



**Pagosa Springs CDC Monthly Board Meeting Minutes**  
**November 13, 2024 | 5:00 pm | Ross Aragon Community Center**

**In Attendance:** Sherry Waner, Rosanna Dufour, Mont McAllister, Warren Brown, Bruce Stuart, Brooks Lindner (Zoom), Jenelle Syverson, Todd Mees (Zoom), Emily Lashbrooke, Kathleen McFadden, Jeff Sams, and Laura Lewis Marchino (Zoom).

**Guests:** Garrett Fevinger (Zoom—The Sun)

**Absent:** Chelle Keplinger, Jim Garrett

Chair Sherry Waner determined there was a quorum and called the meeting to order at 5:02 PM. There were no conflicts of interest on the agenda items.

*Warren motioned to approve the October 9, 2024, board meeting minutes as presented. Bruce seconded. The motion carried.*

### **Financial Update – Emily Lashbrooke**

Treasurer Chelle Keplinger was absent, so Emily Lashbrooke reviewed the financials with the board for August, September, and October. There was nothing out of the ordinary to highlight on the financials other than workforce development expenses that will be reimbursed and housing costs carried by PSCDC.

*Jenelle moved to approve the August 2024 financials as presented. Mont seconded. The motion carried.*

*Mont moved to approve the September 2024 financials as presented. Warren seconded. The motion carried.*

*Rosanna moved to approve the October 2024 financials as presented. Jenelle seconded. The motion carried.*

### **Executive Director Report – Emily Lashbrooke**

**Broadband:** Currently we are still working on overhead contracts for the completion of our redundant loop. There is a large number of overhead lines along the south side of Archuleta County. Our ISPs have started work on Timber Ridge project. We had several applications submitted for the BEADS application due on October 28th. This was a heavy application, and we are hopeful the area gets awarded. We know that Aspen Springs was included in the application. This would be a collaboration with the SUIT. Our four-way \$2,000,000 grant The SUIT is continuing to work to lay fiber to adhere to the grant requirements. Eric and I are working with the state CBO to help develop a career path for all things Broadband. This effort

includes the Workforce Development office, Consortium, Higher education, and Community colleges. This is going to be piloted in Pagosa Springs. Hoping to start with a Fiber Splicing Technician training in January. Currently securing locations and programming materials. SUIT Tribe will participate here in Pagosa Springs. Eirc and I spearheaded a SW Connectivity Forum conference. This will happen on November 20th in Durango. It will include the Region 9 tech related individuals and ISP's, Electric Companies, and all companies related to fiber and the internet. We are expecting 40 people. At this event the group will also elect to become a Sector Partnership. This designation will bring this group benefits in solving challenges at the state level. It will also open up grant opportunities and other funding options. This is the First Sector Partnership in Southwest Colorado and the First in Broadband in the entire state.

**Workforce Development:** We just recently have had our request granted. In The coming months, we will host more interns and provide special training. We are currently setting a CDL class for the First week in December. We have had some interest from Goal Academy for this training. We have 9 participants in the internship program and 5 of them are brand new to the program. We are watching this funding closely to ensure we do not overspend.

**Main Street:** Kat will give you a very comprehensive report on the movement in the reconstruction project with CDOT. PSCDC is currently looking at some grants that could provide drawings or renderings for the CDOT Project.

**Economic Development:** Kat and I attended the EDCC annual Conference in Beaver Creek. This conference is required for me. Personally, this could not have been any better of a conference for me. All the workforce development folks were at the conference, and I was able to connect and deal with some struggles we have had with the Sector Partnership. Great conversation with other ED professionals and City of Durango was Awarded Small Community of the year. SW Colorado was in the house.

**Workforce Housing:** All 10 homes are coming along nicely. We fully anticipate an on time and on budget. Simply amazing that this project did not get stalled any further. We are working with a total of 33 registered home buyers to become qualified. Some are for 2025. Looking to hold the next lottery as soon as we have eight qualified buyers. If we have any others in the queue and are close, we will wait for them to hold the lottery. We are looking to hold the lottery the first week of December.

The Prop 123 application The September 1st applications were in fact way oversubscribed, and we have been asked to move to the December 1 application. This funding will still be in time for the build season of Phase 2. Our application was accepted, and we are working through the do diligence of items to accompany the Application

We submitted a LOI for Land Banking for properties on Bonita Ct in collaboration with Habitat. This property is in the middle of our current build and would make sense to provide more housing. This program was also oversubscribed, and we are waiting for a decision. We would like to propose to the county if we get grant funding to pay for Bonita Dr properties can the county use this funding to build up a workforce housing fund to help offset costs. We are still waiting for the application invitation to arrive.

The Dragoo enlisted our help for a More Housing Now Application for infrastructure placement on the Property between the Hospital and Walmart. 99 Acre parcel for a multifamily affordable housing project. They worked with the Town on this project. Their hearing with EIAF committee was Wednesday October 30th. The committee recommended full funding. The Last step is the

Director of DOLA sings off on the contract. This will significantly increase affordable units in Pagosa Springs

The Housing Needs Assessment survey link has started to circulate and we are hopeful for a great response. This information will guide us to creating a Housing Strategy.

We held our first Business Forum in October. We had about 30 business people attend and stay engaged for six hours. We are currently compiling the results and will have them ready for this meeting. It was amazing.

## **Main Street Coordinator Report – Kathleen McFadden**

### **PSCDC**

**Innovation Grant Summer Work Program:** Our internship program has been a tremendous success this year with 50 students and 32 business partners participating. We currently have ten enrollees this fall, including three students continuing from the summer session and seven new interns. To date, we have processed \$127K in invoices and hope to use up all available funds.

**EDCC Annual Conference:** Emily and I attended the Economic Development Council of Colorado Annual Drive | Lead | Succeed Conference in Beaver Creek October 13-16. As usual, Colorado State Demographer Elizabeth Garner provided an interesting and informative update on Colorado's population trends, highlighting that the state's growth is slowing, which will have significant implications for our future workforce. Colorado has seen reduced rates of in-migration, and when combined with an aging population and lower birth rates, this slowdown will lead to fewer working-age individuals available to support businesses and industries. Given these changes, it's even more important that we continue our initiatives at PSCDC to develop and strengthen our local workforce.

**Business Forum:** On October 22, we held our Q3 membership meeting in combination with a highly successful business forum. The forum gave participants an opportunity to provide direct input on the issues and challenges affecting our community. We will use this data to compile a comprehensive report for our elected officials to help shape the direction of future policies and initiatives.

### **Main Street Program**

**Cone Zone Care Committee:** The committee continues working with the Town, CDOT, and Main Street businesses to help prepare for the Highway 160 Reconstruction Project. Given the bid delay in September, Cone Zone did not host an October in-person update. I created and distributed an October newsletter (see attached) with a status update. CDOT did advertise the Pagosa Springs Highway 160 Reconstruction Project on Bidnet on October 3 and opened bids on November 7. During our next Cone Zone Update on November 18 at Bliss Scoops & Sweets, CDOT will provide an update on the number of bids received and if they are within budget. The contractor names and bid amounts will be confidential until CDOT selects a contractor. If the bids are too high and/or no "qualified" bids are received, CDOT will report that to us and work with the Town to determine how to move forward.

CDOT Regional Communications Manager Lisa Schwantes and the Public Information Managers Tracy Trulove and Meredith Green conducted a site visit on Monday, November 4. We discussed the coordination of a community communications plan. The PIMs will be creating an opt-in email subscription, a project webpage, and phone hotline for our project in the next few weeks. We will use our current email list of 174 subscribers and social media channels to encourage everyone to sign up and connect with these resources. We also will provide direct, convenient access to the official CDOT communications channels at all times before and during the reconstruction project.

**CDOT Rendering:** We are still seeking grant funding to create a project rendering for the CDOT reconstruction. Such a rendering would serve as a powerful tool to showcase the vision for our

downtown area once the construction is complete. By offering a tangible, visual representation of the end result, we can more effectively communicate the value of the project to local businesses, residents, and visitors. This would help shift the narrative from focusing on short-term disruptions to envisioning a revitalized, pedestrian-friendly, and aesthetically pleasing Main Street that enhances the overall community experience.

**Business Assistance Program:** Main Street continues working with PSCDC and Region 9 to offer a Business Assistance Program to those businesses affected by the reconstruction project. The program will provide a low-cost loan offering to ease the repayment burden. We are also working closely with DOLA to pass grant funding through Region 9 to support business disruption. The goal is to create a flexible program that includes a combination of loans with grant money or even standalone grants. While loan amounts may seem modest in context of a multi-million-dollar highway project, they can make a crucial difference for small businesses trying to stay afloat during reconstruction. These loan and grant funds could be the key to keeping our local businesses open and thriving throughout the project.

**Free Digital Training for Main Street Businesses:** As part of our Main Street America national accreditation and membership, we continue to offer free access to MSA's Small Business Digital Trainers program. This program provides virtual and on-demand training to help small businesses enhance their digital presence and e-commerce capabilities to increase sales and customer reach through tools and platforms including website optimization, search engine optimization, social media marketing, online advertising, analytic tools, and ecommerce services.

**MET Task Force:** The task force last met on September 9 to discuss downtown parking alternatives during the reconstruction project and will meet again on Thursday, November 14 at 3:00 PM. The Town has secured an agreement for parking with Ruby Sisson Library and will add gravel and signage to provide up to 50 spaces on their empty lot. The Springs Resort & Spa has received the first draft of a parking agreement from the Town for ~150 spaces. The Springs also confirmed with BWD that they can incorporate their southern lot into the planning efforts to ensure the best possible solution. These two solutions alone will more than cover the 188 spaces that will be lost during reconstruction. Main Street and MET will continue providing support and solutions wherever possible.

Additionally, we are exploring an innovative option to create a branded Cone Zone Stop & Go bus service with the County. This service would run every 30 minutes, offering shuttle transportation around the highway construction areas. County Road & Bridge has indicated that they can donate a bus, pending ADA accessibility repairs, and provide this service for approximately \$500,000 over the two years of high tourist season.

**Middle School Revitalization Project:** The board is finalizing a T-Mobile Hometown grant application to renovate the middle school greenhouse. The goal of the grant program is to help build stronger, more prosperous small towns and rural communities, with up to 100 grants a year being awarded up to \$50K each with no required match. Renovating the greenhouse is a vital component of our larger effort to revitalize the exterior of the middle school property and enhance the aesthetic appeal of our downtown corridor.

The greenhouse project is also a natural extension of the middle school's commitment to health and wellness. The school has been recognized as a Healthy School Champion twice and has received the Governor's Award for being the healthiest school in Colorado. A functioning greenhouse will not only support these values but also provide an invaluable educational resource for our students. Improving the school's appearance at such a critical location on Main Street also will have a positive ripple effect on the entire downtown area.

We selected Growing Spaces as our community partner to do the renovation. They have provided a detailed design plan and budget that will include improving the interior and exterior. Growing Spaces, with expertise in greenhouse design and horticulture, brings invaluable knowledge and resources to the project and strengthens the connection between local business and our educational institutions.

**Pagosa Springs History Museum:** The museum completed the cleaning/abatement a couple weeks ago and the Museum Board conducted a walk-through of the cleaning. Mountain Man Property Brothers did a great job. The museum is now in the process of securing a contractor to put a floor in the new addition. The projected opening date is scheduled for the 2025 season (May 1).

The board reviewed Larry Lucas' conceptual design for the museum. Larry Lucas is the State Architect for the Colorado Main Street Program. Design A includes no structural modifications while Design B includes a new facility. The board has not yet had time to give it their full attention due to insurance claims and cleanup, but they plan to revisit the proposal during the off-season months next year.

## **Multijurisdictional Housing Coordinator Report – Jeff Sams**

### **Housing Needs Assessment (HNA)**

Continue to work with Emily Lashbrooke, James Dickhoff and Pam Flowers including biweekly meetings with ECONorthwest. The final draft of the surveys was approved, and the platform was tested in mid-October. There are 2 surveys, one for Employers and one for Residents. Distribution of the surveys started the last week of October. There have already been over 150 responses (Completed Surveys). Plans to close out the survey before Thanksgiving, but leave it open if there is an opportunity to get more in. <https://www.archuletacounty.org/886/Archuleta-County-Housing-Needs-Assessment>

### **Phase 1 CDC Chris Mountain Work Force Ownership Housing**

Continued contact with buyers that have applied to purchase. Several have moved to 2025 or pulled out of the program, but there are still 6 or 7 that are moving forward. Buyers were given a deadline of 11/19/24 to have a prequalification from a lender. And our next Home Opportunity Process (Lottery) will be on December 10th, 2024. We are pushing hard to make sure all homes are placed under contract at the December 10th selection process.

Deed Restrictions have been reviewed and finalized with a final draft from the County Attorney. Waiting on approval from the Archuleta County Housing Authority. Planning to present to the BOCC in early December for approval.

Workforce Housing Guidelines will also need to be in place prior to the sale of Phase 1 homes. I have completed an RFP and once approved it will be posted to start the process of finding a consultant to create and implement these guidelines. The Guidelines will be referenced by Town and County officials, Other Government Agencies (including state agencies and those working on Prop 123), Developers, those looking for housing, etc.

Submitted Application for Land Banking Funds that could be used to purchase more lots that the County is currently looking to sell, but did not sell at auction. This program has funds available to purchase land and have that purchase amount forgiven once developed. The goal of the program is to set aside land for future workforce housing projects. The Letter of Intent (LOI) was submitted and received. Awaiting final application instructions.

### **Potential Developments**

- Pagosa Views is still working towards submitting subdivision applications for getting their project being built.
- Town's Enclave property with development agreement with Servitas is on hold as they look at other financial and construction options.
- Colorado Outdoors, LLC is moving forward with a proposed middle income (60-140% of AMI) apartment rental project east of the Pagosa Springs Medical Center. Attended James Dickhoff's presentation for More Housing now Grant via zoom. That was successful and there was initial approval for over \$1.9M for this project.
- Timberline Apartment LIHTC

- Project next to Walmart has broken ground.

### **Other Work in Progress**

Attended the Business Forum put on by the CDC. The event had great attendance and participation. Housing was a topic that came up several times which reiterated the importance of additional workforce housing. The businesses provided great feedback on an array of topics.

Completed initial meetings with those that would be included in the re-establishment of the Housing Coalition Meetings. These were monthly meetings to review each group's potential projects or needs regarding housing. Hoping to poll the group and have our first meeting before the end of the year.

I have also been attending several meetings with Region 9, DOLA and other Prop 123 groups and updates. It helps to keep up to speed on changes and helps me understand what is going on in the industry.

Started attending C.A.S.T. (Colorado Area Ski Towns) Housing Task Force Meetings. Reviews topics that we all share as ski towns and address issues with workforce housing.

Chris Mountain Housing Deed Restrictions have been reviewed and finalized with a final draft from the County Attorney. Waiting on approval from the Archuleta County Housing Authority. Planning to present to the BOCC in early December for approval. These will be used for Phase 1 Chris Mountain and other projects in the future.

Workforce Housing Guidelines will also need to be in place prior to the sale of Phase 1 homes. I have completed an RFP and once approved it will be posted to start the process of finding a consultant to create and implement those guidelines. The Guidelines will be referenced by Town and County officials, Other Government Agencies (including state agencies and those working on Prop 123), Developers, those looking for housing, etc.

## **Region 9 Economic Development**

Region 9 provided 6 letters of support for different Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEADS) applications across the region, including those in Archuleta County. In October, Region 9 had 1 loan inquiry, 10 enterprise zone inquiries, 1 grant inquiry, and they applied for a CHIPS grant. Region 9 completed a recreation use study focused on the high alpine areas in San Juan and parts of Dolores counties. This mapping of trail usage data could be useful for the region. Region 9 is also working on a timber/biomass study to assess the market potential for growing the timber industry and supporting businesses in the region.

Laura mentioned an upcoming AI conference at Fort Lewis College on November 20th that is free and has beginner and intermediate tracks. Region 9 is connecting the new Durango Chamber of Commerce director, Jeff Dupont, with economic development efforts across the region. Laura also offered to connect Emily with the Ute Mountain Ute tribe's learning center regarding potential participation in the upcoming CDL training program.

## **Discussion**

1. **Workforce Housing Applicants Update:** As Emily discussed, we have 27 applicants in process. Several potential buyers earn approximately \$500 too much to qualify for our 80-100% AMI houses, highlighting the need for 120% AMI.
2. **Department of Housing Update:** Phase 2 application is in the review process.
3. **Builder Update:** Executed final contract for Phase 2 with BWD.
4. **Grant Update:** See above.

5. **Business Forum Discussion on October 22:** PSCDC will host a Business Forum in place of the Q3 Membership Meeting. The primary purpose of this forum is to get input directly from our local businesses on the most important topics impacting our community, as well as to participate in informative breakout sessions. Topics will include the Archuleta County Strategic Plan, Employee Business Ownership, Affordable Housing, and the forum will provide a conduit for businesses to communicate with elected officials.

*The meeting adjourned 6:24 PM.*