

MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING LA JUNTA CITY COUNCIL
LA JUNTA, CO
AUGUST 31, 2026
5:00 PM
COUNCIL CHAMBERS
601 COLORADO AVENUE

CALL TO ORDER (Mayor Ayala)

The Special Meeting of the City Council of the City of La Junta, Colorado, was called to order by Mayor Ayala on Monday, August 31, 2026, at 5:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers of the Municipal Building.

ROLL CALL (City Clerk)

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

Absent: Lisa Pantoya, Ward 3

Also Present: Michael Hart, City Manager
 Cristian Estrada, Deputy City Clerk

NEW BUSINESS

- A. A Resolution of the City Council of La Junta, Colorado, Authorizing the Conveyance of Certain Real Property Located at 322 Harriet Avenue to Otero College (City Attorney) (Action)

MOTION TO APPROVE A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF LA JUNTA, COLORADO, AUTHORIZING THE CONVEYANCE OF CERTAIN REAL PROPERTY LOCATED AT 322 HARRIET AVENUE TO OTERO COLLEGE: Rikhof

SECOND: Velasquez

DISCUSSION: Michael Hart – This is essentially a junk property that the city has and has had for a while. This is a great opportunity for us to get rid of a piece of property that we don't need and have been paying roughly \$2,500 per year to maintain. It is also an opportunity for the City of La Junta to partner with Otero College, and their intention for this property is to utilize their construction management students to go in and rehab the dwelling.

Mayor Joe Ayala – This is something that the college has tried to start for some time now.

City Manager Michael Hart – They are all ready to get this thing going to get their students in and rehab the property.

Council Member Rikhof – It is part of a larger grant, called the "Copper Grant" and it's through the attorney general's office. Other communities have participated in this. It is

kind of an exciting first step in what hopefully will be a very productive cycle.

- Council Member Velasquez – They don't have to have a prospective buyer prior to the construction beginning?

- Council Member Rikhof – No.

Council Member Rikhof – A question regarding properties: are there other properties of this nature that are also owned by the City of La Junta?

- City Manager Michael Hart – There are; according to Brock Hinkhouse, we have at least four.

- Council Member Rikhof – Do we have a plan on what we are doing with those four properties?

- City Manager Michael Hart – Not yet, no.

- Mayor Joe Ayala – When they get to this stage, we either have to pay to get the asbestos abated on that property, or we have something cool like this Otero program that can do that.

- City Manager Michael Hart – Correct; Otero College is taking care of all the asbestos abatement, etc.

Mayor Joe Ayala – Just ballpark: what does it cost when we have to get properties like these torn down with asbestos abatement?

- City Manager Michael Hart – Not including asbestos abatement, the last one that Martin Montoya did was in the \$10,000-\$12,000 range. That house was a hoarder's house, so there was potentially more stuff in there than a vacant house would have.

- Mayor Joe Ayala – Sometimes places get lucky and earn grants from the EPA to abate asbestos. Similarly, the building that caught fire across from City Hall was all done by the EPA and did not cost the City of La Junta a dime.

- City Manager Michael Hart – There was emergency funding going on with the property across the street from City Hall and that was through Ayers. They aided us with filling out and filing the applications, and they got it done in a very timely manner.

VOTE: The motion carried 5-0

ABSTAIN: Copley

ABSENT: Pantoya

B. AN 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 Semi-Annual Review)

MOTION TO MOVE 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: Copley

SECOND: Velasquez

DISCUSSION: There was no discussion.

VOTE: The motion carried 6-0.

ABSENT: Pantoya

The board moved into executive session at 5:08 p.m. and adjourned.

ADJOURN

ATTEST:

CITY OF LA JUNTA

Melanie R. Scofield, City Clerk

Joseph Ayala, Mayor