CHEYENNE DOWNTOWN
DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

2101 O'Neil Ave., Room 202
Cheyenne, WY 82001
(307) 433-9730
cheyennecity.org/dda

MINUTES

Thursday, November 20th, 2025
Western Vista Conference Room
1920 Thomes Ave, Cheyenne, WY 82001

I. CALL TO ORDER

Meeting called to order at 10:00 AM.

II. ROLL CALL

Members Present: Wendy Volk (Vice President); David Teubner (President); Brian Bau (Treasurer); Lorrell Bellotti (Secretary); Candice Wisdom; Stan Hartzheim. **On Zoom**: Amber Nuse; Janelle Rose; Jamie Winters; Linda Heath (Ex-Officio).

Members Absent: No one absent.

Staff Present: Sophia Maes, DDA Executive Director; Miya Debusk, DDA Social Media Assistant; Cass Raffa, DDA Operations & Project Coordinator

Members of the Public Present: Caroline Veit, Cheyenne's Children Museum President; Kelsie Salisbury, Cheyenne's Children Museum Interim Executive Director; Daunte Rushton, LEADS Representative; Akili Bonner, Wyo News Now; and Glenn Garrett. **On Zoom**: Jeff White, City Councilman; Tom Cobb, City Engineer; Eric Fountain, Compliance Department Head; Corey Loughrey, Downtown Business Owner; Julie Tucker, City Council of Disabilities; and Charles Bloom, City Planner.

III. DISCLOSURES / ANNOUNCEMENTS

Teubner mentioned that at the end of the agenda, Daunte Rushton will report on the LEADS' Hynds and the Hole project.

IV. MINUTES:

A. October 16th, 2025, Regular Board Meeting Minutes

Volk motioned to approve minutes for October 16th, 2025. Seconded by Bau. Motion approved.

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V. OLD BUSINESS

VI. NEW BUSINESS

A. October 2025 Financial Report

Maes reported the total current assets and net income in the October 2025 Financial Report as of October 31. She noted that there are approximately 692.85 days of operating expenditures available, while the policy requires 60 days. Maes also addressed the line item for COVID Rental Assistance, which was granted to the DDA by the City in 2021 and must be fully expended by next year. She recommended getting it off the books as soon as possible.

This grant provides up to $5,000 for businesses that were renting during COVID. The DDA has not received any additional applications beyond the three original applicants: Ike's Bar and Grill, Alexis Drake, and one other business. Maes stated that one option would be allocating more of the remaining funds to those businesses, except for Ike's, which may no longer be in operation. She asked for other ideas or a motion to disperse the remaining $25,000 in the budget to other line items. Jeff White, attending via Zoom, confirmed that Ike's is no longer in business.

Wisdom asked whether there are limitations on how the funds must be distributed. Maes responded that yes, there are. Bau noted that many businesses are still trying to recover from that period, even though it was years ago. He recommended issuing another social media announcement to promote the grant, explaining that the requirements are low and that additional businesses could benefit. Volk suggested issuing a press release to the Wyoming Tribune Eagle, Cowboy State Daily, Cap City News, or other media outlets. She emphasized that this is a use-it-or-lose-it situation and that the DDA has one year to fully promote the program.

Hartzheim asked whether there is a list of eligible businesses and whether staff could send a direct mailing to 100 potential recipients. Maes responded that the challenge is that eligibility depends on whether the businesses were renting during that specific period, and the DDA does not currently have a list. She added that mailing property owners would not necessarily reach business owners. She stated that staff can issue another media push, and clarified that eligibility includes being located in the downtown district, renting during the COVID period, and having experienced financial hardship. Wisdom asked whether these requirements are outlined in the application. Maes replied that she would need to check, but they should be included. She added that other requirements include being in good standing with the Secretary of State and submitting a tax return or annual income documentation.

Maes then reviewed the grants and sponsorships committed in the budget. The Sidewalk Match Program CIG has been paid out to the City. One additional property owner is interested, and staff is waiting for bids. Healthworks has not yet been paid out, but the agreement has been sent. The same is true for the Lincoln. For Just Dandy, the application has been signed and now needs signatures and notarization by the DDA President and Vice President. Smiles With Santa and Thanks for the Memories were paid earlier in the week and should be off the books by next month. Watson Properties LLC was paid out in September, but the amount was less than what was committed, so a motion is needed to uncommit the remaining $90.70 that was unused.

Bellotti motioned to uncommit the remaining funds for Watson Properties LLC. Volk seconded. Motion passed.

Volk motioned to approve the October 2025 Financial Report as presented. Wisdom seconded. Motion passed.

B. FY26 Budget Amendment #2

Maes introduced the second budget amendment for FY2026, Q4. The line item (704) Communications Plan needs to be increased to $70,000 to cover the cost of the contract. Funds will be reallocated from the line items- Website Renewal and Maintenance, FIPs, CIGs, and DDA Board Strategic Projects. Maes also stated that a $7,500 increase needs to go to (720) Sponsorship for the Thanks for the Memories series, as discussed last meeting. Funds will be reallocated from Community Events, and Advertising and Marketing. At this time, funds are only transferred between expense line items; no additional funds are added to the operating budget.

Volk motioned to approve the Staff Report as recommended. Hartzheim seconded. Motion passes.

C. DDAC-25-7 Cheyenne Children's Museum Sign

Maes reported that Kelsie Salisbury, Interim Executive Director of the Cheyenne Children's Museum, submitted an application to the DDA CIG Program for funding signage and vinyl graphics, including all necessary electrical work. The total project cost is estimated at $36,809.19, and the applicant is requesting up to $18,500 (50%) from the program. The project includes an 8' x 4' monument sign at the front of the building, a 4' x 10' illuminated sign at the back, and an acrylic wrap on three sides of the front awning.

The Children's Museum is located in the Central Business District on the west side, at O'Neil Avenue and 17th Street. The newly constructed building, completed in 2024, is 4,304 square feet

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and serves children ages 0–9. The DDA previously supported this site with a grant for landscaping in 2024. Staff analysis indicates that the application meets all review criteria. Maes stated that staff recommends approval of the request, authorizing up to $18,500 for signage and graphics at 1618 O'Neil Avenue, contingent upon adherence to all permit requirements and codes, including UDC sign codes, and verification that contractors are licensed in Wyoming and the City of Cheyenne. Maes then introduced the applicant, who was present at the meeting.

Caroline Veit introduced herself as the Board President of the Cheyenne Children's Museum and introduced Kelsie Salisbury as the Interim Executive Director. She thanked the board for their consideration and encouraged members to visit the museum to see firsthand what their support helps create. Veit explained that the previously empty block is now active, and the museum continues to enhance its exterior, including the installation of a small train. She stated that the signage grant funds will support ongoing educational opportunities, exhibits, and programming. Veit presented the selected sign designs and described their importance, including clearly identifying the main entrance.

Volk commended Veit and her team for their accomplishments and for helping advance progress downtown. Teubner agreed and expressed appreciation for their investment in the next generation.

Volk motioned to approve the staff recommendation as presented. Hartzheim seconded. Motion passed.

D. 2026 Planter Program RFP

Maes introduced the memo outlining plans for the 2026 Planter Program RFP. She explained that this program is a key annual effort of the DDA, supporting downtown beautification by enhancing the streetscape, engaging pedestrians, and contributing to economic vitality throughout the district. In recent years, vendor selection began in late spring or was handled by volunteers, which resulted in a rushed process and limited planning time. To support improvements, DDA staff conducted a planter survey that received 98 responses, with overwhelmingly positive feedback about the past season. Respondents expressed interest in incorporating more plant variety and multiple height levels, such as tall grasses and vines, as well as more drought-tolerant, climate-appropriate, and annual plant options.

Maes stated that staff recommends releasing the RFP for the 2026 season, with the option to renew the selected contractor for up to three years after the initial term. The RFP would be released by December 1, 2025, with proposals due January 16, 2026. Vendor selection would

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occur by February 6, 2026, and the contract would be awarded by February 20, 2026. This timeline ensures adequate time for designing and planting by mid-May. The current designated budget is $45,000, though staff will evaluate whether this amount should be increased in the next fiscal year. The agreement would be for one year with the option to extend for multi-year maintenance. Vendors would propose a cohesive pollinator-friendly and climate-appropriate plant design for Cheyenne, incorporating perennials, year-round elements, and clear maintenance requirements, including contingencies for damaged plants. Vendors would also be required to meet communication expectations, provide reporting, and participate in a post-season debrief.

Staff recommended approving the 2026 Planter Program RFP and authorizing DDA staff to publicly promote and solicit proposals, as well as creating a review and selection committee of at least two board members, per purchasing policy requirements.

Bau motioned to approve the staff recommendation. Bellotti seconded. During discussion, Bau emphasized that because the planters receive regular watering, they should showcase vibrant, colorful plants rather than drought-resistant selections resembling grass already growing in sidewalks. He cautioned against asking for plant varieties that may not create a visually appealing display. Teubner agreed. Maes clarified that the RFP does include vibrant plant options and that drought-friendly plants may not respond well to consistent watering. She added that the RFP allows vendors to bring forward their professional recommendations. Maes also noted that staff had previously discussed piloting more water-wise planters to determine whether they are cost-effective.

Janelle Rose, a board member attending via Zoom, asked whether the RFP includes a contingency for hail damage. Maes explained that the price proposal includes a 10% contingency for plants that are damaged or stolen. Rose expressed appreciation for the clarification. Teubner asked that this contingency be discussed during interviews with vendors.

Teubner then asked Maes for a brief staff report on the program's performance during the current year. Maes stated that she and Miya Debusk met with the vendor, and the feedback closely aligned with survey results, primarily adding more plants and planting earlier in the season. Because the contract began in mid-June, plant availability was limited. The vendor also recommended adding height, such as grasses and vines, and reported certain challenges, including vandalism, citizens urinating or defecating in planters, and unauthorized plants being grown. Safety concerns were also raised for maintenance staff working along busy streets. Maes

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stated that staff could collaborate with the vendor to adjust watering schedules or relocate certain planters.

Jeff White, attending via Zoom, commented that when he served on the volunteer committee for the planter program, the best watering times were very early on Saturday and Sunday mornings. Teubner asked for any further comments.

The motion passed, with Bau voting no. Bau expressed a desire to remove the term "drought-tolerant" from the RFP.

Wisdom motioned to amend the motion by removing the "drought-tolerant" language. Volk seconded. Motion passed.

Teubner asked Maes whether the budget had been reviewed to accommodate the board's feedback about adding more plants and whether an adjustment should be made. Maes stated that adjustments were possible, noting that the previous vendor fully used the $45,000 allocation and was a smaller operation. She recommended increasing the budget in order to expand the program, including extending it to the south side of the district. She noted that budget amendments could occur later and that she is currently reviewing the full program, including the costs of phasing out old planters and adding new ones. Teubner asked whether the budget should be increased now so the RFP can reflect the change or adjusted later. Maes recommended amending it now so vendors could respond accordingly, with funds able to be shifted later if needed.

Bau recommended setting a budget range of $45,000 to $55,000. Wisdom asked Maes to detail the current per-planter cost, the number of proposed new planters, and the total number downtown. Maes reported approximately 95 planters (74 rectangular and nearly 20 cylindrical on Lincolnway), which averages about $450 per planter. She added that the new pilot program requires purchasing a minimum of 12 planters at a discounted rate, though purchasing 6 could be an alternative. She stated that revising the budget may be best addressed next fiscal year. Wisdom agreed to a range. Maes clarified that the pilot program will be separate from this RFP. Wisdom asked whether the vendor would be responsible for planting in the pilot program; Maes said yes, supporting the use of a range.

Teubner expressed support for maintaining a consistent partnership with a contractor and asked whether future seasons would always require an RFP or if a contract could be extended with a high-performing vendor. Maes confirmed that multi-year contracting is the intent behind the RFP.

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Teubner stated that having an ongoing relationship with a vendor who grows alongside the DDA is important.

Maes noted that Jeff White commented via Zoom about creating a volunteer committee to assist the vendor with beautification, but she expressed concern that vendors may be uncomfortable with volunteer involvement due to liability issues under contract.

Wisdom motioned to amend the RFP budget to a range of $45,000–$55,000. Bau seconded. Motion passed.

Hartzheim moved to approve the release of the 2026 Downtown Planter Program RFP as presented and amended, authorizing staff to publicly advertise and solicit proposals. Wisdom seconded. Motion passed.

Maes added that the second motion requires at least two board members to serve on the vendor selection committee. She reiterated the timeline, noting that selection must occur by February 6. Volk motioned to create a selection committee of at least two members for evaluating proposals. Wisdom seconded. Hartzheim and Volk volunteered to serve.

Volk motioned to amend the previous motion to include their names. Bau seconded. Motion passed.

E. CIG and FIP Grant Application Deadlines

Maes stated that the memo outlines key dates for grant applications, specifically grants, not sponsorships. Staff proposes setting a grant application deadline of no later than the second Wednesday of the month preceding a DDA board meeting. Maes explained that this deadline ensures all City departments have sufficient time to review the application, allows DDA staff adequate time for due diligence, follow-up questions, and communication, and helps staff manage resources and multiple projects efficiently. Staff recommended approval of the proposed policy change establishing that DDA staff shall accept grant applications no later than the second Wednesday of the month preceding a DDA board meeting.

Bellotti motioned to accept the staff report. Volk seconded. During discussion, Bau noted a typo in the chart included in the memo, located in the middle column of the last row. Volk recommended issuing a press release, so new businesses are aware of the program and receive a gentle reminder about application requirements. Motion passed.

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F. FIP Maximum Award Amount

Maes stated that the memo introduces the need to establish a maximum grant amount for the FIP program, as no cap currently exists. Historically, FIP grant awards have ranged between $20,000 and $50,000 per project, with a few larger projects receiving up to $80,000. Staff recommended approving a maximum award limit of $80,000 per project for the FIP, subject to applicable application parameters and eligibility criteria.

Volk motioned to approve the recommendation. Bau seconded.

During discussion, Bau expressed appreciation for the increase from $50,000 to $80,000, noting that it is more realistic in today's market. Maes clarified that the memo pertains only to the FIP and asked whether the board would also prefer to raise the CIG grant maximum, which remains at $50,000. Bau said it should be considered and noted that the DDA has sometimes worked around the limit by separating projects into multiple components. Volk agreed and added that rising construction costs significantly impact the cost of doing business. Wisdom stated that this update should also be included in a press release. Teubner agreed, noting that issuing periodic press releases aligns with the Communications Plan and helps keep the public informed. Volk added that the DDA has strong success stories under this program and that highlighting completed projects and business impacts would reinforce the value of these investments. Wisdom recommended including before-and-after photos.

Motion passed.

VII. PLAN OF DEVELOPMENT UPDATES

Teubner introduced and thanked Daunte Rushton, the LEADS representative, for providing updates on the Hynds and the Hole project. Teubner noted that while the DDA cannot be deeply involved in the project due to its private-sector structure, it remains strongly supportive. Rushton explained that this is one of LEADS' special projects. In August, the City approved a resolution designating LEADS as the fiscal agent for the project, with a significant portion of funding coming from the 6th Penny. These funds will be transferred into a gap-financing account overseen by LEADS. Last month, LEADS executed an MOU with the City to appoint a project board. The development partner, Full Circle Realty (owned by the Surdam family), has applied to the WCDA Board for additional funding, which is expected to be awarded in January. The application appears promising. If funded, design work and permitting would begin, with construction anticipated to start in the summer of 2026 and conclude by Q4 of 2027. Rushton noted that both the Hynds and the Hole will be residential projects with ground-floor retail components.

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Bau asked for clarification on the meaning of WCDA, and Rushton explained that it stands for Wyoming Community Development Authority. Cheyenne resident Glenn Garrett asked about parking for the new residential units. Rushton responded that parking has not yet been presented to LEADS but should include below-grade parking, though this has not yet been formally discussed.

Volk expressed excitement for the project and shared that the DDA previously submitted an offer to acquire the building before the Surdam family purchased it, though the DDA was unsuccessful. She expressed confidence in the Surdam family as strong partners. Wisdom asked whether the project includes any allocation for affordable housing. Rushton initially responded that units would be market rate; Maes then asked for clarification, noting WCDA typically supports affordable housing. Rushton confirmed that, in fact, the project will be affordable housing. Volk provided context about income requirements, explaining that multi-family guidelines offer more flexibility than single-family housing. Teubner asked whether the units will be rentals or ownership units; Rushton confirmed they will be rentals. Garrett noted that the DDA could participate through the Façade Improvement Program, and Teubner agreed. Volk added that the DDA also has sidewalk funding and a line item for large special projects, intended for projects of this scale. Teubner expressed excitement for additional downtown residential activity, which increases foot traffic.

Hartzheim commented that he is committed to bringing a grocery store, ideally Trader Joe's, to downtown, noting that such an anchor could attract young residents and may appeal to the Surdam family for the building's ground floor. Maes added that this discussion should also involve City Planning & Development and other downtown stakeholders, and that the DDA can work to offer development incentives.

Volk shared that the office building her family owns at 222 E. 18th Street, within the DDA district, has secured three new tenants: Western States Carpenters Union, Public Knowledge, and a digital asset banking company called Next. She noted that the tenants will bring approximately 50 jobs to the downtown economy.

Rushton also reported that LEADS recently completed installation of the long-planned traffic signal on Highway 85, a project that took roughly a year and a half. Volk elaborated on the location, explaining that turning onto South Greeley Highway from High Plains Road, especially after events at High Plains Speedway, was previously extremely difficult. The traffic signal and associated infrastructure improvements are important safety upgrades.

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Maes provided several Plan of Development updates. The Comprehensive Communications Plan continues to move forward; West Edge is finalizing its communications strategy, which should be presented at the December work session. They have also begun work on branding deliverables. She noted that the Resource Repository, developed by Cass Raffa, will be incorporated into the communications plan. Maes referenced a recent Wyoming Tribune Eagle article highlighting challenges small businesses face when starting up. Raffa is developing a how-to guide for businesses, specifically outlining City planning processes. She also noted that City employees have moved back into the Municipal Building from the U.S. Bank Building after carbon monoxide testing cleared the space.

Maes reported on Plan of Development catalyst projects. The 15th Street Master Plan is nearing completion, and the City Engineer expects to finalize it soon. Plans include moving the caboose and Old Sadie closer to the Depot, and the remaining rail cars from Swan Ranch should arrive by July. She noted that tomorrow is the last day for Renee Smith, the City's Economic Resource Administrator, but Maes will gather updates from her before she leaves. Smith had been working to connect with the EDA regarding a Business Planning Grant to assist with the project proforma.

On the Reed Avenue Rail Project, Maes stated there is little new information, but the pilot program is still expected to be proposed for the 6th Penny ballot. The next steering committee meeting will be held December 2. For the 1600 Alley Improvements Project, engineering work is ongoing; the City Engineer reported that St. Mary's is currently their top maintenance priority, with additional work taking place near Paris West and the Lincoln. Maes emphasized that burying power lines remains a DDA priority, and a task force, or designated champion, will be needed to bring together Black Hills Energy, property owners, and potential funding partners such as the 6th Penny or gap financing.

Maes reported no updates for Pumphouse Parks or 17th Street. Regarding on-street parking striping, the DDA assisted the City by hosting an online survey, which has received mixed feedback. The survey remains open until December 12.

Wisdom asked whether the City has a maintenance program for 17th Street's lights and bulb replacements. Maes explained that many bulbs were damaged during the August hailstorm, with some cut at the bases. She reported that the City Engineer noted no dedicated maintenance plan; City Facilities oversees the lighting, not the Street & Alley Division. Wisdom expressed concern that the lack of maintenance will undermine the vibrancy that the DDA helped create. Maes

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stated that if the DDA wants to support repairs, staff would need to assess the budget. Wisdom added that the issue seems tied more to lack of initiative than funding.

Bau asked for updates following the Pumphouse Open House held the previous weekend. Hartzheim stated he attended twice and found that both times he went, it was well attended. Maes noted that Raffa also attended and that staff were present at the Historic Preservation Board meeting the week prior. She explained that the board is considering ways to promote the Pumphouse and pursue a public/private partnership proposal, with possible inclusion in the 6th Penny. Councilman Laybourne, also present at the HPB meeting, proposed bringing forward an amended resolution. The current resolution states that if the Pumphouse is not sold by January, it will be demolished. No legitimate proposals have been submitted, largely due to the high cost, estimated at $1 million to mothball the building and $4 million to fully restore it. Teubner suggested publicizing the Pumphouse, though he felt Facebook may not reach serious investors. He then asked about the Alleyway Project task force and whether it should be discussed now or next year. Maes recommended discussing it at the December work session, which will focus on DDA operations and long-term vision. Teubner also requested a presentation on the Reed Rail Project, including drawings, for that meeting.

Maes announced that December's meeting will be a work session held on December 18 at the Western Vista Conference Room. Teubner noted he would like to continue holding meetings there and recommended sending a thank-you to Western Vista for providing the space. Bau asked whether Jeff White is officially designated to the DDA; Maes said she was unsure but would follow up. Teubner expressed interest in inviting more guest speakers to future meetings, including White, to present project updates rather than relying solely on internal reports. Maes added that she has begun scheduling more recurring interdepartmental meetings to improve internal coordination. Bau concluded by expressing appreciation for Renee Smith's contributions to the City and the DDA, encouraging staff to offer support during the transition following her departure.

VIII. OTHER BUSINESS/STAFF ANNOUNCEMENTS

No other announcements.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Volk motioned to adjourn the meeting. Wisdom seconded. Meeting adjourned at 11:23 PM