



CITY OF ROCKY FORD - CITY COUNCIL MEETING

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

March 24, 2026

REGULAR MEETING: 6:00pm

Rocky Ford City Council met in Council Chambers on Tuesday, March 24, 2026. Mayor Duane Gurulé called the meeting to order.

Those present at roll call were:

Mayor: Duane Gurulé

Councilmembers: Nicholas Martinez, Robert Barron, Thomas Mullins, and Nicole Roberts.
Councilmember Nanette Mosby was in attendance by Zoom.

City Staff: City Manager Stacey Milenski, City Clerk Michelle Grasmick, Police Chief Matthew Wallace, Public Works Director Rick Long, Finance Director Kyle Crosswhite, Water/Wastewater Foreman Cody Baylor, Public Works Foreman Cuco Ruiz. City Attorney Dan Harvey was in attendance online by Zoom.

Public attendance: JR Thompson, Gary Reed, James Budnick, Susan Jung, Adrian Hart, Dan Gallegos, Emilianna Romero.

Mayor Duane Gurulé led the Pledge of Allegiance.

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

5. PUBLIC COMMENT

Gary Reed, county resident, spoke in opposition to Ordinance 995, expressing concern regarding the proposed 4% component and its potential impact on residents, questioning how resident-funded accounts would be replenished without raising rates. Reed also raised concerns about proposed board reassignments, urging that any restructuring be conducted fairly.

James Budnick, county resident, expressed concern regarding rising utility costs, particularly for elderly residents on fixed incomes, and asked whether exemptions or moratoriums exist for longtime homeowners.

Councilmember Roberts clarified that the sewer facility fee increase is related to repayment of a specific loan for sewer system repairs, increases by \$8 annually, applies uniformly to all customers, and will terminate once the loan is paid in full. Mayor Gurulé added that the fee took effect on July 1, 2025, with the next scheduled increase on July 1, 2026.

Susan Jung, resident and former Mayor, requested clarification regarding the proposed franchise fee ordinance and stated concerns that the ordinance was not included on the current agenda despite affecting all residents. Mayor Gurulé responded that the ordinance requires two readings and that the second reading and public hearing are scheduled for April 14, 2026, with required notice having been published.

John DeNicola, participating via Zoom, commented on proposed board changes and expressed concern regarding consistency in board appointment practices and prior budget discussions.

Councilmember Barron noted the continuing vacancy in Ward II and encouraged interested residents to apply.

6. APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

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

YES: Barron, Mullins, Mosby, Martinez, Gurulé

NO: None

ABTAIN: Roberts

Motion carried: 5-0 with one abstention

Consent Agenda Items approved were:

6.1 Approval of Council meeting minutes from March 10, 2026 – Regular meeting at 6:00pm

6.2 Application for Special Events Permit – Malt, Vinous and Spirituous Liquor - Rocky Ford Chamber of Commerce, Gobin Building, 105 N Main Street, Rocky Ford, on Saturday, April 4, 2026, from 5:00pm to 2:00am

7. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mayor Gurulé noted that the Proclamation for Week of the Young Child will be an action item requiring approval and is not a presentation. It was also requested to add a scheduled presentation by Pioneer Health Care Center as agenda item 8.4.

Councilmember Roberts motioned to approve the Agenda as amended. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Mosby.

Voting results were:

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

NO: None

Motion carried: 6-0

8. PRESENTATIONS, AWARDS, PROCLAMATIONS

8.1 Proclamation - Week of the Young Child (April 11-17, 2026)

Councilmember Roberts motioned to approve the Proclamation for the Week of the Young Child. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Barron.

Voting results were:

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

NO: None

Motion carried: 6-0

8.2 End of Year Report – Public Works Director Rick Long

Public Works Director Rick Long presented the department's 2025 end-of-year report, summarizing operational activity, regulatory compliance, infrastructure challenges, and staffing issues across the Water, Sewer, Refuse, and Public Works divisions. Long reported that both the Water and Sewer Divisions completed state inspections with no violations and noted continued concerns related to water loss and infrastructure age.

8.3 End of Year Report – Finance Director Kyle Crosswhite

Finance Director Kyle Crosswhite presented the unaudited 2025 year-end financial report, advising that figures remain subject to audit. Crosswhite reported a projected General Fund deficit of approximately \$1.054 million and summarized year-end results for the City's enterprise and capital funds.

8.4 Presentation – Pioneer Health Care Center Rehabilitation Services

Emilianna Romero, Director of Rehabilitation, and Dan Gallegos, Physical Therapy Assistant, provided an overview of Pioneer Health Care Center's rehabilitation services. Romero reported that the outpatient rehabilitation program is fully operational and available to the public, offering physical, occupational, and speech therapy services. She noted expanded service capacity under new management and advised that additional insurance contracts are in progress.

9. PUBLIC HEARING

9.1 Ordinance No. 996 – An Ordinance Amending Chapter 7 of the Rocky Ford Municipal Code Concerning Animals at Large

Mayor Gurulé closed the regular meeting and opened the Public Hearing at 6:57pm.

Mayor Gurulé verified with City Clerk Michelle Grasmick that Ordinance No. 996 had been properly posted and met all publishing requirements.

City Manager Stacey Milenski provided an overview of the proposed ordinance amending Chapter 7 of the Rocky Ford Municipal Code regarding animals at large. Milenski explained that the ordinance updates and clarifies the City's rules by removing outdated definitions and establishing a clear prohibition against animals being off their owner's property unless physically controlled by a leash. She noted that the

changes are intended to support public health, safety, and welfare, and include a standard severability clause. City Attorney Dan Harvey added that the amendment broadens the previous “dogs at large” language to apply to all animals and provides clearer enforcement authority within the code.

There was no public testimony for or against the Ordinance.

There being no further comments, Mayor Gurulé closed the Public Hearing at 6:59pm.

10. OLD BUSINESS

10.1 Ordinance No. 996 – An Ordinance Amending Chapter 7 of the Rocky Ford Municipal Code Concerning Animals at Large, on Final Reading

Councilmember Roberts motioned to approve Ordinance No. 996 – An Ordinance Amending Chapter 7 of the Rocky Ford Municipal Code Concerning Animals at Large, on Final Reading. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Martinez.

Voting results were:

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

NO: None

Motion carried: 6-0

10.2 Ordinance No. 997 – An Ordinance Amending Chapter 2, Article 4, Division 1 of the Rocky Ford Municipal Code by the Addition of a New Section 2-4-120 Entitled “Municipal Penalties”, on Final Reading

City Manager Stacey Milenski provided background on Ordinance No. 997, explaining that the ordinance amends Chapter 2 of the Rocky Ford Municipal Code to align municipal penalty limits with Colorado state law. Milenski stated that the amendment is required following the 2025 *People v. Camp* decision and ensures that municipal penalties do not exceed state statutory limits. City Attorney Dan Harvey confirmed that the ordinance brings the City’s code into legal compliance.

Councilmember Roberts motioned to approve Ordinance No. 997 – An Ordinance Amending Chapter 2, Article 4, Division 1 of the Rocky Ford Municipal Code by the Addition of a New Section 2-4-120 Entitled “Municipal Penalties”, on Final Reading. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Barron.

Voting results were:

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

NO: None

Motion carried: 6-0

10.3 Letters of Interest – Ward II Vacancy

No letters of interest were received by the March 24, 2026, deadline for the vacant Ward II Council seat. The vacancy must be filled by appointment within 60 days of being declared; otherwise, the City will be required to proceed with a special election.

Councilmember Roberts motioned to extend the deadline for submission of letters of interest for Ward II to April 28, 2026. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Martinez.

Voting results were:

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

NO: None

Motion carried: 6-0

11. NEW BUSINESS

11.1 Board Changes: Removal of trustees/liaisons

Mayor Gurulé presented proposed changes to City board liaison assignments intended to address vacancies, improve board engagement, and stabilize board operations. The Mayor provided a memorandum outlining recommendations for the removal of specific Councilmembers from designated board liaison roles.

Council discussed the proposed removal of board liaisons, including clarification of liaison responsibilities, volunteer service beyond those responsibilities, and current board membership levels. It was clarified that removal of a Council liaison would also remove that individual from any City-appointed trustee position on the affected board.

Public comment was received from former Museum Board president Donna Bush regarding Museum Board operations and prior board conflicts.

Council also considered whether the advisory boards should participate in decisions regarding liaison assignments, which was determined to be impractical due to current board membership levels. Mayor Gurulé reiterated that the intent of the proposal was to improve board functionality and working relationships

Councilmember Mullins motioned to dismiss the recommendations for removal of certain board liaisons. The motion failed for lack of a second.

City Attorney Dan Harvey advised that board members serve at the pleasure of City Council and that each proposed removal requires a separate formal vote. Harvey further clarified that affected Councilmembers may participate in the vote, as board liaison positions are unpaid and do not constitute a conflict of interest.

Councilmember Barron motioned to keep Councilmember Mosby on the Golf Course Board. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Martinez.

Voting results were:

YES: Barron, Mullins, Mosby, Roberts, Martinez

NO: Gurulé

Motion carried: 5-1

Councilmember Roberts motioned to accept Councilmember Martinez's resignation from the Tree Board. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Martinez.

Voting results were:

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

NO: None

Motion carried: 6-0

Councilmember Mullins motioned to keep Councilmember Martinez on the Library Board. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Martinez.

Voting results were:

YES: Mullins, Mosby, Roberts, Martinez, Barron

NO: Gurulé

Motion carried: 5-1

Councilmember Martinez motioned to keep Councilmember Mullins on the Museum Board. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Mullins.

Voting results were:

YES: Mosby, Martinez, Mullins

NO: Roberts, Barron, Gurulé

Motion failed: 3-3

Councilmember Roberts motioned to remove Councilmember Mullins from the Museum Board. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Barron.

Voting results were:

YES: Roberts, Barron, Mosby, Gurulé

NO: Martinez, Mullins

Motion carried: 4-2

11.2 Board Changes: Appointment of trustees/liaisons

Mayor Gurulé clarified that his appointment recommendations would need to be adjusted, as not all positions identified in the memorandum are currently vacant. The current vacancies were identified as the Museum Board and the Tree Board. Councilmember Mullins also submitted three recommended appointments for the Museum Board.

Councilmember Mullins motioned to approve the recommended appointment of Jennifer Johnson, Charles Maxwell, and Rick Long to the Museum Board. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Martinez.

Voting results were:

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

NO: None

Motion carried: 6-0

Councilmember Roberts motioned to appoint Mayor Gurulé to the Museum Board and herself to the Tree Board. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Barron. During consideration of the motion, Councilmember Mullins left the dais and exited the meeting. Council briefly recessed at 7:53pm to determine whether the vote should proceed. The meeting reconvened at 7:56pm, at which time it was noted that Councilmember Mullins would not be returning. Councilmember Roberts subsequently withdrew the motion in order to separate the appointments.

Councilmember Martinez motioned to appoint Councilmember Roberts to the Tree Board. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Mosby.

Voting results were:

YES: Mosby, Roberts, Martinez, Barron, Gurulé

NO: None

ABSENT: Mullins

Motion carried: 5-0

Susan Jung, resident and former Mayor, commented on board participation policies, stating that during her tenure she served only on boards related to financial matters and questioned the basis for broader board involvement by the Mayor.

Mayor Gurulé responded that board composition requirements are established in the Municipal Code. He explained that certain boards, including the Pension Board and Planning Commission, require the Mayor's participation and that these provisions are outlined in the Municipal Code.

Council discussed Museum Board liaison participation and continuity following recent board changes. It was clarified that service on the Museum Board requires a time commitment and that maintaining continuity was a consideration due to current board membership levels.

Public comment was received questioning whether the proposed board changes were based on interpersonal concerns rather than policy violations or insubordination.

Mayor Gurulé clarified that the proposed changes were intended to strengthen working relationships as outlined in board responsibilities and were based on feedback received directly from board members and staff.

Discussion also included concern regarding public perception of appointment decisions. Council considered the option of leaving the Museum Board liaison position temporarily unfilled. Mayor Gurulé indicated his willingness to attend Museum Board meetings in an interim support role to represent Council until the Ward II vacancy is filled, at which time the Councilmember appointed to that vacancy would be assigned as the Museum Board liaison.

Councilmember Roberts motioned to table the appointment of the Museum Board liaison and have Mayor Gurulé attend the meetings in the interim. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Martinez.

Voting results were:

YES: Mosby, Roberts, Martinez, Barron, Gurulé

NO: None

ABSENT: Mullins

Motion carried: 5-0

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.

Police Chief Matthew Wallace reported that the Fowler Police Department expressed interest in purchasing a Tahoe and Charger for \$12,000. The vehicles would be sold fully equipped, excluding radios. Fowler City Council is scheduled to consider the purchase on April 9, 2026. Chief Wallace advised that selling the vehicles to another law enforcement agency would yield a higher return than a public sale, as vehicles sold to the public would require decommissioning and removal of equipment. Approval of the sale would require a special meeting of City Council.

13. COUNCIL REPORTS

Councilmembers provided updates and reports on their respective boards and community events. Mayor Gurulé summarized his written Mayor’s report provided to Council, including updates that occurred after the report was written.

14. PUBLIC COMMENT

14.1 None

15. EXECUTIVE SESSION

15.1 None

16. UPCOMING MEETINGS

16.1 March 31, 2026, from 2:00pm – 4:00pm City Council Work Session

16.2 April 14, 2026, at 6:00pm - City Council Regular Meeting

ADJOURN

There being no further business, Mayor Gurulé adjourned the meeting at 8:32pm.



Mayor Duane Gurulé



City Clerk, Michelle Grasmick