



MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING LA JUNTA URBAN
RENEWAL AUTHORITY
LA JUNTA, CO
APRIL 23, 2026
4:00 PM
COUNCIL CHAMBERS
601 COLORADO AVENUE

CALL TO ORDER (Chairperson)

The La Junta Urban Renewal Authority Board of Commissioners held a Regular Meeting on Thursday, April 23, 2026, at 4:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers. The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Mason.

ROLL CALL (City Clerk/Deputy)

Board Members

Ayala

Bennett

Fleischacker

Johnson

Linder

Madrid

Mason

Miner

Saucedo

Present: Joe Ayala - arrived at 4:07 p.m.
Nancy Bennett
Marty Fleischacker
Carly Johnson
Cheryl Lindner
Toni Madrid
Ben Mason
Zach Miner
Angel Saucedo

Absent: None

Also Present: Melanie Scofield, City Clerk/URA Director
Cristian Estrada Deputy City Clerk
Rena Ruiz, La Junta (Ruiz Arts)
Niels Rikhof, La Junta (Carpe Construction)
Eric Baca, La Junta (Copper Kitchen)
Tracy Taullie, La Junta (Ark Valley Animal Hospital)
Mickey & Tammy Bethel, La Junta (Mattress by Appointment)

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

Niels Rikhof, La Junta (Carpe Construction): Inquired regarding a parking lot located

beside the Chestnut Apartments; would like to discuss the possibility of purchasing said parking lot because it was discovered that Urban Renewal owns the parking lot. When the Chestnut Apartments are finished, it will have a total of 12 (twelve) units. The building will need parking. Four years ago, I spoke with the City Manager at the time (Rick Klein) regarding parking options. At the time, Rick said that the Chestnut was basically stuck with what parking they currently have. Now with the rear parking area being available, there will still not be enough parking for the tenants. Perhaps Urban Renewal would consider selling the parking lot.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (Chairperson)

A. Regular Meeting Minutes March 26, 2026

Chairperson Mason asked if there were any corrections or additions to be made to the March 26, 2026 minutes.

Cheryl Lindner: Asked for clarification regarding the motion regarding the Elks Lodge, did not know that the motion included both costs with and without tax.

Ben Mason: It will be the cost with tax because the Elks Lodge is not a nonprofit. The Elks Lodge still pays sales tax when they purchase things, because they do not re-sell anything back to the public.

Melanie Scofield: They never applied for tax exemption. They will have to pay the tax. The motion can still stay.

MOTION TO APPROVE MARCH 26, 2026 MINUTES WITH CORRECTIONS: Madrid

SECOND: Fleischacker

DISCUSSION: There was no discussion

VOTE: The motion carried

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (Treasurer)

A. March 2026 Financial Statement

Marty Fleischacker provided the March Financial Statement. The cash in the bank is \$26,634.42. The investment account is at \$378,957.35. Cheryl, you had a question regarding the receivables with Melanie; the "Accounts Receivable" is money that goes into the URA account. It went from the account to the city instead of to the URA by mistake. That balance of \$61,122.17 is a receivable this month, but it will go into the other account next month. Will watch and see if that adjustment takes place in April. Does that answer your question, Cheryl?

Cheryl Lindner: Yes. Was really looking for the differentiation from "Accounts Receivable" to "Notes Receivable."

Marty Fleischacker: That inadvertently went the wrong way, and it was caught. That correction should be reflected in next month's reporting. The Notes Receivable for

\$166,827.71 are the two accounts that are currently out, which are Thyme Square and the Chestnut Apartments.

MOTION TO APPROVE MARCH FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AS PRESENTED:

Lindner

SECOND: Johnson

DISCUSSION: There was no discussion

VOTE: The motion carried

REPORTS

A. Plaza Building (Bennett/Mason)

Ben Mason: This is just the data that was received; still waiting for final inspections from electrical and plumbing, is that correct Nancy?

Nancy Bennett: The electrical inspection has passed; I had not heard anything regarding plumbing.

Joe Ayala arrived at 4:07 p.m.

Ben Mason: Spoke with the plumbing inspector a few days ago; the plumber still needs to install p-traps in the public restrooms downstairs; still needs to get the heater issue fixed. Once that is done, they can be called back out. Expects to hear from the plumber next week, and that report is from the plumbing inspector, not the plumber. They are getting close on the asphalt, unaware of the exact date.

Joe Ayala: The asphalt should happen next week.

B. Promenade (Fleischacker)

Marty Fleischacker: Finished with the tear down/tear up/regrouping of the HVAC from the roof. Took all the gas lines/electrical lines to the ground. Everything is at the back of the building on the pad. For the units, all the duct work has been redirected and reconnected. Currently sitting in a building that gets up to 86 degrees. Waiting for the ten-ton unit coming in from back east, which 3 (three) weeks ago they said it was in transit. Not sure how slow the transit takes to get the unit here. Lucky to have customers that are patient enough to withstand the heat of the building. Paid a little bit more for what needed to be done, but getting a better quality going this route. The application is set for 180 days, and that end date is the end of next week. Would like to request an extension from the Board, if possible. Hopefully, the HVAC unit will be in next week. Thanked the Board for their patience.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Spark Grant Program (Applications) (Action)

Ben Mason: Sent an email a few days ago. Had a few folks call with a couple of

questions regarding the Spark Grant Program. Will go down the list from top to bottom. If any Board members have a business that has applied for a Spark Grant, then they must abstain from voting and any discussion regarding their submitted application. To keep things simple, Cheryl, Carly, and Angel will abstain from all five applications.

1. Wild Roots Kava Co.

MOTION TO APPROVE THE WILD ROOTS KAVA CO. SPARK GRANT

APPLICATION: Ayala

SECOND: Madrid

DISCUSSION: There was no discussion

VOTE: The motion carried (Johnson, Lindner, Saucedo abstained)

2. Mattress by Appointment

MOTION TO APPROVE THE MATTRESS BY APPOINTMENT SPARK GRANT

APPLICATION: Madrid

SECOND: Fleischacker

DISCUSSION: Joe Ayala — Even though the mock-up was drawn for you by the company, it will still need to be revised by the City Engineer to make sure it meets all code. What it looks like today might be a little different tomorrow, but for the most part, as long as it passes the sign code, it should be fine.

Cheryl Lindner — Had a couple of questions. I was looking at their quote. The first thing is that it says the estimated cost is \$5,900 and the grant is only for \$5,000 with no indication of where the additional funds are coming from. The other thing is regarding the graphics on the window and the graphics installation; there was a mock-up of that. Did not see anything in regard to the banner, such as the mock-up and where it was going to be installed, and if there was any labor cost with the installation, as well.

Joe Ayala — In response to that, the Spark Grant is for \$5,000. If it is over \$5,000 then I'm unsure where the rest of the funding is coming from, but it is not coming from urban Renewal. If there are any noted extra costs beyond the \$5,000, then the remaining funds are supplemented by the applicant.

Cheryl Lindner — The point is to be clear, especially in regard to banners. Banners are most often seen as temporary, and are typically not permanently attached to a building. If the goal is external beautification and attractiveness, the question is where the banner was going to be installed externally on the building.

Ben Mason — Ultimately, that is up to the property owner and the code of the City of La Junta. The Board cannot decide what folks can do or not do with their received funds.

Joe Ayala — This is different from the normal grant; this is for storefront improvement. Whether it's a small or short-term storefront improvement.

VOTE: The motion carried (Johnson, Lindner, Saucedo abstained)

3. Ark Valley Animal Hospital

MOTION TO APPROVE THE ARK VALLEY ANIMAL HOSPITAL SPARK GRANT

APPLICATION: Ayala

SECOND: Madrid

DISCUSSION: Joe Ayala — Would like to add that different storefronts have different needs. Where this application is at is that the storefront needs landscaping. This application qualifies because it is a storefront within the TIF district.

VOTE: The motion carried (Johnson, Lindner, Saucedo abstained)

Tracy Taullie — Thanked the Board for the consideration and approval of the application. Sees the amazing work being done by the URA with the City's current businesses and this is a great thing for the City.

4. Copper Kitchen

MOTION TO APPROVE THE COPPER KITCHEN SPARK GRANT APPLICATION:

Ayala

SECOND: Madrid

DISCUSSION: There was no discussion

VOTE: The motion carried (Johnson, Lindner, Saucedo abstained)

5. Ruiz Arts LLC

MOTION TO APPROVE THE RUIZ ARTS LLC SPARK GRANT APPLICATION: Ayala

SECOND: Fleischacker

DISCUSSION: There was no discussion

VOTE: The motion carried (Johnson, Lindner, Saucedo abstained)

B. Director Comments

1. Vacant Lots - Bradish Avenue

Melanie Scofield: Provided copies of the bid process that the City of La Junta follows. Jennifer Hinkhouse, Director of Purchasing, takes care of that through purchasing. The only thing that the Board would need to get to her is the minimum bid, as the legal descriptions have already been provided to her. The assessor's fair market value is \$1,000.00 on one lot and the other is valued at \$1,300.00. Hopefully, by the next meeting, the Board can have figures decided, and then it can be posted.

Ben Mason: Once it is posted, anybody who wants to buy such property just comes and makes a bid, correct? Then the URA just accepts the highest bid, is that how it works?

Joe Ayala: It is put out for a time through different publications, and the publication will state the end date for bid amounts. The Board is deciding on the minimum bid, then the rest of it is up to city procedure (which would in fact be the highest bidder).

Cheryl Lindner: Does the bidding on the property stay open if the minimum bid is not

achieved?

Melanie Scofield: No. The posting would have to be edited/rewritten and posted again. Once the due date is on the posting, it stops on that due date.

Conversations regarding the specifics of bid processes and the URA involvement within the process; the only thing that the URA sets is the bid minimum, then the city processes take over through the purchasing department of the city.

2. Downtown Beautification Project

Pam Denahy, Director of Tourism/Economic Development, and Melanie Scofield have a meeting date set with Chris Argeullo, Electric Department, sometime during the first week of May; the Board may participate in this meeting. The meeting is to discuss changing the lighting up and down Colorado Avenue (updating broken lights; change broken brackets for the banners) as well as looking into whatever the Electric Department has in their inventory for the street lamps/poles.

Ben Mason: Pam wasn't sure if the current light fixtures could hold new brackets, which is why the lights got thrown into the Downtown Beautification Project mix. If the banner program does happen, it is possible the street lights might have to be replaced, which may be a sore spot.

Melanie Scofield: Similarly, has anyone from the Board heard back from the Presbyterian Church regarding a quote for the windows?

Joe Ayala: When reaching out to the owner, the Board should also bring up the pigeon problem with that building. There are holes all throughout the windows where the siding once was. The owner was outside the building cleaning the pigeon feces off of the building a few weeks ago, only for it to look exactly the same now due to the pigeons.

Carly Johnson: Yes. At the corners of the windows, there are missing blocks, and the pigeons are getting into the building. There are gaps where a bird could easily get in. I think some of the funds for the windows should be redirected towards the building. Unsure if the owner has the ability to address the building currently. The building is an eyesore and a potential health hazard.

Melanie Scofield: This topic needs to be revisited until a different game plan is made. Are there any other questions regarding this topic or anything else?

Ben Mason: Could an update be given regarding the Loan/Grant application from the Elks Lodge? Are there any further actions needed from the URA?

Melanie Scofield: The Elks Lodge is trying to come up with funds to pay the money upfront; unsure where to go with this. Mike Perez has yet to get back to us regarding the down payment, as he doesn't think the Elks Lodge can afford this project at this time. Mike also thinks that they don't even have enough to make the down payment.

Cheryl Lindner: Could the updates be done in phases? If that needed to happen, let's say fixing the lights, and then they turned in the receipt for the lights to be reimbursed, and then use those funds to continue to the next phase.

Marty Fleischacker: That may be able to be negotiated. For the Promenade project, half of the cost had to be paid upfront when the project began. I cannot see SBT backing out of a deal just because the Elks Lodge doesn't have the upfront cost paid. The Elks is a nonprofit. If both parties are spoken to and given an update, perhaps a negotiation can be made regarding the upfront cost.

Conversations continued regarding options for the Elks Lodge and the down payment for the project on their building.

MOTION TO HAVE THE DIRECTOR OF THE URBAN RENEWAL AUTHORITY SEND A LETTER TO SBT ON BEHALF OF THE URBAN RENEWAL AUTHORITY

GUARANTEEING PAYMENT: Madrid

SECOND: Fleischacker

DISCUSSION: There was no further discussion

VOTE: The motion carried

C. Governing Body's Comments

Angel Saucedo: Thanked the Board for the Spark Grant Program and awarding Ruiz Arts with the grant. The sign situation at Rena's building has been a dream since the business opened in 2023. Hopes that this grant can help plenty of other businesses in the future.

Cheryl Lindner: Had a question regarding the letter of support for Maureen Rikhof. Is the Board still moving forward with writing this?

- Ben Mason: Maureen had already received the letter. It was a letter of support from the Board. It is not something the Board actually writes, but something that Melanie had sent to Maureen.
- Cheryl Lindner: I was under the impression through the previous meeting minutes that the letter would be presented to the Board first.

ADJOURN

The next Urban Renewal Authority meetings will be held May 28, 2026 (regular meeting) and June 25, 2026 (regular meeting) at 4:00 p.m.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:40 p.m.

ATTEST:

CITY OF LA JUNTA

Melanie R. Scofield, City Clerk

Joseph Ayala, Mayor