

CORTEZ CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING
TUESDAY, MARCH 24, 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, Matthew Keefauver, Bill Lewis, Robert Dobry, and April Randle. Mayor Pro Tem Dennis Spruell and Councilmember Lydia DeHaven were absent. Staff present included: Chief of Police Vernon Knuckles, IT Director Jay Rohrer, Parks and Recreation Director Creighton Wright, Finance Director Randy Bailey, Interim Community and Economic Development Director/City Planner Jason Armstrong, Fire Inspector Sean Canada, General Services Director/Interim Public Works Director Casey Simpson, Court Clerk/Administrator Carla Odell, 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 Lewis moved that Council approve the Agenda as presented for March 24, 2026. Councilmember Dobry seconded the motion and the vote was as follows:

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

2. CONSENT AGENDA

- a. Approval of the minutes for the City Council meetings on March 10, 2026.
- b. Approval of the Expenditure List for March 24, 2026.
- c. Approval of a Renewal Application for a Hotel and Restaurant Liquor License for Shiloh Inc., DBA Shiloh Steakhouse, Located At 5 South Veach Street, Cortez.
- d. Approval of a Renewal Application for a Hotel and Restaurant Liquor License for The Wigglin' Pig LLC, DBA The Wigglin' Pig, Located At 76 South Veach Street, Cortez.
- e. Approval of a Renewal Application for a Fermented Malt Beverage and Wine Liquor License for Esmeralda's Ranchito Mexican Store, located at 2501 East Main Street, Cortez.
- f. Approval of a Special Event Permit to allow the Montezuma Cortez Softball Association to host an event on April 4, 2026 from 5:00 p.m. to 12:00 a.m. at 209 W. Main Street, Cortez.
- g. Approval of a Special Event Permit to allow The Cortez Area Chamber of Commerce to host a Business After Hours event on April 9, 2026 from 5:00-7:00 p.m. at 209 W. Main Street, Cortez.
- h. Approval of a Special Event Permit to allow the Southwest Colorado Cycling Association to host a special event on April 10, 2026 from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. at 130 W. Main Street, Cortez.
- i. Approval of a Special Event Permit to allow the Cortez Celtic Fair to host a special event in Parque de Vida on June 27, 2026 from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.

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

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

3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

James McGinley stated that the new council needed stronger leadership to help move Cortez forward,

develop sustainable funding, and support local businesses. He expressed concern that the current structure limited accountability and emphasized the need for broader citizen involvement. He urged the new council to step up and lead or be held accountable.

4. PRESENTATIONS: None

5. PUBLIC HEARINGS

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

Council reviewed Ordinance No. 1361, Series 2026, on second reading, which would adopt the 2025 Colorado Wildfire Resiliency Code. A presentation addressed common questions, including the need for the new code due to increasing wildfire frequency and severity since 2000. The state-mandated code, created under Senate Bill 23-166, aims to reduce wildfire risk by limiting fire spread between structures and surrounding fuels. Requirements follow a tiered system based on mapped hazard levels, with Class 1 applying to low-intensity areas and Class 2 to moderate-to-high areas. The code applies to new construction, defensible-space standards, and significant alterations. Adoption is required by municipalities by April 1, with enforcement beginning July 1. Council and the ordinance noted the code is an unfunded mandate. Staff noted that few city parcels fall within higher-risk zones, and that coordination with the Cortez Fire Protection District will help to report areas of concern while City Staff would help support enforcement. Existing permitted projects will not be affected. The Mayor opened the floor for public comment and, with no speakers, closed it. Staff noted that the proposed code would apply only to certain areas and would not change building permit fees, which are based solely on square footage. They emphasized that residents would not be required to obtain additional permits. Council suggested that the City should track its implementation costs and report them to the state rather than passing costs to the community.

Councilmember Keefauver moved that the City Council approve on second reading 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. Councilmember Lewis seconded the motion and the vote was as follows:

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

6. UNFINISHED BUSINESS: None

7. NEW BUSINESS

- a. Consideration of approval and acceptance of the bid for the 2026 Concrete Cost-Share Project Presented by Casey Simpson, Interim Director of Public Works

Council received an overview of the City's annual sidewalk cost-share program, which provides a 50% match to residents and businesses for new or replacement sidewalks and also supports ADA ramps, curbs, and gutters. This year's project includes approximately 680 square yards of sidewalk, 505 linear feet of curb and gutter, and 190 square yards of ADA ramps. Staff reported that one bid was received from Candelaria Construction for \$268,513, which is below the engineer's estimate of \$286,980. Fourteen property owners are participating this year, one of the highest levels in recent years, and sufficient funding is available in the Street Improvement Fund.

Councilmember Lewis moved to accept and award the bid for the 2026 Concrete Cost-Share Project to Candelaria Construction Inc. at its bid price of \$268,513.00 and authorize the City Manager to negotiate

and sign a contract and all related documents with the company on behalf of the City. Councilmember Randle seconded the motion and the vote was as follows:

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

b. Consideration of acceptance and award of bid for the 2026 Service Center Roof Replacement Project presented by Casey Simpson, Interim Director of Public Works

Council received an update on the Service Center roof project, with Public Works recommending an overlay of the aging membrane roof due to drainage issues, patching, and separation at roof joints. Staff noted that although the membrane has exceeded its service life, the underlying insulation remains adequate, making an overlay a cost-effective and preventative solution to avoid future water intrusion. Nine proposals were received in response to the RFP, and funding for the project is available in the General Services Capital Outlay budget. Staff noted that the recommended contractor was not the lowest bidder but achieved the highest score based on the RFP evaluation criteria and remains within budget.

Councilmember Dobry moved that City Council award the contract for the 2026 Service Center Roof Replacement Project to PRQ Topline LLC (DBA Top Line Installers) and authorize the City Manager to negotiate and sign a contract and any related documents on behalf of the City for this purpose. Councilmember Randle seconded the motion and the vote was as follows:

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

c. Harrison Street Waterline Project presented by Casey Simpson, Interim Director of Public Works

To reduce costs and streamline construction, the City intends to partner with the contractor already mobilized for the private fire-suppression installation, allowing the public main extension to be completed concurrently. The City plans to install a new 6-inch waterline along North Harrison Street, from Arbecam Avenue to Montezuma Avenue, to meet The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment and American Water Works Association standards and to address the inadequacy of the existing 2-inch dead-end service line, which cannot maintain required fire-flow pressures or support additional fire-suppression demands. Upgrading to a 6-inch looped main will improve hydraulic performance, system redundancy, and water quality circulation. The project will also provide capacity for existing residential services and a new 2-inch fire-suppression tap requested by the property owner at 444 E. Montezuma Avenue. The total project cost is estimated at \$42,260 and is already budgeted in the Water Fund Capital Projects. Although this line was not scheduled for replacement based on age, it must be upgraded to meet fire-safety requirements and CDPHE regulations. Staff noted that this is a cost-effective opportunity to address an undersized line and that similar situations are not widely expected, as most system concerns relate to aging infrastructure rather than undersized mains.

Councilmember Lewis moved that City Council accept the estimate for the Harrison Street Waterline Project with RAMCO Developments, L.L.C. at its estimated price of \$42,260.00 and that the City Manager be authorized negotiate and to sign a contract and all other documents on behalf of the City for this purpose. Councilmember Dobry seconded the motion and the vote was as follows:

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

d. Ordinance No. 1362, Series 2026 presented by Patrick Coleman, City Attorney

Council reviewed the annual amendment process for City Manager Drew Sanders' employment agreement, noting four separate amendments to date. Council requested consolidating these into a single

updated agreement for clarity. Because the City Charter requires compensation to be set by ordinance, the proposal is to adopt a new agreement that incorporates all prior amendments.

Councilmember Dobry moved that Council approve on first reading Ordinance 1362, Series 2026, an ordinance adopting an employment agreement and fixing the compensation for City Manager Drew C. Sanders at \$191,776 effective April 13, 2026, and set for public hearing and second reading on April 14, 2026. Councilmember Lewis seconded the motion and the vote was as follows:

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

e. Ordinance No. 1363, Series 2026 presented by Drew Sanders, City Manager

Council discussed cleaning up City Attorney Patrick Coleman's employment agreement by consolidating the growing number of amendments into a single, streamlined replacement document. This update is not a new contract but a clarified version reflecting his recent evaluation and fixing compensation as required.

Councilmember Dobry moved that Council approve on first reading Ordinance No. 1363, Series 2026, an ordinance adopting an employment agreement and fixing the compensation for City Attorney J. Patrick Coleman at \$174,342 effective April 13, 2026, and set for public hearing and second reading on April 14, 2026. Councilmember Keefauver seconded the motion and the vote was as follows:

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

f. Ordinance No. 1364, Series 2026 presented by Drew Sanders, City Manager

There has been strong community and staff interest in creating an Airport Advisory Committee to provide input on airport growth and decision making. The proposed committee would function similarly to other city boards and commissions and would include a youth member seat. Council noted that a previous advisory group struggled due to a lack of clear direction, and emphasized that this new committee would have a defined scope and structure. Several community members have already expressed interest in serving if the committee is established.

Councilmember Lewis moved that the Cortez City Council approve on first reading Ordinance No. 1364 Series 2026, an ordinance creating an airport advisory committee for the City of Cortez, Colorado, and set for public hearing and second reading on April 14, 2026. Councilmember Randle seconded the motion and the vote was as follows:

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

8. DRAFT RESOLUTION/ORDINANCES: None

9. CITY ATTORNEY'S REPORT:

- The City Attorney's office is preparing ordinance updates in advance to ensure that any ballot measures that pass can be implemented quickly. Draft ordinances will be ready for adoption once election results are finalized.

10. CITY MANAGER'S REPORT:

- The annual Cortez city employee appreciation event 'The Champions of Charm' held on Saturday, March 14, 2026 at the Cortez Elks Club was yet another success. I would like to thank the committee

members, Carla Odell, Karla Ross, Kelly Codner, and Asialynn Hagar, (Team Cortez,) for their hard work and dedication to make this happen.

- I will be attending the Southwestern Water Conservation District annual water seminar this Friday, March 27, 2026 in Ignacio, CO, along with Councilmember April Randle and others, to receive updates on the Southwest basin's pressing water challenges and opportunities.
- The finance department is in the middle of the annual audit process. This requires a lot of time, and is a stressful process for the finance team. I thank them for their professionalism.
- Rising geopolitical tensions in Iran have introduced significant uncertainty into the U.S. economic outlook, driving oil prices higher and reducing expectations that inflation will ease or that the Federal Reserve will cut rates this year. At the same time, a softening labor market and persistent inflation pressures are putting the Fed in a difficult position, with the duration and overall economic impact of the conflict still unclear.

11. CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE REPORTS

- a. Mayor's Report on Workshop: No workshop was held.
- b. Other Board Reports: None

12. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: None

13. OTHER ITEMS OF BUSINESS

- a. Councilmember Randle noted that March 29 is recognized for Vietnam Veterans, marking the final prisoner exchanges, and encouraged everyone to remember and thank these veterans for their service.

14. The meeting was adjourned at 8:22 p.m.

Rachel Medina, Mayor

ATTEST:

Danielle Wells, City Clerk