

CORTEZ CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 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, Bill Lewis and April Randle. Councilmembers Lydia DeHaven and Robert Dobry were absent. Staff present included: Municipal Court Clerk Carla Odell, Chief of Police Vernon Knuckles, Director of General Services/Interim Director of Public Works Casey Simpson, Refuse/Recycling Superintendent Colby Early, IT Director Jay Rohrer, Parks and Recreation Director Creighton Wright, Finance Director Randy Bailey, Interim Community and Economic Development Director/City Planner Jason Armstrong, Library Director LeRoy Harris, Project Engineer Noah Peterson, Airport Director Jeremy Patton, Human Resources Director Matt Cashner, City Clerk Danielle Wells, City Manager Drew Sanders and City Attorney Patrick Coleman. There were over 40 members of the public present in the audience.

Councilmember Lewis moved that Council approve the Agenda as presented for February 10, 2026. Councilmember Keefauver seconded the motion and the vote was as follows:

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

2. CONSENT AGENDA

- a. Approval of the minutes for the City Council meeting on January 27, 2026
- b. Approval of the Expenditure List for February 10, 2026
- c. Approval of a Renewal Application on a Tavern Liquor License for Cortez Conference Center LLC., DBA Destination Grill, located at 2121 East Main Street, Cortez
- d. Approval of a Renewal Application for a Hotel & Restaurant Liquor License with One Optional Premise for Rudosky Golf LLC, DBA Conquistador Golf Course, located at 2018 North Dolores Road, Cortez.

Councilmember Keefauver moved that Council approve the Consent Agenda. Councilmember Randle seconded the motion and the vote was as follows:

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

3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Public Comment Speakers: Richard Gallegos, Chad Pierce, Simon Martinez, Christina Gallegos, Morgan Head, Tiffany Jean, Josh Cornett, and Tara Faye. Numerous members of the public were present to support the speakers.

All speakers voiced deep concern about the deteriorating condition of the City's South Softball Complex. They emphasized that youth participation in the softball program is strong, that there are many committed volunteers and parents that would like to help with the complex. The softball organization reports that in the past, grants or other forms of assistance were repeatedly offered, but these were met with delays, red tape, or no response from the City. Many described unsafe or unusable conditions including no field lights, outdated power, closed concessions, lack of dugouts, and health-department issues, arguing that these failures limit opportunities for kids and undermine programs that generate revenue for the City. Collectively, they urged the council to prioritize repairs to the complex, provide a clear timeline, and to work

collaboratively with the community to restore a facility that keeps youth active, supported, and off the streets.

4. PRESENTATIONS

- a. Donation of Art to the City of Cortez by Artist Karen Kristin presented by Carla Odell, Court Administrator

Local Artist Karen Kristin donated her artwork titled “The Red Sunset”, a painting on 7 ft x 11 ft canvas to the City of Cortez. Ms. Kristin has created backdrops for commercials and movies in Hollywood, the sky art at the Venetian Casino and Caesar’s Palace in Las Vegas, and at the Olympics. The painting has been hung on the wall at the back of the Municipal Courtroom where it can be viewed and enjoyed by the community. The City of Cortez thanks Ms. Karen Kristin for her generous donation.

Councilmember Spruell moved that Council authorize the Mayor to sign a certificate of appreciation on behalf of the City of Cortez in recognition of a donation of the painting “The Red Sunset” by artist Karen Kristen. Councilmember Randle seconded the motion and the vote was as follows:

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

- b. Presentation of an Intergovernmental Agreement with the Town of Dolores for Waste and Recycling Services presented by Casey Simpson, Interim Director of Public Works and Colby Early, Refuse/Recycling Superintendent

Staff presented an overview of the proposed regional recycling and refuse partnership, explaining that TIF fees have historically supported drop-site operations and that a new state-driven funding mechanism will help haulers reduce curbside trash and increase recycling participation. Cortez has become a leader in waste-management services, and the proposal would extend its operations to Dolores, replacing outdated drop-off bins and offering more convenient, household-level service. The program would cost Dolores residents approximately \$2 more than Cortez residents, reflecting onboarding expenses, but long-term reimbursements of \$10–50k per year are anticipated. Staff emphasized that increased recycling diverts waste from the Montezuma County Landfill, extending its operational life and reducing long-term disposal costs for both City and County budgets. Standardizing recycling practices across Cortez, Dolores, and surrounding areas would improve material quality, and stabilize market prices in the recycling sector. The cleaner the collected materials, the more valuable they become, potentially generating rebates when sold by the landfill. Staff noted that Cortez already recycles over 90% of the county’s cardboard and more than 27,000 pounds of type-one plastics annually. Operationally, the city has the equipment, staff capacity, and bear-proof containers needed to serve approximately 500 Dolores households without difficulty. Participation would be voluntary, ensuring no conflict with private haulers. The state’s Extended Producer Responsibility program will help with the financial burden by making producers responsible for covering costs related to recycling. Overall, staff described the IGA as a “win-win-win,” supporting Dolores with dependable services while strengthening Cortez’s modernization efforts, regional partnerships, and long-term sustainability.

Councilmember Keefauver made a motion that Council authorize the City staff to prepare an intergovernmental agreement with the Town of Dolores for Waste and Recycling Services to be presented to the City Council for ratification at a future meeting. Councilmember Randle seconded the motion and the vote was as follows:

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

5. PUBLIC HEARINGS: None
6. UNFINISHED BUSINESS: None
7. NEW BUSINESS

a. Ordinance No. 1359, Series 2026 presented by Drew Sanders, City Manager

Council heard the first reading of an ordinance to amend Section 9-26 of the City Code to implement a TABOR-required refund of a portion of Family Recreation Center sales tax revenue collected between 2022 and 2025. City Manager Sanders explained that an over-collection issue was identified in September 2025, prompting a three-step response: immediately correcting the tax rate through Ordinance 1350, conducting an internal analysis of the over-collected amount, and establishing a refund mechanism. Financial analysis confirmed that all funds collected for the Recreation Center were properly accounted for and used for their intended purpose, totaling \$2,850,958. Because individual refunds are not feasible, the City proposes a sales-tax holiday from October 18 through December 31, 2026, covering 75 days to ensure the full refund amount is returned to the public. This period was selected to maximize benefit for local residents and support holiday-season business activity. The refund applies only to the City's portion of the sales tax and does not affect county, state, or other taxing entities. The ordinance is intended to fully satisfy TABOR requirements while maintaining transparency and ensuring the community receives the value of the over-collected revenue.

Councilmember Lewis moved that Council approve, on first reading, Ordinance 1359, Series 2026, an ordinance amending Section 9-26 of Chapter 9, Article II, Division 3 of the Cortez City Code by enacting subsection (C) in order to effect a TABOR refund of a portion of the Family Recreation Center Sales Tax Revenue that was collected by the City in 2022 through 2025, and set it for second reading and public hearing on February 24, 2026. Councilmember Keefauver seconded the motion and the vote was as follows:

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

b. Ordinance No. 1356, Series 2026 presented by Jeremy Patton, Airport Director

Airport Director Jeremy Patton presented Ordinance No. 1356, Series 2026 on first reading. He reported that Cortez Real Estate Holding Company LLC (CRE) has completed planning for a 70' x 80' private hangar on North Lot 9, the final available lot suitable for a hangar of this size. After reviewing the hangar waitlist, other interested parties were either not ready or preferred to wait for future south-apron expansion. The leased area totals approximately 9,500 sq. ft., with a lease rate of \$0.45 per square foot, generating \$3,206.25 for March–December 2026 and about \$4,275 annually thereafter, subject to CPI adjustments. CRE intends to begin construction once apron concrete work is complete.

Councilmember Lewis moved that City Council approve on first reading Ordinance No. 1356, Series 2026, an ordinance approving a 40-year Land Lease Agreement between the City of Cortez and Cortez Real Estate Holding Company LLC, for the purpose of hangar construction on Hangar Lot N9, and set the ordinance for second reading and public hearing on February 24, 2026. Councilmember Keefauver seconded the motion and the vote was as follows:

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

c. Resolution No. 6, Series 2026 presented by Patrick Coleman, City Attorney

Council considered a resolution authorizing the purchase of the Empire Electric Building at 801 N.

Broadway and granting the City Manager authority to sign all documents and pay required fees to complete the closing. City Attorney Coleman noted that Council had previously approved the purchase contract in July 2025, and the transaction is now two days from closing. The title company requested this formal resolution to confirm the City Manager's authority to finalize the purchase.

Councilmember Keefauver moved that Council approve Resolution No. 6, Series 2026, a resolution authorizing the purchase, and authorizing the City Manager to execute any and all documents and pay any fees and costs necessary to complete the purchase of the real property known as the Empire Electric Building, located at 801 N. Broadway, Cortez, Colorado. Councilmember Lewis seconded the motion and the vote was as follows:

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

d. Local Planning Capacity (LPC) Supplemental Grant Funds presented by Jason Armstrong, Interim Community & Economic Development Director/City Planner

The City of Cortez is eligible to request a \$50,000 LPC supplemental grant from the Department of Local Affairs (DOLA) to support early adoption of the expedited "Fast Track" review process for affordable housing development applications. Jason Armstrong, Interim Community & Economic Development Director/City Planner, explained that the only remaining requirement is a formal request letter signed by the Mayor. The City previously received a 2024 grant to fund a housing coordinator contractor, and as part of the grant conditions must implement a fast-track review ensuring decisions on affordable housing projects are made within 90 days. Securing this supplemental funding will aid implementation of the expedited review process and provide meaningful support for advancing the 7th Street property project.

Councilmember Spruell moved that City Council authorize the Mayor to sign a letter to the Department of Local Affairs requesting supplementary grant funds of \$50,000.00 that will support the extension of the contracted Housing Coordinator position with the City. Councilmember Randle seconded the motion and the vote was as follows:

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

e. Equipment Purchase for City Street Cleaning Division presented by Casey Simpson, Interim Director of Public Works

Casey Simpson, Interim Director of Public Works presented bids and requested Council approval to lease a new street sweeper that better meets operational needs, is easier to use, and reduces service and maintenance costs. Director Simpson explained that the City's 2018 and 2023 sweepers—both with Fiat engines—have been difficult to operate and maintain, resulting in frequent downtime. After gathering testimonials from other communities, staff developed specifications and identified a regenerative air sweeper supported by a dealership in Grand Junction, which offers accessible service and non-proprietary computer systems. Leasing the equipment will reduce upfront costs, and the Finance Department has confirmed loan arrangements within the current budget. Simpson noted that sweeping needs vary with winter sanding, fall leaves, trash, and weather conditions, and both existing sweepers were down for much of the summer due to mechanical issues and staffing shortages. Street sweeping is also required for road improvement projects such as chip seal and sealing. Parts are not covered under the lease, but labor and testing are included.

Councilmember Lewis moved that City Council accept the bid for the Schwarze A7 Tornado from Faris Machinery Company at its bid price of \$388,310.00 and associated Clayton Holdings Financing Proposal of \$85,274.00 to be paid annually, and that the City Manager be authorized to negotiate and sign a contract

on behalf of the City for this purpose. Councilmember Keefauver seconded the motion and the vote was as follows:

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

- f. Letter of Support for Colorado Circular Communities (C3) Recycling Transfer Station presented by Casey Simpson, Interim Director of Public Works

Director Simpson presented a letter to Council supporting Montezuma County's grant request to the Colorado Circular Economy program for construction of a recycling transfer station. He noted that the County anticipates increased recyclable material volumes and requires a new transfer facility to manage that growth, and the City's letter of support will strengthen the County's grant application.

Councilmember Randle moved that Council authorize the Mayor to sign the letter of support for Montezuma County's Recycling Transfer Station grant request through Colorado Circular Economy. Councilmember Spruell seconded the motion and the vote was as follows:

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

8. DRAFT RESOLUTION/ORDINANCES: None
9. CITY ATTORNEY'S REPORT: The City placed a road-closed sign on the south end of North Adams Street, prompting the adjacent property owner to file a lawsuit in October 2025. The case is scheduled for trial on August 17, with mandatory mediation ordered prior to July 17.
10. CITY MANAGER'S REPORT:
- I would like to recognize and thank the Franchini family for the very generous donation of \$32,000 to the Cortez Animal Shelter. These funds are managed by the Onward! foundation for unanticipated or emergency needs. Their contribution is most appreciated.
 - Three community outreach sessions will take place prior to the April 7, 2026 Cortez Municipal Election regarding the four Cortez Charter ballot questions. These will be informational meetings for anyone who has questions regarding the ballot and the Charter amendments. Information regarding the upcoming municipal election and the ballot questions is also posted on the City of Cortez website under 'elections.' The tentative dates selected are Thursday February 26, 2026, Thursday March 19, 2026, and Thursday March 26, 2026. Times and locations will be announced at a later date.
 - Our new Cortez Library Director, Mr. LeRoy Harris has arrived and started today, Tuesday February 10, 2026. Mr. Harris and his family have relocated to Cortez from New Ulm, Minnesota. With an impressive background and over eleven years' experience as a professional librarian, Mr. Harris will be an asset to our library and our community.
11. CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE REPORTS
- a. Mayor's Report on Workshop: Council went into executive session for annual review of our City Manager Drew Sanders.
- b. Other Board Reports
- i. Historic Preservation Board: The board met on February 3 and continues planning for Heritage Days on May 1–2. The Board is moving forward with the continuation of its original grant to evaluate the Conservation Camp south of town and held a related presentation on April 7 at the Methodist Church.

Members also submitted local areas of interest at the Colorado Preservation Inc. Saving Places Conference. The projects submitted include the flume, the CCC camp, the Cultural Center, and the City of Cortez 140-year initiative. The HPB plans to present an update to Council in May.

- ii. Public Arts Committee: The Board held its first meeting of the year and reviewed upcoming annual events. A new board member was welcomed, and the youth position remains open. Officers were selected for the year, including chair, vice chair, and secretary.
- iii. Park, Recreation and Forestry Advisory Board: The Board met on Thursday, February 5, and held listening sessions; no subcommittee reports were presented. A recreation user group meeting is scheduled for February 12. Two students from Southwest Open School attended, and the Board hopes they will continue participating. Interviews for the Parks Superintendent position will be on February 11.

12. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: None

13. OTHER ITEMS OF BUSINESS

- a. The Montezuma Cortez High School varsity basketball team is ranked #1 with a 19-0 record. Congratulations to the team on all their hard work and success!
- b. Council discussed the concerns about the softball fields that were expressed during the earlier public comment. Repairs are estimated at approximately \$1.4 million for the South Softball Complex. Parks and Recreation Director Creighton Wright reported that the South Softball Complex's lighting and electrical systems—dating back to the 1970s—have become unsafe, with no contractors willing to repair the infrastructure. The first planned improvement was to replace the electrical panel serving the concessions area, funding was unavailable this year, and the system has been decommissioned for safety. The City has hired an engineer, SGM, to prepare a design so the project is ready to be put in place when funding becomes available. Staff emphasized that decades of deferred maintenance across Parks and Recreation have created system-wide challenges, limiting the City's ability to repair or replace failing infrastructure. A Master Plan is underway to help prioritize future investments and improve eligibility for grants. The City is open to exploring partnerships with user groups, with realistic expectations and shared goals, and plans to continue discussions at an upcoming meeting with the softball league organizers.

14. The meeting was adjourned at 9.28 p.m.

Rachel B. Medina, Mayor

ATTEST:

Danielle Wells, City Clerk