

CITY OF CORNELIA
MINUTES OF MEETING
FEBRUARY 10, 2026

The Cornelia City Commission met in a Workshop Session on Tuesday, February 10, 2026, at 5:00 PM in the Commission Conference Room, 181 Larkin Street, Cornelia, GA. Mayor John Borrow called the meeting to order, and the following Commissioners were present: Mark Reed, Don Bagwell, Tony Cook, and Janice Griggs. Also present: City Attorney Steve Campbell, City Manager Donald Anderson, and City Clerk Debbie Turner.

Mayor Borrow opened the meeting and said that we have one thing to add to the agenda. City Manager Anderson explained that in 2018 we replaced a collapsed storm culvert on Galloway Street because the houses were flooding when it would rain. The new culvert fixed the flooding but now the stream bank has begun washing away because of the increased flow. We budgeted \$69,000 to have a contractor repair it, but the cost is higher than expected. The lowest quote is from Wilcorp in the amount of \$97,200. Mr. Anderson said we would need to do a budget adjustment of \$28,200 to the Storm Water Utility Fund to cover the additional cost.

They discussed the amendment to the City Charter. City Attorney Steve Campbell said that we have a cap on our millage rate, and no other surrounding cities have that. For us to be competitive in getting good rates on loans we need to remove this language from our Charter. City Manager Anderson said that he has spoken with Victor Anderson and he feels confident that he can get it in this legislative session.

Mayor Borrow said that the Urban Redevelopment Agency met before the workshop and discussed the Bond for the Amphitheatre Project. Mayor Borrow said that the Urban Redevelopment Agency voted to into the agreement for the City to borrow the money.

Ken Polick, Bond Attorney, and Tom Owens from Raymond James were there to discuss the Bond. Mr. Owens said that the Urban Redevelopment Agency adopted a plan in 2019 and that the Municipal Complex was one of those projects in the plan. Mr. Owens said that the URA is a conduit for bonds to allow the city to borrow money. He said that the URA has adopted the documents to facilitate the financing of the Amphitheatre Project. Mr. Owens said that what the city would do is enter into an intergovernmental contract that would be in the form of a sale agreement. He said that they went out and solicited offers, and the best rate was from JP Morgan Chase at 4.74%. He explained that you will make one payment per year in the amount of \$530,000 per year for the next 10 years. Mr. Polick said that the city now needs to authorize the mayor to execute the agreement. Finance Director, Melaine Chandler asked if that quote is based on

us changing the City Charter and removing that cap on the millage rate. She asked if that would provide us with a better interest rate. Mr. Owens said that some of the feedback was part of that, but he feels good about this rate. He said going forward it will be easier getting funding especially with the WWTP Expansion.

They went over the remainder of the agenda items.

Will Cobb, Wade Rhodes, and Greg Holcomb were at the workshop to speak. Mr. Rhodes asked if this is a public meeting, and the media is here, and this is a delicate subject to discuss. He wanted to know how to get a closed meeting with the Mayor and Commissioners. City Attorney Campbell told him you must decide if you want to discuss it, but you cannot get a closed meeting with them. He said you can speak with one or two at a time if you want to do that. Mr. Rhodes decided not to speak, and they left the meeting.

Commissioner Reed made a motion to exit the workshop and enter into executive session for real estate, seconded by Commissioner Bagwell. Approved 4 - 0

Commissioner Bagwell made a motion to exit the executive session and enter back into the workshop, seconded by Commissioner Reed. Approved 4 - 0

No Action Taken!

The meeting adjourned at 5:52 PM

Debbie Turner, City Clerk

John Borrow, Mayor

CITY OF CORNELIA
MINUTES OF MEETING
FEBRUARY 10, 2026

The Cornelia City Commission met in Regular Session on Tuesday, February 10, 2026, at 6:00 PM in the Commission Conference Room, 181 Larkin Street, Cornelia, GA. Mayor John Borrow called the meeting to order, and the following Commissioners were present: Mark Reed, Don Bagwell, Tony Cook, and Janice Griggs. Also present: City Attorney Steve Campbell, City Manager Donald Anderson, and City Clerk Debbie Turner.

Commissioner Cook gave the invocation, and Commissioner Bagwell led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Commissioner Reed made the motion to approve the amended agenda, seconded by Commissioner Griggs. Approved 4 - 0

Commissioner Bagwell made the motion to approve the January 6th minutes as submitted, seconded by Commissioner Cook. Approved

Mayor Borrow issued the Oath of Office to Municipal Court Judge Winslow Verdery.

City Managers Monthly Report

All the concrete at the park has been installed and the landscaping is almost complete. Georgia Power has installed the new lights as well as the electrical meters. Now that the power is on to the restrooms Steel Cell will be able to complete the installation of the epoxy floors. The fence company began installing the fence on Monday so the construction of the park should be complete in about 2 weeks. We finally got our tax bills sent out on February 2nd. The delay was caused because of the new floating homestead exemption. Since everyone does not receive this exemption our software company had an issue figuring out how to implement it. The Cornelia Hospitality and Tourism Board has decided to do a drone show for this year's Music Festival instead of fireworks. They have signed an agreement with Open Sky Pro out of Gainesville for this. They felt that this was a better option because it will not disrupt the residents like the fireworks do. Thanks to our dedicated employees and people staying off the roads we came through the ice storm with very little incidents. We also did not have the large-scale power outages that other areas encountered. The snow on the other hand was a different story because people did not stay off the roads. There were a lot of accidents that kept the Fire and Police Departments busy all weekend. We are partnering with Life South Community Blood Centers to host a blood drive. The event will take place of February 16th from Noon to 6:00 PM in the parking lot of City Hall. Ms. Davenport will be using the Ballard Center as her studio and to host some community events for the Brush Strokes for Change Mural Project. The first event, A Heart

for Community, will be this Saturday. A copy of this report is made an integral part of the minutes.

Public Forum

Audrey Davenport came forward to request that the Mayor and Commissioners, rename the portion of Chattahoochee Street between Main Street and Clarkesville Street to Martin Luther King. Ms. Davenport stated it will restore historical continuity. Ms. Davenport also requested that they support the visibility of the Brushstrokes of Change Mural Project and Jim Smith Park. She said she would also like to paint the words Historical Soque Street. This will help with local tourism and support small businesses and advertise the Jim Smith Mural Project. Ms. Davenport also gave an update on the Mural Project, and she asked if anyone has any old pictures to please get them to her. She thanked them for their time. City Manager Anderson said he had reached out to Ms. Davenport about the parking lot at the corner of Rosa Parks and MLK. He said that while it is going to be a parking lot he wanted to get input from the neighborhood on landscaping and some more features that might make it more aesthetically pleasing.

Old Business

Ordinance to Amend the GMEBS Defined Benefit Retirement Plan

This is an amendment to the employee retirement plan to allow all employees to be eligible for retirement at age 55 with at least 25 years of service. The pension plan was amended in 2024 to allow this benefit for our Public Safety personnel. This amendment will amend the plan to offer this benefit to all our employees. The increase to our annual contribution will be \$64,000. The increase for 2026 is in the approved Budget. This ordinance was posted for public comment at the January Commission Meeting. To date, we have not received any comments for or against this ordinance. The city manager recommended approval of this ordinance. Commissioner Bagwell made a motion to approve the amended Ordinance, seconded by Commissioner Griggs.

Public Hearings

None

New Business

Agreement with Carter & Sloope for Railroad Pedestrian Bridge Planning

We have received a Railroad Crossing Elimination Grant to assist with the cost of Project Planning and Development for a pedestrian bridge over the train tracks. This is an agreement with Carter & Sloope to perform these functions. Once the planning and development is complete, we will be able to apply for Phase 2 of the funding for the construction of the bridge. The cost for these services will be \$1,407,000; the amount of the grant is \$1,437,000. The other \$30,000 is for the GMRC's Grant administration Fees. The city manager recommended approval of this agreement with Carter & Sloope. Commissioner Cook made a motion to approve the agreement with Carter & Sloope, seconded by Commissioner Griggs. Approved 4 - 0

Bond Resolution

This is a resolution authorizing the city to enter into an Agreement of Sale with the Urban Redevelopment Agency of the City of Cornelia. This resolution also makes other provisions in connection with the foregoing, in order to provide funding for the Downtown Amphitheater Project. Bond Attorney Ken Polick said that this is a resolution for the City to enter into an agreement with the Urban Redevelopment Agency, and they will then issue the bond in the amount of \$4.155,000. The city will then agree to purchase the project. Commissioner Bagwell said so that people understand it better, this is a way for the city to borrow larger amounts of money and pay back over time. Commissioner Reed made a motion to enter into the agreement with the URA and pass the authorizing resolution, seconded by Commissioner Griggs. Approved 4 - 0

Proposed Amendment to the City Charter

This is an amendment to the City Charter to Article V, Section 5.11, Millage in its entirety which currently reads:

Sec. 5.11. - Millage.

(a) The city commission by ordinance shall establish a millage rate for the city property tax, a due date, and the time period within which these taxes must be paid.

(b) The millage rate levied pursuant to this article shall not exceed 20 mills, except that such limitation shall not apply with respect to any ad valorem tax levied for the purpose of payment of any general obligation debt of the city.

(c) The city commission by ordinance may provide for the payment of these taxes

by installments or in one lump sum, as well as authorize the voluntary payment of taxes prior to the time when due.

The new language will read:

Sec. 5.11 - Millage

- (a) The city commission by ordinance shall establish a millage rate for the city property tax, a due date, and the time period within these taxes must be paid.
- (b) The city commission by ordinance may provide for the payment of these taxes by installments or in one lump sum, as well as authorize the voluntary payment of taxes prior to the time when due.

By removing the millage rate cap we will be able to get a better bond rating for the Amphitheater Project and the Wastewater Plant Project. Commissioner Reed made a motion to approve the resolution, seconded by Commissioner Bagwell. Approved 4 - 0.

Application for Historic Preservation Commission

We currently have 3 openings on the Historic Preservation Commission. We have received an application from Jay Reeder to fill one of these openings. Commissioner Reed made a motion to appoint Jay Reeder to the Historic Preservation Commission, seconded by Commissioner Griggs. Approved 4 - 0

Galloway Street Stream Bank Restoration Quotes

We replaced a collapsed storm culvert under Galloway Street in 2018 because houses were flooding every time it rained. The new culvert fixed the flooding issue, but the stream bank has begun washing away because of the increased flow. We budgeted \$69,000 to have a contractor repair the stream bank based on the cost of the Brookside Stream Bank Restoration Project from a couple of years ago. Unfortunately, the cost of these repairs has increased so all the quotes that we received are more than what was budgeted. The lowest bid is from Wilcorp in the amount of \$97,200. I recommend that you approve the bid from Wilcorp along with a Budget Adjustment to the Storm Water Utility to move the \$28,200 overage from the Front Street Drainage Project. Commissioner Reed made a motion to award the project to Wilcorp \$97,200 and to amend the Stormwater Utility Budget by taking \$28,200 from the Front Street Drainage Project, seconded by Commissioner Bagwell. Approved 4 - 0

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The meeting adjourned at 6:35 PM

Debbie Turner, City Clerk

John Borrow, Mayor

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 day

_____, _____, 2026