

LA JUNTA URBAN RENEWAL AUTHORITY

CALL TO ORDER: The La Junta Urban Renewal Authority Board of Commissioners held a Regular Meeting on Thursday, March 9, 2023 at 4:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers. The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Bennett.

Board Members Present

Absent

Joe Ayala
Nancy Bennett
Christine Coffield
Trevor Herasingh
Daniel Horton – via Zoom
Toni Madrid
Justin Miller
Randall Roberson

Lily Sweikert

**Subject to approval at the
April 13, 2023
Urban Renewal Meeting**

Also present: Cynthia Nieb, Economic/Urban Renewal Director
Melanie Scofield, City Clerk/UR Secretary
Erika Lively, La Junta
Bette McFarren, Rocky Ford Gazette

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION:

1. Erika Lively: Wanted to see what is going on. Her grandma used to be part of Urban Renewal.

MINUTES: January 12, 2023

Chairperson Bennett asked if there were any corrections or additions to be made to the January 12, 2023 minutes. Hearing none, a motion was made by Joe Ayala, seconded by Trevor Herasingh, that the minutes for January 12, 2023 be approved as published. The motion carried unanimously.

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS: January/February 2023

Cynthia Nieb explained to the Board the difficulty with Finance having reports available a week before the meeting. There is a process for the financials to be reconciled before going out. This takes time.

The January 2023 financial statements were provided for the Board's review.

BALANCE SHEET

ASSETS

- Total cash at the end of January was \$53,695.04.
- Notes receivable was \$3,875.00.
- Investments were \$360,117.42 (COLOTRUST).
- Total assets are \$417,687.46 for the month ending January 2023.

LIABILITIES

- There were no outstanding bills at the end of January.

STATEMENT OF REVENUE/EXPENDITURES

BUDGET TO ACTUAL

Interest in the amount of \$1,317.45 was received. Tax increment of \$0.00 was received from property tax collections. The following bills were paid:

Otero County Insurance Inc.	\$1,575.90
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The 2023 budget is \$182,500.00 less \$1,575.90 in expenses leaving a budget remaining of \$180,924.10.

The February 2023 financial statements were provided for the Board's review.

BALANCE SHEET

ASSETS

- Total cash at the end of January was \$53,760.04.
- Notes receivable was \$3,812.50.
- Investments were \$361,314.51 (COLOTRUST).
- Total assets are \$418,887.05 for the month ending February 2023.

LIABILITIES

- There were no outstanding bills at the end of February.

STATEMENT OF REVENUE/EXPENDITURES

BUDGET TO ACTUAL

Interest in the amount of \$1,199.59 was received. Tax increment of \$9,264.20 was received from property tax collections. There were no expenses for the month of February.

The 2023 budget is \$182,500.00 less \$1,575.90 in expenses leaving a budget remaining of \$180,924.10.

Chairperson Bennett asked if there were any questions or corrections regarding the January/February 2023 financial statements. Hearing none, a motion was made by Trevor Herasingh, seconded by Randall Roberson, that the financial statements for January/February 2023 be approved as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

REPORTS:

A. Plaza Building

Chairperson Bennett: We had a sneak peek a few weeks ago. It was very successful. We had so many positive comments. Appreciate everyone who came down to see it. The sub-contractors have been working but the main contractors were off. Don't have any additional information. Haven't had our AOC meeting until next week. Jane, Rebecca, Nancy Aschermann, Julie Worley and I have been working hard for additional funding of \$450,000 short fall because of cost increase caused by supply chain delays. A lot of the grant applications have deadlines this month.

B. Saving Places

Nancy Bennett: Very valuable because of the people we got to see and the things we got to hear. A lot of the main speakers were talking about memories. The way people feel about the historic buildings. That's why it's so important to save them. Which I thought was pretty

interesting. Had a chance to talk with Larry Lucas with DOLA about solar projects that many of the small towns of Colorado are working on now. He's interested in working with La Junta. Also had a chance to speak with Caroline Trani with CHAFA and she recommended we work with the Department of Housing through DOLA to get some funds for finishing the apartments upstairs

Toni Madrid: Had an interesting conversation with the liaison from Ft. Carson about the Pinon Canyon expansion not expanding. It was a worthwhile time to go.

Trevor Herasingh: Learned how to make new stained glass. Made a bunch of contacts with historians looking for people with trades skills to join their organization. One of the big topics at the conference was African American History. Also made some contacts with people from History Colorado.

Cynthia Nieb: I always have a wonderful time. One person said that historic preservation is being too tough, too stiff, we should just go with the flow and do whatever we can to save the buildings even if they're drastically altered. Another person presenting, from an indigenous tribe, basically said that you need to save and not replace things. That's been the standard mantra for over 25 years. They showed varying views that caused a lot of discussion, which is what we wanted to happen. The conference was very well done. I feel as if underserved communities were actually represented at this conference. A total of \$2,487.89 was spent for three days and five people.

Joe Ayala: Asked Nancy about mentioning memories and know how nostalgia plays a big part. Were there any ideas on how to incorporate that and bring it home to capitalize on? (Nancy said they didn't really have any projects related to it but to just ask people about their memories and then listening to them). Perhaps we could start off with the Plaza Building. Once that generation is gone, it will be harder to get those memories.

Cynthia Nieb: Anya Miller is starting to do the oral history. Asking about the buildings and people's memories.

Erika Lively: Ms. Lively shared her experience in oral history and archival research and agreed with the Board that it is important that these histories are reported and captured now before that information is gone.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- A. Commercial Building Funding Application.** Cynthia Nieb will be posting public notices next week in both papers, and on Facebook, so that everybody knows that this is available. We want people to be aware of the grant/loan program and the specifics of what the Board is looking for.

NEW BUSINESS

- A. Election of Officers for 2023.** The chair opened the floor for nominations for Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Treasurer. Nancy Bennett was nominated for Chairman. Trevor Herasingh was nominated for Vice-Chairman. Randall Roberson was nominated for Treasurer. Chairman Bennett declared the election by acclamation.

- B. Action 22 Leadership Training:** Daniel and Joe are attending. It's an outstanding program. Joe's training is being paid for through the City; however, Daniel doesn't have anyone sponsoring him. Cynthia asked the Board if they would be willing to pay \$5,500 for the training and \$1000 for travel. The following is a brief description: "Throughout the state, a generational churn is slowly taking place. As many leaders that have served in both public and private sectors beginning to retire and move on, it will become critical that their successors are prepared to step up and take the reins. The Action 22 Leadership Academy, a selective, non-partisan leadership experience, is designed to educate and prepare the next generation of leadership that is going to guide our state into the future. Ensuring Colorado has strong and informed leadership cannot be any more important, than it is right now," Garrison Ortiz, Foundation Chair. After some discussion, the following motion was made:

MOTION TO PAY UP TO \$5,500 FOR TRAINING AND UP TO \$1,000 FOR TRAVEL/EXPENSES FOR DANIEL HORTON TO ATTEND THE ACTION 22 LEADERSHIP ACADEMY: Herasingh

SECOND: Ayala

DISCUSSION: There was no further discussion

VOTE: Those voting YES: Ayala, Bennett, Coffield, Herasingh, Madrid

Those voting NO: Roberson

The motion carried 5-1 (Miller and Sweikert absent, Horton abstained)

- C. REDI Grant:** The Board asked for a Strategic Plan as well as a Communications Marketing Plan. Cynthia received a proposal from SBrand Solutions (attached) in the amount of \$30,000. She also found a REDI grant with a 50% cash match for the funding. The plan does a lot of outreach with the public being completely transparent in what the Authority is doing. The City of La Junta would be applying on behalf of the Urban Renewal Authority. Our half would be \$15,000. A strategic plan tells the Board on what direction it needs to go. It will also provide two-way communication with the public to find out what they want. At the end of the day, there is direction, publicity and the community has more knowledge and support.

MOTION TO APPROVE THE \$15,000 CASH MATCH AND MOVE FORWARD WITH THE STRATEGIC AND COMMUNICATIONS PLAN: Roberson

SECOND: Madrid

DISCUSSION: There was no further discussion

VOTE: The motion carried unanimously

- D. LJ URA 464311405014 – Request to Purchase:** Cynthia received a phone call from Ted Garcia who is interested in purchasing the property on Bradish (which was returned to URA from the High Prairie Homes Project because they were unable to use it.) The Actual Land Value is \$1,311 and the Assessed Value is \$380. He wants to put a garage on it with the possibility of putting a modular on it down the road. He also asked if the Board would pay for curb and gutter. It was decided that Cynthia would look into the ordinances and laws to determine what would be allowed and get back to Mr. Garcia before having him appear in front of Urban Renewal.

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E. Urban Renewal Director:

1. There were no Urban Renewal Director comments.

F. Governing Body Comments:

1. Joe Ayala: La Junta RISE has advanced in tiers. This is a big accomplishment. Thank you to everyone on that committee.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:37 p.m.

Melanie R. Scofield, Secretary

Nancy Bennett, Chairperson