

CORTEZ CITY COUNCIL  
REGULAR MEETING  
TUESDAY, MAY 26, 2026

1. The meeting was called to order in the City Council Chambers at 7:50 p.m., with the Pledge of Allegiance. Roll Call was taken and the following Councilmembers were present: Mayor Dennis Spruell, Mayor Pro Tem Bill Lewis, April Randle, Carly Wolf, Kathleen Swope, Claire West, and Clarisa Osborn. Staff present included: Chief of Police Vernon Knuckles, Parks and Recreation Director Creighton Wright, Finance Director Randy Bailey, Interim Community and Economic Development Director/City Planner Jason Armstrong, Airport Director Kyle Sloan, General Services and Public Works Director Casey Simpson, Community and Economic Development Specialist Helen West, Public Works Project Engineer Noah Peterson, Chief Building Official Sean Canada, Payroll/Sales Tax Administrator Sara Coffey, Library Director LeRoy Harris, City Clerk Danielle Wells, City Manager Drew Sanders and City Attorney Patrick Coleman. There were 15 members of the public present in the audience.

Councilmember Lewis moved that Council approve the Agenda as presented for May 26, 2026. Councilmember Randle seconded the motion and the vote was as follows:

|       |        |        |         |       |      |      |
|-------|--------|--------|---------|-------|------|------|
| Lewis | Osborn | Randle | Spruell | Swope | West | Wolf |
| Yes   | Yes    | Yes    | Yes     | Yes   | Yes  | Yes  |

2. CONSENT AGENDA

- a. Approval of the meeting minutes for May 12, 2026
- b. Approval of the Expenditure List for May 26, 2026
- c. Approval of an Arts Liquor License and Outdoor Dining License Agreement for The Community Radio Project, Inc., DBA KSJD, located at 2-8 East Main Street, Cortez
- d. Approval of a Renewal Application for a Hotel and Restaurant Liquor License for Fiesta Mexicana No. 3 Inc., DBA Fiesta Mexicana Family Restaurant, located at 430 North Highway 145, Cortez
- e. Approval of a Special Event Permit to allow The Cortez Area Chamber of Commerce to host an event on June 11, 2026 from 5:00-8:00 p.m., at 20 W. Main Street, Cortez

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

|       |        |        |         |       |      |      |
|-------|--------|--------|---------|-------|------|------|
| Lewis | Osborn | Randle | Spruell | Swope | West | Wolf |
| Yes   | Yes    | Yes    | Yes     | Yes   | Yes  | Yes  |

3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: None

4. PRESENTATIONS

- a. Mesa Verde Country Presentation by Brian Bartlett, Executive Director

Mesa Verde Country reported that tourism demand has stabilized following the post-pandemic rebound, with domestic drive travel remaining the strongest market segment while international visitation is still below 2019 levels. Outdoor recreation, experiential activities, and interest in authentic, uncrowded destinations continue to grow, contributing to strong shoulder-season expansion over the past five years. Road-trip and national-park-focused travel outperform urban travel, with shorter booking windows and multigenerational, experience-driven trips shaping visitor behavior. Visitor spending averages \$139 per trip with 2.8 transactions, though true growth remains modest once inflation is accounted for. Forecasts for 2026 project 1–4% overall growth, with regional and

domestic travel expected to remain the primary drivers. Strategic priorities include expanding shoulder-season markets, promoting archaeology, pioneer and Indigenous heritage, and strengthening regional itineraries with Durango, Moab, and the Four Corners. The destination's strongest advantage is its blend of heritage, culture, outdoor recreation, and emotional, educational experiences anchored by eight nearby national parks. Culinary and agritourism opportunities, such as vineyards and elevated local food experiences, broaden the appeal to higher-spending travelers and support longer stays. MVC emphasized Cortez's role as an authentic crossroads of the Southwest and highlighted opportunities to enhance partnerships, improve visitor services, and increase the impact of local events. Financial contributors remain primarily the City of Cortez and Montezuma County, with metrics tied to sales and lodgers tax trends and ongoing efforts to improve reporting timeliness.

b. Proclamation of June 2026 as LGBTQ+ Pride Month in the City of Cortez

During discussion of the proposed proclamation, Councilmember Randle expressed concern that identity-based proclamations risk elevating one group over others and emphasized the Council's duty to represent all residents equally while avoiding actions that may create division. Mayor Pro Tem Lewis disagreed, stating that the proclamation does not grant special treatment but acknowledges visibility, safety, and inclusion for a community that has faced threats and marginalization, noting that not supporting it could send a message of exclusion. Mayor Spruell cautioned that such proclamations may foster division and lead to a slippery slope of identity focused recognitions, urging a focus on universal rights. Councilmember West supported the proclamation as a gesture of good will and public safety, noting that personal beliefs must sometimes yield to the public good and that denying the proclamation could harm community trust.

Mayor Pro Tem Lewis moved that Council accept the proclamation establishing June 2026 as LGBTQ+ Pride Month in the City of Cortez. Councilmember Swope seconded the motion and the vote was as follows:

|       |        |        |         |       |      |      |
|-------|--------|--------|---------|-------|------|------|
| Lewis | Osborn | Randle | Spruell | Swope | West | Wolf |
| Yes   | Yes    | No     | No      | Yes   | Yes  | Yes  |

Mayor Spruell read the proclamation aloud.

c. Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting presented by Drew Sanders, City Manager

The City of Cortez received a major financial reporting award, reflecting full compliance with state and local transparency standards for the 2024 fiscal year. Staff noted that while reporting lags one year and 2025 audits are still underway, this recognition marks a significant turnaround from four years ago, when the City was five years delinquent following a financial scandal and embezzlement case. The goal to earn this award was set in 2021, and achieving it required sustained effort and technical expertise. Former Finance Director Kelly Koskie, along with Payroll/Sales Tax Administrator Sara Coffey and Accounts Payable Technician Lynette Reece, were commended for their critical roles in restoring financial integrity. Council expressed appreciation for the staff's work and acknowledged the importance of this accomplishment in rebuilding public trust.

d. Finance Update for Q1 2026 presented by Randy Bailey, Finance Director

Staff presented the first-quarter 2026 financial report, noting inflation at 4.2% in the Denver–Aurora region and stabilizing interest rates. Employment growth and consumer confidence are slowing, with personal savings down and debt levels rising. Local building permits reached 25% of last year's volume, consistent with historic trends, and most City revenues and expenses are tracking as expected for Q1. General Fund revenues remain on forecast, with labor costs at 21% of budget and facility

expenses reflecting the 801 N. Broadway purchase and dispatch center work. Airport projects continue, including runway rehabilitation and upcoming apron expansion. Utility rates increased modestly, and capital spending will peak later in the year. Staff noted rising utility aging balances, with 35–40 accounts totaling roughly \$80,000 more than 60 days past due, though shut-off notices have declined significantly. Ensuring fairness and improving customer experience remain priorities as utility collections are strengthened.

## 5. PUBLIC HEARINGS

- a. Ordinance No. 1366, Series 2026 presented by Vernon Knuckles, Chief of Police

Council member Osborn recused herself due to a conflict of interest.

Council received an update on the Police Department's successful award of a \$23,500 reimbursement grant through the Colorado Energy Office's E-Cargo Bike Grant Program. The program supports public-sector fleets in shifting short and medium-distance trips to electric cargo bikes, and law-enforcement patrol is specifically listed as an eligible use. The Cortez Police Department applied under the patrol category and was awarded funding with no local match required. The new e-cargo bikes are expected to be in service this summer. Mayor Spruell opened the public comment and it was closed with no comments offered.

Councilmember Swope moved that the City Council approve on second and final reading Ordinance No. 1366, Series 2026, an ordinance that accepts a \$23,500.00 grant award from the Colorado Energy Office E-Cargo Bike Grant Program, authorizes appropriation of \$23,500, and authorizes the Cortez Police Department to execute the State's Small Dollar Grant Purchase Order and proceed with procurement. Councilmember Wolf seconded the motion and the vote was as follows:

|       |         |        |         |       |      |      |
|-------|---------|--------|---------|-------|------|------|
| Lewis | Osborn  | Randle | Spruell | Swope | West | Wolf |
| Yes   | Recused | Yes    | Yes     | Yes   | Yes  | Yes  |

## 6. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- a. CUP Application withdrawn by applicant. No council action required.

Resolution No. 10, Series 2026, a City Council resolution approving an accessory structure (garage) that exceeds the maximum square footage allowed in the Land Use Code through a Conditional Use Permit. This item was continued by City Council at the May 12, 2026 meeting. The property owners of 525 South Market Street, Cortez, have withdrawn the application for a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) and the building permit application.

## 7. NEW BUSINESS

- a. Ordinance No. 1367, Series 2026 presented by Jason Armstrong, Interim Director of Community & Economic Development/City Planner

City Council heard the first reading of Ordinance No. 1367, Series 2026, which proposes adopting the 2024 ICC codes, the 2023 NFPA code, and the 2023 Colorado Model Electric Ready and Solar Ready Code into the Cortez Municipal Code. Jason Armstrong presented the item, with additional technical explanation from Building Official Sean Canada, who noted that municipalities are expected to update building codes every two to three cycles and that Cortez is currently overdue. The updated codes address safety, structural improvements, energy efficiency, ADA clarity, and modern construction practices, while also aligning with state mandates for energy, electric-ready, and solar-ready standards. Mr. Canada explained that the 2024 codes introduce significant changes related to energy performance, air tightness, wildfire and flood resiliency, and more technical residential requirements.

The fiscal impact is expected to increase construction costs by approximately 2–5%, largely due to energy-efficiency and infrastructure requirements such as EV-charging capacity and solar readiness. Not adopting the ordinance would make the City ineligible for certain state grants tied to code compliance. Existing homes would only be affected if rebuilt after a total loss, and remodels under 25% would not trigger new code requirements. Modular homes remain regulated by the state. Staff also confirmed that training for contractors and other interested persons will be offered before enforcement of the updated codes.

Mayor Pro Tem Lewis moved that City Council approve on first reading Ordinance No. 1367, Series 2026, an ordinance adopting the 2024 ICC codes, the 2023 NFPA 70 Code and the 2023 Colorado Model Electric Ready and Solar Ready Code, and set the ordinance for second reading and public hearing on June 9, 2026. Councilmember Wolf seconded the motion and the vote was as follows:

|       |        |        |         |       |      |      |
|-------|--------|--------|---------|-------|------|------|
| Lewis | Osborn | Randle | Spruell | Swope | West | Wolf |
| Yes   | Yes    | No     | Yes     | Yes   | Yes  | Yes  |

b. Bid Results for the 2026 Micro-surfacing Project presented by Casey Simpson, Director of Public Works and General Services

Council considered awarding the 2026 Micro-surfacing Project to A-1 Chipseal Company and authorizing the City Manager to negotiate and sign a contract on the City's behalf. Casey Simpson, Director of Public Works and General Services, explained that the project supports street safety and follows recommendations from the updated transportation plan. Micro-surfacing is a thin, quick-setting asphalt mixture that seals cracks and improves traction, offering a smoother finish and fewer loose stones than traditional chip seal. This will be the first time the City uses this method, though it has been widely used for over a decade, particularly in Utah, where it is considered a superior pavement-preservation technique. Two bids were received, both under budget, but one did not meet all requirements; A-1 Chipseal was recommended based on completeness of the bid and past performance. The \$245,000 budget applies specifically to the micro-surfacing portion of the street program. The treatment is expected to last about four years longer than chip seal. The selected project zone was prioritized based on engineering analysis from Jones and DeMille Engineering, which identified streets suitable for preservation rather than full replacement.

Councilmember Osborn moved that Council accept the bid and award the contract for the 2026 Micro-surfacing Project to A-1 Chipseal Company at its bid price of \$147,840.00 and authorize the City Manager to negotiate and sign a contract with the company on behalf of the City. Councilmember Wolf seconded the motion and the vote was as follows:

|       |        |        |         |       |      |      |
|-------|--------|--------|---------|-------|------|------|
| Lewis | Osborn | Randle | Spruell | Swope | West | Wolf |
| Yes   | Yes    | Yes    | Yes     | Yes   | Yes  | Yes  |

c. Proposed repaving of a full-width portion of East Montezuma Avenue in cooperation with the Cortez Sanitation District presented by Casey Simpson, Director of Public Works and General Services

Council heard a proposal to authorize full-width repaving of the west-bound lane of East Montezuma Avenue, from North Washington Street to North Market Street, in partnership with the Cortez Sanitation District. Director Simpson explained that the Sanitation District is currently replacing an aging clay sewer main and is only responsible for repairing the pavement they disturb, but the roadway's condition—rated 2.56 out of 5—warrants full replacement. The project would remove and regrade the entire lane, with D&L Construction submitting the low bid through a competitive process. The City would fund 17 feet of the 28-foot lane, using \$200,000 already earmarked for 2026 along with savings from other street projects. Staff noted that shifting funds will delay work on the Filmore Street drainage project, but Montezuma Avenue is more heavily traveled and considered a higher

priority. The excluded bid items would be completed by Public Works if Council approves the partnership. Staff also emphasized that unknown subsurface conditions may affect project needs once excavation begins.

Mayor Pro Tem Lewis moved that Council approve the City partnering with the Cortez Sanitation District to repave the full width of the northern, west bound lane of Montezuma Avenue from North Washington Street to North Market Street for the price of \$205,450.00. Councilmember Randle seconded the motion and the vote was as follows:

|       |        |        |         |       |      |      |
|-------|--------|--------|---------|-------|------|------|
| Lewis | Osborn | Randle | Spruell | Swope | West | Wolf |
| Yes   | Yes    | Yes    | Yes     | Yes   | Yes  | Yes  |

- d. Purchase of a used 14-Passenger Transit Van for Recreation Center presented by Casey Simpson, Director of Public Works and General Services

Council considered approval of purchasing a used 14-passenger transit van to replace a previously sold 24-passenger van. Director Simpson explained that the City relies on two transit vans daily, making the replacement necessary to maintain service levels. The proposed vehicle has approximately 74,000 miles, and staff confirmed that the shop supervisor personally inspected and test-drove the van to ensure it met operational standards.

Councilmember Randle moved that City Council approve the purchase of a 2019 Ford Transit T350XL 14-passenger van from Davey Coach Sales, LLC in the amount of \$48,770. Councilmember West seconded the motion and the vote was as follows:

|       |        |        |         |       |      |      |
|-------|--------|--------|---------|-------|------|------|
| Lewis | Osborn | Randle | Spruell | Swope | West | Wolf |
| Yes   | Yes    | Yes    | Yes     | Yes   | Yes  | Yes  |

- e. Budget Amendment appropriating funds for City (potable) water to irrigate City park areas and the golf course presented by Creighton Wright, Director of Parks and Recreation

Council heard an introduction to a proposed budget amendment to appropriate \$294,000 from the General Fund reserve to support the purchase of potable water for irrigating City parks and the golf course later this summer. Director Creighton Wright explained that irrigation water is expected to be cut off in late June or early July, leaving three months of the irrigation season without a water source. He emphasized that maintaining parks, landscaped areas, and the golf course is important to the community, and the funding would ensure these assets remain healthy through the summer. This first reading served as a brief overview, with a more detailed presentation and public hearing planned for the second reading to allow for additional questions and discussion. The amendment would transfer funds to the Parks and Golf budgets to cover the cost of potable water needed once irrigation water is no longer available.

Councilmember West moved that Council approve on first reading Ordinance 1368, Series 2026, an ordinance approving a Budget Amendment and appropriating \$294,000 for treated City (potable) water to irrigate the Park areas and the golf course, and set the public hearing and second reading for June 9, 2026. Mayor Pro Tem Lewis seconded the motion and the vote was as follows:

|       |        |        |         |       |      |      |
|-------|--------|--------|---------|-------|------|------|
| Lewis | Osborn | Randle | Spruell | Swope | West | Wolf |
| Yes   | Yes    | Yes    | Yes     | Yes   | Yes  | Yes  |

- f. Fireworks Display Permits presented by Danielle Wells, City Clerk

Council reviewed a request to authorize the City Fire Inspector to sign fireworks display permits for

the annual July 4th show at Parque de Vida and the August 15, 2026 Pinto Bean Golf Tournament display at Conquistador Golf Course. City Code assigns permit authority to the Fire Chief or their designee, which is currently Fire Inspector Sean Canada. The Cortez Fire Protection District has long conducted these community fireworks events, and the required insurance documentation and permit forms were provided. Staff recommended Council approval for the Fire Inspector to sign both permits.

Councilmember Randle moved that City Council authorize the City Fire Inspector to sign the Fireworks Display Permits for the Fourth of July Fireworks Show and the August 15, 2026 Fireworks Show for the Pinto Bean Golf Tournament. Councilmember Wolf seconded the motion and the vote was as follows:

|       |        |        |         |       |      |      |
|-------|--------|--------|---------|-------|------|------|
| Lewis | Osborn | Randle | Spruell | Swope | West | Wolf |
| Yes   | Yes    | Yes    | Yes     | Yes   | Yes  | Yes  |

g. Appointments to Various Boards and Commissions presented by Danielle Wells, City Clerk

Council was informed that multiple board and commission vacancies have been publicly advertised, including openings on Planning & Zoning, the Library Advisory Board, the Historic Preservation Board, and the Parks, Recreation and Forestry Advisory Board. Several seats are available due to resignations or term expirations, with varying term lengths and some positions open to Montezuma County residents. During the work session, Council interviewed applicants for these vacancies, including candidates for the Historic Preservation Board, Library Advisory Board, Planning & Zoning Commission, and the Parks, Recreation and Forestry Advisory Board. Due to additional applicants who were unable to attend the interviews this evening, Council continued the appointments to the Parks, Recreation, and Forestry Advisory Board until the next meeting on June 9, 2026.

Councilmember Randle moved that Council appoint Richard Landreth to the Planning & Zoning Commission to complete a term ending May 2027; Abel Berrada to the Library Advisory Board for a three-year term; Linda Towle and Jennifer Dimond to the Historic Preservation Board for three year terms. Councilmember Wolf seconded the motion and the vote was as follows:

|       |        |        |         |       |      |      |
|-------|--------|--------|---------|-------|------|------|
| Lewis | Osborn | Randle | Spruell | Swope | West | Wolf |
| Yes   | Yes    | Yes    | Yes     | Yes   | Yes  | Yes  |

h. Possible Cancellation of the June 23, 2026 Council Meeting presented by Drew Sanders, City Manager

Council discussed the possible cancellation of the June 23, 2026 meeting due to a scheduling conflict with the annual Colorado Municipal League (CML) conference. City Manager Drew Sanders noted that the CML conference is a long-standing training event for elected officials and staff, providing statewide municipal advocacy, research, and professional development. Canceling the meeting would prevent conflicts and allow full participation in the conference.

Mayor Pro Tem Lewis moved that Council cancel the regular scheduled City Council meeting on June 23, 2026 for the purpose of permitting certain staff and Council Members to attend the Colorado Municipal League Annual Conference. Councilmember Wolf seconded the motion and the vote was as follows:

|       |        |        |         |       |      |      |
|-------|--------|--------|---------|-------|------|------|
| Lewis | Osborn | Randle | Spruell | Swope | West | Wolf |
| Yes   | Yes    | Yes    | Yes     | Yes   | Yes  | Yes  |

8. DRAFT RESOLUTION/ORDINANCES: None

9. CITY ATTORNEY'S REPORT: None

10. CITY MANAGER'S REPORT: The report will be posted on the website.

## 11. CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE REPORTS

## a. Mayor's Report on Workshop

- i. Council received an update from Region 9 on a comprehensive economic report for the City of Cortez, and Council also conducted interviews with applicants for various board and commission vacancies.

## b. Other Board Reports

- i. Library Advisory Board - All staff recently completed training and are updating user policies and HR forms. Bake sales continue as part of fundraising efforts, and the Summer Reading Program will kick off on June 4.

## 12. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: None

## 13. OTHER ITEMS OF BUSINESS

a. Executive Session - 7th Street Housing Project

At 9:54 p.m., Mayor Pro Tem Lewis moved that City Council go into executive session pursuant to C.R.S. Section 24-6-402(4)(e) for the purpose of determining positions relative to matters that may be subject to negotiations, developing strategy for negotiations, and/or instructing negotiators concerning the City's efforts to select a developer-builder for a housing project on City owned land located on West 7th Street. Councilmember Randle seconded the motion and the vote was as follows:

|       |        |        |         |       |      |      |
|-------|--------|--------|---------|-------|------|------|
| Lewis | Osborn | Randle | Spruell | Swope | West | Wolf |
| Yes   | Yes    | Yes    | Yes     | Yes   | Yes  | Yes  |

Close of Executive Session: The open meeting resumed at 10:27 p.m. Those persons participating in the executive session were Mayor Dennis Spruell, Councilmembers April Randle, Bill Lewis, Kathleen Swope, Carly Wolf, Clarisa Osborn, and Claire West. Also participating were City Manager Drew Sanders, City Attorney Patrick Coleman, Interim Community and Economic Director/City Planner Jason Armstrong, Contract Affordable Housing Coordinator Jennifer Lopez of Project Moxie, LLC and Alicia Lopez, an attorney that specializes in low-income housing tax credit who participated via Zoom. No adoption of any proposed policy, position, resolution, rule, regulation or formal action occurred during the executive session.

## 14. The meeting was adjourned at 10:29 p.m.

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Dennis Spruell, Mayor

ATTEST:

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Danielle Wells, City Clerk