



CITY OF ROCKY FORD - CITY COUNCIL MEETING

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

January 27, 2026

REGULAR MEETING: 6:00pm

Rocky Ford City Council met in Council Chambers on Tuesday, January 27, 2026. Mayor Duane Gurulé called the meeting to order.

Those present at roll call were:

Mayor: Duane Gurulé

Councilmembers: Nicole Roberts, Nanette Mosby, Thomas Mullins, Johnny McMurray, Robert Barron, and Nicholas Martinez.

City Staff: City Manager Stacey Milenski, City Clerk Michelle Grasmick, Police Chief Matt Wallace, Fire Chief Raymond Gonzales, Cody Kurtz. City Attorney Dan Harvey was in attendance online by Zoom.

Public attendance: JR Thompson, Gary Reed, Kathleen Hamady, James Budnick.

Mayor Duane Gurulé led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Councilmember Barron read aloud the City of Rocky Ford's Mission Statement.

5. PUBLIC COMMENT

5.1 James Budnick, a county resident living outside Rocky Ford, expressed concern that there is no ordinance preventing individuals with felony convictions from serving on council. Mr. Budnick stated that he raised this issue in November 2025 and has not seen further discussion since. He requested that council address the topic.

Kathleen Hamady expressed support for the proposed stray dog ordinance and asked when it would be reviewed. Ms. Hamady stated that loose and aggressive dogs are creating safety concerns for residents and their pets and urged the council to move the ordinance forward.

6. APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

Councilmember Mullins motioned to move item 6.2 Job Description – Library Director / Part – Time

on the Consent Agenda to 11.6 under New Business. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Mosby.

Voting results were:

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

NO: None

Motion carried: 7-0

Councilmember Roberts motioned to move item 6.4 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) – Otero County 4-H Council on the Consent Agenda to 11.7 under New Business. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Martinez.

Voting results were:

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

NO: None

Motion carried: 7-0

Councilmember Martinez motioned to approve the Consent Agenda as amended. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Roberts.

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

NO: None

Motion carried: 7-0

Consent Agenda Items approved were:

6.1 Approval of Council meeting minutes from January 13, 2026 – Regular meeting at 6:00pm

6.3 Otero County Authorization Letter

7. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

7.1 Councilmember Roberts motioned to approve the Agenda with additions of 11.6 Job Description – Library Director / Part – Time and 11.7 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) – Otero County 4-H Council under New Business. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Mosby.

Voting results were:

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

NO: None

Motion carried: 7-0

8. PRESENTATIONS, AWARDS, PROCLAMATIONS

8.1 End of Year Report – Police Department presented by Chief Matthew Wallace

Chief Wallace presented the department's 2025 activity report, noting 15,032 CAD entries, 658 traffic stops, 2,217 security checks, and 1,186 cases—an increase from 2024. He reported data on code enforcement, animal-related calls, agency assists, and support provided to the Fire Department. The department made approximately 262 arrests and issued at least 325 citations. Chief Wallace highlighted significant drug and firearm seizures, including quantities recovered during a joint federal operation, and

emphasized ongoing concerns about drug activity in the community. He also noted continued collaboration with schools, the Fire Department, and Public Works, and recognized their support throughout the year.

9. PUBLIC HEARING

9.1 None

10. OLD BUSINESS

10.1 None

11. NEW BUSINESS

11.1 Purchase Request – Ambulance

Council reviewed the proposed purchase of a new ambulance, as previously discussed in a work session. The purchase is expected to fall within the current budget, though delivery may extend into the next fiscal year, with an anticipated completion date of February 2027. Chief Gonzales noted that a grant will cover most of the cost, with the City responsible for a 10% match.

Councilmember McMurray motioned to approve the presented proposal from Danko for \$208,990. Councilmember Martinez seconded the motion.

Voting results were:

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

NO: None

Motion carried: 7-0

11.2 Amendments to Cemetery Rules and Regulations

Proposed updates to cemetery rules were discussed, including limits on solar lights and decorations, adjustments to monument specifications, and clarifications to fees and interment rules. Council members expressed concern that terms such as “excessive” were too vague and could allow favoritism or raise First Amendment issues. City Attorney Dan Harvey advised that rules must be specific, content-neutral, and leave no discretionary judgment regarding expression. Council discussed clarifying the number and size of allowable items and expressed interest in visiting the cemetery before making decisions.

Councilmember Martinez motioned to table the Amendments to Cemetery Rules and Regulations for more discussion in a future work session. Councilmember Mullins seconded the motion.

Voting results were:

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

NO: None

Motion carried: 7-0

11.3 City Rental House (1101 Lincoln Ave) Lease Update

Council reviewed options for the City-owned rental house at 1101 Lincoln Ave, noting the tenant currently pays \$200 per month with all utilities covered by the City and has no active lease. Council discussed whether to continue renting, sell, repurpose, or demolish the property. Selling would require subdivision and could create easement and access issues. Council discussed continuing to rent the home at fair market value, with the tenant responsible for all utilities and the addition of a security deposit. It was noted that the 2026 Budget included \$12,000 in revenue for this rental property.

Councilmember Mullins motioned to approve lease agreement with the amount of \$1000 for rent. Councilmember McMurray seconded the motion. Councilmember Mullins withdrew the motion.

Councilmember Roberts motioned to approve presented lease with amended conditions to update rent to \$1000 per month, not including utilities, and the inclusion of a \$1000 security deposit. Councilmember Mosby seconded the motion.

Voting results were:

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

NO: Martinez

Motion carried: 6-1

11.4 Thriving Communities Program (TCP) Grant

Council reviewed participation in the Governor's Office Thriving Communities Program, which provides technical assistance at no cost to the city. The program would fund consultants to complete a comprehensive assessment and engineering design for streets, sidewalks, and multimodal transportation needs, producing a plan that would position the city to apply for future state and federal infrastructure grants. Mayor Gurulé confirmed there is no financial match required. Council discussed the scope of the assistance and the benefit of having a ready-to-use master plan.

Councilmember Roberts motioned to approve participation in the Thriving Communities Program. Councilmember Mosby seconded the motion.

Voting results were:

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

NO: None

Motion carried: 7-0

11.5 2026 City Council Guiding Principles, Procedures, and Protocols

Council reviewed the Guiding Principles, Procedures, and Protocols adopted in early 2025, noting the importance of revisiting them at the start of the year and providing them to new members. Council emphasized the value of reaffirming expectations, ensuring all members have access to the full packet of reference materials, and maintaining consistent meeting procedures. No changes were proposed, and Council agreed to review and sign the documents for 2026.

11.6 Job Description – Library Director / Part – Time

City Manager Stacey Milenski presented the updated part-time Library Director job description, noting the position is now 30 hours per week following budget reductions. The previous director has resigned, and the role must remain a director-level position to maintain eligibility for certain grants. The library will continue operating 35 hours per week through coordinated scheduling between the staff. Council discussed recent adjustments to library hours, school impacts, and interim coverage. Council also explored long-term ideas such as combining oversight of the library and museum or relocating recreation functions to the library in the future. No changes to the job description were proposed.

Councilmember Mullins motioned to approve the Job Description of Part-Time Library Director. Councilmember Roberts seconded the motion.

Voting results were:

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

NO: None

Motion carried: 7-0

11.7 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) – Otero County 4-H Council

City Manager Stacey Milenski presented an updated Memorandum of Understanding with the Otero County 4-H Council, noting it had not been revised in more than a decade. References to CSU Extension were removed at the request of 4-H representatives. The agreement outlines 4-H's use of the fairgrounds and the Event Center kitchen during the two weeks of the annual fair, with an annual payment of \$2,532 to the City. A correction was noted to fix the numerical dollar amount in the payment section.

Councilmember Roberts motioned to approve the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) – Otero County 4-H Council with a correction under #2 payment in the numerical form to \$2,532. Councilmember Martinez seconded the motion.

Voting results were:

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

NO: None

Motion carried: 7-0

12. STAFF REPORTS

12.1 City Manager – *Stacey Milenski summarized written City Manager's report to Council. Milenski included updates that occurred after the report was written.*

13. COUNCIL REPORTS

Martinez – *Next library board meeting is on Feb 2nd. No upcoming tree board meeting scheduled.*

Barron – *Song Sung Blue will be showing this weekend. Arts Commission recently met and currently has one vacancy but can have up to three additional members. Multiple ways to support the theater were suggested.*

McMurray – *No updates*

Mullins – *The museum received a small, but generous grant from the Fox Family Foundation and has already begun work to modernize exhibits. Efforts include creating professional interpretive labels,*

improving exhibit storytelling, and expanding digital cataloging. New sublimation-printed labels will feature photos, descriptions, accession numbers, and QR codes linking to additional images and related historical information. Much of the museum's collection has now been digitized, and future plans include developing a more advanced online catalog interface.

Mosby – No updates

Roberts – Rocky Free Kitchen now serves two free meals per month, typically on the first and third Wednesdays, and demand has grown rapidly—100 meals were served in under an hour last week. The next meal on February 4th will feature pork green chile, with plans to prepare 200 servings. Upcoming events include a Valentine's Day Dance (Feb 14), Arkansas Valley Resource Center Comedy Night (Feb 21), Arkansas Valley Community Cancer Support Group chili dinner fundraiser (Feb 28), Lions Club Pancake Supper (March 2), and Chamber Easter Brunch and Egg Hunt (April 4).

Gurulé – summarized written Mayor's report to Council

14. PUBLIC COMMENT

(skipped)

15. EXECUTIVE SESSION

15.1 None

16. UPCOMING MEETINGS

16.1 February 3, 2026, from 2:00pm – 4:00pm City Council Work Session

16.2 February 10, 2026, at 6:00pm - City Council Regular Meeting

ADJOURN

There being no further business, Mayor Gurulé adjourned the meeting at 7:38pm.

Police Chief Matthew Wallace came to the podium to bring to attention the second public comment was skipped. Meeting reopened by Mayor Gurule at 7:42pm for second public comment.

Chief Wallace emphasized the importance of allowing time for public comment and expressed appreciation for the Rocky Ford Communication Center staff. He noted that since taking on La Junta's dispatch duties, their workload has increased significantly, yet they continue to perform exceptionally well and are doing a fantastic job of serving the community. He added that, although future budget considerations may shift dispatch services to the county, Rocky Ford should be proud of the center and the people who built it.

Mayor Gurulé readjoined the meeting at 7:43pm.



Mayor Duane Gurulé



City Clerk, Michelle Grasmick