

WORK SESSION MEETING
October 13, 2025
9:00 AM
City Hall



CITY OF MILLS
EST. 1921

Mayor:
Leah Juarez
Council President:
Brad Neumiller
Council Members:
Cherie Butcher
Sarah McCarthy
Tim Sutherland

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

AGENDA ITEMS

1. Casper Christian School – Mills Elementary Lease

School Background

- Serves **grades 6–12**, with approximately **111 students** (references noted 110).
- Currently leasing space at **Restoration Church** through **May 2026** on a **year-to-year** term with a **45-day notice** clause.
- Staff includes 5 full-time teachers, 5–7 part-time/dual-role staff, and ~23 total employees.
- Tuition: **\$7,100 (high school)**, **\$6,550 (middle school)**. Tuition does not fully cover costs, and affordability is a goal.
- School fields a **six-man football team** that recently qualified for **state playoffs**; currently practices near the former CY Junior High field.

Leasing Intent

- School is exploring **lease, lease-to-buy, or purchase**, but **not committing** to any option yet.
- The **City prefers leasing** to keep the facility in use; sale could be revisited in the future.
- School asked for the City's **lease preferences** and **utility/maintenance breakdowns** before drafting a proposal.

Existing Lease & Utility Discussion

- Current rent: **\$9,400/month**, includes utilities (except cleaning).
- Tenants historically paid **all utilities** except possibly **water/sewer** under city arrangements.
- Minor repairs are **tenant responsibility**; major repairs (e.g., structural/roof) are **City responsibility**.
- The City will provide **average and peak utility costs** (especially October–April heating) for budgeting.
- The building remains **in very good condition**, though **roof drainage/French drain improvements** may be needed.

Facility Fit and Planning

- The school appreciates Mills Elementary's **purpose-built design, security control, and growth capacity**.
- Plans to conduct a **follow-up walkthrough** to map potential use (full vs. phased occupancy).
- **Gym** will be used for volleyball/basketball; open to limited **community activity sharing**.

Parking, Safety, and SRO

- ~16 seniors and several juniors drive; parking layout needs refinement.
- Options include gated areas or converting gravel areas at added cost.
- The City anticipates a **DOJ-funded School Resource Officer (SRO)** in the future; funding is **federal**, pending confirmation post-shutdown.

Fire & Life-Safety Systems

- Mills Elementary: **monitored fire alarm**, no sprinklers.
- Sprinklers not required under prior interpretation since **ownership and use remain "school."**
- **Fire Chief Wil** confirmed continued compliance under current classification.

2. Vision Beyond Borders – Temporary Occupancy Request

Project Overview

- Constructing a **warehouse and thrift store**; needs early occupancy to sort and ship aid (clothing and supplies for 30,000+ refugees abroad).
- **Interior completion target**: December 1, 2025.
- **Exterior paving** postponed due to weather; intent to pave by **July 1, 2026**.

Temporary Occupancy Discussion

- Request to **occupy before paving completion** was supported if compliance and site plan updates occur.
- City requires an **amended site plan** detailing:
 - Temporary **road base use**
 - **Drainage and maintenance obligations**
 - **Pave-by date**
 - Compliance review by **Planning & Zoning (Nov 5)** and **Council (Nov 10)**.
- **Maintenance**: Must prevent tracking material into the street and maintain drainage.
- **Cost concern**: \$85,000 asphalt bid; exploring **concrete alternatives** and new bids.
- **Donor funds committed** for spring paving. Concrete could allow earlier installation despite winter.
- **Council consensus**: Approve temporary occupancy post-interior inspection, conditional upon amended site plan approval.

3. Fire Department – Air Methods MOU and On-Call Incentive Plan

Status and Context

- **No signed MOU** with Air Methods as of October 1.
- The MOU allows **three billing cycles** to the patient before billing Air Methods directly—deemed a major advantage.
- **City not obligated** to perform transfers; service occurs if a crew is available.

Proposed Internal Incentive Structure

- **\$100 per life-flight transfer** incentive.
- **On-call pay**: \$50 nightly (8 p.m.–8 a.m.) to two personnel to ensure coverage.
- **Standard overtime** for full-time staff; volunteers paid hourly.
- A **90-day trial** supported by Council.
- **Estimated costs**:
 - On-call coverage ≈ \$37,000/year.
 - ~26 transfers needed annually to offset cost; 5–10 transfers/month projected.
- **BLS base rate**: \$1,150 + 10 miles @ \$250 = \$1,400 per call.

Operational Notes

- Typical transfers: 1.5–2 hours; often late nights, especially weekends.
- **Fixed-wing vs. helicopter**: helicopters cheaper and avoid airport logistics; fixed-wing more winter-capable.
- **Union concerns**: discussion needed if incentive overlaps with time-and-a-half.
- **No-show/on-call policy**: must be defined to prevent abuse.

4. Zoning Strategy – Gaming Establishments

Overview

- Anticipating state legislation to expand gaming, the City aims to **regulate locally first**.
- Plan: Amend zoning code (likely **Title 19**, possibly **Title 17**) to classify “**gaming establishments**” as **conditional uses** with defined criteria.

Discussion Highlights

- Overlays not preferred; **conditional use permitting** recommended for specific zones.
- Staff to draft ordinance **for council meeting “tomorrow.”**
- **Criteria to include**: definitions, permitted vs. prohibited zones, and conditional approval standards.
- Intent: establish local control before state laws reduce municipal authority.

5. Estate Billing and Collections Case

Case Summary

- Patient with traumatic injury died; estate in children’s names with mother as guardian/conservator.

- **City bill:** ~\$2,100 (in collections). **Collection agency fee:** ~\$600 ($\approx 30\%$).
- Estate has no cash; possible **home sale** required to pay.
- Mother's attorney indicated estate cannot settle until this bill is resolved.

Clarifications

- Claim **assigned to AIM**, making it AIM's responsibility.
- **City may withdraw its portion** if AIM did not file a creditor's claim.
- **Seventh Judicial District Court** governs the estate.
- **Pat** to pull the court file to verify:
 - Whether **AIM received notice**
 - If **claims bar date** was properly set
 - Whether **AIM filed timely**
- If AIM failed to file and the bar date passed → claim barred.
- If the estate failed to notify or advertise properly → bar date invalid, and obligations may change.
- Current **debtor meeting postponed** pending legal review.

Open Issues & Risks

- **Casper Christian:** Lease terms, utility cost data, drainage responsibilities, and parking layout remain open.
- **Vision Beyond Borders:** Temporary occupancy depends on timely amended site plan; cost uncertainty between asphalt vs. concrete.
- **Air Methods:** No signed MOU; internal trial needs policy framework, metrics, and union clarity.
- **Gaming Ordinance:** Must define terms and zoning criteria; coordination with Title 17/19 amendments needed.
- **Estate Case:** Bar date, AIM filing status, and notification procedure require verification.

Action Items

1. **Casper Christian School**
 - City to provide **utility cost averages and peaks (Oct–Apr)**.
 - School to **revisit building** and determine phased vs. full occupancy.
 - City to **draft lease terms** after receiving proposed numbers and council guidance.
 - Clarify **water/sewer inclusion** and **drainage responsibility** (roof/French drain).
2. **Vision Beyond Borders**
 - **Submit amended site plan by October 31 ("Halloween") for P&Z review Nov 5, Council Nov 10.**
 - Include **drainage, maintenance, and pave-by date** in submission.
 - **Gather additional bids**, including **concrete options**, for comparison to \$85k asphalt bid.
3. **Air Methods / Fire Department**
 - Finalize **MOU revisions and mayoral signature**.
 - Implement **90-day trial** of on-call program; define no-show consequences and reporting metrics.
 - Track **call volume and costs** for evaluation.
4. **Zoning / Gaming Ordinance**
 - Draft **ordinance defining "gaming establishments"** and outlining conditional use criteria.
 - Place draft on **next council agenda**.
5. **Estate Collections (AIM Claim)**
 - **Pull court file** (7th Judicial District) to confirm notice, filing, and bar date accuracy.
 - Determine **AIM's claim status**; clarify whether bar date passed or notice defective.
 - **Postpone debtor meeting** until legal review complete; update parties once verified.

ADJOURNMENT

AGENDA SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT NOTICE

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