

LA JUNTA URBAN RENEWAL AUTHORITY

CALL TO ORDER: The La Junta Urban Renewal Authority Board of Commissioners held a Regular Meeting on Thursday, October 24, 2024 at 4:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers. The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Bennett.

Board Members Present

Nancy Bennett
Toni Madrid
Christine Coffield
Randall Roberson
Erin Monroy

Absent

Joe Ayala
Trevor Herasingh
Lily Sweikert

**Subject to approval at the
January 23, 2025
Urban Renewal Meeting**

Also present: Melanie Scofield, City Clerk
Cristian Estrada, Deputy City Clerk
Aimee Hill, Building Code Official
Jeremiah Stoker, Exalted Ruler Elks Lodge
Ben Mason, La Junta

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

There was no citizen participation.

Emergency Funding Application – Elks Lodge

Jeremiah Stoker, Exalted Ruler of Elks Lodge in La Junta had presented a case for requesting emergency funding for a structural beam that had been affected by termite infestation. Most of the beams at the Elks Lodge had been affected, which has now been mitigated. There is a yearly service that the Elks contracts for treatment of termites. The beam that has been affected the most that is needing replaced is located near the front of the building by the restrooms downstairs. They (the Elks) have been provided a bid by the engineer whom inspected the beam. Chairperson Bennett opened the floor for questioning by the board.

- Randall Roberson, Treasurer, had recalled during the previously held work session if there was a cost share of 50% or 25%; to which Chairperson Bennett responded and Toni Madrid confirmed that the cost share was exactly 50%, which meets the guidelines for the grant application.
- Erin Monroy asked whether this was a loan or a grant that the Elks Lodge was requesting. Toni Madrid confirmed that this is a grant that the Elks is requesting, and not a loan.

MOTION MADE TO APPROVE THE GRANT REQUESTED BY THE ELKS LODGE FOR BEAM REPLACEMENT BY TONI MADRID.

SECOND MADE BY RANDALL ROBERSON

AYE: Bennett, Madrid, Coffield, Roberson, Monroy

OPPOSED: None

ABSENT: Ayala, Sweikert, Herasingh

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The motion carries.

MINUTES: September 26, 2024

Chairperson Bennett asked if there were any corrections or additions to be made to the September 26, 2024 minutes.

MOTION MADE TO APPROVE SEPTEMBER 26, 2024 MINUTES AS PUBLISHED

SECOND MADE BY TONI MADRID

AYE: Bennett, Madrid, Coffield, Roberson, Monroy

OPPOSED: None

ABSENT: Ayala, Sweikert, Herasingh

The motion carries.

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS: October 2024

Treasurer's Report: Randall Roberson reported that toward the end of September, we had \$56,001.80 in our cash/checking account; in the ColoTrust investment account there is \$367,239.75. Notes receivable for \$1,625 for our total assets being \$424,866.55. We took in revenue from the tax increment district being \$4,024.92. We earned interest from the ColoTrust account on our monies deposited, which is \$1,532.16. The total being \$5,557.68. The only expense for the month of September was the cost of power to the City of La Junta welcome sign which totals \$44.09.

MOTION MADE TO APPROVE THE FINACIAL REPORT AS PRESENTED BY TONI MADRID

SECOND MADE BY ERIN MONROY

AYE: Bennett, Madrid, Coffield, Roberson, Monroy

OPPOSED: None

ABSENT: Ayala, Sweikert, Herasingh

The motion carries.

2025 Proposed Budget: Aliza Libby, Finance Director, gave the report for the 2025 Proposed URA Budget. Randall Roberson was congratulated by putting forth the work required to inform the public about processes. Total revenue for URA was \$418,000. Historically, the total revenue has been \$200,000 and it has increased for the 2025 calendar year. Aliza Libby also mentioned that, with the \$100,000 being set aside for emergency purposes, the budget is largely similar to the 2024 Approved URA Budget. There is more money in grants for Urban Renewal Authority to give out.

- Randall Roberson: There is \$200,000 set aside for rehab grant and loan requests for the 2025 year; Operating expenses budgeted at \$4,000. Training and travel being budgeted at \$5,000. Advertising has been budgeted for \$1,000; the Welcome to La Junta sign is budgeted at \$800 for the 2025 year; the TIF distribution from the Hampton Inn is \$35,000.

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Administrative costs have been budgeted at \$1,200; the total budgeted expenses being \$247,000.

- Aliza Libby added that any remaining money would go into a savings account. The budget is not set in stone for next year, as long as the board agrees to any changes. A budget serves as a guide. Aliza Libby continued explaining how budgets work and what can be changed in the future. With more income, there is a lot that can be done with the new budget. You could also use the money for increasing the advertising budget, etc. It is, in fact, a living, breathing document.
- Roberson: It was brought up the budgeted amount for a director; there is \$20,000 set aside for a director.
- Libby: City Council has decided not to fill the director position at this time. Any movement for a director must be first discussed and approved by City Council.

Further discussions and explanations on how budgets and financials work, as well as how moving money through accounts was given by Aliza Libby.

- Roberson gave more information regarding how the TIF tax increment will increase as the years go by, with some suffrage of depreciation from the businesses and those whom received grants/loans. To those watching remotely, we do have funds available for cases of blight, etc. Especially for the 2025 year.

MOTION MADE TO APPROVE THE 2025 URA BUDGET BY ERIN MONROY

SECOND MADE BY CHRISTINE COFFIELD

Discussion:

- Erin Monroy inquired about the Hampton Inn expense, and what the “TIF” means for what is mentioned in the budget.
- Libby responded, that when the deal was made with Hampton Inn, the agreement was that their TIF be returned. This will only go for two more years (2025 and 2026). Part of the deal was to return the TIF for the hotel to be built. There is a schedule that confirms the increase and the ending of said TIF.
- Monroy asked for more clarification on the 2025 Budget; where numbers appear and where the numbers are essentially coming from.

With there being no further discussions, the board moved to vote.

AYE: Bennett, Madrid, Coffield, Roberson, Monroy

OPPOSED: None

ABSENT: Ayala, Sweikert, Herasingh

The motion carries.

- Aliza Libby: At the last meeting, there was a motion made that needs to be amended. In that motion, it was made to open a new account for the \$100,000 set aside for emergency purposes. This needs to be amended, so that way it is more streamlined and a new account being opened is unnecessary.

MOTION MADE BY ERIN MONROY TO REPEAL THE PREVIOUS MOTION MADE REGARDING THE EMERGENCY FUNDING

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SECOND MADE BY TONI MADRID

AYE: Bennett, Madrid, Coffield, Roberson, Monroy

OPPOSED: None

ABSENT: Ayala, Sweikert, Herasingh

The motion carries.

MOTION MADE BY ERIN MONROY TO NOT LET THE SAVINGS ACCOUNT FALL BELOW \$100,000 EXCEPT TO BE USED FOR EMERGENCY SITUATIONS

SECOND MADE BY RANDALL ROBERSON

AYE: Bennett, Madrid, Coffield, Roberson, Monroy

OPPOSED: None

ABSENT: Ayala, Sweikert, Herasingh

The motion carries.

- Aliza Libby: The City of La Junta still submits your budget to the State of Colorado. Anyone that is looking for the budget, it will be found online as the Adopted Budget, and not the Proposed Budget.

REPORTS:

A. Plaza Building

The following update has been provided by email to the board from Jane Daniels, Project Manager of the Plaza Building:

The tax credits do not expire, meaning that even if your project doesn't conclude until the end of 2025, or even 2026, your credits are still reserved. Delays in construction are typical (granted, this project has been exceptional, but it is not out of the ordinary).

Without the tax credits and the loan to serve as a bridge, this project cannot be completed. The URA would have an unfinished building, most likely, and a big liability on their hands. They already have a great asset. They need to trust in the professionals who are doing the work, have raised the funds and reserved the credits and now just need a bridge to get them to the finish line, which includes a delayed timeline. (Again, very typical!)

I have personally worked with several other projects that took many years (like 3-4) to complete before they received their tax credits.

I think there may be some confusion, re: timing of application and when to request issuance. For the first phase, which applied tax credits for asbestos remediation we had to finish up the phase so to claim credits that could be monetized and used towards future phases and cash match to the SHF. There was a timing issue there.

In any case, there is no threat that the credits for this round would “expire”. They are collateral for the loan, and when the project is complete, in the spring of 2025, we can then request issuance of the credits. First National Bank has been very thoughtful and helpful by allowing some wiggle room to apply the loan terms only when needed. It looks like it will be needed for only a few months to carry you forward to claim the credits (because there is a time lag to have them approved and then monetized).

Discussion:

- Randall Roberson inquired about the amount that the Plaza Building has been appraised at. Chairperson Bennett responded, stating that she does not have recollection of the exact amount, but will send out the information to the board at a later date. Bennett anticipates that the appraised value will only increase when the Plaza Building is completed. It is currently being appraised as a “Work In Progress”.
- Chairperson Bennett: There has been some movement on the acquiring of needed materials that were previously out of stock; Toni Madrid inquired what the delay was, if there was no movement due to decisions or due to the lack of supply. Bennett responded that, to her knowledge, it is due to the lack of supplies. It has been made clear that everyone on the project is eagerly awaiting completion and that everything is trying to be pushed forward on the contractor’s part.

B. Current Funding Projects: Melanie Scofield, City Clerk, gave updates on the current three (3) projects being worked on.

- Hansen – Clothespin Laundry: I had received a text right before the meeting stating that she is complete with the construction. Melanie is awaiting confirmation paperwork/Aimee Hill to conduct an inspection, and will award a certificate of completion, as well as cutting a check once all paperwork has been submitted.
- Jacob – Miss Fit LLC: This project has also been completed. We had received all required paperwork; inspection has been done and a certificate of completion has been awarded. The check has been cut on Monday October 21st, 2024.
- Rikhof – Chestnut Apartments: Has received that they are working with Home Depot for the windows; there were errors with measurements of windows, so they are awaiting the corrections for the window replacements. There is currently no movement on construction due to the fact that climate temperatures need to be within favorable range (above 55 degrees Fahrenheit). This will resume March 2025.
 - Randall Roberson asked if Rikhof had requested an extension, however, there are differing timelines on the application guidelines (30 days/180 days) from the contract (18 months). Roberson does not recall the larger timeline, and was only aware of 180 days. There needs to be some revisions made on the applications, guidelines, etc.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Funding Application Revisions

1. Melanie Scofield had made some revisions to the applications; Cristian Estrada, Deputy City Clerk, had updated and streamlined the scoring rubric. Awaiting more suggestions for revisions; there were some citizen inputs, and they had stated to have two separate types of applications (one for grants, and one for loans). Suggestions given by Scofield had been delivered to the board on what should be changed/included in the new, separated applications.
2. Toni Madrid made a suggestion on having another work session solely focusing on the application processes and updates; perhaps holding the work session before the end of the 2024 year.

Discussions surrounding the date of when the special work session to be held. The date agreed upon for the Application Work Session has been tentatively scheduled for November 18, 2024 at 4:00 p.m. in the Power Board Room of the Municipal Building.

B. URA Website Information

1. There were three (3) suggestions provided to Melanie Scofield; Cristian and I will put all of those suggestions onto the website. The website is essentially a live, working document and can be changed/edited at any time. There is a massive amount of text (reading) material. It was asked if having photographs of projects between paragraphs would help break up the reading a bit more.

C. URA Funding Outreach: *This has been tabled by the board to be added to next meeting's agenda, or a separate work session, until a decision has been made with application processes and website updates.*

D. Governing Body Comments:

- Roberson brought up the vacancy that was left by Daniel Horton, and if whether it would be filled by another person at a later time. Any board vacancies are posted yearly in November; Melanie will update posts on the current board openings, as well as reaching out to Trevor Herasingh about his position, as it expires this year.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:47 p.m.

Cristian Estrada, Deputy City Clerk

Nancy Bennett, Chairperson