



MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING LA JUNTA CITY COUNCIL
LA JUNTA, CO
JUNE 1, 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, June 1, 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)

Present: Damon Ramirez, Ward 1
Paul Velasquez, Ward 1
Scott Copley, Ward 2
Joe Ayala, Mayor
Chandra Ochoa, Ward 2
Lisa Pantoya, Ward 3
Maureen Rikhof, Ward 3

Absent: None

Also Present: Michael Hart, City Manager
Melanie Scofield, City Clerk
Pam Denahy, Director of Tourism/E.D.
Ron Hogan, AVRMC
Ben Mason, La Junta
Kasey Miehke, La Junta
Nancy Bennett, La Junta
Cole/Kate Smith, La Junta
CaSandra Thomas, La Junta
Elaine McIntyre, La Junta
Douglas Golding, La Junta
Mary/AI Martinez, La Junta
David Polley, La Junta
Cheryl Lindner, La Junta
Angela Ayala, La Junta
Erika Lively, La Junta
Gary Reed, Rocky Ford
Nancy Harrington, SECO News
Adrian Hart, SECO News
Bette McFarren, RF Gazette

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION (5-minute time limit per person)

1. Cole & Kate Smith, 621 W 8th Street/Timothy & Trisha Wyss 815 Nevada Avenue, La Junta: Concerns regarding vandalism, loitering, and cars doing donuts at the Brick & Tile Park. They would like some support in more security in the area so they can enjoy their homes.
2. Douglas Golding, 1316 Lincoln Avenue, La Junta: Thanked council for voting no to the business registration. Also spoke of the weeds on city property.
3. Mary Martinez, 516 Dalton Avenue, La Junta: Complained about the weeds on the property across from her home. Would like something done about it.
4. CaSandra Thomas, 324 Bradish Avenue, La Junta: Asked how the weed ordinance reads and what the process is.

INFORMATION

- A. DeBourgh Manufacturing - Patrick Berg (Presentation)

Patrick Berg gave a quick update after being acquired about three months ago. As far as the implementation and getting everything across between our companies, everything is going as planned. There's always going to be some challenges and difficulties in the transition period. LIST Manufacturing out of Boca Raton Florida is also a hundred-year-old company that's owned by a third-generation family. A lot of the ideals of this company are very similar to ours. It's been very rewarding for me personally to work with a family that is so similar to a lot of ways that we see doing business. We are looking into the first delivery of machinery that they have invested into our facility to arrive mid-July. Some of the things that we've been looking into investing in personally, they have stepped up and started a plan of implementation of new machines over the next twelve months. We're seeing a 30% reduction in school lockers which would have been a catastrophic situation that DeBourgh would have had to make some very serious decisions like our employment levels. At this point, we've had nobody removed from the team. We have very solid growth and anticipated growth of our work force over the next year because of the demand we're hoping to see in the market. Being able to weather across another company coming in and supporting the organization and bringing us into some of the investment levels that we have not been able to do ourselves. It's been very exciting.

CONSENT AGENDA

A. Regular Meeting Minutes May 18, 2026

MOTION TO APPROVE THE JUNE 1, 2026 CONSENT AGENDA: Ramirez

SECOND: Rikhof

DISCUSSION: There was no discussion

VOTE: The motion carried 7-0

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. Second Reading/AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF LA JUNTA, COLORADO, ACTING BY AND THROUGH ITS WATER ENTERPRISE, AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION AND DELIVERY OF A LOAN AGREEMENT AND GOVERNMENTAL AGENCY BOND WITH THE COLORADO WATER RESOURCES AND POWER DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY FOR THE FINANCING OF WATER SYSTEM IMPROVEMENTS INCLUDING LEAD SERVICE LINE REPLACEMENTS; AUTHORIZING THE PLEDGE OF NET REVENUES OF THE WATER ENTERPRISE; AUTHORIZING CITY OFFICIALS TO EXECUTE DOCUMENTS AND TAKE ACTION NECESSARY TO CARRY OUT THE FINANCING; AND PROVIDING OTHER MATTERS RELATED THERETO (Mayor) (Action)

MOTION TO PASS THE ORDINANCE ON SECOND READING: Rikhof

SECOND: Velasquez

DISCUSSION: There was no discussion

VOTE: The motion carried 7-0

NEW BUSINESS

A. Appointment of Members to the La Junta Capital, Inc. Board (Mayor) (Action)

City Manager Michael Hart explained that La Junta Capital Inc. started back in 1990. According to the Articles of Incorporation, the “purpose of assisting in the development and economic stabilization by promoting and assisting the growth and development of business concerns, including small business and industry concerns in the La Junta area. The primary objective of this corporation shall be the benefit to the area as measured by increased employment, payroll, business volume and corresponding factors and not monetary profits to its members.” When I first came here, I noticed that there was no Economic Development Board. We thought about re-creating the wheel; however, we discovered LJCI is actually governed in ordinance. So, it’s already established and under the city umbrella. The best thing to do now is to appoint new members to an interim board, allow them to establish bylaws and bring them back to the City Council for approval and then to establish a permanent board. The timeframe should be within three to four meetings of this interim board to get this done and back to council.

The members picked have a vested interest in Economic Development here in the city. Those picked for this interim board are: Pam Denahy, Christina Tozzie, Ben Mason, Angela Ayala, and Michael Hart. According to Chapter 2.44.040 in the Municipal Code, “no elected official of the city may serve as a director for said corporation.”

The LJCI Board would provide direction for the director of Economic Development and would remain a contracted employee with the city. The board currently has around \$9,000 to \$10,000 in an account they’ve had for years. As far as funding, many boards have participation with businesses, low-interest loans, and grants.

MOTION TO APPROVE PAM DENAHY, CHRISTINA TOZZIE, BEN MASON, ANGELA AYALA AND MICHAEL HART AS THE INTERIM BOARD MEMBERS OF LA JUNTA CAPITAL, INC.: Ochoa

SECOND: Velasquez

DISCUSSION: Council Member Rikhof feels this is one of those times when business hasn’t been discussed until the board meeting and the public doesn’t have the opportunity to have any input whatsoever. She thinks this is the least transparent thing they can do as a city council. What Mr. Hart read and the names of the proposed members should have been sent out ahead of time. She doesn’t know why it was kept a secret. Mr. Hart explained that this is one of his performance points for next year. Pam reports on a quarterly basis. He’s been talking about Economic Development the entire time he’s lived in La Junta and the fact that there is a need for a board. He doesn’t know how much more transparent he could have been since he’s been talking about it for a year now.

VOTE: Those voting YES: Ramirez, Velasquez, Copley, Ochoa, Pantoya

Those voting NO: Rikhof

The motion carried 5-1 (Ayala abstained)

B. AVRMC Amended and Restated Bylaws (Mayor) (Action)

Ron Hogan, AVRMC CEO shared that other than the amendment to the consolidation agreement, the most significant change is that these amended bylaws allow for governance to take place in the event of a national, regional or local catastrophe. In those limited circumstances, it would be the CEO, Chief of Staff and the Board Chair.

MOTION TO ACCEPT THE AVRMC AMENDED AND RESTATED BYLAWS: Rikhof

SECOND: Velasquez

DISCUSSION: There was no discussion

VOTE: The motion carried 7-0

C. Committee/Board Report

1. There were no committee/board reports.

D. City Manager Report

- Awarded contract to Ayers/Ironhorse for the MMOF.
- Police Department had 1,527 calls for service, 73 arrests, 157 traffic stops and 17 traffic collisions for May.
- The police will also be teaming up with Mayor Ayala and Mrs. Mayor Ayal this Friday at the park for E-bike safety.
- Code Enforcement had 131 calls for service, 35 weed violations, 11 trash violations, 8 municipal code violations and 73 animal complaints.
- The Fire Department had 179 calls for service, with 111 of them being EMS, 10 different accidents, various fire and other calls.
- The Fire Department was picked by MedTech Safety as a pilot program testing advance warning systems in the roadway. It's currently training purposes at this point.
- Street Department is working on chip seal preparation.
- Streets will start demo between 1st & 3rd Streets depending on CDOT.
- An RFQ was put out for the 3rd Street bridge.
- Currently working on advertising for a position in the Engineering Department.
- First season for swim lessons will be June 15th – 25th.
- The pool opened today.
- The bid for the taxi-way at the airport opened last Tuesday.
- The Electric Department are doing their annual tree trimming and routine line maintenance through town.
- Reminder that we are in Stage 2 water restrictions.
- The Summer Reading Program at the library kicked off today. There is so much going on everyday in the months of June and July.
- The audit is complete on the city side. We are waiting on the Rural Fire District.

E. Community Events/Council Report

1. Council Member Rikhof:

- As far as committee reports, I don't believe we've ever had a recreation committee report. Does that committee meet and why don't we hear reports?

Council Member Ramirez: I haven't been to a meeting this year.

- Then Tourism, is there a way that we could have a report for the council meetings?

City Manager Hart: Pam comes here quarterly per the direction of the city council and gives a report.

- Specifically, from the last Tourism meeting, is there a follow up on what to do on the ordinance regarding short term rentals that has the language in it about the business registration? I'm wondering if that has been resolved.

Tourism Director Denahy: That was brought up at our last board meeting and is on my list to talk to Michael about and make sure we move forward. That was the recommendation of the Tourism Board.

- The Southeast Colorado Creative Partnership Brew Fest is Friday, June 12th from 6:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. at the Santa Fe Plaza. Supporting arts and creative partnerships here in La Junta.
- Puzzle night at Dickey's.
- E-bike safety night at City Park from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. this Friday.
- Trivia night at the Otero Museum on June 17th at 5:30 p.m.
- Auggie's Grant Opening will be Sunday, June 14th and it's also Auggie's birthday.
- Had a Bent's Fort tour with Cathy Garcia, State Representative Ty Winter and State Senator Rod Pelton. It was a great tour.
- Town Hall pot luck meeting in Las Animas next Monday at 6:00 p.m.
- At our June 15th council meeting, Ty Winter and Rod Pelton will be here giving us a legislative update.
- Having a contest to guess how many people were at the pool on opening day. Must guess exact number. Winner will receive one 12-punch card.

F. Governing Body Report

1. Council Member Rikhof:

- Question about the Economic Development Summit that's coming up on June 17th. Is there anything we can do to prepare for that? If it's invitation only? If anyone can come? What can we expect?

Pam Denahy: It's a follow up to the Economic Development Summit we had last year. We will be re-visiting the goals. An agenda will be sent out. It's invite only

- I would like to have a work session on safety. I feel like we've had some really specific questions about shoplifting, rampant issues of theft in town. I don't feel like we're going to be able to get anywhere on the topic until we have a conversation about it. I ask for a work session on safety related issues in La Junta with specific attention to issues of theft and shoplifting and what we can do better as a city, better enforcement.

- Again, I think we need to have a conversation about communication and expectations. I brought up several issues. We were talking about the business registration, sometimes council sets fees sometimes administration set fees. I think this is something we should have a discussion about and on what council's philosophy is on setting fees. I also think that we do not communicate about meetings. We were all told at the last meeting that the Bents Fort tour was coming up and I said I would like to be invited but I did not find out about the Bents Fort tour until I started seeing it on Facebook. I also know there's some issues that were before the council at our last meeting. I know that the mayor reached out and talked to every other council member individually. I am not often contacted when these things happen. It's concerning to me because I was elected to represent the people in the City of La Junta and if I'm not at the table for conversations, if I'm not invited to the same tours that everyone else is, if our city attorney abruptly quits and every other council member gets to have a conversation about it, I feel that as a council we need to say what we think our expectations are around communications.

- I also think that; we haven't had budget or finance issues on the agenda except for once the entire year. It's problematic given that we know one of our sister governing bodies, the school board, seriously wishes that they had done a better job of knowing how to read the financial statements. So, I put my voice out there that the budget and finance should be on the agenda more than once a year.

- Again, we passed a conflict-of-interest statement and it has been shelved and never heard another word about it. I would like to know what the intention is with the conflict-of-interest policy.

2. Council Member Ramirez:

- I just want to make a statement again about the public being able to speak here. That's a point in time for you guys to speak and we allot you guys five minutes to do that. We're really not in a response mode at that time. We're taking notes and trying to figure out who we're going to delegate that information to so that they can deal with it. That's why you get that awkward silence sometimes. When people talk it's not that we don't know what to do or what to say. That's not a time we're going to speak. We're strictly taking information so we can delegate it to the proper departments.

3. Mayor Ayala:

- Mr. Wayne Walter has done stuff for our community that people don't really realize. One of those things is he does the flags and not just in La Junta but the Arkansas Valley. Memorial Day we had some really bad winds and one of those flags really got shredded up. Online he got a lot of grief for the flag being messed up. So, he went out and replaced it. In 2018, he paid \$12,000 for the flag pole at the train. Every time he replaces them, if it's a smaller flag, it \$849 if it's a big flag, 30 x 65 its \$2,100. These are things he is paying for out of his pocket. He does have an account set up at the First National Bank for the Wayne Walter Community Flag Fund. Anybody that donates to that fund, it will be tax deductible for them. He would love to have help with that. He tries

his best to make sure he's getting those replaced. He also likes to leave them out if there's a light available at the pole. If not, he has to go back out when the sun goes down because it's etiquette not to have it out there without a light on. I really want to thank Wayne for everything that he's doing not just for La Junta but for the Valley.

ADJOURN

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

ATTEST:

CITY OF LA JUNTA

Melanie R. Scofield, City Clerk

Joseph Ayala, Mayor