



CITY OF ROCKY FORD – CITY COUNCIL MEETING

City Council Chambers | 203 S. Main Street, Rocky Ford, CO

September 22, 2026

REGULAR MEETING: 6:00pm

Rocky Ford City Council met in Council Chambers on Tuesday, September 22, 2026. Mayor Pro Tem Joe Pentlicki called the meeting to order.

Those present at roll call were:

Councilmembers: Nicholas Martinez, Robert Barron, Nicole Roberts, and Mayor Pro Tem Joe Pentlicki. Councilmembers Thomas Mullins and Nanette Mosby were in attendance by Zoom.

City Staff: City Manager Stacey Milenski, City Clerk Michelle Grasmick, Police Chief Matthew Wallace, Finance Director Kyle Crosswhite, Communications Director June Ferraro, Fire Chief Ray Gonzales, Public Works Director Rick Long. City Attorney Dan Harvey was in attendance by Zoom.

Public attendance: JR Thompson, Gary Reed, Marty Lee, Sandy Lee, Patrice McGowen, LaDonna Hutton, Brian Lovato, L. Buck, Cuco Ruiz. Others were in attendance that did not sign in.

Mayor Pro Tem Pentlicki led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Councilmember Barron read aloud the City of Rocky Ford's Mission Statement.

5. PUBLIC COMMENT

Kristene Harbert, Ward III resident, submitted written questions by email for public comment. City Attorney Dan Harvey advised that written comments are included in the public record regardless of whether they are read aloud. Councilmembers expressed concerns regarding the length and scope of the submission. By consensus, Council agreed that the emailed comments would remain part of the public record and would not be read aloud during the public comment period. In the emails, Harbert requested clarification and additional information regarding the proposed Arkansas Valley Emergency Communications Authority Intergovernmental Agreement, including financial obligations, budget oversight, audit procedures, board representation, personnel and operational impacts, withdrawal provisions, and implementation timelines. Harbert also submitted questions regarding Ordinance No. 999, including medical marijuana provisions, animal confinement and rabies-control procedures, and concealed weapons and knife definitions. Additional requests for information were made concerning the process for filling the mayoral vacancy, the proposed emergency communications agreement, the library security upgrade project, the code enforcement job description, and the availability of the City's 2025 audited financial statements.

Patrice McGowan, Ward II resident, addressed the mayoral candidates and expressed appreciation for the willingness of several community members to serve. She spoke favorably of Marty Lee's community service, particularly his efforts to provide shelter during severe weather, and commended Councilmember Pentlicki for his service and commitment to the community. Ms. McGowan also praised Councilmember Martinez for his responsiveness to constituents and his work on issues important to residents. She concluded by recommending Councilmember Martinez for appointment as Mayor, citing his experience, commitment to the community, and growth as a councilmember.

Murisa Jackson, a non-resident, spoke in opposition to Councilmember Martinez's appointment as Mayor, citing concerns about interactions between public officials and community members and emphasizing the importance of professionalism, accountability, and respectful public discourse. She encouraged the Council to consider the impact of public officials' conduct and communications on civic participation.

6. APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

Councilmember Martinez motioned to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Roberts.

Voting results were:

YES: Barron, Pentlicki, Mullins, Roberts, Martinez

NO: None

ABSENT: Mosby (lost internet connection)

Motion carried: 5-0

Consent Agenda Items approved were:

- 6.1 **Approval of Council meeting minutes from September 8, 2026** – Regular meeting at 6:00pm
- 6.2 **Application for Liquor License Renewal** – Rocky Ford Country Club – 91 Play Park Hill, Rocky Ford
- 6.3 **Application for Liquor License Renewal** – Lobos Curve Liquor – 1504 Elm Avenue, Rocky Ford
- 6.4 **Letter of Support for the Grand Friends** – History Colorado State Historical Fund
- 6.5 **Application for Renewal of Medical Marijuana License** – Rocky Farms, 1709 Swink Avenue, Rocky Ford

7. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Councilmember Roberts motioned to approve the Agenda as presented. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Martinez.

Voting results were:

YES: Pentlicki, Mullins, Mosby, Roberts, Martinez, Mullins

NO: None

Motion carried: 6-0

8. PRESENTATIONS, AWARDS, PROCLAMATIONS

8.1 None

9. PUBLIC HEARING

9.1 None

10. OLD BUSINESS

10.1 Discussion/Action – Letters of Interest – Mayoral Vacancy

Council received letters of interest for the mayoral vacancy from Nicholas Martinez, Joe Pentlicki, and Marty Lee. All three applicants met the statutory eligibility requirements and submitted their letters of interest by the established deadline. Council then proceeded to hear presentations from the candidates regarding their qualifications for appointment.

Marty Lee, a Ward I resident, addressed Council regarding his interest in the mayoral vacancy. Lee stated that he has lived in Rocky Ford for 13 years and has been actively involved in the community through his service as pastor of the United Methodist Church, membership on various local boards, employment with the City as an Economic Development Specialist, and prior service on City Council. Lee highlighted his commitment to Rocky Ford, his community involvement, and his understanding of City operations and Council-staff relationships. He identified a balanced budget, job creation, and addressing housing needs as key priorities for the community. In response to a Council question regarding the time commitment required for the position, Lee stated that he has the time available to fulfill the responsibilities of Mayor.

Councilmember Nic Martinez addressed Council regarding his interest in the mayoral vacancy. Martinez highlighted his years of service on City Council and his record of attending meetings, noting more than four years of consistent participation. He emphasized his commitment to the community and the time required to serve effectively in the position. Martinez cited his involvement in the adoption of the City's chicken ordinance and his efforts to work through the legislative process to achieve community goals. He also noted that he volunteered significant time to help keep the public library operating following staffing departures. Martinez stated that he is committed to serving the community and, due to the flexibility of being self-employed and homeschooling his child, has the time available to fulfill the duties of Mayor.

Councilmember Joe Pentlicki addressed Council regarding his interest in the mayoral vacancy. Mr. Pentlicki stated that he has lived in Rocky Ford since 2011 and that his interest in the position stems from observing Council operations and recognizing the need for strong leadership. He highlighted more than 25 years of executive leadership experience, service on several boards, and experience with financial oversight, budgeting, and audits. Mr. Pentlicki emphasized his ability to foster communication, address issues directly, and work collaboratively with Councilmembers, staff, and the community. He identified several key challenges facing the City that he believes should be priority moving forward, including improving the City's financial position, rebuilding public trust, addressing infrastructure needs, reducing vacancies and abandoned properties, and responding to population decline and its impact on sales tax revenue.

An anonymous Zoom participant identifying as “Batman” thanked all three candidates for their willingness to serve. The speaker expressed appreciation for Marty Lee’s service, stated that Nic Martinez had demonstrated personal growth and commitment to the community, and expressed the opinion that Joe Pentlicki had not yet served on Council long enough to be appointed Mayor. The speaker also suggested that Councilmembers who were candidates for the position should abstain from voting and stated his belief that the appointment should be decided by the remaining Councilmembers.

City Attorney Dan Harvey addressed questions regarding potential conflicts of interest related to the mayoral appointment vote. He explained that, under the state ethics code, recusal is generally required when a matter involves a financial interest or a personal interest involving an immediate family member.

Harvey advised that neither circumstance applied to the mayoral appointment and, therefore, Councilmembers who were candidates for the position were permitted to participate in the vote.

Councilmembers discussed the qualifications of the three candidates for the mayoral vacancy and expressed appreciation for each applicant's willingness to serve. Councilmembers noted the importance of professionalism, respect for the public, and the responsibilities associated with public office. It was observed that all three candidates had current or prior City Council experience and were qualified to serve. Councilmembers offered comments in support of the candidates, citing their respective community involvement, leadership, and service. Discussion also included consideration of public feedback received through emails, social media, and public comments both in favor of and opposed to various candidates.

Councilmember Mullins motioned to appoint Nicholas Martinez as Mayor. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Martinez.

Voting results were:

YES: Mullins, Martinez

NO: Mosby, Roberts, Barron, Pentlicki

Motion failed: 2-4

Councilmember Mullins motioned to appoint Joe Pentlicki as Mayor. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Roberts.

Voting results were:

YES: Mullins, Mosby, Roberts, Barron, Pentlicki

NO: Martinez

Motion carried: 5-1

City Clerk Michelle Grasmick administered Oath of Office to Joe Pentlicki.

10.2 Discussion/Action – Ordinance No. 999 – An Ordinance of the City Council of the City of Rocky Ford, Colorado, Amending Various Provisions of the City of Rocky Ford Municipal Code Concerning Surrender of Animals, Possession of Marijuana, Concealed Weapons and Operation of Municipal Parks, on final reading

Council considered Ordinance No. 999 and noted that the ordinance had been discussed extensively during prior meetings. Appreciation was expressed to Chief Wallace and City Attorney Dan Harvey for their work in developing and reviewing the ordinance. There was no further discussion.

Councilmember Roberts motioned to approve Ordinance No. 999 on final reading. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Martinez.

Voting results were:

YES: Barron, Mullins, Mosby, Roberts, Martinez, Mayor Pentlicki

NO: None

Motion carried: 6-0

11. NEW BUSINESS

11.1 Discussion/Action – IGA for Arkansas Valley Emergency Communication Authority

June Ferraro, Communications Director, presented the proposed Intergovernmental Agreement establishing the Arkansas Valley Emergency Communications Authority (AVECA). She explained that the existing Otero County and Kiowa County 911 authority boards would be consolidated into a single governing authority to oversee regional emergency communications services and provide opportunities for future growth. Ferraro stated that the new authority would assume responsibility for operation of the Communications Center, with governance provided by a board representing participating agencies. Employees would ultimately be administered through the County, while policy and operational decisions would be made by the Authority Board. Council previously received the IGA and supporting background information for review. Ferraro further explained that the Rocky Ford Rural Fire Protection District would also participate in the agreement. Because the City of Rocky Ford currently provides dispatch services for the District, discussions are ongoing regarding cost-sharing arrangements, facility lease terms, utilities, equipment, and other operational expenses associated with the transition.

Regarding implementation, Ferraro reported that the existing 911 boards and the newly formed authority board would meet on October 1st to formally transition governance to the new authority. She also reviewed the funding structure for 911 services, noting that equipment and training are supported through 911 fees collected from telephone service users in Otero and Kiowa Counties. Ferraro advised that, although the new authority would be established on October 1st, the transition of personnel administration to the County is anticipated to occur on April 1st. During the interim period, dispatch employees would remain City employees, with the Authority reimbursing the City for associated personnel costs. Council discussed the transition timeline, funding sources, and operational agreements required to complete implementation of the new authority.

Councilmember Roberts motioned to approve the IGA for Arkansas Valley Emergency Communication Authority subject to final review by the City Attorney. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Martinez.

Voting results were:

YES: Martinez, Barron, Mullins, Mosby, Roberts, Mayor Pentlicki

NO: None

Motion carried: 6-0

11.2 Discussion/Action – Library Security Upgrade

City Manager Stacey Milenski presented a proposal to upgrade the library's security system, including the installation of security cameras inside the library and throughout the adjacent park, access-control features, and alarm monitoring services. Milenski noted that the current system is outdated and that the upgrades would improve security, address vandalism concerns, support after-hours programming, and help protect sensitive information handled by the library. Milenski recommended utilizing HomeSync Security, which currently provides security services for other City facilities. Positive experiences with the vendor were noted by Milenski and Fire Chief Ray Gonzales. The proposed system would include video surveillance, alarm monitoring, emergency notification capabilities, local and cloud-based video storage, and approximately 45 days of video retention. Administrative access would be assigned to authorized City personnel, and law enforcement and dispatch personnel would be able to access camera feeds as needed.

Council discussed the importance of maintaining cloud storage to facilitate public records requests, the benefits of expanded camera coverage for public safety, and the lack of an expectation of privacy in public spaces. Additional discussion included an option to extend Wi-Fi service from the library to the museum and potentially portions of the park through the installation of networking equipment.

Milenski reported that the approximately \$12,000 installation cost would be funded through available grant and donation funds, including funds donated following the dissolution of the Friends of the Library organization. Ongoing operating costs were estimated at approximately \$400 annually beginning after the first year, which would be incorporated into future budgets.

Councilmember Roberts motioned to approve the estimate from HomeSync for the Library Security Upgrade as presented. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Martinez.

Voting results were:

YES: Barron, Mullins, Mosby, Roberts, Martinez, Mayor Pentlicki

NO: None

Motion carried: 6-0

11.3 Discussion/Action – Code Enforcement Job Description

Council reviewed the updated Code Enforcement Officer job description. Police Chief Matthew Wallace explained that the revisions were intended to clarify the qualifications and standards desired for the position and to ensure appropriate hiring safeguards, including requirements related to criminal history, character, and driving record.

Chief Wallace reported that Code Enforcement Officer Tony Jones had obtained POST certification and would be transitioning into an open police officer position, creating a vacancy in code enforcement. Chief noted that the Code Enforcement Officer position is expected to be easier to fill because it requires less specialized certification than a police officer position, while emphasizing the importance of hiring a qualified individual who can continue the department's enforcement and community outreach efforts. Council expressed appreciation for Mr. Jones' service and acknowledged that a temporary vacancy would exist until the position is filled.

Councilmember Martinez motioned to approve the Code Enforcement Job Description as presented. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Barron.

Voting results were:

YES: Roberts, Martinez, Barron, Mayor Pentlicki

NO: None

ABSENT: Mullins, Mosby (lost internet connection)

Motion carried: 4-0

12. STAFF REPORTS

12.1 City Manager – *Stacey Milenski summarized written City Manager's report to Council. Milenski included updates that occurred after the report was written.*

13. COUNCIL REPORTS

Councilmembers provided updates and reports on their respective boards and community events.

14. PUBLIC COMMENT

14.1 None

15. EXECUTIVE SESSION

15.1 None

16. UPCOMING MEETINGS

16.1 October 13, 2026 – 4:30pm Work Session, 6:00pm City Council Regular Meeting

16.1 October 27, 2026 – 4:30pm Work Session, 6:00pm City Council Regular Meeting

ADJOURN

There being no further business, Mayor Pentlicki adjourned the meeting at 7:37pm.


Mayor Joe Pentlicki


City Clerk, Michelle Grasmick