 E 15th Avenue, Cordele, GA. Beer and Wine Consumed Off Premises. Police Chief Heard approved the application on November 2, 2023. A motion was not made for Agenda Item #1.
- 2. Consider and Approve a Parade Permit:** City of Cordele Annual Christmas Parade sponsored by Cordele-Crisp Chamber of Commerce will be held on Thursday, November 30, 2023 at 6:00 PM. The route for the parade: starting at City Hall, 501 N. 7<sup>th</sup> St., ending at the Cordele Community Clubhouse, 108 East 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Commissioner Shephard moved to approve the Parade Permit; seconded by Commissioner Rainey. Commissioner Rainey voted aye; Commissioner Shephard vote aye; Commissioner Owens voted aye.

The Parade Permit was approved by the Commission.

3. Consider and Approve the Proposal from Hutchins Clenney Rumsey Huckaby, P. C. to Provide Accounting Services to the City of Cordele.  
Commissioner Shephard moved to approve the Proposal to provide Accounting Services to the City of Cordele; seconded by Commissioner Owens.  
Commissioner Owens voted aye; Commissioner Rainey voted aye; Commissioner Shephard voted aye.  
The Proposal from Hutchins Clenney Rumsey Huckaby, P. C. was approved by the Commission.
4. Consider and Approve the Generator Preventative Maintenance Agreements for U, C, & T.  
Commissioner Shephard moved to approve the Generator Preventive Maintenance Agreements; seconded by Commissioner Owens.  
Commissioner Rainey voted aye; Commissioner Shephard voted aye; Commissioner Owens voted aye.  
The Generator Preventive Maintenance Agreements was approved by the Commission.
5. Consider and Approve the First Reading of an Ordinance Regarding the Disposal of Discarded, Dismantled, Wrecked, Scrapped, Ruined, or Junk Motor Vehicles in the Possession of the City of Cordele; Repealing all Ordinances in Conflict Herewith; and for Other Purposes.  
Commissioner Shephard moved to approve the First Reading of an Ordinance; seconded by Commissioner Rainey.  
Commissioner Rainey voted aye; Commissioner Owens voted aye; Commissioner Shephard voted aye.  
The First Reading of an Ordinance was approved by the Commission.
6. Consider and Approve a Resolution Accepting the Donation of a Hurst Power Unit; Repealing All Resolutions in Conflict Herewith; and for Other Purposes.  
Commissioner Rainey moved to approve the Resolution Accepting the Donation of a Hurst Power Unit; seconded by Commissioner Owens.  
Commissioner Owens voted aye; Commissioner Shephard voted aye; Commissioner Rainey voted aye.  
A Resolution Accepting the Donation of a Hurst Power Unit was approved by the Commission.
7. Discussion - City Civility Award.  
Commissioner Owens moved to discuss the City's Civility Award.  
The motion to discuss failed for a lack of a second.

**Background:** Chairman Deriso stated at the GMA Savannah Summit, the City Civility Award was presented and accepted; I have had the Award, it is now in the City of Cordele's Vault, in the podium. Chairman Deriso stated that he was never asked for the Civility Award, but the Award is in City Hall. Chairman Deriso also stated he does not believe the Commission is deserving of this Award, based on how the Commission has behaved. Chairman Deriso stated, he will challenge the Commission Body to do not display the Award until the Commission can behave civil toward each other.

8. Discussion - Appointment of the Chairman and Vice Chairman by the Governing Body and the Creation of an At-Large Ward.  
A motion was not made to discuss this item
9. **CITY MANAGER'S REPORT – City Manager Angela Redding Reported.**  
City Manager Angela Redding presented a Power Point for her report.

**Community Meetings with Express Disposal, new Solid Waste Service Company**

Thursday, November 16, 2023 – First Meeting

Thursday, December 14, 2023 – 5:00 – 7:00 PM – Community Clubhouse

**Red Ribbon Week at Southwestern Elementary School**

Crisp County Middle School – McGruff was on hand to greet the students.

**Comprehensive Plan**

- One of the fundamental responsibilities of government is planning for future growth and development of the Community.
- The results of planning are contained in a document, known as the Comprehensive Plan.
- Effective planning ensures that future development will occur where, when, and how the Community and Local Government wants.
- While every Comprehensive Plan is unique, in general, all address four topics: (1) existing condition, (2) goals and objectives, (3) implementation strategies and (4) the future land-use map.
- This will be the fifth Comprehensive Planning document prepared by the County, Cordele, and Arabi in compliance with the Georgia Planning Act of 1989.

Community Input Survey 2023 can be accessed through a QR Code. The QR Code can be scanned, filled out and sent directly to River Valley. The QR Code will be placed on the City of Cordele website; this is another way the survey can be filled out, in addition to the written surveys.

Members are needed for the Stakeholders Committee and the Steering Committee, if you have an interest in participating with the Comprehensive Plan, please alert City Manager Angela Redding.

**Accomplishments of the Present Administration**

- Amended the City of Cordele Zoning Map to rezone the current Office and Industrial District (OI) on 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue from 5<sup>th</sup> Street to Fleming Road to Highway Commercial District (HC).
- Passed an Ordinance to Establish and Designate Food Truck Zones in the City.
- Hired a Fire Chief.
- Approved the 2023 SPLOST Intergovernmental Agreement
- Purchased a new Ladder Truck
- Engaged Condrey & Associates for a Classification and Compensation Study.

- Revamped Code Enforcement
- Awarded Redesign of the Website to Granicus
- Revenue Recovery – Approved an agreement with Government Tax Solutions (GTS) to assist with the collection of delinquent property taxes.
- Juvenile Crime & Community Safety Committee – The following have agreed to serve on the
  - Pastor Terrence Walker
  - Summer Murray
  - Dr. Ruby Jackson
  - Courtney Oliver
  - Mario Kellogg

**Energy Assistance Program**

The program will begin December 1<sup>st</sup> for the elderly and homebound citizens. The location changed from the Farmer’s Market to the Dowdy Building; the date for the general population will be January 2<sup>nd</sup>.

**Action Items**

**VC3 Service Advantage Change Order**

The City engaged in an Agreement with VC3 for IT services. When the City initially engaged with VC3, we had 85 mailboxes, in terms of email, now that number has increased to 116, this is an additional thirty-five (35) mailboxes, we are now starting the process of email migration, but the City needs to make sure all of the mailboxes are included in the migration. City Manager Angela Redding is asking for an approval on this item.

**Motion:** Commissioner Rainey moved to approve the VC3 Service Advantage Change Order; seconded by Commissioner Shephard.

Commissioner Owens voted aye; Commissioner Shephard voted aye; Commissioner Rainey voted aye.

The VC3 Service Advantage Changer Order was approved by the Commission.

Juvenile Crime & Community Safety Committee will come before the Commission in December when the other City Boards are submitted.

A Public Hearing is scheduled for Wednesday, December 6, 2023 at 5:30 PM. It is regarding the use of the building, located at 212 N. 7<sup>th</sup> Street for the new tenant.

Thanksgiving Holidays

November 22, 2023 – Close at Noon

November 23, 2023 – Closed

November 24, 2023 - Closed

**10. CITY ATTORNEY’S REPORT:** No Report.

**11. EXECUTIVE SESSION:** (For Personnel, Litigation, Real Estate): There was no Executive Session.

- 12. ADJOURNMENT:** Commissioner Shephard moved to adjourn the Meeting at 9:52 AM; seconded by Commissioner Owens; the motion was approved by the Commission.

APPROVED