

LA JUNTA URBAN RENEWAL AUTHORITY

CALL TO ORDER: The La Junta Urban Renewal Authority Board of Commissioners held a Regular Meeting on Thursday, April 24, 2025 at 4:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers. The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Bennett.

Board Members Present

Absent

Nancy Bennett
Carly Johnson
Toni Madrid (via Zoom)
Ben Mason
Zach Miner
Erin Monroy
Randall Roberson

Joe Ayala
Angel Saucedo

**Subject to approval at the
May 22, 2025
Urban Renewal Meeting**

Also present: Melanie Scofield, City Clerk
Cayle Hines, La Junta
Sharon Jones, Otero County Treasurer

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

There was no citizen participation.

MINUTES: March 27, 2025

Chairperson Bennett asked if there were any corrections or additions to be made to the March 27, 2025 minutes. There being none, the board moved to a motion.

MOTION TO APPROVE MARCH 27, 2025 MINUTES AS PUBLISHED: RANDALL ROBERSON

SECOND: ERIN MONROY

AYE: Bennett, Johnson, Madrid, Mason, Miner, Monroy, Roberson

ABSENT: Ayala, Saucedo

OPPOSED: None

The motion carries.

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS: MARCH 2025

For the month of March, we took in \$1,866.88 of interest last month and \$146.73 of tax increment money, for a total of \$2,013.61 approx. income. There was \$40.78 of expenditures for the electric of the welcome sign; as of right now in our cash account, we have \$72,373.34. There is \$375,403.74 in our investment account. Notes receivable is for \$1,250.00. Total assets for March are up from \$389,111.00. to \$449,027.08.

MOTION TO APPROVE THE MARCH 2025 FINANCIAL REPORT AS PRESENTED: BEN MASON

SECOND: ERIN MONROY

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AYE: Bennett, Johnson, Madrid, Mason, Miner, Monroy, Roberson

ABSENT: Ayala, Saucedo

OPPOSED: None

The motion carries.

REPORTS:

A. Plaza Building (Nancy Bennett)

- The Board will be glad to know that all drywall is up and has been mudded. It is finally beginning to look like an actual building.
- The contractors hope to have the walls painted with primer at the end of next week.
- After walls have been completed, the next steps are wood floors and doors, as well as trim work.
- We have discussed colors for paint.
- Tin ceiling is up and completed; we've noticed that between each ceiling tile, there is noticeable "gaps".
 - It was suggested to the contractors if caulking the gaps would help lessen their visibility; the contractors responded by mentioning that the building does move, so the caulking would need to be redone on a yearly basis. They also mentioned that the idea of a tin ceiling factors in the fact of the building moving and settling.

B. Chestnut Apartments (Maureen Rikhof): Maureen Rikhof was unable to make it to the meeting. Melanie Scofield, City Clerk, gave the Chestnut Apartments update.

- No major updates, unless Sutherlands has been able to source the windows. The Rikhofs have been seeking out other ways to acquire the windows.
- Currently, the building is being prepped for the installation of windows, such as brickwork around the windows.
- While the windows get sourced, the contractors are working on various other projects (such as the utility building across the alley and plumbing for the building)
- The old policy that the Rikhofs signed off on allows them until January 1, 2026 to complete the window project for the building. Hopefully they will stick to their summer schedule to comply with the Jan. 1, 2026 end date.
- Randall Roberson congratulated the Rikhofs and the contractors for the amazing job they have done to another building (907 Belleview). Has complete faith in the team to complete the Chestnut Apartments restoration.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. Funding Application/Program Policy (Action)

MOTION TO ACCEPT THE URA FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE POLICY AS PRESENTED: ERIN MONROY

SECOND: RANDALL ROBERSON

AYE: Bennett, Johnson, Madrid, Mason, Miner, Monroy, Roberson

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ABSENT: Ayala, Saucedo

OPPOSED: None

The motion carries.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Establish New TIF District:

- Nancy Bennett has been in contact with Paul Benedetti regarding the establishment of a new TIF district. He mentioned that a new TIF district can be virtually any size – whether it be just one property or an entire block of properties. Deciding this would be entirely up to the City Council and the Urban Renewal Authority.
- In order to establish said TIF districts, there would need to be community outreach of the area affected by the new TIF district establishment. Letters would need to go out to the area business and neighbors.
- There would first have to be a survey conducted; this would need a planning grant; DOLA can grant \$8,000. This would be an extremely slow process, possibly encompassing several years.
 - Randall Roberson: Could we still keep funds in one single checking account? Or would we still need separate accounts?
 - Nancy Bennet: They mentioned we would still need separate accounts, as the process will not be quick. I don't believe it would be beneficial to us in that case.
 - Randall Roberson: If we established a new TIF district, we would not benefit from any funds immediately, especially speaking on behalf of the bowling alley; it would take several years (up to five (5) or more) before we would see any funds or benefit from that business. If we were to establish the new TIF district being the entire business area where the bowling alley was located, not only would the city benefit from it, but also the businesses in the area.
- There are several businesses in the immediate area where the bowling alley is located; mostly health-related businesses such as clinics, gym, and chiropractic office.
- Cayle Hines, La Junta, had recently purchased the bowling alley. Is in complete support of the establishment of the new TIF district in the area the bowling alley is located.
 - Ben Mason: If we open a new TIF district, we would not only need City Council approval, but we would also need to contact the local school district's board member(s), Police Dept., Fire Dept. We would need more clear information to be able to move forward with the discussions.
 - Cayle Hines: We have been in contact with all of the acronyms in Colorado for assistance; even getting grants for the area is difficult, as nobody in the state is willing to give assistance to businesses in Southeastern Colorado. This is why establishing a new TIF district would essentially be extremely beneficial.
 - Nancy Bennett: Paul has suggested that we communicate with Pueblo Urban Renewal, as they have completed similar projects in the past, as well as currently opening an entirely new TIF district in Pueblo. They may be of assistance in this situation.
- Melanie Scofield, Nancy Bennett, Ben Mason, and Randall Roberson have volunteered to go to Pueblo.

The board continued discussions regarding the establishment of a new TIF district and working with Pueblo Urban Renewal.

B. Director Comments

1. Schedule Tour: The board has been discussing scheduling a bus tour; there are limited dates for the use of the city bus. I have been trying to piece together a larger extent of our map; for the most part, the board is somewhat aware of what downtown encompasses regarding the TIF district. Everything else is city limit to city limit along Highway 50. It is possible to compile a list of businesses that are within the district along Highway 50; some businesses (Big R; Felisa's Restaurant) are with county rather than the city, which is why you will see the TIF district outlined irregularly. For the use of the busses, they are only available in the morning. It would need to be done within the month of May, as school districts will be entering their summer breaks.
 - Erin Monroy: Is this just to tour the TIF district or just to see the businesses along the way?
 - Melanie Scofield: It is up to the board. It was brought up at one of the work sessions.
 - Ben Mason: I am completely fine with starting with a list of businesses within the TIF district, and then conduct some research on my own. We could visit this idea and set up a work session to discuss findings. The topic came up for discussion when we were discussing the ideas for new projects the URA can do.
 - Zach Miner: Somebody through the idea out because the board is new. I also like the idea of a list, especially regarding the larger businesses. Perhaps compiling the list and then have a walking tour would be an idea.
 - Carly Johnson: I think we wanted to think of some projects and figure out who the point of contact would be for certain businesses.
 - Zach Miner: It would be good to see any completed projects; it would be helpful to find out how many of those projects have used funds from the URA.
 - Nancy Bennett: I think a good starting point would be to have Melanie compile the list and identify which buildings have used funds from the URA. Then we wouldn't need to worry about a tour at this time.
2. Work Session Dates/Topics:
 - Melanie Scofield: I have some ideas for topics for our future work sessions – I am thinking we are wanting to have Mr. Benedetti first.
 - I have found something that would be very beneficial to the board from DCI (Downtown Colorado Inc.) has a pre-recorded webinar talking about HB-1348, the new taxing for special districts/school districts, and I have learned a lot from that webinar. The board was asking for an orientation about the URA, however, there is no specific orientation. All they really do is bring a representative in, show you the TIF district, show you a list of projects they've completed, go over the bylaws, and that is basically it. I thought that our second work session could be watching the webinar (approx. 50 mins), take notes and discuss ideas for about 30 mins.
 - We also had Ken Hood visit us in the past; we would need a separate work session to have him visit again. I believe once we watch the webinar, we will understand Ken Hood and what he speaks about.
 - Nancy Bennett: When I was talking to councilperson Paul Benedetti about the board makeup when we expanded the board, he suggested if we could get the County Assessor appointed to the board by the County Commissioners, it would be the best idea for URA. It doesn't have to be a commissioner specifically, but anyone from the county would be good.
 - Erin Monroy: I thought it would be great; I was thinking of Ken Hood earlier when we brought up the idea of expanding the TIF district; something that I found

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interesting that he was discussing as the specific things that would generate the most money from property taxes.

- Melanie Scofield: We have three topics for our next work sessions planned. We will come up with a date for the Pueblo URA visit for us four, and we will also come up with a date for our first work session with Mr. Benedetti.

3. Public Outreach:

- Melanie Scofield: Now that we've got all of our documentation together, we will be getting that out on the URA part of the website sometime next week. What does the board want to do with getting the word out about the URA?
- Ben Mason: I like the idea of sending letters out to the properties within the TIF district that are blighted or would like some assistance from the URA; perhaps having a sticker or decal on the windows of the projects completed in the past using URA funding?
- Erin Monroy: Do we want to put a limit on that? Some of the past projects may not look as good as they originally did 10 years ago.
- Melanie Scofield: That may be a good way to identify which buildings may need some assistance. Identifying those buildings that have used funding from the URA – if they have kept up on their properties, send them the decal, and those that have not kept up on the maintaining of their properties, then those are the ones we send a letter out asking to apply for funding from the URA.
- Ben Mason: Reaching out through Facebook is not a bad idea, as there are a lot of people whom use Facebook.
- Carly Johnson: I think it would be good to have an open information session. Maybe even sending out mailers to every property in the district and offer that information session to the public, so whomever is interested, they can come to that information session and get all the resources from us.
- Erin Monroy: The general public may not be eligible to get the funding from URA, but it would still help get the word out. We could even do a Facebook live.

Any other suggestions for public outreach to be forwarded to Melanie Scofield via phone call or email correspondence.

C. Governing Body's Comments: None

An Urban Renewal Authority work session is scheduled for April 29, 2025 at 10:30 AM in the Power Board Room of the Municipal Building.

The next Urban Renewal Authority meeting will be held May 22, 2025 at 4:00 PM in the Council Chambers of the Municipal Building.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:42 p.m.

Cristian Estrada, Deputy City Clerk

Nancy Bennett, Chairperson