



RHA Meeting Minutes

Board of Directors

January 11, 2024, 2:00–4:00 p.m.

Center for Innovation, Durango

A. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER by Chairman Vaughn at 2:02 pm (00:00:01)

B. INTRODUCTIONS AND ROLL CALL (00:00:09)

Table with 3 columns: NAME, AFFILIATION, ATTENDANCE. Lists names like Marsha Porter-Norton, Kevin Hall, Gilda Yazzie, etc., with their affiliations and attendance status (Present, Absent, Online).

Others present:

- o Mike French, LPEDA
o J.J. Desrosiers, LPEDA
o Sarah Tober, LPEDA
o Sarah Schwartz, LPEDA
o Rosalinda Linares-Gray, LPEDA
o Nicol Killian, Town of Bayfield (online)
o Laurie Roberts, Citizen
o Shak Powers, Region 9 (online)
o Chris Coleman, 9R School District

No directors disclosed any conflict of interest.

C. PUBLIC COMMENT (00:01:05)

No public comments were presented.

D. APPROVAL OF AGENDA (00:01:15)

Director Morlan motioned to approve the agenda, and Director Sickles seconded to approve the agenda. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

E. CONSENT AGENDA (00:01:45)

The consent agenda consisted of the December 2023 Board Meeting Minutes and the December 2023 Financial Statements.

Director Sickles motioned, and Treasurer Garcia seconded to approve the consent agenda. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

F. PRESENTATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT WITH NON-RHA ENTITIES (00:15:20)

Secretary's Note: Public presentations were delayed due to technological difficulties and took place after the STEER Committee updates.

Adventure Inn Conversion- Jenn Lopez Executive Director, Project Moxie

Ms. Lopez, Executive Director of Project Moxie, presented a new potential bridge housing project located at the Adventure Inn on North Main Avenue in Durango. The Adventure Inn, if the deal goes through, will be repurposed into a regional housing resource, to combat and prevent homelessness. This model involves a short-term living model, referred to as a "bridge program" that helps to avoid homelessness through a term-limited, lease-free program that focused on transitional housing. It is supported by partnerships between local partners such as Region 9, Fort Lewis, the Mercy Hospital, Manna Soup Kitchen, and La Plata County government. They plan to have 25 rooms operational in February with all applicants being referred through Manna. The program will offer 14-day leases, with the option to extend for unlimited 14-day periods if the individual remains in good standing. The initiative is estimated to target over 100 households annually.

Project Moxie initiated the Adventure Inn conversion with La Plata County to address homelessness and lack of workforce housing. Vice-Chair Porter-Norton added, that following the closure of Purple Cliffs in 2022, the County committed to staying involved in the issues of the unhoused and the community has looked at 42 different sites for a managed camp. However, they soon learned that the community did not support the model of a managed camp prompting them to try this new pilot approach. Project Moxie requested to use \$1 million of the County's \$11 million ARPA funds and was awarded \$500,000 in the form of an unconventional loan at 1% interest rate for 40 years. Ms. Lopez added that the County's investment of over half a million dollars will leverage about \$4 million in State funds, Project Moxie's efforts and the need for innovative solutions influenced support.

G. ALLIANCE UPDATES (00:03:20)

1. PROGRAM DIRECTOR REPORT- SARAH TOBER (00:03:21)

Ms. Tober reported that the 2024 Goals Tracker is based on the Strategic Plan and scope of work outlined in the Alliance and RHA contract. Economic Development Alliance staff will continue to provide updates at each board meeting. Ms. Tober added that the Economic Development Alliance in partnership with Project Moxie and the RHA has been hosting a successful "Workforce Housing 101" webinar series. The series includes three separate webinars including the topics of Readiness to Proceed, For-Sale Strategies, and Finance Strategies with representatives of Colorado Housing and Finance Authority (CHFA). All the webinar recordings and presentation materials will be available on the RHA website, including the For-Sale Strategies for Spanish speakers. The final presentation of this series has garnered interest from developers in the Front Range.

It was reported that the *Workforce Housing Strategy* plan is set to be updated with a draft expected in February and March 2024. Alliance staff has been working with Project Moxie on a 2023 RHA Annual Report, with a draft to be reviewed by the Board and printed in March.

The RHA is submitting a DOLA grant application for \$200,000, led by Treasurer Garcia. The application is due on 2/15/24 and the RHA is requesting partner support letters.

It was mentioned that the Housing Needs Assessment is emphasized as crucial, and Alliance staff has been in discussions with CHFA and plans for an RFP to gather accurate data based on Board preferences.

The RHA Housing Summit on April 30th, 2024 is confirmed, and Economic Development Alliance staff will work on the location, providing a draft agenda for the next board meeting. The Colorado Mountain Housing Coalition is holding its annual conference on April 14-16, 2024, at Mt. Princeton Hot Springs. The conference will focus on rural resort issues within Colorado and will be attended by members of Alliance staff. The conference will be led by Lisa Bloomquist-Palmer from HomesFund and will include involvement from statewide housing partners.

2. STEER COMMITTEE UPDATES- SARAH TOBER (00:10:38)

Invitations for the STEER Committee have been sent to individuals identified by the Board, with the potential for name changes or additional members. All status updates and information related to the STEER Committee are being tracked on a spreadsheet. Economic Development Alliance staff has received several positive responses with commitments to attend the first Committee meeting on Wednesday, January 30, 2024, at the Center for Innovation. The meeting will establish the committee and set the schedule. Chair Vaughn stated that if insufficient people have signed up by then (at least 20 interested individuals), Alliance staff may want to consider postponing the meeting. It was also expressed that there is interest in meeting with La Plata Healthcare Improvement Coalition on childcare and women voters' programs.

3. CATALYST FUND UPDATES – SARAH TOBER (00:26:50)

Mr. French informed the Board that the proposal to Durango Industrial Development Foundation (DIDF) went very well and DIDF intends to split the \$2 million between Fort Lewis College and the RHA. The DIDF Executive Committee has approved the RHA's proposal, but it requires member approval to pass. A vote is scheduled for February 7, 2024. If awarded, a significant portion, around \$950,000, is earmarked for the RHA to establish a revolving loan fund specifically for workforce housing, offering no to low-interest loans. If approved, the process will involve working on a formal agreement with DIDF and that issuance of funds can be initiated shortly after an agreement has been signed. Chair Vaughn acknowledged Mr. French's diligent work in this process and said he looks forward to what these funds could do for affordable housing development in La Plata County.

Economic Development Alliance staff reported that Round 2 of the Catalyst Fund has concluded, with applicants notified of approval or denial. Three projects have been funded, including two for mobile home park preservation, at Animas View MHP and Westside/Triangle MHP, with \$195K allocated this round. Between Round 1 and Round 2 of the Catalyst Fund, a total of \$383,052 has been awarded. Round 3 is scheduled for March, and a press release related to Round 2 is planned for release next week. Chairman Vaughn and other directors were invited to provide quotes to be included in the press release.

Treasurer Garcia inquired about improvements in the process for Round 3, with Catalyst Fund staff confirming the intent to tweak the rubric to enhance certain aspects. The working group will start assessing changes in February to ensure readiness for the March round of funding.

4. BUDGET SUBMISSION TO DOLA – J.J. DESROSIERS (00:32:33)

Mr. Desrosiers shared that the 2024 RHA budget which was approved last month and has since been submitted to DOLA. Economic Development Alliance staff will let the Board know once they receive a response.

5. 2024 GOALS TRACKING- SARAH TOBER (00:32:55)

Ms. Tober reported that the 2024 goals have been defined based on the Strategic Plan, and the Economic Development Alliance staff has adopted a different format shaped by input from Vice-Chair Porter-Norton and Director Henson. The goal tracker outlines action items, responsibilities, project status, as well as start and end dates. The Board was asked to confirm that it aligns with their expectations. Ms. Tober pointed out that the scope of work is excluded from the goal tracker as it pertains to Economic Development Alliance initiatives. The STEER committee is highlighted as a major milestone this year, and Strategy 3 will not be a focus until 2025. Vice-Chair Porter-Norton emphasized the County’s commitment to creating and assessing its Land Use Code for more ease in establishing affordable housing.

Shak Powers, Regional Projects Manager for Region 9 Economic Development District, provided an update on legislative developments, including SB-23-213, which faced challenges in committees and thus was not passed in the last Legislative session. He mentioned the audit and transportation bills, along with a strategic growth bill. There is a potential legislative mandate for regional-level planning (multi-county), which may necessitate adjustments to parts of the strategic plan if the legislation is enacted.

6. 2024 MEETING SCHEDULE- J.J. DESROSIERS (00:37:22)

The Board had confirmed dates for the monthly 2024 RHA Board meetings but had not confirmed the exact dates for meetings to be hosted in Bayfield and Ignacio. The proposed schedule, outlined in the agenda located in the packet, was discussed. No issues were mentioned by the Board and so it was stated that Economic Development Alliance staff will send out calendar invites for the confirmed dates.

Vice-Chair Porter-Norton proposed adding a standing item to future Board meeting agendas to cover any legislative updates. Ms. Lopez suggested inviting Housing Colorado, as well as other housing legislative experts to present at upcoming RHA Board meetings.

H. DECISION ITEMS (00:40:40)

1. STRATEGIC PLAN ADOPTION (00:40:43)

Ms. Tober reminded the Board of the steps taken to reach the current stage of the RHA Strategic Plan, highlighting challenges with the previous consultant Community Builders. Project Moxie has since taken over and successfully completed the plan, emphasizing the immediate need for a sustainable funding source. The third priority of the Strategic Plan addresses aligning local policies with regional housing goals, which are set for 2025. This decision signals an understanding of the need to address policy countywide, particularly in

relation to Prop 123 efforts. To address the unsuccessful 2018/2019 effort, Ms. Tober suggested implementing an idea proposed by Director Hall: for the RHA to create a policy paper outlining best practices in land use that can be provided to all jurisdictions. Jurisdictions can then decide whether to align with the principles in the document, and the RHA will compile and provide information from all entities. Several Board members voiced interest in this approach.

Chairman Vaughn suggested keeping the third strategic priority as it directly relates to Prop 123. Ms. Lopez added that keeping the third strategic priority will help with future funding through DOLA.

The Board also discussed how the word “regional” is used in the Strategic Plan Document. Typically, “regional” relates to larger, multi-county, areas, whereas the RHA uses regional to refer to Durango, Bayfield, Ignacio, and La Plata County. It was suggested to replace any use of Regional with RHA or countywide where applicable and the need to use the same terminology throughout the report with an example being “Workforce housing” and “affordable housing”. Directors suggested leaving "Regional" in the plan with a clarifying sentence that indicates it means countywide and emphasized the need for gap financing, including short-term loans and lines of credit for infrastructure and construction. Economic Development Alliance staff was directed to update the Strategic Plan to reflect “affordable and workforce housing” more accurately, include a table of contents and glossary with definitions, update a few areas that need wordsmithing and minor changes, and bring the updated version back next month.

Treasurer Garcia identified parallels between the 3-Year Workforce Housing Plan and the Strategic Plan processes and wondered if the Strategic Plan should be done after the update to the 3-Year Workforce Housing Strategy. Ms. Tober emphasized the importance of finalizing the Strategic Plan before the first STEER Committee meeting and aims to complete the final document by the February 2024 meeting. The Board agreed with the importance of having a copy ready before the STEER meeting and approved presenting a draft of the strategic plan to the group.

The Board agreed to defer the adoption of the Strategic Plan to next month’s meeting.

2. OFFICER ELECTION

(01:03:35)

The bylaws for Officer Elections were included in the packet. Mr. Desrosiers reminded the Board of the procedure for elections and the current roster of officers noting that the entity Economic Development Alliance had been elected Secretary rather than an individual. Director Hall noted that having someone outside of local government serve as Chair brings credibility.

Director Hall motioned for Patrick Vaughn to continue as the Chair, with Director Yazzie seconding the motion. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

Director Morlan motioned, and Director Yazzie seconded for the individuals currently holding the positions of Vice-Chair, Treasurer, and Secretary to continue in their roles for another term. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

Final Election results

Chair: Patrick Vaughn

Vice-Chair: Marsha Porter Norton

Treasurer: Mark Garcia

Secretary: The La Plata Economic Development Alliance



3. RESOLUTION 2024-01 ~ PUBLIC NOTICE DESIGNATION (01:07:45)

Mr. Desrosiers presented the Board with a procedural resolution that is state-mandated and would designate a location to post meeting minutes, public hearings, and agendas, as well as list the Durango Chamber of Commerce building as a backup location.

Director Sickles motioned, and Director Henson seconded to adopt Resolution 2024-01 The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

4. RESOLUTION 2024-02~ LOCAL CAPACITY GRANT APPLICATION (01:09:09)

The Board reviewed a resolution to apply for a DOLA local capacity grant application. The intent of the program is to support local governments' capacities to address affordable housing, especially by expediting development review, permitting, and zoning of affordable housing. The Town of Ignacio Letter of Intent (LOI) was approved, and the RHA needs the Board's approval prior to grant submission.

Director Sickles motioned, and Director Morlan seconded to approve Resolution 2024-02. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

I. DISCUSSION/UPDATES (01:10:58)

1. GRANT MATRIX – SARAH SCHWARTZ (01:11:13)

Ms. Schwartz presented an updated version of the grant matrix for 2024. The Board was asked to determine the timeframe to be reflected in the tracker. The consensus was to include a minimum of 2 years of history to show changes in the amount awarded, with the timeline extending two years from the application status. Additionally, the Board suggested to present this information on one sheet, segmented by years. It was also proposed to use notes as an attachment to the matrix. There was also consideration of how to incorporate County grants into the tracker. Economic Development Alliance staff will come back to the February 2024 meeting with an updated format for review.

2. PROP 123 UPDATES – EVA HENSON & SARAH TOBER (01:18:28)

Director Henson shared that DOLA is actively gathering stakeholder input on Proposition 123, which involves expediting the review of affordable housing. Stakeholders are being sought to provide input for DOLA's guidance. A link to the survey will be shared with the board for their input.

J. MEMBER UPDATES

1. LA PLATA COUNTY (01:19:55)

Director Hall mentioned their excitement for the collaboration with Project Moxie and the Adventure Inn. He added that the County has been reviewing the documents for the Strategic Plan, as well as tying things up with Bayfield and Ignacio for County-awarded ARPA funding for the Cinnamon Heights and Rock Creek projects respectively.

2. TOWN OF IGNACIO

(01:20:52)

Treasurer Garcia shared that Canyon Construction is on-site at Rock Creek and has fulfilled its mobilization and work commitments. They are collaborating with Fading West, with an estimated completion time of about 5 months from the order date. Short-term construction loans are being sought to initiate the Fading West project and an RFP for construction services, specifically for foundations and final components, is in progress. Treasurer Garcia brought up the difficulties he is running into with construction loans and financing and has been meeting with 1st Southwest Bank and TBK Bank on potential avenues for short-term, construction financing. He is working on getting a team together to build foundations and final touches for Rock Creek which would enable the sites to be ready for the Fading West units to be delivered.

Treasurer Garcia added that the Town of Ignacio is working with HomesFund for deed restrictions. He also mentioned that there's interest from the Town Board in the use of town-owned vacant properties. An RFP is being considered to offer properties to economic development and workforce housing developers, potentially creating a public/private partnership. The project has room to utilize County funds.

3. MEMBER AT LARGE

(01:25:00)

Chairman Vaughn reported that the City of Durango is contemplating an area plan amendment related to a potential project at Tree Farm Village. He reminded the Board that it had previously expressed support through a letter and Chairman Vaughn was seeking permission to represent the Board in presenting to City Council on Tuesday, January 16, 2024. The Board supports Chair Vaughn representing the RHA and emphasized the need to stay relevant to the content of the Board's previous letter of support.

4. TOWN OF BAYFIELD

(01:27:23)

Director Sickles reported that the Town of Bayfield is actively putting together an RFP for builders for Cinnamon Heights. It was also mentioned that the mayor had canceled meetings in December and January, but they are holding a Broadband ribbon cutting tomorrow, January 12, 2024, at noon.

5. CITY OF DURANGO

(01:28:21)

Director Henson stated that the City of Durango is relocating the Community Development and Engineering Departments from City Hall to the former Big Picture High School building. The City has scheduled an open house for February 9, 2024, from 12-3 pm. Director Yazzie shared that a full-time Municipal Judge has been hired, and the Durango Police Department is collaborating to assist the chronically unhoused population. Additionally, the Civic Center concept is progressing, and Southern Ute Indian Tribe meetings held with the City have been positive, she said.

Regarding housing, a proposal is going to City Council to continue as a pass-through agency for HomesFund, involving \$1.8 million for HomesFund and the City's down payment assistance program. Collaboration with Root Policy on the Fair Share program is underway, with a presentation to the Community Development Commission in March and adoption by May. Director Henson added that two housing projects are going before the City Council and Leasing for Locals is ongoing, with available 2-bedroom units at 80% AMI. A flyer will be circulated. Director Henson stated that the Gauge Apartment Project has added 30 more units to the rental market.

K. MEETING ADJOURNED by Chairman Vaughn at 3:36 PM

(01:34:11)



Recording: https://us06web.zoom.us/rec/share/dLI6TbRgYxMHU4po1xQfLnmB0qr_TmhkxTa3hvq-pElZD44wWyMF9cqY9IeBhYNi.YOPE9fMsq20Y5QIt

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