

CITY OF CORNELIA
MINUTES OF MEETING
JULY 1, 2025

The Cornelia City Commission met in a Workshop Session on Tuesday, July 1, 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 asked if there were any changes to the agenda. City Manager Anderson stated that Windstream had approached him a couple of months back about the naming rights of the proposed Amphitheatre. Then he and the mayor met with them again, and they think that the proposal is excellent. They have pledged \$30,000 a year for the next 5 years. Nicole Payne and Josh Baker are here tonight from Windstream to answer any questions. Ms. Payne spoke and said that they are committed to community involvement and giving back, and they believe that partnering with the city would benefit both parties. Ms. Payne said that they will provide fiber to the park and Wi-Fi services throughout the park. Additionally, signage will be placed at the park, which will be named Kinetic Amphitheater. Commissioner Reed asked where they had done this before. She said they have worked with the Georgia. Mountain Fairgrounds, but this is the first one in the state of Georgia. Ms. Payne said that they will have a splash page for free Wi-Fi, and the customer will provide an email address for access. They discussed the logistics of how Wi-Fi would work when there was no activity in the park. Ms. Payne said that they are still working out on this. Commissioner Reed asked about their company's values. Ms. Payne reiterated that they are ingrained in the community and want to give back.

They discussed the public hearing on the Planned Unit Development. City Manager Anderson stated that Cook Communities has been in the area for a long time and is currently developing the second phase of the Orchard Reserve. Commissioner Griggs asked about the traffic, she said it's already horrible out there. Commissioner Bagwell noted that we do need housing. They discussed it at length.

They reviewed the other items on the agenda, particularly the agreement with Demorest for Fire services. The mayor and commissioners all felt that even if they decided to do it, they would need much more information.

The consensus at this time is that they will pull it from the agenda.
They went over the remaining items on the agenda.

The workshop was adjourned at 6:00

Debbie Turner, City Clerk

John Borrow, Mayor

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The Cornelia City Commission met in Regular Session on Tuesday, July 1, 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.

Mayor Borrow gave the invocation and Larry Whitfield led the Pledge of Allegiance.

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

Commissioner Reed made a motion to approve the minutes from June 3rd as submitted, seconded by Commissioner Bagwell. Approved 4 - 0

FOP Presentation to the Police Department - Michael Palmer from the Georgia FOP Vest Committee presented three bulletproof vests, three tourniquets, and three doses of Narcan to the Police Department. He emphasized the importance of every officer wearing their vest every day. He gave the statistics of officers who have been fatally shot or injured in the line of duty. He said that making this donation is personal because he has worked with some of our officers for years. Mayor Borrow thanked him for his generous donation.

City Manager's Monthly Report

City Manager Anderson stated that we received our Supplemental LMIG funding from GDOT in the amount of \$95,241.94. These funds have been placed in our LMIG account and will be used for the 2026 Paving Project. We sustained significant damage to several pieces of city property during the storm that came through on June 6th. Several trees were damaged at the City Park, causing the park to be closed since the event. We also had fence damage at the Chenocetah Water Tank, City Shop, BC Grant Lift Station, and Hazel Creek Lift Station. The cost of the fence repairs will be \$24,729, which we have submitted to our insurance company. A copy of his report is made an integral part of the minutes.

Public Forum

Audrey Davenport came forward to speak about a comment made by Commissioner Cook during the June Workshop about a proposal for her to create an Art Master Plan. Ms. Davenport stated that she felt that he owed her a public apology. Commissioner Cook stated that the media had misquoted his words and that the reporter should apologize.

Sandra Davenport came forward on behalf of her sister Audrey. Ms. Davenport said that he should uphold his integrity. Commissioner Cook has damaged her reputation, she stated, and Audrey has a legacy of service to others.

Renetha Gipson said that she has always looked up to Commissioner Cook and his comment was not deserved. Ms. Gipson stated that the night of the fireworks, she was hosting her 4-year-old daughter's birthday party, and now her daughter is terrified of fireworks because they were so loud. Ms. Gibson said that she was not made aware that there would be fireworks following the concert. Mayor Borrow thanked her for coming.

Johnathan Mark, formerly of 418 Grand Ave, came forward to complain about the trash pick-up. He said he doesn't understand why if the lid is not completely closed, they will not get his trash. He said if he pays for the service, he should get it. He stated that sometimes the trash can lid is open and if it rains, then the trash can gets water in it and that sometimes the trash can is left in the middle of the driveway. He said there needs to be some consistency. City Manager Anderson explained that when they lift the trash can, sometimes the lid does not close when the can is lowered back down. Commissioner Reed ask if there is a discount second bag. City Manager Anderson said that you can purchase purple bags at City Hall and they will pick those bags up. Mr. Mark also said he would like to see something done about the speeding on Habersham Terrace.

Audrey Davenport asked if she could get a response about her concerns. Mayor Borrow said we can sit down at any time and talk.

Public Hearings

Request for a Conditional Use Permit to Open a Package Store at 194 Crossing Shopping Center

Mayor Borrow recused himself from the hearing since he is the current property owner of 194 Cornelia Crossing Shopping Center. Mayor Pro Tem Reed opened the public hearing and stated that this is a request from Sukwant Singh to obtain a Conditional Use Permit to operate a package store at 194 Cornelia Crossing Shopping Center. The property is zoned Highway Business, and package stores are allowed as a Conditional Use in the HB Zoning District. Staff has verified that the property meets the distance requirements from both Level Grove Baptist Church and the school that operates on their property. The Planning Commission held a public hearing on this matter on June 19, 2025. Following this public hearing, the board voted unanimously to recommend approval of the request. Mayor Pro Tem Reed asked if anyone wanted to speak for or against the development. Wade Rodes came forward on behalf of Mr. Singh and stated that he already owns several package stores which are always very clean and well-stocked. No one else came forward. Mayor Pro Tem Reed closed the Public Hearing. Commissioner Bagwell made a motion to approve the conditional use, seconded by Commissioner Cook. Approved

Mayor Borrow returned to lead the remainder of the meeting.

Mayor Borrow opened the Public Hearing for a rezoning request from Cook Communities for 1900 Level Grove Road and asked if anyone had anything to say for or against the rezoning. Erin Moore from Cook Communities presented a PowerPoint slide show outlining what the development will look like, as well as their proposed plans. Ms. Moore stated that the 2 parcels are 36.86 acres. She said there will be 72 townhomes, 228 apartments, and 3 commercial outparcels. The units will have hardi plank siding and accents of stone and brick. The property will have 24/7 onsite management. There will be a Pool, a Clubhouse, a Pavilion, a Playground, and walking trails. Ms. Moore stated that it would have one entrance and one exit, as well as retention ponds, and a 25-foot buffer, as required by city ordinance. She asked if they had any questions. Seth Herrin came forward with concerns about the traffic; he said he was not opposed to the development, but was very concerned about someone having a wreck, especially if it involved a school bus. City Manager Anderson noted that the planning commission had requested that they speak with GDOT, specifically requesting a right turn lane from the egress onto Hwy 365. He also suggested installing Flock Cameras at the entrance and exit lanes. Commissioner Reed said that he didn't know if he could vote on

it because he didn't know if he would be comfortable with cameras in use. City Manager Anderson noted that the cameras were used to capture the man who had murdered his wife a couple of months back and brought her body to Carpenter's Cove. Ms. Moore said she would like to know who would maintain them if they were installed. Mr. Anderson stated that he would discuss it with Police Chief Roberts. Commissioner Reed made a motion to post, seconded by Commissioner Bagwell. Approved 4 - 0

New Business

Agreement with Mount Airy for Fire Protection

This is the annual agreement with the Town of Mount Airy for us to provide them with fire protection. I have increased the fee by 5% to \$92.85 per building to account for the increased cost of providing this service. Based on the current number of buildings to be covered, 498, the annual cost will be \$46,239.30 to be paid in monthly installments of \$3,853.28. Commissioner ... made a motion for the mayor to sign the agreement, seconded by Commissioner ... Approved 4 - 0

Proposal to Purchase the Naming Rights for the New Amphitheater

Kinetic has provided us with a proposal to purchase the naming rights for the new amphitheater. If approved, the venue would be named the Kinetic Amphitheater. Kinetic would be allowed to put signage up in the park. They would also be the sole internet provider for the park and amphitheater. They will provide free public Wi-Fi throughout the park. The financial commitment on their part would be \$30,000 per year over a 5-year contract period. This would be re-evaluated at the end of the contract. Commissioner Bagwell made a motion to accept the proposal from Kinetic, seconded by Commissioner Cook. Approved 4 - 0

Potential SPLOST Projects

We are on a tight timeline to be able to place the SPLOST VII referendum on the November ballot. To meet this timeline, all the cities and the county will need to approve the intergovernmental agreement by July 17th. The County has provided us with three different scenarios, depending on

how much money they plan to allocate from the top to cover a portion of the new jail costs.

Option 1: The county uses \$15 million towards the jail project, which leaves \$60,937,510 to split between the county and the cities. Under this scenario, we will receive \$6,748,220 over the 6-year collection period. Potential projects that staff have come up with under this option include \$1,700,000 for Community Facilities, \$2,680,000 for Public Safety, and \$2,368,220 for Streets and Sidewalks.

Option 2: The county uses \$18 million towards the jail project, which leaves \$57,937,510 to split between the county and the cities. Under this scenario, we will receive \$6,416,000 over the 6-year collection period. Potential projects that staff have come up with under this option include \$1,367,780 for Community Facilities, \$2,680,000 for Public Safety, and \$2,368,220 for Streets and Sidewalks.

Option 3: The county uses \$20 million towards the jail project, which leaves \$55,937,510 to split between the county and the cities. Under this scenario, we will receive \$6,194,520 over the 6-year collection period. Potential projects that staff have come up with under this option include \$1,226,300 for Community Facilities, \$2,600,000 for Public Safety, and \$2,368,220 for Streets and Sidewalks.

Amendment to GEFA Loan # WS12L18WR

This is the GEFA loan that we obtained in 2012 for the construction of the new reservoir. Included in this loan are funds to make necessary modifications to the old reservoir. The modifications to the old reservoir have been delayed for several reasons. First, we were unable to complete this project until the new reservoir was constructed. Second, we had to wait for Safe Dams to approve the Dam Stability Analysis that was prepared by our Geotechnical Engineer. We made our third plan submission to Safe Dams in April of this year and are still waiting to hear from them on this submission. This modification extends the life of the loan to November 2026; I recommend that you approve this

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modification. Commissioner Reed made a motion for the modification, seconded by Commissioner Griggs. Approved 4 - 0

Request to Install Crosswalk on Industrial Blvd at Wayside St

Fieldale has requested permission to install a crosswalk on Industrial Boulevard at Wayside Street. Fieldale will pay for the installation of the crosswalk; they just need permission to construct it. I recommend that you approve this request. Commissioner Griggs made a motion to approve the request, seconded by Commissioner Bagwell. Approved 4 - 0

Commissioner Reed made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:05, seconded by Commissioner Griggs. Approved 4 - 0

Debbie Turner, City Clerk

John Borrow, Mayor