

MINUTES
CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING
SOLOMON KS 67480
March 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, Kelley VanDeCreek

Council Absent: Colten Kohman

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

Others Present: Jerry Davis, Chris Ade, Aaron Martin, Natalie Muruato, Don Boyer

APPROVAL OF AGENDA FOR March 2, 2026 CITY COUNCIL MEETING

Motion by Jennifer Cross to approve the agenda, seconded by Kelley VanDeCreek, 4 Yays, 0 Nays.

Motion carried.

2. PUBLIC COMMENTS & COMMUNICATIONS

No public comments. A letter addressed to the council was shared and reviewed.

3. PRESENTATION/REPORTS

1. Driving Dickinson County- Natalie Morado reported that from October 1 through the end of February she has been actively supporting potential new development in Solomon by providing CID and NRP applications, consulting with bond counsel on incentive options, and partnering with the Department of Commerce on a no-cost cost-benefit analysis. She has worked with a housing developer and the Community Foundation on strategies to increase housing availability, developed a comprehensive housing survey to update the city's housing assessment and support grants/tax credits, and continued to refine financing and partnership models for new housing. She represented Driving Dickinson County at Solomon High School Opportunity Night.

2. Building Inspector- Bill Rogers was not present

3. Library- Lynn was ill and unable to make it to the meeting to report.

4. Recreation Report- Mayor Gray read Kyle McCook's written report. Soccer registrations have been sent out; game dates are set and noted in the written report. Easter Egg Hunt will be at the park April 4th. Public Works may need to ensure bathrooms and facilities are open by then if approved. Baseball/Softball registration forms will be going out in the near future.

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

14 traffic stops, 3 speak with an officer, 1 alarm, 1 motorist assist, 4 suspicious activity, 3 warrants, 5 business checks, 2 VIN inspections, 2 welfare checks, 1 lost/found property, 1 message delivery, 1 park check, 1 traffic accident. They had 39 calls with 232.75 hours.

6. Solomon Fire Department- Chief Paden reported they welcomed a new member, Gunnar Wilson. The hose purchased with grant funds has arrived. All five new SCBA air packs approved last year have been received; two had issues and were sent back and forth but are now fixed. Truck 613 failed its pump test: the rear main bearing and seal in the pump failed, overheated (over 500°F), and the pump was taken out of service. Parts have arrived; the truck will go back in for repair. Estimated repair cost is over \$8,000, with potential for additional costs if more damage is found once it's fully torn down. Brandy noted they'll begin building a capital equipment list (apparatus, major equipment, ages, and expected life) to support long-term capital replacement planning for the fire department.

Call Volume –February

Total calls: 13 City: 5 medical calls, 1 fire alarm, 1 structure fire (nothing found). County: 3 medical calls, 1 structure fire, 1 CO call, 1 out-of-district training.

7. Public Works Director- Dan reported well house #2 on the east edge of town (old 40) has been torn down and hauled to the Dickinson County landfill; the county waived landfill fees for three loads. The well house by Abilene Machine has been cleaned up; Abilene Machine agreed the building can remain. Well #11 had a failed motor; Sergeant Drilling installed a new motor on Friday. This is the well used to run the town if the water tower is shut down; estimated cost is around \$8,000. The community garden is nearly complete. Waiting on Doug Frase to do the tilling. Burt's Tree Service donated mulch, Peterson's feedlot donated manure. The raised containers are filled; about 60 bags of raised-bed soil were added. They're planning to remove the large tree east of the basketball/pickleball court that is overhanging the court. Burt's Tree Service will use a crane to protect the newly painted slab. They're also preparing to build two food-truck / vendor parking pads south of the south shelter, as previously discussed. Tree removal must occur first. Don Boyer's last day is March 27. A retirement meet-and-greet is set for March 26, 3:00–6:00 PM at the back room of the city hall/shop area. City will begin advertising Don's position; emphasis on finding the *right* person (mechanical skills, heavy equipment operation, willingness to do dirty/muddy work; wastewater certification is a plus but not required at entry). Discussion of possibly using part-time summer help if a full-time replacement is not found quickly.

8. City Clerk- Andrea McCook reported she met with the bank after the last meeting to open new CDs and transfer funds as previously directed. Chicken permits are nearly complete. Pet registrations have started coming in; the pet clinic is scheduled for March 14 at the city shop. Code compliance is ramping up for spring: about 10 new complaints have been logged, numbered, and will be worked through systematically. Planning & Zoning items were moved to a later agenda section for fuller discussion. Coordinated DKEDC with the former Bush's Market owners and the new grocery owners to plan an event that both thanks the Bush family and welcomes the new owners.

9. Municipal Services Clerk- Krista Radke reported court was held February 15th with a small docket (15 cases). The next regular court date is April 16. Court/fee account balances are trending up slightly, indicating some improvement in collections. 27 pet tags have been issued so far. Community garden rentals: 2 in-ground plots and 5 above-ground plots have been rented, and she expects they will fill quickly.

4. **CONSENT AGENDA**

Council reviewed consent agenda items including:

- (1) Approval of minutes dated February 2nd, 2026.
- (2) February Check Register & Payroll Summary
- (3) License Approval- KVK, Inc, S&K Electric, Inc., Quality Structures, LLC, Best Roofing & Remodeling, Solomon Market.

Brian Duryea moved to approve the Consent Agenda, seconded by Jennifer Cross, 4 Yays, 0 Nays. Motion carried.

5. **BUSINESS ITEMS**

1. EMC Insurance Renewal

Council reviewed two EMC insurance renewal options. Option 04: Annual premium \$105,313 with a \$1,500 deductible and Option 05: Annual premium \$103,728 with a \$3,000 deductible. Overall premium was essentially flat compared to last year after adjusting equipment valuations and adding the park sign. Kyle recommended keeping the current \$1,500 deductible since the savings for moving to \$3,000 were minimal. After discussion, Brian Duryea moved to approve Option 4, seconded by Shawn Kirby, 4 Yays, 0 Nays.

2. Recreation & Library Board Appointments

The council reviewed applications to fill open positions on the Recreation Commission and Library Board. Heather Hemmy was appointed to fill the unexpired term of Kyle (who resigned). Her term will run through February 2028. On the Library Board two long-time members, Helen Helwig and Kathy Minniman will roll off when their terms end on April 30,

2026. The council appointed Keala Jones and Shawna Bowers to those seats, with new full terms to run April 30, 2026 – April 30, 2030. Motion by Kelley VanDeCreek to approve all three appointments, seconded by Shawn, 4 Yays, 0 Nays. Motion carried.

3. Pool 2026 Season

Council and staff discussed 2024 pool season planning, focusing on hours, special events, rentals, staffing, and concessions. General agreement to operate from Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day, with weekday closures once teachers return to school and remaining open on weekends into early September, similar to 2026. Hours and adult swim were discussed. The final decision was deferred to the end-of-month workshop. There was strong interest in continuing Family Fun Nights and shifting them back to Wednesdays (better attendance than Fridays). Plan to repeat successful events such as the movie night at the pool and Solomon Festival free-swim day, and to explore activities for middle/high-school youth and more use of the water volleyball net (e.g., set times on Fridays). Goal is to publish a full summer pool event calendar before school dismisses so families can plan. Daily admission and season pass rates are expected to remain unchanged. Council discussed increasing private pool party rentals to better cover costs. Consensus was to set party rentals at \$125 for a 2-hour rental.

4. County Tax

Attorney Martin explained that the downtown TIF district was set up so that any increased property value (“increment”) inside the district goes to pay project costs for up to 20 years, starting from when the project plan was approved (July 2005), not when the district was first created. Because taxes in Kansas are based on property values as of January 1 each year and are paid in arrears, the county correctly kept the TIF value off the tax rolls for 2025, since the TIF was still active on January 1, 2025 and did not expire until July 2025. Therefore, there was no error made in the 2025 tax calculations. The city will receive its final TIF payment in June 2026, giving it a full 20 years of TIF revenue. Starting with valuations as of January 1, 2026, the former TIF properties will return to the regular tax roll, significantly increasing the city’s taxable valuation and likely reducing the mill levy in the next budget year.

5. Consider replat of Geis Addition

Council reviewed a replat of the Geis Addition that had already been approved by Planning & Zoning. The replat shifts interior lot lines (blue = old, yellow = new) so that the north–south lot line is moved west to line up with other lots on the block. The east–west line is adjusted so Tracts 1 & 4 accommodate the new houses, and Tracts 2 & 3 can be added onto the existing Stull and Boyer properties. Dan confirmed the replat does not change utility easements. Brandy raised concern about Tracts 2 & 3 being under the minimum lot size if they were ever left as stand-alone lots; discussion clarified the intent is for those tracts to be combined with the adjacent existing properties, not sold off separately. Aaron explained that the council’s primary role is to accept right-of-way and easements via the plat, and that all affected owners should sign the final plat. Motion by Kelley VanDeCreek to approve the replat on the condition of obtaining Wayne’s signature and being reviewed by Aaron to make sure all required landowner signatures are obtained before the plat is filed, seconded by Jennifer Cross, 4 Yays, 0 Nays. Motion carried.

6. P&Z Recommended updates

Aaron walked through the proposed ordinance language that would create a municipal communication sign category, allow such signs on city-owned property in any zoning district, and set standards on size, height, setback, brightness, and animation. The council did not take formal action on the code at this meeting; they acknowledged that it will need to go through the required P&Z public hearing process and then come back in ordinance form for adoption.

Planning & Zoning has been reviewing some codebook changes of clarifying structure spacing and accessory building standards (including maximum accessory building and sidewall heights and how close outbuildings can be to one another and to primary

structures). They've also looked at adding clearer rules for RVs on residential property, allowing short-term stays with a permit while continuing to prohibit RVs as permanent dwellings, and maintaining existing setback and placement requirements. Because these are zoning/code amendments, they require a formal public hearing through the Planning & Zoning Commission before any ordinance can be adopted by the council. Andrea will coordinate with Aaron and P&Z to schedule the hearing, publish the required notice, and then bring the recommended ordinance(s) back to the council for final action after the hearing.

7. CITY MAYOR & COUNCIL COMMENTS

Jennifer noted that the playground and pickleball courts are getting a lot of use, especially by young families, and expressed excitement about how busy the park has become.

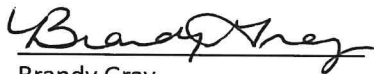
8. CALENDAR REMINDERS

Monday, March 30th at 6PM-Council Workshop
Monday, April 6th at 6PM- City Council Meeting

9. ADJOURN

Motion to adjourn at 7:46 PM by Jennifer Cross, seconded by Shawn Kirby, 4
Yays, 0 Nays. Motion Carried.

Signed:



Brandy Gray
Mayor

Attest:



Andrea McCook
City Clerk