

**MINUTES
CITY COMMISSION CALLED MEETING
September 6, 2022**

The Regular Meeting of the Cordele City Commission was held on September 6th, 5:30 p.m., Cordele City Hall Courtroom, 501 North 7th Street, Cordele, Georgia with the following present:

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

Staff absent: Debbie Wright, U C & T Director; Irene Cantrell – HUA Director,

Staff present: Police Chief Jalon Heard, Fire Chief Augusta Telfair, Jack Wood., Sr. Chief Codes Official, David Wade – Human Resources Director, Teddy Hubbard – Water Superintendent, Bobby Stennett – Information Technology, Steve Fulford – Public Works Director/Asst. City Manager, Jackie Walker – Municipal Court Clerk, Cathy Mygrant – Asst. Finance Director.

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

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

Invocation: There was a silent moment of prayer.

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

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 – September 6, 2022: Commissioner Shephard moved to approve the Agenda for September 6, 2022; seconded by Commissioner Rainey; the motion was approved by the Commission.

Approval of Meeting Minutes – August 2 and August 16, 2022: Commission Chair Joshua Deriso stated, “he was not going to ask for approval of minutes for August 2nd and August 16th, there was some language in there that was not recorded verbatim, we’re going to look at those changes and get back with them.”

SPEAKERS APPEARANCES: Speakers will have five (5) minutes
Mr. Maurice L. King, Jr., P. C.: The matter of Commissioner Royce Reeves Sr.

Mr. King stated, “the position we take and we have taken for some period of time is that Mr. Reeves has not being properly suspended, basically, because the term he was suspended from is over with, so he did nothing in the new term that would justify a suspension. Also, the law says, basically, that if he is suspended, he must be tried at the first term. I think, he might have been indicted in August of 2021, and basically, the Cordele Judicial Circuit has had at least three jury trial terms and the last term was maybe August 3rd – August 19th, somewhere..., it was like two-weeks in August. So, our position is that he is eligible to come and take his seat. But rather than just let him come and take a seat, we want to get the position of the Board, and we are going to ask the Board, if they would, to take a vote as to whether or not you are going to allow Mr. Reeves to take his seat, because we don’t think the suspension was ever proper. Even if you argue for the sake of argument that it was proper, everybody knows from the City of Cordele who knows about the Court system, knows that since he was suspended, there has been at least three terms where jury trials were tried and his case has not been tried. I guess we do this, ask you, this as a courtesy, because we don’t want to be just in your face and Mr. Reeves to just come take his seat. I think you all took away his name tag at some point and I don’t see it up there today and at least not now. We will have you all on the record, as a Council, as to what your position is on it.”

After a lengthy discussion on this matter, a motion was made.

Motion: Commissioner Owens made a motion that the Commission seat Commissioner Reeves back to represent Ward Two at this time, and we will deal with any rebuttal that comes after that; seconded by Commissioner Shephard; the motion was approved by the Commission. Commissioner Shephard – aye; Commissioner Owens – aye; Commissioner Rainey– aye. The motion was properly carried, Commissioner Reeves will take his seat back.

Commissioner Reeves will wait until the next meeting (September 20, 2022) to take his seat.

SPEAKERS ON A SPECIFIC AGENDA ITEM: Speakers will have three (3) minutes.

No Requests.

CORDELE-CRISP CHAMBER OF COMMERCE PRESENTATION: A presentation was made by Monica Simmons – Chamber of Commerce President and Tamala Mathis – Chamber of Commerce Vice President, in reference to, Small Business Development.

Mrs. Simmons stated the goal for Small Business Development: to develop programs to promote quality economic growth, and provide assistance to small businesses and entrepreneurs. The Chamber’s Small Business Development division provides information and assistance to businesses that are in the starting stages, as well as, businesses that are looking to expand services or expand into additional locations.

Partners are: UGA Small Business Development Center, City of Cordele, Downtown Cordele & Downtown Development Authority, South GA Technical College, Albany State, Southwest GA United, Crisp County, Cordele/Crisp IDC, River Valley Regional Commission, Local Business/Professionals. There will be a Small Business Development Meeting on Friday, September 9, 2022 at 10:00 AM, in the Chamber Boardroom.

MR. BRANDON SIMPSON, SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT SPECIALIST, SOUTHWEST GEORGIA UNITED: Mr. Simpson made a presentation on the Start-up Fees for Small Businesses and compared Cordele Start-up Business License fees with surrounding Cities.

CITY ATTORNEY: City Representation Sim's Lawsuit: Item was discussed in Executive Session.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: (For Personnel, Litigation, Real Estate and Legal Matters): Commissioner Shephard moved to go into Executive Session at 6:10 p.m., for litigation and personnel matters; seconded by Commissioner Owens; the motion was approved by the Commission.

City Attorney Tommy Coleman came out of executive session at 6:30 p.m. and left the meeting. Per Mr. Coleman, he was going out of town.

REGULAR MEETING RESUME: Commissioner Owens moved to resume Regular Meeting at 7:30 p.m., seconded by Commissioner Shephard; the motion was approved by the Commission.

DEPARTMEN HEADS REPORT:

1. Finance Department: City Manager Angela Redding Reported.
SPLOST \$165,08.10 June Distribution
LOST \$242,172.54 July Distribution – Received on 8.30.2022
TSPLOST \$ 30,054.88 July Distribution – Received on 9.1.2022
Paychex is coming along, as far as, implementation; we are now looking at the time/attendance module, to bring it on-line.
2. Fire Chief – Chief Augusta Telfair Reported. Calls for Service- Numerical Breakdown
Types of Activity Number of Incidents Reported – July 28 – September 1, 2022

Fire alarm investigations	15
Rubbish fires	1
Vehicle fires	3
Grass fire	0
Smoke investigation	4
MVA	3
EMS assist call	2
Cancelled enroute calls	1
Safety fire inspection report	5
Odor investigation	2
Dumpster fires	0
Lighten strike	0
Structure fire	1
Automatic aid call	2
Total calls for Service from Dispatch	39

Department News

On August 31, 2022 Captain William Mark Allen retired from the Cordele Fire Department after 32 years and 4 months of service.

There was a pause in the Department Heads giving their reports. Commission Chair Joshua Deriso stated, the Commission needs to make a few motions before 8:00 p.m., that was discussed in Executive Session.

Motion on litigations - Trae Sims Case:

Commissioner Owens moved to retain the service of attorneys' fees; Freeman Mathis & Gary for the Commission and Frances Clay for the Commission Chair, in regards to the Sims' Case; seconded by Commissioner Shephard; the motion was approved by the Commission.

Commissioner Shephard left the Meeting at 7:40 p.m.

3. Housing and Urban Development – City Manager Angela Redding Reported.

a. CDBG 2020 SEWER IMPROVEMENTS PROJECT:

The Construction Contractor for this project is RPI Underground, Inc. of Valdosta, Georgia and they have been issued the Notice to Proceed for October 10, 2022 by Lanier Engineering Firm, Project Engineers. However, the Contractor has expressed delays in obtaining materials, supplies, etc., for the work to be done in the McLeod Subdivision Sewer Improvements Project.

b. CHIP 2018 GRANT PROJECT:

To date we have one additional certified Housing Rehab Contractor that is ready to start working as soon as all of the Contract Documents have been executed and DCA approved.

c. CORDELE PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION:

The Planning Commission conducted a public hearing and meeting on Tuesday, August 16, 2022, at 10:00 a.m., to amend the "The 1999 Zoning Ordinance" to authorize the use of solar panels in limited circumstances. After the public hearing was closed the Planning Commission Chairman called the CPC meeting to order and reviewed all comments, proposed amendments, etc. to the 1999 Zoning Ordinance in regards to Solar Electrical Systems.

d. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT REVOLVING LOAN FUND COMMITTEE:

The EDRLF Committee is in the process of scheduling a committee meeting on Thursday, September 15, 2022, at 10:00 a.m., to review the EDRLF Policy and the status of the seven (7) outstanding Loans, etc.

e. TRAINING SESSIONS - CORDELE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION:

Four (4) CHPC Members attended a very informative one-day Historic Preservation Training Session on Thursday, August 25, 2022, at the Georgia Sports Hall of Fame Theater located in Macon, Georgia.

4. Codes Report: Jack Wood, Sr. Reported.

Commercial Construction Projects	\$12,526,876.00
Residential Construction Projects	\$13,633,187.00

5. Human Resources: David Wade Reported.

August 4 th	Completed and submitted the 2021 Annual GMEBS Retirement Valuation Census
August 16 th	Begin compiling information to complete Georgia Department of Audits and Accounts Biennial Retirement Survey. The report is due September 16, 2022.
August 22 nd	Hosted a tour of all departments for students in the Work Based Learning

Program along with representatives from the Cordele-Crisp IDC. Many positive Comments and feedback were received.

6. Municipal Court: Jackie Walker Reported.

Municipal Court Report for July and August 2022

July	Total Court Cases	168	Collected Fines	\$43,801.38	Incarcerated 0
August	Total Court Cases	251	Collected Fines	\$36,746.53	Incarcerated 1

7. Police Chief – Chief Heard Reported

Calls For Service – Numerical Breakdown

Part I Crimes

53

Aggravated Assault

3

Larceny (Thefts)

40 (7 enter autos; 11 shoplifting w/11 arrests; 22 other thefts)

Burglary 10

(9 residential; 1 mini storage) 5 arrests

Part II Crimes

27

Incidents Reported

184

Community Contacts

17

Citations Issued

201

Warnings Issued

177

Total Calls for Service

1,554

Departmental News:

The department has two applicants for detective going through the hiring process.

The department has three applicants that are scheduled to start the Police Academy on September 26th.

Upcoming Events: National Faith & Blue Weekend October 7-10, 2022

8. Public Works – Steve Fulford Reported

Paving in Bethel Cemetery Annex has been completed.

Completed 6th Avenue

Engineers are looking at sewer capacity for two truck stops, which will be located on Hwy. 300 and the sewer lines that are presently there will suffice.

9. UC&T – Teddy Hubbard Reported.

Water restrictions put in place in 2010 are still in effect and have not changed. This allows for daily outdoor watering between the hours of 4pm and 10am.

The Digesters at the WWTP are complete and now back in service. We hope we will see major improvements in several areas.

We are monitoring our well levels every month and began twice a month monitoring in June. Well levels have dropped 20 feet since April. Most well levels stabilized in July 2022.

10. Information Technology Update – Bobby Stennett Reported: No Report

AGENDA ITEMS

1. Consideration of an Ordinance to move City Clerk under the City Commission.

Commission Chair Joshua Deriso stated “different cities do different things, based on our Charter, our Charter has the City Clerk under our City Commission, but there are some researching cities that do not want that because, if there are ethical or things that...we really do not want a City Clerk answering to anyone because then they can also be pressured to hide things, based on that authority, is what research is saying. However, I think right now, we should maybe look at addressing this a little bit later, giving some information. I ask you all to do your research into some of the things that the leading research is saying with, why you want to, kind of, have your City Clerk, kind of, not answering to anybody, but the governing body, because if you have someone that want to hide something or use something then you kind of, have that coercion from that person. Of course, the citizens vote for elected officials that they trust, we are trustees of the City, so we are kind of in a different bracket, but it is still my opinion that we should do it, I just want anything to be misconstrued, as to why we may do it.” Commissioner Rainey stated he thinks this item should be discussed later, once there is a full Commission.

2. Investigation of personnel treatment in Police Department (per Section 2.15-Inquires and Investigations of Charter).

Commission Chair Joshua Deriso stated he does not believe that things are handled equally in the Police Department. So, the Commission and the governing body has the authority to have investigations and inquiries into the Departments.

Commissioner Rainey stated he thinks the Commission should give the City Manager the opportunity to look into the issues that have been presented before the Commission have an investigation.

Commission Chair Deriso asked, if there is a timeline.

Commissioner Rainey stated that he does not have a timeline; he wants to give her the necessary time that he feels she needs to look into the issue. Commissioner Rainey stated the Commission knew restructuring was happening when a new Police Chief was hired; Police Chief Heard needs his opportunity to take care of the issues and the Police Chief answers to the City Manager. Commissioner Rainey stated between Chief Heard and the City Manager Angela Redding, he believes that they can solve the problem.

After a brief discussion, Commission Owens recommended for City Manager Angela Redding to give an update to the Commission on this issue at the next meeting, which is September 20, 2022.

3. Consider an Alcohol License Application, Beer & Wine Consumed Off Premises, for Family Dollar Stores of Georgia LLC, dba Family Dollar #32903, 704 North 7th Street, Cordele, GA. Application was approved by Police Chief Jalon Heard on August 15, 2022. Commissioner Rainey moved to approve the Alcohol License for Family Dollar; seconded by Commissioner Owens. Commissioner Owens asked if an individual come in to make the request because the Commission does not see the person’s information. City Manager Angela Redding informed the City Commission that the City does have the person’s information on file.
4. Consider the K9 Policy and Memorandum of Understanding from the Cordele Police Department. Police Chief Heard stated that the City of Cordele need to have a K9 Policy because the Police Department need their own K9. No action was taken.

5. Consider and Approve the Addendum to the Customer Service Agreement between the City of Cordele and Unifirst. City Manager Angela Redding stated, Unifirst provides the uniforms for various departments. It is time to renew the Agreement with Unifirst and the Agreement had language referring to sixty months and the City cannot enter into that type of Agreement, as well as, changes were made to the State regarding litigation. City Manager Angela Redding stated that she had the City Attorney review the Agreement that was submitted and to revise the terms so that it would protect the City, in terms of the renewal determination and the State where there is any type of litigation or anything else that needs to be addressed, that it will be under the laws of the State of Georgia. The initial terms should expire on December of this year; provided the City does not provide notice of non-renewal by October 1st and will remain in effect for an additional one-year term, then from an additional one-year term for a five-year period. Unless, Unifirst or the City give written notice of non-renewal to the other, at least, ninety days prior to the next expiration date. Before it had that the term would be for sixty months. It was revised to show that it expires this year, unless we give notice, and then it could remain in effect for one additional year. The option now is included to terminate, if it is needed, before the end of the lease, where before it just had a term of sixty months. Commissioner Owens moved to approve the Addendum to the Customer Service Agreement with Unifirst; seconded by Commissioner Rainey; the Addendum was approved by the Commission. Commissioner Owens – aye; Commissioner Rainey – aye; Commission Chair Deriso – aye.
6. Maintenance of Williams’ Field.
Commission Chair Joshua Deriso stated he had gotten complaints, in reference to, the maintenance of the field. There is a maintenance rotation for Williams Field and Standard Park.
7. Consideration of Hiring City Grant Writer.
Commission Chair Joshua Deriso stated, the City needs a Grant Writer to commit to the citizens, as far as, increasing the funding for some of the social needs, there are some community services that are needed. City Manager Angela Redding stated at the last Meeting there were several options that were discussed, such as, River Valley, they deal with infrastructure; The Georgia Grants Professional Association and other Grant Writers. City Manager Angela Redding stated that she has a conference call scheduled with a person who reached out to her and the person sent his/her resume; she is speaking with that person because she does realize we need more than just infrastructure Grants, those was just different options that were presented at the las meeting. City Manager Angela Redding stated she is looking for a person on a contractual basis.
8. Community Projects for use of ARPA Funds.
Commission Chair Joshua Deriso stated that there are other community projects that the ARPA Funds can be used for. Commissioner Rainey stated that the other portion of the APRA Funds at the City of Cordele, were in the Grant Application for the \$10,000,000 infrastructure, so this other portion that we have was in the City’s Grant Writing process. If The ARPA Funds are changed, it will put the \$10,000,000 Grant in jeopardy, because it was designated on the Grant Application for the infrastructure.
9. **CITY MANAGER’S REPORT: Angela Redding Reported.**

Public Hearing – Solar Ordinance

City Commission need to schedule a Public Hearing on the Solar Panel Ordinance.

Grapple Truck

Grapple Truck out of service for at least a week. Public Works is waiting on parts for the truck.

Bench – Edward Beach

The bench for former City Manager Edward Beach is ready and should be installed this week.

Bethel Annex Cemetery

The road has been paved at Bethel Annex.

Board Appointments

The following Boards need Board members:

- Board of Zoning Appeals – Board member appointed in February is unable to attend
- meetings due to his work schedule
- Community Clubhouse Coordination Board
- DDA Board

Job Fair

A City Job Fair will be held Monday, September 12, 2022 from 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM at the Community Clubhouse.

Bids for Janitorial Services

The RFP for Janitorial services will be advertised this month.

Logo Contest Guidelines

City of Cordele is seeking submission to redesign the city's logo. The contest is open to students in grades 8-12. The winning logo will receive a prize.

Ordinance Regulating Boarding Up Windows and Doors

An ordinance regulating boarding up windows and doors will be presented at the next City Commission meeting.

Website Committee

Meeting has been scheduled for Thursday, September 15th

City Clerk Duties

Janice Mumphery and Nancy Butler will perform the duties of City Clerk until one is hired. All Open Records request will go to Janice Mumphery.

Budget Meetings

Budget Meetings will be scheduled for this month, September, as well as for the Tax Digest.

10. **ADJOURNMENT:** Commissioner Rainey moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:45 p.m.; seconded by Commissioner Owens; the motion was approved by the Commission.

APPROVED