



# CITY OF ROCKY FORD - CITY COUNCIL MEETING

City Council Chambers | 203 S. Main Street, Rocky Ford, CO

**September 23, 2025**

## **REGULAR MEETING: 6:00pm**

Rocky Ford City Council met in Council Chambers on Tuesday, September 23, 2025. Mayor Duane Gurulé called the meeting to order.

Those present at roll call were:

Mayor: Duane Gurulé

Council Members: Johnny McMurray, Robert Barron, Nicholas Martinez, Nicole Roberts, and Thomas Mullins.

City Staff: City Manager Stacey Milenski, Interim City Clerk Michelle Grasmick, Finance Director Kyle Crosswhite and Police Chief Matt Wallace. City Attorney Dan Harvey was in attendance online by Zoom.

Absent: Council Member Nanette Mosby

Public attendance: J.R. Thompson, Gary Reed, Patrice McGowen, Heather Waits, Nikki Shannon, Camea Savoie, Andy Hartless, Daniel Santistevan. Susan Jung was in attendance online by Zoom.

Mayor Duane Gurulé led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Council Member McMurray read aloud the City of Rocky Ford's Mission Statement.

## **5. PUBLIC COMMENT**

5.1 None

## **6. APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA**

Council Member Roberts moved to approve the consent agenda as presented. The motion was seconded by Council Member Mullins. Voting results were:

YES: Barron, Martinez, Roberts, Mullins, McMurray, Gurulé

NO: None

ABSENT: Mosby

Motion carried: 6-0

Consent Agenda Items approved were:

6.1 **Approval of Council meeting minutes from September 9, 2025** – Regular meeting at 6:00 pm

6.2 **Application for Liquor License Renewal** – Rocky Ford Country Club – 91 Play Park Hill, Rocky Ford

6.3 **Application for Liquor License Renewal** – Taqueria Mexico #2 – 1720 Elm Avenue, Rocky Ford

## **7. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

7.1 Council Member McMurray moved to approve the Agenda with the addition of 11.4 Proposed Ordinance Restricting Access to City Attorneys. The motion was seconded by Council Member Roberts. Voting results were:

YES: Martinez, Roberts, Mullins, McMurray, Barron, Gurulé

NO: None

ABSENT: Mosby

Motion carried: 6-0

## **8. PRESENTATIONS, AWARDS, PROCLAMATIONS**

8.1 Energize Colorado – Heather Waits, Community Lending Specialist

8.2 PEER 404 – No presentation

## **9. PUBLIC HEARING**

9.1 None

## **10. OLD BUSINESS**

10.1 None

## **11. NEW BUSINESS**

### ***11.1 Traffic: Removal of Stop sign at Main St and Pine Ave***

Council Member McMurray moved to leave Stop signs in place at Main St and Pine Ave. The motion was seconded by Council Member Roberts. Voting results were:

YES: Roberts, Mullins, McMurray, Barron, Martinez, Gurulé

NO: None

ABSENT: Mosby

Motion carried: 6-0

### ***11.2 Traffic: Change traffic direction from One Way to Two Way on 11th St between Pine Ave and Burrell***

Council Member Roberts moved to approve the change of traffic direction from One Way to Two Way on 11<sup>th</sup> St between Pine Ave and Burrell. Council Member McMurray seconded the motion.

YES: Mullins, McMurray, Martinez, Roberts, Gurulé

NO: Barron

ABSENT: Mosby

Motion carried: 5-1

### ***11.3 Discussion on providing Administrative Guidance to Address 2025 Budget Deficit***

Council held a detailed discussion on how to address the 2025 budget deficit. Recommendations included implementing a hiring freeze, restricting overtime and non-essential expenses, delaying new capital projects funded by the general fund, suspending new programs, and considering asset sales through a bidding process. Mayor Gurulé will prepare a memo outlining these administrative changes, which do not require a formal vote. Department directors will begin presenting updates during the upcoming Work Sessions.

### ***11.4 Proposed Ordinance Restricting Access to City Attorneys***

Council discussed proposed changes to attorney access policies, with input from City Attorney Dan Harvey. Dan recommended implementing the changes as a policy rather than an ordinance, suggesting it could be added to the City Council Rules of Procedure. He emphasized the importance of funneling legal questions through appropriate channels and maintaining confidentiality in certain situations. The Council discussed separating the policy into two parts: one for City Employees and another for Council Members. Concerns were raised about maintaining attorney-client privilege, avoiding violations of Open Meetings Law, and ensuring legal advice is shared appropriately. Those opposed to the proposal viewed it as unnecessary and potentially obstructive. The discussion emphasized confidentiality, proper communication channels, and ensuring legal guidance serves the best interests of the City. The Council decided to further discuss the specifics of the policy changes at a future meeting.

## **12. STAFF REPORTS**

**12.1 City Manager** – Stacey Milenski summarized written City Manager's report to Council. Additionally, Stacey informed Council that Public Works Director Rick Long and Public Works Foreman Cuco Ruiz are currently attending the Snow and

*Ice Conference. Council requested an update on the Employee Handbook; City Attorney Dan Harvey requested that a copy is also sent to him for review. Council also requested an update on efforts to serve notices to properties on the Nuisance Building list. Chief Matt Wallace reported that the MacKenzie Building's registered agent only forwards mail, but a second decision-making agent will be served in California. A letter for Liberty School has been drafted, and communication is ongoing with a civil process agency in Ohio. One property on the corner of 9th Street has been served, while the other property on 9th Street is under renovation. The City is also in contact with the owner of the El Capitan property, where individuals are being charged with trespassing and theft.*

*12.2 Public Works Director – Rick Long is out of town at a previously scheduled and approved conference. The Maple Avenue Update is rescheduled to the next Regular Meeting, October 14, 2025.*

*12.3 Museum Curator Report – Report has already been provided for the month. An updated report will be provided at the next Regular Meeting, October 14, 2025.*

### **13. COUNCIL REPORTS**

***Martinez** – No update on Boards. Postcards distributed to Council Members on initiatives for State ballot in 2026.*

***Barron** – The Arts Commission met on Tuesday, September 16<sup>th</sup> @ 6:00pm. Member Alisha Knapp resigned – term ends Dec 2025 - one seat open. Upcoming movies include The Senior and Downton Abbey. Creede Repertory Theater has scheduled performances this week. Sponsors are needed for upcoming free events, including a Halloween movie on Thursday, October 30<sup>th</sup> with a costume contest as well as Christmas/Holiday movies every weekend between Thanksgiving and Christmas. The Grand has a large number of movie posters for \$10 each; newer releases will be sold through silent auction. Support the Grand Theater by attending shows and buying concessions. Shoutout to Rocky Ford Community Banks staff for volunteering on September 12<sup>th</sup>. Community Clean Up at the Arkansas Valley Fairgrounds on September 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> – encouraged citizens to consider volunteering to help. Thanked all who helped the American Legion with flags on 9/11.*

***McMurray** - No updates on Boards.*

***Mosby** – Absent.*

***Roberts** – Thanked all who came out to both events on September 13<sup>th</sup>; Community support keeps these events going. Upcoming events - Jump in Fall Celebration at Railroad Park on September 24<sup>th</sup> and Tarantula Fest in La Junta, September 26<sup>th</sup> – 27<sup>th</sup>. Upcoming ticketed events include the Rocky Ford Boxing Club Show on October 4<sup>th</sup>, Los Amos de los Sierra concert on October 18<sup>th</sup>, and AVR Fiesta Royalties Halloween Party on October 25<sup>th</sup>. Other upcoming events include Trunk or Treat in Depot Square for Halloween and Day of the Dead event on November 1<sup>st</sup>. After school program has started. Goodwood Festival on October 4<sup>th</sup>. City Clean Up Day – contact Small Town Project if you need help. One truckload per person - there are some restricted items, and electronics are accepted for a small, weight-based fee.*

***Mullins** – The Museum is actively pursuing several grants, including the Inspire Grant with a potential award of around \$25,000. Volunteer Ericha, who is completing a doctorate in Museum Studies, has contributed valuable expertise. Grant funds may be used to offset volunteer wages, allowing the museum to retain the money, and could also serve as matching funds for other grants. Also applying for a grant with The Fox Family Foundation that would assist with costs for interpretive labels and plaques to describe museum objects.*

***Gurulé** – Summarized written Mayor's report.*

### **14. PUBLIC COMMENT**

JR Thompson announced that the Creede Repertory Theater is back this week, with a show scheduled for tomorrow morning. Gary Reed shared updates on several community events, including a yard sale organized by the American Legion Auxiliary to support a veteran in need, an upcoming Gala and auction on the 17th, Wreaths Across America, and multiple October events such as the Ordway Fire Department's Oktoberfest and a fundraiser by Court Appointed Special Advocates called Boots and Bling. Nic Martinez thanked Council Members, City employees, and the community who reached out after he experienced a family emergency after the last council meeting.

**15. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

15.1 None

**16. UPCOMING MEETINGS**

16.1 Tuesday, September 30, 2025, from 2:00pm – 4:00pm City Council Work Session

16.2 Tuesday, October 14, 2025, at 6:00pm - Regular City Council Meeting

**ADJOURN**

There being no further business, Mayor Gurulé adjourned the meeting at 9:12pm.



Mayor Duane Gurulé



Interim City Clerk, Michelle Grasmick