

CORTEZ CITY COUNCIL
WORK SESSION/SPECIAL MEETING
TUESDAY, JUNE 9, 2026

1. The worksession was called to order at 6:16 p.m.

2. Interviews of Applicants for City Boards and Committees

a. Neco Escoe, Applicant for the Parks, Recreation and Forestry Advisory Board

Mr. Neco Escoe, a lifelong Cortez resident, applied for the Parks, Recreation and Forestry Advisory Board, citing four years as a skateboarding mentor with SCYC, volunteer service at the Hive, and involvement with the Dolores Skate Park. He identified infrastructure capacity as the Board's primary challenge and advocated for replacing the existing Cortez skate park, citing the Dolores facility as a model, with plans to pursue a dedicated committee and Colorado Trail hike fundraiser to finance a new facility.

b. Bruce Burkett, Applicant for the Planning & Zoning Commission

Mr. Bruce Burkett appeared as an applicant for the Planning & Zoning Commission, citing experience navigating the building approval process from the applicant's perspective as his key qualification. He identified housing and the 7th Street Park as likely priorities, while acknowledging he would need further immersion in the role before offering a fully informed assessment. Mr. Burkett confirmed his availability and expressed a strong desire to serve.

3. Official Council Photos Taken Outside City Hall from 6:15 p.m. to 6:45 p.m.

4. 6:45 p.m. – Lodger's Tax Discussion

The Council received an overview of the City's lodger's tax, a tax levied on commercial lodging accommodations including hotels, motels, commercial campgrounds, and short-term rentals. Cortez currently collects a 2% tax on gross taxable lodging rent, a rate that has not been increased in approximately 40 years. For context, comparable Colorado communities range from 2–8%, with Durango at 5.25%, Grand Junction at 6%, and Rico at 7%, while neighboring states trend higher on average. Permitted uses of the tax include tourism advertising, service improvements, new facility financing, conference attraction, and city beautification. Currently, \$125,000 annually is directed to Mesa Verde Country for tourism development services, with additional funds supporting the City's business beautification grant program, totaling approximately \$250,000 collected in 2025. Council discussed whether to pursue a ballot question in November to increase the rate, with general consensus that the tax represents a minimal burden to visitors and little to no impact on tourism levels. Discussion centered on broadening allowable uses of the funds, including infrastructure, to provide future flexibility, rather than designating specific allocations in ballot language. Staff was directed to return with additional information, ordinance language, and timing considerations, with a ballot title required by August and necessary code amendments in place by July 14 to meet November election deadlines.

5. Council General Discussion

A Council member attended the CML Spring Forum in Montrose, noting discussions on municipal fee strategy. Drone regulations, and e-bike and scooter safety were discussed. The e-bike and scooter safety are largely not identified as current concerns for Cortez. Drone use has been a concern in the past and the City has an existing licensing system through the airport.

6. The worksession was adjourned at 7:15 p.m.