

MINUTES
CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING
SOLOMON KS 67480
February 2, 2026 at 6:00 pm

1. CALL TO ORDER & ROLL CALL

Mayor Brandy Gray called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM

Council Present: Shawn Kirby, Jennifer Cross, Brian Duryea,

Council Absent: Kelley VanDeCreek, Colten Kohman

Staff Present: Krista Radke, Randy Paden, Andrea McCook, Dan Britt

Others Present: Jerry Davis, Chris Ade, Aaron Martin, Kenny Roelofson, Luke Riordan, Jeri Richards

APPROVAL OF AGENDA FOR February 2, 2026 CITY COUNCIL MEETING

Motion by Jennifer Cross to approve the agenda, seconded by Shawn Kirby, 3 Yays, 0 Nays.

Motion carried.

2. PUBLIC COMMENTS & COMMUNICATIONS

None.

3. PRESENTATION/REPORTS

1. Solomon Land, LLC- Kenny Roelofson reported that about 14–15 years ago, when the road was built, there was an understanding that the City would maintain the retention ponds for Solomon Land LLC, even though it wasn't a formal written agreement. Solomon Land, LLC has had interested buyers for that property and they routinely ask who is responsible for the retention pond. To avoid having to create maintenance agreements with every future buyer, Kenny wants the City to own and continue to maintain that area outright. The City is already maintaining the area as if it were city property. This proposal is simply to formalize that by deed, with no purchase cost to the City.

2. Building Inspector- Bill Rogers was ill and unable to attend and will be moved to the March meeting.

3. Community Garden- Luke Riordan thanked city workers for help at the garden. He noted new locks on the building for the machinery, now code-based instead of physical key. They are working with the Solomon school science program. Students will collect soil samples from above-ground plots and in-ground plots and do soil testing to see what needs to be added or removed. They want a sign under the covered table area to encourage donations of produce and items for others. The garden opens to the public March 1 for people to start working. He requested that city staff check gas and fire equipment and make sure everything is ready for the season. They are planning to meet on February 17th at 5:00. Luke also presented an infographic handout they're working on to hand out.

4. Senior Senter- Jeri Richards reported they averaged about 24 meals per day for January. The center was rented most weekends in November and December, plus Thanksgiving and Christmas, making it a very strong end of year. They plan to hold bingo this month (February) since it had to be canceled in January due to weather.

5. Dickinson County Sheriff- Summary of activity for January 2026.

16 traffic stops, 8 speak with an officer, 6 alarms, 3 unknown problems, 2 arrests, 2 burglary, 2 motorist assist, 2 suspicious activity, 1 disorderly subject, 1 welfare check, 1 citizen check, 1 civil matter. They had 45 calls with 240.5 hours.

6. Solomon Fire Department- Chief Paden reported the new truck is mostly prepared and back in service, with only a few minor items still to be addressed. Three trucks need pump-related service: 615 – About \$2,000 to replace 9 gauges that failed, plus pump service and pump testing. This is the truck whose pump had to be chiseled free of scale/debris. 613 – Pump service and testing estimated at about \$620. 608 – Needs a new pressure gauge; its pump is also getting scaled/gummed up. Goal is to get these scheduled, hopefully next month.

Call Volume – January

Total calls: 8 City: 3 medical calls, 2 pendant activations (both false alarms). County: 1 possible vehicle fire – nothing found, 1 traffic accident – canceled en route, 1 possible grass fire – nothing found

7. Public Works Director- Dan reported that the city completed its quarterly KDHE lagoon sampling while discharging to the river, and the December Biochemical Oxygen Demand (BOD) result was high. KDHE will send a KRWA technician to review sampling procedures and potential causes, and the high result will be noted in the inspection report, though no immediate fines are expected if the issue is addressed. He explained that BOD is monitored because high levels in river discharge can deplete oxygen and cause fish kills. Dan confirmed that lagoon water is discharged to the river at times, while in hot summers evaporation can eliminate the need to discharge for some quarters. As a follow-up to a prior citizen complaint, “Engine Braking Prohibited” signs have been installed on all four entrances to town. Regarding abandoned well houses, wells at Well House #2 (east edge on Old 40) and Well House #12 (near Abilene Machine) have been properly plugged by Sergeant Drilling, with paperwork filed with KDHE. Annual maintenance has been completed on fire trucks and fire equipment, and nearly all annual maintenance on shop equipment is finished. Dan also announced that Don Boyers’ last day will be March 20th.

8. City Clerk- Andrea McCook reported that chicken renewal reminders have been mailed and a few renewals have already been returned. Pet registrations are coming in slowly, with many typically arriving closer to March around the pet clinic. She confirmed that all easement letters for the water infrastructure project have been mailed, and she will provide further detail during the infrastructure update. Andrea noted that the new park sign has been installed and is operational, and a meeting will be scheduled with the school to finalize related details. She is also working on board appointment review and organization, updating forms and documentation to be discussed later under board renewals. Bank account balances have been updated and are included in the packet for council review. The city has completed and issued all 1099s.

9. Municipal Services Clerk- Krista Radke reported that on January 15 there were 22 cases on the municipal court docket; one case is on a payment agreement, a few defendants failed to appear, some cases were paid off, and there is a probation violation tied to a separate case in another town whose outcome may determine whether the violation proceeds. The next court date is scheduled for February 19 at 4:00 p.m. She noted continued growth in participation in the utility auto-pay and electronic payment programs: there are now 193 customers on auto-pay and 21 using text-to-pay, with the latter allowing customers to review and approve the amount before payment processes. She highlighted an increase in customer calls related to the new infrastructure charge and recent water rate changes. Krista also reported it has been a busy year-end and New Year period, with work focused on closing out files, processing sales tax and quarterly usage reports, and preparing for the upcoming annual usage reports in the next few months.

4. **CONSENT AGENDA**

Council reviewed consent agenda items including:

- (1) Approval of minutes dated January 5, 2026.
 - (2) January Check Register & Payroll Summary & December Fund Reports.
 - (3) License Approval- George Goracke Basements, Frontier Electric, LLC, Bird Contracting, comfort Heating & Air, Everett Lorson Roofing, T.D. Construction.
- Jennifer Cross moved to approve the Consent Agenda, seconded by Shawn Kirby, 3 Yays, 0 Nays. Motion carried.

5. BUSINESS ITEMS

1. Deed from Solomon Land, LLC

Motion by Brian Duryea to approve the Kansas Warranty Deed, seconded by Shawn Kirby, 53 Yays, 0 Nays. Motion carried. The next step is to get the deed signed and recorded so that it becomes the owner of the drainage/retention.

2. City's Legal Notification

City Attorney Aaron discussed Charter Ordinance No. 780, which would exempt the City of Solomon from K.S.A. 12-1651, the state statute requiring second- and third-class cities to designate a single official city newspaper that meets traditional print criteria. He explained that because the statute does not apply uniformly to all cities, Solomon may "charter out" under home rule and instead adopt its own approach to official publications. Under Charter Ordinance 780, the City may later designate one or more forums as its "official newspaper," which may include both traditional newspapers and websites, such as the City's website, thereby providing more flexibility and potential cost savings while improving access for residents who no longer rely on print papers. Aaron outlined the charter ordinance process, noting that the ordinance must be published twice in the Abilene Reflector-Chronicle and will become effective 61 days after the second publication if no referendum petition is filed during the 60-day protest period. Motion by Jennifer Cross to approve Ordinance 780, seconded by Brian Duryea was made and seconded to approve Charter Ordinance No. 780; 4 Yays, 0 Nays. Motion carried. The motion passed with the required two-thirds majority, including the mayor's affirmative vote.

3. Twin Valley Grant

Motion by Brian Duryea to approve the acceptance of the Twin Valley Grant, seconded by Jennifer Cross, 3 Yays, 0 Nays. Motion carried.

4. Board Appointment renewals

Brandy reviewed the status of various city boards and upcoming vacancies. On the Planning and Zoning Board, Tallie Pletcher's term had technically expired in 2025. On the Community Garden Board, Luke Riordon's term was also up for renewal. Brandy noted that the Housing Authority has a vacancy to fill, and the Library Board has two members rolling off with two interested community members identified, with formal recommendations to follow once paperwork is complete. She also reported that Kyle McCook resigned from the Recreation Board, creating a city representative vacancy there as well. Motion by Jennifer Cross to renew Tallie Pletcher on P&Z board and Luke Riordan to the Garden Board until 2029, seconded by Shawn Kirby, 3 Yays, 0 Nays. Motion carried.

5. Infrastructure Update

Andrea reported that all easement information letters for the water infrastructure project have been mailed and that staff expects to begin receiving responses this week. If recipients have not contacted City Hall within about a week, staff will begin making courtesy follow-up calls to confirm receipt, answer questions, and prepare for the second step, which will involve signing formal easement agreements. City Attorney Aaron briefly outlined the eminent domain process, noting it is time- and resource-intensive and would only be used as a last resort, with steps to establish public purpose and determine compensation. Brandy added that Dan has been in contact with CES to refine the priority map, and Andrea has reached out to North Central Regional Planning regarding a potential contract amendment with Deb, with a formal proposal still pending. February remains the key month for hearing results on the KWO grant application and for receiving KDHE's project review, and Brandy reported that staff has asked CES to take a more aggressive look at reducing engineering costs related to the well house component given past issues.

6. County Tax

Brandy and City Attorney Aaron provided an update on the county tax and mill levy discrepancy discovered after adoption of the current budget. Brandy explained that the City's calculated mill levy for Solomon was approximately 65 mills, but the County applied about 69 mills, with the difference tied to how the TIF district valuation was handled. Aaron summarized that when the TIF district was originally created, the tax base within the district was frozen and the increment in valuation was routed to the TIF project; when the TIF expired last year, that increment should have been restored to the taxable valuation, but it appears the County continued using the reduced base, which artificially increased the mills

needed for each taxing jurisdiction in that area, including the City, school district, and certain townships. He noted that statutes exist for correcting errors of this nature, but timing is complicated because tax bills have already been issued and paid, so the solution could involve refunds or credits, subject to the County's determination. Aaron advised that he now serves as attorney for both the City and the County and will work with both sides toward a cooperative resolution; if the matter ever became adversarial, separate counsel would be needed. He emphasized that, regardless of how past taxes are corrected, the issue has been identified and going forward the valuation base will be corrected, resulting in a lower mill levy than what was applied this year. The City will provide further updates once the County finalizes its approach and timing.

7. Bank Account Overview

Mayor Gray presented an overview of the City's existing bank accounts at Solomon State Bank, noting that several accounts, including a CDBG account and a money market account, have been largely inactive. She reviewed updated rate options for money market accounts and certificates of deposit (CDs), showing that funds over certain thresholds could earn approximately 2.5% in a money market or 3.45% in 6-month CDs, and presented a proposed strategy to increase investment income while maintaining adequate liquidity. The plan includes: (1) formally closing the inactive CDBG account and moving its balance into regular operations (already initiated); (2) fully reconciling and moving all accumulated TIF revenues into the dedicated TIF account so it matches the fund balance (also completed); (3) maintaining roughly \$50,000–\$100,000 in the operating checking account for routine cash flow needs and moving excess operating cash into the money market account to earn interest; and (4) laddering the TIF balance into four CDs on a quarterly rotation so that a portion of TIF funds regularly matures and remains available for upcoming projects while still generating investment earnings. Discussion followed. Motion by Jennifer Cross to approve the recommended cash management strategy and authorized staff to implement the outlined account closures, transfers, and CD investments consistent with the proposal, seconded by Shawn Kirby, 3 Yays, 0 Nays. Motion carried.

8. Park Sign Code

Mayor Gray reported that the new park sign has been installed, but staff and the City Attorney have identified that the existing zoning and sign code technically prohibits advertising messages in the park, meaning the electronic sign has been out of compliance since its original installation. City Attorney Aaron explained that the park is currently zoned residential, which carries some of the most restrictive sign regulations, and that the code does not address electronic monument signs on public property. He outlined two options: (1) creating an entirely new zoning district for parks and public/civic property with its own sign standards; or (2) adopting a targeted amendment to the sign code to specifically allow electronic monument signs on city- or government-owned property (including parks and civic facilities) subject to standards for height, size, brightness, message timing, and setbacks. Aaron recommended the second option as a quicker, more practical fix to bring the park sign into compliance. He also advised that, more broadly, the City's sign code need a more comprehensive update to become content-neutral and compliant. Council agreed to pursue the quicker code amendment to legitimize the park sign and asked Aaron to prioritize a broader sign code overhaul as time allows.

7. CITY MAYOR & COUNCIL COMMENTS

Jennifer noted that Solomon Community Fund is hosting a Trivia night February 28th.

Brandy reported that the Housing Authority is working with its HUD contact on a new five-year PHA plan. She noted that staff is wrapping up year-end work and has largely completed drafting the 2026 budgets. She plans to meet with relevant departments/boards to review their detailed budgets.

8. CALENDAR REMINDERS

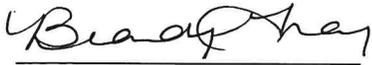
Monday, February 26th at 6PM-Council Workshop

Monday, March 2nd at 6PM- City Council Meeting

9. ADJOURN

Motion to adjourn at 7:28 PM by Jennifer Cross, seconded by Shawn Kirby, 3
Yays, 0 Nays. Motion Carried.

Signed:



Brandy Gray
Mayor

Attest:



Andrea McCook
City Clerk