



RHA Meeting Minutes

Board of Directors

February 8, 2024, 2:00–4:00 p.m.

Virtual, Zoom

A. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER by Vice-Chair Porter-Norton at 2:02 p.m. (00:00:00)

B. INTRODUCTIONS AND ROLL CALL (00:01:03)

NAME	AFFILIATION	ATTENDANCE		
Marsha Porter-Norton	La Plata County, Commissioner	<input type="checkbox"/> Present	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Online
Kevin Hall	La Plata County, Deputy Manager	<input type="checkbox"/> Present	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Online
Gilda Yazzie	City of Durango, Councilor	<input type="checkbox"/> Present	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Online
Eva Henson	City of Durango, Housing Innovation Manager	<input type="checkbox"/> Present	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Online
Kathleen Sickles	Town of Bayfield, Manager	<input type="checkbox"/> Present	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Online
Brenna Morlan	Town of Bayfield, Trustee	<input type="checkbox"/> Present	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Online
Mark Garcia	Town of Ignacio, Manager	<input type="checkbox"/> Present	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Online
Clark Craig	Town of Ignacio, Mayor	<input type="checkbox"/> Present	<input type="checkbox"/> Absent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Online
Patrick Vaughn	Member at Large	<input type="checkbox"/> Present	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Absent	<input type="checkbox"/> Online

OTHERS PRESENT:

- o Mike French, EDA, online
- o J.J. Desrosiers, EDA, online
- o Sarah Tober, EDA, online
- o Sarah Schwartz, EDA, online
- o Nicol Killian, Town of Bayfield, online
- o Laurie Roberts, Public, online
- o Lisa Bloomquist-Palmer, HomesFund, online
- o Cynthia Roebuck, public, online
- o Leslie Carlson, public, online
- o Chris Coleman, Durango 9R, online
- o Jessica Jones, Habitat for Humanity, online
- o Elizabeth Salkind, Housing Solutions, online
- o Jenn Lopez, Project Moxie, online
- o Meade Harbison, Southern Ute Growth Fund, online
- o Amos Lee, public, online
- o Caroline Kinser, public, online
- o Joan Fauteaux, DAAR, online
- o Emily Missildine, public, online
- o Gavin Martinez, public, online

Vice-Chair Porter-Norton and Director Craig recused themselves from the first item during Public Comment as the proposed project is located within the County and may go through a land use process within the jurisdictions they represent.



**C. PUBLIC COMMENT** (00:05:15)

Vice-Chair Porter-Norton reminded the Board of an email received from Laurie Roberts earlier in the week that represented her public comment.

*Secretaries Note: Vice-Chair Porter-Norton and Director Craig entered a separate breakout room at 2:08 p.m. as they may be potential decision makers on this item through La Plata County.*

Jessica Jones, Executive Director of Habitat for Humanity of La Plata County, discussed a potential 5-acre land donation at 61 Airpark Drive for affordable housing. While the landowner expressed interest in donating, both parties seek assurances on project feasibility before finalizing the donation, prompting Habitat to seek guidance as they do not own the land yet. Various directors highlighted the need for city planning department consultation due to the land's location in a joint planning area outside Durango city limits, which may pose barriers to housing construction given its primarily industrial nature.

*Vice-Chair Porter-Norton and Director Craig rejoined the meeting after Ms. Jones' presentation at 2:14 p.m.*

Lisa Bloomquist-Palmer, executive director of HomesFund, stated she would reach out to Jessica about a study they had previously done on the land.

Ms. Bloomquist-Palmer mentioned that the Colorado Mountain Housing Conference (CMHC) is scheduled to take place from April 14-16, 2024, at Mount Princeton Hot Springs. The conference, which was held at the same location last year, serves as a gathering for diverse communities and organizations, including those similar to the Regional Housing Authority (RHA) and other represented entities. Registration for the conference will open soon, and interested parties are encouraged to contact Ms. Bloomquist-Palmer for any inquiries or additional information.

**D. APPROVAL OF AGENDA** (00:05:15)

**Director Sickles motioned to approve the agenda, and Director Yazzie seconded to approve the agenda. The motion passed unopposed by voice vote.**

**E. CONSENT AGENDA** (00:14:20)

The consent agenda consisted of the January 2024 Board Meeting Minutes and the January 2024 Financial Statements.

Director Hall moved to approve the January 2024 Consent Agenda less the January minutes which he would like to offer an amendment to. Director Hall's motion was seconded by Director Garcia. The motion passed unopposed by voice vote.

Director Hall suggested a modification to the January 2024 Board Meeting Minutes concerning the discussion on the Strategic Plan Adoption. Specifically, he proposed a change to the language on page 6 related to an idea suggested by Ms. Tober. The original sentence mentioned creating a policy paper outlining best practices in land use for each jurisdiction, but Director Hall recommended updating it to state that the RHA should create a policy paper outlining best practices in land use that can be provided to all jurisdictions.

**Director Craig motioned, and Director Morlan seconded to approve the January 2024 Board Meeting Minutes with the changes. The motion passed unopposed by voice vote.**

**F. PRESENTATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT WITH NON-RHA ENTITIES** (00:19:10)

No presentations were scheduled or presented.

## G. ALLIANCE UPDATES

### 1. CATALYST FUND UPDATES – MIKE FRENCH & SARAH TOBER (00:19:32)

On February 7<sup>th</sup>, 2024, the Durango Industrial Development Foundation (DIDF) voted to dissolve and distribute its remaining funds, totaling just under \$2 million, approximately \$950,000 of which will go to the RHA. Legal fees and settlements for the dissolution are underway, and the funds are anticipated to be wired within 14 days. Collaboration with Chair Vaughn and Vice-Chair Porter-Norton is planned to establish a separate account from the original Catalyst Fund. The new sub-fund will operate as a revolving loan fund for workforce housing projects, similar to the Catalyst application, involving a working committee and banking partners offering low to no interest. Despite the need for infrastructure setup in the next two weeks, there was much enthusiasm expressed about the potential impact of the new fund.

It was stated that Treasurer Garcia and La Plata Economic Development Alliance (EDA) Accountant, Carolyn Moller, are collaborating on establishing financial infrastructure. Treasurer Garcia expressed appreciation for the hard work and congratulated the team on securing funds. Vice-Chair Porter-Norton commented on the excellent news, acknowledging the dedicated effort to obtain the funding. She highlighted that it demonstrates strong community support and responsiveness when the community becomes aware of the affordable housing needs.

Ms. Tober provided an update on the Catalyst Fund, mentioning the completion of Round 2, where contracts have been signed and most funds have been distributed. There was media coverage in the *Durango Herald* regarding the fund's involvement in mobile home park preservation. Round 3 of the Catalyst Fund is scheduled to open in March 2024, with closing and distributions expected in April/May 2024.

### 2. PROGRAM DIRECTOR REPORT – SARAH TOBER (00:26:12)

Ms. Tober relayed that the Stakeholder Taskforce for the Evaluation and Endorsement of Revenue-streams (STEER) Committee meeting was successful, with 15 attendees and ongoing communication with 30 people expressing interest. It was noted that the Ignacio and Bayfield School Districts, as well as a parks and open space representative, are yet to be included. Most attendees committed to stay involved with the next meeting scheduled for March 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup>. There are ongoing discussions with the Buell Foundation for potential support and funding. Ms. Tober provided an overview of the STEER Committee's focus on exploring revenue streams and determining the best direction. The committee's purpose is to identify a sustainable funding source for workforce housing in La Plata County. Comprising 15 to 20 members representing various sectors, including leaders, advocates, and industry professionals, the Committee is tasked with evaluating and endorsing revenue streams, she told the Board. It will analyze data, polling information, and potential taxes, considering budget needs and how funding could enhance RHA's efforts. The committee is expected to be actively engaged for the next 4 to 6 months, meeting at least once a month and possibly more often for in-depth studies. The goal is for the committee to provide recommendations to the RHA Board regarding the funding mechanisms to pursue.

Ms. Tober announced that Ms. Bloomquist-Palmer will be departing from HomesFund in the next few months and expressed strong support and gratitude for her partnership and hard work. Her last day is expected to be at the end of April or May, depending on organizational needs. As a result, HomesFund is currently in the process of hiring a new executive director.

Lastly, Ms. Tober directed the Board's attention to the draft RHA Newsletter included in the packet. The newsletter is intended for quarterly distribution, responding to requests from developers and community members for an outreach and education mechanism. EDA staff has maintained a list of individuals who attended the education series as well as a substantial number of people interested in housing from both the County and Region 9. The goal is to utilize this outreach list and seek Board input on the draft of the first newsletter, to move forward with its distribution in the coming months.

3. 2024 GOALS TRACKING – SARAH TOBER (00:38:23)

It was again reported that the RHA has successfully established a STEER Committee, and progress is expected to continue throughout the year. Additionally, there is notable progress on Strategy 3 of the Strategic Plan, which was initially planned for 2025. EDA staff is currently working on a DOLA (State of Colorado Department of Local Affairs) grant application, proposing to allocate a portion of it for a land use consultant. The consultant's role would involve creating a white paper on best practices on land use and affordable housing policies for the municipalities and government involved, along with providing technical assistance. This grant has the potential to enhance the RHA's capacity, and Treasurer Garcia has been instrumental in crafting the application and maintaining ongoing discussions with DOLA to ensure alignment with our goals.

4. HOUSING SUMMIT- SARAH TOBER & SARAH SCHWARTZ (00:39:58)

A draft agenda for the 2024 RHA Housing Summit was presented on page 17 of the Board's packet. The agenda has been developed with input from contacts throughout the state via the Regional Housing Alliance and Project Moxie. Efforts are being made to secure the DoubleTree as the venue for the event on April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2024. The aim is to accommodate 80 to 100 attendees. The draft agenda includes a closing reception with funders, providing an opportunity for networking and potential sponsorships. The goal is to offset event expenses and potentially generate revenue for the RHA. The agenda is in draft, and staff are open to feedback, and it will be refined over the next month. A save-the-date announcement will be sent soon to encourage attendance.

Director Hall expressed anticipation of significant interest and suggested considering how the event aligns with other forums, such as one in April related to Ms. Bloomquist-Palmer's departure. He raised questions about the potential overlap or connection between the events and the importance of defining the intended audience.

The importance of active engagement of the STEER committee was emphasized, with a suggestion for someone from the committee to share thoughts on revenue streams. The preference for local perspectives, including communities like Grand Junction (or other Western Slope communities), and the importance of a local feel were emphasized. The idea of an open house for the general public from 5 to 6 p.m., was put forth to cater to a broader audience without a full-day commitment. Vice-Chair Porter-Norton expressed enthusiasm for the positive direction of the RHA and the valuable work of the STEER Committee. She also directed the Board to email EDA staff with ideas and feedback to further shape the Housing Summit.

5. RFP FOR HOUSING NEEDS ASSESSMENT- SARAH TOBER & SARAH SCHWARTZ (00:51:09)

Currently, EDA staff is in the process of creating a Request for Proposals (RFP) for a housing needs assessment. Ms. Tober is reaching out to government partners to gather specific data points they are looking for in the assessment, ensuring alignment with their needs with the intention to share the RFP with partners before posting it and plans to keep it open for a month. The goal is to identify any missing data points in their current metrics and to ensure that they are included in the assessment.

6. 2023 ANNUAL REPORT- MIKE FRENCH & SARAH SCHWARTZ (00:52:28)

A draft of the RHA 2023 Annual Report was sent to the Board before the meeting report covers various aspects of the RHA, including the Board of Directors, focus, and commitment to addressing the housing needs of La Plata County. Ms. Tober encouraged Board members to review, make markups on the PDF, or send any potential edits via email. The plan is to bring it back for board approval next month, followed by printing and distribution in PDF format.

## H. DECISION ITEMS

1. RESOLUTION 2024-03 STRATEGIC PLAN ADOPTION (00:54:42)

Resolution 2024-03 is focused on adopting the strategic plan. Mr. Desrosiers mentioned that the resolution reflects the culmination of the past few months spent refining and discussing the strategic plan that came out of

the October 2023 RHA Board Retreat. The resolution articulates the formal adoption of the crafted strategic plan, and the document is attached for reference.

**Director Sickles motioned, and Director Hall seconded to approve Resolution 2024-03 Strategic Plan Adoption. The motion passed unopposed by voice vote.**

2. INVOICING FOR THE IGA (00:58:51)

EDA staff brought up the topic of invoicing for the Intergovernmental Agreement IGA, Ms. Tober sought confirmation from the board on whether it was acceptable to begin invoicing government partners at this time instead of the traditional time in March.

All directors confirmed that their respective jurisdictions are prepared to pay once their invoice has been received.

**I. DISCUSSION/UPDATE**

1. GRANT MATRIX— SARAH SCHWARTZ (00:59:54)

Ms. Schwartz expressed gratitude for the feedback received, mentioning significant revisions to the document. The revamped version is considered to be an improvement, providing a comprehensive overview of the history of grants and their current status. Page 30 of the packet includes basic statistics segmented by jurisdiction and the use of funds.

The Town of Bayfield had received a letter from La Plata County regarding the \$700,000 infrastructure grant awarded by the County for Cinnamon Heights and said that the process is moving forward. Ignacio is awaiting some numbers from Fading West. Once received, modifications or requests will be made to La Plata County and IHUI for additional Grant funds intended for the progressing Rock Creek Project. Director Hall highlighted that the County focuses on providing support to various projects rather than building houses directly. Projects such as those in Bayfield, Ignacio, West Side Mobile Home Park, and the Adventure Inn Project are incorporated into the spreadsheet used as the grant tracker. While there may not be extensive details in the update, it was noted that the West Side project is ongoing. Vice-Chair Porter Norton highlighted her focus on the bottom line of the report and found the gap analysis interesting and impressive. She acknowledged the substantial amount brought into the community, noting that a significant portion comes from ARPA funds, which may not be sustainable at the state level.

The only substantial update for the RHA is the Local Planning Capacity Grant. If the Board has additional feedback or specific information they would like to see, such as a tab displaying all La Plata County funding going out, EDA staff is open to including that in the March version of the report or any subsequent board packets.

2. PROP 123 UPDATES – EVA HENSON & SARAH TOBER (01:05:09)

Director Henson reported on a recent Prop 123 webinar where survey results were discussed. The next stakeholder advisory meeting is on February 26 to address the 90-day fast-track process. Despite a perfect application, achieving the 90-day timeframe was thought to be optimistic as the development processes typically exceed the 90-day timeframe. The diverse statewide land use code standards complicate matters. No discussions on extending the 90 days have occurred. DOLA and the Division of Housing are aware of the difficulties and are looking into concerns. Municipalities find it challenging to meet the 90-day requirement, especially with diverse projects. Prioritizing projects with different scales and affordability levels poses challenges, and the suggestion is that all projects with workforce and affordability components should be eligible for the 90-day fast track, creating a staff capacity challenge.

Director Hall expressed the need for modifications in the current system and that even with a perfect application, meeting the 90-day timeframe is difficult, particularly for communities like La Plata County with complex land use codes. Smaller communities lacking staff may struggle, leading to a disparity in resources. Adjustments or rule changes may be necessary for communities with limited capacity, and parallels were drawn to past concerns about land banking, emphasizing implementation challenges despite initial policy enthusiasm.

3. LEGISLATIVE UPDATES (01:12:26)

Vice-Chair Porter-Norton shared that she had spent considerable time on legislative calls with the County's two lobbying organizations, CCI and CCAT. While the issues related to Prop 123 timelines have been brought up, there is currently no legislation aimed at remedies at this time. Addressing the concerns might be a focus for the 2025 legislative session as many Prop 123 requirements have not had ample time to be implemented and evaluated, she said.

Vice-Chair Porter-Norton mentioned that in the face of Senate Bill 23-213 failing there are now several smaller bills addressing ADUs, Transit Oriented Communities, and regional growth planning. All of these are being tracked and not all apply in rural areas.

Of note is a potential bill(s) related to requiring or incentivizing regional needs assessments for housing and potential other regional-level actions. The Governor and the Colorado Municipal League each have developed bills but nothing as of this date has been introduced. It was emphasized, that the need for tracking all these bills is important due to implications across La Plata County and each jurisdiction.

An upcoming construction defect bill related to condominium construction was discussed. Although the concept has been met with much opposition, any bill could address the need to balance getting more condos built and protections for homeowners.

## J. Member Updates

1. TOWN OF IGNACIO (01:16:25)

Treasurer Garcia provided updates on the Rock Creek project, mentioning progress in reallocating funds through IHUI for the vertical portion and refining a request to the County for infrastructure and construction dollars. The project has been selected for consideration at the Colorado Municipal League (CML) Annual Conference, where Treasurer Garcia will present this summer. Discussions with the Southern Ute Indian Tribe continue, and if congressionally directed spending approvals are obtained, they will join the project's presentation at CML. He also expressed excitement about the potential for both rental and homeownership opportunities within Fading West and looks forward to collaborating with HomesFund on the project's deed restrictions and permanent financing.

Treasurer Garcia suggested addressing the lack of information about the RHA in the community, emphasizing the need for better outreach, potentially using press releases, to clarify the RHA's role and achievements. He encouraged Directors to actively think about opportunities for messaging and raising awareness about the RHA as a distinct organization from local government entities.

2. TOWN OF BAYFIELD (01:19:04)

Director Sickles provided updates on the Cinnamon Heights project, mentioning the upcoming replat regarding the 30 units. The project is approaching a public hearing, and despite the town being a majority landowner in the HOA, approval from the HOA is needed as other lots in the subdivision are not town-owned. A special meeting will be held for this purpose. She added that the RFQ for builders has been under review by professionals, with the board considering it at their meeting on February 20<sup>th</sup> and expressed excitement about obtaining funding for infrastructure, and emphasized the goal of ensuring local contractors have the opportunity to contribute. Director

Sickles mentioned inquiring about local preference in State grants, but State officials have not provided clear answers.

3. CITY OF DURANGO (01:20:50)

Director Henson and Nicole Killian have agreed to be panelists and presenters at the upcoming Wells Group Real Estate forecast event. The event is expected to be held in person, with the location yet to be determined, possibly at Fort Lewis College. She anticipates the presentation will include statistical data, information about housing projects in the pipeline, and other relevant updates.

In addition, Director Henson highlighted a significant achievement with the City Council regarding a public-private partnership for the Durango Crossings housing project. The project entails around 149 units, with 50% designated for affordable workforce housing, including 50% for home ownership. This initiative is noted as the largest-scale mixed-use development of its kind in Durango, representing a substantial accomplishment for the community. Director Henson added that the project was awarded funding in the first round of the Catalyst Fund. Director Henson also spoke about the progress of inclusionary zoning, mentioning that it will be presented to the Community Development Commission. An inclusionary zoning update is expected by the end of March. Director Henson plans to keep the RHA board informed and invites them to listen in the morning for a summary report with input from various stakeholders, including minor updates based on community engagement feedback received in December.

Director Henson announced significant achievements in securing grants for the city of Durango, with a reimbursement of \$4 million received. She expressed pride in her team's hard work and acknowledged the support from the city of Durango, development partners, and the finance department. The funds include \$3 million from the Federal Government through Congressional funding, attributed to Senators Bennett and Hickenlooper, and \$1 million from House Bill 1271 funds for IHUI. Director Henson celebrated the successful grant reporting and emphasized the importance of this reimbursement, concluding the update on a positive note.

Director Yazzie shared various successes, acknowledging Director Henson's diligence in her work with the Housing Innovation Program. She invited everyone to an open house for the new location of the City's Community Development Department at the former Big Picture High School on February 9th at noon, and a public forum for the new Police Department City Hall on February 27th from 5:30 to 7:30. Director Yazzie added that another Engage Durango forum is scheduled for March 26th from 5 to 6:30 at the Durango Public Library and encouraged people to attend these events to engage with city departments, including housing initiatives. Additionally, she expressed pride in the City's efforts to address opposition and change zoning for the Tree Farm village project. Director Yazzie concludes by thanking everyone for their efforts in the housing initiatives.

4. LA PLATA COUNTY (01:26:14)

Director Hall highlighted the County's ongoing support for housing initiatives, mentioning the allocation of additional funds to HomesFund for the mortgage assistance program. He emphasized the various programs and contributions the County has made over the past year, including fiscal agent roles, ARPA money commitments, and private activity bond allocations and he noted that these efforts might not always be publicized but are significant contributions to housing in the community. Additionally, he discussed recent discussions about code amendments related to housing, and other improvements, indicating the County's commitment to enhancing housing-related regulations.

Vice-Chair Porter-Norton suggested creating a JPEG of the 2023 Year in Review infographic shared earlier and encouraged sharing it on social media platforms like Facebook and Instagram to increase awareness about the RHA's activities and accomplishments. She highlighted the importance of utilizing social media to reach the community and provide quick, easy-to-read updates.

**K. MEETING ADJOURNED** by Vice-Chair Porter-Norton at 3:36 pm (01:34:14)

**Recording:** [https://us06web.zoom.us/rec/share/Qi-w79IU5mXjmBr-H4IHbJodc5xIMcR9r\\_DFWxC6jpkHp6N1udJwZXu32YYOSGVA.cgrFR\\_TW2nSnu4II](https://us06web.zoom.us/rec/share/Qi-w79IU5mXjmBr-H4IHbJodc5xIMcR9r_DFWxC6jpkHp6N1udJwZXu32YYOSGVA.cgrFR_TW2nSnu4II)

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