



Colorado Springs Downtown Development Authority
Board of Directors Meeting
8:15 a.m. January 9, 2024
111 S Tejon St Ste 703, Colorado Springs, CO

Meeting minutes

Board members present: Chris Lieber, Laura Neumann, Michelle Talarico, Troy Coats, Jeremy Shirley, Patrick Stephens, Amber Brannigan, Jordan Empey (remote)

Board members absent: Jeff Finn, Carrie Bartow

Staff members present: Susan Edmondson, Carrie Simison, Austin Wilson-Bradley, Chelsea Gondeck, Ana Valdez, Jessica Vasquez

Guests: Ryan Tefertiller, Peter Wysocki (City of Colorado Springs), Amber Ptak (Community Health Partnership)

Public hearing call to order

8:17 a.m. Chris Lieber called the public meeting to order and asked for any public remarks, which there were none.

Susan shared that it was an abnormal budget season as final figures were provided very late in the year, but that there were very few changes from the preliminary budget presented to the board in September, with the exception of reduced TIF income by \$27,000 and reduced Mill income of \$5,000.

At 8:22 a.m. the public hearing closed and the board meeting was opened.

Chris sought a motion to approve the following resolutions presented in the board packet:

Resolution 2401-01 to adopt 2024 budget.

Resolution 2401-02 to appropriate sums of money.

Resolution 2401-03 to amend the 2023 budget to expend all funds not required by December 31, 2023, to meet expenditure obligations as originally set forth in the budget into the Unrestricted Operating Reserve Fund.

Laura moved to approve the resolutions. Dave seconded and the resolutions passed unanimously.

Minutes

The board reviewed minutes from the Dec. 12, 2023, board meeting. On a motion by Amber, seconded by Jeremy, the minutes were unanimously approved.

Financials

The board reviewed financials dated Dec. 31, 2023. Susan reminded the board that grants used to come out of the general fund, but those are now primarily paid out of the TIF Fund, so the general fund will continue to serve more as a true operating fund.

Grants

601 N Nevada Ave.

Austin introduced Amber Ptak, CEO of Community Health Partnership, who comes before the board seeking a Building Enhancement Grant to support renovations to their newly purchased mid-century office building. Austin provided a brief overview of CHP's scope of work, which seeks to address complex community health issues along the Front Range alongside several other partner organizations.

On the exterior of the building, CHP plans a new entryway structural element, stucco repairs and a complete repainting of the exterior, new wood-look paneling system, new signage and energy-efficient LED exterior lighting, new entry doors and railing, and new landscaping. Items for an exterior rear patio were removed from the eligible costs as it will not serve to activate the public-facing portions of the property, as is the primary aim of Building Enhancement Grants.

Jordan joined the meeting virtually at 8:36 a.m.

Susan inquired about the organization's search for a larger space and some of the reasoning behind going from renting to purchase/ownership. Amber shared that their organization convenes dozens of partner agencies in their work, and their current leased space does not fulfill those needs. Through their extensive search for a larger space (either for purchase or for rent), a significant obstacle was the lack of all-gender restrooms, which is crucial for their staff, the clients they serve, and volunteers, several of whom are gender-opposite caregivers to those with disabilities, nonbinary, or otherwise require a gender-neutral restroom. By purchasing this building and improving it to their specifications, they are able to have restrooms on site that meet the needs of their staff and guests. Amber anticipates the top floor to be move-in ready for staff by March 1, and the meeting space on the ground floor available shortly thereafter.

Austin shared that this request most closely aligns with the Experience Downtown Master Plan Goal 8: A Place for Inspiration Honoring History and Facing the Future, and staff recommends a \$30,000 Building Enhancement Grant be awarded to Community Health Partnership.

Laura moved to award Community Health Partnership a \$30,000 Building Enhancement Grant. Patrick seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Amber thanked the board and departed at 8:40 a.m.

TIF

Updates and process overview

Susan provided a printout of approved TIF projects for context in the coming discussion. She shared that historically, DDA set a goal of 600 residential units, and incentivized projects aggressively at 100 percent until that goal was reached. Once the goal was achieved, the standard percentage was scaled back to allow the TIF tool to truly enhance the design of projects, incentivize affordable and attainable units, and transform catalytic or challenging sites rather than just support any residential project no matter the quality. Susan reminded the board that decisions for TIF reimbursement are not made on a project's financing gap and in general will not 'make or break' a development, and stressed that every project is different and has its own unique attributes and challenges.

The board had robust discussion on how best to ensure that DDA is enhancing the public realm environment and being good stewards of tax dollars.

Old Business

Majestic Building fire update

Austin provided a short update on the tenants affected by the Majestic Building fire, stating that the majority of the affected businesses will not likely be able to reopen for six months to one year. It appears that there were not fire stops in between the units, so the damage is more extensive than originally anticipated. Additionally, when renovations begin, two tenants that were less affected may be asked to vacate.

Austin and Susan will review the grant applications received thus far and update the board on next steps or any new developments.

Colorado Springs Utilities Update

Susan updated the board on a follow-up meeting stemming from the December Utilities presentation. She, Jeff Finn, Laura Neumann, and Councilwoman Talarico met with Colorado Springs Utilities representatives last week to better understand overall the design plan for transmission lines in Downtown, whether overhead or underground. The October Utilities vote was not a vote that determined that power lines would only be placed overhead; rather, it was a vote to affirm current policy toward overhead lines with existing cost matching criteria to underground lines. Meeting attendees left the meeting with a better understanding of project timeline and the cost requirement to underground these transmission lines, and will continue to press forward to explore options for safe utilities that will not negatively impact the catalytic Creek COS project.

Peter left at 9:35 a.m.

Tenant ownership conversation

Susan revisited a concept that has been discussed at previous board meetings: Should the DDA board structure some sort of funding to assist established, viable Downtown businesses in purchasing property in order to increase retail stability Downtown through property ownership? The benefits of tenant ownership are many, and building ownership is becoming harder for younger generations. The general consensus from the board was favorable, albeit cautious. Staff was authorized to put forth a proposal.

Chris left at 9:41 a.m.

State of Downtown Report

As staff is pulling together data for the State of Downtown report, Susan asked board members to look at the 2023 report and identify what information might be missing or helpful, if there is a better way graphically to tell stories, etc. She asked that any ideas or suggestions be sent to her.

Final notes

The board meeting was adjourned at 9:49 a.m.