



CITY OF ROCKY FORD – CITY COUNCIL MEETING

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

May 12, 2026

REGULAR MEETING: 6:00pm

Rocky Ford City Council met in Council Chambers on Tuesday, May 12, 2026. Mayor Duane Gurulé called the meeting to order.

Those present at roll call were:

Mayor: Duane Gurulé

Councilmembers: Nicholas Martinez, Robert Barron, Joe Pentlicki, Thomas Mullins, and Nicole Roberts.

Councilmembers absent: Nanette Mosby.

City Staff: City Manager Stacey Milenski, City Clerk Michelle Grasmick, Police Chief Matthew Wallace, Public Works Director Rick Long, Water/Wastewater Foreman Cody Baylor, Fire Chief Ray Gonzales, Fire Captain Brandon Dickinson, Nikki Shannon, Autumn Akers, Peyton Cranson, Daniel Santistevan (Volunteer Fire). City Attorney Dan Harvey was in attendance by Zoom.

Public attendance: JR Thompson, Gary Reed, Dan Williams, Susan Jung, Mike Laurent, Sarah Dillon, James Budnick. Numerous others who did not sign in.

Mayor Duane Gurulé led the Pledge of Allegiance.

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

5. PUBLIC COMMENT

5.1 None

6. APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

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

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

NO: None

ABSENT: Mosby

Motion carried: 6-0

Consent Agenda Items approved were:

6.1 **Approval of Council meeting minutes from March 31, 2026** – Special meeting at 2:00pm

6.2 **Approval of Council meeting minutes from April 28, 2026** – Regular meeting at 6:00pm

6.3 Approval of Council meeting minutes from April 30, 2026 – Special meeting at 3:00pm

6.4 Approval of Arbor Day Proclamation – required for Tree City USA Application

7. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Councilmember Pentlicki motioned to approve the Agenda as presented. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Martinez.

Voting results were:

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

NO: None

ABSENT: Mosby

Motion carried: 6-0

8. PRESENTATIONS, AWARDS, PROCLAMATIONS

8.1 Presentation – Life Saving Awards – Eddie Tenorio & Alejandro Guzman

Chief Ray Gonzales presented Life Saving Awards to Eddie Tenorio and Alejandro Guzman for their response on April 3, 2026, when a missing 4-year-old autistic child was located in the Catlin Canal near Main Street and Play Park Hill Road. The recipients entered the canal, rescued the child, and performed CPR, resulting in the child’s survival. Their actions were recognized as exemplary displays of courage, bravery, and determination, consistent with the motto “Service Above Self,” and were honored with Life Saving Awards; Alejandro Guzman also received the Colorado Department of Corrections Medal of Valor as an off-duty officer.

9. PUBLIC HEARING

9.1 None

10. OLD BUSINESS

10.1 Discussion/Action – **Next steps on Ordinance No. 995** - An Ordinance of the City of Rocky Ford, Colorado approving a franchise fee for City Water, Sewer, and Garbage Enterprise - Changes or considerations for moving forward with Second Reading

City Attorney Dan Harvey noted the ordinance has completed first reading but cannot proceed to second reading until required public hearing notice is published. Council discussed options to either schedule second reading for a future meeting with proper notice or table/discontinue the ordinance based on community feedback, which largely opposed the measure and raised concerns about TABOR implications and impacts to enterprise fund projects.

Council discussed legal, financial, and structural differences between franchise fees and enterprise fund charges, including concerns about applying a franchise fee to a city-owned utility and potential TABOR implications. Concerns were raised regarding the appropriateness of the proposed fee, particularly its high percentage and lack of a clear connection to right-of-way usage costs. Councilmembers reviewed alternative approaches to addressing general fund shortfalls, including reallocating administrative costs, adjusting departmental fees, reducing spending, and pursuing voter-approved revenue options. Ongoing concerns about the lack of cost-based justification, potential impacts to enterprise funds, and newly expressed opposition from the water and sewer departments led Council to consider whether to proceed to second reading or discontinue the ordinance.

Councilmember Mullins motioned to table Ordinance 995 indefinitely. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Pentlicki.

Voting results were:

YES: Mullins, Martinez, Pentlicki, Gurulé

NO: Roberts, Barron

ABSENT: Mosby

Motion carried: 4-2

11. NEW BUSINESS

11.1 Discussion/Action – Rental House – 1101 Lincoln Ave – request for occupancy by Water Foreman

Council discussed a request by Water Foreman Cody Baylor to occupy the property, including a proposal to perform repairs in exchange for reduced rent of \$700 per month with utilities covered. Council noted prior directions to set rent at \$1,000 per month without utilities, install a water meter, and begin repairs to prepare the property for market rental. Extensive discussion addressed utility costs, liability, fairness, and consistency with other employee housing arrangements, with concerns raised about the City acting as a landlord and potential preferential treatment. City Attorney Dan Harvey advised that additional legal review is needed to identify any potential liability implications before a decision is made.

Councilmember Mullins motioned to table discussion on rental house 1101 Lincoln Avenue. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Roberts.

Voting results were:

YES: Roberts, Pentlicki, Mullins, Gurulé

NO: Martinez, Barron

ABSENT: Mosby

Motion carried: 4-2

11.2 Discussion/Action – Appointment of New Tree Board Members – Donna Bush, Darla Marshall

Council discussed the proposed appointments of Donna Bush and Darla Marshall, noting that requested letters of intent had not been submitted despite prior requests.

Councilmember Martinez motioned to deny the appointment of Donna Bush and Darla Marshall to Tree Board. Motion dies for lack of a second.

Councilmember Mullins motioned to table the appointment of new Tree Board members until they submit their letters of interest. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Pentlicki.

Voting results were:

YES: Barron, Pentlicki, Mullins, Roberts, Gurulé

NO: Martinez

ABSENT: Mosby

Motion carried: 5-1

11.3 Discussion/Action – Board Appointments filled by Council Members – Museum Board, Volunteer Firefighter Pension Board

Council considered filling the vacant council-appointed Museum Board seat, including requests to reappoint Councilmember Mullins or appoint Councilmember Pentlicki. Discussion also addressed board member roles and responsibilities, key policy restrictions and access limitations, and the importance of disclosing relationships among board members to ensure transparency.

Councilmember Martinez motioned to reappoint Councilmember Mullins as liaison to the Museum Board. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Pentlicki.

Voting results were:

YES: Barron, Pentlicki, Martinez

NO: Roberts, Gurulé

ABSENT: Mosby

ABSTAIN: Mullins

Motion carried: 3-2 with one abstention

Council noted the requirement for the Mayor and one additional council member to serve on the Volunteer Firefighter Pension Board, which meets quarterly during weekday mornings. Councilmember Pentlicki expressed willingness to serve and indicated he can adjust his work schedule to attend meetings.

Councilmember Martinez motioned to appoint Councilmember Pentlicki as liaison to the Volunteer Firefighter Pension Board. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Roberts.

Voting results were:

YES: Mullins, Roberts, Martinez, Barron, Gurulé

NO: None

ABSENT: Mosby

ABSTAIN: Pentlicki

Motion carried: 5-0 with one abstention

11.4 Discussion/Action – Work Session Date/Time Change

Council discussed potential adjustments to work session scheduling, including timing before regular meetings and alternative days or evenings, while considering meeting effectiveness and scheduling conflicts. Consensus was to maintain the current schedule of the 1st and 3rd Tuesdays from 2:00–4:00pm.

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 also provided his Mayor's report, a written report was not provided in advance of the meeting.

14. PUBLIC COMMENT

Sarah Dillon, Director of Tri-County Family Care Center, stated that a newspaper notice indicated vendor fees would be discussed at the meeting, prompting her attendance along with Mike Laurent, a resident

and owner of Christine's Food Truck. Both expressed concerns regarding current and proposed vendor fees, noting that application costs and the lack of a one-day permit option for a lower rate may discourage participation in upcoming events. Dillon emphasized that only two food vendors had registered to date for Cruisin' Into Summer, raising concerns about limited food availability for the event.

Council clarified that vendor fees were not on the meeting agenda for action and require further review, including legal analysis and potential updates to the fee schedule. Council acknowledged the concerns and confirmed the matter will be addressed in future discussions, noting that existing vendor fee requirements are in place but have not been consistently enforced.

Councilmember Mullins left the meeting at 8:09pm.

Susan Jung, resident and former mayor, congratulated Council for requiring members to cover their own expenses for attendance at the CML conference this year, contrasting it with the previous year when the City funded attendance. Jung urged Council to focus on addressing the root causes of current financial challenges, recommending that certain programs be paused until budget stability is achieved rather than relying primarily on cuts or revenue increases.

James Budnick, county resident, raised concerns about the lack of a functioning building department in Rocky Ford, noting that permitting, contractor registration, and related fees common in other municipalities are not being utilized. Budnick suggested these mechanisms could serve as significant revenue sources and expressed concern that the City is focusing on new taxes rather than leveraging existing municipal code provisions to address budget deficits.

Council clarified that Rocky Ford does have permitting processes in place, including zoning permits managed by the Public Works Director and coordination with Otero County for inspections and code compliance. Water tap fees and other related charges are established, though historically low and recently increased. Council noted that while these systems exist, they differ from larger municipalities, with inspections outsourced to the county, and acknowledged that capacity and administration may limit revenue potential compared to a full in-house building department.

15. EXECUTIVE SESSION

15.1 None


16. UPCOMING MEETINGS

16.1 May 19, 2026, from 2:00pm – 4:00pm City Council Work Session

16.2 May 26, 2026, at 6:00pm - City Council Regular Meeting

ADJOURN

There being no further business, Mayor Gurulé adjourned the meeting at 8:30pm.



Mayor Duane Gurulé



City Clerk, Michelle Grasmick