

MINUTES
CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING
SOLOMON KS 67480
December 1, 2025 at 6:12 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, Kelley VanDeCreek, Brian Duryea

Colten Kohman entered the meeting at 6:19 pm

Staff Present: Krista Radke, Randy Paden, Andrea McCook

Others Present: Under Sheriff, Chris Ade, Kyle McCook, Aaron Martin, Barbara Glover

APPROVAL OF AGENDA FOR December 1, 2025 CITY COUNCIL MEETING

Motion by Shawn Kirby to approve the agenda, seconded by Brian Duryea, 4 Yays, 0 Nays.

Motion carried.

2. PUBLIC COMMENTS & COMMUNICATIONS

None.

3. PRESENTATION/REPORTS

1. Library- Lynn Teeters did not report.

2. Recreation Commission- Kyle McCook reported the city's girls' and boys' basketball programs are underway, with games scheduled for December 13 and ongoing skills and drills sessions. Priscilla Abel, interim director, will be stepping down at the end of year. The rec will begin advertising the position soon.

3. Dickinson County Sheriff- Summary of activity for November 2025.

8 traffic stops, 9 suspicious activity, 4 speak with an officer, 7 alarms, 2 welfare checks, 1 juvenile complaint, 1 citizen check, 1 domestic disturbance, 1 traffic accident, 1 lost/found property. They had 35 calls with 230.75 hours. Jennifer Cross mentioned that increased officer presence on Willow Street has successfully slowed traffic, which was appreciated by concerned residents. Mayor Gray highlighted recent upgrades to the local park due to Community Foundation funding and requested extra vigilance because of increased activity and to protect new amenities.

4. Solomon Fire Department- Chief Paden reported the department received five new SCBAs (self-contained breathing apparatus units) that had been previously approved; these have arrived, but hoses and bottles on the associated grant are still pending. The department has not yet received invoices for the new equipment, as billing will occur after shipping costs are determined. Coordination is needed to process the invoice to match with incoming grant-related income by the end of the year. Department members attended multiple outside training events recently, including a roadways first responders class and a three-day wildland firefighting training. Santa gave out about 75 bags at the recent Community Christmas event held at the fire station. There was good participation despite the weather outside. Discussion of changes to payroll processing for volunteer fire department personnel.

9 calls in November

3 Med Calls, 1 smoke scare, 3 outside training events, 1 community awareness event, 1 canceled route.

5. Public Works Director- Andrea read Dan's written report. The team winterized the entire pool and downtown sprinkler system. Six loads of rock were delivered for the sewer lagoon road and Dakota Drive; rock was spread on both roads. Installed new door lock assemblies, including a combination lock for a roll-up door in the community garden. They cleaned and decorated the park and Main Street for the community Christmas, including clearing a significant amount of leaves. They had two water leaks—one at Seventh and Pine (main break, six-hour repair), and one at Fifth and Oak (service line leak). They blew out new bathrooms and the sprinkler system post-event to prevent freezing. The Senior Center had their hot water heater replaced. Concrete

was poured at the Seventh and Walnut intersection. There was a communication issue between wells and the water tower; this required multiple late nights to monitor and was eventually fixed. Completed pothole filling in alleys. Replaced heaters in the lift station and two well houses (10 and 11) ahead of cold weather.

6. City Clerk- Andrea McCook reported license renewal letters were sent and returns coming in. She's updated the process for following up on overdue water statements and improving compliance tracking. Employee health profiles collected and insurance options reviewed. Continued work on the community Christmas event.

7. Municipal Services Clerk- Krista Radke reported the November court docket included 20 cases. The next court date will be December 18th at 4 pm. Since switching to the "NextBill" utility billing platform, 328 users have signed up, with 185 on autopay, 22 using text-to-pay, 50 on paperless billing, and 10 city accounts. In November, 505 meters were read. 369 individual statements were mailed, with 419 total statements printed. Quarterly water protection fees were processed. Krista highlighted ongoing issues with old water lines causing leaks. For the past quarter, 202,600 gallons of leaked water were recorded. She described her process for tracking leaks and reconciling meter reads, averaging and adjusting as needed for large leaks or inaccessible meters. Krista discussed possibly using Otter.ai (AI transcription) for municipal court to help track notes and summaries, pending legal approval. She researched new accounts payable tools (bill.com, ramp.com) to speed up AP processing, cut down on late fees, and create digital workflows. Ramp.com offers a free version for trialing.

4. CONSENT AGENDA

Council reviewed consent agenda items including:

- (1) Approval of minutes dated November 3, 2025.
- (2) November Check Register & Payroll Summary & October Fund Reports.
- (3) License Approval- Home Resort, Callebresi, Superior.

A motion by Shawn Kirby to approve the Consent Agenda, seconded by Brian Duryea, 5 Yays, 0 Nays. Motion carried.

5. BUSINESS ITEMS

1. 2026 Sheriff Contract Review

The council reviewed a new contract with the sheriff for law enforcement services covering 2026 and 2027. The contract continues the same number of service hours as the prior agreement. The only substantive change is a 4.8% annual rate increase, meant to reflect increased salary costs for county employees, as revealed by a recent salary study. The increase will be split over two years to avoid a large one-time rise. The rest of the contract is largely identical except for updating dates and the county commissioner's name.

Motion by Jennifer Cross to approve the 2026-2027 Contract, seconded by Shawn Kirby, 4 Yays, 1 Nay. Motion carried.

2. 2026 Calendars

Presentation of the proposed 2026 council meeting calendar, committee meeting calendar, and employee holiday schedules were reviewed.

Motion by Kelley VanDeCreek to approve the 2026 calendars, seconded by Brian Duryea, 5 Yays, 0 Nays. Motion carried.

3. Park Sign Update

The city's digital park sign is no longer functioning and needs replacement. An agreement (MOU) was developed whereby the city and the school district will split the remaining project costs after a \$7,500 grant, plus each will contribute to a fund for long-term sustainability and eventual future sign replacement. Current zoning (R1 residential) restricts commercial advertising on the sign; council discussed either amending the sign code/zoning or creating a unique parks district to potentially allow limited advertising. Legal advice emphasized that any relaxation of advertising restrictions would require code or zone changes, and there was consensus these issues would be reviewed in the spring by council and the appropriate committee. Council approved the MOU to proceed with the sign project, with zoning/code updates set as a future item. Motion by Brian Duryea to approve the MOU, seconded by Kelley VanDeCreek, 5 Yays, 0 Nays. Motion carried.

4. Consider Ordinance 778 Imposing 1% sales tax.

The purpose of ordinance 778 is to officially impose a 1% city-wide sales tax for general city purposes. The council had previously voted to approve the sales tax option. This ordinance formalizes this with the state so it can go into effect. While the revenue is for general purposes, the priority for spending will be on the city's water project. The council reviewed the draft ordinance as prepared by bond counsel (Gilmore and Bell). Implementation date will be April 1st. Motion by Kelley VanDeCreek to approve ordinance 778, seconded by Jennifer Cross, 5 Yays, 0 Nays. Motion carried.

5. Water Infrastructure Project

The team is still in the process of prioritizing which areas of the city should be included in phase one of the water line improvements; this is ongoing because all areas are important. Dan is working on highlighting on maps which areas should be in phase one and trying to split the project into manageable sections for bidding. The project has been submitted to KDHE for review and the city is still awaiting feedback. CES is working on easement descriptions and exhibits, which are also pending. KWO grant was submitted and anticipate hearing back by February. The current status is essentially holding until responses come back from KDHE and on the grant, but prioritization and preparatory work continue.

6&7. Health Insurance &HSA

The city explored a quad plan option for health insurance, offering employees four plan choices. These plans ranged from a \$1,000 deductible (benefit-rich) to a \$5,300 deductible (HSA-eligible) to match a variety of employee/family needs. Motion by Shawn Kirby to approve the plan structure, contribution levels, and the addition of HSA/FSA benefits effective January 1, 2026, seconded by Colten Kohman, 5 Yays, 0 Nays. Motion carried.

8. Fee Schedule Review

Presentation of the 2026 fee schedule, with updates highlighted, were reviewed. The water rate will move from \$22/month for the first 1,000 gallons to a fixed \$22/month, plus a \$4 per 1,000 gallon usage charge. The infrastructure project fee increases from a \$5 fixed fee to a \$5 fixed plus a \$2 per 1,000 gallon usage-based variable fee. The sewer rate will increase from \$21.45 per house to \$22.50 per house. The stormwater rate rises from \$1.50 to \$1.75 per drainage unit. No other fee changes except those noted. Motion by Shawn Kirby to approve the fee schedule, seconded by Brian Duryea, 5 Yays, 0 Nays. Motion carried.

9. 2026 Mil rate update

There is a discrepancy between the property valuation used by the city's CPA for the mill rate calculation and the valuation provided by the county for their levy calculation. The city is actively working with the county to resolve these differences and understand any impacts this might have on taxpayers. The council and administration are aware of the need to finalize the mill rate to ensure accuracy for budget and tax purposes.

6. EXECUTIVE SESSION ATTORNEY/CLIENT PRIVILEGE

Kelley VanDeCreek made the motion that council recess into executive session for 15 minutes to discuss with legal counsel a zoning regulation compliance matter involving an unpermitted sign, based upon the need for consultation with an attorney for the public body which would be deemed privileged in the attorney-client relationship pursuant to K.S.A 75-4319(B)(2). The open meeting will resume in this room at 7:22 p.m., seconded by Colten Kohman, 5 Yays, 0 Nays. Motion carried.

Council came out of executive session at 7:22.

Kelley VanDeCreek made the motion that council recess into executive session for an additional 20 minutes to discuss with legal counsel a zoning regulation compliance matter involving an unpermitted sign, based upon the need for consultation with an attorney for the public body which would be deemed privileged in the attorney-client relationship pursuant to K.S.A 75-4319(B)(2). The open meeting will resume in this room at 7:42 p.m., seconded by Colten Kohman, 5 Yays, 0 Nays. Motion carried.

7. CITY MAYOR & COUNCIL COMMENTS

Brandy Gray thanked the community and city staff for their hard work organizing the Community Christmas event. Specific highlights included the Christmas tree

competition, kids' singing performances, and carriage rides—all viewed as successful in building community spirit and memories. There has been increased engagement on the city's website and social media resulting from posts about the event.

8. CALENDAR REMINDERS

Monday, December 29th at 6PM-Council Workshop

Monday, January 5th at 6PM- City Council Meeting

9. ADJOURN

Motion to adjourn at 7:53 PM by Jennifer Cross, seconded by Colten Kohman, 5
Yays, 0 Nays. Motion Carried.

Signed:



Brandy Gray
Mayor

Attest:



Andrea McCook
City Clerk