

**CITY COUNCIL MEETING – November 3, 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, November 3, 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  
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  
Gary Reed, Rocky Ford  
Betty Velasquez, La Junta  
Jim Goodwin, La Junta  
Tammy McCann, La Junta  
David Polley, La Junta  
Adrian Hart, SECO News  
Bette McFarren, RF Gazette

  
Subject to approval at the  
November 17, 2025  
City Council Meeting  


**PROCLAMATION – NOVEMBER 2025 AS NATIONAL HOSPICE AND PALLIATIVE CARE MONTH.**  
Mayor Ayala proclaimed November 2025 as National Hospice and Palliative Care Month.

**COMMUNITY RECOGNITION – Otero College Students:** A group of students stepped up in a big way for the City helping the Fire Department move a fire hose to another hydrant during the fire located at 618 Colorado Avenue. The City of La Junta along with the Fire Department would like to take a moment to recognize these students. Thank you for your actions that night. Otero College Students: Cali Fulks, Chloe Brill, Isabel Rosario, Danica Shawver, Jenna Schramm, Reagan Mewbourn, Marissa West, Ava Flading, Riley Lavgel, Ty Reed, Wyatt Kelley, Keita Fujino and Kaige Schriener.

**REPORT- Ty Winter, State Representative, House District 47**

- He and Senator Pelton signed a letter that was basically drafted by the local hospital here asking the governor to take a really hard look at where he’s going to spend the money that comes down to saving rural hospitals. It has to stay in rural Colorado.
- Last year, he and Representative Martinez worked on HB 25-1288 that supports federally qualified health centers. These monies usually go into the general fund and they were asking for it to be earmarked for health care.
- Also worked on HB 25-1222 which prevents pharmacy benefit managers (PBMs) from prohibiting rural independent pharmacies from using a private courier or delivery service to deliver prescription drugs to patients. (Gave the example of Mr. Davis in our Rocky Ford pharmacy.)

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- Passed Colorado’s House Bill 25-1203 which addresses the misbranding of cultivated meat by requiring it to be clearly labeled as such, prohibiting its sale under traditional meat labels like “beef” or “chicken” without a qualifying term. The law defines “cell-cultivated meat” and mandates that any such product must be conspicuously labeled with terms like “cell-cultivated” or “cell-cultured.” It’s also important that people know where their vegetables and fruit is coming from and that we send out a really good product.
- In Colorado, agricultural workers have the right to access key service providers, which includes health and legal professionals, during non-working hours, on rest or meal breaks, and remotely even on employer property. Re-started up the farm and ranch tours that Representative Kimmie Lewis used to do. Legislators out of Denver have no idea what our life is like down here.
- Passed a bill regarding property rights and labor. People just can’t come on your private property for any reason. Second, this is the key labor overtime provision on migrant workers. The workers are upset with this law because they come here to make as much money as fast as they can in order to go to another state to make more money.
- We’re in a state with a lot of emphasis on climate and green energy. However; wind and solar is not enough. HB 25-1040 designates nuclear energy as a clean energy resource alongside sources like solar, wind, and geothermal. It changed the definition from green energy to clean energy for the tax credits.
- Tried to pass a bill that would have added members to the PUC from our area. We were basically told by people testifying against the bill that there was nobody smart enough in Southeastern Colorado to be on the PUC. I think it’s important you know that.
- The people of Colorado wanted wolves, now the people of Colorado have to pay up to farmers and ranchers and stock growers that have their animals eaten by wolves. The wolf activists were finding these people that were being reimbursed and harassing them, cutting fences, protesting outside of their houses. So, we passed to make it where their names are hidden from a CORA request. Not to hide anything but what was happening to these people was wrong.

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

1. Jim Goodwin, 1317 Bradish Avenue: 1) The bathroom doors at the new park are locked. There’s not toilet paper in the outside toilets. If we’re not going to use that building the lines need to be flushed and signs put up saying closed. 2) At Wal-Mart on the weekends I’ve seen four or five city vehicles there getting their groceries. Some of them have even had their spouses with them. This kind of stuff needs to stop.
2. David Polley, 622 Colorado Avenue: Thanked Paul for meeting with him after the last council meeting. I talked to the District Attorneys office today and the police finally got their report in but they need to have the final totals from all of us that were victimized by that fire. In order to determine whether this young man’s going to have a felony or a misdemeanor. I was really shocked to find out that the \$890,000 devastating loss that the city had on the abandoned property that got burned was not reported to raise that to a felony with the DA. I want you guys to know, nobody can run. It’s going to come out and it’s going to be known. The statute of limitations when that fire crossed property lines, that’s attempted second-degree murder. There’s no statute of limitations on that and there’s no statute of limitation on first-degree arson. When you guys in the city didn’t respond to the tree fire, that was your fire from then on and everything you did dropping the hose, not going to the hydrant that was right across the street, all these things to allow the fire to burn out of the back of the building and get established and only fight it from the side of the road, it’s just unbelievable to me.

**CONSENT AGENDA****A. Regular Meeting Minutes October 20, 2025**

MOTION TO APPROVE THE NOVEMBER 3, 2025 CONSENT AGENDA: Ramirez

SECOND: Rikhof

DISCUSSION: There was no discussion

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

**CITY COUNCIL MEETING – November 3, 2025****UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

- A. Second Reading/AN ORDINANCE FIXING THE MILL LEVY FOR ASSESSMENT OF VALUATIONS FOR THE YEAR ENDING ON DECEMBER 31, 2025 (FISCAL YEAR, 2026).** The ordinance was introduced by title only, there being copies available to those in attendance.

MOTION TO PASS THE ORDINANCE ON SECOND READING: Velasquez

SECOND: Johnson

DISCUSSION: There was no discussion

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

- A. Second Reading/THE ANNUAL APPROPRIATION ORDINANCE: APPROPRIATING SUMS OF MONEYS TO DEFRAY EXPENSES AND LIABILITIES OF THE CITY OF LA JUNTA, COLORADO FOR THE CITY'S FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING JANUARY 1, 2026 AND ENDING ON DECEMBER 31, 2026.** The ordinance was introduced by title only, there being copies available to those in attendance.

MOTION TO PASS THE ORDINANCE ON SECOND READING: Velasquez

SECOND: Pantoya

DISCUSSION: Council Member Rikhof has concerns regarding the 15% increase in the general fund miscellaneous expenses, the leasing of vehicles and would like the financial statements on the agenda.

VOTE: Those voting YES: Ramirez, Velasquez, Johnson, Ayala, Pantoya

Those voting NO: Rikhof

The motion carried 5-1 (Ochoa absent)

**NEW BUSINESS**

- A. First Reading/AN ORDINANCE MAKING SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS TO THE INTERNAL SERVICES, WATER, AND WASTE WATER FUNDS FOR THE CALENDAR YEAR 2025.** The ordinance was introduced by title only, there being copies available to those in attendance.

MOTION TO PASS THE ORDINANCE ON FIRST READING: Velasquez

SECOND: Pantoya

DISCUSSION: There was no discussion

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

**B. Committee/Board Reports**

1. Senior Citizens Center (Council Member Velasquez):
  - Their next meeting will be this Thursday.
  - The November Gem of the Month is Mrs. Pat Valdez. She's been a member since 2005. Her message is to offer others the same understanding and grace that you would want for yourself.
2. AVRMC (Council Member Velasquez):
  - Will be hosting a wellness and women's health event on November 13<sup>th</sup> from 4:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. where they're going to be doing the ribbon cutting for the new 3D mammography machine. It'll be a wellness expo and tours.

**C. City Manager's Comments**

- 618 Colorado Avenue: The EPA has concluded their cleanup work. What's left is removal of the concrete and the backfill which will be done by our city crew. Work is anticipated to be completed no later than the end of the month.

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- Ark Valley Conduit: Still not real clear as to what they're actually going to be doing for us here in La Junta. From 2011 to today we've paid out almost \$1.5 million and we've received absolutely nothing. The update they gave us is that their continuing to work on the conduit to get it out this way but it's just a slow-moving thing. I would like to have a discussion about this over continued effort into this because I'm not really seeing that the city is getting out of it nor do I see it getting to us anytime soon.
- Police: It was alluded to last month about the loss of police officers. Of the six that we've lost this year, one has moved out of town, two have left law enforcement, another one went back with Crowley County and two other ones left to different agencies. Since then, they have one cadet that will be graduating in December and starting FTO. There are two others that are in the middle of the background check process and should be starting within the next month or so. Currently, there are seven applicants for the upcoming law academy, which has been narrowed down to three which will get them back to a full staff within the next couple of months.
- Electric: Have lost three employees to larger utilities. So far, they've had two hired back. They are brand new so it's going to take a little bit of training. They have three certified journey linemen and three apprentices. Two of these will be certified in January.
- Fire: October was Fire Prevention month. They taught about 700 different kids in schools here at La Junta Primary, Manzanola Elementary, Cheraw, La Junta CDS, Hasty, McClave, and a few of the other smaller daycare programs here in the area.
- Parks: The tennis courts should be starting this week.
- Airport: The final documentation for the planning on the runway replacement has been submitted. This will happen next year.
- Purchasing: A self-audit is being conducted. They continued with yard cleanup and some lighting upgrades at the warehouse.
- Sanitation: During the October Cleanup they received 1,126 tires, the compactor took on a total of 77 tons, there was 2 ½ 20-yard roll-offs of e-waste, two tons of paint waste, 30 gallons of antifreeze, 140 gallons of used oil and almost 30 tons of metal.
- Library: Gave out around 800 pieces of candy and 400 books. The participation in the free movie that happens every month is down and they are looking to potentially discontinue that service in the coming year.
- Senior Center: Breakfast burritos this Friday.
- With the SNAP benefits and the government shutdown going on, we're getting together to try to figure out how to make sure our people here in La Junta and Otero County are still being fed. Essentially, we'll be putting together food drives at different places throughout the city.  
Mayor Ayala: Reached out to Associated Charities and they said that since the announcement of possible SNAP benefits being cut off, they've averaged five new people per day. They are not able to sustain that. The top three items they are needing is: cereal, dry milk, and mac'n cheese.

**D. Community Events/Council Reports**

- November 10<sup>th</sup> is the 250<sup>th</sup> birthday of the United States Marine Corps. Happy Birthday!
- November 11<sup>th</sup> is Veterans Day. Thank you to all the veterans. Staff Sergeant Ambrosio Guillen, who died during the Korean War, was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor for his actions. He was born in La Junta and grew up in Texas.
- Next week during everybody's day off, take a second to remember those veterans that are serving, have served or gave their fullest measure of service for their country.
- On Wednesday, October 22<sup>nd</sup>, Council Member Ramirez attended a luncheon in Rocky Ford hosted by the Lower Arkansas Valley Water Conservancy District. It was a lesson from the San Luis Valley on utilizing 1041 powers to protect local water rights.
- La Junta Chamber of Commerce is having their Veterans Day Celebration on November 11<sup>th</sup> from 1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m. at the La Junta Primary School.

**E. Governing Body Reports**

1. Council Member Velasquez:
  - Way to go La Junta celebrating Halloween!

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2. Council Member Pantoya:
  - Wanting to know if YEEHAW is setting something up for the cold. Where should people be directed?  
Council Member Rikhof: Make sure you are following Facebook. That's how most of their information is getting out. We are looking for volunteers who are willing to be trained and ready when we start having warming shelters. There are currently no warming shelters open.
  
3. Mayor Ayala:
  - Council will notice that we have an officer at the back of the room. There is an emergency switch up here for us to use however; now that the police have moved to the Armory, that won't help much. So, we'll have an officer at our council meetings and court nights just to make sure everyone is safe. Thank you for being here with us tonight.
  - There were multiple officers from La Junta Police Department, Bent County, Otero County at Wal-Mart this morning. We received an email middle of last week that people may try to get unruly because of the SNAP benefits being cut. So, Chief Quick was able to be proactive instead of reactive and make sure that we had a presence out there.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:06 p.m.

**ATTEST:**

**CITY OF LA JUNTA**

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Melanie R. Scofield, City Clerk

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Joseph Ayala, Mayor