GRAND JUNCTION DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES
THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 2025
750 MAIN STREET-GROWL CONFERENCE ROOM & VITRUAL OPTION
8:00 AM

Board Members present: Libby Olson (Chair), Dustin Anzures, Steven Boyd, Cole Hanson, Karli Hyland, Afton Neal, Faith Rodriguez (via Zoom), City Council Representative Ben Van Dyke

Board Members absent: Garrett Portra (Vice-Chair)

Downtown Grand Junction staff present: Brandon Stam, Vonda Bauer, Dave Goe

Other: Northland Securities, Inc Financial Advisor Troy Bernberg (representing the DDA)-via zoom

City of Grand Junction staff present: City Attorney John Shaver

CALL TO ORDER: Libby called the meeting to order at 7:41 a.m.

CONSENT AGENDA

Approval of Minutes:
Meeting on October 23, 2025
Steve made a motion to approve the minutes of the October 23, 2025, Downtown Development Authority Board meeting. Karli seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

REGULAR AGENDA

MUSEUM OF WESTERN COLORATO UPDATE-SHENNA HAYDEN
Shenna Hayden, Executive Director of the Museums of Western Colorado, introduced herself and shared an overview of a proposed plan to merge Museum of the West and Dinosaur Journey within Grand Junction. The plan includes using the CD Smith building for core operations and exhibits, and the Whitman building as a location for the Dinosaur Journey exhibits and lab space. She explained that the organization is evaluating the long-term sustainability, operational, and financial efficiency of its three sites: Cross Orchards Historic Site, Dinosaur Journey, and the Downtown Museum of the West. They will engage the community and stakeholders throughout the process. Shenna requested financial support from the DDA for a feasibility study to assess the consolidation. She also noted ongoing discussions with Mayor Cody Kennedy and City Manager Mike Bennett regarding potential city involvement and support.

Brandon stated that the estimated cost for the feasibility study would be between $10,000 and $40,000 with a timeline of six to twelve months.

The Board discussed the history and current structural issues of the Whitman School building, raising concerns about its future and the implications for historical preservation. There were concerns regarding the potential demolition of the Whitman school without a thorough assessment of its historical value. A commitment to exploring preservation was expressed, along with an acknowledgement of the building's deteriorating condition. The availability of state funding for historic preservation was discussed. They expressed the importance of retaining the museum in Downtown Grand Junction. They agreed that the potential cost savings from reducing the number of locations and improving programming opportunities would be beneficial.

Cole motioned to approve up to $40,000 for a feasibility study for the Museums of Western Colorado, with final details to be determined. Karli seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

BOARD UPDATES

Ben shared that the Business Incubator confirmed the Mesa County Enterprise Zone tax credit grandfathering deadline has been extended from October 16th to the end of the year. Despite over 2,000 eligible businesses across the valley, fewer than 50 have enrolled. The program offers significant tax refunds for employee training, healthcare, new hires, and more, returning roughly $1.2 million to nonprofits and up to $1.4 million to private businesses last year. Businesses located within the Downtown corridor, or the Patterson corridor (23 to 29 Road) qualify, even if they don't own the property. Ben encouraged helping spread the word to promote this valuable opportunity.

Karli reported that the Hampton Inn Hotel will begin a major renovation during the slow season, starting in the next week or two. They recently renewed their 20-year franchise agreement, which includes several upgrade requirements from Hilton. Most of the renovations will be interior, done in stages while keeping the hotel open. Some exterior updates will also take place over the next five months. She invited everyone to come take a look once it's completed.

Steve shared that after four years in business, he will implement his first price increase in December, though it will be modest. He also reported that Veterans Day was a great success as he reached out to GJPD, Fruita PD, and Community Hospital and were able to give away a significant amount of food.

Libby had no updates to share.

Cole shared that outdoor gear prices, especially for kids, have increased significantly, creating challenges as they finalize preseason orders for 2026, which involve substantial financial commitments. He also highlighted the first Outdoor Recreation Coalition Industry Summit happening now, bringing together outdoor businesses, conservation nonprofits, city, and county representatives. The Summit's focus is developing an outdoor master plan to coordinate efforts, improve trail and river infrastructure, address maintenance needs, and ensure the community remains competitive in outdoor recreation opportunities.

Afton reported that she will be very busy over the next three to four weeks due to commitments with her business, Everwood Collective. Preparations are beginning for the 12 Days of Cheer gift boxes, including shopping and creating social media collaborations featuring local businesses to assist holiday shoppers. She noted that the holiday season is also a high-demand time for bridal dress shopping, making operations especially busy.

Dustin provided several updates for the Board.

First, he reported that the Historic Preservation Board toured the former Grand Junction Auto Sales property. While the main office is not historic, the back-offices date to the late 1800s. The tour occurred prior to demolition, after which the lot will be cleared and vacant.

Next, he updated on the Rail District. Following their September 11th Catalyst Grant presentation, the Federal Railroad Administration announced a new $5 billion Fed-State Partnership Grant on September 22nd up from $1 billion in previous years. As private entities cannot apply, they are requesting that the City serve as the applicant. Previous timing issues prevented commitments, but this year City staff are now more willing to support the application. The grant could fund up to 80% of the project, including property acquisitions for needed parking not included in the current mobility hub. CDOT will complete the required benefit-cost analysis for the project. Dustin noted they will present at next Monday's City Council workshop and seek a resolution at the December meeting for formal City application. While there is some risk to the City, they remain optimistic. They are also awaiting results from their first grant application submitted October 1, with a decision expected December 15th.

Dustin concluded by noting that, as part of the Historic Preservation Board, he plans to reconnect with Shenna to arrange a tour of the Whitman School to review renovations from 2000 and inspect a visible exterior crack.

Faith provided an update on Health and Human Services nonprofits, noting that it has been a particularly challenging month due to SNAP benefits and other pressures. She reported that United Way, which manages the Regional Opioid Abatement Council funding, was able to secure emergency funds, an uncommon occurrence. They obtained $800,000, including $500,000 for CEC, enabling them to open a facility in Orchard Mesa. This will allow the Counseling & Education Center (CEC) to expand services and provide counseling and education, benefiting the community's mental health during a difficult time.

UPDATES
Brandon provided the following updates:

The Terminal Project is currently in site plan review and has already received the first round of comments. There are items to address, but nothing unmanageable at this stage. We also had a productive discussion with Xcel regarding utility-related matters.

Splashpad Improvements: Close to finalizing the timeline. Once confirmed, details will be shared with the businesses, aiming for February or March during the slower season. DTJ Design is assisting in creating a punch list for additional improvements. The goal is to have a finalized punch list early next year so the project can launch on schedule and establish a consistent annual cycle with projects starting at the beginning of each year, helping to reduce disruption and improve planning. Brandon also met with department heads, including Ken, Trent, and Chief Smith, to gather input on priorities and determine which tasks the City can self-perform versus those requiring outside contractors.

CDOT expects to finish the current phase by the end of November. If it isn't completed on time, a contingency plan will be put in place for the Parade of Lights route.

The holiday lights are installed and look great. They will be turned on during the Tree Lighting event on November 22nd.

Hilltop has begun moving into their building and plans to hold a formal opening after the new year. It's great timing to have them in place before the holidays, and they have agreed to allow use of their parking lot after business hours and on weekends.

OTHER BUSINESS
None

PUBLIC COMMENTS
None

ADJOURN
There being no further business, Cole made a motion to adjourn. Steve seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 8:53 a.m.