

CITY COUNCIL MEETING – October 6, 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, October 6, 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:

Carly Johnson, Ward 2
Joe Ayala, Mayor
Chandra Ochoa, Ward 2
Lisa Pantoya, Ward 3
Maureen Rikhof, Ward 3

Absent: Damon Ramirez, Ward 1
Paul Velasquez, Ward 1

Also present: Michael Hart, City Manager
Erin Harris, City Attorney
Melanie Scofield, City Clerk
Aliza Libby, Director of Finance
Gary Reed, Rocky Ford
Elaine Wittman, La Junta
Tammy McCann, La Junta
David Polley, La Junta
Angela Ayala, La Junta
Lynne Tabb, La Junta
Judy Yoder, La Junta
Nancy Bennett, La Junta
Erika Lively, La Junta
Joe Farra, La Junta
Nancy Harrington, SECO News
Adrian Hart, SECO News
Bette McFarren, RF Gazette


Subject to approval at the
October 20, 2025
City Council Meeting


OATH OF OFFICE TO NEWLY APPOINTED COUNCIL MEMBER. The City Clerk administered the oath of office to newly appointed Council Member Carly Johnson (Ward 2).

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

1. David Polley, 622 Colorado Avenue: Was a fireman in his youth for the Forest Service and is an expert in fire behavior. Also trained as an arson investigator, as an observer. Had watched the Fire Chief at the last council meeting and shared his observations of the fire that happened at 618 Colorado Avenue
2. Angela Ayala, 1514 San Juan Avenue: Spoke about the Tarantula Fest and how big it has become. Thanked the City of La Junta, the community and the Tourism Board. The effort on everyone’s part was very appreciated. For those who don’t know, National Geographic has spotlighted La Junta quite a bit since Tarantula Fest. Thanked everybody for supporting the Tarantula Fest.

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3. Erika Lively, 213 Lewis Avenue: Suggested the idea of creating some sort of bike train and/or trail that's used along the ravine on the east side of town outside of the baseball field. Then bringing that trail and the trail on the west side together to make a full loop around La Junta.
4. Lynne Tabb, United Methodist Church Pastor, 601 San Juan Avenue: Invited everyone to a celebration on October 26th, Sunday afternoon at 1:00 p.m. The church buildings have been placed on the state and national registers of historic places as well as city. She thanked the council for their support. There will be music, information given out about the history of the buildings and then there will be an ice cream social afterwards.

INFORMATION

- A. **LJHS Theatre** - Gianna Ayala and Maranatha Hoyt, members of the La Junta Jr./Sr. High School Tiger Theatre: Invited everyone to their fall production of Beetlejuice Jr, the Musical. Will be held October 23rd and 24th at 7:00 p.m. and October 25th at 2:00 p.m. Run time for the play is one hour and fifteen minutes. Tickets are \$10.00 and may be purchased at the door.
- B. **2026 Budget Revision** – Aliza Libby, Director of Finance: Received the \$1.9 million in PFA's money this year instead of next year as planned. The revised 2026 budget is available online.

CONSENT AGENDA

- A. **Regular Meeting Minutes September 15, 2025**
- B. **Application for a Special Events Permit by Otero College Foundation, Bethany Bender, Event Manager. The event is their 30th Annual International Foods Night to be held November 7, 2025 from 6:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. at 2001 San Juan Avenue (Rizzuto Banquet Hall)**
- C. **Application for a Special Events Permit by American Legion Auxiliary Unit 9, Elaine Wittman, Event Manager. The event is their Annual Gala to be held November 15, 2025 from 6:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. at 2001 San Juan Avenue (Rizzuto Banquet Hall)**
- D. **Application for Renewal of a Tavern Liquor License by Tran & Yen LLC, d/b/a Asian Café, 414 W. 1st Street**
- E. **Application for Change of manager by Tran & Yen LLC, d/b/a Asian Café, from Charles Ly to Qiang He**

MOTION TO APPROVE THE OCTOBER 6, 2025 CONSENT AGENDA: Ochoa

SECOND: Pantoya

DISCUSSION: There was no discussion

VOTE: The motion carried 5-0 (Ramirez and Velasquez absent)

NEW BUSINESS

- A. **First Reading/AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF LA JUNTA AMENDING TITLE 17 OF THE MUNICIPAL CODE REGARDING EXPEDITED REVIEW FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROJECTS.** The ordinance was introduced by title only, there being copies available to those in attendance. Director of Engineering Montoya brought attention to a small discrepancy under Section 1 of the definitions that needs to be changed for the second reading. It says “. . . one-hundred (100) percent or less of the area median income for rentals or earning sixty (60) percent or less of the area median income for ownership . . .” It should actually read as follows: “. . . one-hundred (100) percent or less of the area median income for ownership or earning sixty (60) percent or less of the area median income for rentals . . .”

MOTION TO PASS THE ORDINANCE ON FIRST READING WITH THE TWO CHANGES THAT DIRECTOR OF ENGINEERING MONTOYA OF SWAPPING THE “OWNERSHIP” AND “RENTALS”:
Ochoa

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SECOND: Pantoya

DISCUSSION: There was no further discussion

VOTE: The motion carried 5-0 (Ramirez and Velasquez absent)

- B. First Reading/AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF LA JUNTA AMENDING TITLE 17 OF THE MUNICIPAL CODE REGARDING SIGN STANDARDS.** The ordinance was introduced by title only, there being copies available to those in attendance. Several people in town participated in the conversation and it is appreciated.

MOTIN TO PASS THE ORDINANCE ON FIRST READING: Rikhof

SECOND: Johnson

DISCUSSION: There was no further discussion

VOTE: The motion carried 5-0 (Ramirez and Velasquez absent)

C. Committee/Board Reports

1. Planning Commission (Council Member Rikhof):
 - The two ordinances of the affordable housing and sign standards were passed.

E. City Manager's Comments

- Woodruff Memorial Library October Calendar
 - Oct. 13th – Free Legal Clinic. Appointments are available via phone call since they Library is closed that day.
 - Oct. 19th – 25th – Friends of the Library Week. They are celebrating their 30th anniversary. Be sure to stop by the Library and pick up your Friends of the Library registration form.
 - Oct. 20th – 25th – Friends of the Library Silent Auction.
 - Oct. 23rd 4:00 p.m. – 6:00. p.m. – Author Talk. Corryl Mersettler, Sheri Dubois.
 - Oct. 25th 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. – Author Talk. The Lost Sand Creed Site. Mike and Chuck Bowen.
- Fire Department
 - This week is Fire Prevention Week.
 - Our safety trailers will be at various different schools, not just La Junta. They'll also be in Manzanola, McClave, Swink and Cheraw.
 - They're looking at about 650 kids that they'll have in front of them.
 - Also, Halloween candy will be at the station during the day on October 31st.
- Police Department
 - Oct. 10th is the homecoming parade that will start at 1:00 p.m.
 - Then Saturday, they will be helping with Trunk-or-Treat at Wal-Mart.
 - Oct. 31st is the Elks Annual Halloween party at the La Junta High School gym starting at 6:00 p.m.
- Senior Center
 - Lunch this month will be on Oct. 16th and will be enchiladas for only \$3.00.
 - Their Halloween party will be on the 30th.
- Parks & Rec
 - K-2nd Grade basketball registration has started and will run through the end of the month.
- Water/Wastewater
 - Been doing some replacement of membranes on RO "B".
 - Seasonal maintenance going on.
 - Replaced two fire hydrants.

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- Motor Pool continues to handle large repairs to include multiple air conditioners and hydraulic systems.
- Streets/Sanitation/Engineering
 - City-Wide clean-up. Open every day in October, except Sunday, from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
 - The sidewalk trail on 10th Street is still in process, hopefully to be done by the end of the week.
 - Projects that still need to be complete by year-end are: 6th Street by the Library, 14th Street fixing water cuts and paving at the Plaza Building.
- Human Resources
 - Currently advertising for Police Department and Electric Department positions.
 - By end of the week, all departments should be trained in Narcan administration.

F. Community Events/Council Reports

- Basketball game on Halloween at Otero College.
- Internation Food Night at Otero College on November 7th.
- Maureen will not be available next week for her Ward 3 meeting. Can reschedule if needed. Otherwise, it will resume on November 10th.
- Chamber of Commerce will have Trick-or-Treat Street.
- Inspiration Field has Trunk-or-Treat.
- Inspiration Field is also having their Monster Bash on October 24th.
- This weekend is CASA's Boot-n-Bling

G. Governing Body Reports

1. Mayor Ayala:
 - Want to thank everyone in this community. Tarantula Fest, we had people from all over, not just Colorado but the United States. They think it's the greatest thing that's ever happened. The Tarantula Committee is small but their mighty and I thank them and Tourism for everything they're doing to put La Junta on the map.
 - I also thank the Chamber for all of the events that they do as well. It's all a team effort.
 - Thank you to everybody that came out tonight and spoke. There are some tough conversations that might need to be had but we'll have them and work on them together.
 - Attended the presentation last night about Farmland Direct possibly opening a type of a co-op here in La Junta. It's still a long way from coming to fruition. But those things start with an idea and it takes people being active.
 - There was a high school football game, which is a rivalry game, called the Whistle Game which was in Lamar. The high school boys did a great job in bringing the whistle back to La Junta.
2. Council Member Rikhof:
 - Also, a big shout out to the A.R.T. Project. We had over fifty artists in town.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:34 p.m.

ATTEST:**CITY OF LA JUNTA**

 Melanie R. Scofield, City Clerk

 Joseph Ayala, Mayor