

CITY OF CORNELIA  
MINUTES OF MEETING  
JUNE 3, 2025

The Cornelia City Commission met in a Workshop Session on Tuesday, June 3, 2025, 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: Janice Griggs, Mark Reed, Don Bagwell, and Tony Cook. Also, present: City Attorney, Steve Campbell, City Manager, Donald Anderson, City Clerk, Debbie Turner.

Mayor Borrow opened the meeting and said that we have a couple of items to add to the agenda.

City Manager Anderson explained the Milledge Rollback Rate. He said that a requirement of House Bill 581 is that we are now required to put an estimated rollback rate on the tax assessment bills. He said that if you set the rollback rate at 9.5 it can be lowered but you will not be able to increase it. Commissioner Bagwell noted that the bill is very confusing.

Mr. Anderson said that HB 137 raised the sealed bid requirement for Public Works Projects from \$100,000 to \$250,000. Our current city financial policy requires sealed bids at \$100,000. He recommends that you raise it to \$250,000.

Mr. Anderson then went over the 2024 CDBG project, he explained that of the 3 bids we received the low bidder was Higgins Construction at \$899,290. He said that we received a grant of \$1,000,000 and the project was estimated to cost \$1,740,000 and now that the project came in so low we are working with DCA to determine how much of the grant can be used. We still have the full amount of the grant, and we won't be required to return any of it until the project is completed.

City Manager Anderson went over the two items that were added to the agenda.

Mr. Anderson said he was approached by Audrey Davenport about creating a Public Art Master Plan. City Manager Anderson stated that she thinks it will take up to 6 months to complete at a cost of \$25,000 to \$50,000. Commissioner Griggs asked, "are we going to hire her?" Mr. Anderson said as a consultant only and he thinks the cost is way too high. They had a lengthy discussion as to the quality of her work and how she is to work with. City Attorney Steve Campbell was asked how the mural project went

on his building, he said he had nothing but good things to say and that he and his wife Susan were very happy with how it turned out. Commissioner Bagwell stated that he had worked with her in the past and that she is very knowledge and skilled at what she does but he doesn't think it would take six months. Commissioner Bagwell said that it could be a good thing to have an art district. After the discussion they decided that Commissioner Bagwell and Mr. Anderson will work together on a counter proposal.

The meeting adjourned at 5:35.

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Debbie Turner, City Clerk

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John Borrow, Mayor

CITY OF CORNELIA  
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JUNE 3, 2025

The Cornelia City Commission met in Regular Session on Tuesday, June 3, 2025, 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: Janice Griggs, Mark Reed, Don Bagwell, and Tony Cook. Also, present: City Attorney, Steve Campbell, City Manager, Donald Anderson, City Clerk, Debbie Turner.

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

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

Commissioner Bagwell made the motion to approve the May 6th minutes as submitted, seconded by Commissioner Cook. Approved 4 - 0

#### City Manager's Monthly Report

Habersham County E911 has received a grant to automate our weather siren located at the Wastewater Plant. This means that the siren will be connected directly to NOAA so it will automatically sound whenever there is a severe weather threat. Currently the siren must be manually started by the 911 dispatchers. The upgrades should be completed by the end of the summer. We were able to get the Splash Pad open for the season on May 16<sup>th</sup> and it has already been heavily used almost every day when it hasn't rained! The upgrades that we have made will cut down on the amount of time that our employees have to spend each day working on the Splash Pad. We will also see a reduction in our maintenance costs because the filters will last a lot longer. The first event at the new park was a huge success! All the bands did a great job and the headliner, Marty Stuart, was phenomenal! The crowd was estimated to be between 2,000 and 2,500 people. We have received a lot of positive feedback from residents as well as visitors. The Cornelia Hospitality & Tourism Board is already working on a headliner for next year's event which is tentatively scheduled for May 16, 2026. We awarded the fire hydrant decorating

contest winners for this year. The winners were Adalyn Ledford from Tallulah Falls, Audrey Colburn from South Habersham Middle School, and Kylee Cross from Cornelia Elementary. The hydrants that will be painted are on South Main Street across from the fire station, at the corner of Berry and Main Street and across from Dolson Street. The hydrants will be painted sometime this summer. The fire department along with assistance from Baldwin, Demorest, Lee Arrendale, and the county responded to a fire at Fieldale's rendering plant on May 25<sup>th</sup>. They were able to contain the fire quickly to keep it from spreading to other parts of the plant. Luckily, they had not begun operations yet so there were only a few people in the plant to evacuate. I have been in touch with Fieldale, and they are operating the processing plant, but it will take a few weeks to complete the repairs to the rendering plant.

Public Forum - No Comments were made.

#### Estimated Milledge Rollback Rate for 2025

A requirement of House Bill 581 is that we now must put an estimated rollback rate on the tax assessment notices. This does not mean that this will be the Milledge rate that you ultimately approve of with the Budget. However, it does prevent you from setting the Milledge rate higher than this number. The city manager recommended that the estimated rollback rate be set at 9.5 mills. Commissioner Cook made a motion to set the estimated rollback at 9.5 mills, seconded by Commissioner Reed. Approved 4 - 0

#### Amendment to City Financial Policy

HB 137 raised the Public Works project bidding threshold from \$100,000 to \$250,000. The City Finance policy requires sealed bids for projects over \$100,000. The city manager recommended the policy be amended to require sealed bids on projects over \$250,000. Commissioner Bagwell made a motion to amend our policy to require sealed bids on projects over \$250,000, seconded by Commissioner Griggs. Approved 4 - 0

#### Bid Results for FY 24 CDBG Project

We received 3 bids for the FY 24 CDBG Project which will replace the water lines in the Magnolia and East Walnut subdivision. The low bid was Higgins Construction at \$899,290. We received a \$1,000,000 CDBG grant for this project which was estimated to cost \$1,470,000. With the engineering and grant administration cost the total cost of the project will now be \$1,317,790. Because the low bid amount is less than

the grant number and we pledged a 74% match we are working with DCA to determine how much grant funds we will use for the project. We have requested that they allow us to reduce our match portion to \$439,843 and use \$877,947 in grant funds. At this time, we still have the full grant award of \$1,000,000 and no portion of the grant funds will be returned/de-obligated until after the construction. This allows the city to utilize grant funds on any change orders for unforeseen items during construction. Commissioner Reed made a motion to award the project to Higgins Construction, seconded by Commissioner Bagwell. Approved 4 - 0

#### Proposals for Third Party Utility Billing

City Manager Anderson said that our current software provider, Harris Technologies, prints our utility bills for \$.73 per bill. We will be converting to Tyler Technologies for Utility billing in July, so we need to find a new company to print our bills. We received 2 proposals to provide this service. Pagus quoted \$.97 per bill and InfoSend quoted \$.71 per bill. City Manager Anderson said he recommends InfoSend, he said they come highly recommended. Commissioner Bagwell made a motion to go with InfoSend at \$.71, seconded by Commissioner Reed. Approved 4 - 0

#### Quote to replace Gate Controls at Utilities Maintenance Shop

The City Manager stated that the original gate was installed in 2006, but now it has stopped working and cannot be repaired. We received a quote from Franklin Fence in the amount of \$11,015.78 but it was not budgeted for. City Manager Anderson said that he recommends approving the quote and paying for it out of Water & Sewer reserve funds. Commissioner Reed made a motion to approve the quote and to pay for it out of the Water & Sewer Reserve funds, seconded by Commissioner Griggs. Approved 4 - 0

Commissioner Cook made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:15, seconded by Commissioner Reed. Approved 4 - 0

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Debbie Turner, City Clerk

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John Borrow, Mayor