

Visit Manitou Springs

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

January 23, 2025

Present: April Hall, Ted Jonston, Farley McDonough, Annie Schmitt, Natalie Johnson

Absent: Angela Wilks

Guests: Commander Corey Sevene

A regular meeting of Visit Manitou Springs was held on Thursday, January 23, 2025 in the classroom of the Manitou Art Center, 513 Manitou Avenue. The meeting was called to order at 8:40 a.m. by President Farley McDonough.

A. Police Department Update

Commander Corey Sevene reported the police department has two new officers in training and another candidate in background checks. That will bring them close to being fully staffed.

The print reader is not yet operational. There are technical issues that are being worked on.

The Chief is working on the speed camera project. They are hoping to have that camera operational soon. This camera will be mobile so it can travel to different parts of the city.

There are patrols out in the evening trying to catch the person or persons vandalizing the city (graffiti mainly). They are using an unmarked vehicle. They are still requesting people report anything they might have seen and any vandalism they have had.

B. City Update

The Library opening will be February 7 with the ribbon cutting from 4:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m. The project cost \$4.7 million with a city contribution of only \$700,000.

The water tank is close to completion. This project was largely funded by grants as well. Once that tank is operational the other tank will be decommissioned until repairs are accomplished. The city will then have the benefit of both tanks.

There were several residents that spoke to the City Council on the RPP program. Council also received letters regarding the program. Staff provided an update at the MAPS meeting extending the deadline for renewing permits until February 15. Natalie expects the city to change back to the hang tags instead of the online registration.

The Plan Manitou survey will be open from January 24 – February 12. Everyone was encouraged to fill out the survey.

The Metro District has separated from the city entirely. They have hired a separate management company that specializes in working with districts. They have closed the restrooms. The Metro has offered to lease the restrooms to the city for a monthly fee. They have an election coming up with three openings on that board.

C. Events Update

Jenna Gallas reported the holiday events were wrapped up. The Elf Hunt was not as successful as last year but we will keep going and hope to build on it.

The holiday decorating contest winners were announced. Flowers and the Moon is leading the decorating competitions.

Fruitcake Toss has been postponed with the extreme cold forecast. Jenna has \$2,050 in sponsorships with 5 entries in the baking competition.

For the Gumbo Cook-off, there are 13 of the 20 allowed chefs registered. There is \$2,300 in sponsorship commitments. Farley will talk with David about being a judge. CarniBall is February 22 at the Iron Springs Chateau. Carnivale will be March 1 following the Gumbo Cook-off. Merlin Vincent was one of the original puppet artists and he has renovated 3 of the puppets, working on the King puppet and the letters now.

There have been 176 presale Wine Fest tickets sold so far. The sponsorship applications have gone out.

Jenna is meeting with the new leadership of the Manitou Music Foundation next week to go through what we have done with them in partnerships previously.

Jenna has been meeting with Colorado Music Hall of Fame as part of the Music Tourism Action Task Force and looking for ways to collaborate with venues, promoters and destinations to get music tourism to their locations.

D. CRANE Update

CRANE has submitted Mach grant applications for installation of 3 pieces for Art on the Avenue and a mural. They have been given two signs for Creative District designation by the state, so they are determining locations for those on Manitou Avenue with Chelsea's help. Manizoo was damaged and is being repaired. They have hired Amy Kerr to do social media. "Watts Up" is not working so the artist is trying to determine the problem. They are looking at the solar panels as a first step.

E. URA Update

Jim is retiring as the Executive Director. His last day is February 4. The board has posted that they are hiring Electra Johnson as his replacement. She will begin February 5.

Paragon is looking at an affordable housing project for the LaFun property. They are working with the State and the Colorado Housing and Finance Authority for tax credits and subsidies. They are in the beginning stages of building the packet for submission. Farley explained some of the restrictions and reporting requirements the project will have to go through. Additional questions were discussed. They are looking at 43 units on the property. The first step of approval with the state and Colorado Housing and Finance Authority could take up to a year so this is a long process.

F. Action Item: Approval of December Meeting Minutes

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

G. Action Item: Approval of December Financial Statements

April reported on the financials as of December. There will be some additional changes in that there are 2024 invoices that were not paid until January. Leslie will look to make sure all special events revenue for 2025 tickets and event sponsorships are posted as protected income in 2024 and will show as revenue

in 2025. Annie made a motion to approve the December 2024 financial statements. Ted Johnston seconded the motion, and it was approved.

H. Election of Officers for 2025

There are several openings on the board currently. Sam Cobble was invited to attend today's meeting. Leslie did not hear back from him. Leslie needs to get back in touch with Jen Barrow and speak with her about the board. Several lodging properties were discussed as possible board members. After conversation, the slate of officers was decided as: April Hall – President, Annie Schmitt – Vice President, and Farley McDonough – Treasurer. Ted made a motion to approve the slate of officers. Annie seconded it and it was approved.

I. Gateway Sign

The Gateway sign on Highway 24 looks awful and city council is not allocating funds to replace it at this time. Because of the impression of the sign, Leslie is looking at the funds in Vectra Bank (\$31,740.49 from a business revolving loan fund that was set up by the Chamber, City and URA many years ago and has not been used recently and \$25,736.54 in a savings account) as a way to look at replacing that sign. A new sign would improve economic development in Manitou Springs. We don't know what the cost of a new sign would be but once we do, we could go to the business community and ask for donations to help with the cost. We could also look for grants to help with the cost. Leslie will reach out to CDOT to determine what we need to do to replace that sign.

J. Chat with the Chamber

The February "Chat with the Chamber" is scheduled for Rocky Mountain Beignets. For the new year, Leslie is proposing March – Mo's Diner (a.m.), April – Crystal Park Cantina (p.m.), May – Persephone Grae's (a.m.), June – Manitou Brewing (p.m.), September – The Kitchen (a.m.), October – The Loop (p.m.), November – Red Dog Café (a.m.), December – The "Crush" at Iron Springs Chateau, and January – Balanced Rock Café (a.m.). A new calendar magnet will be created.

K. Annual Meeting

We will look at April as a possibility for an Annual Meeting. It will be further discussed and scheduled after there is a new Executive Director.

L. Destination Blueprint Update

The Scope of Work was recently signed. There are mentoring hours, creation of a template for the Annual Report, a dissemination plan for getting results of the resident sentiment survey and tourism survey to the public.

Having no other public business, the board adjourned to go into Executive Session on matters of personnel at 10:23 a.m.

M. Actions from Executive Session

At 10:54 a.m., the Board of Directors of Visit Manitou Springs returned to open session.

April Hall made a motion to adjust Leslie Lewis's pay to the new Executive Director pay (as an hourly rate) for January and to adjust 2025 payroll received to this rate. Annie seconded and it was approved.

April made a motion to hire Leslie as the part-time bookkeeper at a rate of \$30 per hour. Annie seconded the motion, and it was approved.

Having no further business before the board, the meeting adjourned at 10:57 a.m.