

**CITY COUNCIL MEETING – December 15, 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, December 15, 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  
Chandra Ochoa, Ward 2  
Lisa Pantoya, Ward 3  
Maureen Rikhof, Ward 3

  
Subject to approval at the  
January 5, 2026  
City Council Meeting  


Absent: none

Also present: Michael Hart, City Manager  
Erin Harris, City Attorney  
Melanie Scofield, City Clerk  
Pam Denahy, Director of Tourism/Econ. Dev.  
Joven Green, La Junta  
Mindy Green, La Junta  
David Polley, La Junta  
Kayleigh Hart, La Junta  
Luci Gendreau, La Junta  
Nancy Harrington, SECO News  
Bette McFarren, RF Gazette

**EMPLOYEE SERVICE AWARDS**

**A. November 2025**

**1. Cesar Carrillo, Industrial Park – 25 years.**

- 9/16/1999-11/1/1999 Part time Laborer Street Department
- 4/17/2000 Part time Laborer Park Department
- 11/1/2000 Transferred to Sanitation Department as Full time Refuse Collector
- 2/16/2002 Transferred to Industrial Park as Maintenance Worker I
- 2/16/2022 Promoted to Maintenance Worker II

**B. December 2025**

**1. Mitch Zgorzynski, Police – 10 years**

- 11/16/2015 Full time Academy Cadet
- 12/1/2015 Police Officer
- 12/2021 Sergeant
- 01/2025 Investigator

**CITY COUNCIL MEETING – December 15, 2025****2. Virginia Roybal, Warehouse – 20 years**

- 2/20/2002 Part time bus driver
- 12/1/2005 Full time Electric/Motor Pool Secretary

**3. Melanie Scofield, City Clerk – 30 years**

- 7/24/1995 Part time Clerk/Typist Police Department
- 12/11/1995 Full time Accounting Technician Finance Department
- 1/1/2015 Deputy City Clerk
- 1/1/2016 City Clerk
- 1/1/2025 Added Urban Renewal Director responsibilities

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

1. There was no citizen participation.

**REPORTS****A. Tourism/Economic Development (Pam Denahy).**

- 2025 Tarantula Fest had more than 2,000 people go through the Education Pavilion. There were 100 people who attended the presentation at Otero College. The tours booked quickly. There were five busses and a waitlist of over 100 people. There were also 107 vendors, including food and merchants. The next Tarantula Fest will be September 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup>, 2026.
- The procurement request for the Design & Engineering services of the MMOF, the Welcome Center, was approved. There have been conversations with the Chamber as well as other partners.
- America 250/Colorado 150 will be celebrated in 2026. We will be bringing a proclamation to council in January.
- Continuing to work on the short-term rental compliance. It's been challenging to get it done with rules and regulations changing. In 2016, we had 2 short-term rentals and now we're up to twenty-four. Based on the numbers, an estimated \$17,000 in revenue is expected.
- Having lots of conversation around the structure of Economic Development and what it should look like. We've done some research and re-instated the La Junta Economic Development Inc. The next step will be looking at bylaws, board of directors, budgeting and how best to move forward.
- The three priorities from the Economic Development Summit were: 1) beautify storefronts in downtown La Junta, 2) identify new primary industries to recruit to La Junta Industrial park by 2030, and 3) reassess and upgrade all aging city infrastructure.
- La Junta Creative Mainstreet, which used to be called La Junta Rise, is a program under DOLA. This is where we received the grant for the parklet. In 2026, we'll be focusing on re-branding.

**CONSENT AGENDA****A. Regular Meeting Minutes December 1, 2025**

MOTION TO APPROVE THE DECEMBER 15, 2025 CONSENT AGENDA: Ramirez

SECOND: Rikhof

DISCUSSION: There was no discussion

VOTE: The motion carried 7-0

**CITY COUNCIL MEETING – December 15, 2025****UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

- A. Second Reading/AN ORDINANCE REQUIRING SHORT-TERM RENTAL MARKETPLACES TO COLLECT AND REMIT LODGING TAXES ON BEHALF OF HOSTS WITHIN THE CITY OF LA JUNTA, COLORADO.** The ordinance was introduced by title only, there being copies available to those in attendance.

MOTION TO PASS THE ORDINANCE ON SECOND READING: Ochoa

SECOND: Velasquez

DISCUSSION: There is concern regarding Section 2, Item 1 and Section 4, Item 2 referencing a policy/license that does not exist.

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

Those voting NO: Rikhof

The motion carried 6-1

- B. Second Reading/AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE CITY OF LA JUNTA SUBDIVISION REGULATIONS TO ESTABLISH A PROCEDURE AND CRITERIA FOR LOT MERGERS AND TO REQUIRE REZONING REVIEW FOR MERGERS INVOLVING MULTIPLE ZONING DISTRICTS.** The ordinance was introduced by title only, there being copies available to those in attendance.

MOTION TO PASS THE ORDINANCE ON SECOND READING: Rikhof

SECOND: Johnson

DISCUSSION: There was no discussion

VOTE: The motion carried 7-0

**NEW BUSINESS****A. Board Appointments****1. ARPA Board****a. Gary Cranson (term to expire 12/31/2029)**

MOTION TO REAPPOINT GARY CRANSON TO THE ARPA BOARD: Rikhof

SECOND: Velasquez

DISCUSSION: There was no discussion

VOTE: The motion carried 7-0

**2. Historic Preservation Board****a. Aimee Hill (term to expire 12/31/2027)**

MOTION TO APPOINT AIMEE HILL TO THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION BOARD: Rikhof

SECOND: Pantoya

DISCUSSION: There was no discussion

VOTE: The motion carried 7-0

**3. La Junta Housing Authority****a. Luann Cannon (term to expire 12/31/2030)**

MOTION TO APPOINT LUANN CANNON TO THE LA JUNTA HOUSING AUTHORITY:  
Rikhof

SECOND: Ochoa

DISCUSSION: There was no discussion

VOTE: The motion carried 7-0

**b. Diana Pennington (term to expire 12/31/2029)**

MOTION TO APPOINT DIANA PENNINGTON TO THE LA JUNTA HOUSING AUTHORITY:  
Rikhof

SECOND: Ochoa

DISCUSSION: There was no discussion

VOTE: The motion carried 7-0

**4. Library Advisory Board**

**a. Nickolas Burdick (term to expire 12/31/2028)**

MOTION TO REAPPOINT NICKOLAS BURDICK TO THE LIBRARY ADVISORY BOARD:  
Johnson

SECOND: Rikhof

DISCUSSION: There was no discussion

VOTE: The motion carried 7-0

**b. Sara Holt (term to expire 12/31/2028)**

MOTION TO REAPPOINT SARA HOLT TO THE LIBRARY ADVISORY BOARD: Ramirez

SECOND: Johnson

DISCUSSION: There was no discussion

VOTE: The motion carried 7-0

**5. Planning Commission**

**a. Gregg Portch (term to expire 12/31/2031)**

MOTION TO REAPPOINT GREGG PORTCH TO THE PLANNING COMMISSION:  
Velasquez

SECOND: Rikhof

DISCUSSION: There was no discussion

VOTE: The motion carried 7-0

**6. Senior Citizens Board**

**a. Mary Sue Holland (term to expire 12/31/2027)**

MOTION TO APPOINT MARY SUE HOLLAND TO THE SENIOR CITIZENS BOARD:  
Velasquez

SECOND: Pantoya

DISCUSSION: There was no discussion

VOTE: The motion carried 7-0

**b. Connie Ortiz (term to expire 12/31/2027)**

MOTION TO APPOINT CONNIE ORTIZ TO THE SENIOR CITIZENS BOARD: Velasquez

SECOND: Rikhof

DISCUSSION: There was no discussion

VOTE: The motion carried 7-0

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**7. Tourism Advisory Board****a. Ruth Ayala (term to expire 12/31/2028)**

MOTION TO APPOINT RUTH AYALA TO THE TOURISM ADVISORY BOARD: Ramirez

SECOND: Pantoya

DISCUSSION: There was no discussion

VOTE: The motion carried 7-0

**8. Board of Utilities****a. CaSandra Thomas (term to expire 11/2027)**

MOTION TO APPOINT CASANDRA THOMAS TO THE BOARD OF UTILITIES: Rikhof

SECOND: Johnson

DISCUSSION: There was no discussion

VOTE: The motion carried 7-0

**B. Committee/Board Reports****1. Senior Citizens Advisory Board (Council Member Velasquez):**

- The action item at the last meeting was the appointment of the two ladies to the Board.
- Next meeting will be on January 8<sup>th</sup>.

**2. Utilities Board (Council Member Velasquez):**

- The Utility Department will be closed on Fridays. Office hours will be Monday – Thursday from 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. The Drive-Up will be open until 5:00 p.m.
- If you anticipate difficulty paying your utility bill, please see Aliza.
- The fire hydrants in La Junta are inspected once a year by the Water Department.
- If you receive a mailing in reference to water quality in La Junta, this is an independent company and has nothing to do with the City of La Junta.
- Appointed CaSandra Thomas to the Utility Board.
- Christmas lighting contest starts tonight and will end on the 18<sup>th</sup>.

**3. Library Advisory Board (Council Member Rikhof):**

- Took December off.

**4. Planning Commission (Council Member Rikhof):**

- Will meet this Thursday.

**C. City Manager's Comments**

- Just about finished up with the demo at 1220 Rice Avenue.
- Martin is in the process of pursuing a grant to get two more houses torn down.
- The Gibson building parking lot is looking much better. We have been working with them for the last several months. Their plan is to rehab the building.
- Have a meeting on the 30<sup>th</sup> regarding the MMOF to discuss the next steps, establishing the parameters of the RFQ.
- Met with Scott with SECOM, he gave the City a check for \$1,000 to pass along to Associated Charities to help out with the donations.
- Covered dish is this Wednesday.
- Got together with supervisors today and had a festive celebration of breakfast and a gift exchange. I appreciate every one of the supervisors we have here at the City.

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**D. Community Events/Council Reports**

- Council Member Rikhof noticed that out of the eleven people appointed tonight, four were reappointments and seven were appointments. Hopefully this is showing a trend towards new people getting involved on our committees and boards.
- Thanked those who supported YEEHAW on Friday night. It was amazing. In less than two hours, over \$1,000 was raised.
- Meeting days/times may be found on the City's website for all of the various boards.

**E. Governing Body Reports**

1. There were no governing body reports.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:47 p.m.

**ATTEST:**

**CITY OF LA JUNTA**

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Melanie R. Scofield, City Clerk

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Joseph Ayala, Mayor