

CORTEZ CITY COUNCIL
WORK SESSION
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 9, 2025

1. The work session was called to order at 5:30 p.m. in the City Council Chambers. Councilmembers present included: Mayor Pro Tem Dennis Spruell, Robert Dobry, Matthew Keefauver, April Randle, Bill Lewis and Lydia DeHaven. Mayor Rachel Medina participated remotely. Staff members present included: Finance Director Randy Bailey, Parks and Recreation Director Creighton Wright, Parks and Recreation Assistant Director Jenni Bandy, City Manager Drew Sanders, and City Clerk Danielle Wells. City Attorney Patrick Coleman participated remotely. There were four members of the public present in the audience.
2. Recreation Center Tax: In 2001, voters approved a 0.55% sales tax with its sunset tied to the debt retirement of the bond on the Recreation Center. In 2018, a successful ballot measure reduced the rate to 0.35% in perpetuity once the bond was paid off. However, the required implementing ordinance was never enacted after the measure passed. The omission was discovered during 2026 budget preparation when staff reviewed the Recreation Center Fund account. City Manager Drew Sanders reported that total collections to date amount to \$2,114,830.45, with 2025 projected at \$730,066, yielding a projected total of \$2,844,896 for the impacted period of 2022–2025. The tax rate will be lowered to 0.35% effective January 1, 2026. He confirmed that all sales tax revenues were deposited into and used for the Recreation Center Fund for their intended purposes, a fact verified by external audits. The City has engaged outside legal counsel to evaluate and advise on potential remedies. Refunding over-collected sales tax amounts is considered highly impracticable. Currently \$2.1 million is budgeted for 2026 maintenance and repairs of the Recreation Center. City staff aims to present options of remedies on this matter to Council by the end of January 2026.
3. Charter Revisions: City Attorney Patrick Coleman presented options for Charter revisions to the Council in preparation for the April 2026 election. Counsel and staff suggested using a single summary ballot question that would reference the detailed changes outlined in the implementing ordinance. The general approach to these revisions was to keep the Charter focused on high-level provisions, while placing administrative details that may need more adjustment into the Municipal Code. Counselor Coleman first suggested splitting the Charter and the Municipal Code into separate documents. Draft changes to the Charter include typographical corrections, formatting updates, and edits to ensure pronoun neutrality. In addition to these technical adjustments, several substantive proposals were introduced. These include revising council member qualifications to restrict immediate city employment, retaining but clarifying the optional nature of director oath requirements, and clarifying rules for remote participation while considering compensation adjustments. The proposals also expand council powers to explicitly include the appointment and removal of the city manager, city attorney, and municipal judge. Furthermore, the departmental structure would be moved from the Charter to the Code, allowing for greater administrative flexibility. Additional items discussed included allowing publication by reference, adjusting the qualifications required for the city attorney, and preserving fiscal responsibility guardrails while removing overly detailed job descriptions. Departments such as general services, parks and recreation, police, health, and aviation would be relocated into ordinance language where appropriate. Utilities acquisition authority was proposed to be granted to the Council, while water policy would remain in the Charter but would no longer require a property taxpayer-only vote. A follow-up work session was scheduled for December 17 at 6:00 p.m. to review a cleaned-up draft of the proposed revisions.

Work session adjourned at 7:28 p.m.