

COLFAX CITY COUNCIL
March 16, 2026

CALL TO ORDER:

Mayor Retzer called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

ROLL CALL:

Golden, McRae, Mackleit, Guenther, Sevedge and Huntwork: Present. Schaefer: Absent.
A motion was entered by Golden, seconded by Huntwork to excuse Schaefer. Roll Call: All Yes.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

A motion was entered by Golden, seconded by Sevedge to approve the minutes of the March 2, 2026 Council meeting as amended. The amendment involves quoting Mackleit that he was going to do something about railroad. Roll Call: All Yes.

GOOD OF THE CITY:

The Kiwanis Masquerade Ball will be 6:00 p.m. March 28th at the Colfax Golf Course. Proceeds go for Stuff the Bus, a program that provides school supplies for Whitman County Kids.

Distinguished Young Women (DYW) was held Saturday March 14th. Winona McGraw was named DYW for 2027, 1st alternate Stella McNeilly and 2nd alternate Vivian Riley.

Colfax Boys Basketball brought home the Class 2B State Championship.

Colfax Wrestling did a great job at State as well. Jack McBride commented five to seven more could have participated at the state level if it wasn't for injuries.

Public Works were commended for always doing a great job. Crews were exceptional in manning the pumps and keeping a close eye on everything during the recent heavy rain and runoff. It was noted that while several surrounding towns experienced flooding, Colfax had none thanks to their hard work and dedication.

BILLS AND CLAIMS:

A motion was entered by Mackleit, seconded by McRae to approve all bills and claims as presented. Roll Call: All Yes.

CLAIMS

#11603-11624
\$29,508.08

PAYROLL

#11597-11602 & EFT
\$65,869.00

GRAND TOTAL: \$95,377.08

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CITIZENS REQUEST:

Hanna Nolan- 615 N Perkins- read a letter prepared by Jill Gfeller the Outreach Coordinator for the Perkins House. The letter concerns the generator for the train engine and specifically addresses the loud humming and noise disruption it is causing for both volunteers and visitors at the Perkins House.

PUBLIC HEARING:

PRESENTATION/WORK STUDY:

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

2026 Humane Society Contract-Draft-

Hammer has updated the contract to specify that the city will not accept cats unless they are injured or too small to care for themselves. This update is intended to reflect our current practice and ensure the city is not responsible for costs associated with citizens turning in cats to the Humane Society.

During the council discussion, it was clarified that the city will continue to take in dogs for a few days to locate owners. We currently post notices of found dogs on Facebook, which has been successful in getting animals claimed quickly. Also, the contract includes a provision for the Humane Society to notify us of animals turned into their facility so we can assist in locating their owners.

Hammer will have Attorney Hannah Kimball review the contract before sending to the Humane Society.

Letter to Railroad-

Retzer read the prepared letter to Senator Michael Baumgartner regarding the railroad generator noise issues.

Retzer went on to say we are actively working to find a solution we have had multiple meetings with the railroad and the state. Unfortunately, this is a lengthy process and there is no quick solution.

Council asked that we add in that this is a new process that started in September.

Mackleit shared with the council and audience what he has found:

March 2nd phone conversation with Representative Joe Schmick. That conversation put Mackleit in contact with the Regional Manager of DOT Char Kay, who wanted to have a zoom meeting. Hammer, Mackleit, Char Kay, Jason Biggs, Ryan Ragza, Larry Rassmusson and Greg Figg from the DOT participated in the zoom meeting.

Mackleit stated they were not aware of situation and Mackleit thanked Hammer for clarifying a few things during that meeting. Mackleit went on to say they did not come up with a solution.

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The DOT will meet with the railroad to discuss the issue. Mackleit stated he will follow up with them and long term Mackleit thinks we will come up with a solution of some kind. Mackleit stated he feels bad he didn't do something sooner.

Hammer reiterated there are no state regulations for the railroad, it is all federal.

NEW BUSINESS:

DEPARTMENT REPORTS:

Police-

Police Chief Michael Melcher stated call count for first half of March:

32 traffic stops

20 citations

41 calls for service

3 criminal cases

Public Works-

Hammer reported the water improvement project begins Monday March 23rd. There will be two concurrent work areas, one on Last Street and Main Street and the other on Cooper and Meadow Street. This portion of the project should last until June, then they will move down to 7th Street and Cedar Street.

Hammer met with WSDOT regarding the Warwick Plaza, they discussed some ideas but nothing with traction yet.

Administration-

Kramlich reported that Finance Director Amanda Link attended finance training. Also, staff members have been working on finishing up painting in preparation of the upcoming carpet installation.

COMMITTEE/BOARD/COMISSION REPORTS:

OTHER BUSINESS:

MPD Meeting: No Business

CITY ATTORNEY'S REPORT:

MAYORS REPORT:

Retzer asked for patience regarding the railroad issue and wants to assure everyone your voices are no going unheard. There is a process we must go through, we are committed to finding a long-term solution.

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Retzer stated the recent work being done in our office has been taken on by our office staff. Tomorrow, they will also be working on pulling out the old carpet in preparation for the new carpet installation. Staff cut out concrete to run cords underneath the floor, alleviating potential tripping hazards. Retzer went on to say this demonstrates the dedication of our staff, they are taking on projects well outside their normal job descriptions. It is evidence as to how hard our staff works for the people.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

ADJOURNMENT:

Mayor Retzer adjourned the meeting at 7:34 p.m.



Jim Retzer, Mayor



Lynda Kramlich, City Clerk