

## LA JUNTA URBAN RENEWAL AUTHORITY

**CALL TO ORDER:** The La Junta Urban Renewal Authority Board of Commissioners held a Regular Meeting on Thursday, July 27, 2023 at 4:00 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  
Daniel Horton – via Zoom  
Toni Madrid  
Randall Roberson  
Lily Sweikert – via Zoom (left at 5:00 p.m.)

Trevor Herasingh

**Subject to approval at the  
September 28, 2023  
Urban Renewal Meeting**

Also present: Cynthia Nieb, Economic/Urban Renewal Director  
Debra Fraker, Admin. Asst.  
Erin Monroy, La Junta  
Norberto Villanueva, La Junta  
Bette McFarren, RF Gazette

### **CITIZEN PARTICIPATION:**

There was no citizen participation.

### **MINUTES:** June 22, 2023

Chairperson Bennett asked if there were any corrections or additions to be made to the June 22, 2023 minutes. Hearing none, a motion was made by Daniel Horton, seconded by Christine Coffield, that the minutes for June 22, 2023 be approved as published. The motion carried unanimously.

### **FINANCIAL STATEMENTS:** June 2023

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

#### **BALANCE SHEET**

##### ASSETS

- Total cash at the end of June was \$27,851.83.
- Notes receivable was \$2,562.50. (One note)
- Investments were \$517,873.23 (COLOTRUST).
- Total assets are \$548,287.56 for the month ending June 2023.

##### LIABILITIES

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

**STATEMENT OF REVENUE/EXPENDITURES**

**BUDGET TO ACTUAL**

Interest in the amount of \$2,041.93 was received. Tax increment of \$30,902.74 was received from property tax collections. Expenses for the month of June were as follows:

- \$37,410.60 – Rehab Grants
- \$42.56 – Southeast Colorado Power (Welcome LJ Sing)
- \$3,100.00 – UR Director Reimbursement to City of La Junta

The 2023 budget is \$182,500.00 less \$53,434.43 in expenses less \$36,200 encumbered leaving a budget remaining of \$55,454.97. The 2024 budget worksheet has been given to Cynthia and are due back by August 4<sup>th</sup>. They must be approved by the Board. Budgets are a guide to show the community your plans and a reminder throughout the year of the goals set.

Chairperson Bennett asked if there were any questions or corrections regarding the June 2023 financial statements. Hearing none, a motion was made by Joe Ayala, seconded by Christine Coffield, that the financial statements for June 2023 be approved as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

Cynthia Nieb: The budget is due August 4<sup>th</sup>. Everyone has a worksheet along with a sample suggested budget with recommendations. We can say that we have a draft budget and amend is in the future after having more time to look over it.

**MOTION TO ACCEPT A DRAFT BUDGET OFF OF LAST YEARS BUDGET UNTIL THE BOARD CAN SOLIDIFY THE NUMBERS AT THE NEXT MEETING:** Ayala

**SECOND:** Madrid

**DISCUSSION:** There was no further discussion

**VOTE:** The motion carried (Horton abstained)

**REPORTS:**

**A. Plaza Building**

Chairperson Bennett: SECCP is working on getting enough money gathered to close the building by the end of September. People are working on the storefront. Some of it is being worked on in their facilities somewhere else. It will be a couple of months before it gets installed. Their pulling loose ends together right now. They're getting ready for another grant round. There is still \$250,000 more needed.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

**A. Strategic & Communications Plan.** The La Junta Urban Renewal Strategic Plan consultant, Sheryl Trent, spoke at length about upcoming milestones to complete the plan and the upcoming work session in August.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**A. Urban Renewal Director:**

1. Planning not to make the final changes to the grant loan application until we work through our goals and strategies so that we're all in alignment.

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2. Aimee is pulling together information on our codes and their enforcement. She will report that to us so we can work together.

**B. LA JUNTA URBAN RENEWAL AUTHORITY APPLICATIONS.** The following two applications were received. Chairperson Bennett asked questions of each candidate and each board member had opportunity to ask questions as well.

### **ERIN MONROY**

1. What do you know about Urban Renewal Authorities?
  - *URAs assist towns in eliminating blighted areas. URAs use TIF to fund redevelopment of blighted areas. I feel like URAs powers are pretty broad – they can plan and implement redevelopment, they can acquire, sell, and lease property, and when needed they do have the power to exercise eminent domain. Because their powers are broad, I have seen that they can get a bad name or be accused of misappropriation of funds. I feel like educating the community on what the local URA is and what it does is an important part of what a URA does.*
2. What do you think the Authority should focus on now and in the future (must reflect the directives of the state statute)?
  - *Increase the vibrancy of downtown La Junta.*
    - *Related; figure a plan to increase occupancy of downtown buildings. Increase density; buildings should be mixed-use instead of sitting empty.*
  - *Save and restore any and all historic buildings.*
  - *Help to create a variety of new jobs to attract/retain residents.*
    - *Related; create new sources of tax revenue to help support and sustain the town.*
  - *Create more housing options.*
  - *Maintain a balance between healthy, needed redevelopment and not “providing another finance mechanism for developers”.*
3. Why do you think you are a good choice for this position?
  - *I am civic-minded. I have a strong desire to learn and serve the community and I have a deep appreciation for beauty including historic buildings and architecture. I am also both creative and analytical; in fact, on my most recent employee evaluation, I received the comment, “Erin is analytical and extremely fastidious. Her work quality is without question.”*
  - *To me, civic-minded means not only caring about my community, but having the desire to learn more about how my community functions. I think it is also taking a look at my actions, taking responsibility for those actions and seeing how my actions can affect those around me. Taking responsibility for what I put out into the world and being intentional on continually growing and being better. I think you can be civic-minded about anything that you take to heart and care about making better, and by thinking about how your actions can affect everyone. Civics can be something practiced constantly, not just a subject to learn in school.*
  - *I have a drive and passion to learn. Since I have moved here to La Junta, I have spent countless hours researching – its history, its buildings, its citizens, its leaders, its problems, its climate, its plants and animals. The list goes on (and this is just in my free time). This in itself is civic-minded because I want to learn as*

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*much about the town as possible so I can be as mindful as I can and try to let the past inform future decisions and actions.*

- I have also spent many hours researching LJURA, CLG, TIF, ED, SBDC, and any other acronym I could cram into my brain, to increase my knowledge and understanding. I have realized that not everyone researches things as I do, and so I can serve as a resource to help educate others on what LJURA does. My research has benefited me in connecting with the SBDC and several other resources to assist in starting my own business. I still have lots of room to learn because I don't feel like I have an actual understanding of TIF and how it works.*
- I believe in equality. Asking the simple question, "How does this/may this affect others?" ensures that we think about all citizens, all demographics and how they can be given equal access and equal opportunities to affirm their individual rights. I feel part of a URAs responsibility is to identify underserved areas – this goes along with equality – so not just the affluent have access to resources.*
- Even though I have only lived in La Junta for a little over a year, I care deeply about the town and its residents. I want the town to continue to be revitalized and grow. I want my kids to grow up here and stay here and continue to invest in their community.*

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Best regards,

Erin Monroy

### **NORBERTO VILLANUEVA**

- What do you know about Urban Renewal Authorities?
  - Urban Renewal Authorities are corporate bodies organized to affect the physical development of their respective municipalities to urban renewal projects to "eliminate and prevent the development or spread of slums and blight."*
- What do you think the Authority should focus on now and in the future (must reflect the directives of the state statute)?
  - a. Revitalization of the downtown corridor to invigorate trade and create employment opportunities.*
  - b. Perform outreach to property owners to help redevelop and/or acquire those suffering from deterioration and/or dilapidation.*
  - c. Identify and earmark historical properties for preservation and/or repurposing.*
- Why do you think you are a good choice for this position?
  - An extensive background in sales, finance, and development gained from over 25 years of experience in real estate mortgage loan origination, sales, and development. I possess significant skill sets that will serve the community well.*

The members voted by ballot:

Erin Monroy received 3 votes

Norberto Villanueva received 2 votes

The official result of Erin Monroy will go to a recommendation for the Mayor to present before City Council.

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**C. Governing Body Comments:**

1. There were no governing body comments.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:31 p.m.

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Melanie R. Scofield, Secretary

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Nancy Bennett, Chairperson