

## **Visit Manitou Springs**

### **Board of Directors Meeting Minutes**

**Date: July 24, 2025**

**Present:** Chris Dwyer, Ted Johnston, Farley McDonough, Annie Schmitt, Angela Wilks, Natalie Johnson

**Absent:** Rachel Milar

**Guests:** None

**Staff:** Monica Rozelle, Jenna Wells

A regular meeting of the Visit Manitou Springs Board of Directors was held on Thursday, July 24, 2025, 515 Manitou Ave. The meeting was called to order at 8:31am by President April Hall.

**A. CRANE Update.** Farley McDonough stated that Art on the Avenue is now fully installed with 4 new pieces. The Duck Stop has also been completed with quotes and new sculpture. The printer at D-11 was down for a while, so the replacement art signs at Fields Park are still waiting to be printed. The next Cookies with CRANE takes place on August 14<sup>th</sup> at the MS Middle School. An art call for a sculpture that will be placed at the Dillon Mobility Hub is going out. CRANE attended a legal conference hosted by CO Non-Profits Association in Denver on July 23<sup>rd</sup> and learned that all of the paperwork for the organization is good. The telephone booth project at The Loft is becoming intense, but donors really like the idea, so the hope is for it to be completed this year. Audrey needs to input all of the information and build a phone book. No URA update, as they did not meet in July. The next meeting is August 5<sup>th</sup>.

**B. City Update.** Natalie Johnson shared that the City Council is working on a budget and looking for people to run for City Council and for Mayor.

#### **Action Items:**

**C. Approval of June Meeting Minutes:** Motion to approve June meeting minutes made by Annie and seconded by Farley. The motion passed and the June meeting minutes were approved.

**D. Approval of June Financial Statement:** Farley discussed that the event revenue is currently down more than expected due to lower Wine Fest ticket sales, but more money is still coming in from Wine Fest and sponsors for Coffin Races. There was \$10,000 budgeted for a consultant which has not yet been used. In the miscellaneous section, Leslie still has 30 boxes of paperwork at the storage unit that will need to be shredded, which is expensive. Due to events being projected to be down \$50,000 this year, Chris Dwyer asked if we can move the \$10,000 for a consultant over to the Events budget. Farley said that in September they will begin working on next year's budget and will move around what they can. As of last year, the

Coffin Races stopped losing money thanks to Jenna's work on sponsors, but sponsorship is looking down this year. Motion to approve June financials made by Angela Wilks and seconded by Chris Dwyer. Motion carries.

## **New Business**

E. **Main Street Program Information:** Jenna met with a representative from DOLA to discuss what it will take to become part of the CO Main Street Program. We had received funding from them in the past but never moved forward with becoming a Main Street. District. It's a multi-year-long project but it would be worth it to help offset costs of different things within the city, including funding, promotion, maintenance, etc. We could bring in a DOLA representative to speak with City Council once more research has been conducted. Farley and Annie recommended waiting until next year's council is in place, but Chris thinks we should begin working on the process, since it could take several years and there's a chance for grants. Annie agreed we should begin moving forward with the preliminary work and the present to Council once we have more information. The first step is for Jenna to put a committee together who can begin work on the multi-year plan to present. April said to table the Main Street discussion until January 2026, but to continue researching and be ready.

F. **Destination Blueprint Update:** Jenna said that there's a Destination Development Mentor grant that opens in September and will be handed out in November, so she's working on getting that grant completed. The Tourism Marketing Grant is open until August 26<sup>th</sup>, and it was discussed trying to get that grant to help offset the cost of the Gateway Sign. April recommended going for both grants because they were both recommended to us by Destination Blueprint.

G. **Chat with the Chamber Discussion:** Jenna would like to discuss how we can change this event to make it more enticing for people to attend. Farley would like it to remain casual but have a list of suggested topics. Ted said we should email everyone 10 days prior to it asking if anyone has topics to discuss and then have a mini agenda sent to everyone the Monday before. Monica recommended adding a brief overview in each Member Newsletter after the meeting to show the topics being discussed and how it's beneficial to attend.

H. **Lodging and Occupancy Tax Increase Discussion:** Jenna said that HB 1247 passed this year, allowing counties to raise their lodging taxes from 2% up to 6%. It's not a required increase but a vote can happen to raise it if they want. Ted doesn't think it's a good idea to keep raising taxes on the visitors who are paying to keep the town afloat. This discussion is to prepare everyone in case El Paso County does bring it to a vote – do we support or try to discourage?

## **Old Business**

I. **Mural in Visitors Center Update:** MACH declined the mural at the Visitors Center.

J.      **Board Openings:** Ted's term expires in December of 2025. He will speak with people at the Cog Railway to see if there's a replacement for him there. Katie Snyder, Greg Cobble, Mike Casey, Trip Uhault, Frank DeLay, and Jen Barrow were all recommended to approach. April asked Jenna if she can talk with 3 of them and try to get them at the September board meeting, and then ask 3 more to attend October. This way they can understand a little bit about the Board of Directors prior to agreeing to join.

K.      **Visitors Center Updates:** Jenna brought the monthly walk-in stats to the meeting to show that the visitor numbers are up YTD. Annie and the Mineral Springs Foundation are working to ensure the State is unable to take the water rights with the mineral springs. Chris is helping research UNESCO to see if they can become a World Heritage Site. Mark Snyder is going to reach out to indigenous peoples because it was a sacred area for the tribes. Jenna is keeping track of Board volunteer hours, so please make sure to note how long you work on different projects and committee meetings.

L.      **Board Retreat Topics:** A date for the retreat is still being decided, but it will most likely be October 30<sup>th</sup> or November 6<sup>th</sup>. Farley will figure out when Council is meeting in November in regard to our budget meeting. So far, the topics are: Revamping the membership benefit packet and the 75<sup>th</sup> Chamber Anniversary next year.

Having no additional business before the board, Farley made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Ted at 9:59am. Motion passed to adjourn meeting.