

GRAND JUNCTION CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP SUMMARY

October 30, 2023

Meeting Convened: 4:01 p.m. The meeting was held in person at the Fire Department Training Room, 625 Ute Avenue, and live streamed via GoToWebinar.

City Councilmembers Present: Councilmembers Scott Beilfuss, Cody Kennedy, Jason Nguyen, Randall Reitz, Dennis Simpson and Mayor Anna Stout. Mayor Pro Tem Abe Herman was absent.

Staff present: City Manager Greg Caton, City Attorney John Shaver, Assistant to the City Manager Johnny McFarland, Director of Community Development Tamra Allen, Finance Director Emeritus Jodi Welch, Finance Director Jennifer Tomaszewski, Public Works Director Trent Prall, General Services Director Jay Valentine, Human Resources Director Shelley Caskey, Fire Chief Ken Watkins, Police Chief Matt Smith, Parks and Recreation Director Ken Sherbenou, Utilities Director Randi Kim, Visit Grand Junction Director Elizabeth Fogarty, City Clerk Amy Phillips, and Deputy City Clerk Selestina Sandoval.

1. Discussion Topics

a. Unhoused Resource Facility Concept Plans

Community Development Director Tamra Allen reported that at the September 18, City Council Workshop, City Council suggested that service providers develop proposals to address a viable option for day use and meal and service delivery for the unhoused. As part of the Unhoused Needs Assessment and the survey of Persons Experiencing Homelessness (PEH) conducted in December 2022, it was identified that a central location would be beneficial to accessing and navigating services and that bathrooms, showers, laundry facilities and access to electricity were critical.

The City received two formal proposals, one from Amos Supportive Housing Association and another one from HomewardBound in partnership with United Way of Mesa County. The full proposals were included in the agenda packet.

Both proposals provide indoor warming opportunities, connect people to services from local service providers, and offer meal and service delivery in a central location for people experiencing homelessness.

HomewardBound, in conjunction with United Way of Mesa County - The proposal included providing a day resource center including extensive indoor space for warming/cooling, meal provision, showers/restrooms, and a place that local service providers can utilize to resource individuals. They requested a capital investment of \$773,176, start-up costs of \$99,490, and annual operating costs of \$316,600 for a total first-year estimated cost of \$1,189,266. A second-year request for annual operating cost was estimated at \$316,600, for a total two-year cost of \$1,505,866.

The following is an overview of the proposal.

Objective: To establish a safe, enclosed, and supported structure in the central area

of Grand Junction where individuals formerly congregating at Whitman and other City parks can receive services, counseling, and community support to assist them in meeting their immediate needs and in moving along the path to more permanent housing.

Timeline: Assuming City approval, they believe that a site could be established by December 15th, 2023. They anticipate that the Day Center will be a 1- to 2-year project that hopefully will serve as a community catalyst for a wider solution to the area's problems of homelessness among our most vulnerable citizens.

Organizing Partners: HomewardBound of the Grand Valley & The United Way of Mesa County will assist the City in the location, design, and implementation of the project. HomewardBound will, under a Memorandum of Understanding with the City, operate the program for a maximum of two years as all partners work toward a larger solution for the community. Collaboration is critical amongst all agencies, so the organizing partners have already begun to establish a "service council" that will assist in what services are available, who offers them and how they are delivered.

Community Partners: For the Day Center to provide the results wanted, multiple agencies will need to be involved in offering service, supplies and engaging with the homeless population to ensure trust. These partners must include, but are not limited to, the following: City of Grand Junction, Mesa County, Hilltop, Catholic Outreach, The Joseph Center, Mutual Aid Partners, Solidarity not Charity, Peace and Justice, Karis, Amos Counseling and the Grand Junction Housing Authority. It is anticipated that other non-profit providers, St Mary's, Community Hospital and the Grand Valley Coalition for the Homeless will be involved as needed.

It was noted that part of the research for this project was to review possible warehouse buildings available for rent or sale, as well as potential open sites within what was defined as the central area of the City. After review, it was determined that the cost of renting or purchasing a warehouse facility was too costly, leading the team to find properties, either City owned or private, that might be available for use. Six potential sites were located. The estimates of capital, operating and start-up costs were based on locating the Day Center on one of these sites for 1 to 2 years. The annual operating cost estimates the facility would be open 7 days per week from 8:00AM to 8:00PM.

Amos Counseling proposal requested \$350,000 for the purchase of the .28 acre property which includes 1,000 square feet of existing building space.

The following is an overview of their proposal.

Organization

Amos Supportive Housing Association's "ASHA" is the non-profit arm to Amos Counseling. The mission is to create healthy environments for individuals and families by strengthening their life skills empowering them to cultivate a safe, stable, and sober environment. To achieve their mission ASHA provides services to people who are struggling with addiction, persistent mental health issues, and those who are medically fragile through comprehensive programs that support individuals in creating a solid foundation for their

recovery by aiding individuals to become independent. ASHA promotes education, economic stability, wellness, and health care, built environments, and social cohesion. ASHA's programs assist individuals in overcoming addiction, poverty, mental, or physical limitations, aging, homelessness, and other circumstances. ASHA collaborates with other organizations to provide service efficiently and effectively. ASHA has been working in the supportive housing space for over five years.

Project Summary

Currently, ASHA owns the property at 1111 Ute Ave and opened "The Hangout" on October 1 which offers unhoused individuals a day/evening center from 3 pm – 7 am to cook healthy meals, shower, do laundry, rest for up to 4 hours, gain access to heat/cool, and participate in services that will support recovery, housing, mental health, medical needs, etc. to help ensure stabilization of individuals who are chronically unhoused and deemed high utilizers of criminal, medical, and emergency services. Currently, "The Hangout" can provide services for up to 37 guests and has been at capacity since opening. The site has seen both

men and women including D51 employees, single mothers with small children, and has had to maintain a sign-up sheet for napping stations, showers, and restrooms due to the consistent use. Additionally, the site has seen between 8-13 new participants daily who are

coming from encampments and the street. The site provides a dumpster, and many are bringing their trash from camps and sleeping locations. This property will also decrease the burden placed on the city's cleanup efforts through the police and fire department. "The Hangout" is fully staffed by two mental health first aid professionals. Services and staffing are primarily funded through Medicaid and Amos Counseling Services who provide wrap-around and coordinated services with other agencies to ensure that their most basic needs are being met.

Project Description

The current request of \$350,000 is for ASHA to expand these services by purchasing two additional houses on the property adjacent to its current location. Upon purchasing the 2 houses, ASHA would complete the minor improvements needed and purchase furniture within 30 days of closing. The contract is currently being negotiated, and the closing date is tentatively set for January 15, 2024, but is open to being moved up pending availability and timing of funding. The current "Hang-out" property would transition to being a men's site, and the two additional houses would create additional spaces for up to 30 for women and children. This property is located within walking distance to many services, bus stops, major medical facilities and close to temporary employment centers. It is providing services outside of traditional hours for day centers, outreach programs, and more importantly gives a space

for overnight napping and resourcing which is eliminating the opportunities for loitering or camping in public spaces or neighborhoods.

Currently, the ending 2023 General Fund reserve is projected at \$41.7 million with \$13.1 million available above internal loans, earmarked funds, and the minimum reserve. If the project were to commence in 2024, monies could be dedicated from the proposed \$7.4 million in housing funds included in the recommended 2024 Budget which includes the \$1.6 million in remaining ARPA funds.

Discussion ensued regarding both proposals. Council requested that the Homeward Bound in partnership with United Way of Mesa County be placed on the Regular Agenda for the November 1st City Council Meeting for further discussion and possible action. Council asked ASHA to provide more information regarding their non-profit status, financials, delineation between ASHA and Amos Counseling and which of the two entities would own the property if funded.

b. 2024 Budget Workshop-Wrap Up and Discussion

Mr. Caton explained that economic development is key to the diversification and growth of the local economy. The City has devoted significant funding toward developing strategies and amenities designed to strengthen the community as a regional economic hub and attract new residents and businesses.

Economic development can be seen in three major areas of the budget. First, the City invests in economic development by delivering core services such as public safety and through capital plans that fund improvements to street infrastructure and public amenities such as parks, trails, community sports, and recreation facilities. The second is by the City supporting agencies that directly engage in economic development through their services which positively impact the community and economy and third, the City funds the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) by providing support to enhance the viability of downtown through grants, capital investment, and improvements to public amenities for a total of \$1.9 million.

The City does not have an economic development division or dedicated staff and therefore outsources the work to partners for their expertise and services. Funding for partners comes from the 0.75 percent sales tax and the vendors fee cap established in 2018.

The City's economic development partners totals \$2.3 million in the 2024 Recommended Budget. Economic Development partners are Colorado Mesa University, Grand Valley Transit, the Downtown Business Improvement District, Grand Junction Economic Partnership (GJEP), the Business Incubator, Grand Junction Area Chamber of Commerce, Industrial Development Inc., and the Western Colorado Latino Chamber of Commerce.

- **Grand Junction Area Chamber of Commerce (GJ Chamber), Industrial Development Inc. (IDI), Grand Junction Regional Air Service Alliance (Air Alliance)**

Candace Carnahan, CEO of GJ Chamber, presented the City funding and upcoming budget requests for GJ Chamber, IDI, and the Air Alliance. Both the GJ Chamber and IDI receive a portion of the revenue generated from the vendor's fee cap. In the 2024 Recommended Budget, \$40,000 is included for the GJ Chamber for business retention, and \$79,000 is included for IDI for job incentives.

The Air Alliance receives one percent of the three percent lodging tax passed in 2019. In the 2024 Recommended Budget, the amount is projected to be \$839,729.

- **Western Colorado Latino Chamber of Commerce (WCLCC)**

Jorge Pantoja and Sonia Guiterrez presented City funding and upcoming budget requests.

- **Downtown Development Authority (DDA), Downtown Business Improvement District (DBID)**

Brandon Stam, Executive Director, DDA and DBID presented the 2024 budgets. The DDA's budget is approved by the DDA Board and then comes to City Council for authorization of total spending. On the same schedule as the appropriation ordinance, the Council will be asked to approve a resolution funding the redevelopment projects to be consistent with the DDA Plan of Development.

The City Council annually approves the operating plan and budget of the DBID which coincides with the City Council's adoption of the City's budget in December.

- **Continued Council Discussion**

Discussion ensued regarding the Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) and its feasibility and funding, and that the County has asked that the City work with them on a composting project instead of creating its own. The differences in the scope for each project was discussed resulting in direction to staff to meet with County staff regarding joint programs that could mitigate duplication. There were questions regarding the \$750,000 budget for employee housing and how Council could be more involved in the non-profit funding.

Concluding discussion, Council would like to have an ex-officio seat on the Gand Junction Chamber Board as it sits on boards for all other economic partners.

2. City Council Communication

None

3. Next Workshop Topics

City Manager Caton reported the items for the November 13, 2023, Workshop will be:

- a. Sustainability and Adaptation Plan
- b. Zoning and Development Code
- c. Unhoused Needs Assessment

Adjournment

There being no further business, the Workshop adjourned at 8:43 p.m.