



Colorado Springs Downtown Development Authority
Board of Directors Meeting
9:15 a.m. Jan. 20, 2026
111 S Tejon St., Ste. 703, Colorado Springs, CO 80903

Board members present: Carrie Bartow (remote), Sam Clark, Troy Coats, Jordan Empey, Jeff Finn, Chris Lieber, Laura Neumann, Jeremy Shirley, Jim Smith, Patrick Stephens

Board members absent: Brandy Williams

Staff members present: Chelsea Gondeck, Sarah Nurmi, Carrie Simison, Ana Valdez, Austin Wilson-Bradley, Michelle Winchell

Guests: Dustin and Shelley Sapp (Lolley's Ice Cream), Ryan Tefertiller (City of Colorado Springs), Jessica Thompson (Thompson Leadership), Sara Vaas (Dizzy Charlie's)

Call to Order & Welcome

At 9:16 a.m., Chis Lieber called the meeting to order.

Public Comment

None.

Minutes

Dates December 9, 2025

The board reviewed the meeting minutes of December 9, 2025. On a motion by Jeff Finn, seconded by Jordan Empey, the board unanimously approved the minutes.

Financials

Dated November 30, 2025

Ana Valdez reviewed the financial statements with the Board.

Jeff Finn motioned to accept the financial statements, Jeremy Shirley seconded, and the board unanimously accepted the financials.

Elevate Downtown

Chelsea Gondeck provided an update on the Elevate Downtown Plan, noting that public comments have concluded and public feedback was largely positive. Chelsea noted the plan is largely in a good place with a few remaining items to refine. She shared that while the process was productive, it did not yield the level of economic analysis or implementation guidance the DDA had anticipated, particularly related to use of remaining TIF funds and next steps. Chelsea also shared that staff have been engaging with consultants to help provide additional economic insight. She reported that a previously distributed memo on utilizing the remaining TIF funds will be recirculated for reference.

Austin Wilson-Bradley shared an update on the City Auditorium. He noted that Jesse Morreale has owned the property for approximately eight months and has been working with the City to explore options related to ownership and renovation. His goal is to restore the venue as a major economic asset for Downtown, drawing on prior successful redevelopment experience in Denver and other

Chelsea clarified that City Auditorium is identified in the Elevate Downtown Plan as a catalytic opportunity, and the upcoming tour is intended for informational purposes only, not as a staff recommendation. Austin will explore whether a City representative can attend. Chris Lieber requested a strategic discussion regarding potential use of TIF funding before any City Auditorium grant request is formally presented.

Grants

BEG: Lolley's Ice Cream

Austin Wilson-Bradley reviewed a Building Enhancement Grant for Lolley's Ice Cream. Lolley's Ice Cream is seeking a \$25,000 Building Enhancement Grant for interior and exterior renovations at 216 N. Tejon Street to establish a second Downtown location. The property, formerly a Berkshire Hathaway brokerage office, is on a high-visibility, high-traffic block. Lolley's, a locally owned, family-operated company founded in 2019 and known for small-batch, handcrafted ice cream, has successfully operated its Monument location for nearly seven years. The owners, Dustin and Shelley Sapp, highlighted that Lolley's provides sustainable wages for employees, crafts all ice cream from scratch, and serves as a unique, family-friendly destination with gluten- and dairy-free options. Board members agreed that this expansion is a positive addition to Downtown and is expected to bring additional street activation to the area.

Laura Neumann motioned to approve the grant proposal, Jim Smith seconded, the board unanimously approved the \$25,000 Building Enhancement grant proposal.

Dustin and Shelley Sapp left at 9:36 a.m.

Special Event: Downtown Summer Concert Series

Austin Wilson-Bradley reviewed a Signature Event Grant for the Acacia Summer Concert Series. Dizzy Charlie's, operated by Sara Vaas, is requesting a \$15,000 Signature Event Grant to launch a new weekly, free, family-friendly summer concert series in Acacia Park, utilizing the bandshell on Thursday evenings from 6–8 p.m. from June through September, for a total of 17 concerts. The series would feature local and regional bands, marking the first regularly scheduled concert series in the park in over a decade. It is intended to create consistent activation of a prominent Downtown public space, support nearby restaurants and businesses, and establish an annual Downtown tradition.

Austin highlighted that Sara brings prior experience producing a similar series in Old Colorado City, which draws roughly 500 attendees per event. This would suggest the potential for 8,000+ visitors Downtown over the summer over the concert series. Carrie Simison expressed her enthusiasm for the series because it aligns with the Elevate Downtown Plan by activating public space, offering free, family-friendly programming, and engaging diverse partners. She stated that SoCo Insider has already committed sponsorship support, and the DDA would assist with marketing and event promotion. Michelle Winchell noted that a music series is a recurring Downtown Ventures board priority, essential for activating Downtown, supporting the creative industry, and advancing a broader strategy for Downtown cultural activation, with CCI also focusing on this sector.

Board discussion included logistical considerations, such as restroom access, portable toilets, and ongoing maintenance of the bandshell, with Rotary Club efforts noted to support renovation and upkeep. Board members stressed the importance of sustainable operations, sponsorship development, and potential for multi-year impact. Jeff Finn suggested a three-year commitment to encourage long-term activation, which Sara Vaas expressed willingness to support. Multi-year grant terms would be contingent on agreed-upon deliverables, including the number of concerts each season. Overall, there was strong enthusiasm for the project as a catalytic opportunity to enhance Thursday evening activity and Downtown vibrancy.

Jeff Finn motioned to approve a three-year Signature Event Grant agreement, with Jim Smith seconding. The Board unanimously approved the grant, providing \$15,000 annually over three years.

Sara Vaas left at 9:05 a.m.

Other

Clean & Safe Program

Chelsea Gondeck shared an update on recent enhancements to the Clean & Safe program. Security coverage is now consistent seven days per week, with increased staffing aligned to peak pedestrian

hours. The expanded schedule is supported by City funding through recreational marijuana revenues. The agreement is currently under review by the City Attorney's Office, with no issues anticipated.

Operational improvements include the use of a mobile reporting platform, allowing officers to remain in the field longer, and new radios to improve communication and response times. Security uniforms will transition to high-visibility orange to further strengthen visible presence Downtown. Chelsea also noted expanded outreach efforts to better engage non-street-level businesses and ensure Downtown residents and workers know how to report issues and access services. The DDA anticipates gaining access to GoCOS to simplify issue reporting and task assignment.

Additional coordination efforts include a "Handouts Don't Help" campaign to educate the public on effective ways to give. Ambassadors and outreach teams continue regular street operations, and Homeward Pikes Peak is launching a QR-code reporting tool to connect individuals in need directly with outreach services.

Austin Wilson-Bradley separately shared that there is an Urban Renewal Authority reform bill expected in the state legislature (no bill number yet) that would potentially weaken their effectiveness. There is concern this could extend to DDAs. A bill number will be shared if testimony is needed.

Public Comment

None.

Executive Session

Annual Work Plan

Sam Clark motioned to enter an executive session pursuant to C.R.S. Section 24-6-402(4)(f) to discuss personnel matters. Laura Neumann seconded and the board unanimously approved entering executive session.

On a motion by Jeff Finn, seconded by Jordan Empey, the board unanimously agreed to exit the executive session.

Adjournment

The board meeting adjourned at 11:00 a.m.