

**REGULAR CITY COUNCIL
MEETING**

March 24, 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

Council Butcher

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 - *None*
5. Regular / Police Payroll
6. Fire Payroll
7. Transmittal Transactions
8. Voided Checks

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

ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS

9. RESOLUTION NO. 2026-11:

A RESOLUTION MODIFYING BOND SCHEDULE APPLYING TO CRUELTY TO ANIMALS

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

10. ORDINANCE NO. 836 - SECOND READING

REVISION TO SEC. 6.03.040 KENNEL, CATTERY REQUIREMENTS

Motion made by Council President Neumiller, Seconded by Council Member Butcher.

Staff Report: The City Attorney reviewed this ordinance and determined that matters related to business licensing, including animal-related businesses—are more appropriately addressed within the broader business license regulations.

This particular ordinance is narrowly focused on animal-related businesses, and staff believes that approach is too limited in scope. Therefore, staff recommend that this ordinance not be passed.

The Mayor thanked the City Attorney and asked if there were any other comments from council. Council President Neumiller agreed with the decision to not pass the ordinance.

Voting No: Council Member McCarthy, President Neumiller, Mayor Juarez, Council Member Sutherland, and Council Member Butcher, the second reading does not pass.

COUNCIL APPROVALS

11. Ridgewest Subdivision Agreement

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

12. Appointment - Interim Police Chief - Kate Acord

Motion made by Council Member Butcher, Seconded by Council President Neumiller,

The Mayor commented that it is her honor to make this interim Police Chief appointment to Kate Acord. She is going to do great things for the City of Mills.

Voting Yea: Council Member McCarthy, President Neumiller, Mayor Juarez, Council Member Sutherland, and Council Member Butcher, motion passes

BUSINESS MATTERS

13. B Diesels Bar & Grill

The Mayor requested a report from staff. The City Attorney informed council that we sent a letter to the owner of the liquor license for Diesel's after the municipality received several complaints. These included concerns about the improper service of alcohol—specifically, at least one instance involving a minor—as well as more serious issues related to health and welfare.

Additional concerns involved staff members reportedly sleeping on the premises, cleanliness, and other related matters.

As a result, we invited the liquor license holder to be present this evening to address these concerns. I believe one of the owners is here tonight to do so.

Mayor Juarez requested that one of the liquor license holders come forward to address the Council. Steve Loftin came forward.

The Mayor thanked Mr. Loftin for attending and explained that the City's goal is to work collaboratively to establish a clear set of expectations to address the concerns that have been raised, without getting into extensive detail during the meeting. She advised that if Mr. Loftin had any questions or concerns, he was welcome to address them at that time, or the discussion could continue offline.

Mr. Loftin stated that he did not receive a formal notice to attend the meeting but did receive a phone call from staff and appreciated the opportunity to be present. He further explained that he does not manage the day-to-day operations of the establishment, as he is one of the owners, but would relay any concerns discussed to the other owner.

The City Clerk provided Mr. Loftin with a copy of the letter. The City Attorney requested that Mr. Loftin provide his contact information so that he may be included in future correspondence and receive all communications related to the establishment.

Mr. Loftin agreed to provide his contact information. The Mayor thanked Mr. Loftin for his time.

OPEN DISCUSSION

The Mayor announced that the meeting would move into open discussion and public comment. Prior to opening the floor, she provided a statement to establish expectations and ensure decorum in the gallery.

The Mayor acknowledged that many attendees were present to speak on the proposed zoning ordinance and stated that public comment on that topic, as well as other agenda items, was appropriate and encouraged. However, she clarified that there had been significant discussion—both publicly and online—regarding a separate matter involving private parties. She emphasized that the Council is not the appropriate venue to address or resolve disputes between private individuals or businesses, noting that such matters belong in the proper legal or administrative channels.

The Mayor distinguished between policy-related discussion and personal disputes, stating that comments relevant to the ordinance would be heard, while personal accusations, claims of retaliation, or attempts to resolve private disputes would be ruled out of order. She reminded those present that all statements made during the meeting are part of the public record and may be used in a court of law. She further clarified that public comment is intended for matters within the Council's jurisdiction and not for personal grievances.

The Mayor requested that all attendees remain respectful, focused, and professional, and stated that the City would ensure all relevant comments were heard while maintaining order and the integrity of the meeting. She emphasized that the purpose of the meeting was to conduct City business responsibly and professionally.

Instructions were then provided for public comment: individuals wishing to speak were asked to approach the lectern, state their name for the record, and direct their comments to the Mayor rather than individual Council members. Each speaker would be allotted three minutes. Comments from the gallery would not be permitted, and individuals disrupting the proceedings could be removed. She then opened the floor for public comment and invited the first speaker to approach the lectern.

Ryan Perry, a former Mills resident, approached the lectern to address the Council.

Mr. Perry spoke in opposition to the proposed permit requirement for animal services and adoption agencies. He stated that he believes the proposal is not necessary for public safety or animal welfare, but instead creates an additional layer of regulation for small businesses that are already licensed, taxed, and operating legally.

He questioned what specific problem the proposed permit would address and expressed concern that the measure could be perceived as stemming from personal conflict rather than a demonstrated need. He further noted concerns about the potential for government action to be used in a manner that could impact competition between businesses.

Mr. Perry stated that existing laws related to noise, sanitation, and animal welfare are already in place and should be enforced as needed, rather than implementing new regulations. He added that the proposal could negatively impact responsible community members and set an unfavorable precedent.

Scott Clamp approached the lectern to address the Council.

Mr. Clamp stated that he supports the installation of fiber optic infrastructure in the Town of Mills but expressed concerns regarding how the work is being conducted. He questioned whether proper easements were in place for work occurring near or under his properties, specifically referencing multiple addresses on Wasatch Street and Plat Street. He noted that he holds original abstracts for these properties and inquired whether that affects the rights of contractors to access or bore beneath the land.

Mr. Clamp also raised concerns about potential impacts to existing infrastructure, including a sewer line located near the sidewalk at one of his properties. He emphasized the importance of ensuring that installation work does not damage existing utilities and stated that he has been in communication with representatives involved in the project.

Additionally, He suggested that more effort be made to notify and inform residents—particularly older individuals—about ongoing work in their neighborhoods.

Staff responded that contractors should be operating within established easements or franchise agreements and should not be entering private property without proper authorization. It was also noted that the City may explore providing updates through social media regarding permitted work and project timelines.

Lindsay Royce, a resident of Mills and owner of For Pet Sake, approached the lectern.

Ms. Royce stated that although the Council had previously voted against the proposed ordinance at this time, she wished to provide input for future consideration. She explained that her business operates a dog daycare and boarding facility, and that the income from those services directly supports her animal rescue efforts.

Ms. Royce shared that, over the past four years, her organization has facilitated the rescue and adoption of more than 550 dogs. She also noted that her business provides opportunities for youth in Natrona County to complete community service hours and learn responsibility.

Ms. Royce expressed concern that the proposed ordinance may be overly restrictive and appear to be a response to a specific complaint rather than a demonstrated community-wide issue. She stated that, as written, the regulations could make it difficult to sustain both her business operations and rescue efforts, potentially impacting the broader community.

She encouraged the Council to consider whether existing ordinances already address the concerns at issue and whether additional regulations are necessary. Ms. Royce indicated her willingness to work with the Council on

reasonable and consistent solutions and requested that any future ordinance be applied fairly and not target a specific business.

Ms. Royce concluded by urging the Council to adopt policies that reflect fairness and support small businesses and community-driven initiatives.

Lena Nama, a resident from the Casper area, approached the lectern to address the Council.

Ms. Nama spoke regarding the proposed ordinance, noting that although it had been voted down, she wished to share her perspective. She expressed support for the community impact of For Pet Sake, referencing the previously stated number of over 550 dogs rescued and adopted, many of which may have otherwise been euthanized. She emphasized the positive effect this has had on families in the community, as well as the additional services provided, including boarding and daycare.

Ms. Nama compared these efforts to adopt statistics from other communities, stating that the scale of impact is significant. She also noted that the business is family-run and provides employment opportunities within Mills, contributing to the local economy.

She encouraged the Council to evaluate whether the concerns addressed in the proposed ordinance are already covered under existing regulations and cautioned against creating additional ordinances if they are unnecessary.

Ms. Nama further recommended that the Council remain mindful of potential conflicts of interest. She suggested that, in situations where personal interests or disputes may be involved, individuals should consider abstaining from participation to avoid the appearance of impropriety or misuse of authority.

Ms. Nama thanked the Council for the opportunity to speak.

Rebecca Kuna, a local rescue operator, stated that she operates an animal rescue and has helped transport over 200 dogs from out-of-state euthanasia situations. She noted she has worked with Lindsay's facility and described it as well-managed. Ms. Kuna explained that she has also obtained dogs for fostering and adoption through rescue efforts. She expressed opposition to the proposed kennel ordinance, characterizing it as overly restrictive. She emphasized that rescued dogs are typically healthy, vaccinated, and spayed or neutered before being placed into homes, and she expressed concern that the ordinance could negatively impact lifesaving rescue operations. She requested that the Council reconsider the ordinance.

Madison, a Mills resident, spoke as a concerned community member regarding fairness and transparency in the ordinance process. She acknowledged the legitimacy of addressing issues such as noise and neighborhood impacts, but raised questions about how and why the ordinance was initiated and whether it was the result of a broader community need. She expressed concern that the timing and scope of the ordinance could create a perception that it targets a small number of organizations. She also raised general concerns about transparency, potential conflicts of interest, and the importance of maintaining public trust. She encouraged the Council to provide clarity on the ordinance's origin and intent and to continue working collaboratively with affected organizations and community members moving forward.

Shannon Heidrich, a former Mills resident, spoke regarding concerns with specific provisions in the ordinance. She noted confusion over ordinance language requiring animals to be physically restrained or confined within kennel or cattery premises at all times, stating she interpreted this as requiring continuous kennel confinement rather than allowing fenced outdoor areas, which she felt could be inhumane or overly restrictive. She also raised

concerns about the requirement for privacy fencing, stating that fences do not fully prevent animal escapes and may represent an added cost without effectively addressing safety issues. She further questioned provisions related to obstructing animals' view of adjacent properties, stating she did not understand the purpose of that requirement. Ms. Heidrich also shared her experience volunteering with local animal welfare organizations, including Metro Animal Shelter, For Pet's Sake, and Black Dog Animal Rescue. She expressed support for local rescue efforts and encouraged collaboration and continued discussion to reach a balanced solution that supports animal welfare while addressing community concerns.

Lindsay Odell also provided comment in support of the existing rescue efforts associated with For Pet's Sake. She described her long-standing involvement with the organization since 2022 and praised the dedication and commitment of its leadership in caring for and rehoming animals. She emphasized the limited availability of rescue options in the Casper area and noted that rescue organizations often assist animals from overcrowded or high-risk shelters in other regions. She credited the organization with saving numerous dogs and bringing them into safe adoptive homes. Ms. Odell encouraged the Council to work collaboratively with rescue organizations if regulatory changes are considered in the future, rather than adopting ordinances that could create barriers to their operations. She concluded by emphasizing the importance of supporting and sustaining local animal welfare efforts.

Mayor Juarez responded to public comments regarding the proposed kennel ordinance and its placement within the city's regulatory framework.

The Mayor explained that after review, staff and council determined the concerns raised in the proposed ordinance are better addressed through existing or upcoming business permit regulations rather than a standalone zoning ordinance. They noted that the city routinely evaluates and updates regulations under broader categories such as business licensing, health, and safety standards, which also include various commercial operations such as auto-related businesses, waste handling concerns, and personal service industries.

The Mayor emphasized that the process is community-driven, stating that ordinances are typically initiated when issues are brought forward by residents, staff, or officials and then evaluated through staff review. They acknowledged concerns that the ordinance may feel targeted, but stated that regulatory changes often affect a small number of businesses or individuals due to the nature of local policy updates.

They also referenced past updates to building and zoning ordinances, noting that such changes often occur without widespread public awareness but still impact the community broadly.

Regarding the kennel and boarding-related standards, the council member stated the intent is to work within a broader business permitting framework to establish health and safety requirements for kennels, catteries, boarding, and grooming operations. They emphasized a desire to collaborate with nonprofits and local operators to ensure that any standards adopted are both appropriate and fair.

The Mayor further explained that ordinance concerns are often identified through real-world application, when gaps or issues in existing regulations become apparent through resident or staff feedback. The Mayor noted one such issue having been risen by a public comment in this meeting. Explaining that is regularly how changes to ordinances or resolutions initiate. Mrs Heidrich arose concern about language in a long existing ordinance and as such staff will review it to evaluate if a change needs to be made, which likely it does. She encouraged public participation in the process moving forward, noting that community involvement is essential for shaping effective policy.

Finally, the Mayor acknowledged and appreciated comments recognizing the work of local animal welfare organizations and expressed an intent to work collaboratively with stakeholders to develop a workable solution going forward.

To address Mrs. Heidrich's concern, the Mayor requested staff clarification regarding the existing ordinance language requiring animals to be "physically restrained or confined within the premises of the kennel or cattery."

In response, the City Attorney clarified that this language is not new, and is carried forward from existing code that has been in place for approximately 20 years. They explained that the provision states dogs or cats must be physically restrained or confined within the kennel or cattery premises.

The City Attorney further explained that the intent of the language is to ensure animals remain on the licensed premises and do not escape or run at large. They noted that this has historically been interpreted as requiring animals to remain contained within the facility's control, with the goal of preventing animals from leaving the property. It was emphasized that the provision is part of long-standing ordinance language rather than a new regulatory addition. The Mayor also noted that public comments helped bring attention to how the language is being interpreted and applied, and reiterated that community feedback is an important part of identifying potential gaps or misunderstandings in existing code.

Following this clarification, the council proceeded to conclude open discussion.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

14. Legal Matter

Mayor Juarez asked for a motion to go into executive session for a legal matter at 7:37pm. Council President Neumiller made a motion to go into executive session for a personnel matter, Council Member Sutherland seconded the motion, Voting Yea: Council Member McCarthy, President Neumiller, Mayor Juarez, Council Member Sutherland, and Council Member Butcher, motion passes

All of council returned from executive session at 7:50pm.

Council Member Butcher made a motion to authorize a legal action, Council President Neumiller seconded the motion. Voting Yea: Council Member McCarthy, President Neumiller, Mayor Juarez, Council Member Sutherland, and Council Member Butcher, motion passes

15. Legal Matter

Council President Neumiller made a motion to go into executive session for a legal matter at 7:51pm, Council Member Sutherland seconded the motion, Voting Yea: Council Member McCarthy, President Neumiller, Mayor Juarez, Council Member Sutherland, and Council Member Butcher, motion passes

All of council returned from executive session at 7:58pm.

No action necessary.

16. Legal Matter

Council President Neumiller made a motion to go into executive session for a legal matter at 7:59pm, Council Member Butcher seconded the motion, Voting Yea: Council Member McCarthy, President Neumiller, Mayor Juarez, Council Member Sutherland, and Council Member Butcher, motion passes

All of council returned from executive session at 8:04pm.

Council Member Butcher made a motion for authorization to contact LGLP on a matter, Council President Neumiller seconded the motion. Voting Yea: Council Member McCarthy, President Neumiller, Mayor Juarez, Council Member Sutherland, and Council Member Butcher, motion passes

ADJOURNMENT

Council President Neumiller made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:05pm. Council Member McCarthy seconded the motion, Voting Yea: Council Member McCarthy, President Neumiller, Mayor Juarez, Council Member Sutherland, and Council Member Butcher, motion passes

AGENDA SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT NOTICE

NEXT MEETING - April 14, 2026 at 7:00pm / April 28, 2026 at 7:00pm

NEXT WORK SESSION - April 13, 2026 at 9:00am / April 14, 2026 at 7:00pm

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