

CORTEZ CITY COUNCIL
WORK SESSION
TUESDAY, JANUARY 27, 2026

1. The work session was called to order at 7:00 p.m. in the City Council Chambers. Councilmembers present included: Mayor Rachel Medina, Mayor Pro Tem Dennis Spruell, Robert Dobry, Lydia DeHaven, Matthew Keefauver, April Randle, and Bill Lewis. Staff members present included Chief of Police Vernon Knuckles, Finance Director Randy Bailey, City Manager Drew Sanders, City Clerk Danielle Wells and City Attorney Patrick Coleman.
2. Public Arts Committee Interviews. Council interviewed applicants for the Public Arts Committee
 - a. Malinda Mascarenas emphasized that a community becomes what its members work to create, and she sees public arts as a key part of that growth. She brings a holistic perspective, experience in floral design, and a lifelong connection to the arts through her family and business. Recently returning to the area, she sees strong potential along Main Street and Broadway and hopes to collaborate with other groups while first learning the current goals of the Public Arts Committee. She believes the community is fortunate to have rich cultural assets and wants to help residents appreciate the beauty around them. Ms. Mascarenas also noted that during economic challenges, arts and beautification are often deprioritized, and she hopes to help maintain a balance that preserves the value and meaning the arts bring to the community.
 - b. Tanner Besse, the applicant, was not able to attend.
 - c. Barnabas Kane expressed a strong desire to volunteer and give back to the community, particularly through supporting the arts. Having moved to the area two years ago, he brings experience from preservation commissions in Leadville and Prescott, as well as skills as a landscape architect involved in public art, project management, construction, and fundraising. He has a minor in fine arts and has spent his career working closely with artists through graphics and illustration. Mr. Kane sees tremendous artistic potential in the local landscape but wants to learn from the committee before forming specific opinions. He noted that the lack of an operating budget is a significant challenge, as arts funding is often limited or cut, making the work more difficult.
3. Council General Discussion
 - a. The League of Women Voters of Montezuma County will be hosting a Candidate Forum for the candidates running for City Council on Wednesday, March 11, from 6:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m in the City Council Chambers.
 - b. A screening of *Place at the Table* is scheduled for Thursday, January 29, at 7:00 p.m. at the Sunflower Theater. The film explores the challenges families face with food insecurity, and a panel discussion will follow the showing.

Worksession adjourned at 7:16pm.