

CORTEZ CITY COUNCIL
WORK SESSION
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 25, 2025

1. The work session was called to order at 6:45 p.m. in the City Council Chambers. Councilmembers present included: Mayor Rachel Medina, Mayor Pro Tem Dennis Spruell, Robert Dobry, Matthew Keefauver, April Randle, Bill Lewis and Lydia DeHaven. Staff members present included: Finance Director Randy Bailey, Municipal Court Judge Beth Padilla, Court Clerk Carla Odell, Lieutenant Rogelio Maynard, Interim Community and Economic Development Director/City Planner Jason Armstrong, Parks and Recreation Director Creighton Wright, City Manager Drew Sanders, City Attorney Patrick Coleman, and City Clerk Danielle Wells. There were two members of the public present in the audience.
2. **Municipal Court Update:** Judge Beth Padilla reported a 24% rise in criminal cases, with 509 citations filed in 2025. The court is managing its caseload efficiently, averaging eight sessions per month, with steady animal and traffic cases but increased juvenile cases due to a new ordinance that keeps youth out of district court. Parents generally attend hearings and are receptive to support, though some youth fail to appear. Progress continues in treatment and sober living options with the Pinion Project, and therapy hours now count as community service. Judge Padilla noted filings reflect more cases being directed to municipal court rather than higher crime rates. She is exploring a teen court program—an evidence-based model with low recidivism—where peer juries could assign community service, apology letters, or jury duty. The program would require school collaboration and sufficient case volume to succeed.
3. **Recreation Center Taxation – Preliminary Discussion:** City Manager Drew Sanders provided an update on the Recreation Center taxation issue, noting that the process involved two parts: correcting future tax collections and reviewing past costs and charges. Changes in tax collections require 45 days to implement with businesses and the state, with changes only permitted on January 1 or July 1; this step was addressed through Ordinance 1350, passed at the last meeting. Staff is now focused on analyzing past costs and charges and plans to present some accounting details and a timeline at the next meeting.
4. **Citywide Projects Discussion:** City Manager Drew Sanders outlined major projects for the coming year, to ask for Council guidance and preference on how topics are discussed. Key topics include short-term rentals, storm water, water rates, election timing, Recreation Center taxation, future annexation, water rights and storage, and master/comprehensive plans (including parks). The Recreation Center tax matter is the only immediate time-sensitive issue, while water infrastructure remains a priority already in progress. City Manager Sanders suggested additional or earlier workshops, with focused sessions on master plans and infrastructure needs.
5. City Attorney Patrick Coleman discussed lodgers tax flexibility, with Council seeking clarification on what lodger's tax funds can be used for and if changes would need to be put on a ballot. Further discussion and clarification will be brought to Council at the next meeting. Potential ballot questions could be considered for April or November, though April may already be crowded. A work session is scheduled for December 9, 2025 with follow-ups in January 2026 to refine ballot language. Council will review options, consider combining questions to avoid lengthy ballots, and ensure alignment with state guidelines and TABOR requirements.
6. **Council General Discussion:** Councilmember Spruell suggested adding time to discuss presentations and ideas, allowing for more dialogue and input. Councilmember Keefauver reported that city departments donated 177 lbs. of food to the Good Samaritan food drive. While current supplies meet demand, the need remains high, with 138 families served in one day last week. Donations are encouraged to continue, as food boxes typically range from 20–40 lbs. depending on family size, and contributions help ease burdens during the holiday season.

The work session was adjourned at 7:27 p.m.