

**REGULAR CITY COUNCIL
MEETING**

January 13, 2026

7:00 PM

City Hall



CITY OF MILLS
EST. 1921

Mayor:

Leah Juarez

Council President:

Brad Neumiller

Council Members:

Cherie Butcher

Sara McCarthy

Tim Sutherland

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor called the meeting to order at 7:01 pm

ROLL CALL

Present:

Mayor Juarez

President Neumiller

Council Sutherland

Council McCarthy

Absent:

Council Butcher (Clerk noted that this was an excused absence)

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

CONSENT AGENDA

Minutes

1. Council Meeting Minutes

City Licenses

2. New / Renewal Business / Contractor Licenses and Home Occupation Permits

Financial Approvals

3. Financial Breakdown - Check Register & Future ACH/EFT Transactions
4. PAID ACH / EFT Transactions
5. Regular / Police Payroll 12-15-25 to 12-28-25
6. Fire Payroll 12-16-25 to 12-27-25
7. Fire Payroll 12-28-25 to 1-8-26
8. Transmittal Transactions
9. Reserve Transfers
10. Treasurer's Report
11. Court Report

Motion made by Council Member Sutherland, Seconded by Council President Neumiller, Voting Yea: Council Member McCarthy, Mayor Juarez, Council President Neumiller, and Council Member Sutherland, motion passes

OPEN DISCUSSION

Marv Christopherson, owner of Casper Discount Storage, addressed Council regarding ongoing concerns about fire-code enforcement for his outdoor-access mini-storage facility. Mr. Christopherson stated that when he originally opened his business, he was informed by the Fire Chief that a fire inspection was not required due to the absence of electrical service in the units and the exterior drive-up access for each storage space. For several years, he paid his business license fee annually without any inspection requirement.

Mr. Christopherson explained that in the summer of 2024, his business license renewal was denied because he had not completed a fire inspection. He stated that during the inspection, the Fire Chief required him to install fire extinguishers on the exterior of his buildings at 75-foot intervals. Mr. Christopherson expressed concern that this requirement was identified only after another storage-facility owner challenged the need for inspections, and he believes the requirement was retaliatory in nature.

He reported that after reviewing the fire code, he found no provision requiring exterior fire extinguishers for drive-up mini-storage buildings. Mr. Christopherson stated he also consulted a former colleague with fire-code experience who confirmed that such facilities typically do not require extinguishers because there is no interior occupancy or life-safety risk. He stated that installing 16 extinguishers would cost approximately \$3,000 and that his business earns roughly \$6,000 per year, making the requirement financially burdensome.

Mr. Christopherson stated he monitored other storage facilities in Mills and believed that, aside from one facility, none had installed fire extinguishers. He also stated he has not observed similar requirements at facilities in Natrona County, Gillette, Sheridan, or in neighboring states. He asserted that he does not wish to be held to a standard that is not being enforced consistently or reflected in code.

Council clarified that enforcement is based on the City's adopted code and not on practices in other municipalities. Staff stated they would verify compliance at other local storage facilities to ensure consistent application. The City Attorney noted that a variance would not be applicable in this situation and that compliance with the adopted code is required.

Mr. Christopherson stated that while he disagrees with the requirement, he would comply if it is demonstrated that other storage facilities within Mills are held to the same standard. He expressed that the requirement significantly impacts his business and may affect his willingness to continue investing or expanding within Mills which would result in less property tax revenue for Mills.

The Mayor clarified that the majority of property tax does not go directly to the City and noted that basic safety measures such as fire extinguishers are a standard cost of doing business and part of ensuring public safety and compliance with adopted codes.

Fire Chief Wil Gay provided clarification regarding compliance status and the applicable sections of the International Fire Code.

Chief Gay explained that the City currently has three storage facilities in full compliance, two in partial compliance, and two that were out of compliance at the time of inspection. He stated that contact has been made with all remaining facilities and that they are in the process of achieving compliance.

Regarding the code interpretation raised during public comment, Chief Gay stated that all facilities were provided with excerpts from the International Fire Code explaining the basis for the requirement. He noted that mini-storage facilities are explicitly classified as "self-service storage facilities (mini-storage)" under the code and fall under S-1 Moderate Hazard Occupancy.

Chief Gay referenced Section 906 of the International Fire Code, which states that portable fire extinguishers are required in all new and existing S-occupancies. He further explained that the applicable table requires facilities of this type to have extinguishers rated at least 2A.

Chief Gay clarified that the requirement is often misunderstood. Fire extinguishers do not need to be installed every 75 feet; rather, they must be positioned so that no point within the facility is more than 75 feet from an extinguisher. He stated he has offered to work with all facility owners to measure and place extinguishers in a way that minimizes the total number needed while remaining compliant.

Chief Gay also noted a recent incident in which a storage facility (which was nearing compliance but had not yet installed extinguishers) experienced a vehicle fire within the yard area. The fire did not extend to the buildings, and the facility did not have an extinguisher on site. A law enforcement officer arrived and used their own extinguisher to put out the fire.

The Mayor thanked Chief Gay for providing additional clarification.

Connie Hagenlock addressed Council with questions and concerns regarding the Service and Sacrifice Park. Ms. Hagenlock stated that she is confused about why the City and the nonprofit group appear unable to work collaboratively on the park project. She explained that the park name was changed from “Mills Memorial Park” to “Service and Sacrifice Park” to better reflect its intended purpose and the experience it will provide once completed.

Ms. Hagenlock shared her belief that the completed park will be a destination that the entire Casper metropolitan area can be proud of. She stated that, based on its educational components, historical storytelling, and lifelike visitor experiences, the park has the potential to put Mills and the Casper area “on the map.”

Ms. Hagenlock then posed three questions to Council:

1. Why does this park have a nonprofit organization supporting it when none of the other City parks have nonprofits?
2. Why is there ongoing conflict or disagreement over the project when the park continues to be owned by the City?
3. Why are other communities able to work collaboratively toward similar large-scale community projects, yet Mills seems unable to do the same?

She concluded her remarks after reading her questions to Council.

The Mayor responded to Ms. Hagenlock’s questions regarding the Service and Sacrifice Park. The Mayor explained that the nonprofit associated with the project is a community group formed to raise funds for the remodel and expansion of the park. The purpose of the nonprofit effort is to reduce or eliminate the financial burden on taxpayers by securing donations from individuals and organizations who support the park’s mission of honoring veterans and first responders. The Mayor noted that many members of the community, veteran organizations, and first responders have rallied behind the project and are actively contributing to its vision.

Addressing the question of why issues have arisen despite the park being City-owned, the Mayor stated that she did not have a “politically correct” answer. She expressed disappointment that conflict has surrounded the project despite its positive intent. The Mayor commented that other communities successfully collaborate with nonprofits on projects located on City land, citing Bar Nunn as an example where a nonprofit, council, and staff have worked in harmony to complete park improvements without placing the cost on residents.

Regarding the broader concern raised by Ms. Hagenlock—why other communities seem able to work cohesively toward similar goals—the Mayor stated that the most challenging aspect of being an elected official is navigating personalities, differing beliefs, and differing priorities among councilmembers. She noted that even when a

project is beneficial, individual disagreements can lead to sidelining or decisions that intentionally derail progress. She emphasized that this dynamic is not unique to Mills and occurs in many political environments.

Ms. Hagenlock then asked why fundraising that reduces taxpayer burden would still generate opposition, noting that such an arrangement appears to be a “win-win” for the community. The Mayor agreed, reiterating that the conflict is rooted in differing personalities and perspectives rather than the project itself. She described the situation as disappointing, given the project’s positive intent.

When asked what could be done to resolve these issues and build cohesiveness, the Mayor stated that efforts are currently underway. She shared that the City is working internally and with the nonprofit to address concerns and improve collaboration. She noted that some challenges stem from council tensions but expressed hope that ongoing discussions, including assistance from the City Attorney to clarify roles and expectations, will help the parties move forward in alignment similar to successful models seen in Bar Nunn and Casper. The Mayor requested that councilmembers comment on Ms. Hagenlocks questions. Councilmembers did not have any response to the questions.

Ms. Hagenlock concluded her comments when her allotted time expired, and the Mayor thanked her for speaking.

Scott Clamp addressed Council and began by commenting that issues discussed during the meeting appeared to “present themselves easily.” He spoke briefly on two earlier topics before raising his primary concern.

Mr. Clamp stated that, in his view, elected officials should prioritize decisions that benefit the community as a whole, referencing a quote he attributed to former Governor Freudenthal. He then commented on the fire extinguisher discussion, noting that individuals who have experienced a fire understand how valuable extinguishers can be. He acknowledged that purchasing extinguishers is not the only cost, as they require annual servicing, but stated the expense is worth the peace of mind given how quickly accidents can occur.

Mr. Clamp then shifted to his primary concern regarding the longstanding issue with the fire hydrant and water service near his property. He stated that this matter has been promised attention for years and that previous grant funding allocated for the project was spent by individuals no longer serving with the City. He said he is frustrated with the delay and intends to continue raising the issue until it is resolved.

Mr. Clamp explained that he had previously offered to hire a contractor at his own expense to excavate the hydrant, but with uncertainty around the shutoff valve’s location, he could no longer safely do so. He stated that as a citizen he should not have to pay for repairs that should fall under the City’s responsibility, especially when grants had been available in the past.

In response, staff shared that the City has applied for additional funding and is awaiting notification, noting a recent update indicating the application advanced to the next review stage. Staff also discussed next steps, including reviewing cost estimates and evaluating timing windows for completion, acknowledging limitations caused by weather, water-line pressure, and seasonal construction constraints.

Mr. Clamp emphasized that the larger concern is the condition of the main water line in the area, noting that pressure changes and pipe movement make it vulnerable. He expressed worry about the timing of a potential failure, especially during freezing temperatures or periods of high water usage.

Mr. Clamp concluded by noting that residents often criticize development activity but do not later recognize the benefits to property values once those developments are complete. He expressed appreciation for the City’s work despite public criticism. The Mayor thanked him for his comments.

ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS

12. ORDINANCE NO. 833 - FIRST READING:

AN ORDINANCE ESTABLISHING AN APPEALS BOARD FOR THE CITY OF MILLS, WYOMING

Motion made by Council President Neumiller, Seconded by Council President Sutherland,
Voting Yea: Council Member McCarthy, Mayor Juarez, Council President Neumiller, and Council Member Sutherland, motion passes

13. RESOLUTION NO. 2026-01

This document sets forth fixed asset accounting procedures for the City of Mills. These policies define “Fixed Assets”, system maintenance, capitalization and depreciation guidelines, and inventory guidelines.

Motion made by Council President Neumiller, Seconded by Council President Sutherland,
Voting Yea: Council Member McCarthy, Mayor Juarez, Council President Neumiller, and Council Member Sutherland, motion passes

14. RESOLUTION NO. 2026-02

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF MILLS, WYOMING, DESIGNATING THE BANKING INSTITUTIONS TO BE USED FOR THE FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING JANUARY 1, 2026 TO DECEMBER 31, 2026

Motion made by Council President Neumiller, Seconded by Council President Sutherland,
Voting Yea: Council Member McCarthy, Mayor Juarez, Council President Neumiller, and Council Member Sutherland, motion passes

15. RESOLUTION NO. 2026-03

A RESOLUTION FIXING THE TAX LEVY FOR THE CITY OF MILLS FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 31, 2026.

Motion made by Council President Neumiller, Seconded by Council President Sutherland,
Voting Yea: Council Member McCarthy, Mayor Juarez, Council President Neumiller, and Council Member Sutherland, motion passes

16. RESOLUTION NO. 2026-04

A RESOLUTION CERTIFYING COMPLIANCE WITH W.S SECTION 24-2-111

Motion made by Council President Neumiller, Seconded by Council President McCarthy,
Voting Yea: Council Member McCarthy, Mayor Juarez, Council President Neumiller, and Council Member Sutherland, motion passes

17. RESOLUTION NO. 2026-05

RESOLUTION ADOPTING AND CONFIRMING EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYMENT

Motion made by Council President Neumiller, Seconded by Council President Sutherland,
Voting Yea: Council Member McCarthy, Mayor Juarez, Council President Neumiller, and Council Member Sutherland, motion passes

18. RESOLUTION NO. 2026-06

ADOPTING A CURRENT UNDERSTANDING OF THE MEANING OF “NEWSPAPER” AT LAW

Motion made by Council President Neumiller, Seconded by Council President McCarthy,
Voting Yea: Council Member McCarthy, Mayor Juarez, Council President Neumiller, and Council Member Sutherland, motion passes

19. RESOLUTION NO. 2026-07

RESOLUTION ADOPTING AND CONFIRMING CITY OF MILLS NONDISCRIMINATORY PRATICES

Motion made by Council President Neumiller, Seconded by Council President Sutherland,
Voting Yea: Council Member McCarthy, Mayor Juarez, Council President Neumiller, and Council Member Sutherland, motion passes

20. RESOLUTION NO. 2026-08:

A RESOLUTION SETTING WATER AND SEWER CONNECTION FEES

Motion made by Council President Neumiller, Seconded by Council President McCarthy,
Voting Yea: Council Member McCarthy, Mayor Juarez, Council President Neumiller, and Council Member Sutherland, motion passes

COUNCIL APPROVALS

21. Bayou Liquors Catering Permit 1-18-26

Motion made by Council President Neumiller, Seconded by Council President McCarthy,
Voting Yea: Council Member McCarthy, Mayor Juarez, Council President Neumiller, and Council Member Sutherland, motion passes

EXECUTIVE SESSION

22. Legal Matter

Motion made by Council President Neumiller to go into executive session legal matter at 7:32pm, Seconded by Council President Sutherland,
Voting Yea: Council Member McCarthy, Mayor Juarez, Council President Neumiller, and Council Member Sutherland, motion passes

Council returned from an executive session legal matter at 8:08pm, council member present included Council Member Sutherland, Council Member McCarthy, Council President Neumiller, and excused included Council Member Butcher.

No action necessary.

ADJOURNMENT

Council President Neumiller made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:08pm, Council Member McCarthy seconded the motion. Voting Yea: Council Member McCarthy, Mayor Juarez, Council President Neumiller, and Council Member Sutherland, motion passes

AGENDA SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT NOTICE

NEXT MEETING - January 23, 2026 at 7:00pm February 10, 2026 at 7:00pm

NEXT WORK SESSION - January 23, 2026 at 6:00pm / February 9, 2026 at 6:00pm

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, persons who need accommodation in order to attend or participate in this meeting should contact City Hall at 307-234-6679 within 48 hours prior to the meeting in order to request such assistance.

Mayor, Leah Juarez

City Clerk, Sarah Osborn