CORTEZ CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING
TUESDAY, JANUARY 27, 2026

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, Chief of Police Vernon Knuckles, Director of General Services/Interim Director of Public Works Casey Simpson, IT Director Jay Rohrer, Parks and Recreation Director Creighton Wright, Finance Director Randy Bailey, Interim Community and Economic Development Director/City Planner Jason Armstrong, Community and Economic Development Specialist Helen West, City Clerk Danielle Wells, City Manager Drew Sanders and City Attorney Patrick Coleman. There were 9 members of the public present in the audience.

   Councilmember Lewis moved that Council approve the agenda as presented for January 27, 2026. 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

2. CONSENT AGENDA

   a. Approval of the minutes for the City Council meeting on January 13, 2026.

   b. Approval of the Expenditure List for January 27, 2026

   Councilmember Dobry moved that the Council approve the Consent Agenda. 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

3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

   a. Rebecca Buscic introduced herself as a candidate for Montezuma County commissioner.

   b. Julia Buff spoke on the success of youth sports at the 7th Street fields and requested the City's support in formally honoring the late Richard Morales, a beloved coach who shaped local youth, by naming the fields at 7th street after him.

   c. Susan Kemnetz expressed concern that ongoing miscommunication in the City's land-use process—especially over the phone—leads to incorrect information, unfair outcomes, and loss of public trust, and suggested posting a clear written procedure on the city website to improve transparency.

4. PRESENTATIONS: None

5. PUBLIC HEARINGS

   a. <u>Ordinance No. 1353, Series 2026</u> presented by Patrick Coleman, City Attorney

   Council reviewed Ordinance No. 1353, Series 2026, on second and final reading, which places four proposed City Charter amendment questions on the April 7, 2026 ballot. The ballot questions address non-substantive corrections (Exhibit A), updates to council qualifications, duties, compensation, and remote participation (Exhibit B), clarification of meeting locations and remote meeting authority (Exhibit C), and revised term-limit provisions allowing a two-year separation between periods of service (Exhibit

D). Staff noted that the exhibits contain the full text of proposed changes and will be available online and in print. Council also discussed wording in Question 2 regarding whether compensation changes take effect to a “new council” or to “new terms”.

The public comment period was opened. Susan Kemnetz, in regard to the timing of Council compensation suggested for the impacted members of Council to recuse themselves during the vote on the ordinance. This portion of the hearing was closed.

Councilmember Randle moved that City Council approve Ordinance No. 1353, Series 2026 on second and final reading, and enable the Charter amendments to be placed on the ballot for consideration by the voters on the April 7, 2026 municipal election with the following amendments: first amendment regarding Exhibit D regarding the two-year time frame between consecutive terms. The second amendment regarding Exhibit B, that no elected or appointed council member may receive an increase in pay until the next Council is seated following an election. 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

b. <u>Ordinance No. 1354, Series 2026</u> presented by Helen West, Community & Economic Development Specialist

Council reviewed Ordinance No. 1354, proposing historic designation for the property at 245 East Montezuma and its addition to the City Register of Historic Resources. The structure meets required standards, including being over 50 years old and satisfying architectural and cultural criteria. Built in 1928, the home is a bungalow-style residence associated with Helen Duncan, who operated a well-known beauty shop from the property. The house retains key original features, including its front porch and chimney, and remains in its original historic context. The Historic Preservation Board unanimously recommended approval. The public comment period was opened; no input was received, and this portion of the hearing was closed.

Councilmember Lewis moved that the City Council approve, on second reading, Ordinance No. 1354, Series 2026, an ordinance approving the Helen Duncan home building located at 245 East Montezuma Avenue for Historic Designation and to include this property on the City Register of Historic Resources. Councilmember Keefauver seconded the motion and the vote was as follows:

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

c. <u>Ordinance No. 1355, Series 2026</u> presented by Helen West, Community & Economic Development Specialist

Council reviewed Ordinance No. 1355, proposing historic designation for the group of buildings located at 410 East Empire Street and their addition to the City Register of Historic Resources. The owners are also exploring eligibility for state historic tax credits and potential listing on the National Register. The property includes four buildings constructed between 1913 and the 1940s, historically associated with the Kermode family and their dairy farm. The site meets cultural designation criteria as both a family homestead and a culturally significant property. Key defining features include the original 1913 fireplace and cottage-style architecture. Only exterior elements are considered for the designation.

A detailed historic narrative prepared by the owners was included in the Council packet. Unit C was built in 1931; Unit D is believed to be the original barn; the garage may have served as a stable or dairy cottage; and Unit B was built by the Barlow family. All structures retain original design features and remain in their historic locations. The owners continue restoration work, including addressing heating setbacks in the first building, and plan to furnish interiors with period-appropriate pieces. Council expressed appreciation for the owners' commitment to preserving local history. The public comment period was opened; no input was received, and this portion of the hearing was closed.

Councilmember Dobry moved that the City Council approve, on second reading, Ordinance No. 1355, Series 2026, an ordinance approving the buildings located at 410 East Empire Street for Historic Designation and to include this property on the City Register of Historic Resources. Councilmember Keefauver 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. Highway Users Tax Fund (HUTF) Report for 2025 presented by Casey Simpson, Interim Director of Public Works

Established in 1953, HUTF helps CDOT maintain accurate, up-to-date records of all publicly maintained roadways in Colorado. The City's yearly mileage certification documents roadway changes for state funding purposes. Municipal HUTF distributions are calculated using two factors: total road mileage within the city and the number of vehicles registered locally.

Councilmember DeHaven moved to authorize the Mayor to sign the 2025 Highway Users Tax Fund Report. Councilmember Randle seconded the motion and the vote was as follows:

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

b. Public Arts Committee Appointments presented by Danielle Wells, City Clerk

Council interviewed Barnabas Kane and Malinda Mascarenas during the earlier worksession for two openings on the Public Arts Committee. Mascarenas is a Cortez resident, while Kane and applicant Tanner Besse live outside city limits. Besse was unable to attend his interview, and Council encouraged him to consider applying for another board in the future.

Councilmember Randle moved that Malinda Mascarenas and Barnabas Kane be appointed to the Public Arts Committee for two-year terms. 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

c. Resolution No. 3, Series 2026 presented by Danielle Wells, City Clerk

Council reviewed Resolution No. 3, Series 2026, authorizing the April 7, 2026 Municipal Election to be conducted as a mail-ballot election. The date aligns with the City Charter requirement for elections on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in April of even-numbered years. In accordance with Colorado law, staff recommended the mail-ballot format. The election will follow all City Charter and state statutory requirements, and the City Clerk will serve as the designated election official.

Councilmember Dobry moved that City Council approve Resolution No. 3, Series 2026, a resolution authorizing a Mail Ballot Election to be held on April 7, 2026. 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

d. Resolution No. 4, Series 2026 presented by Danielle Wells, City Clerk

Council reviewed the annual designation of official posting locations for public meeting notices. State law requires that notices be posted in a designated public place at least 24 hours before a meeting, with locations reaffirmed each year. The City's established posting sites—the east and west entrance doors of City Hall at 123 Roger Smith Ave—remain the official physical locations. Notices are also posted on the City's website.

Councilmember Lewis moved that Council approve Resolution No. 4, Series 2026, a resolution designating the public notice posting locations for the City of Cortez. Mayor Pro Tem Spruell 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: None

10. CITY MANAGER'S REPORT:

- With the new year upon us, we have been busily reviewing upcoming city projects, working on the 2025 year end reporting and annual reports, and getting ready for the 2025 audit.
- The Public Works Department is currently working with SGM to develop an updated Water Distribution Network (WDN) Master Plan. This Master Plan will serve as a key planning tool to guide the city in identifying and prioritizing critical waterline replacements. Through hydraulic analysis and long-term planning, Public Works will be able to make informed, data driven decisions rather than reacting on a case-by-case basis. Assets in critical condition will be addressed through a methodical, prioritized replacement hierarchy.
- Congressman Jeff Hurd, Colorado 3rd Congressional District, met with City and County leaders in Cortez on Monday, January 26, 2026. We had a very good and favorable discussion with our County partners that included City and Airport infrastructure, water distribution, etc. We look forward to the continued relationship and support of Congressman Hurd.

11. CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE REPORTS

a. Mayor's Report on Workshop: Two applicants for the Public Arts Committee were interviewed and then appointed during the regular meeting.

b. Other Board Reports

i. Golf Advisory Board: The Board met on January 15 and discussed four major items. The board reviewed a golf course financial analysis showing a $300,000 shortfall before the course could operate as an independent enterprise. Members considered creating a golf course advisory plan, received an update on the Parks and Recreation Master Plan, and reviewed a community golf survey planned for release in the spring to help identify needs and improve services of the golf course.

12. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: None

13. OTHER ITEMS OF BUSINESS

a. Council discussed the public comment from earlier in the meeting requesting that a field be named in honor of coach and community member Richard Morales following his passing. The City currently has no policy for naming facilities and noted that any name consideration would need to wait until the park project is completed. The suggestion will be kept in mind for future park-naming discussions.

b. Four Corners Community Band sent a thank you letter to the City for the Community Grant.

c. There was discussion on the City's ability to educate the public about the municipal election ballot language. City Attorney Coleman will distribute a memo outlining the legal limitations on how the City may communicate about ballot questions.

d. Executive Session:

At 8:36 p.m., Councilmember Dobry moved that Council go into executive session pursuant to C.R.S. Section 24-6-402(4)(f) for the purpose of discussing a personnel matter, and specifically to discuss the City Manager's employment contract. Mr. Sanders has not requested that the discussion occur in open session. 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

Close of Executive Session: Meeting resumed at 9:08 p.m. Those persons participating in the meeting were Mayor Rachel Medina, Mayor Pro-tem Dennis Spruell, Councilmembers Lydia DeHaven, Matt Keefauver, Bill Lewis, April Randle, and Robert Dobry. Also participating were City Manager Drew Sanders, and City Attorney Patrick Coleman. No adoption of any proposed policy, position, resolution, rule, regulation or formal action occurred during the executive session.

14. The meeting was adjourned at 9:09 p.m.

Rachel B. Medina, Mayor

ATTEST:

Danielle Wells, City Clerk