

Visit Manitou Springs

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

February 27, 2025

Present: April Hall, Ted Johnston, Farley McDonough, Angela Wilks, Natalie Johnson

Absent: Annie Schmitt

Guests: Chris Dwyer, Rachel Milar

Staff: Jenna Gallas, Leslie Lewis, Monica Rozelle

A regular meeting of Visit Manitou Springs Board of Directors was held on Thursday, February 27, 2025, in the upstairs conference room of Venue 515, 515 Manitou Avenue. The meeting was called to order at 8:31 a.m. by President April Hall.

A. City Update

Natalie Johnson reported that a City Council Retreat took place on Saturday, March 22, 2025, to work on goals for 2025. The primary areas of focus were Economic Development and Mobility. One suggestion Natalie had for Visit Manitou Springs to create a communication plan that focuses on mobility and parking and how the Visitors Center is directing traffic downtown.

Natalie has attended the Downtown Colorado Inc conference for years, but Nancy Fortune will be attending this year as well.

Two issues discussed by MAPS this month, that will be going before Council in April are allowing Golf Carts to move people around Manitou, and the other is "20 is Plenty". That is 20 mph as the standard speed limit in particularly in residential areas but will possibly be lowered to 20mph in other areas of town.

Natalie was also asked for a Manitou Made Update. She gave a brief overview of the history of Manitou Made. The MAC and Creative District have been working to reenergize the Manitou Made brand and are hoping for a collaboration to launch new businesses that would like to get started but cannot afford a location in downtown Manitou Springs to start. They are asking Visit Manitou Springs to help promote and support this, as well as jury applications and offer a free one-year membership to help them get started. They are hoping to launch applications by March 15. They would like the businesses to open by May 15. Natalie believes there could be 6 – 10 businesses included. The businesses must make a one-year commitment to be at the MAC but could stay in that location for up to three years. Ted Johnston volunteered to serve on the jury process for Visit Manitou Springs. Farley McDonough made a motion for the Chamber to support this program as a partner, assisting as requested and providing membership for businesses in the program. This was seconded by Ted and approved by the board.

B. Event Update

Jenna Gallas reported that The Great Fruitcake Toss was a success, even with the date change, and brought in \$2900 in revenue and sponsorships while only costing \$900.

The Mumbo Jumbo Gumbo Cook-off and Carnivale take place on March 1, 2025, and there are 16 chefs signed up with \$2900 in sponsorships for the Gumbo Cook-off. We are only able to use the pavilion for the Gumbo Cook-off this year due to Soda Springs Park construction, so we are more limited on space.

Some of the parking spaces that we were planning to use are involved with the construction and construction equipment, so we have requested additional spaces along Manitou Avenue. There will not be construction going on that day.

CarniBall had 80 attendees. ManiKrewe is actively recruiting to grow their volunteer team.

The Carnivale Parade has 22 Krewes signed up to march in the parade, which should last about 45 minutes. Road closure detour signs will go out to everyone living in the detour area today. It has been sent to lodging properties for their information and to share with guests. The road will be closed from Noon to 2 pm. Colorado Event Traffic will be handling the road closure. There will be a Route 36 shuttle from 11 am – 4 pm that will pick up people at the shuttle stop locations. There will be parking at the High School and Middle School (\$10 donation). The funds will go to the USA Skills Club. PikeRide is offering a discount code for people wanting to ride to the event. The original artwork for this year's Carnivale poster will be auctioned off as a fundraiser.

Manni Awards take place on March 19, 2025, and we're currently working on name tags, swag bags, and gathering information from some of the finalists.

Wine Fest already has lots of returning vendors and sponsors signing up. As of this date 251 tickets have already been sold for the June 7th event. Vendors and sponsors are coming in. With changes in some leadership, we are waiting to hear from them on platinum sponsorship.

The City Council parking discussion regarding Soda Springs Park was postponed until March 4 so that there could be a Chamber presence at the meeting.

The City is taking over all of the Day of Friendship arrangements this year. It will be moved back to El Paso Blvd around Memorial Park and will be held on September 10.

C. CRANE Update

Farley McDonough reported that the MACH applications submitted by CRANE have been approved by the MACH Board. The list of board approvals will go to City Council for final approval before being announced. CRANE has applied for a grant from Ent Credit Union for more art installations to be put up along Fountain Creek. The URA is also partnering with CRANE on the art signs along the creek in the URA area.

The Downtown Colorado Inc Conference is coming up and a total of 6 people from Manitou Springs will be attending. CRANE will be releasing a quarterly newsletter soon and their annual report will go out in March.

D. URA Update

The URA has hired a new director, Electra Johnson, who will be making the rounds to introduce herself over the next few months.

The developers have submitted their application, with the letters of support, for the housing project on the LaFun property. They will be providing an update to the URA board in their April meeting.

The fifth sculpture for the URA area is on hold until there is a better understanding of where it can be placed on the Dillon property.

E. Action Items – Approval of January Meeting Minutes

Farley motioned for approval of the January meeting minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Ted Johnston. The motion was approved.

F. Approval of January Financial Statements

Leslie Lewis reported some of the revenue and some of the expenses came in last year and were placed in protected income and prepaid expense classes and moved into 2025. There were no questions on the financial statements and Farley made a motion to approve the report as presented. Ted seconded the motion, and it was approved. Leslie is recommending reducing expenses by not getting flood insurance for 2026 due to steep rising costs. She will investigate the rental contract with the City to make sure we can drop flood insurance.

New Business

G. Discussion: Gateway Sign

Leslie received CDOT regulations regarding the Gateway sign off Highway 24. The City will need to approve the new sign before we can go to CDOT for approval. Because it is replacing an existing sign, there should be no concerns as long as we stay within their size requirements. The Chamber wants to get a group/committee together to work on a sign design to submit to City Council.

Vectra Funds – There is approximately \$31,000 still in an account that was originally designed to give loans to businesses and another account that is a Chamber saving account with approximately \$25,000. These funds can be reallocated to put towards the new sign. If they are pulled from Vectra they can be put into either Ent or Oakstar Bank as a short-term CD until the sign needs to be paid for. The motion to combine the funds and place them in a short-term CD was motioned by Ted and seconded by Angela Wilks. Natalie will send Leslie the design that had been approved several years ago to send out to the board as a starting point.

Once a design is determined, we can get prices and know what additional funds need to be raised. Angela and Rachel Milar volunteered to help with the design committee. The board discussed putting the designs out to residents to get community input.

H. Executive Director Position Update

Jenna Gallas has been promoted to Interim Executive Director until Leslie’s retirement on May 31, 2025.

I. Marketing Position Update

Jesse McCoy has been hired as the new marketing coordinator. Monica Rozelle reported that Jesse is very organized and has good ideas. He has been reworking some of the ads for additional submissions. Jesse handed out flyers for the Gumbo Cook-off so he had a chance to meet some of the business owners. He has started working on the Visitors Guide to get that wrapped up.

A new Event Coordinator will need to be hired so that Jenna can train him or her until Jenna’s full promotion on June 1, 2025. There is one candidate in mind for that position. An interview will be set up for next week.

Old Business

J. Destination Blueprint Update

Farley and Leslie have been meeting with Beth Wright every other week via Zoom. Beth will help Jenna transition into her new position, help with creating the annual report, putting together a meeting for the

membership, and help with Manitou Cares. The Destination Blueprint program runs through end of June. We will apply for the Destination Management next January, as we accidentally missed this year's deadline. There is a marketing grant that we can come up with a plan for prior to it being available again.

K. Annual Meeting Date

We will reach out to Beth and see if April 29 might work for her to help in putting it together.

Pikes Peak Region Attractions is hosting a Summer Kick-off Party is Saturday, May 17th at Flying W Ranch from 2-5pm. The VIP Passes through PPRAA will soon be available for this year – take advantage for your frontline staff!

Farley made a motion to adjourn the regular meeting and move into the Executive Session. The motion was seconded by Ted and the meeting adjourned at 9:43 a.m.

The Executive Session began at 9:48 a.m. There were no actions taken and the board adjourned at 10:24 a.m.