

CORTEZ CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING
TUESDAY, MARCH 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 Pro Tem Dennis Spruell, Matthew Keefauver, Bill Lewis, Robert Dobry, Lydia DeHaven, and April Randle. Mayor Rachel Medina was absent. Staff present included: Chief of Police Vernon Knuckles, IT Director Jay Rohrer, Parks and Recreation Director Creighton Wright, Parks and Recreation Assistant Director Jenni Bandy, Finance Director Randy Bailey, Interim Community and Economic Development Director/City Planner Jason Armstrong, Community and Economic Development Specialist Helen West, Fire Inspector Sean Canada, Library Director LeRoy Harris, Human Resources Director Matt Cashner, City Clerk Danielle Wells, City Manager Drew Sanders and City Attorney Patrick Coleman. There were six members of the public present in the audience.

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

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

2. CONSENT AGENDA

- a. Approval of the meeting minutes for February 24, 2026
- b. Approval of the Expenditure List for March 10, 2026
- c. Approval of a renewal Retail Liquor Store License for Elevated Liquors LLC, DBA Elevated Liquors, located at 530 North Broadway, Cortez
- d. Approval of a renewal application for a Retail Marijuana Store License and a Retail Marijuana Cultivation Facility License for Chronic Therapy -- Cortez, located at 1020 South Broadway, Cortez

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

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

3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

James McGinley questioned whether the current city leadership structure truly empowers the council, expressing concern that residents feel undervalued and disconnected from decision-making. He urged the next council to assert stronger leadership and ensure accountability within city management.

4. PRESENTATIONS: None

5. PUBLIC HEARINGS

- a. Ordinance No. 1357, Series 2026 presented by Jason Armstrong, Community & Economic Development Director/City Planner

On January 27, 2026, the City Council adopted Ordinance No. 1354, Series 2026, approving the buildings located at 245 East Montezuma Avenue for Historic Designation and including the property in the city register of historic resources. The legal description of the property listed on Ordinance No. 1354 was incorrect and Ordinance No. 1354 needs to be amended to the correct legal description. Mayor Pro Tem Spruell opened the public comment period. With no comments offered, it was closed.

Councilmember DeHaven moved that Council approve, on second reading, Ordinance No. 1357, Series 2026, an ordinance amending Ordinance No. 1354, Series 2026. Councilmember Dobry seconded the motion and the vote was as follows:

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

- b. Ordinance No. 1358, Series 2026 presented by Jason Armstrong, Interim Community & Economic Development Director/City Planner

On January 27, 2026, the City Council adopted Ordinance No. 1355, Series 2026, approving the buildings located at 410 East Empire Street for Historic Designation and including the property on the city register of historic resources. The legal description of the property listed on Ordinance No. 1355 was incorrect and Ordinance No. 1355 needs to be amended to the correct legal description. Mayor Pro Tem Spruell opened the public comment period. With no comments offered, it was closed.

Councilmember Dobry moved that Council approve, on second reading, Ordinance No. 1358, Series 2026, an ordinance amending Ordinance No. 1355, Series 2026. Councilmember Lewis seconded the motion and the vote was as follows:

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

- c. Ordinance No. 1360, Series 2026 presented by Randy Bailey, Finance Director

Director Bailey presented proposed amendments to the 2026 budget based on finalized FY 2025 results, including new grant awards, surplus revenues, and unused 2025 appropriations. Eight items are funded by grants, several by 2025 revenue surplus, and one reflects a 2026 golf budget revision. One request requires a \$46,000 draw from General Fund reserves due to a position previously assumed vacant. Council thanked staff for the clear breakdown of funding sources. Mayor Pro Tem Spruell opened the public comment period. With no comments offered, it was closed.

Councilmember Dobry moved that City Council approve on second reading, Ordinance No. 1360, Series 2026, an ordinance amending the 2026 budget as stated in the Ordinance. Councilmember Lewis seconded the motion and the vote was as follows:

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

6. UNFINISHED BUSINESS: None

7. NEW BUSINESS

- a. Ordinance No. 1361, Series 2026 presented by Jason Armstrong, Interim Director of Community & Economic Development/City Planner

Interim Director Armstrong provided an overview of state legislation adopted in 2023 and 2024 establishing the Wildfire Resiliency Code Board and requiring communities within the wildland-urban interface to adopt minimum wildfire-resiliency codes by April 1, with enforcement beginning July 1. The code supplements existing building regulations and focuses on construction standards, defensible space, and property maintenance to reduce wildfire risk. Staff explained the tiered enforcement structure, mapping work underway using state and local GIS data, and upcoming community engagement efforts, including outreach to contractors, trade groups, and realtors. The code applies to new construction and certain alterations to existing structures but is not retroactive. Fiscal impacts remain uncertain, including potential staffing needs and unclear state penalties for noncompliance.

Council noted concerns about the legislation being an unfunded mandate. Insurance implications were discussed, with compliance potentially lowering premiums for affected properties. Staff will continue coordinating with state officials, local governments, and fire districts, and additional engagement sessions will be held.

Councilmember Dobry moved that the City Council approve on first reading, with amendments, Ordinance No. 1361, Series 2026, an ordinance adopting the Colorado Wildfire Resiliency Code and amending the Cortez City Code as set forth in the Ordinance, and set a public hearing and second reading of the Ordinance for March 24, 2026. Councilmember Lewis seconded the motion and the vote was as follows:

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

b. Award 2026 Golf Cart Path Project presented by Creighton Wright, Director of Parks and Recreation

Director Wright reported that the golf course opened over the weekend with strong turnout, with 100 rounds on Sunday, which is comparable to summer activity levels. The primary purpose is improving cart paths to enhance safety and overall course experience, particularly for golf carts navigating the paths. Staff separated this work from the citywide concrete cost-share program due to the wider, longer paths and heavier-duty needs at the course. The project includes excavation and new road base in key areas that require stronger concrete to accommodate maintenance vehicles. Three bids were received, and JRG Concrete achieved the highest overall score based on cost, safety approach, expertise, and a short 10-day completion timeline. The project is budgeted at \$60,000 and remains under budget. This budget is supported in part by private cart fees which are projected to generate \$62,000. Staff emphasized the goal of completing approximately 300 feet of path per year and beginning work early in the season to avoid disruptions in play.

Councilmember Lewis moved that Council accept the proposal from JRG Concrete and Construction LLC for \$41,856 and authorize the City Manager to negotiate, sign, and execute a contract. Councilmember Randle seconded the motion and the vote was as follows:

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

c. Designate a sole source distributor, and award the bid for the Conquistador Golf Course Reel Grinder presented by Creighton Wright, Director of Parks and Recreation

Director Wright presented a recommendation to award the bid for a Foley 633 Accu-Pro AC reel grinder for the Conquistador Golf Course in the amount of \$61,754. Reel grinders are essential for maintaining the six reel mowers used on the course, as sharp blades are critical for turf health and playability. The current grinder is more than 20 years old, was purchased used, and is no longer supported by the manufacturer. Staff recommended the Foley unit as a sole-source purchase due to its exclusive Colorado distributor, its relief-grind capability that reduces friction and extends equipment life, its versatility and programmable settings for multiple mower types, its compatibility with existing maintenance space and workflow, and staff familiarity with the brand. The purchase will be funded through the Conservation Trust Fund and is slightly over budget. The expected lifecycle is approximately 10 years, though with proper maintenance it may last 15–20 years, as demonstrated by the current unit.

Councilmember DeHaven moved to designate Colorado Golf and Turf, Inc. as the sole source distributor, and award the bid for a Foley 633 Accu-Pro AC reel grinder for the Conquistador Golf Course for \$61,754. Councilmember Dobry seconded the motion and the vote was as follows:

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

d. Appointment of Election Judges presented by Danielle Wells, City Clerk

Clerk Wells reported that four community members have applied to serve as judges of election, all of whom have prior experience working in Montezuma County elections and bring the expertise needed to support the City's first independent election. Judges will complete both online and in-person training and will begin work on March 30. Their duties include signature verification, opening ballot envelopes, and ballot tabulation. Staff also reviewed upcoming election dates, including a League of Women Voters Candidate Forum on March 11 at 6:00 p.m., and noted that ballots will be mailed to all active City voters on March 16.

Councilmember Lewis moved that Council appoint Susan Maxwell, Beth Wetherill, Cindy Clare, and Laura Bierbower to serve as judges of election for the April 7, 2026 municipal election. Councilmember Dobry seconded the motion and the vote was as follows:

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

8. DRAFT RESOLUTION/ORDINANCES: None

9. CITY ATTORNEY'S REPORT: None

10. CITY MANAGER'S REPORT:

- The Enterprise Zone program was established to help economically distressed areas in Colorado by providing state income tax credits and incentives for businesses. These tax credits help retain businesses, create jobs, and encourage growth to name a few. The Southwest Enterprise Zone 2025 Annual Report prepared by Region 9 Economic Development shows Montezuma County to have the highest business participation in the region. This is in part due to the efforts of our Economic Development Specialist, Helen West. Helen's consistent work educating our community about EZ tax credits have earned Montezuma County a total of \$789,738 in EZ state tax credits; higher than the rest of the Southwest counties in Region 9 combined.
- Councilmember April Randle has been appointed as one of 15 members of the Rural Health Transformation Program (RHTP) Advisory Committee on behalf of the Colorado Department of Health Care Policy and Financing and the State of Colorado. The RHTP Advisory Committee will provide recommendations for funding projects and advise the RHTP in the development, implementation and governance of over \$1 billion in federal grants from 2026 to 2031. Councilmember Randle has shown a solid commitment to strengthen rural health care to better serve rural Coloradans and their providers.
- Interviews for the Cortez Airport Director were conducted on Friday, March 6, 2026; we had two very qualified finalists. An offer was made to and accepted by Kyle Sloan from Dugway, UT where he currently serves as an Air Traffic Control Specialist. Kyle served in the US Marine Corps and was an OCS Quantico graduate. After his discharge from the USMC he was employed as a flight instructor and an airline pilot. Kyle's start date is March 30, 2026.
- I attended the county wide Regional Cyber Security Tabletop Exercise on March 5, 2026 hosted by Montezuma County Emergency Management and presented by the Montezuma County Cyber Security Planning Team along with CISA (Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency.) This exercise was conducted to plan for and to be prepared when a cyber security breach occurs in our county.

- The first public outreach informational session for the four Cortez Charter ballot questions was held on Thursday, February 26, 2026 at the Cortez Chamber of Commerce from noon – 1 p.m. Two subsequent sessions will be held on Thursday, March 19, 2026 and Thursday, March 26, 2026 from 5:30 – 6:30 p.m. both at the Cortez Library. Ballots are slated to be mailed beginning March 16, 2026; election day is Tuesday, April 7, 2026.
- Mayor Pro Tem Spruell asked City Manager Drew Sanders to give a brief “State of the Union” update on the City. Manager Sanders discussed the City’s continued commitment to operating efficiently and remaining debt-free, guided by a publicly available budget and a philosophy of living within available resources. Staff emphasized that core services—public safety, roads, water, and sanitation—must take priority, and that pursuing non-essential projects without adequate funding can jeopardize the City’s financial stability. He noted the difficult choices Councilmembers are required to make each year during the budget process. Great progress has been made during the past five years in moving the City away from the brink of financial insecurity. He cautioned that a bright future is not guaranteed and that careful stewardship remains essential. Staff and Council were recognized for their ongoing work behind the scenes to manage limited resources responsibly.

11. CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE REPORTS

- a. Mayor Pro Tem’s Report on Workshop: Held an Executive Session discussing the contracts of the City Manager and City Attorney.
- b. Other Board Reports
 - i. Parks, Recreation, and Forestry Advisory Board – The board discussed the Recreation Center user group report, the Parks and Recreation Master Plan, and the update on sales tax. Two new youth members joined at the meeting. Park superintended recruitment and concerns on south softball complex were also discussed.

12. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: None

13. OTHER ITEMS OF BUSINESS:

- a. Councilmember Keefauver informed Council of the loss of a community member experiencing homelessness, who had been found deceased near the Good Samaritan food pantry, and reaffirmed the need to address homelessness and substance-abuse challenges in the community.

14. The meeting was adjourned at 8:34 p.m.

Dennis Spruell, Mayor Pro Tem

ATTEST:

Danielle Wells, City Clerk