

CITY OF CORNELIA
MINUTES OF WORKSHOP MEETING
March 4, 2025

The Cornelia City Commission met in a Workshop Session on Tuesday, March 4, 2025, at 5:00 PM in the Cornelia Municipal Building Conference Room, 181 Larkin Street, Cornelia, GA. Mayor John Borrow called the meeting to order and the following Commissioners were present: Tony Cook, Janice Griggs, Mark Reed, and Don Bagwell. Also, present: City Attorney, Steve Campbell, City Manager, Donald Anderson, and City Clerk, Debbie Turner.

Mayor Borrow asked if there are any changes to the agenda. City Manager Anderson stated that there were none. He said we know Audrey Davenport will be here tonight; Blake Foster may be here as well. They went over Ordinance # 02-25-01 GMA Model Right of Way, Mr. Anderson said that this is an amendment to Chapter 14 and is necessary because the state changed the law regarding telecommunications services. Broadband companies are now required to pay \$.05 per liner footage when providing retail service within the city limits.

Mr. Anderson said that we have an application from Josh Dilbeck to serve on the Planning Commission, but we still need someone from Ward 3 to apply.

They discussed the amendment to the Sewer Tap Fee schedule, Mr. Anderson said that this came about when a person wanted to tie onto our sewer, but he had a septic tank. Commissioner Reed asked how many people were on septic tank. Mr. Anderson we could run a report, but he did not think there would be very many. They discussed giving 90 days to connect if they wanted to. They decided on July 1st.

They went over the other items on the agenda and discussed the CDBG Grant Administration service with Carter & Sloope. Mr. Anderson gave the upfront cost as well as the cost if we receive funding. Commissioner Bagwell asked if it was a Federal or State Grant, Mr. Anderson said it is Federal.

They Moved onto to discuss the engineering proposals for 2025 CDBG project. Mr. Anderson said that we received three good proposals, but staff recommended Carter & Sloope due to their knowledge and experience with us and the project.

Mayor Borrow asked if anyone had anything else that they wanted to discuss. City Manager Anderson said that he, Mayor Borrow and Commissioner Reed, had met with a landscape architect several weeks back and had asked them to look at all the Parks. Commissioner Bagwell mentioned the sign that states Big City Park. He said he feels that it should be named something else at least something referring to the history of Cornelia. He said it is such a nice park and that it should be named something that is nicer than Big City Park.

City Manager said that work has begun on the amphitheater project and that water and sewer lines will be going in soon.

Commissioner Reed made a motion to enter into executive session for real estate, seconded by Commissioner Bagwell.

Commissioner Reed made a motion to exit executive session, seconded by Commissioner Cook.

No Action Taken!

The meeting adjourned at 5:45

Debbie Turner, City Clerk

John Borrow, Mayor

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Commissioner Reed gave the Invocation and Commissioner Griggs led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Commissioner Cook made a motion to approve the agenda, seconded by Commissioner Bagwell. Approved 4 -0

Commissioner Reed made a motion to approve the February 7th minutes as submitted, seconded by Commissioner Bagwell. Approved 4 - 0

Commissioner Reed made a motion to approve the February 27th minutes as submitted, seconded by Commissioner Cook. Approved 4 - 0

City Manager's Monthly Report - We met with FCS Sanitation to discuss their merger with Waste Eliminator out of Gainesville. They do not plan to change the name so the trucks will still say FCS Sanitation. All their trucks will be equipped with cameras which we will have access to if we receive any complaints from our customers. We will be hosting the annual Sweep the Hooch cleanup event on March 22nd at the old reservoir. The event will begin at 9:00 AM. Last year we had 9 volunteers show up to help pick up trash around the reservoir. We will be conducting a series of Town Hall meetings throughout the community to discuss the GICH Initiative and Community Housing needs in March, April, and May. Representatives from the Georgia Conservancy will be moderating the meetings. The first one will be March 31st at 5:30 PM at Cornelia Elementary School. The date and time for the April meeting has not been set but the meeting will take place at Shady Grove Baptist Church. The final meeting will be May 7th at 11:00 AM at Fender's Alley. Higgins Construction has begun moving equipment onto the site of the new park so grading should begin soon. City workers have completed the demolition of the existing buildings and are now installing the new sewer lines for the restrooms. The project will not be completed until December 2025, but the grading will be finished by May 2nd so that the Cornelia Hospitality & Tourism Board will be able to use the park for this year's annual Music Festival on May 17th. The

Police Department conducted 344 traffic stops, worked 46 motor vehicle accidents, 9 fight calls, 1 burglary, 14 shoplifting complaints, and 28 alarms.

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They responded to a total of 983 calls for the month. The Investigative Division opened 5 new cases, closed 6 cases, and made 3 arrests. The Narcotics Division made 2 arrests and currently has 4 active cases. We distributed 8 car seats and trained 15 care givers. The Building Department issued 12 permits (8 new home permits), reviewed 9 sets of plans, and collected \$5,192 in fees. They completed 28 residential inspections, 16 erosion inspections, and 5 commercial inspections. They issued 3 residential certificates of occupancy and 1 commercial certificate of occupancy. Code Enforcement opened 30 new cases, closed 29 cases, and currently has 3 active cases. The Fire Department responded to 104 calls and completed 432 hours of training. The Fire Marshal completed 15 commercial inspections. The Wastewater Plant treated 95.3 million gallons of sewage. The Water Plant treated 89.5 million gallons of drinking water. We recorded 6.32 inches of rain, so the new reservoir level is 24.5 feet which is 4 feet below full pool, and the old reservoir is 5.5 feet above pool. The Utilities Maintenance Department repaired 5 water leaks and 6 sewer blockages. They are now working to get the Splash pad ready for this season. Public Works completed the leaf route for this year, they cleaned the Community House after 11 events. They have removed all the dangerous and dead trees around Chenocetah Tower. They cleaned up graffiti in several locations around the city. They have removed the old playground equipment at City Park and began installing the new equipment. They made repairs to the dugouts at the baseball field at City Park. They planted 3 dogwood trees at the Dog Park for Arbor Day. They made repairs to the restrooms at City Park and Jim Smith Park. They poured the concrete slab for the new Christmas light storage building behind the Ballard Center. The Maintenance Department Repaired 46 vehicles and serviced 12 vehicles. His report is made an integral part of the minutes.

Public Forum -

Peter Mudruga with Habersham History came forward to speak about the Big Red Apple and that it will turn one hundred this year. He is requesting pictures of the apple along with stories from the Public so that he can put a presentation together.

Audrey Davenport with Soque St. LLC came forward to speak about her neighborhood and its significance. Ms. Davenport spoke to honor her ancestors whom she said lived on Soque St. where she lives. She spoke about blighted properties and even gave the definition of blight. Ms. Davenport talked about

her love for the community and how working in partnership with the City of Cornelia was the projects that she poured her heart into. These are some of the projects she has worked on Habersham Bicentennial Intro to Juneteenth, Habersham 200 Bicentennial Publication, Community partner for HistoriCorps, Cornelia City Commission
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the county's First Hispanic Festival, HCHS 50th year Celebration and the Tim loves Tink Mural Project. Ms. Davenport spoke about Historical Soque Street and Neighborhood Inclusion. In closing you shared her vision for Cornelia stating that by working together we can showcase Cornelia as a model of inclusive progress where cultural preservation and modern development thrive side by side while maintaining our small-town values. She thanked the Mayor and Commissioners for their time.

Old Business:

Ordinance # 02-25-01, GMA Model Right of Way Ordinance -
This is an amendment to Chapter 14 of the Municipal Code to update the GMA Model Right of Way Ordinance. The changes are to address changes to state law regarding telecommunications services. Specifically, to address Broadband companies accessing the right of way and establishing rates of due compensation. Broadband companies are required to compensate cities with a per linear footage rate of \$.05 when providing retail service within the city limits. This ordinance was posted for public comment at the February 4th Commission Meeting. To date we have not received any comment for or against the new ordinance, so the city manager recommended approval. Commissioner Reed made a motion to adopt the amendment, seconded by Commissioner Bagwell. Approved 4 - 0

Public Hearings - None

New Business

Appointment to the Unified Planning Commission -
Currently there are two openings on the Unified Planning Commission, Ward 1 and Ward 3. We have received an application from Josh Dilbeck at 760 Highland Avenue to fill the opening for Ward 1. This person will fill the unexpired term of Bill Strickland, the term runs through December 31, 2026. Commissioner Reed stated that he had spoken with Mr. Dilbeck and that he was excited about serving on the board. Commissioner Reed made a motion to appoint Josh Dilbeck to the Planning Board, seconded by Commissioner Bagwell. Approved 4 - 0

Amendment to the Sewer Tap Fee Schedule -
Currently if a property has a septic tank and wishes to connect to the city sewer the fee for inside the city limits is \$700 and for outside the city

limits it is \$850. The cost for us to connect them to the city sewer is much greater than this. The city manager proposed that we eliminate this language from our fee schedule and treat these as what they are which is a new connection on to our sewer system. Commissioner Reed made a motion to amend the Sewer

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Tap Fee Schedule to go into effect July 1st, seconded by Commissioner Bagwell.
Approved 4 - 0

Amendment to the Sanitation Agreement with FCS -
FCS Sanitation has merged with a company called Waste Eliminator, LLC. out of Gainesville. This amendment assigns the existing agreement with FCS to Waste Eliminator, LLC. The terms and conditions of the existing agreement remain the same. Commissioner Reed made a motion to amend the Sanitation Agreement with FCS, seconded by Commissioner Griggs. Approved 4 - 0

Budget Adjustment to Purchase Equipment for the Police Department -
The Police Department has a separate bank account for Forfeiture funds, these funds can only be used to purchase equipment for the Police Department. They would like to use \$500 of these funds to purchase a new gun for the department. In order to do this, line item 100-3200-53-1100 needs to be increased by \$500. Commissioner Bagwell made a motion to adjust the budget to purchase equipment for the Police Department, seconded by Commissioner Reed. Approved 4 - 0

Agreement with Carter & Sloope for CDBG Grant Administration Services -
Carter & Sloope has been awarded the FY 2025 CDBG Grant Administration Services project. This is the agreement for them to provide these services. The upfront cost for them to prepare the grant application and conduct the LMI surveys will be \$25,400. If we receive funding the Administration fees will be an additional \$88,300. The City Manager recommended that the mayor be authorized to sign this agreement. Commissioner Cook made a motion to have the mayor sign the agreement, seconded by Commissioner Bagwell. Approved 4 - 0

Engineering Proposals for FY 2025 CDBG Project -
We received 3 really good proposals for engineering services for the FY 2025 CDBG Project. They were so good that when staff evaluated the proposals 2 received a score of 11 out of 12 points and the third was 10.5 out of 12 points. Each firm has plenty of experience with CDBG projects. After completing the evaluations staff recommends that we use Carter & Sloope for this project because of our experience with them and their knowledge of the target area. The PER will be \$7,200, if we receive the grant funding the design, bidding, and inspections fees will be \$314,500. Commissioner Griggs made a motion for

Carter & Sloope to be the engineers for the 2025 CDBG Project, seconded by Commissioner Cook. Approved 4 - 0

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FY 2025 CDBG Resolution -

This year's CDBG target area is Circle Drive, which has very old water lines which need to be replaced. We are applying for a \$1 million grant to help offset the cost of the project which is estimated to be \$1.5 million. The matching funds will come from Water revenues. Commissioner Bagwell made a motion for the Mayor to sign the resolution, seconded by Commissioner Griggs. Approved 4 - 0

Executive Session was held in the Workshop. No Action Taken!

Commissioner Reed made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:30, seconded by Commissioner Bagwell. Approved 4 - 0

Debbie Turner, City Clerk

John Borrow, Mayor

STATE OF GEORGIA, COUNTY HABERSHAM

CITY OF CORNELIA, GEORGIA

AFFIDAVIT OF PRESIDING OFFICIAL(S) FOR A CLOSED PUBLIC MEETING

While in Regular Session, the motion was made to enter an Executive Session to discuss certain matters in a closed session.

() To discuss with the council pending and/or potential litigation, settlement claims, administrative proceedings, or other judicial actions, which is exempt from the Open Meetings Act pursuant to O.C.G.A. Section 50-14-2(1).

() A meeting to discuss the purchase, disposal of, or lease of property; authorize the ordering of an appraisal related to the acquisition or disposal of real estate; enter into a contract to purchase, dispose of, or lease property subject to approval in a subsequent public vote; or enter into an option to purchase, dispose of, or lease real estate subject to approval in subsequent public vote, which is excluded from the Open Meetings Act pursuant to Section 50-14-3(b)(1)(C).

() A meeting discussing the appointment, employment, compensation, hiring, disciplinary action or dismissal, or periodic evaluation or rating of a public officer or employee, which is excluded pursuant to O.C.G.A. Section 50-14-3(b)(2).

() Discussion in Executive Session of Records that are otherwise protected from disclosure under the Open Records Act as pursuant to O.C.G.A. Section 50-14-3- (b)(4).

X The subject matter of the Executive Session of the Regular Session was devoted to matters within the exceptions provided by law.

 Because of events occurring during the closed session, I am unable to affirm the subject matter of the Executive Session of the Regular Session was devoted to only matters within the exceptions provided by law.

John Borrow, Mayor, City of Cornelia

Sworn to and subscribed before me this March 4, 2025

Notary Public