

CORTEZ CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR WORKSHOP
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 27, 2020, 5:30 p.m.
By Virtual Contact – ZOOM

1. The workshop was called to order at 5:30 p.m., through Virtual Contact by ZOOM included Mayor Mike Lavey, Amy Huckins, Orly Lucero, Mayor Pro-tem Rachel Medina, David Rainey, and Arlina Yazzie. Also present was Robert Dobry who would be sworn in during the regular Council meeting as Councilmember. Staff members present were City Planner Tracie Hughes, Director of Finance Ben Burkett, Chief of Police Vern Knuckles, Director of Public Works Phil Johnson, Water Superintendent Richard Landreth, Senior Water Operator Randy Hunt, City Engineer Chad Hill, City Manager John Dougherty, City Clerk Linda Smith, and City Attorney Mike Green. There were nine people signed up as participants on ZOOM.

2. Haley Leonard Saunders, Director of Public Relations and Development with Axis Health System, and Chief of Police Knuckles spoke about a community policing program. Chief of Police Knuckles stated that the process is in the beginning stages and would be created to deal with different crisis issues such as mental health, depression, substance abuse, homelessness, etc. He stated that the program would include a place for people to call should they need help. Ms. Leonard Saunders stated that the team would include a mental health crisis worker and an EMT person and would fill the gap as law enforcement is not always needed due to the non-violent situation. She stated that members participating in the discussion on the program are from Southwest Memorial Hospital, Mancos Marshall's office, Cortez Fire Department, Montezuma County Sheriff's Office, Montezuma County, and the Bridge Shelter and the goal is to get the program running by January 2021. She spoke about different programs that are being reviewed for copying, such as the STAR program from Denver and a similar program from Portland, and it was noted the calls would still be received through the dispatch center (911 calls). Chief of Police Knuckles stated that the Police Department would respond as backup for the calls. Discussion was held on the cost for the program and how the team would be staffed.

3. A presentation was made by Laura Lewis Marchino, Executive Director of Region 9, on the Rural Jump Start Program. She noted that the program allows for tax relief for out-of-state relocating businesses and new hires who locate into rural areas. She stated that only 24 counties are eligible to be in the Rural Jumpstart program and to-date only 16 have approved resolutions. She stated that the City had initially participated in 2017 and due to new updates to the program, a new resolution would need to be approved by City Council for Cortez to continue participating in the program. She noted that Montezuma County passed a resolution approving the program earlier this year and she commented that the City would need to pass their own resolution to also participate. She spoke about the regulations for the program which were originally passed in 2015 (based on Senate Bill 15-282). Councilmember Yazzie asked about the tax incentives for businesses that may be duplicated, such as child care, and Ms. Lewis Marchino stated that the Jump Start Program is to incentivize new businesses so that current businesses are not hurt by incentivizing a new business to compete.

4. Monique DiGiorgio, Director of the Local First Foundation and member of the Steering Committee of Southwest Health Alliance, and Nanette Penz-Reuter, member of the Steering Committee, both shared information on the Southwest Health Alliance program and noted its goal to provide affordable, accessible, and high-quality healthcare to citizens in the region. Ms. DiGiorgio spoke about the values/goals of the program and noted that the insurance program offers comprehensive benefits similar to what people are used to buying. She spoke about Bright Health which is a new health care carrier involved in the program and commented that Southwest Health Alliance has branded plans in Southwest Colorado for individuals and businesses, in partnership with Peak Health Alliance. She stated that currently Southwest Health Alliance works with Animas Surgical Hospital (ASH) and Mercy Hospital; however, Southwest Memorial Hospital is not involved at this time in the program. Ms. Penz-Reuter spoke about the different plan designs from Bright Health and in answer to a question from Councilmember Yazzie, Ms. Penz-Reuter commented that the ACA (Affordable Care Act) requirements may change how the plan would work in the future; however, that is unknown at the current time.

5. Director of Public Works Johnson, Water Superintendent Landreth, Senior Water Operator Hunt, and City Engineer Hill spoke to Council about several topics on water: Drought Restrictions, Source Water Protection Plan, Risk/Resilience Assessment & Emergency Response Plan, and Preliminary Engineering Report. Water Superintendent Landreth spoke about the Risk/Resilience Assessment noting that it is a requirement from the EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) and once it is finalized the City would be required to complete a Emergency Response Plan within six months. He noted that the Emergency Response Plan is already complete but would need to be re-formatted to meet EPA requirements. Director of Public Works Johnson spoke about the Preliminary Engineering Report which staff began working on in 2018. City Engineer Hill stated that the report follows a format by Rural Development and allows for access to their loan program. He stated that Rural Development offers a 40-year loan program which can be joined with DOLA (Department of Local Affairs) grants. He stated that the loan/grant would be used toward the water treatment plant/distribution improvements and he reviewed various improvements that the City has prioritized. Director of Public Works Johnson spoke about the ageing infrastructure (old as well as undersized) and how the cost could be saved/planned for. Mayor Pro-tem Medina asked if Council could take a tour of the water treatment plant and it was agreed that would be a great idea. Director of Public Works Johnson spoke about the Water Conservation Plan and commented that staff would like to propose that the water restrictions change in 2021 from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., beginning April 1 to October 31. He also spoke about the restriction of having odd addresses watering on odd days and even addresses watering on even days. He stated that staff would have conversation with Council on the proposal in February and that public outreach would then be completed so everyone would know what would be required during the watering season. In answer to a question from Councilmember Rainey, Director of Public Works Johnson stated that the current watering restrictions are being followed and compliance is adhered too. Also discussed was the Source Water Protection Plan and Water Superintendent Landreth stated that the next phase is to get the information out to the public and Council for their review.

6. General Council Discussion included discussion on parliamentary procedures at Council meetings and how that can be improved on. Council spoke about the need for civil participation and respect. City Attorney Green stated that he would caution Council to have dialogue with

citizens that speak at the meetings as it can escalate different situations. It was suggested that agenda items be worded differently so they don't prompt any unnecessary issues. Council welcomed Robert Dobry and he stated he is excited to start serving the community and work with the Councilmembers over the next year and a-half. Council spoke about the new health restrictions that were recently issued by the Health Department on Halloween and they asked that people respect social distancing and use common sense. In answer to a question from Councilmember Huckins, City Attorney Green stated that any concerns on barking dogs should be directed to the Animal Control Officer at the Police Department.

The zoom meeting was adjourned at 7:20 p.m.