



MINUTES  
REGULAR MEETING LA JUNTA CITY COUNCIL  
LA JUNTA, CO  
APRIL 6, 2026  
6:00 PM  
COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
601 COLORADO AVENUE

**CALL TO ORDER (Mayor Ayala)**

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

**INVOCATION (Mayor Ayala)**

Mayor Ayala gave the invocation.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE (Mayor Ayala)**

Mayor Ayala led everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**ROLL CALL (City Clerk)**

Mayor Joe Ayala  
Council Member Damon Ramirez  
Council Member Paul Velasquez  
Council Member Scott Copley  
Council Member Chandra Ochoa  
Council Member Lisa Pantoya  
Council Member Maureen Rikhof

Absent: none

Also Present: Michael Hart, City Manager  
Erin Harris, City Attorney  
Melanie Scofield, City Clerk  
Pam Denahy, Tourism/Econ.Dev.  
Tom Seaba, Water/Wastewater  
Cheryl Lindner, La Junta  
Matthew Avens, La Junta  
Kara Copley, La Junta  
Ky Davis, La Junta  
Wallner Balicki, La Junta  
Denise Balicki, La Junta  
Gary Reed, Rocky Ford  
Adrian Hart, SECO News  
Nancy Harrington, SECO News  
Bette McFarren, RF Gazette

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

Ky Davis, 24125 County Road 25: The La Junta High School is in a big financial crunch. The pool costs a lot of money to operate, and they are looking at ways to continue that operation. Southeastern Colorado lacks winter physical activity. This pool is the only indoor, competitive pool in the area. I wanted to make sure it was on your radar and make sure that it is something that we are looking at solutions to try and keep it here. While the school district's pool represents more than just the children in that school, it represents the community and that pool is used by a broader area than just this community. I would like to hope that you guys are considering ways to help because it is a valuable resource to the community.

### **EMPLOYEE SERVICE AWARDS**

A. March 2026

1. Tom Seaba, Water - 15 years

- 04/05/2010-12/24/2010 - Laborer at Cemetery
- 01/03/2011-03/16/2011 - Laborer at Cemetery
- 03/16/2011-08/2014 - Purchasing Clerk at Warehouse
- 08/2014-07/19/2018 - Water/Wastewater Quality Technician
- 07/19/2018-09/01/2018 - Administrative Director of Water/Wastewater/Motor Pool
- 09/01/2018 - Director Water/Wastewater/Motor Pool

### **PRESENTATION**

A. City of La Junta Motor Pool (Tom Seaba)

The mission of the City of La Junta Motor Pool is to provide cars, trucks, heavy equipment, fuel, repair parts, and offer maintenance support for the approximate 250 vehicles and other pieces of motorized equipment that support the various city departments. It is located at the Utility Service Center, which is the warehouse at 515 Lacey Avenue. We also prepare specifications to purchase all automotive equipment. We manage the purchase, storage and distribution of fuels and other automotive parts. We develop vehicle utilization and replacement policies and our technicians inspect all the CDOT approved vehicles within the city on a yearly basis. We also take care of registration and titling of every vehicle. We are an internal services department, so that means we bill other city departments for the services that we provide. Repair and fueling facilities are located on Lacey Avenue and are staffed daily. We have two mechanics and an operation supervisor who takes care of the schedule, ordering parts, and all the rest. Motor Pool is there for cost reduction and optimization. Centralized management and maintenance of all vehicles. Improved efficiency with the purchase and facilitation of vehicles for the various departments. We manage the asset lifecycle and our sustainability goal is to help the city track and improve fuel consumption and support the potential integration of hybrid, electric, or other alternative fuel vehicles for a better environmental impact in the future.

## **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

- A. 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 One-Year Review)

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 MATTER PERSONAL TO PARTICULAR EMPLOYEES: Ochoa

SECOND: Pantoya

DISCUSSION: There was no discussion

VOTE: The motion carried 7-0

**The Council went into Executive Session at 6:22 p.m. and reconvened at 6:42 p.m.**

## **CONSENT AGENDA**

- A. Regular Meeting Minutes March 16, 2026
- B. Application for a Special Events Permit by Otero Museum Association, Dave Hill, Event Manager. The event is their Annual Wine Tasting to be held April 24, 2026 from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at 706 W. 3rd Street
- C. Application for Renewal of a Tavern Liquor License by Red Dog Revisited LLC, d/b/a Red Dog Revisited, 709 E. 3rd Street
- D. Application for Renewal of a Tavern Liquor License by New Venture LLC, d/b/a Strike & Play, 2420 San Juan Avenue

MOTION TO APPROVE THE APRIL 6, 2026 CONSENT AGENDA: Ramirez

SECOND: Rikhof

DISCUSSION: there was no discussion

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

## **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

- A. Second Reading/AN ORDINANCE MAKING SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS TO THE ELECTRIC FUND FOR THE CALENDAR YEAR 2026 (City Attorney) (Action)

MOTION TO PASS THE ORDINANCE ON SECOND READING: Rikhof

SECOND: Ochoa

DISCUSSION: There was no discussion

VOTE: The motion carried 7-0

- B. Second Reading/AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF LA JUNTA, COLORADO, APPROVING AN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT WITH AUGGIE'S GROCERY LLC FOR A SALES TAX REBATE INCENTIVE RELATED TO THE OPERATION OF A GROCERY STORE WITHIN THE CITY (City Attorney) (Action)

MOTION TO PASS THE ORDINANCE ON SECOND READING: Ochoa

SECOND: Pantoya

DISCUSSION: There was no discussion

VOTE: The motion carried 7-0

MOTION TO RETRACT THE VOTE AND AMEND THE DATE OF THE ORDINANCE TO START JANUARY 1, 2027 AND NOW WITHIN 30 DAYS AFTER PUBLICATION

AND PASSED AS READ: Ochoa

SECOND: Pantoya

DISCUSSION: There was no discussion

VOTE: The motion carried 7-0

- C. Second Reading/AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF LA JUNTA, COLORADO, AMENDING CHAPTER 2.04 (CITY COUNCIL) AND CHAPTER 2.08 (CITY MANAGER) OF THE LA JUNTA MUNICIPAL CODE TO ESTABLISH COUNCIL PROCEDURAL STRUCTURE, PROVIDE FOR ADOPTION OF RULES OF PROCEDURE, AND CLARIFY CITY MANAGER GOVERNANCE CONSISTENT WITH THE HOME RULE CHARTER (City Attorney) (Action)

MOTION TO PASS THE ORDINANCE ON SECOND READING: Ochoa

SECOND: Velasquez

DISCUSSION: There was no discussion

VOTE: The motion carried 7-0

## **NEW BUSINESS**

- A. Incentive Funding Letter (SECRHA) (Action)

MOTION TO APPROVE THE SIGNING OF THE LETTER CONCERNING THE ADU PLANNING AND PROP 123: Rikhof

SECOND: Velasquez

DISCUSSION: There was no discussion

VOTE: The motion carried 7-0

- B. Committee/Board Report

1. AVRMC (Council Member Velasquez):

- The Board would like to thank Mayor Ayala and Michael Hart and County Commissioners Tim Knabenshue, Rob Oquist and Jim Baldwin for signing a joint

letter addressed to Senator Bennett and Senator Hickenlooper for some federal funding to modernize the radiology suite at the hospital.

- Tuesday, April 21st, will be the joint dinner between the hospital ward and the city council. The hospital is hosting this year. It will be in the medical education rooms 1 & 2 at the hospital.

2. Senior Center Board (Council Member Velasquez):

- There are 448 members.
- The lunch will be corned beef on Thursday April 16th.
- Rockies tickets will be \$13.00 this year.

3. Urban Renewal (Mayor Ayala):

- Spark Grant: If you remember with Sears, that storefront was empty, and it had some butcher paper hanging in the windows for at least four years. Urban Renewal and Main Street wrapped it in vinyl with some nice pictures showcasing La Junta. It made a big difference to the downtown. So, I started thinking, what if we did something for businesses that are actually active right now. Everyone was wondering why we'd do that for a business when no one's even there. So, Urban Renewal backed this idea, and we're doing ten \$5,000 storefront improvement grants. It can be used for things like windows, doors, vinyl, awnings, etc. There's been a lot of interest. The flyer and application can be found on the city's website and can be dropped off to Melanie.

C. City Manager Report

- The Police Department had 1,678 calls for service in March. Of those, fifty-three resulted in arrests, 164 traffic and twenty-one involved traffic crashes.
- At the end of March, the Police Department hosted training in partnership with the National Law Enforcement Firearms Instructors Association. There were two different courses. One was a two-day and the other was a three-day course. They had over thirty people come and participate in the training.
- Starting this week, the Police Department is holding an FBI Law Enforcement Executive Development Association training. It's a 3-part training. Last year was part one. This year is part two and next year will be the third part. Officers who complete that will earn their leadership trilogy. It's a significant professional achievement that enhances leadership capabilities and career development.
- The Fire Department had 222 calls for service in March. There were 165 medical and 57 fire and other calls for service.
- This Thursday through Sunday, the Fire Department will be doing Fire on the Plains training. There will be about 140–150 people here in town at the college as well as the Fire Training Center.
- Teen volunteer applications are available at the Library starting today. They must

be returned by May 11th at 6:00 p.m. The volunteers help with the Summer Reading Program. You can pick up an application at the Library or you can download it from the website or Facebook page.

- The third Friday movie this month will be April 17th at 1:00 p.m. The movies are Elemental and Biggest Little Farm.
- The Library is also doing a six-word story contest through the month of April. You must be a resident of Otero, Crowley, or Bent county to participate. If you have any questions, call the Library or email Kimberly.
- If we have good enough weather, the tennis courts project may start tomorrow.
- The bids have closed today for the runway resurfacing project. We ended up with four total bids.
- New irrigation software has been installed at the golf course which will help run the system much more effectively.
- We will be rewarding the MMOF project on Friday. We received nine different submissions. The committee has kind of the same company in mind.
- The wall mural bid will be closing on Monday the 13th.
- Fuel surcharges are reappearing for deliveries. Some as high as 25–30%.
- Applications for summer help closed on the 30th. We had seventy-five applications for the pool, water, wastewater, park, cemetery and street.
- Currently taking applications for Water Treatment Plant Maintenance Worker and Water Plant Operator. Those will close on the 15th.
- Had another baby born in March, so that's four babies so far this year.
- I will be attending the CCCMA Conference in Glenwood Springs next April 15th - 17th.

#### D. Community Events/Council Report

- April 6th: Council had a work session with Congressman Jeff Hurd representing Colorado's 3rd Congressional District. We had a good discussion about various things going on here in the valley and La Junta.
- April 11th: Sutherland's 2nd Anniversary party all day in their parking lot.
- April 13th: Ward 3 Listening meeting at the park at 6:00 p.m.
- April 15th: Casa Heart of the Valley Luncheon at noon at the college.
- April 20th: City Council tour of Bent's Fort in the morning.
- April 21st: Joint AVRMC and City Council meeting.
- April 23rd: La Junta is celebrating 145 years. In honor of that, Dickies is making a special menu for the occasion.
- April 24th: Otero Museum is having their Annual Wine Tasting event.
- April 25th: Inspiration Fields 60th Annual Block party all day.
- April 24th-26th: Otero students are putting on their spring play. It's a musical called Mr. Burns A Post Electric Play.

Past Event: On March 21st, there was a sports card and collectibles trade show at the college. People were from all over the state. Thank you to Primo Rips who sponsored it.

They would like to have more events in La Junta.

E. Governing Body Report

- We had an individual or individuals who made it a good way around the west side of town, spray-painting various buildings and city property. They hit Brick & Tile Park. If you know anything about this, get a hold of La Junta Police Department. They are working to figure out who is behind this.
- Something we might look at when budget time comes around is maybe purchasing more cameras. It's not something that we want to have to spend money on, but at this rate, with everything going on in our parks and around town, it's always a good idea to have.
- Regarding the trails and parks. Our workers do a lot of work every morning. The trail looks great and is beautiful, but you didn't see what they did when they got to work that morning to make it look that way. It's the same with City Park. They have other duties to tend to in the mornings.

**ADJOURN**

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:15 p.m.

ATTEST:

CITY OF LA JUNTA

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Melanie R. Scofield, City Clerk

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Joseph Ayala, Mayor

**CITY COUNCIL MEETING – March 16, 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, March 16, 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  
Joe Ayala, Mayor  
Chandra Ochoa, Ward 2  
Lisa Pantoya, Ward 3  
Maureen Rikhof, Ward 3



Subject to approval at the  
April 6, 2026  
City Council Meeting

Also present: Michael Hart, City Manager  
Erin Harris, City Attorney  
Cristian Estrada, Deputy City Clerk  
Ben Mason, La Junta  
Elaine McIntyre, La Junta  
Chris Arguello, Electric, City of La Junta  
Jennifer Hinkhouse, Purchasing, City of La Junta  
Gary Reed, Rocky Ford  
Chery Lindner, La Junta  
Adrian Hart, SECO News  
Nancy Harrington, SECO News  
Bette McFarren, RF Gazette



**WARD 2 VACANCY APPOINTMENT: Scott Copley, La Junta.** Has had the opportunity to serve his community is something he has done most of his adult career; he and his wife have lived in the community for the last 24 years. Have really grown to love and appreciate the area. Has been impressed with this council. Would like to give back to the community by enhancing the community to the best of his abilities and assist the council with any challenges that may come. Has worked previously with the City’s Police Department.

**MOTION TO ACCEPT THE LETTER OF INTEREST BY SCOTT COPLEY TO FILL THE WARD 2 VACANCY:** Ramirez

**SECOND:** Velasquez

**DISCUSSION:** There was no discussion

**VOTE:** The motion carried 5-0 (Rikhof absent)

**PUBLIC HEARING: Application for a New Retail Fermented Malt Beverage and Wine Liquor License by Colorado Harvest Markets, Inc. d/b/a Auggie’s Market, 315 W. 2<sup>nd</sup> Street**

1. Nolan Brown, Owner – came with his wife Amanda, his sons Hudson, Athen, and August (or “Auggie”). The store is named after August, the youngest of the family. Very excited to be a part of the community. Officially closed on a deal with the building today, and the building plus all

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equipment has been purchased. Shooting for early May (hopefully not, but the latest date would be late May) to open.

- a. Council Member Velasquez – What percentage of the retail space will be dedicated to selling alcohol?
  - i. Nolan Brown – Not very much; it would be probably just a single aisle. Not sure on what percentage of the store that would be.
- b. Council Member Ramirez – Since the storefront is currently not open, and there aren't employees yet, will there be training offered regarding alcohol sales?
  - i. Nolan Brown – Both he and his wife have taken the necessary alcohol license training; the same will be offered to the employees. This will not be another liquor store, just having beer and wine for convenience. Operating as a full grocery store. Just to comment to the public: have had a lot of applications for employment come in, please bear with the delays. Will be reviewing those applications closer to opening date.

MOTION TO APPROVE THE NEW RETAIL FERMENTED MALT BEVERAGE AND WINE LIQUOR LICENSE APPLICATION BY COLORADO HARVEST MARKETS, INC D/B/A AUGGIE'S MARKET, LOCATED AT 315 W. 2<sup>ND</sup> STREET: Rikhof

SECOND: Velasquez

DISCUSSION: There was no discussion

VOTE: The motion carried unanimously

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

1. Cheryl Lindner, 16 E. 22<sup>nd</sup> Street; the comments are not meant for the council, but the public; is concerned regarding the increased level and frequency of recent vandalism to the city parks. Graffiti, bathrooms and play apparatus being destroyed, picnic tables being thrown into the pond, dog waste being left on the walking trails – these are all preventable. The parks are services that are free of charge and able to be used by the public for basically whatever. It costs quite a bit of money (funds from tax dollars and the city) but not only costs, also labor needed to be able to constantly repair the damages, as well as more costs for rentals of port-a-potties. It is the job of us as citizens to be good stewards of said areas. If you see someone, or know someone who is causing the destruction, please say something.

**SUTHERLANDS 2025 UPDATE: Ben Mason**

- Officially in La Junta for three (3) years
- The store is entering its third summer, even though it is technically the second year of the garden being open
- Have 38 (eight (8) of whom were recently employed) employees of varying ages (high school to retirees who need some work) as well as varying experience levels
- Promoted two (2) local employees to assistant managers of the store; it has been a great change for them being able to move up.
- Have five (5) others that are currently being trained for assistant manager/lead positions
- Currently working on building a pole barn within the building
- Have a new assistant manager from Lawton, OK to help jumpstart the pole barn and the contractor program
- Est. payroll going back into the community is a little over \$600,000 a year
- Growth and sales totaled over \$8,000,000, which is a 23% increase for 2024
- Served well over 100,000 customers
- The AJ Quick Memorial Bow Range was opened last year, resulting in a successful \$35,000-\$40,000 in sales with archery and fishing equipment
- Held a number of shooting events at the Arkansas Valley Fair, Crowley County Days, and have sponsored Dove Fest the last four (4) years

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- Any students in 4-H are able to use the bow range free of charge
- New line of cabinets coming in soon
- Community involvement: there are several of Sutherlands employees that are on varying boards for the City of La Junta; have been a member of the Chamber of Commerce since the store opened, sponsored Early Settler's Day, and Tarantula Fest.
- Hosts students from Otero College's Construction Academy by teaching the younger generation about trades and giving them more enthusiasm in the trades
- Started working with Tiger Trades Academy, a lot of students are interested in Archery; was able to locate a grant through the State of Colorado; these students will also be able to use the AJ Quick Memorial Bow Range free of charge.
- Jeannie Mason has been hosting various community events for children at Sutherlands; Mother's Day decorating pot planters, Easter, 4<sup>th</sup> of July, Father's Day arts and crafts projects to help kids come to the hardware store
- Hosted a "No-Kill" pet shelter event; all but one dog was adopted
- Last year's anniversary event was incredible - \$100,000 made in sales just in one day with over 100,000 customers served; hosted non-food vendor booths at the anniversary event, as the La Junta Rotary Club grills hot dogs that day.
  - Announcing this year's Sutherlands Anniversary Event on Saturday, April 11, 2026. Parking lot is open to all non-food vendors; the "No-Kill" shelters will return, bounce houses, various fun events for everyone as well as a tour of the pole barn.

**CONSENT AGENDA****A. Regular Meeting Minutes March 2, 2026**

MOTION TO APPROVE THE MARCH 16, 2026 CONSENT AGENDA: Rikhof

SECOND: Ramirez

DISCUSSION: There was no discussion

VOTE: The motion carried unanimously

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

**A. Second Reading/AN ORDINANCE ANNEXING CERTAIN REAL PROPERTY TO THE CITY OF LA JUNTA, COLORADO, AND ESTABLISHING ZONING FOR SUCH PROPERTY.** 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: Rikhof

DISCUSSION: Council Member Rikhof – Reminding citizens that this has been vetted twice at planning and was discussed in detail at the last council meeting.

VOTE: The motion carried unanimously

**NEW BUSINESS**

**A. First Reading/AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF LA JUNTA, COLORADO, APPROVING AN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT WITH AUGGIE'S GROCERY LLC FOR A SALES TAX REBATE INCENTIVE RELATED TO THE OPERATION OF A GROCERY STORE WITHIN THE CITY.** The ordinance was introduced by title only, there being copies available to those in attendance.

MOTION TO PASS THE ORDINANCE ON FIRST READING: Ramirez

SECOND: Velasquez

DISCUSSION: Council Member Rikhof – This seems like a bigger deal than something that can be just "sailed through". Could it be explained how the numbers will affect sales tax revenue, since it has dipped a bit since Safeway closed. Just to inform the public that this was not just "thrown together" quickly.

**CITY COUNCIL MEETING – March 16, 2026**

City Manager Michael Hart - This is a 20% rebate sales tax return for a five (5) year period to begin in 2027. Officially this will end in 2032. Have discussed with Nolan regarding this. This is an exclusive deal with Auggie's Market. In case Nolan decides to sell the building just after two (2) years (hypothetically, hopefully will not happen) then the deal is null and void. It is a non-transferrable deal.

VOTE: The motion carried unanimously

- B. First Reading/AN ORDINANCE MAKING SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS TO THE ELECTRIC FUND FOR THE CALENDAR YEAR 2026.** The ordinance was introduced by title only, there being copies available to those in attendance.

MOTION TO PASS THE ORDINANCE ON FIRST READING: Rikhof

SECOND: Pantoya

DISCUSSION: City Manager Michael Hart - This had already gone through the Utilities Board. Jennifer Hinkhouse and Chris Arguello are here to answer questions. There is a need for a new roof at the power plant. They recommended this be sent to City Council for approval.

Purchasing Dir. Jennifer Hinkhouse – had a great turnout for the bids, totaling 20 contractors from within the state and out of state. There were 11 total submissions. Of those 11, there's about a \$500,000 difference. Those differences may be due to some bidders being from out of state – out of state employees, out of state materials can be costly, which could contribute to the vast differences within the bids. The successful bidder is from Pueblo, Colorado. The reason for going with this company is because the City of La Junta has done business with them prior in a similar capacity. They do good work, they are giving us a great deal, and they more than likely be purchasing some materials locally, as well.

Electric Supervisor Chris Arguello – (provided pictures to the council showing the damages on the roof) Would ask a regularly hired contractor to do patchwork; wouldn't know if there was another leak until the next rain or snow storm. Kept calling the same contractor for the job, however, they stopped coming. They also did not submit a bid for repair. That being said, they stopped coming, tried to put this as an insurance claim prior to submitting it for the budge, however, the insurance turned the claim down. That is why we are here discussing this with you, the council.

Council Member Copley – Would like clarification: Jennifer had mentioned that they have completed successful work with the city prior, what is their service like later, do they have a warranty to cover if damages occur shortly thereafter the repairs have been completed?

Purchasing Dir. Jennifer Hinkhouse – Yes, part of the bid was regarding the manufacturer that they chose has a 20-year warranty on the product. They are also close by (Pueblo, CO).

VOTE: The motion carried unanimously

- C. MOTION TO MOVE INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION FOR DISCUSSION OF A PERSONNE MATTER UNDER C.R.S. (INSERT SIMOLEON SYMBOL HERE)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 MATTER PERSONAL TO PARTICULAR EMPLOYEES:** Ochoa

SECOND: Velasquez

DISCUSSION: There was no discussion

VOTE: The motion carried unanimously

The Council moved into executive session at 6:41 p.m. and returned at 7:25 p.m.

- D. A Resolution of the City Council of the City of La Junta, Colorado, Adopting City Council Rules of Procedure Pursuant to Charter Section 5.1 and Municipal Code Section 2.04.060**

**CITY COUNCIL MEETING – March 16, 2026**

MOTION TO PASS THE RESOLUTION: Pantoya

SECOND: Velasquez

DISCUSSION: Council Member Rikhof – This is one of those resolutions that the board does not see until the Thursday prior to the meeting. There is a lot in this resolution, and is curious on what the thinking was behind the process. B and C seem to overlap a bit on this resolution. Would like to understand what is different/what was changed. Why the two separate resolutions?

City Attorney Harris – Since it was drafted by the office of City Attorney, part of the reason that was presented as B and C, the board ends up then discussing them separately and in more detail. This is, what the City Attorney's office thinks, can track better the changes that are made. These are not changes to the Charter itself, it would just change the current Municipal Code. The reason they are separate is partially due to them having different themes. If the council prefers these to be together, then the council should look into that and provide additional comments to the City Attorney's office concerning how the council would like it done.

Council Member Rikhof – Would appreciate more than just two (2) business days to look at these documents before the council is asked to vote on it once and only once. Now that the council has a new council member, this would be even more beneficial to have these documents at an earlier date.

VOTE: The motion carried 6-1

**E. First Reading/AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF LA JUNTA, COLORADO, AMENDING CHAPTER 2.04 (CITY COUNCIL) AND CHAPTER 2.08 (CITY MANAGER) OF THE LA JUNTA MUNICIPAL CODE TO ESTABLISH COUNCIL PROCEDURAL STRUCTURE, PROVIDE FOR ADOPTION OF RULES OF PROCEDURE, AND CLARIFY CITY MANAGER GOVERNANCE CONSISTENT WITH THE HOME RULE CHARTER**

City Attorney Harris – Once again, these were drafted at two different times addressing two separate needs. Still discusses the sorts of things that the council is generally already doing. This was drafted in response to Council Member Rikhof's questions regarding filling vacancies on city council. Is aware that the council only receives these documents on the Thursday prior to the meeting, but these are drafted by the City Attorney's office well in advance. There is also time needed to gather all necessary documents together for the council packet.

MOTION TO PASS THE ORDINANCE ON FIRST READING: Ramirez

SECOND: Velasquez

DISCUSSION: Council Member Pantoya – Wanted to state that, as a city council member, doesn't look at the packet only on business days. City council seats are 24/7, so there is the possibility of reviewing the packets on the weekend.

Council Member Rikhof – Thinks that passing this ordinance is more solid. This one does have more specific and relevant information.

VOTE: The motion carried unanimously

**F. Committee/Board Reports**

1. Utilities Board (Council Member Velasquez):
  - The budget amendment for the roof replacement at the power plant on first street was already discussed and addressed by Jennifer Hinkhouse and Chris Arguello.
2. Senior Center Board (Council Member Velasquez):
  - New board has been seated: Mitch Cruz - Chair, Hollis Goodwin, Kathy Martinez, Mary Sue Holland – Vice Chair and Connie Ortiz – Secretary. Would like to thank previous board members: Dortha McClain, Bobby Reins, Karen Prather, Sue Vance, and Kathy Martinez for their long-standing efforts. Would like to thank Kathy Martinez, who is the longest-tenured member, to temporarily fill the role as the interim chair for the board.
  - On Good Friday (first Friday of the month of April) there will be no breakfast, as the Senior Center is closed.

**CITY COUNCIL MEETING – March 16, 2026****D. City Manager Report**

- MMOF – ended up receiving nine (9) bids. In the process of evaluating those bids. Looking to have that awarded by the second Friday in April
- CML District 6 meeting will be held here in La Junta on May 21, 2026 in the evening at the Otero College Rizzuto Banquet Room
- Seasonal hiring will begin for the various departments that offer seasonal jobs
- Approved a resolution today for new toilets at the City Park. These are going to be heavy duty stainless steel. As soon as they arrive, they will be installed
- Have received many pothole reports; asphalt companies have not opened for the season yet. This should happen between April or May; weather tends to be a major factor for these companies, as well as frequency of need, which La Junta is needing
  - This policy has changed within the last few years due to ownership of the asphalt plant changing, so some of its policies have also changed.
  - Council Member Rikhof thanked City Manager Michael Hart for his annual report. Is unsure whether or not it has been shared with the public.
    - City Manager Michael Hart asked Deputy City Clerk Cristian Estrada whether or not the annual report can be located on the city website,

**E. Community Events/Council Report**

1. Council Member Velasquez:
  - Citizens Academy through the Police Department – pick up your applications in the foyer of the old dispatch area of where the Police Department used to be at the Municipal Building.

**F. Governing Body Reports**

1. Council Member Rikhof:
  - Could not locate the links on the website to the Annual Report, Approved Budget, Zoning, and Municipal Code
  - The zoning code is on the website, but just that is linked and that is only one portion of the entire municipal code
  - It is important for citizens to be able to access these documents easily, and not needing to search around for it
  - The council tends to talk a lot about “special meetings”, however, in the language in what was passed tonight, “special meetings” is used consistently throughout the charter and what was passed tonight.
    - City Manager Michael Hart – there are differences between “special meetings” and “work sessions”. “Special Meetings” are meetings where business is done and things are passed and voted on, while “Work Sessions” are meetings where no business can be done, only discussions.
  - When is the council going to have the 2025 completed financials/actuals of the city?
  - When will the audit presentation be held?
  - The council had discussed about having a public safety work session; it has been over two years now. Believes a work session regarding public safety needs to be had. The city has laws and rules, but whether they are enforced or not is the question.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:49 p.m.

**ATTEST:****CITY OF LA JUNTA**


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 Cristian Estrada, Deputy City Clerk

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 Joseph Ayala, Mayor

**ORDINANCE NO. 1696**  
**AN ORDINANCE MAKING SUPPLEMENTAL**  
**APPROPRIATIONS TO ELECTRIC FUND FOR THE**  
**CALENDAR YEAR 2026.**

**WHEREAS**, the City of La Junta has adopted a budget for the calendar year 2026; and

**WHEREAS**, various funds anticipate revenues, expenses, and other changes not otherwise anticipated at the time of the creation of the 2026 budget; and

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT ORDAINED** by the City Council of the City of La Junta as follows:

**SECTION 1. Electric Fund** – That an additional \$136,000 be appropriated for the following expenditures:

- A. Expenses shall be for the following:
  - 1. Building Maintenance ..... \$ 136,000
- B. Revenues shall be for the following:
  - 1. Retained Earnings ..... \$ 136,000

**PASSED** on first reading the 16<sup>th</sup> day of March, 2026.

**ADOPTED** and approved as amended the 6<sup>th</sup> day of April, 2026.

**CITY OF LA JUNTA**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Joseph Ayala, Mayor

**ATTEST:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Melanie R. Scofield, City Clerk

**ORDINANCE NO. 1697**

**AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF LA JUNTA, COLORADO, APPROVING AN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT WITH AUGGIE'S GROCERY LLC FOR A SALES TAX REBATE INCENTIVE RELATED TO THE OPERATION OF A GROCERY STORE WITHIN THE CITY**

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**WHEREAS**, the City of La Junta is a home rule municipality organized pursuant to Article XX of the Colorado Constitution; and

**WHEREAS**, the City Council has the authority to promote economic development and encourage commercial investment within the City; and

**WHEREAS**, access to a full-service grocery store is an important component of community health, economic stability, and quality of life for residents of the City; and

**WHEREAS**, Auggie's Grocery LLC (the "Developer") proposes to purchase, renovate, reopen, and operate a grocery store within the City of La Junta involving approximately Three Million Dollars (\$3,000,000) in private investment (the "Project"); and

**WHEREAS**, the City Council finds that the Project will provide substantial public benefits to the City, including improved access to grocery services, employment opportunities, increased commercial activity, and the generation of municipal sales tax revenue; and

**WHEREAS**, in order to encourage the development and successful operation of the Project, the City desires to provide a limited economic development incentive in the form of a rebate of a portion of municipal sales tax generated by the Project; and

**WHEREAS**, the proposed incentive consists of a rebate equal to twenty percent (20%) of the City's municipal sales tax actually collected from the operation of the grocery store for a period of five (5) years; and

**WHEREAS**, the incentive is performance-based and will be paid only from municipal sales tax revenues actually generated by the Project; and

**WHEREAS**, the terms and conditions of the incentive are set forth in an Economic Development Agreement between the City and Developer; and

**WHEREAS**, the City Council has reviewed the proposed Economic Development Agreement and finds that approving the Agreement serves a valid public purpose and promotes the economic welfare of the City.

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**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF LA JUNTA, COLORADO:**

**Section 1. Approval of Economic Development Agreement**

The City Council hereby approves the Economic Development Agreement between the City of La Junta and Auggie's Grocery LLC, attached hereto as Exhibit A, substantially in the form presented to the City Council.

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**Section 2. Authorization to Execute**

The City Manager is hereby authorized and directed to execute the Economic Development Agreement on behalf of the City and to take such actions as may be reasonably necessary to carry out the intent of this Ordinance.

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**Section 3. Incentive Structure**

Pursuant to the Economic Development Agreement, the City shall rebate to the Developer an amount equal to twenty percent (20%) of the City's municipal sales tax actually collected from the operation of the grocery store for a period of five (5) years beginning after the Commencement of Operations as defined in the Economic Development Agreement, subject to the terms and conditions of the Agreement.

The rebate shall apply only to the City of La Junta's municipal sales tax and shall not apply to state, county, or special district taxes.

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**Section 4. Limitation of Obligation**

The incentive authorized by this Ordinance is performance-based and shall be paid only from municipal sales tax revenues generated by the Project.

Nothing in this Ordinance or the Economic Development Agreement shall be construed to create a multiple-fiscal-year debt or financial obligation of the City.

The City Council further finds that the incentive authorized herein promotes economic development within the City and is intended to encourage private investment that will generate municipal tax revenue and community benefits.

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**Section 5. Severability**

If any provision of this Ordinance is held invalid by a court of competent jurisdiction, such invalidity shall not affect the remaining provisions of the Ordinance.

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**Section 6. Effective Date**

This Ordinance shall take effect thirty (30) days after publication as required by the City Charter.

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INTRODUCED, READ, AND PASSED ON FIRST READING this 16<sup>th</sup> day of March, 2026.

ADOPTED AND APPROVED ON SECOND READING this 6<sup>th</sup> day of April, 2026.

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**CITY OF LA JUNTA, COLORADO**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Joe Ayala, Mayor

**ATTEST:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Melanie R. Scofield, City Clerk

**ORDINANCE NO. 1698**

**AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF LA JUNTA,  
COLORADO, AMENDING CHAPTER 2.04 (CITY COUNCIL) AND CHAPTER 2.08  
(CITY MANAGER) OF THE LA JUNTA MUNICIPAL CODE TO ESTABLISH  
COUNCIL PROCEDURAL STRUCTURE, PROVIDE FOR ADOPTION OF RULES OF  
PROCEDURE, AND CLARIFY CITY MANAGER GOVERNANCE CONSISTENT  
WITH THE HOME RULE CHARTER**

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**RECITALS**

**WHEREAS**, the City of La Junta is a home rule municipality organized pursuant to Article XX of the Colorado Constitution and governed by the City’s Home Rule Charter (the “Charter”); and

**WHEREAS**, the Charter establishes the fundamental structure, powers, and procedures of City government, and municipal code provisions adopted by ordinance must be interpreted and applied consistently with the Charter; and

**WHEREAS**, the City Council (the “Council”) is vested with the corporate authority of the City pursuant to the Charter and Section 2.04.010 of the La Junta Municipal Code; and

**WHEREAS**, Charter Section 5.1 provides that the Council shall determine the rules of procedure governing its meetings; and

**WHEREAS**, Charter Chapter VI establishes the council-manager form of government and defines the powers, duties, appointment, removal, and non-interference provisions relating to the City Manager; and

**WHEREAS**, the Council finds that clear procedural structure promotes transparency, orderly meetings, compliance with the Colorado Open Meetings Law, and effective governance; and

**WHEREAS**, the Council desires to codify structural provisions governing meetings and procedural administration while allowing detailed meeting rules and internal processes to be adopted and amended by resolution; and

**WHEREAS**, the Colorado Open Meetings Law, Article 6 of Title 24, C.R.S., applies to meetings of the Council, and the Council finds it appropriate to restate certain requirements within the Municipal Code for clarity and consistent governance practices; and

**WHEREAS**, the Council intends that any restatement of state law or Charter provisions within the Municipal Code shall be interpreted consistent with applicable Colorado law and the Charter and not as an expansion or limitation thereof;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF LA JUNTA, COLORADO:**

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**SECTION 1.**

**Amendments to Chapter 2.04 — City Council (Procedural Structure)**

Chapter 2.04 of the La Junta Municipal Code is hereby amended by adding the following sections:

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**2.04.030 — Meetings; Open Meetings Compliance.**

A. The Council shall hold regular and special meetings as provided in the Charter and shall conduct meetings in accordance with the Colorado Open Meetings Law, Article 6 of Title 24, C.R.S., as amended.

B. All meetings of the Council at which public business is discussed or formal action may be taken shall be open to the public except as otherwise permitted by law.

C. Executive sessions may be held only in compliance with Section 24-6-402, C.R.S., and any applicable Charter provisions.

D. This section is intended to restate and implement applicable open meetings requirements and shall not be construed to expand or limit state law or Charter authority.

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**2.04.040 — Agenda Preparation and Placement of Items.**

A. Agendas for regular meetings shall be prepared administratively by the City Manager in coordination with the Mayor, consistent with the Charter and the Council's adopted Rules of Procedure.

B. Any Councilmember may request that an item be placed on a future agenda. Requests shall be submitted in a manner and timeframe established by the Council's Rules of Procedure.

C. If the requested item is not placed on the agenda through the administrative process described in subsection (A), the item shall be placed on a future regularly scheduled meeting agenda upon a written request supported by at least one (1) additional Councilmember, at the next reasonably practicable meeting consistent with notice requirements and the Council's Rules of Procedure.

D. Nothing in this section limits the Council's authority to set or amend its agenda by motion, resolution, or other lawful action at a duly noticed meeting, consistent with the Charter.

E. Councilmembers shall conduct electronic communications in a manner consistent with the Colorado Open Meetings Law.

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**2.04.050 — Vacancies in Council Office.**

A. **Governing Authority.** Vacancies in elective office shall be filled as provided in the Charter, including without limitation Charter Section 4.6, and consistent with applicable law. The Council shall act within the timeframe required by the Charter.

B. **Administrative Process by Resolution.** The Council may adopt, by resolution, procedures to administer the vacancy-filling process, including solicitation of applications, eligibility verification steps, interview format, and a recommended timeline, provided that no such procedures shall conflict with the Charter’s requirements regarding appointment authority, voting thresholds, time limits, or election timing.

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**2.04.060 — Rules of Procedure.**

A. Pursuant to Charter Section 5.1, the Council shall determine and adopt Rules of Procedure governing the conduct of meetings and related procedural matters.

B. The Rules of Procedure may be adopted or amended by resolution.

C. In the event of a conflict between the Rules of Procedure and the Charter, the Charter shall control. In the event of a conflict between the Rules of Procedure and this Municipal Code, this Municipal Code shall control.

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**SECTION 2.**

**Amendments to Chapter 2.08 — City Manager (Charter-Consistent Governance Clarifications)**

Chapter 2.08 of the La Junta Municipal Code is hereby amended by adding the following sections:

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**2.08.030 — Council–Manager Relationship; Direction and Non-Interference.**

A. The City Manager is the chief executive and administrative officer of the City as provided in Section 2.08.010 and Charter Sections 6.1 and 6.3, and is responsible to the Council acting as a body.

B. Consistent with Charter Section 6.5, neither the Council nor any of its members, committees, or boards shall direct or request the appointment, removal, or discipline of any employee under the City Manager’s administrative authority, or otherwise interfere in administrative operations except as permitted by the Charter.

C. Neither the Council nor any member thereof shall give orders, publicly or privately, to any employee of the City under the administrative authority of the City Manager, except as permitted by the Charter.

D. Councilmembers may make inquiries and request information through the City Manager; such requests do not constitute administrative direction.

E. This section is intended to implement and restate Charter requirements and shall not be interpreted to expand or limit Charter authority.

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**2.08.040 — Performance Evaluation.**

A. The Council shall conduct a performance evaluation of the City Manager not less than annually, or more frequently as determined by the Council.

B. The format and procedures for such evaluation may be established in the Council's Rules of Procedure or by Council action.

C. Nothing in this section creates a contractual right to any particular evaluation format, rating system, or compensation outcome.

D. Discussion regarding the City Manager's performance may occur in executive session only to the extent permitted by law; any final action, including action affecting compensation or employment status, shall occur in open session.

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**2.08.050 — Appointment and Removal; Charter Controlled.**

A. Appointment of the City Manager shall be made in accordance with Charter Section 6.1, including the requirement of an affirmative vote of a majority of the entire Council.

B. Removal of the City Manager shall be made in accordance with Charter Section 6.4, including the requirement of an affirmative vote of a majority of the entire Council.

C. Eligibility and residency requirements shall be as provided in Charter Section 6.1.

D. Nothing herein supersedes the terms of an employment agreement approved by the Council, to the extent consistent with the Charter.

E. This section is intended to implement and restate Charter requirements and shall not be interpreted to expand or limit Charter authority.

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**SECTION 3.**

**Interpretation; Charter Supremacy.**

Nothing in this Ordinance is intended to amend, supersede, or conflict with the Home Rule Charter of the City of La Junta. In the event of any inconsistency, the Charter shall control.

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**SECTION 4.**

**Severability.**

If any provision of this Ordinance is held invalid, such invalidity shall not affect the remaining provisions of this Ordinance.

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**SECTION 5.**

**Effective Date.**

This Ordinance shall take effect in accordance with Charter Section 5.8.

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PASSED ON FIRST READING this 16<sup>th</sup> day of March, 2026.

PASSED ON SECOND READING AND ADOPTED this 6<sup>th</sup> day of April, 2026.

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**CITY OF LA JUNTA, COLORADO**

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Joseph Ayala, Mayor

**ATTEST:**

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Melanie R. Scofield, City Clerk



*City of La Junta*

*P O Box 489*

*La Junta CO 81050*

*719.384.5991*

[www.lajuntacolorado.org](http://www.lajuntacolorado.org)

April 6, 2026

Robyn DiFalco, Planning Capacity Unit Manager  
Local Planning Capacity Grant Program (Prop 123)  
Division of Local Government, DOLA  
Community Development Office  
1313 Sherman Street, Room 521  
Denver, Colorado 80203

RE: City of La Junta-Prop 123 Expedited Review Incentive Funds Request Letter

Ms. DiFalco:

Thank you for the notification of eligibility for the Prop 123 Expedited Review Incentive Funds. Our jurisdiction would like to request that the City of La Junta incentive funding be contributed to the existing LPC grant-funded Southeast Colorado Regional Housing Authority Project (#24-031), awarded to Crowley County as the fiscal agent and managed by SECED.

SECED and SECRHA staff will work with the lead fiscal agent on this grant to assist with grant fund management and reporting. While specific potential housing sites in the City of La Junta are yet to be determined, the SECRHA will assist in the entire development process for the City's projects.

The City looks forward to working on regional ADU planning and preparing additional sites for affordable housing to meet the City's Prop 123 commitments.

Sincerely,

Joe Ayala  
Mayor