



CITY OF ROCKY FORD – CITY COUNCIL MEETING

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

June 9, 2026

REGULAR MEETING: 6:00pm

Rocky Ford City Council met in Council Chambers on Tuesday, June 9, 2026. Mayor Duane Gurulé called the meeting to order.

Those present at roll call were:

Mayor: Duane Gurulé

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

Councilmembers absent: Nanette Mosby

City Staff: City Manager Stacey Milenski, City Clerk Michelle Grasmick, Officer Anthony Trujillo, Officer Jeron Berig, Officer Zander Rypkyma, Library Assistant Hannah Gomez, Public Works Director Rick Long, Library Director Sonia Puga. City Attorney Dan Harvey was in attendance by Zoom.

Public attendance: JR Thompson, Gary Reed, Brian Lovato, Susan Jung, Diana Marshall, Cindy Kovalcik, Tim Muth, Rockie Sanders, James Budnick, Johnny McMurray, Judy Campbell. Numerous others who did not sign in.

Mayor Duane Gurulé led the Pledge of Allegiance.

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

5. PUBLIC COMMENT

Johnny McMurray, resident Ward II, spoke in opposition to the Pride Month proclamation, stating the community was not adequately consulted and no work session or dialogue occurred. McMurray expressed concern that the council did not represent the majority of residents and that the proclamation is divisive rather than unifying. He urged the council to table the item until broader community input is gathered and majority support is confirmed.

Cindy Kovalcik, resident, expressed support for the Pride Month proclamation and thanked those involved in bringing it forward as well as council for its approval. Kovalcik shared personal experiences of discrimination and emphasized that silence enables harm. She urged the council to lead by example in promoting inclusion and protecting the rights and dignity of all community members.

Susan Jung, resident and former Mayor, addressed events at the end of the previous council meeting. Jung stated she consulted legal counsel and was advised she could and should pursue legal action but has chosen not to, citing her commitment to and respect for the Rocky Ford community. She emphasized the need for humility and respect moving forward. Jung presented a package, previously inspected by police for safety, to the Mayor for future use in preventing similar incidents.

Tim Muth, resident and community pastor, spoke in opposition to the Pride Month proclamation, questioning the specific contributions being recognized and expressing concern that it elevates a minority group beyond general citizenship. Muth asserted the proclamation does not reflect the views of a majority of residents and urged greater community consultation. He emphasized his position as non-hateful while referencing personal, social, and religious perspectives.

Diana Marshall, resident, submitted a formal complaint alleging unprofessional and inappropriate conduct by Councilman Martinez during the February 5, 2026 Tree Board meeting. Marshall stated she was singled out, criticized, and subjected to hostile and intimidating behavior, including being urged to resign. She requested a formal investigation into the incident and appropriate corrective action, and indicated willingness to provide additional information.

Thomas Mullins, Councilmember Ward III, encouraged the community to come together despite recent disagreements. Mullins acknowledged differing viewpoints and past conflicts, and emphasized the importance of setting those aside, finding common ground, and working collaboratively for the betterment of the community's future.

John DeNicola, via Zoom, criticized council actions at the prior meeting, alleging that requesting a resident's name and address was intimidating. DeNicola stated the Pride Month designation is already established nationally and viewed the local proclamation as unnecessary and politically motivated. He questioned why other groups are not similarly recognized and raised concerns about council conduct and adherence to standards.

Anonymous Participant ("U People") via Zoom issued an apology to Councilman Martinez regarding a recent online exchange. They referenced concerns about his conduct and briefly commented on behavior discussed during public comments.

James Budnick, county resident, spoke in opposition to the Pride Month proclamation, asserting the council is not acting in accordance with its oath of office or constitutional responsibilities. Budnick expressed lack of confidence in council leadership and called for members to step down. He criticized the proclamation and stated his intent to publicly oppose council members who support it.

Johnny McMurray, resident Ward II, provided a second public comment on a different topic regarding concerns regarding treatment of a local business owner at Highway 50 and Main. McMurray alleged that a Tree Board representative instructed the owner to water newly planted flowers and threatened harm to the business when he declined. He stated such behavior, if accurate, is unprofessional and inappropriate, emphasizing the importance of supporting local businesses.

Diana Marshall, resident, provided a second public comment to respond to allegations regarding an interaction with a local business owner, stating she only asked him to water flowers and left after he

declined, characterizing the prior claim as hearsay. Marshall spoke broadly about her long-standing ties to the community, emphasizing values of acceptance, respect, and inclusion learned through local institutions. She highlighted contributions of community members, including education, healthcare work, and civic involvement, and stressed the importance of recognizing positive contributions and community support.

6. APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

Councilmember Pentlicki motioned to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Barron.

YES: Barron, Pentlicki, Mullins, Roberts, Martinez, Gurulé

NO: None

ABSENT: Mosby

Motion carried: 6-0

Consent Agenda Items approved were:

6.1 Approval of Council meeting minutes from May 26, 2026 – Regular meeting at 6:00pm

7. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Councilmember Martinez motioned to approve the Agenda with the removal of 8.1 under Presentations. Motion dies for lack of second.

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

Voting results were:

YES: Mullins, Roberts, Barron, Pentlicki, Gurulé

NO: Martinez

ABSENT: Mosby

Motion carried: 5-1

8. PRESENTATIONS, AWARDS, PROCLAMATIONS

8.1 Presentation – Pride Month Proclamation presented to SECO PRIDE

Mayor Gurulé noted that the Council approved the Pride Month proclamation by majority vote at the previous meeting. The proclamation, recognizing June 2026 as Pride Month in Rocky Ford, was presented to representatives of SECO Pride, and the organization's work supporting LGBTQ individuals and families in Southeast Colorado was acknowledged.

9. PUBLIC HEARING

9.1 Application for New Retail Liquor License - EZ Spirits, 913 Railroad Ave, Rocky Ford, CO

Mayor Gurulé opened the public hearing at 6:41pm to consider comments for or against the application for a Retail Liquor License submitted by EZ Spirits.

City Clerk Michelle Grasmick presented the application for EZ Spirits to change its existing fermented malt beverage and wine license to a retail liquor license, noting the business now meets distance requirements between licensed retail establishments.

No public comment was received.

Applicant Judy Campbell stated that the business is not yet open but is nearing completion, noting that remodeling has taken longer than anticipated. She indicated there are no operational changes beyond the requested license type, which would allow the sale of a broader range of alcoholic beverages. Council had no questions.

With no additional comments, Mayor Gurulé closed the public hearing and reopened the regular meeting at 6:43pm.

10. OLD BUSINESS

10.1 None

11. NEW BUSINESS

11.1 Discussion/Action – **Application for New Retail Liquor License** - EZ Spirits, 913 Railroad Ave, Rocky Ford, CO

Councilmember Mullins motioned to approve the Application for New Retail Liquor License - EZ Spirits, 913 Railroad Ave, Rocky Ford, CO. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Roberts.

Voting results were:

YES: Roberts, Martinez, Barron, Pentlicki, Mullins, Gurulé

NO: None

ABSENT: Mosby

Motion carried: 6-0

11.2 Discussion/Action – **Application for Renewal of Retail Liquor License** – The Main Lounge LLC, 301 S. Main Street, Rocky Ford, CO

City Clerk Michelle Grasmick presented the renewal application and noted concerns outlined in a police report provided to Council. Council discussed disturbance calls, compliance with reporting requirements, and liquor code considerations. The applicant, Rocio Maestas, participated via Zoom, responded to questions regarding incidents, and outlined efforts to manage patron behavior. The City Attorney provided guidance on allowable considerations, including options to deny or continue the application. It was noted the application was submitted within the required timeframe, allowing continued operation while pending. Council continued discussion following the applicant's responses.

Councilmember Martinez motioned to deny the Application for Renewal of Retail Liquor License – The Main Lounge LLC, 301 S. Main Street, Rocky Ford, CO. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Barron.

Voting results were:

YES: Martinez, Pentlicki
NO: Roberts, Barron, Mullins, Gurulé
ABSENT: Mosby
Motion dies: 2-4

Councilmember Mullins motioned to table the Application for Renewal of Retail Liquor License – The Main Lounge LLC, 301 S. Main Street, Rocky Ford, CO until the next Council Meeting (June 23). The motion was seconded by Councilmember Barron.

Voting results were:

YES: Martinez, Barron, Pentlicki, Mullins, Gurulé
NO: Roberts
ABSENT: Mosby
Motion carried: 5-1

11.3 Discussion/Action – **Application for Addition of Sidewalk Service Area** – The Main Lounge LLC, 301 S. Main Street, Rocky Ford, CO

Councilmember Roberts motioned to keep the Application for Addition of Sidewalk Service Area – The Main Lounge LLC, 301 S. Main Street, Rocky Ford, CO with the Application for Renewal of Retail Liquor License (tabled until June 23). The motion was seconded by Councilmember Pentlicki.

Voting results were:

YES: Barron, Pentlicki, Mullins, Roberts, Martinez, Gurulé
NO: None
ABSENT: Mosby
Motion carried: 6-0

11.4 Discussion/Action – **Vacation of Easement Ordinance** - Circle K request

Public Works Director Rick Long presented a request from Circle K to vacate a utility easement, noting the existing service line is no longer in use and the City has no objection. Council discussed procedural requirements, and City Attorney Dan Harvey confirmed the ordinance requires two readings, including a public hearing. Item was introduced for discussion and consideration of moving forward with first reading. To prevent further project delays, Council opted to expedite the request by conducting the first reading concurrently with discussion.

Councilmember Martinez motioned to approve Ordinance 998 – An Ordinance Vacating an Access and Utility Easement Recorded with the Otero County Clerk and Recorder on December 17, 1971 at Book No. 642 and Page No. 229 on first reading. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Roberts.

Voting results were:

YES: Pentlicki, Mullins, Roberts, Martinez, Barron, Gurulé
NO: None
ABSENT: Mosby
Motion carried: 6-0

11.5 Discussion/Action – **Asphalt Utility Cut Repairs at 21 locations** – Rick Long, Public Works Director

Public Works Director Rick Long presented a proposal to address 21 deteriorated utility cuts totaling approximately 5,000 square feet as part of a proactive street maintenance effort. Long confirmed selected locations will not conflict with upcoming infrastructure projects. Council discussed funding availability and community benefit.

Councilmember Martinez motioned to authorize the City Manager and Public Works Director to proceed with issuing a Request for Proposals (RFP) for asphalt utility cut repairs at 21 designated locations. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Pentlicki.

Voting results were:

YES: Mullins, Roberts, Martinez, Barron, Pentlicki, Gurulé

NO: None

ABSENT: Mosby

Motion carried: 6-0

11.6 Discussion/Action – **Recommendation to appoint New Library Board members** - Carol Segura, Persephone Burgess

Library Director Sonia Puga recommended the appointment of Carol Segura and Persephone Burgess to the Library Board, stating both candidates demonstrated leadership qualities and commitment to serving the library and community.

Councilmember Martinez motioned to approve the recommendation to appoint Carol Segura and Persephone Burgess to the Library Board. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Roberts.

Voting results were:

YES: Pentlicki, Barron, Mullins, Roberts, Martinez, Gurulé

NO: None

ABSENT: Mosby

Motion carried: 6-0

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.*

12.2 Library Director – Sonia Puga

Library Director Sonia Puga reported 1,014 patrons in May, an increase of 333 from the previous year. Puga highlighted successful student visits and expanded school engagement, ongoing community programming including a puzzle activity, and strong participation in the Summer Reading Program. She reported receipt of a grant to establish a centralized technology hub supporting access to health and social services. Puga also noted addition of 206 new books and availability of approximately 25,000 digital items. She also introduced library assistant Hannah Gomez and provided updates on programs including the State Parks pass checkout initiative.

12.3 Museum Curator – Rob Marshall, written only

13. COUNCIL REPORTS

Councilmembers provided updates and reports on their respective boards and community events. Mayor Gurulé also provided his Mayor's report, a written report was not provided in advance of the meeting.

14. PUBLIC COMMENT

James Budnick, county resident, expressed concern that the Pride Month proclamation does not equitably address public safety and stated that he feels unsafe due to reactions to his expressed views. Budnick alleged receiving threatening messages from the spouse of a councilmember related to his boycott of their business following the councilmember's vote on the proclamation and requested equitable consideration and inclusion regarding safety concerns.

Mayor Gurulé noted for the record that Mr. Budnick does not live within City limits.

John DeNicola, via Zoom, criticized the Mayor's handling of public comment, referencing prior CIRSA training and urging adherence to guidance on allowing speakers to be heard without interruption. He also expressed concerns about council conduct and professionalism.

Nicholas Martinez, Councilmember Ward II, objected to statements identifying a speaker as a non-resident, describing them as retaliatory and inconsistently applied. Martinez asserted that if residency requirements for public comment exist, they should be enforced uniformly for all speakers.

15. EXECUTIVE SESSION

15.1 None

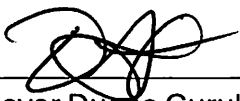
16. UPCOMING MEETINGS

16.1 June 16, 2026, from 2:00pm – 4:00pm City Council Work Session

16.2 June 23, 2026, at 6:00pm - City Council Regular Meeting

ADJOURN

There being no further business, Mayor Gurulé adjourned the meeting at 8:18pm.



Mayor Duane Gurulé



City Clerk, Michelle Grasmick