

LA JUNTA URBAN RENEWAL AUTHORITY

CALL TO ORDER: The La Junta Urban Renewal Authority Board of Commissioners held a Regular Meeting on Thursday, June 22, 2023 at 4:00 p.m. in the Power Board Room. The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Bennett.

Board Members Present

Absent

Nancy Bennett
Trevor Herasingh
Daniel Horton
Randall Roberson
Lily Sweikert

Joe Ayala
Trevor Herasingh
Toni Madrid

**Subject to approval at the
July 27, 2023
Urban Renewal Meeting**

Also present: Cynthia Nieb, Economic/Urban Renewal Director
Aimee Hill, City Building Code Officer
Gregg Portch, La Junta

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION:

1. Gregg Portch: Very interested in La Junta and wanted to see what Urban Renewal was about.

MINUTES: May 25, 2023

Chairperson Bennett asked if there were any corrections or additions to be made to the May 25, 2023 minutes. Hearing none, a motion was made by Trevor Herasingh, seconded by Randall Roberson, that the minutes for May 25, 2023 be approved as published. The motion carried unanimously.

MINUTES: June 6, 2023

Chairperson Bennett asked if there were any corrections or additions to be made to the June 6, 2023 minutes. Hearing none, a motion was made by Randall Roberson, seconded by Lily Sweikert, that the minutes for June 6, 2023 be approved as published. The motion carried unanimously.

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS: May 2023

Randall Roberson explained the budget and the expenses so far this year. The Board has overspent the budget by \$35,000. There's still money if an amendment is needed. There is still well over \$100,000 in savings.

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

BALANCE SHEET

ASSETS

- Total cash at the end of May was \$137,435.02.
- Notes receivable was \$2,625.00. (One note was paid in full leaving only one pending note.)
- Investments were \$415,836.03 (COLOTRUST).
- Total assets are \$555,896.05 for the month ending May 2023.

LIABILITIES

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

STATEMENT OF REVENUE/EXPENDITURES

BUDGET TO ACTUAL

Interest in the amount of \$1,722.76 was received. Tax increment of \$66,767.14 was received from property tax collections. Expenses for the month of May were as follows:

- \$67.50 – Rocky Ford Daily Gazette
- \$42.43 – Southeast Colorado Power (Welcome LJ Sing)

The 2023 budget is \$182,500.00 less \$12,881.27 in expenses less \$9,300 encumbered leaving a budget remaining of \$160,318.73.

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

REPORTS:

A. Plaza Building

Chairperson Bennett: The Gates Family Foundation awarded a grant for \$50,000. The electrical inspection has been passed. Electric is hooked up and SECCP is paying the bill.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. Strategic & Communications Plan. Sheryl Trent sent out survey and interview questions by email.

Cynthia Nieb: In looking at the Community Survey, under question no. 1, technically we don't do business development, we only do building development. I'll ask for that to be taken out.

Lily Sweikert: On that same section, my concern is that nobody seems to know what the Urban Renewal Authority actually does. To start a survey off by this question is going to be problematic. I'd recommend, asking more of what La Junta needs. Perhaps including a list of things that URA has done.

Randall Roberson: This is a good list of names that the survey went out to.

Lily Sweikert: We're always talking about including the Chamber of Commerce, Main Street Open for Business in collaboration with what we are doing. The Police Department would be a good group in terms of safety. The Engineering Department should also be included.

Cynthia Nieb: How about the AVRMC? They're not in the tax district but they are a major partner. The other survey, is the "internal survey questions." It asks things like strengths, positive/negative trends, top three priorities, challenges or obstacles standing in the way of success, what things do you want to preserve.

- B. Certified Local Government – Opting in for Board Continuation. (Cynthia Nieb):** We had voted to break off the Certified Local Government from the Urban Renewal in case people wanted to opt-out. In being positive, I'm saying those who want to opt-in. Toni Madrid already said that she wants in. If there anybody here today who still would like to be on the CLG? Those on the CLG are: Toni Madrid, Lily Sweikert, Nancy Bennett, Daniel Horton and Trevor Herasingh.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Urban Renewal Director:

1. I pulled together a packet because it hit me that only Lily has ever reviewed grants before. On the top of it, I put my reviewer sheets from my last State Historical Fund grant. I just wanted you to know how complex these things can be and how seriously everybody took the funding in terms of writing comments and giving me direction. I will re-submit.
2. Looking at the La Junta URA Commercial Building Funding Request, originally, I was told that we don't want anymore than two pages for an application because it's too confusing. Well, it's too confusing if you don't explain it. I used more spacing and broke things out explain what the requirements would be. I also changed the application of the questions that are asked because we had two people that had some challenges with ownership. It also includes an "abbreviated business plan."
3. Moving on to the rubric, in terms of criteria, the biggest change I made was under the second point which is, "is the requested cost effective and are the trades people qualified, do the contractors provide guarantees, how did the applicant evaluate them, are relevant photos and scope of work attached. It cleaned it up and going in the direction being asked for.
4. Then we start getting into the rubric review. This will be given to you at least a week ahead of time in your packets. You'll fill it out and anonymously put in your comments and scores. That way we have something to discuss when we get to the meeting.

Lily Sweikert: Question, are we considering covering apportion of the eligible cost or the total cost?

Randall Roberson: In our original discussions in trying to put this application together, the total budget, I'm agreeing with the 49% of eligible costs. It gets complicated. We got amazingly close to having to make a budget amendment to cover some of these expenses. We need the ability to break down what portion we're going to do as a grant and what portion we're going to make a loan. I think it has to be considered on the total project cost.

Cynthia Nieb: It's very hard if you're thinking about it right at the moment and you have to calculate all this stuff in one meeting to figure out what you're doing. That's the reason I've tried to slow you down a little bit. Before you get in that room, you need to think it through, the positives and the negatives. Something should be in there about "what do you think would be an exceptional project?" Rick took me aside and said, "Cynthia, we always gave half grant and half loan together. You guys didn't do that. You're going to run out of money." That was a concern of his. We need to get something back. We could

LA JUNTA URBAN RENEWAL AUTHORITY

cut out the 2% on the loan. We don't need to make money. We just need to replace some of that money. We should think about having one grant run after the majority of the money comes in.

(There was lengthy discussion and compromises regarding setting aside monies and/or having set application deadlines and what that would look like. Cynthia will incorporate these ideas.)

5. We have two people who are interested in applying for the Urban Renewal Board vacancy.
6. You received the email thread regarding the CORE building expenses.

B. Governing Body Comments:

1. There were no governing body comments.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:26 p.m.

Melanie R. Scofield, Secretary

Nancy Bennett, Chairperson