

CORTEZ CITY COUNCIL
WORK SESSION/SPECIAL MEETING
TUESDAY, AUGUST 25, 2026

1. The work session/special meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m.
2. Executive Session – Municipal Judge Beth Padilla Contract.

Mayor Pro Tem Lewis moved that Council go into executive session pursuant to C.R.S. Sections 24-6-402(4)(f) and 24-6-402(4)(e) for the purpose of discussing a personnel matter and for the purpose of determining positions relative to matters that may be subject to negotiations, developing strategy for negotiations, and/or instructing negotiators, all concerning the Municipal Judge, Beth Padilla's professional services contract. Ms. Padilla has not requested that this executive session occur in an open meeting. Councilmember Wolf seconded the motion and the vote was as follows:

Lewis	Osborn	Randle	Spruell	Swope	West	Wolf
Yes	Yes	Absent	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Close of Executive Session: The open meeting resumed at 6:50 p.m. Those persons participating in the executive session were Mayor Dennis Spruell, Mayor Pro Tem Bill Lewis, Councilmembers Kathleen Swope, Carly Wolf, Clarisa Osborn, and Claire West. Also participating were City Manager Drew Sanders and Municipal Judge Beth Padilla were present for portions of the executive session. No adoption of any proposed policy, position, resolution, rule, regulation or formal action occurred during the executive session.

3. Airport Advisory Committee – Youth Applicant Interview – Grant Wright. Mr. Grant Wright, a Dolores High School senior who swims for the Durango swim club, interviewed for the youth position on the Airport Advisory Committee. He said he was motivated to offer a youth perspective and, as someone unfamiliar with airport operations, to ask basic questions more experienced members might overlook. He plans to study aviation in college and viewed the position as a chance to learn how an airport operates. He identified funding, particularly reductions in State funding, as the primary challenge, and pointed to opportunities in expanding terminals and taxiways, attracting additional jet and commercial airline traffic, and adding an on-site fire department. He cited experience flying in and out of the airport, membership in the local experimental aircraft chapter, and aerospace and airport-management coursework, and suggested outreach such as fly-in rallies could improve through greater engagement with the director and pilots.
4. 7th Street Property Update — presented by Jason Armstrong, Deputy Director of Community and Economic Development / City Planner. This update was given to keep the Council and community informed about the 7th Street property development. In response to questions from city partners and community members about the lack of affordable housing, staff explained that a market study found only four similar affordable-housing developments in the area, totaling about 138 units, and none of them currently serve households earning 70–80% of the area median income (AMI). Evergreen evaluated building a new development in Cortez with about 60–70 units, focused first on housing for people earning 30–50% AMI, and second on housing for people earning 60–80% AMI, with rents ranging from about \$685 to \$1,300 per month. The property has already been legally split in half through a simple process called a plat amendment, and that step is complete. However, detailed site design is on hold until the Colorado Housing and Finance Authority (CHFA) decides whether to award tax credits for the project, with a decision expected in early November. Of the 29 applications submitted statewide, Evergreen's was the only one from a community with fewer than 180,000 people, and because CHFA has special rules meant to help rural communities, Evergreen's chances of approval are roughly 50/50. If the project is approved, the developer will need further approval from the City, including conditional use permits before the Planning & Zoning Commission and City Council. These are anticipated to occur in the first quarter of 2027, with plans for two-story, condo-style buildings. On July 10, 2026, City Manager Drew Sanders signed a Purchase and Sales Agreement that will sell the land to the developer at a reduced, below-market price, acting as a

subsidy to help make the housing affordable; when the sale closes, the City will also attach a legal agreement (a covenant) guaranteeing the land can only be used for affordable housing. Staff summarized outreach efforts completed so far and noted that the next public meeting will be held at the Cortez Recreation Center on August 27 from 5:00p.m. – 6:30 p.m. Councilmember Lewis shared a concern raised by a property owner about how the project would be taxed, and asked that future staff updates begin with clear data on housing definitions and the demonstrated need for this type of housing.

5. Ordinance No. 1371, Series 2026 – Discussion Only. Presenter: Helen West, Community & Economic Development Specialist. Ms. West presented a draft ordinance revising Chapter 15, Article XI of the City Code regarding annual licensure of mobile food vendors (food trucks). Under requirements adopted in March 2017, vendors must obtain annual Montezuma County Health Department inspections, pay City sales tax, and, if cooking in the vehicle, pass a Cortez Fire inspection, and may not operate in the central business district without an authorized special event or special permit. Staff explained that a licensing requirement — requested by Parks and Recreation and the Police Department after difficulties with vendors at the 2025 Fourth of July event — would let the City enforce rules and revoke licenses, address concerns about out-of-city vendors not complying with local regulations, and replace a process that currently requires three separate documents that are difficult to display and verify. Anticipated benefits include faster compliance verification, license revocation as a disciplinary option, streamlined permitting for events and festivals, and a clear process for vendors. The program would require an annual license — with application requirements including sales tax, annual inspections, a certificate of good standing, and an application fee suggested at \$50 annually — with no fee charged until 2027 if adopted. Staff noted the license is specific to mobile food vending, that every other area municipality has a similar license, and that adoption would follow the standard ordinance process with public outreach to vendors. This ordinance will be brought forward on first reading in a future Council meeting.

The work session/special meeting was adjourned at 7:24 p.m.