

CORTEZ CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING
TUESDAY, JULY 22, 2025
7:30 P.M.

1. The meeting was called to order in the City Council Chambers at 7:30 p.m., with the Pledge of Allegiance. Roll Call was taken and the following Councilmembers were present: Mayor Rachel Medina, Mayor Pro-tem Dennis Spruell, Matthew Keefauver, Lydia DeHaven, Robert Dobry, Bill Lewis, and April Randle. Staff present included: Municipal Court Clerk Carla Odell, Finance Director Randy Bailey, Interim Chief of Police Andy Brock, Director of General Services Casey Simpson, Director of Parks and Recreation Creighton Wright, Airport Director Jeremy Patton, Community and Economic Development Director Rachael Marchbanks, City Planner Jason Armstrong, Human Resources Director Matt Cashner, Grants Coordinator Scott Baker, Municipal Court Judge Beth Padilla, IT Director Jay Rohrer, City Clerk Danielle Wells, City Manager Drew Sanders and City Attorney Patrick Coleman. There were six members of the public present in the audience.

Councilmember Dobry moved that the agenda for July 22, 2025, be approved. Councilmember Lewis seconded the motion and the vote was as follows:

DeHaven	Dobry	Lewis	Keefauver	Medina	Randle	Spruell
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

2. The Consent Agenda items acted upon by Council were as follows:
 - a. Approval of the Expenditure List for July 22, 2025.
 - b. Approval of a renewal application for a Fermented Malt Beverage and Wine Liquor License from Dillon Companies, LLC., DBA City Market #8, located at 508 East Main Street, Cortez.
 - c. Approval of a renewal application on a Retail Liquor Store License for Seven Eighteen Cortez, Inc., DBA Liquid Assets, located at 718 East Main Street, Cortez
 - d. Approval of a renewal application for a Medical Marijuana Center/On Site Optional Premises Cultivation License for Durango Organics, LLP, DBA DO Cortez, located at 1013 East Street, Cortez
 - e. Approval of a renewal application for a Retail Marijuana Center License for Green KIWI 4, LLC, DBA LivWell, located at 1819 East Main Street, Cortez.

Councilmember Randle moved to approve the Consent Agenda with the removal of Consent Agenda item “c”. Councilmember Dobry seconded the motion, and the vote was as follows:

DeHaven	Dobry	Lewis	Keefauver	Medina	Randle	Spruell
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Councilmember Randle moved to table item number “c” from the Consent Agenda. Councilmember Spruell seconded the motion, and the vote was as follows:

DeHaven	Dobry	Lewis	Keefauver	Medina	Randle	Spruell
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: None

4. PRESENTATIONS:

- a. Quarterly Review by Municipal Court Judge Beth Padilla Municipal Court Judge Beth Padilla provided a quarterly update for the municipal court to City Council. This year there has been an increase in most types of court cases in comparison to last year’s numbers. Criminal cases rose from 178 to 316, land use from 2 to 8, animal cases from 4 to 6, parking violations from 36 to 126, while traffic cases slightly declined from 171 to 167. Judge Padilla has set the second Monday of each month at 8:30 am for juvenile cases in order to help accommodate school schedules. Judge Padilla has been conducting legal research about legislative updates and municipal court rules that have changed to ensure our municipal court is up to date. She has also spent time updating forms, documents and docket systems with the help of the IT Department. The court is currently staffed by Court Clerk Carla Odell, one full time clerk and one part time clerk. The staff is the court’s biggest asset. There have been two medical emergencies in the last six weeks that law enforcement and paramedics quickly addressed. The police department has done a great job keeping the whole building safe. The office may attend fall conference remotely this year due to staffing constraints and distance to the event. Cortez will host a Southwest regional networking event on court security for municipal judges, administrators, and court clerks on September 19th, 2025, featuring a keynote speaker, with 15 expected attendees and remote access available.

5. PUBLIC HEARINGS:

- a. Ordinance No. 1341, Series 2025 City Manager Drew Sanders presented the ordinance to increase City Attorney Patrick Coleman’s salary. He has worked 3 years with the City of Cortez. His salary increased to \$163,800 on his second-year review. This raise will put him in the market salary structure determined by the 2024 wage study. His office has been working hard on CORA requests. Council asks that he continue his work on updating the Code, City Charter and Ordinances. Mayor Medina reminded him to focus on areas of time management and asking for help when needed. Council expressed their appreciation for his hard work and expertise. Mayor Medina opened the hearing for public comment, however, there was none and the public comment portion of the hearing was closed.

Councilmember Lewis moved that Council approve on second and final reading Ordinance No. 1341, Series 2025, an ordinance approving the amendment to the City Attorney's employment contract and fixing the City Attorney's compensation at \$174,342 effective June 30, 2025. Councilmember Randle seconded the motion, and the vote was as follows:

DeHaven	Dobry	Lewis	Keefauver	Medina	Randle	Spruell
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Yes Yes Yes Yes Yes Yes Yes

- b. Ordinance No. 1342, Series 2025 City Attorney Patrick Coleman stated the intention of this ordinance is to give peace officers the ability to enter offenders into municipal court for minor violations instead of only sending them to combined courts. This ordinance will amend the age ranges so that juvenile offender cases have the option to be heard in municipal court, rather than combined courts. This ordinance would also correct the contradictory sentencing and age restrictions currently found in the City Code. Judge Padilla did a lot of work establishing which areas could help with the juveniles including reviewing other City's codes. The City police officers are supportive of these types of changes. After Council discussion, an amendment to Section 18-4 of the City Code is also needed to reflect that underage consumption and possession of alcohol applies to any person under the age of 21. Adding alcohol regulations to this ordinance will simplify and correct the age and sentencing contradictions similar to the ones found in tobacco and marijuana. Mayor Medina opened the hearing for public comment, however, there was none and the public comment portion of the hearing was closed.

Councilmember Randle moved that Council approve on second and final reading Ordinance No. 1342, Series 2025, an ordinance amending Chapter 18 of the City of Cortez Code of Ordinances regarding juvenile sentencing, with the following modifications: underage purchase, possession or consumption of tobacco, underage purchase, possession or consumption of marijuana, and underage purchase, possession, or consumption of drug paraphernalia and include the underage purchase, possession, or consumption of alcohol. Councilmember Randle requested an amendment to Section 18-4 to reflect the underage purchase, possession and consumption of alcohol to under the age of 21 and that the sentencing recommendations coincide with the other substances. Councilmember Dobry seconded the motion with all of the amendments, and the vote was as follows:

DeHaven	Dobry	Lewis	Keefauver	Medina	Randle	Spruell
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

- c. Ordinance No. 1343, Series 2025 Community and Economic Director Rachael Marchbanks presented the ordinance to the Council. The Montezuma school district has applied for the historic designation of the Manaugh Elementary School building located at 300 East Fourth Street. The school was built in 1955. There were two additions added to the building, one in 1957 and the other in 1987. The Historic Board voted unanimously to approve the application. Designation standards require that a structure be no less than fifty years old and demonstrate meaningful significance in one or more of the following categories: geographical, cultural, historical, architectural, or environmental. The Historic Board determined that the Manaugh Elementary School meets the historic cultural guidelines of the designation. In general, the school is in its original location, and has kept its original character. Karen Sheek represented the school and mentioned the goal is to repurpose the school for affordable housing, specifically for teachers in the district. This designation is the first step in that process and to help in securing an assessment grant to see if it in fact is suitable for housing. Mayor Medina opened the hearing for public comment, however, there was none and the public comment portion of the hearing was closed.

Councilmember Lewis moved that Council approve on second and final reading Ordinance No. 1343, Series 2025, an ordinance approving the Manaugh Elementary School building, located at 300 E. Fourth Street, for Historic Designation and to include this property on the City Register of Historic Resources. Councilmember Spruell seconded the motion, and the vote was as follows:

DeHaven	Dobry	Lewis	Keefauver	Medina	Randle	Spruell
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

6. UNFINISHED BUSINESS: None

7. NEW BUSINESS

- a. Signature Authorization for 2025 CLG Grant Acceptance and Risk Assessment Form Grants Administrator Scott Baker presented the grant. Grant would be to examine a Civilian Conservation Corps camp in the Geer Natural Area. The grant has been awarded and the mayor's signature would allow the City to proceed.

Councilmember Dobry moved to authorize the Mayor to sign the completed Risk Self-Assessment Form and any other documents necessary to obtain and accept the 2025 CLG Grant Award from History Colorado. Councilmember Lewis seconded the motion, and the vote was as follows:

DeHaven	Dobry	Lewis	Keefauver	Medina	Randle	Spruell
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

- b. Letter of Support for CDOT Federal Grant Application, 2025 USDOT Wildlife Crossing Pilot Program City Manager Drew Sanders presented a letter of support for Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) to seek a grant for a wildlife connectivity project. Wildlife is dangerous around Highway 160, and this would create something similar to what has been built near Bayfield, CO. Staff recommends signing this letter because it would help improve public safety for our community.

Councilmember Spruell moved to approve the letter of support in collaboration with the Colorado Department of Transportation and Colorado Parks and Wildlife in support of the Wildlife Crossing Pilot Program, and authorize the Mayor to sign on behalf of the City. Councilmember DeHaven seconded the motion, and the vote was as follows:

DeHaven	Dobry	Lewis	Keefauver	Medina	Randle	Spruell
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

- c. Mesa Verde Country Visitor Information Bureau contract compliance issue City Manager Drew Sanders presented the information to Council. The City collects lodger tax and 80% of the tax is required to go to tourism. Mesa Verde Country (MVC) does that work on our behalf. Since MVC receives a large portion of its funding from Cortez, they are a component in the City's yearly financial audit. MVC's deadline to provide an audited financial statement was April 1st, and the

City's deadline for the audit was June 30th. Since the City did not receive the MVC reports, Council requested an extension for our audit which was granted and extended to September 30th. In order to meet the new deadline, the audit company needs MVC's financial documents by July 31st. Based on the contract, signed by Brian Bartlett, if MVC fails to meet auditing requirement, they can be fined a \$50,000 fee/penalty. The audit team of MVC say they hope to have the documents to the City by July 25th. MVC Director Brian Bartlett was present and reported to the Council that the audit is almost complete. Medical issues prevented the audit from being completed in a timely manner, and he is apologetic for being late. Due to many staff hours lost, a significant cost to the tax payers, and damage to public trust, it is City Manager Sanders' recommendation to withhold \$50,000 from Mesa Verde Country. Councilmember Keefauver stated that he would hate to see punitive measures that don't necessarily work, and wishes the City had a more creative approach or option. It seems to be punishing an organization that is already down. Council had questions regarding the contract with Mesa Verde Country, and City Attorney Patrick Coleman recommended going into an executive session to be able to freely discuss the contract with legal counsel.

At 8:44 p.m. Councilmember Dobry moved that Council enter executive session for a conference with the City Attorney for the purpose of receiving legal advice on specific legal questions under C.R.S. Section 24-6-402(4)(b) as well as the purpose of determining positions relative to matters that may be subject to negotiation, developing strategy for negotiations or instructing negotiators under C.R.S. Section 24-6-402(4)(e). Councilmember Lewis seconded the motion, and the vote was as follows:

DeHaven	Dobry	Lewis	Keefauver	Medina	Randle	Spruell
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

The executive session was closed and the regular meeting was resumed at 9:13 p.m. Those persons participating in the executive session were Mayor Rachel Medina, Mayor Pro-tem Dennis Spruell, Councilmembers Lydia DeHaven, Bill Lewis, Matt Keefauver, April Randle, and Robert Dobry, City Attorney Patrick Coleman, and City Manager Drew Sanders. No adoption of any proposed policy, position, resolution, rule, regulation or formal action occurred during the executive session.

Council asked Mr. Bartlett how a financial penalty would affect their organization. He said it will hamstring MVC, but it would not hobble them indefinitely. Mesa Verde Country will continue to offer their services. Councilmember Randle expressed that the Council is aware of the situation referenced and extended their sympathies on behalf of the Council.

Councilmember Lewis moved that Council continue agenda item 7c Mesa Verde Country Visitor Information Bureau contract compliance issue until the August 11th meeting and that Council avoid any penalty until Mesa Verde Country has had the opportunity to provide its audited financial statements by July 25th, 2025. Councilmember Dobry seconded the motion, and the vote was as follows:

DeHaven	Dobry	Lewis	Keefauver	Medina	Randle	Spruell
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

- d. Empire Electric Association Office Building Purchase City Manager Drew Sanders talked about the City staff growing at City Hall, the police department is also growing and is wanting to start planning for the future. Council has worked for months and negotiated with Empire Electric. An architect was hired to help plan. One idea for this building would be to move the police department and keep the current police department office for future City needs. The purchase price of the building is \$1.4 million dollars. During the workshop, City Council and some city staff toured the facility. Manager Sanders thanked CEO Josh Dellinger and Business Services Manager Chris Snyder for giving the tour. The building is about 18,000 square feet, making this building \$77 per square foot, which is a great deal less compared to the cost of building new, which is about \$351 per square foot. This will save the City money. Council is glad to see the building being used in the community rather than staying vacant. The closing date would be February 2, 2026 to give Empire Electric time to build and move into their new building. There are still due diligence and inspection deadlines to be completed. City Council and staff think this is an excellent opportunity for the City to move forward and will be a great space for the police department to grow.

Councilmember Lewis moved to approve the Contract to Buy and Sell Real Estate and the Addendum and Amendment to Contract to Buy and Sell Real Estate by and between the City and Empire Electric Association, Inc., for the purchase of the office building located at 801 N. Broadway, Cortez, Colorado, a/k/a the Empire Electric Building, and authorize the Mayor to sign the contract and addendum on behalf of the City. Councilmember Dobry seconded the motion, and the vote was as follows:

DeHaven	Dobry	Lewis	Keefauver	Medina	Randle	Spruell
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

- e. CDOT Aeronautics Grant Resolution - State Apportionment of Runway Rehabilitation Project Airport Director Jeremy Patton, presented the grant for the Cortez Airport Runway Project. The project design started in 2023. It was projected to have construction start in 2029 or 2030. Airport staff pushed to get this done sooner. The airport will receive over \$8 million. The City will contribute 2.5% of the grant. Additionally, the State gave the Airport an additional \$500,000 at a 90/10 split for crack seal and patching of the runway pavement. The Council applauds Jeremy for making the airport better for the community and the economy.

Councilmember Dobry moved to approve the CDOT Aeronautics Grant Resolution for the State apportionment of the Runway Rehabilitation Project, and authorize the Mayor to sign the Grant Resolution. Councilmember Spruell seconded the motion, and the vote was as follows:

DeHaven	Dobry	Lewis	Keefauver	Medina	Randle	Spruell
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

- f. Date for Council 2026 Budget Workshop City Manager Drew Sanders proposed the dates of September 25, 26 or 27, 2025 for the budget workshop meeting.

Councilmember Dobry moved to schedule the City Council special 2026 budget workshop on September 26, 2025. Councilmember Lewis seconded the motion, and the vote was as follows:

DeHaven	Dobry	Lewis	Keefauver	Medina	Randle	Spruell
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

8. DRAFT RESOLUTION/ORDINANCES: None

9. CITY ATTORNEY'S REPORT: Spent a lot of time on the Empire Electric real estate contract. Is currently reviewing the City employee handbook and working with the Human Resources Department. Worked on an airport lease assignment. Participated in the Land Use Code Committee meeting, and addressed changes needed since the new Land Use Code was adopted. Working on the marijuana and natural medicine ordinances to present to Council next month.

10. CITY MANAGER'S REPORT: The contract for the Skate Park repair has been finalized and a Notice to Proceed will be sent. The work is expected to take two weeks and is anticipated to begin after school starts either August 11, 2025 or August 18, 2025. The 21st Annual Cortez Rendezvous Balloon Rally is slated for August 1-3, 2025 in Parque de Vida. The balloon glow will take place Friday night, August 1, 2025 at 7 p.m. with many other activities throughout the weekend. The Cortez Library is continuing to sponsor "Movie in the Park." A movie will be shown, free of charge, the first Friday of the month, through October, in Montezuma Park at 8 p.m. The upcoming movie on August 1, 2025 will be "Pee-Wee's Big Adventure." Staff has started working on the 2026 Annual Budget. The preliminary 2026 budget will be presented to Council at the budget workshop the end of September, 2025. The first reading of the 2026 Annual Budget is anticipated to be October 28, 2025 and the second reading, public hearing and proposed adoption will likely occur on November 11, 2025.

11. CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE REPORTS

a. Mayor's Report on Workshop. Council toured Empire Electric Association's administrative building. No workshop discussion was held during the visit. Mayor Medina informed the Council that representatives from the *Journal* and the *Herald* invited her to contribute a regular opinion column. The column will include City updates from her perspective, with a focus on topics that may be less widely discussed, in an effort to keep the community better informed. Council members expressed support and agreed that this would be a beneficial initiative.

b. Other Board Reports

1. Golf Advisory Board. Councilmember Lewis said the meeting has been moved to August 8th due to scheduling conflicts.
2. Parks and Recreation – Met on July 10th. The forestry subcommittee focused on tree replacement downtown and trees in right of way. Recreation Center user group online registration is working really well. The park ranger program is going well. The ranger works 12 p.m. to 9 p.m. currently. They may hire a part time person depending on 2026 budget prioritization.
3. Historic Preservation Board will meet August 5th.
4. Councilmember Dobry talked about the special work session discussion on natural medicine. Good discussion with the community and thanked Dr. Jennifer Gero for presenting information and ideas on how to regulate it and keep the community safe.

12. OTHER ITEMS OF BUSINESS: None

13. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: None

14. ADJOURNMENT: Councilmember Lewis moved that the regular meeting be adjourned at 9:42 p.m. Councilmember Dobry seconded the motion, and the vote was as follows:

DeHaven	Dobry	Lewis	Keefauver	Medina	Randle	Spruell
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Rachel B. Medina, Mayor

ATTEST:

Danielle Wells, City Clerk