

Council Goals

Envision a safe, flourishing downtown that provides a strong commercial tax base

Strive to be active stewards of existing aging infrastructure

Recognize importance of experience, well trained, and community minded staff

Ensure its electorate is well informed of on-going successes and future plans

Envision a safe, secure community for its families and youth

Promote redevelopment of existing businesses and neighborhoods and increase quality of life for all its residents



AGENDA

REGULAR MEETING LA JUNTA CITY COUNCIL

La Junta, Colorado
TUESDAY
September 2, 2025
6:00 PM
Council Chambers
Municipal Building
601 Colorado Avenue

CALL TO ORDER (Mayor Ayala)

INVOCATION (Mayor Ayala)

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE (Mayor Ayala)

ROLL CALL (City Clerk)

Council Members

Supervisors

Others

Ramirez

Velasquez

Stoker

Ayala

Ochoa

Pantoya

Rikhof

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION *(5-minute time limit per person)*

REPORTS

A. Tourism and Economic Development (Pam Denahy) (Information)

CONSENT AGENDA

A. Regular Meeting Minutes August 18, 2025

NEW BUSINESS

A. Present 2026 Budget (Aliza Libby)

B. City of La Junta Drug & Alcohol Policy (Dawn Block) (Action)

C. Tourism Board Recommendation for Funding (Mayor) (Action)

1. National WIFE (Women Involved in Farm Economics) Convention, October 23-25 in La Junta at Otero College - \$5,000 sponsorship request

D. Committee/Board Report

E. City Manager Report

F. Community Events/Council Report

G. Governing Body Report

H. ADJOURN

CITY COUNCIL MEETING – August 18, 2025

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, August 18, 2025, 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
Jeremiah Stoker, Ward 2 – arrived at 6:02 p.m.
Joe Ayala, Mayor
Chandra Ochoa, Ward 2
Lisa Pantoya, Ward 3
Maureen Rikhof, Ward 3

Subject to approval at the
September 2, 2025
City Council Meeting

Absent: None

Also present: Michael Hart, City Manager
Erin Harris, City Attorney
Melanie Scofield, City Clerk
Gary Reed, Rocky Ford
Erika Lively, La Junta
Nancy Harrington, La Junta
Jenny Mathews, La Junta
Bette McFarren, RF Gazette

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING: Mayor Ayala asked if there were any corrections or additions to the minutes of the Regular City Council Meeting of August 4, 2025. Hearing none, the mayor asked for a motion to approve the minutes as published.

MOTION TO APPROVE THE AUGUST 4, 2025 MINUTES AS PUBLISHED: Ramirez

SECOND: Rikhof

DISCUSSION: There was no discussion

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

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION (5-minute time limit per person):

1. There was no citizen participation.

COMMUNITY EVENT ANNOUNCEMENTS (Council Members):

1. The Police Citizen's Academy has been moved to the spring, around March, in order to rally more people to be involved.

CITY COUNCIL MEETING – August 18, 2025**NEW BUSINESS**

- A. MOTION TO GO INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION FOR DISCUSSION OF A PERSONNEL MATTER UNDER C.R.S. §24-6-402(4)(f) AND NOT INVOLVING: ANY SPECIFIC EMPLOYEES WHO HAVE REQUESTED DISCUSSION OF THE MATTER IN OPEN SESSION; ANY MEMBER OF THIS BODY OR ANY ELECTED OFFICIAL; THE APPOINTMENT OF ANY PERSON TO FILL AN OFFICE OF THIS BODY OR OF AN ELECTED OFFICIAL; OR PERSONNEL POLICIES THAT DO NOT REQUIRE THE DISCUSSION OF MATTERS PERSONAL TO PARTICULAR EMPLOYEES (City Manager Six-Month Review):** Ochoa

SECOND: Velasquez

DISCUSSION: There was no discussion

VOTE: The motion carried 7-0

The Council went into Executive Session at 6:04 p.m. and reconvened at 6:48 p.m.

- B. Application for a Special Events Permit by La Junta Chamber of Commerce, Christina Tozzie, Event Manager. The event is Early Settler's Day to be held September 6, 2025 from 4:00 p.m. to 11:59 p.m. at the City Park Tennis Courts.** The application is in order and has been reviewed by City supervisors for compliance with City and State codes. The appropriate fee has been tendered and the premises have been posted.

MOTION TO GRANT A SPECIAL EVENT PERMIT TO LA JUNTA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE FOR EARLY SETTLER'S DAY TO BE HELD SEPTEMBER 6, 2025 FROM 4:00 P.M. TO 11:59 P.M. AT THE CITY PARK TENNIS COURTS: Rikhof

SECOND: Stoker

DISCUSSION: There was no discussion

VOTE: The motion carried 6-0 (Pantoya abstained)

C. Committee/Board Reports

1. Library Advisory Board (Council Member Rikhof):
 - Will begin meeting in the Council Chambers at the next meeting on September 15th.
 - Would like to be added to the September 15th Council agenda to give their annual report.
2. Senior Center Advisory Board (Council Member Velasquez):
 - Brining back breakfast and potluck's starting next month.
3. Utilities Board (Council Member Velasquez):
 - Performed routine maintenance at the RO Plant. Flushed air relief valves and tested wells.
 - Distribution completed the fire hydrant testing and flushing.
 - The Electric and Sanitation Departments requested rate increases. Sanitation requested a 3% rate increase and Electric requested a dollar increase to the customer charge beginning in 2026.
 - It was announced that Keith will not be seeking another term for the utility board.

D. City Manager's Comments

- Attended the Brownsfield Conference in Chicago. Was able to get a lot of good contacts and networking. We've had the Brownsfield program since 2022. The initial grant was for \$500,000. To date, we've spent a little over \$300,000. The next two buildings we'll be looking at is the Travel Inn and Gibson's.

CITY COUNCIL MEETING – August 18, 2025

- Pam is getting with the city attorney regarding short term rental lodging tax and will have a potential ordinance to present soon.
- School is back in session. Please be cautious when you're out driving in the morning.
- Did some research on parking trailers in the street. Currently, the city council has an ordinance that does not allow for trailers, campers, RV's, etc. to be parked on the city right-of-way for more than 48 hours. Parked meaning unhitched from a vehicle sitting independently. The ordinance does not speak to the time frame for a vehicle parked on public right-of-way. However, the state statute does dictate vehicles cannot be parked on a public right-of-way for more than 48 hours unless there's a local ordinance that allows for them to be longer. Since we don't have that local ordinance it reverts back to the state statute. Also, the current city ordinance does not identify what junk vehicles or vehicles in general are. It basically states that they cannot be in disrepair or without current licensing. From that, I worked up four different options. Option #1 is to do nothing and continue to enforce it as it currently is. Option #2 is to change the trailer parking ordinance to allow parking in the streets for longer than 48 hours. Option #3 is to create an ordinance for vehicles parked on the road to align with the trailer ordinance. Option #4 is to establish a designated parking area for trailer parking. This would entail a lot of extra moving parts.
- There is an increase in stray dogs running around town. In 2023, there was a total of 530 stray dog cases. Of those, 251 of the dogs were actually captured. That's about a 47% catch percentage. In 2024, 562 stray dog calls with 273 that were captured. That was up to about 49%. Current year, right now, 313 calls so far, 131 dogs captured or about 42%. So, the thing that would help out the officers the most, is if the person making that call was able to stay there and keep eyes on the animal and let them know if it moves somewhere else. What happens is by the time code enforcement gets there the dogs gone and the report caller. I think it would lead to a higher catch ratio but that's a matter of getting folks to stay with that animal until it's able to be picked up.
- We've had some violence over the last couple of weeks here. I talked to Chief Quick and the plan right now is we're going to be putting together information packets for the public. with information, resources, and phone numbers to call. The crimes that we've had here recently have been person to person. People aren't breaking into stuff, households or carjacking. It's unfortunate but bad people do bad things. With the laws here in Colorado, it's not going to change much because these criminals know that they can do things and they'll get right back out. One of the best things that Chief Quick and I talked about that could help deter crime is to form neighborhood watches. Chief Quick is more than happy to sit down with anyone at any time to help organize a neighborhood watch in order to be able to deter some of the crime that's going on.
- Business licensing here in town is something we've talked about before. It helps us better track the businesses that are in town to know how many of the different types of businesses we have. It could potentially stop an illegal business from popping up. It can ensure that businesses are conducting business in a properly zoned area of the city.
- The Electric Department will be doing some more siren testing. They are waiting on some relay switches to arrive.
- Sanitation Department wants to remind everybody that the October Cleanup is coming up. They will also be doing some painting of the crosswalks around the school; however, the paint machine is not working at this time. They're waiting on the part to get in. The 10th and Barnes curb and gutter project is scheduled to start in two weeks.
- Been working very diligently with all the different supervisors getting the budget figured out and am happy to report, as of right now, we have a balanced budget for next year.
- Encourage everybody to go check out the library and all the services they have to offer.

E. Governing Body's Comments

1. Council Member Rikhof:
 - Happy six-month anniversary to Michael Hart. Glad that you're here and we have already talked about the process that will be commencing to do an official 12-month review in February. Wanted to acknowledge your milestone and thank you.

CITY COUNCIL MEETING – August 18, 2025

2. Mayor Ayala:

- The executive session tonight was a six-month review. That's not a normal review date but we had to prepare for budget time and his hire date falls outside of our annual budget. When we do get closer to his 12-month anniversary, then we will have a specific procedure on how that looks for his actual review.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:13 p.m.

ATTEST:

CITY OF LA JUNTA

Melanie R. Scofield, City Clerk

Joseph Ayala, Mayor

City of La Junta

Drug and Alcohol Policy

Effective as of [08/11/2025]

Adopted by: _____

Date Adopted: [dd/mm/yyyy]

Last Revised: [dd/mm/yyyy]

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1. Purpose of Policy

This policy complies with 49 CFR Part 655, as amended and 49 CFR Part 40, as amended. Copies of Parts 655 and 40 are available in the drug and alcohol program manager's office and can be found on the internet at the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Drug and Alcohol Program website <http://transit-safety.fta.dot.gov/DrugAndAlcohol/>.

All covered employees are required to submit to drug and alcohol tests as a condition of employment in accordance with 49 CFR Part 655.

Portions of this policy are not FTA-mandated, but reflect City of La Junta's policy. These additional provisions are identified by **bold text**.

In addition, DOT has published 49 CFR Part 32, implementing the Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988, which requires the establishment of drug-free workplace policies and the reporting of certain drug-related offenses to the FTA.

All City of La Junta employees are subject to the provisions of the Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988.

The unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession or use of a controlled substance is prohibited in the covered workplace. An employee who is convicted of any criminal drug statute for a violation occurring in the workplace shall notify the HR Department no later than five days after such conviction.

2. Covered Employees

This policy applies to every person, including an applicant or transferee, who performs or will perform a "safety-sensitive function" as defined in Part 655, section 655.4.

You are a covered employee if you perform any of the following:

- Operating a revenue service vehicle, in or out of revenue service
- Operating a non-revenue vehicle requiring a commercial driver's license
- Controlling movement or dispatch of a revenue service vehicle
- Maintaining (including repairs, overhaul and rebuilding) of a revenue service vehicle or equipment used in revenue service
- Carrying a firearm for security purposes

See Attachment A for a list of covered positions by job title.

3. Prohibited Behavior

Use of illegal drugs is prohibited at all times. Prohibited drugs include:

- marijuana
- cocaine
- phencyclidine (PCP)
- opioids
- amphetamines

All covered employees are prohibited from performing or continuing to perform safety-sensitive functions while having an alcohol concentration of 0.04 or greater.

All covered employees are prohibited from consuming alcohol while performing safety-sensitive job functions or while on-call to perform safety-sensitive job functions. If an on-call employee has consumed alcohol, they must acknowledge the use of alcohol at the time that they are called to report for duty. If the on-call employee claims the ability to perform his or her safety-sensitive function, he or she must take an alcohol test with a result of less than 0.02 prior to performance.

All covered employees are prohibited from consuming alcohol within four (4) hours prior to the performance of safety-sensitive job functions.

All covered employees required to take a post-accident test are prohibited from consuming alcohol for eight (8) hours following involvement in an accident or until he or she submits to the post-accident drug and alcohol test, whichever occurs first.

4. Consequences for Violations

Following a positive drug or alcohol (BAC at or above 0.04) test result or test refusal, the employee will be immediately removed from safety-sensitive duty and provided with contact information for Substance Abuse Professionals (SAPs).

Following a BAC of 0.02 or greater, but less than 0.04, the employee will be immediately removed from safety-sensitive duties until the start of their next regularly scheduled duty period (but for not less than eight hours) unless a retest results in the employee's alcohol concentration being less than 0.02.

Zero Tolerance

Per City of La Junta policy, any employee who tests positive for drugs or alcohol (BAC at or above 0.04) or refuses to test will be terminated from employment.

5. Circumstances for Testing

Pre-Employment Testing

Pre-employment alcohol tests are conducted after making a contingent offer of employment or transfer. All pre-employment alcohol tests will be conducted using the procedures set forth in 49 CFR Part 40. An alcohol test result of less than 0.02 is required before an employee can first perform safety-sensitive

functions. If a pre-employment alcohol test is cancelled, the individual will be required to undergo another test with a result of less than 0.02 before performing safety-sensitive functions.

A negative pre-employment drug test result is required before an employee can first perform safety-sensitive functions. If a pre-employment test is cancelled, the individual will be required to undergo another test and successfully pass with a verified negative result before performing safety-sensitive functions.

If a covered employee has not performed a safety-sensitive function for 90 or more consecutive calendar days, and has not been in the random testing pool during that time, the employee must take and pass a pre-employment test before he or she can return to a safety-sensitive function.

A covered employee or applicant who has previously failed or refused a DOT drug and/or alcohol test must provide proof of having successfully completed a referral, evaluation, and treatment plan meeting DOT requirements.

Reasonable Suspicion Testing

All covered employees shall be subject to a drug and/or alcohol test when City of La Junta has reasonable suspicion to believe that the covered employee has used a prohibited drug and/or engaged in alcohol misuse. A reasonable suspicion referral for testing will be made by a trained supervisor or other trained company official on the basis of specific, contemporaneous, articulable observations concerning the appearance, behavior, speech, or body odors of the covered employee.

Covered employees may be subject to reasonable suspicion drug testing any time while on duty. Covered employees may be subject to reasonable suspicion alcohol testing while the employee is performing safety-sensitive functions, just before the employee is to perform safety-sensitive functions, or just after the employee has ceased performing such functions.

Post-Accident Testing

Covered employees shall be subject to post-accident drug and alcohol testing under the following circumstances:

Fatal Accidents

As soon as practicable following an accident involving the loss of a human life, drug and alcohol tests will be conducted on each surviving covered employee operating the public transportation vehicle at the time of the accident. In addition, any other covered employee whose performance could have contributed to the accident, as determined by City of La Junta using the best information available at the time of the decision, will be tested.

Non-fatal Accidents

As soon as practicable following an accident not involving the loss of a human life, drug and alcohol tests will be conducted on each covered employee operating the public transportation vehicle at the time of the accident if at least one of the following conditions is met:

- (1) The accident results in injuries requiring immediate medical treatment away from the scene, unless the covered employee can be completely discounted as a contributing factor to the accident
- (2) One or more vehicles incurs disabling damage and must be towed away from the scene, unless the covered employee can be completely discounted as a contributing factor to the accident

In addition, any other covered employee whose performance could have contributed to the accident, as determined by City of La Junta using the best information available at the time of the decision, will be tested.

A covered employee subject to post-accident testing must remain readily available, or it is considered a refusal to test. Nothing in this section shall be construed to require the delay of necessary medical attention for the injured following an accident or to prohibit a covered employee from leaving the scene of an accident for the period necessary to obtain assistance in responding to the accident or to obtain necessary emergency medical care.

Random Testing

Random drug and alcohol tests are unannounced and unpredictable, and the dates for administering random tests are spread reasonably throughout the calendar year. Random testing will be conducted at all times of the day when safety-sensitive functions are performed.

Testing rates will meet or exceed the minimum annual percentage rate set each year by the FTA administrator. The current year testing rates can be viewed online at www.transportation.gov/odapc/random-testing-rates.

The selection of employees for random drug and alcohol testing will be made by a scientifically valid method, such as a random number table or a computer-based random number generator. Under the selection process used, each covered employee will have an equal chance of being tested each time selections are made.

A covered employee may only be randomly tested for alcohol misuse while the employee is performing safety-sensitive functions, just before the employee is to perform safety-sensitive functions, or just after the employee has ceased performing such functions. A covered employee may be randomly tested for prohibited drug use anytime while on duty.

Each covered employee who is notified of selection for random drug or random alcohol testing must immediately proceed to the designated testing site.

6. Testing Procedures

All FTA drug and alcohol testing will be conducted in accordance with 49 CFR Part 40, as amended.

Dilute Urine Specimen

If there is a negative dilute test result, City of La Junta will accept the test result and there will be no retest, unless the creatinine concentration of a negative dilute specimen was greater than or equal to 2 mg/dL, but less than or equal to 5 mg/dL.

Dilute negative results with a creatinine level greater than or equal to 2 mg/dL but less than or equal to 5 mg/dL require an immediate recollection under direct observation (see 49 CFR Part 40, section 40.67).

Split Specimen Test

In the event of a verified positive test result, or a verified adulterated or substituted result, the employee can request that the split specimen be tested at a second laboratory. City of La Junta guarantees that the split specimen test will be conducted in a timely fashion. **The cost of such test will be the employee's responsibility.**

7. Test Refusals

As a covered employee, you have refused to test if you:

- (1) Fail to appear for any test (except a pre-employment test) within a reasonable time, as determined by City of La Junta.
- (2) Fail to remain at the testing site until the testing process is complete. An employee who leaves the testing site before the testing process commences for a pre-employment test has not refused to test.
- (3) Fail to provide a specimen for a drug or alcohol test. An employee who does not provide a specimen because he or she has left the testing site before the testing process commenced for a pre-employment test has not refused to test.
- (4) In the case of a directly-observed or monitored urine drug collection, fail to permit monitoring or observation of your provision of a specimen.
- (5) Fail to provide a sufficient specimen for a drug or alcohol test without a valid medical explanation.
- (6) Fail or decline to take a second drug test as directed by the collector or City of La Junta.
- (7) Fail to undergo a medical evaluation as required by the MRO or City of La Junta's Designated Employer Representative (DER).
- (8) Fail to cooperate with any part of the testing process.
- (9) Fail to follow an observer's instructions to raise and lower clothing and turn around during a directly-observed urine drug test.
- (10) Possess or wear a prosthetic or other device used to tamper with the collection process.
- (11) Admit to the adulteration or substitution of a specimen to the collector or MRO.

- (12) Refuse to sign the certification at Step 2 of the Alcohol Testing Form (ATF).
- (13) Fail to remain readily available following an accident.

As a covered employee, if the MRO reports that you have a verified adulterated or substituted test result, you have refused to take a drug test.

As a covered employee, if you refuse to take a drug and/or alcohol test, you incur the same consequences as testing positive and will be immediately removed from performing safety-sensitive functions, and provided with contact information for SAPs.

8. Voluntary Self-Referral

Any employee who has a drug and/or alcohol abuse problem and has not been notified of the requirement to submit to reasonable suspicion, random or post-accident testing or has not refused a drug or alcohol test may voluntarily refer her or himself to the HR Department, who will refer the individual to a substance abuse counselor for evaluation and treatment.

The substance abuse counselor will evaluate the employee and make a specific recommendation regarding the appropriate treatment. Employees are encouraged to voluntarily seek professional substance abuse assistance before any substance use or dependence affects job performance.

Any safety-sensitive employee who admits to a drug and/or alcohol problem will immediately be removed from his/her safety-sensitive function and will not be allowed to perform such function until successful completion of a prescribed rehabilitation program.

Costs associated with such evaluation and treatment will be the responsibility of the employee.

9. Prescription Drug Use

The appropriate use of legally prescribed drugs and non-prescription medications is not prohibited. However, the use of any substance which carries a warning label that indicates that mental functioning, motor skills, or judgment may be adversely affected must be reported to the employee's supervisor or department head. Medical advice should be sought, as appropriate, while taking such medication and before performing safety-sensitive duties.

10. Contact Person

For questions about City of La Junta's anti-drug and alcohol misuse program, contact Dawn Block, HR Director, 719-363-1086, or in person at 601 Colorado Avenue, La Junta, CO 81050.

Attachment A: Covered Positions

Bus Driver

Dispatcher