

**MINUTES  
CITY COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING  
DECEMBER 2, 2025**

The Regular Meeting of the Cordele City Commission was held on December 2<sup>nd</sup>, 9:00 AM, Cordele City Hall Courtroom, 501 North 7<sup>th</sup> Street, Cordele, Georgia with the following present:

Joshua Deriso, Commission Chair	J. Wesley Rainey, Commission Vice Chair
Vesta Beal-Shephard, Commissioner	Isaac Owens, Commissioner
Angela Redding, City Manager	Tommy Coleman, City Attorney
Janice Mumphery, City Clerk/ Recording Secretary	

**Staff present:** Maurice Hill – Community Advancement Manager, Sonya Alexander – Finance Director, Fire Chief Todd Alligood, David Wade – Human Resource Director, Nancy Crook - Municipal Court Clerk, Mary Darby – Planning and Community Development Director, Police Chief Danny Hicks, Rick Smarr – Social Media Marketing Manager, Debbie Wright – UC&T Director, Brett Lavender - IT.

**Staff absent:** Marcia Pridgen – Interim Public Works Director.

**Call to Order:** Commission Chair Joshua Deriso called the Regular Meeting to order at 9:00 AM.

**Opening Remarks:** Chairman Joshua Deriso asked all attendees of the Meeting to put their phones on silent or vibrate, preferably silent. If anyone needs to take a call, please step outside the door, away from the doors, so your conversation will not be heard.

Chairman Deriso also stated that this is a Regular Meeting and comments will not be taken from the audience. If there is a subject that needs an expert opinion, then the expert on that subject matter will be allowed to speak.

**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		✓
J. Wesley Rainey	Commission Vice Chairman Ward 2		✓
Vesta Beal-Shephard	Commissioner Ward 1		✓
Isaac Owens	Commissioner Ward 3		✓
Vacant	Ward 2		

**NOTE:** Commissioner Owens arrived at 9:05 AM.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA** – December 2, 2025: Vice Chair Rainey moved to approve the Agenda for December 2, 2025, seconded by Commissioner Shephard; the Agenda for December 2, 2025, was Approved by the Commission.

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**APPROVAL OF REGULAR MEETING MINUTES** – November 18, 2025: Commissioner Shephard moved to approve the Minutes for November 18, 2025; seconded by Vice Chairman Rainey; the Minutes for November 18, 2025, were approved by the Commission.

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

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

**DEPARTMENT HEADS REPORTS:**

**1. Community Advancement Manager: Maurice Hill Reported.**

**Heirs' Property Rights Workshop** – Met with the Georgia Heirs' Property Law Center staff and set up an Heirs' Rights Workshop on February 19th at the Community Clubhouse. I have several local attorneys that specialize in Probate and Property issues about setting up booths at the event to assist Cordele residents with Heir's Rights issues, Wills, Estate Planning, etc.

**BZA Meeting** – Generated the Staff Recommendations for the December 4th BZA Meeting for several variances to the current lot, to build a new home at 712 S 8<sup>th</sup> Street.

**Historic Preservation Grants** – Reviewing several grants for restoration and upgrades to historic buildings in Cordele. Grant applications are due in December.

**Gillespie-Selden Urban Redevelopment Plan** – Reviewed the plan for opportunities to work with the Planning and Community Development Director to implement a strategy to create a comprehensive housing improvement program in partnership with the Georgia Initiative for Community Housing Committee.

**Senior Fitness Program** – Working with a fitness instructor that has a program called "Senior Strong" in Americus, to offer a series of low impact workout sessions for seniors, along a nutrition component. Since the senior center is under renovations, she will start to conduct the classes at the Community Center starting on December 3rd.

**Tokrassee Farms** – Had a call with the owner of the property at 1515 N 11<sup>th</sup> Street to discuss rezoning and converting the property into an Event Center with Glamping Yurts, RV Park, Gazebo/Stage for performances, etc., she would like to look at a launch date in the early spring.

**Orchard Subdivision:** They are putting together their final plat, this should be submitted to the City in January 2026. They will go before the Planning Commission in February and hopefully go before the City Commission in March 2026.

Commissioner Shephard inquired about the Christian Homes Subdivision, "when will the homes be ready for the residents?"

City Manager Angela Redding reported; Marketing begins in December and they hope to begin moving residents in mid-January.

**2. Finance Department: Sonya Alexander Reported.**

**Sales Tax Receipts:** Month of November \$449,068.93

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**3. Fire Department Report: Fire Chief Todd Alligood Reported.**

Reporting Period: October 28 – November 24, 2025

Calls for Service: Total 107

Grass Fire/Rubbish	5
Medical	58
Motor Vehicle Accident	14
Gun Shot	1
Structure Fire	12
Gas	3

**Department News**

- Attended quarterly Crisp TIMS (Traffic Incident Management Meeting) at EOC.
- Went to the send off for the Special Olympics athletes leaving from CC Highschool.
- Participated in the Adopt an Angel Roadblock Fundraiser.
- Kenneth LaCory with the Georgia Arson Control, presented to Lt. Cook (Cordele Fire Department Arson Investigator) a Canon EOS 2000D Digital Camera. Lt. Cook went to the Fire Safety Symposium at GIPST earlier in the year and met Kenneth LaCory. Lt. Cook applied for a Grant and the Fire Department was able to get the camera with the Grant. This is a vital piece of equipment.
- Kudos to A Shift for reviving a patient, this is referring to medical calls that were made by the Fire Department, see medical above.

**4. Human Resource: David Wade Reported.**

- November 06, 2025 Participated in a webinar hosted by the Georgia Municipal Association and Georgia Department of Audits and Accounts regarding changes to the upcoming Annual Immigration reporting requirements. Began compiling information to complete the report which is due December 31, 2025.
- November 07, 2025 Extended a conditional offer of employment to a Firefighter applicant. Anticipated hire date is December 02, 2025.
- November 10, 2025 Received and processed the First Responder PTSD Program renewal effective January 01, 2026. Also completed and submitted the Firefighter Cancer Benefit Program renewal census.
- November 10, 2025 Attended the Career Technical Agricultural Education (CTAE) Advisory Committee Meeting held at Crisp County Middle School. A job fair and industry tours are tentatively set for January 2026.
- November 13, 2025 Met with Noel Williams of Partners Benefit Group regarding the 2026 medical insurance policy renewal.
- November 18, 2025 Attending the swearing-in ceremony and Meet & Greet for incoming Police Chief Danny Hicks.
- November 26, 2025 Exchanged several phone calls and e-mails throughout the month with Michael Shurley and insurance representatives regarding new and ongoing claims.

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Last month – attended the Brick Laying and Veterans Recognition Program at Georgia Veterans Memorial State Park, along with the Veterans Program presented by the Cordele Kiwanis Club.

Participated with the Concern Citizens that Care Thanksgiving Food Box Distribution. Flu vaccines are still available.

December 17<sup>th</sup> – There will be A Lunch and Learn. This will be a repeat of the September Lunch and Learn, “Understanding Your Retirement Benefits”, which was presented by Joshua Colley, Georgia Municipal Association.

Vice Chairman Rainey inquired about the Insurance Renewal. He stated that if the City remains with Anthem Blue Cross/Blue Shield, the City will get a 10 ½% reduction.

David Wade stated, “yes”, if we stay with Anthem Blue Cross/Blue Shield, the City is looking at a 10% reduction over last year’s premium, approximately \$190,000 reduction.

**5. Municipal Court: Nancy Crook Reported.**

Traffic Cases	120
Criminal Cases	<u>18</u>
Total Court Cases	138

Bench Warrants	0
License Suspensions Ordered	0

Total Collections	\$35,646.00
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Total Cases Transferred	0
Total Defendants Incarcerated	0
Total Days Jail Sentenced	0

**6. Planning and Community Development Director: Mary Darby Reported.**

The following is a summary of tasks undertaken by the Planning and Community Development Department during the weeks of November 19, 2025 – December 2, 2025.

**I. Conducted Plan Reviews for four commercial/retail proposed projects.**

**II. Public Hearings.**

- a. Prepared staff report for Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA) meeting scheduled on December 4, 2025. The applicant is proposing to develop a single-family residence on a vacant lot located at 712 S 8th Street, Cordele, Georgia. The applicant has a hardship in developing the lot due to the zoning ordinance development standards as it relates to lot size, lot area, and yards requirements.
- b. Reviewed and approved BZA minutes prepared by Marcha Toussaint, P&CD Administrative Assistant from the October 23, 2025, meeting. A hard copy (and digital copy) of the BZA Board packets were prepared to be delivered to board members on November 25, 2025.

**III. Restructuring of the Pre-Application and Pre-Construction internal Workflow.**

**IV. Meetings held or conferences attended to advance the orderly growth and development of the city are as follows:**

- a. Presented at the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) on November 25, 2025 on potential design standards for the Downtown/Mainstreet area.
- b. Meeting scheduled with applicant on December 1, 2025 to provide update on the Economic Development Revolving Loan Fund.
- c. Scheduled a meeting with River Valley Regional Commission representative to review and discuss the city prior 2025 CDBG infrastructure grant application. This application will be updated and resubmitted for the 2026 CDBG infrastructure grant cycle which is due by April 10, 2026.

**7. Police Department/Animal Control/Codes Compliance – Police Chief Danny Hicks**

**Police Department**

**Departmental News**

- Currently we have zero applicants in the hiring process for Patrol Officer.
- Cadets Pollock and Cadet Fennell successfully graduated from the Police Academy on November 21<sup>st</sup>. They start their field training November 24<sup>th</sup>.
- The Department is currently collecting new unwrapped toys for Adopt an Angel Toy Drive until December 12<sup>th</sup>. A collection box is in the downstairs lobby of the Police Department. Several of our Officers participated in the Donation Roadblock that was held on November 21<sup>st</sup>. We thank everyone that stopped by and donated.
- We are still accepting monetary donations for Shop with a Cop 2025. Shop with a Cop will be held on December 19<sup>th</sup>.

**Animal Control**

**Division News:**

- ADOPT! DON" T SHOP! Adoptions and rescues have slowed down. But sign overs/dumping has continued to increase.
- Dog food donations are continuing to come in. Probation, Tractor Supply, and the Public.
- Participated with Spooktacular and Hometown Hero Day at Tractor Supply.

**Codes Compliance Division**

**Departmental News**

Code Officers participated with Adopt an Angel Program 11.21.2025.

Code Officers attended the Keep Crisp Beautiful Meeting on 11.19.2025

**8. Public Works – Micheal Mitchell – ESG Reported.**

**Water/Sewer**

- ARPA Project:
  - Phase 2 – Contractor is still cleaning and tv'ing lines.
  - Phase 3 – Areas have been identified.

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

Rick Smarr stated that the Commission has his report; he does not have anything else to report.

**10. UC&T – Debbie Wright Reported.**

Wastewater Treated 42 million gallons

Rain for the month of October – “.9”

Debbie Wright stated that Cordele is in moderate drought.

Debbie Wright attended an ARPA Meeting with Lanier Engineering, Marcia Pridgen – Interim Public Works Director and ESG Personnel. This is for Phase 3. This will use up all the Grant money that was received.

**11. IT – Brett Lavender Reported.**

Continue to support all computers and employees.

**AGENDA ITEMS**

1. Consider and Approve the First Reading of an Ordinance Amending the Zoning Ordinance of the City of Cordele, Georgia to Allow for Loft Dwellings in CBD District; Establishing Rules And; Regulations Regarding Such Dwelling; Repealing All Ordinances In Conflict Herewith; And For Other Purposes.

Commissioner Owens moved to approve the First Reading of an Ordinance; seconded by Commissioner Shephard.

Mary Darby gave information on Residential Lofts Dwelling Units Ordinance:

**Purpose:**

The purpose of the Residential Loft Dwelling Ordinance is to:

- Attract new residents to the Historic Downtown area and to support adaptive reuse of buildings – in the Central Business District.
- To preserve architectural character while promoting sustainability by reusing existing structures.
- To expand the range of housing types available within the City and create a consistent customer base beyond the normal business hours.

**Intent:**

- Define the location of permitted loft dwellings.
- Outline the process for loft dwellings to be considered.
- Set restrictions to permit loft dwellings units.
- Ensure loft dwelling units are in compliance with all commercial building and fire codes.
- Amend Section 635.5 CBD to include loft dwellings.

**Property Location:**

- Downtown Area
- Amends Code Section 635.5 of Appendix A of the City of Cordele’s Zoning Ordinance.

**Comprehensive Plan Designation:**

- Consistent and compatible with the goals and objectives of Cordele’s character areas.

**Effect on Character of the Neighborhood:**

- Within two downtown areas there are numerous one-and-two story-attached brick commercial buildings constructed within the late 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The Loft Dwellings Ordinance will have a positive effect in the CBD core which represents

commercial establishments, retail stores, offices, civic organizations, and residential uses.

**Stability of Proposed Land Use:**

- The proposed Text Amendment is suitable for the area because the amendment supports the vision of the CBD area. According to the Cordele Comprehensive Plan, the vision of the downtown area is to restore the economic vitality and preservation of historic integrity of the community's original commercial core.

**Loft Dwelling Units Parking Requirements:**

- The proposed Text Amendment will require that each dwelling unit has its own off-street parking space with direct access to a public alley or a street between the hours of 8:00 AM and 6:00 PM, Monday through Friday. Public parking will not be permitted.

This item was approved by the Cordele Planning Commission on October 16, 2025.

After a discussion on Parking. By a consensus, the Commission agreed to remove #11. Parking from the Ordinance and revisit if necessary.

Vice Chairman Rainey, Commissioner Shephard, Commissioner Owens voted aye.

The Commission approved the First Reading of an Ordinance to remove #11 Parking from the Loft Dwellings Ordinance.

2. Consider and Approve the First Reading of an Ordinance Amending the Zoning Ordinance of the City of Cordele, Georgia to Establish Yard Regulations For Residential Properties in the City; To Provide Fencing Development Standards; To Provide For Permit Fees For Fencing; Repealing All Ordinances In Conflict Herewith; And For Other Purposes.

Mary Darby gave information on Residential Fence Ordinance.

**Purpose:**

- Prevent the total enclosure of residential lots.
- Preserve neighborhood character.
- Formalize the fence installation process and include permitting fees.
- Promote safe, attractive, and cohesive communities.

**Property Location:**

- Citywide
- Adds Code Section 461 of Appendix A to the City of Cordele's Zoning Ordinance.

**Comprehensive Plan Designation:**

- Consistent and compatible with the goals and objectives of Cordele's Character Areas.

**Fence Standards:**

- Front Yard – Fencing is prohibited.
- Side Yards – Shall not exceed six feet.
- Rear Yard – Shall not exceed 6 feet.

**Acceptable Fencing Materials:**

- Wood, Vinyl, Wrought Iron, or Chain Link

**Prohibited Fencing Materials:**

- Barbed wire or razor wire fencing.

**How to Apply For a Fence Permit?**

- Complete Fence Application

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- Pay \$75 Application Fee
- Submit site plan of fence location for development standards approval.

Note: Historic Districts follow District Guidelines.

**Fence Heights**

- Measured from the finished grade.
- Shall not exceed 6' unless for a tennis or basketball court – the fence shall not be more than 50% opaque (solid).
- Shall not abut residential districts taller than 6' without a Variance.
- Shall not be taller than 10' for playgrounds, parks, or communication towers and shall be no more than 50% solid.
- On through lots, Fences may be located in the Rear Yard.

**Fence Design:**

- Shall be designed so that the finished side face outward.
- Shall have materials that are compatible with the building architecture.
- Shall not encroach on public right-of-way.
- Shall prohibit untreated wooden retaining walls.
- Shall maintain a Clear Sight Triangle at all intersections.
- Shall not be permitted on lots without a principal structure.

**Special Exceptions:** The Board of Zoning Appeals may grant special exceptions in any district for greater heights via the Variance procedures.

This item was approved at the Cordele Planning Commission with Revisions on October 16, 2025.

Vice Chairman Rainey asked if the fence needs repairing, would the \$75 have to be paid again? Mary Darby relied, "no".

A vote was taken after a brief discussion.

Commissioner Shephard, Vice Chairman Rainey, Commissioner Owens voted aye.

The First Reading of the Fence Ordinance was approved by the Commission.

3. Consider and Approve A Resolution Approving Additional Compensation For City Employees; Repealing All Resolutions In Conflict Herewith; And For Other Purposes.  
Commissioner Owens moved to approve A Resolution; seconded by Commissioner Shephard.

City Attorney Tommy Coleman explained; this is to ratify the one-time payment for employees. It should be called "Payment to employees for Christmas."

Vice Chairman Rainey, Commissioner Shephard, Commissioner Owens voted aye.

The Resolution was approved by the Commission.

4. Consider and Approve Renewal Alcohol Licenses. No Exception Noted. Initial Approval By Interim Police Chief Sampson.

Quiktrip	2110 E 16 <sup>th</sup> Ave.	Beer & Wine/On Premises
CVS Pharmacy #4267	214 E.16 <sup>th</sup> Ave.	Beer & Wine/Off Premises
Circle K	1717 E. 16 <sup>th</sup> Ave.	Beer & Wine/Off Premises



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Mitchell Bait & Tackle	902 W 16 <sup>th</sup> Ave.	Beer & Wine/Off Premises
American Legion	610 S. 10 <sup>th</sup> St.	Beer Only/On Premises

Commissioner Shephard moved to approve the Alcohol Licenses; seconded by Commissioner Owens.

Police Chief Danny Hicks elaborated on the American Legion on something that had happened Thanksgiving weekend.

After a brief discussion a vote was taken collectively for the Alcohol Licenses.

Commissioner Shephard, Commissioner Owens, Vice Chairman Rainey voted aye.

The Alcohol Licenses were approved collectively by the Commission.

**5. CITY MANAGER'S REPORT: City Manager Angela Redding Reported.**

**Past Events**

Police Chief Swearing-In, November 18, 2025

Police Chief Meet and Greet, November 18, 2025

City Manager Angela Redding thanked Interim Police Chief Connie B. Sampson for her service to the City. Chief Sampson has over forty years of Law Enforcement experience. She prepared an assessment of the Department that will be used to make changes as needed and recommended for future direction.

Concerned Citizens That Care Thanksgiving Prep and Distribution Event  
November 25, 2025

A & M Boutique Ribbon Cutting  
Vice Chairman J. Wesley

**Upcoming Events**

Crisp County Community Roundtable Discussion

Dr. Robert Scott – President

Albany State University Cordele Center

December 4, 2025

10:00 AM

Historic SAM Shortline

Cordele Holiday Train

Friday, December 12<sup>th</sup> – 5:00 PM, 6:30 PM, 8:00 PM

Saturday, December 13<sup>th</sup> – 3:30 PM, 5:00 PM, 6:30 PM, 8:00 PM

Friday, December 19<sup>th</sup> – 5:00 PM, 6:30 PM, 8:00 PM

Saturday, December 20<sup>th</sup> – 3:30 PM, 5:00 PM, 6:30 PM, 8:00 PM

Coach Seating: Adults" \$27 per person, Kids: (Ages 2-12) \$17 per child

Deluxe: \$37 per person (All ages)

Train will depart from the Downtown Cordele Depot

Christmas Parade

Cordele Candyland

December 4, 2025, at 6:00 PM

The parade will go from City Hall to the Community Clubhouse on 7<sup>th</sup> St.

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**Christmas Tree Lighting and Awards Ceremony  
December 4, 2025  
Cordele Community Clubhouse  
108 E 15<sup>th</sup> Ave.  
Parade winners will be announced following parade.**

**Unity Community Action Council, Inc.  
The Georgia Diaper Distribution Program is continuing.**

**Economic Opportunity Council Inc.  
LIHEAP – 2025-2026 Heating Energy Assistance Program  
Crisp, Dooly, Macon, Marion, Schley, Sumter, Taylor, and Webster Counties  
Scheduling for elderly, Tuesday, December 9, 2025.**

**Christmas Events  
Dean Thaxton, LLC Presents  
2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Santa's Helpers  
For Cordele/Crisp County  
Need assistance with Christmas gifts for children. Please text (229) 947-9106**

**Lake Blackshear Resort/Cordelia's  
Breakfast w/Santa  
December 6, 2025  
9:00 AM – 11:00 AM**

**Events  
Adopt An Angel  
Saturday, December 6, 2025  
Holiday Toy Ride  
9:00 AM – Meet at Crisp County Sheriff's Office  
10:00 Am – Kick Stands Up**

**Cordele – Crisp Community Café  
December 8, 2025  
6:00 PM  
Clara Scott Homes Community Center  
213 N. 13<sup>th</sup> St.**

**Faith Based Minister's Meeting  
Thursday, December 11, 2025  
9:30 AM  
Cordele Community Clubhouse  
108 E 15<sup>th</sup> Ave.**

**Municipal Runoff Election  
December 2, 2025  
At-Large Seat**

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Ward 2  
Ward 3  
7:00 AM – 7:00 PM

**Upcoming Meetings**

Propel Meeting  
Albany State University  
December 4, 2025  
8:30 AM

Board of Zoning Appeals Meeting  
City Hall – Courtroom  
December 4, 2025  
10:00 AM

Community Clubhouse Coordination Meeting  
City Hall – Courtroom  
December 8, 2025  
10:00 AM

Tax Digest Public Hearing  
City Hall – Courtroom  
December 10, 2025  
9:00 AM and 6:00 PM

**City Updates**

**Alcohol License Renewals**  
Businesses have until December 16, 2025, to renew their Alcohol License, this includes being fingerprinted, and to be put on the Agenda for approval by the Commission.  
All Alcohol Licenses expire on December 31, 2025.

**Business License Renewals**  
Business License Renewals have gone out to the businesses.  
There is a grace period for Business Licenses, which is April 1, 2025, by 5:00 PM.

Drive Thru Window – new window can be installed.

**Land Bank**

The Land Bank cannot continue without the County per GA Code § 48-4-111. Meetings; conflict of interest; dissolution; “no municipal corporation may maintain the existence of a land bank if the county in which the municipal corporation is located withdraw from the land bank, and no county may maintain the existence of a land bank if the single municipal corporation that is both located within that county and is a member of the land bank withdraws from the land bank.”

**Action Item:**

Blue Cross/Blue Shield Insurance Policy Year 2026.  
There will be 10% savings for the City of Cordele.

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Vice Chairman Rainey moved to accept this policy; seconded by Commissioner Shephard. Commissioner Owens, Vice Chairman Rainey, Commissioner Shephard voted aye. The Commission approved the Insurance Policy from Blue Cross/Blue Shield.

- 6. CITY ATTORNEY'S REPORT:** No Report.
- 7. EXECUTIVE SESSION:** (For Personnel, Litigation, Real Estate): No Executive Session.
- 8. ADJOURNMENT:** Commissioner Owens moved to adjourn the Meeting at 11:00 AM; seconded by Vice Charman Rainey; the Commission approved to adjourn the Meeting.