

CITY COUNCIL MEETING – January 20, 2026

STATE OF COLORADO)
COUNTY OF OTERO) SS
CITY OF LA JUNTA)

CALL TO ORDER: The regular meeting of the City Council of the City of La Junta, Colorado, was called to order by Mayor Ayala on Monday, January 20, 2026, at 6:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers of the Municipal Building.

INVOCATION: Mayor Ayala gave the invocation.



PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Mayor Ayala led everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL: The following Council Members were present:

Damon Ramirez, Ward 1
Paul Velasquez, Ward 1
Carly Johnson, Ward 2
Joe Ayala, Mayor
Lisa Pantoya, Ward 3
Maureen Rikhof, Ward 3

Absent: Chandra Ochoa, Ward 2

Also present: Michael Hart, City Manager
Erin Harris, City Attorney
Melanie Scofield, City Clerk
Brad Davidson, Fire Chief
Michael Engebrecht, Fire Captain
Chris Arguello, Electric Superintendent
Anthony Aguilar, Electric Lineman
Drew Yochum, Electric Lineman
Gary Reed, Rocky Ford
David Polley, La Junta
Alison Penner, La Junta
Cheryl Lindner, La Junta
Brittany Baylor, Inspiration Field
Adrian Hart, SECO News
Nancy Harrington, SECO News
Bette McFarren, RF Gazette


Subject to approval at the
February 2, 2026
City Council Meeting


EMPLOYEE SERVICE AWARDS

A. January 2026

1. Michael Engebrecht, Fire – 5 years

- 11/4/2021 Hired in Police Department
- 11/06/2022 Transferred to Fire Department
- 02/01/2024 Promoted to Fire Captain

EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION

A. Anthony Aguilar

B. Drew Yochum

Superintendent Chris Arguello presented Anthony and Drew with a Certificate of Completion of Apprenticeship to Electrical Lineman.

CITY COUNCIL MEETING – January 20, 2026**CITIZEN PARTICIPATION (5-minute time limit per person):**

1. Cheryl Lindner, 16 E. 22nd Street: Thankful for the tennis courts and disc golf at the park. Also, there is a warming center being opened up this weekend, Friday at noon at the Calvary Church on 5th and Colorado until Sunday at noon. We are very grateful for the cooperation and collaboration that has come from the city.

CONSENT AGENDA**A. Regular Meeting Minutes January 5, 2026****B. Special Meeting Minutes January 13, 2026**

- C. Application for a Special Events Permit by Inspiration Field, Brittany Baylor, Event Manager. The event is their 5th Annual Mardi Gras Grand Masquerade Steak Night to be held February 20, 2026 from 12:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. at 612 Adams Avenue**
- D. Application for a Special Events Permit by Inspiration Field, Brittany Baylor, Event Manager. The event is their 60th Annual Inspiration Field Block Party Celebration to be held April 25, 2026 from 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. at 612 Adams Avenue**
- E. Application for a Special Events Permit by Inspiration Field, Brittany Baylor, Event Manager. The event is their 41st La Junta Trading Company Golf Classic to be held May 8, 2026 from 2:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. at 612 Adams Avenue**
- F. Application for a Special Events Permit by Inspiration Field, Brittany Baylor, Event Manager. The event is their 11th Annual Poker Run/6th Annual Smoke Out to be held June 20, 2026 from 8:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. at 612 Adams Avenue**
- G. Application for a Special Events Permit by Inspiration Field, Brittany Baylor, Event Manager. The event is their Annual SECOM/SECPA Golf Classic to be held July 9, 2026 from 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. at 612 Adams Avenue**

MOTION TO APPROVE THE JANUARY 20, 2026 CONSENT AGENDA: Ramirez

SECOND: Pantoya

DISCUSSION: There was no discussion

VOTE: The motion carried 6-0 (Ochoa absent)

NEW BUSINESS**A. Committee/Board Reports**

1. Senior Citizens Advisory Board (Council Member Velasquez):
 - Meetings have been changed to the first Wednesday of each month. The next meeting will be February 4th at 1:00 p.m.
 - Currently have two vacant positions.
2. Utilities Board (Council Member Velasquez):
 - Congratulations to Kevin and Mary Quillen for winning the Christmas Lighting Contest.
 - Water Department is continuing routine maintenance and working on a couple of breaks.
 - The Electric Department/ARPA has scholarship available to La Junta seniors and families using City of La Junta electricity in the amount of \$1,400. The application is due by April 10th.
3. Library Advisory Board (Council Member Rikhof):
 - ESL classes are starting next Monday from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. Childcare will be provided.
 - The Teen Activities Group is moving to every 2nd and 4th Wednesday of the month from 4:30 to 6:00 p.m.
 - The monthly health screening will be Monday, January 26th from 4:00 – 6:00 p.m. in partnership with Valley Wide.
4. Planning Commission (Council Member Rikhof):
 - Had a work session to discuss Conex containers and business registrations.
 - At last Thursday's regular meeting, it was decided to move forward with drawing up language for both topics.

CITY COUNCIL MEETING – January 20, 2026

C. City Manager Report

- AVRMC is in the process of applying for EPA Brownfield grant to help with some tear down involving asbestos mitigation.
- There was a light out at the top of one of the water towers, that has now been fixed.

D. Community Events/Council Reports

- 2026 Girls in the Middle Conference will be Saturday, March 7th at Otero College. The theme is “Surfing the Waves to Your Future”. The event is targeted for 5th-8th grade girls. Registration ends February 5th and the cost is \$5.00 with a capacity of 200 girls.
- La Junta Chamber of Commerce 124th Annual Banquet is January 26th. There are still tickets and tables available. Tickets are \$45.00 per person and tables are \$375.00 which seats eight and includes two bottles of wine.

E. Governing Body Reports

1. Council Member Johnson: Purchased a home that sits just across the boundary in Ward 3 so will be stepping away from role as Ward 2 representative effective March 1st.
2. Mayor Ayala: In the Gov Business Review Magazine, Michael Hart was listed in the top 10 City Managers for 2025. “True leadership isn’t about having all the answers, it’s about listening, empowering and creating space for every voice to shape the future.”

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:25 p.m.

ATTEST:

CITY OF LA JUNTA

Melanie R. Scofield, City Clerk

Joseph Ayala, Mayor