



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
City Hall—Shared Vision Room, 3989 Central Ave NE
Monday, July 06, 2026
5:00 PM

MINUTES

The meeting was called to order at 5:03 pm by President Spriggs.

CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

Members present: Connie Buesgens; Laurel Deneen; Amáda Márquez-Simula; Justice Spriggs

Members absent: Rachel James; Marlaine Szurek

Staff present: Aaron Chirpich, City Manager; Mitchell Forney, Community Development Director; Emilie Voight, Community Development Coordinator

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

1. Election of EDA Vice President and Secretary. (pg. 4)

Director Forney explained that Dibba departed from the Commission and was previously the Vice President. Therefore, a vacancy needs to be filled. In addition, Secretary Sarah LaVoie is no longer working for the City, and there is therefore a vacancy for an interim Secretary.

Buesgens nominated Voight as the Secretary of the Economic Development Authority. Spriggs nominated Buesgens as the Vice President of the Economic Development Authority.

Motion by Deneen, seconded by Márquez-Simula, to elect Buesgens as Vice President of the Economic Development Authority. All ayes of present. MOTION PASSED.

Motion by Buesgens, seconded by Deneen, to elect CD Coordinator Emilie Voight as interim Secretary of the Economic Development Authority. All ayes of present. MOTION PASSED.

CONSENT AGENDA

2. Approve June 1, 2026 EDA Meeting Minutes. (pg. 6)

MOTION: Move to approve the June 1, 2026, regular EDA meeting minutes.

3. Resolution 2026-19 to Approve the Financial Reports and Payment of the Bills for May 2026. (pg. 16)

MOTION: Move to waive the reading of Resolution 2026-19, there being ample copies available to the public.

MOTION: Move to approve Resolution 2026-19 approving the financial statements for the month of May 2026 and the payment of the bills for the month of May 2026.

4. Approval of Hazardous Materials Contract for 4217 Central Ave NE. (pg. 28)

MOTION: Move to accept the proposal from Sheltertech Corporation in the amount of \$1,920.00 for the removal and proper disposal of asbestos containing and hazardous materials at 4217 Central Ave NE, and furthermore, to authorize the President and Executive Director to enter into an agreement for the same.

Motion by Márquez-Simula, seconded by Deneen, to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. All ayes of present. MOTION PASSED.

RESOLUTION NO. 2026-19

A RESOLUTION OF THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY OF COLUMBIA HEIGHTS, MINNESOTA, APPROVING THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE MONTH OF MAY 2026 AND THE PAYMENT OF THE BILLS FOR THE MONTH OF MAY 2026.

WHEREAS, the Columbia Heights Economic Development Authority (the “EDA”) is required by Minnesota Statutes Section 469.096, Subd. 9, to prepare a detailed financial statement which shows all receipts and disbursements, their nature, the money on hand, the purposes to which the money on hand is to be applied, the EDA's credits and assets and its outstanding liabilities; and

WHEREAS, said Statute also requires the EDA to examine the statement and treasurer's vouchers or bills and if correct, to approve them by resolution and enter the resolution in its records; and

WHEREAS, the financial statements for the month of May 2026 have been reviewed by the EDA Commission; and

WHEREAS, the EDA has examined the financial statements and finds them to be acceptable as to both form and accuracy; and

WHEREAS, the EDA Commission has other means to verify the intent of Section 469.096, Subd. 9, including but not limited to Comprehensive Annual Financial Reports, Annual City approved Budgets, Audits and similar documentation; and

WHEREAS, financial statements are held by the City's Finance Department in a method outlined by the State of Minnesota's Records Retention Schedule,

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Commissioners of the Columbia Heights Economic Development Authority that it has examined the referenced financial statements including the check history, and they are found to be correct, as to form and content; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED the financial statements are acknowledged and received and the check history as presented in writing is approved for payment out of proper funds; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED this resolution is made as part of the permanent records of the Columbia Heights Economic Development Authority.

ORDER OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

Passed this 6th day of July, 2026

Offered by: Márquez-Simula
Seconded by: Deneen
Roll Call: All ayes of present. MOTION PASSED.

Spriggs
President

Attest:

Voight
Secretary

BUSINESS ITEMS

5. Façade Improvement Grant Report for 37th & Johnson Hair & Tanning Salon (Lan Salon LLC). (pg. 39)

Voight stated the report pertains to the 2026 Façade Improvement Grant application for 37th & Johnson Hair & Tanning Salon (Lan Salon LLC), located at 1529 37th Ave NE. The building and business owner has owned the building since 2001. They are applying for grant funds to furnish and install new signage on the south-facing exterior wall. Photos of the existing conditions and renderings of the proposal have been included in the agenda packet.

Voight noted that the applicant was able to receive two bids for the work, amounting to approximately \$1,420 plus tax (Mathey Sign) and \$4,433.79 (SignArt). This sets them up for a grant amount of \$2,216.89. Community Development staff recommend funding this project in full as the existing signage is rusty and weathered and would benefit from a refresh. This is the fifth Façade Improvement Grant application in 2026. If this Façade Improvement Grant were to be approved, it would leave \$24,761.93 remaining in the annual program budget.

Motion by Márquez-Simula, seconded by Deneen, to waive the reading of Resolution No. 2026-20, there being ample copies available to the public. All ayes of present. MOTION PASSED.

Motion by Márquez-Simula, seconded by Deneen, to approve Resolution No. 2026-20, a resolution approving the form and substance of the Façade Improvement Grant Agreement, and approving authority staff and officials to take all actions necessary to enter the authority into a Façade Improvement Grant Agreement with 37th & Johnson Hair & Tanning Salon (Lan Salon LLC). All ayes of present. MOTION PASSED.

RESOLUTION NO. 2026-20

A RESOLUTION OF THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY OF COLUMBIA HEIGHTS, MINNESOTA, APPROVING THE FORM AND SUBSTANCE OF THE FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT GRANT AGREEMENT, AND APPROVING AUTHORITY STAFF AND OFFICIALS TO TAKE ALL ACTIONS NECESSARY TO ENTER THE AUTHORITY INTO A FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT GRANT AGREEMENT WITH 37th & JOHNSON HAIR & TANNING SALON (LAN SALON LLC).

WHEREAS, the City of Columbia Heights (the “City”) and the Columbia Heights Economic Development Authority (the “Authority”) have collaborated to create a certain Façade Improvement Grant Program (the “Program”); and

WHEREAS, pursuant to guidelines established for the Program, the Authority is to award and administer a series of grants to eligible commercial property owners and/or tenants for the purposes of revitalizing existing storefronts, increasing business vitality and economic performance, and decreasing criminal activity along Central Avenue Northeast and in the City's Business districts, pursuant to a Façade Improvement Grant Agreement with various property owners and/or tenants; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to the Program, the City is to coordinate a surveillance camera monitoring program by placing surveillance cameras on some of the storefronts that are part of the Program for the purposes of improving public safety in and around the Central Business District; and

WHEREAS, the Authority has thoroughly reviewed copies of the proposed form of the Grant Agreement.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that, after appropriate examination and due consideration, the Authority

1. approves the form and substance of the Grant Agreement, and approves the Authority entering into the Agreement with 37th & Johnson Hair & Tanning Salon (Lan Salon LLC).
2. that the City Manager, as the Executive Director of the Authority, is hereby authorized, empowered, and directed for and on behalf of the Authority to enter into the Grant Agreement.
3. that the City Manager, as the Executive Director of the Authority, is hereby authorized and directed to execute and take such action as they deem necessary and appropriate to carry out the purpose of the foregoing resolution.

ORDER OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

Adopted this 6th day of July, 2026

Offered by: Márquez-Simula

Seconded by: Deneen

Roll Call: All ayes of present. MOTION PASSED.

Spriggs

President

Attest:

Voight

Secretary

6. Façade Improvement Grant Report for One Reason (4065 Central Ave NE). (pg. 55)

Forney stated that the report pertains to the 2026 Façade Improvement Grant application for One Reason (4065 Central Ave NE). The tenant, a dance studio and church, was previously at a different location in Columbia Heights and is moving into this location to benefit from a larger and more suitable venue. They are applying for grant funds to furnish and install new storefront signage on

the exterior façades. Photos of the existing conditions and renderings of the proposal have been included in the agenda packet.

Forney noted that the applicant was able to receive three bids for the work, amounting to approximately \$12,000 (BMS), \$12,275 (Mathey Sign), and up to \$17,510 (North Star Sign). This sets them up for a grant amount of \$6,000. Community Development staff recommend funding this project in full as the new signage will reflect the new occupancy and attract customers. This is the sixth Façade Improvement Grant application in 2026. If this Façade Improvement Grant were to be approved, it would leave \$18,761.93 remaining in the annual program budget.

Questions/Comments from Members:

Deneen asked if the City had a history of providing façade improvement grants for non-profit organizations. Forney replied that the City does not have a history of providing grants for façade improvements for non-profits.

Buesgens asked if there were rules about non-profits in the City's Ordinance and the grant program guidelines.

Deneen pointed out that non-profits are tax-exempt, and the grant program would be taxpayers' money giving money towards organizations that partially do not pay taxes.

Voight reviewed grantees since 2018 and noted that there have not been non-profits that have received the grant. The local VFW received two façade improvement grants. Forney added that the City allows 501(c)(3) organizations to apply for the grant, as specified in the grant program guidelines.

Motion by Buesgens, seconded by Márquez-Simula, to waive the reading of Resolution No. 2026-21, there being ample copies available to the public. All ayes of present. MOTION PASSED.

Motion by Buesgens, seconded by Márquez-Simula, to adopt Resolution No. 2026-21, a resolution approving the form and substance of the Façade Improvement Grant Agreement, and approving authority staff and officials to take all actions necessary to enter the authority into a Façade Improvement Grant Agreement with One Reason (4065 Central Ave NE). All ayes of present. MOTION PASSED.

RESOLUTION NO. 2026-21

A RESOLUTION OF THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY OF COLUMBIA HEIGHTS, MINNESOTA, APPROVING THE FORM AND SUBSTANCE OF THE FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT GRANT AGREEMENT, AND APPROVING AUTHORITY STAFF AND OFFICIALS TO TAKE ALL ACTIONS NECESSARY TO ENTER THE AUTHORITY INTO A FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT GRANT AGREEMENT WITH ONE REASON (4065 CENTRAL AVE NE).

WHEREAS, the City of Columbia Heights (the "City") and the Columbia Heights Economic Development Authority (the "Authority") have collaborated to create a certain Façade Improvement Grant Program (the "Program"); and

WHEREAS, pursuant to guidelines established for the Program, the Authority is to award and administer a series of grants to eligible commercial property owners and/or tenants for the purposes

of revitalizing existing storefronts, increasing business vitality and economic performance, and decreasing criminal activity along Central Avenue Northeast and in the City's Business districts, pursuant to a Façade Improvement Grant Agreement with various property owners and/or tenants; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to the Program, the City is to coordinate a surveillance camera monitoring program by placing surveillance cameras on some of the storefronts that are part of the Program for the purposes of improving public safety in and around the Central Business District; and

WHEREAS, the Authority has thoroughly reviewed copies of the proposed form of the Grant Agreement.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that, after appropriate examination and due consideration, the Authority

1. approves the form and substance of the Grant Agreement, and approves the Authority entering into the Agreement with One Reason (4065 Central Ave NE).
2. that the City Manager, as the Executive Director of the Authority, is hereby authorized, empowered, and directed for and on behalf of the Authority to enter into the Grant Agreement.
3. that the City Manager, as the Executive Director of the Authority, is hereby authorized and directed to execute and take such action as they deem necessary and appropriate to carry out the purpose of the foregoing resolution.

ORDER OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

Adopted this 6th day of July, 2026

Offered by: Buesgens
Seconded by: Márquez-Simula
Roll Call: All ayes of present. MOTION PASSED.

Spriggs

President

Attest:

Voight

Secretary

7. Fire Suppression Grant Application 4065 Central Ave NE (One Reason). (pg. 85)

Forney reported that in 2022, the EDA created the Fire Suppression Grant Program to assist local businesses with the expenses incurred when installing fire suppression systems within commercial buildings. Many of the commercial properties in Columbia Heights do not have fire suppression systems. Certain businesses and changes of use require the addition of fire suppression systems to existing buildings. The price of adding fire suppression systems is often cost prohibitive for small businesses.

Forney explained that the tenant of the property at 4065 Central Ave NE, One Reason, has submitted an application for this grant program. The tenant is currently working to relocate their church and dance studio from a different location in Columbia Heights. As part of this relocation, the tenant is planning to update the existing fire suppression system.

Forney added that the applicant has provided two quotes for the proposed work. One bid amounts to \$27,214 (Summit) and one amounts to \$8,200 (Pye-Barker). The quotes have been included in the meeting packet. Based on these estimates, the project would be eligible to receive a maximum grant award of \$4,100. In the 2026 budgeting process, the EDA allocated \$100,000 to the Fire Suppression Grant program, of which \$50,268.50 remains. This is the third Fire Suppression Grant application in 2026.

Questions/Comments from Members:

Spriggs asked why there was a large difference in the two quotes. Forney replied that one of the bids was higher because there was a larger scope of work. The applicant determined that the larger scope of work was not necessary.

Deneen asked if the same requirements for 501(c)(3)s applied for the fire suppression grant. Forney agreed.

Motion by Buesgens, seconded by Márquez-Simula, to waive the reading of Resolution No. 2026-22, there being ample copies available to the public. All ayes of present. MOTION PASSED.

Motion by Buesgens, seconded by Márquez-Simula, to adopt Resolution No. 2026-22, a resolution of the Economic Development Authority of Columbia Heights, Minnesota, approving the form and substance of the Fire Suppression Grant Agreement, and approving authority staff and officials to take all actions necessary to enter the authority into the Fire Suppression Grant Agreement with the tenants of 4065 Central Ave NE (One Reason). All ayes of present. MOTION PASSED.

RESOLUTION NO. 2026-22

A RESOLUTION OF THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY OF COLUMBIA HEIGHTS, MINNESOTA, APPROVING THE FORM AND SUBSTANCE OF THE FIRE SUPPRESSION GRANT AGREEMENT, AND APPROVING AUTHORITY STAFF AND OFFICIALS TO TAKE ALL ACTIONS NECESSARY TO ENTER THE AUTHORITY INTO THE FIRE SUPPRESSION GRANT AGREEMENT WITH THE TENANTS OF 4065 CENTRAL AVE NE (ONE REASON).

WHEREAS, the City of Columbia Heights (the “City”) and the Columbia Heights Economic Development Authority (the “Authority”) have collaborated to create a certain Fire Suppression Grant Program (the “Program”); and

WHEREAS, pursuant to guidelines established for the Program, the Authority is to award and administer a series of grants to eligible commercial or industrial property owners and/or tenants for the purposes of revitalizing, rehabilitating, and restoring buildings, and increasing business vitality, economic performance, and public safety; and

WHEREAS, the Authority has thoroughly reviewed copies of the proposed form of the Grant Agreement.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that, after appropriate examination and due consideration, the Authority:

1. approves the form and substance of the grant agreement and approves the Authority entering into the agreement with the tenants of 4065 Central Ave NE (One Reason).
2. that the City Manager, as the Executive Director of the Authority, is hereby authorized, empowered and directed for and on behalf of the Authority to enter into the grant agreement.
3. that the City Manager, as the Executive Director of the Authority, is hereby authorized and directed to execute and take such action as they deem necessary and appropriate to carry out the purpose of the foregoing resolution.

ORDER OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

Adopted this 6th day of July, 2026

Offered by: Buesgens
Seconded by: Márquez-Simula
Roll Call: All ayes of present. MOTION PASSED.

Spriggs
President

Attest:

Voight
Secretary

8. EDA Commissioner Appointment Process. (pg. 106)

Voight stated that following the resignation of EDA Commissioner Lamin Dibba, staff have worked with the City Clerk to prepare for the appointment of a new commissioner. Pursuant to Minnesota Statutes 469.095, Subd. 2 (c), commissioners “shall be appointed by the mayor with the approval of the city council.” Furthermore, in accordance with MN Statutes 469.095, Subd. 2 (f), the vacancy “must be filled for the balance of the unexpired term, in the manner in which the original appointment was made.” The City Code erroneously states that it is possible to begin a new six-year term, but this statement is in conflict with Minnesota Statutes; the Statutes take precedence in these circumstances.

Voight noted that the new commissioner will serve for the remainder of Commissioner Dibba’s original six-year term, through December 2029. This also means that the candidates will need to be interviewed by the City Council during a work session, then appointed by the mayor.

Voight explained that the application period for candidates opened on July 1st and will remain open through July 15th. After the application period has closed, Community Development staff and the City Clerk will work together to schedule interviews for eligible candidates. Staff recommends that the EDA reschedule its August meeting to 4:30 pm. on Monday, August 3rd. This change will allow the City Council and mayor to conduct candidate interviews in a special session immediately following that EDA meeting, ahead of the regularly scheduled 6:00 pm. Council work session. The

selected candidate will then be appointed via resolution at a regular City Council meeting later in August.

Questions/Comments from Members:

Buesgens asked if anyone had applied yet. Voight replied that no one has applied for the position yet.

Buesgens suggested that there be an interview question about how connected and active the applicant is to surrounding businesses.

The Commissioners agreed to move the August 3rd EDA meeting to 4:30 pm.

BUSINESS UPDATES

Voight provided an update on the microloan program. Staff will meet with MCCD tomorrow to go over the state of where the applications are in the process. There have been nine loans originated thus far, and nine that are in the process but have not been originated yet. The nine that have been originated so far equate to \$87,540. The EDA approved \$300,000 for the grant program.

Buesgens inquired about the Medtronic site. Forney replied that staff would have an update during the next meeting.

Forney provided an update on the NOAH program. The City received initial inspection reports for two loans. Voight added that one loan has been originated, and one has completed its prioritization inspection and is getting quotes finalized. There are two loans in process, and one is in the initial steps to start the process. She mentioned that the apartment building that is in the process is interested in doing roof work.

Forney stated the City received the 2026 Local Affordable Housing Aid Certification and will be receiving an additional \$403,000 for Fund 205.

Buesgens asked if there could be a way to track the work that is being done through the NOAH program funds. Voight replied that staff have not established any specific tracking system yet, but would be able to create one. She added that there will soon be a map on the City website to show where all of the façade improvement grants have been across the City.

Forney noted that the Community Development Department has opened up the application period for a Community Development Intern. The intern will assist with the business outreach and Highway 65 this fall. Staff will have a meeting with Partners in Energy about energy efficiency upgrades.

Buesgens asked if the County had any toolkits for businesses. Forney replied that they are working with the County to determine tools to provide businesses throughout the Central Avenue construction. Deneen asked if the light rail project would have any tools. Márquez-Simula replied that there should be tools provided. Forney stated staff would look into it.

Márquez-Simula suggested the EDA work on encouraging tight bonds between businesses and doing business block parties. The City could provide opportunities for businesses to express their opinion on

what would be helpful during the Central Avenue construction. The City could learn how to get through the construction period in an equitable and helpful way for businesses.

Deneen suggested doing the culinary passport program based on the Central Avenue construction. There could be specials for the restaurants under construction to encourage people to go to them. She added that the City could partner with HeightsNext to build a strategy. Forney agreed and added that the next steps are to build a plan and to build relationships with businesses.

Spriggs asked if the State funds for affordable housing projects could be used for a business relief fund during the Central Avenue construction. Forney replied that the affordable housing funds are restricted, but the City has a W-3 and W-4 TIF district that has been used for Habitat for Humanity. The EDA could use the ACHRA levy to shift funds to a business relief fund.

Márquez-Simula suggested getting community groups together who might be in contact with businesses and ask for ideas on how to support businesses during the Central Avenue construction.

Deneen mentioned that the City needs to focus on making the parking ramp more aesthetically pleasing to encourage parking. She added that it is not a pleasant experience to walk between the two buildings to the parking ramp, and by making the area look more pleasing, it will encourage people to go to the surrounding businesses. Buesgens suggested putting in post lights that could be screwed into the cement. Forney noted that Voight is working on the purchase of the pass-through and the easement for the public art and lights. The City will have the easement for the lights on the side of the building.

Chirpich noted that the lighting has been upgraded for the ramp and the alleyway, and there are additional police patrols in the ramp area to crack down on non-parking behavior that has taken place. A camera trailer has been installed in the ramp outside the entrance.

Spriggs asked if there was discussion about putting meters in the parking ramp. Chirpich replied that there have been discussions and that it could provide revenue. Forney added that the next step is to add signage with the Police Department that allows 24-hour-only parking. He explained that people have been storing cars in the ramp.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Deneen, seconded by Buesgens, to adjourn the meeting at 5:56 pm. All ayes. MOTION PASSED.

Respectfully submitted,

EMILIE R. VOIGHT

Interim Secretary