

Visit Manitou Springs

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

December 19, 2024

Present: April Hall, Ted Johnston, Farley McDonough, Annie Schmitt, Angela Wilks, Denise Howell, Natalie Johnson

Absent: Kat Kilner, Anthony Mogck, Lisa Quintana

Staff: Jenna Gallas, Leslie Lewis

A combined meeting of the Executive Committee and Board of Directors was held on Thursday, December 19, 2024 in the Classroom in the Manitou Art Center. The meeting was called to order at 8:38 a.m. by President Farley McDonough.

A. City Update

Natalie Johnson reported that the Metro District has made the decision to close the Wichita Lot restrooms. Leslie Lewis believes the reason they are closing the restrooms is that they don't have staff to clean them. The Metro District is dissolving its relationship with the City in terms of managing the finances and supporting other aspects of the parking management. Ted Johnson asked if the city had recently paid for the ADA changes to those restrooms, which was confirmed that they did.

There was a lot of graffiti on Ruxton Avenue and Spring Street. A lot of people reported the graffiti, and it was removed. There are regular occurrences at Fields Park as well. The city is asking that graffiti now be reported to dispatch so that police reports are taken.

The City Council passed the first Natural Medicine ordinance. There is one business looking at opening. Leslie asked about restrictions. In addition to needing to be in a commercial building, there are distances from schools, and Natalie believes the downtown district was also excluded. Because it is a service business, it will not generate sales tax.

Natalie reported that Ute Pass Elementary School received a National Leave No Trace Award.

On January 7, there will be a work session to discuss the green space in the Dillon parking lot. To have the parking lot ready for use in June, the City Council will need to approve the design and the green area. If Council approves, the building (restroom and parking office) will be complete, with the green space and a dirt lot.

The Higgenbotham Master Plan was approved but there is no funding available currently for that design.

Staff will be presenting an alternative budget to Council in late March or early April. They are still waiting for more information on the legalization of marijuana in Colorado Springs to determine when the impact will be felt.

City staff are planning a presentation for the City Council on Ruxton Avenue because of the costs in February for direction. The city is applying for a large grant for this project. They won't know if they will receive the grant until June.

B. Action Item: Approval of November Meeting Minutes

April Hall made a motion to approve the November Meeting Minutes as presented. Annie Schmitt seconded the motion, and it was approved.

C. Action Item: Approval of November Financials

Leslie was unsure how much of the digital campaign would be billed in December. The Chamber will carry more money than anticipated into the new year because of the success of events. Denise asked about sharing the financial success of events with the public. Farley suggested sharing that information be part of the conversation when we are putting together the Annual Report for 2024. Annie made a motion to approve the November Financial report. Ted seconded the motion, and it was approved.

D. Meeting Dates for 2025

The Board meetings will be held on the fourth Thursday of the month in January through September and on the third Thursday of the month in October through December for next year. Leslie will contact Natalie about using one of the conference rooms.

GovCon will be in October again this year and is being held in Colorado Springs. Leslie offered to assist with GovCon as much as is possible as the Coffin Races will be on the following Saturday.

E. Chat with the Chamber in 2025

Chat with the Chamber is set for January and February. Leslie will send an email to businesses to see who might want to hold Chat with the Chamber in their location. In December we will continue to combine Chat with the Chamber with the Annual Crush so it will always be an evening event then. Chamber staff will work on a new magnet.

F. Special Events Update

Jenna Gallas reported that staff has been talking about Iron Springs Chateau being a nice event venue for some upcoming events. The Women's Club will hold their Silent Auction luncheon there this year, for instance.

The tree lighting went well. It was well attended. Staff will need to plan for more people in the future. The event will continue to be on Wednesday before Thanksgiving in the future. The sax player was well received for the carols playing in the background. Jenna is suggesting that it be continued as well.

Holiday window decorating contest is going on. Not a lot of businesses signed up but many do have their windows decorated. A couple of ladies from the Women's Club and Audrey Gray will be the judges. Ace Hardware has again donated gift cards as prizes.

The Fruitcake Toss is the next event. The Chamber has received \$1,650 in sponsor commitments so far. Jenna has spoken with a couple of people who have baking businesses about participating in the baking contest.

CarniBall will be held at the Iron Springs Chateau on February 22. Tickets are on sale for that event. Cirque du Manitou is the theme. The committee will submit a MACH grant application for the parade again this year. The funds raised from PardiGras will also help with that expense. The committee is also submitting a MACH grant application for a puppet artist to create a new puppet for the permanent collection. They do have separate storage unit for the Carnivale puppets to keep them safe. One of the original creators of the puppets recently retired and has offered to do the needed repairs and maintenance.

Jenna has received approximately half of the gumbo chef applications needed already. There is \$1,450 in sponsorships currently.

Wine Festival pre-sale tickets were offered as a Black Friday special. There were 127 tickets sold. The tickets were \$20 off. There will be Christmas and New Year's special of \$15 off and then pre-sale tickets will be sold at \$10 off. The number of tickets sold will be reduced this year to create a better experience for the attendees.

Roy Chaney has been working with Meghan and speaking with Little London Winds to try to find a solution so that those concerts may continue next summer. Denise added the additional parking request would be going to City Council for approval.

Eventeny provided an event recap. There were 9 events, received 54,000 pageviews, sold 3,700 tickets, and had 3,900 applications. The numbers may be a little skewed as the same people sign up for and volunteer at several events so may be added multiple times. Eventeny makes changes and improvements based on feedback received from customers continuously.

G. Destination Blueprint Workshop Summary

Beth Wright will be helping us with the Annual Report. Community members who participated in the workshop or filled out the Resident Sentiment Survey wanted to know the results. April suggested incorporating this information in the Annual Report. Because we aren't sure of the time of completing the Annual Report, Leslie wasn't sure we wanted to wait that long to get the information to the City Council or the residents that have requested it. We will send the Summary Report to City Council without the table attached. Denise suggested the Chamber ask the consultants what should be shared as others may create their own takeaways from the information. Leslie will reach out to Beth Wright regarding the reports and the template for creating the Annual report.

Old Business:

H. Executive Director Search Update

Leslie filtered through the resumes and sent several to the search committee (Farley, April and Ted). Farley spoke with Beth after reviewing the resumes. Beth will review all of the resumes received to see if she sees additional potential candidates. Beth will suggest changes to the position description to better emphasize some of the skills the board is hoping to see. Some of Beth's time can be spent working with the new Executive Director as a mentor. Denise suggested the position be posted to the Colorado Nonprofit Association website as well. Because of the holidays, interviews will be scheduled after the first of the year.

I. Board Openings

Lisa Quintana, Tony Mogck, and Kat Kilner are going off board at the end of this year. Leslie has had an initial conversation with Jen Barrow (Flowers and the Moon) about joining the board. Leslie and Annie will meet with Jen to further the conversation. Leslie suggested board members reach out to members they would like to see join the board. Several business owners were mentioned.

Having no additional business before the board, the meeting adjourned at 10:00 a.m.