

**Grand Junction City Council**  
**Minutes of the Special Meeting**  
**November 25, 2024**

**Call to Order, Pledge of Allegiance, Moment of Silence**

The City Council of the City of Grand Junction convened into regular session on the 25<sup>th</sup> day of November 2024 at 5:05 p.m. Those present were Councilmembers Scott Beilfuss, Cody Kennedy, Jason Nguyen (virtual), Dennis Simpson, Anna Stout, Council President Pro Tem Randall Reitz (virtual) and Council President Abram Herman.

Also present were Interim City Manager Andrea Phillips, City Attorney John Shaver, Housing Manager Ashley Chambers, Community Development Director Tamra Allen, City Clerk Selestina Sandoval, and Deputy City Clerk Misty Williams.

Council President Herman called the meeting to order, and Councilmember Beilfuss led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance, followed by a moment of silence.

**Public Comments**

The public comment session featured over 40 speakers, reflecting diverse perspectives and suggestions regarding the Resource Center.

**Other Action Items**

**Resource Center Lease/Possible Direction Regarding Suspension and/or Termination of the Lease of City Property at 261 Ute Avenue for Resource Center Operations**

At the regular Council meeting on November 20, 2024, Council requested scheduling a special meeting to discuss the Resource Center. At prior meetings and workshops, Council discussed the operating timeline of the Resource Center. The Center is managed through an agreement with HomewardBound, through a partnership with United Way. The tent that houses the Resource Center was purchased with ARPA funds that were provided to HomewardBound for this purpose. The current lease agreement began on December 18, 2023, and is for a two-year plus period. It is set to expire on April 1, 2026, unless amended, terminated, or extended.

A presentation by Housing Manager Ashley Chambers, Bill Wade (Homeward Bound), and Faith Rodriguez (United Way) detailed operational challenges and proposed changes.

Some recommendations included:

Temporary operations pause through a proposed closure from December 9 – 14, 2024, to allow for staff training, facility upgrades, and implementation of new intake procedures. Ms. Rodriguez expressed a preference for limited operation hours rather than full closure during the reset.

Amendments to the lease terms which included a recommendation to shorten the lease term to end in April 2025, instead of April 2026, to align with plans to relocate the Resource Center or the potential of the addition of right-of-way control near the facility to address loitering and safety concerns.

Operational enhancements, such as an enhanced intake process using ID cards for service tracking and behavior accountability, clearer behavioral policies with consequences for violations aimed at reducing loitering and unsafe activities near the Resource Center, and additional security and cleaning measures to improve the immediate area, were also recommended.

Council President Pro Tem Reitz made comments in support of the changes and left the meeting at 7:08 p.m.

Discussion ensued regarding the proposed changes.

Councilmember Stout moved and Councilmember Simpson seconded to include the immediate right-of-way surrounding the site in the lease. Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

Councilmember Kennedy moved, and Councilmember Simpson seconded, to change the lease's end date to April 15, 2025, and to lower the cure days from 30 to 7.

Discussion ensued on the motion regarding whether the cure period was appropriate notice to the lessee.

Councilmember Kennedy amended his motion to address only the lease's end date amendment to April 15, 2025. Councilmember Simpson seconded. The motion carried 5-1 by voice vote with Councilmember Beilfuss voting no.

Councilmember Simpson moved and Councilmember Stout seconded to change the cure period on the lease from 30 to 14 days.

Comments were made regarding the motion that, should health and safety issues arise, they may need to be addressed faster than the 14 days.

The motion carried by a unanimous voice vote.

Further discussion ensued regarding the Resource Center having limited hours from December 2nd through the 15th instead of the full weeklong closure for the necessary training and updates. It would still be open for food distribution and appointments. The importance of communicating this with the homeless population and downtown businesses was emphasized.

### **Discussion of Alternative Sites for Resource Center Operations**

As directed by City Council, staff has been researching, touring and evaluating multiple alternative sites for locating the Resource Center services. Per Council's direction, staff is seeking a brick and mortar or metal building that is close to move-in ready.

Interim City Manager Andrea Phillips gave an overview of staff efforts to find a more suitable location for the Resource Center. She shared some criteria for the new site, including adequate space for service provision, accessibility for unhoused individuals and service providers, and reduced impact on downtown businesses and residents.

Discussion ensued regarding suggestions for a path forward, including utilizing the HomewardBound shelter during daytime hours to expand services, reassessing requirements for a new site to broaden potential options, and consideration of decentralizing services across multiple smaller locations.

### **Downtown Security Measures**

Downtown businesses and residences have expressed several concerns related to security and safety issues, including property damage.

Police Chief Matt Smith gave an overview of policing versus security of the Resource Center and the difference between what the city could do and what a private company such as Citadel could do.

Council and city staff discussed the pressing concerns of downtown business owners, residents, and community members regarding safety issues arising around the Resource Center and its impact on the surrounding area. Key issues identified included frequent reports of trespassing, loitering, and public disturbances near businesses and residential areas, instances of harassment and intimidation toward employees and customers, trash, drug paraphernalia, and human waste left in public and private spaces. Other concerns included large groups congregating near the Resource Center contributing to a sense of unease among residents and visitors to the downtown area, and the construction zone along 3<sup>rd</sup> Street and Pitkin Avenue exacerbating safety issues, as pedestrians were forced to navigate through potentially unsafe areas. While the

Resource Center itself has internal rules and staff to maintain order, the area outside the gates often lacks consistent oversight. Businesses and residents expressed frustration at what they perceived as limited enforcement of existing rules and inadequate communication about safety measures.

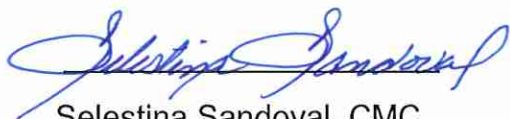
Proposed solutions included expanding the use of private security personnel to patrol the areas surrounding the Resource Center during both operational and non-operational hours, ensuring security staff are trained to de-escalate conflicts and enforce boundaries respectfully but effectively, and increasing police presence in the downtown area to address criminal behavior and enforce local ordinances. Council directed Staff to develop a proposal to address the safety issues through the end of the lease's term, including budget impacts of using police staff and third-party security.

### **Other Business**

There was none.

### **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 9:31 pm.



Selestina Sandoval, CMC

City Clerk

