

CITY OF ROCKY FORD - CITY COUNCIL MEETING

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

February 10, 2026

REGULAR MEETING: 6:00pm

Rocky Ford City Council met in Council Chambers on Tuesday, February 10, 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, Communications Director June Ferraro, Communications Supervisor Jorgina Magana, Serina Springer, Finance Director Kyle Crosswhite. City Attorney Dan Harvey was in attendance online by Zoom.

Public attendance: JR Thompson, Gary Reed, James Budnick, Nicholas Martinez II.

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 James Budnick, a county resident living outside Rocky Ford, asked the council to clarify which utility services will see rate increases under the proposed ordinance and how much residents' bills are expected to rise.

Mayor Gurulé commented that there are no fee increases to customers with Ordinance 995.

6. APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

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

YES: Barron, Mullins, Mosby, Martinez, Gurulé

NO: McMurray

ABSTAIN: Roberts

Motion carried: 5-1 with one abstention

Consent Agenda Items approved were:

6.1 Approval of Council meeting minutes from January 27, 2026 – Regular meeting at 6:00pm

6.2 Application for Special Events Permit – Malt, Vinous and Spirituous Liquor - Rocky Ford Chamber of Commerce, Gobin Building, 105 N Main Street, Rocky Ford, on Saturday, February 14, 2026, from 5:00pm to 2:00am

6.3 Application for Special Events Permit – Malt, Vinous and Spirituous Liquor – Arkansas Valley Resource Center, Gobin Building, 105 N Main Street, Rocky Ford, on Saturday, February 21, 2026, from 5:00pm to 11:00pm

7. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

Voting results were:

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

NO: None

Motion carried: 7-0

8. PRESENTATIONS, AWARDS, PROCLAMATIONS

8.1 Stork & Lifesaving Award – Serina Springer, June Ferraro

Communications Supervisor Jorgina Magana recognized Serina Springer and June Ferraro for their exceptional performance during a December 21, 2025, emergency call from Kiowa County involving a laboring female with the baby in breech position. Springer guided on-scene responders through lifesaving infant CPR. Ferraro coordinated timely dispatch and responder updates. Both were praised for their professionalism and teamwork. Springer received both the Lifesaving Award and the 911 Stork Award; Ferraro received the Lifesaving Award.

8.2 End of Year Report – Communications Department - Communications Director June Ferraro

Communications Director June Ferraro summarized written report provided to Council. Ferraro reported that in 2025 the Communications Center expanded its service area to include Kiowa County and obtained its own FBI ORI, allowing it to operate as an independent agency. The department partnered with Rocky Ford Police and Fire to establish incident command operations at the Arkansas Valley Fair and participated in multiple community outreach events in both Otero and Kiowa counties. The center answered 98.26% of calls within 10 seconds, handled 4,814 emergency calls, and processed 38,514 entries. Staffing stands at 11 of 12 budgeted positions, with two employees earning Center Management Certification through the National Emergency Number Association. Planned 911 equipment upgrades were delayed due to statewide infrastructure work. The department ended the year at 94% of budgeted expenditures, pending audit. Negotiations with La Junta were completed, and service began January 16, 2026.

9. PUBLIC HEARING

9.1 None

10. OLD BUSINESS

10.1 Ordinance No. 995 – An Ordinance of the City of Rocky Ford, Colorado approving a franchise fee for City Water, Sewer, and Garbage Enterprise

Council continued review of the proposed franchise fee ordinance for the water, sewer, and garbage enterprise funds. Finance Director Kyle Crosswhite explained that an 11% fee across the three enterprise funds would be required to balance the 2026 budget, and that the currently proposed 7.7% would create a deficit. Council discussed impacts on water and sewer covenants, the distinction between gross and base revenues, and clarified that the fee would not directly raise customer utility rates.

Questions were raised about TABOR compliance; City Attorney Dan Harvey explained the legal distinction between a franchise fee and a tax, noting that similar structures are used in other municipalities. Councilmembers discussed the need for uniformity among enterprise funds, concerns about relying on reserves, and the importance of a clear methodology for setting fees. Suggestions included adjusting the percentage to 11% and revising ordinance language.

The ordinance will be returned to the attorney for revisions, with first reading scheduled for February 24, 2026, and public hearing with second reading for March 24, 2026.

11. NEW BUSINESS

11.1 Ordinance No. 996 – An Ordinance Amending Chapter 7 of the Rocky Ford Municipal Code Concerning Animals at Large

Council reviewed the proposed amendment to Chapter 7, clarifying that animals at large are prohibited. Discussion continued from previous work session during which it was considered to include a voice-command provision. City Manager Stacey Milenski conveyed that although Police Chief Matthew Wallace was unable to attend today's meeting due to a previously scheduled training, he fully supports the ordinance as written by the City Attorney and recommends retaining the existing leash requirement without adding a voice-command exception. City Attorney Dan Harvey explained that such an exception would be difficult to enforce or prove in court. Councilmembers also shared resident feedback favoring continued leash requirements in parks. Council agreed to proceed with the ordinance as written, which will now undergo final legal review before moving forward through the required publishing and reading process.

11.2 Local Governments Rights to Property for Affordable Housing

City Attorney Dan Harvey briefed Council on Colorado's 2024 law granting municipalities the right of first refusal and a right of first offer on qualifying affordable-housing properties. Council discussed whether to address such notices on a case-by-case basis or issue a blanket waiver indicating the City is not pursuing acquisition of multifamily affordable-housing properties.

Councilmember Martinez motioned to direct the City Attorney to draft a general waiver for consideration. The motion was seconded by Councilmember McMurray.

Voting results were:

YES: Martinez, McMurray

NO: Roberts, Barron, Mullins, Mosby, Gurulé

Motion failed: 2-5

11.3 Right of First Refusal, Right of First Offer - Pine Estates, 1100 Pine Ave, Rocky Ford

During discussion it was determined that Pine Estates does not meet the criteria for either a right of first refusal or a right of first offer. City Attorney Dan Harvey will draft a letter of compliance that can be sent to the property manager.

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

Mullins – *Reported that the museum is preparing a small number of new exhibits that highlight local history and are intended to be displays the community can be proud of. The Museum Board has drafted an internal assessment outlining current operations, successes, and future opportunities, which will be shared with Council once completed. Next Museum Board meeting is on Wednesday. Council members and the public were encouraged to visit the museum to view ongoing work and explore ways to support its efforts.*

Martinez – *Attended meetings for Tree Board and Library Board. Lego Club has continued to be well attended with anywhere from 3-12 kids, some coming from other towns. Game night started last week and will be on Thursday and Friday evenings. There will be an opportunity to decorate cookies again for Valentines Day. Fireside Chat was last night – would love to see more citizens attend. Reiterated that Councilmembers can't speak for the citizens if they don't hear from them.*

Barron – *Solo Mio will be showing for a second weekend. Multiple ways to support the theater were suggested. Consider donating toward the matching funds for the awarded grant for building upgrades and repairs.*

McMurray – *No updates*

Mosby – *No updates*

Roberts – *Membership drive starts this month into March. Fiscal year starts April 1st. There is still one open board seat. The sign at 9th and Elm is aging and will be replaced through a donation from Chris Watters of Discount Tire, a long-time Chamber supporter. The new sign will promote the Baggage Room and rental spaces in the Gobin Building, with plans to upgrade the changeable top portion to digital and replace the deteriorated lower panel. Upcoming events include a Valentine's Day Dance (Feb 14), Arkansas Valley Resource Center Annual Comedy Night Fundraiser (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). Rocky Free Kitchen hosted a meal on February 4th –*

served 174 people and the event was covered by KKTv11. Unfortunately, there is not enough funding to do a second meal this month – next meal will be March 4th.

Gurulé – Reported that the upcoming OCLI–OPI meeting will be held next Tuesday, and City offices will be closed Monday in observance of Presidents Day. There are no current items before the Planning Commission. Attended a tour of AVRMC with Lieutenant Governor Dana Primavera, noting positive leadership changes and new programs underway at the hospital. Briefly discussed community signage and lighting, including interest in exploring options, potentially solar, to illuminate the Rocky Ford obelisks at both entrances to town. This topic may be considered further at a future work session.

14. PUBLIC COMMENT

14.1 None

15. EXECUTIVE SESSION

15.1 None

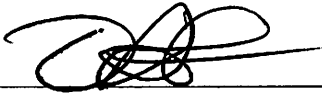
16. UPCOMING MEETINGS

16.1 February 17, 2026, from 2:00pm – 4:00pm City Council Work Session

16.2 February 24, 2026, at 6:00pm - City Council Regular Meeting

ADJOURN

There being no further business, Mayor Gurulé adjourned the meeting at 8:42pm.



Mayor Duane Gurulé



City Clerk, Michelle Grasmick