



CITY OF ROCKY FORD – CITY COUNCIL MEETING

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

May 26, 2026

REGULAR MEETING: 6:00pm

Rocky Ford City Council met in Council Chambers on Tuesday, May 26, 2026. Mayor Duane Gurulé called the meeting to order.

Those present at roll call were:

Mayor: Duane Gurulé

Councilmembers: Nicholas Martinez, Robert Barron, and Nicole Roberts. Thomas Mullins was in attendance by Zoom. Nanette Mosby joined by Zoom at 6:19pm during agenda item 11.2 under New Business.

Councilmembers absent: Joe Pentlicki

City Staff: City Manager Stacey Milenski, City Clerk Michelle Grasmick, Police Chief Matthew Wallace. City Attorney Kathryn Sellars was in attendance by Zoom.

Public attendance: JR Thompson, Bernadette Flores, Steven Fine, Robin Fine, Brad Roe, Brian Lovato, Gary Reed, Susan Jung, Jonathan Rodriguez, Jim Robinson, Moe Heckman, Cindy Kovalcik, James Budnick, Rockie Sanders.

Mayor Duane Gurulé led the Pledge of Allegiance.

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

5. PUBLIC COMMENT

James Budnick, county resident, asked the Council to seek the Mayor and City Clerk's resignation over the Pride Month proclamation, saying it conflicts with his Christian beliefs and should not be promoted by the City. Budnick criticized current priorities and urged adoption of a rule barring persons with felony convictions from serving in city leadership.

6. APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

Councilmember Roberts moved to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Martinez.

YES: Barron, Mullins, Roberts, Martinez, Gurulé

NO: None

ABSENT: Pentlicki, Mosby

Motion carried: 5-0

Consent Agenda Items approved were:

6.1 Approval of Council meeting minutes from May 12, 2026 – Regular meeting at 6:00pm

6.2 Application for Renewal of Retail Liquor License – Vincent & Priscilla Flores dba Mission Deli, 401 N 14th Street, Rocky Ford, CO

7. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Councilmember Martinez motioned to approve the Agenda with the removal of 11.1 Discussion/Action – Pride Month Proclamation. The motion dies for lack of a second.

Councilmember Roberts motioned to approve the Agenda as presented. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Barron.

Voting results were:

YES: Mullins, Roberts, Barron, Gurulé

NO: Martinez

ABSENT: Pentlicki, Mosby

Motion carried: 4-1

8. PRESENTATIONS, AWARDS, PROCLAMATIONS

8.1 None

9. PUBLIC HEARING

9.1 None

10. OLD BUSINESS

10.1 None

11. NEW BUSINESS

11.1 Discussion/Action – Pride Month Proclamation

Mayor Gurulé introduced a proclamation recognizing June 2026 as Pride Month in the City of Rocky Ford, stating it affirms the City’s commitment to dignity, respect, inclusion, and equal opportunity, and recognizes the contributions of LGBTQ+ individuals.

Councilmember Martinez motioned to deny the approval of the Pride Month Proclamation. Motion dies for lack of a second.

Council discussion followed, including concerns raised regarding the City taking a position on the issue, whether the proclamation reflects community views, and the prioritization of city business. Questions were also raised about the process for placing proclamations on the agenda.

Councilmember Barron motioned to approve the Pride Month Proclamation. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Roberts.

Voting results were:

YES: Roberts, Barron, Mullins, Gurulé

NO: Martinez

ABSENT: Pentlicki, Mosby

Motion carried: 4-1

11.2 Discussion/Action – Request to waive rental fees for American Legion Post 8 for the 2nd Annual Veterans’ Outreach Event at Arkansas Valley Fairgrounds on July 11, 2026

Council considered a request from Commander Jonathan “Rod” Rodriguez of American Legion Post 8 to waive rental fees for the Veterans Outreach event scheduled for July 11th at the Arkansas Valley Fairgrounds. Commander Rodriguez was joined by members of the Legion, Arkansas Valley Patriots, and the Women’s Auxiliary. The applicants outlined event details and requested use of the Event Center and fairgrounds. Applications were submitted for the Event Center and a park permit for use of the Fairgrounds; it was noted that an application for the Expo Building is not currently available, though its use for the event was discussed.

Discussion included applicable reservation and rental fees for the Event Center, a required refundable damage deposit, and confirmation that the applicant is responsible for providing liability insurance. Council also reviewed fee waiver eligibility, facility use, and application requirements. It was noted that the special event permit for alcohol cannot be waived and requires a separate application and fee, to be considered at a future meeting.

Councilmember Roberts motioned to waive the reservation and rental fees for the Event Center for American Legion Post 8, contingent upon payment of the refundable damage deposit. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Mosby.

Voting results were:

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

NO: None

ABSENT: Pentlicki

Motion carried: 6-0

Later in the meeting following Council Reports, Councilmember Roberts noted that Council had not voted on waiving park reservation, electricity, and water fees for the Fairgrounds during discussion of the item. Mayor Gurulé allowed a vote to proceed.

Councilmember Roberts motioned to waive the park reservation, water, and electricity fees for the Fairgrounds for American Legion Post 8. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Martinez.

Voting results were:

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

NO: None

ABSENT: Pentlicki

Motion carried: 6-0

11.3 Discussion/Action – Addition of Lift Stations to the Sewer Improvement Project (Bowman Consulting)

Council previously discussed this item at the May 19th work session. Two lift stations were not considered in the original design for the sewer improvement project but were later identified as

necessary. Approval of this addition is required before completion of soil sampling and related project work. Nick Marcotte of Element Engineering (Bowman Consulting) attended via Zoom to answer questions.

Councilmember Roberts motioned to approve the addition of lift stations to the Sewer Improvement Project. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Martinez.

Voting results were:

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

NO: None

ABSENT: Pentlicki

Motion carried: 6-0

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

Councilmembers provided updates and reports on their respective boards and community events. Mayor Gurulé summarized his written Mayor’s report provided to Council, including updates that occurred after the report was written.

14. PUBLIC COMMENT

Cindy Kovalcik, resident, expressed disappointment with Council conduct, citing frequent yelling, disrespect, and political behavior. Kovalcik stated that recent actions and discussions have made her feel unsafe in the community after more than 25 years of residency. She emphasized the importance of inclusivity, opposed discrimination against LGBTQ+ individuals, and urged Council to act in the community’s best interest and focus on effective decision-making.

Rockie Sanders, resident, spoke in support of the Pride Month proclamation, noting he requested it be brought forward. He stated that some LGBTQ+ individuals have chosen not to relocate to Rocky Ford due to safety concerns tied to community attitudes and public discourse. Sanders provided historical context on Pride and emphasized that the request is for recognition and equal treatment, not to impose beliefs on others. He encouraged continued efforts to make the community welcoming and inclusive for all residents.

James Budnick, county resident, opposed the Pride Month proclamation and asserted it violated his constitutional and religious rights. Budnick called for the removal of Councilmembers who supported the proclamation, as well as the City Clerk, and criticized Council actions and city leadership.

Councilmembers Roberts, Barron, and Mullins affirmed their support for the Pride Month Proclamation and emphasized their commitment to upholding the rights of all residents. They also expressed concern about the conduct of both Council and audience members, acknowledged strong differing opinions, and encouraged respect and civility within the community.

Mayor Gurulé acknowledged recent disagreements and community tension, emphasizing the importance of accountability, progress, and adapting to change. He stated his commitment to making decisions that move the community forward, even when difficult, and expressed support for inclusivity and recognizing all members of the community. Gurulé encouraged Council to maintain focus on unity, respect differing perspectives, and uphold high standards in conducting City business.

15. EXECUTIVE SESSION

15.1 None

16. UPCOMING MEETINGS

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

16.2 June 9, 2026, at 6:00pm - City Council Regular Meeting

ADJOURN

There being no further business, Mayor Gurulé adjourned the meeting at 7:09pm.



Mayor Duane Gurulé



City Clerk, Michelle Grasmick