

**Visit Manitou Springs
Board of Directors Retreat 10/30/2025 - Minutes**

Date: October 30, 2025

Time: 8:30 a.m.

Location: Adam's Mountain Cafe – 26 Manitou Avenue

Board Directors Present:

- April Hall, President
- Annie Schmitt, Vice President
- Farley McDonough, Treasurer
- Ted Johnston, Member
- Chris Dwyer, Member
- Rachel Milar, Member
- Angela Wilks, Member (departed at 11:43 a.m.)

Staff Present: Jenna Wells; Jesse McCoy

Guests: None

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at **8:38 a.m.**

2. Introduction of Guests

No guests were present.

3. Community Updates

A. Events Update

Staff provided an events update, including:

- Emma Crawford Coffin Races completed; overall public perception described as very positive.
- Livestream performance: approximately 6,500 views reported as of the day prior; described as significantly higher than prior years.
- Some businesses reported not receiving / being unable to view the livestream email; staff to follow up regarding email/technical issues and member email accuracy.
- Downtown congestion and fan zone operations discussed; city expectation to reopen roads promptly was noted.

- Business impacts discussed, including reports of record days and operational challenges (e.g., staffing call-offs, high demand).
- Estimated attendance discussed; a preliminary estimate of ~**16,000** referenced, pending verification.
- Sponsorship: reported just shy of **\$38,000** (increase over prior year).
- Expenses estimated **\$72,000–\$75,000**; preliminary revenue estimate ~**\$90,000**, indicating the event should not operate at a loss.
- Upcoming events mentioned (Skeleton Crawl, trick-or-treats, staff retreat, Turkey Shoot, Tree Lighting, holiday programming, etc.).
- St. Andrews potential holiday-related participation discussed; public meeting referenced for **November 11**.

Action/Follow-up: Staff to send a follow-up email with key upcoming dates and St. Andrews public meeting details; staff to investigate livestream email delivery/formatting issues and member email accuracy.

B. Marketing Update

Staff provided a marketing update, including:

- Holiday campaign plans; schedule adjustment for Viva Digital work to **December–February**.
- Travel Westward proof expected soon; placement expected in November.
- “Do Right Colorado” campaign content submitted; campaign noted to begin **November 7** and run into early February.
- Content strategy adjustments to broaden business features beyond food-focused posts.
- iHeartRadio partnership discussed (Christmas Channel placement and potential “Sunny Day” sponsorship).
- Visitors Guide update: progress tracking businesses submitted via Google Form; deadline noted as **November 28**.
- Proposal for 2026 marketing education courses for members (paid sessions), including networking benefits and potential collaboration with regional partners.

C. CRANE / URA Update

Updates provided, including:

- Crane scavenger hunt planned for Friday (Halloween) featuring collectible items tied to public art/sculptures.
- Cookies with Crane scheduled for Wednesday, **November 12** (community presentations/voting related to the Dillon mobility hub sculpture).
- Murals and art signage updates; reinstallation after vandalism.
- Pedestal work and focus on West End siting discussed.
- Internal staffing update noted (approved compensation adjustment for Crane staff).

4. Action Items

A. Approval of September Meeting Minutes

Motion: To approve the September meeting minutes.

- **Moved by:** Farley McDonough
- **Seconded by:** Rachel Milar
- **Vote:** 7-0
- **Result:** Approved

B. Approval of September Financial Statements

September financials were reviewed, including discussion of special events timing (Coffin Races occurring in October) and broader discussion regarding city budget assumptions and potential funding impacts. Discussion surrounding ADA updates to the Visitor's Center and financial impacts depending on necessary improvements for compliancy. More information/research needed on requirements and will follow up with Board.

Motion: To approve the September financial statements.

- **Moved by:** Chris Dwyer
- **Seconded by:** Farley McDonough
- **Vote:** 7-0
- **Result:** Approved

C. New Members

A new membership application was presented for **LeGrande Accents Boutique**.

Motion: To approve LeGrande Accents Boutique as a member.

- **Moved by:** April Hall
- **Seconded by:** Chris Dwyer
- **Vote:** 7-0
- **Result:** Approved

D. Membership Non-Renewal Discussion (Agate Hill Inn and Suites)

A request was raised to consider non-renewal of Agate Hill Inn membership. Discussion included the need to align any action with organizational bylaws and to avoid unintended legal or reputational exposure (including Visitors Guide participation).

Disposition: No action taken at this time. Staff to review bylaws and return with recommendations and proper procedure prior to Visitors Guide and other deadlines.

5. New Business

A. 2026 Goals

The group discussed 2025 goals and changes for Chat with the Chamber to include guest speakers, slight topic suggestions, introductions, “field trips or experiences”. structuring and refining 2026 goals, including:

- Reframing goals/strategies into clearer categories aligned to core functions (e.g., Chamber of Commerce, Visitors Bureau/DMO, Economic Development) and attaching measurable indicators like percentages of growth (SMART goals). Defining “economic development”
- Topics included: membership engagement strategies, tourism grant applications, monument signage on Hwy 24, downtown BID/DDA/PBD support, and education/course offerings.
- Mobility and multimodal transportation discussed (shuttle routes, Mountain Metro coordination, PikeRide membership considerations, scooter corrals, and stop clarity).
- Increasing off-season spending, tourism, and economy.
- CRANE partnership needs measurable indicators.
- Investigate/research additional mobility options for events. Conversation around PikeRide to be a non-profit member and for Chamber to look into the Lime/scooters access to Manitou. Chamber should discuss Metro routes and add more downtown stops back in for #33 and regularly communicate with Metro, as they request more input. There will be 3 #33 buses scheduled in 2026.
- Youth entrepreneurship and local business pipeline ideas (marketing courses, partnerships).

Action/Follow-up: Reorganize draft goals into functional categories and return to discuss with Board for finalization.

B. DEI Initiatives / Wheel the World

Discussion included:

- Continued focus on inclusive tourism and accessibility in marketing.
- Interest in leveraging state tourism partnerships and accessibility evaluations (including potential visitor center and/or communitywide evaluation opportunities).
- Intent to better represent diverse travelers in marketing and outreach.

C. Event Safety & Evac Plans w/ COMS

Discussion included:

- Need for a clear event safety and evacuation framework usable by Visit Manitou Springs and adaptable for other community events.
- Interest in using an existing template (referenced as developed by Denver) and tailoring it locally in coordination with public safety partners.

D. Who We Are 1-Pager Updates

The board discussed updating and simplifying the “Who We Are” document to clarify mission, vision, services, and value proposition (including visitor center role), emphasizing concise, graphic-forward formatting.

Action/Follow-up: Staff to draft a revised one-page summary (mission/vision, key services, events, and core values) for board review; consider developing as part of staff retreat work.

E. 75th Anniversary 2026

Staff confirmed the organization’s 75th anniversary event date as **March 12, 2026** at the **Cliff House**.

Discussion included:

- Event concept framing as a “Diamond Jubilee.”
- Potential revenue plan: sponsorship levels, ticketing options, and/or fundraising elements.
- Program ideas: awards (including “new member” and longevity recognition), trivia, and/or a Manitou-themed riddle/scavenger-style activity usable at tables.
- Potential emcee options and adding a short history/“highlights” presentation.

F. Membership Packet Review & Updates

The board reviewed the membership packet and discussed updates including:

- Website “About/Board” goal: board members to provide a photo and short bio for a dedicated website page.
- Board composition/strategy: discussion of potentially expanding board seats (keeping an odd number), including consideration of adding a City staff member seat and improving category representation (e.g., services).
- Member contact info sharing: discussed adding an opt-in authorization so members can consent to sharing business contact information with other member businesses.
- Member benefits updates: discussed clarifying benefits language, adding platforms (e.g., TikTok), and reviewing items that are no longer applicable (e.g., marquee).
- Notary/fax: discussed maintaining notary access as a benefit and exploring fax capability; discussed potential fees for nonmembers (where permissible).
- Advisory boards/liaison wording: discussed revising “dedicated liaisons” language to better reflect advocacy/support and connections with city departments and partner organizations.
- Membership categories/pricing simplification: discussed consolidating categories (e.g., folding various service-type categories together), removing “media” as a standalone category, and aligning brackets for simplicity.
- Lodging/campground and restaurant calculations: discussed keeping a verifiable metric approach (rooms/sites/seats) and reviewing max caps for consistency.
- Trade memberships: discussed handling trade agreements intentionally while avoiding creating broad expectations that trades are generally available.

- Renewal cycle: discussed moving to a consistent annual cycle (proposed September–September) to align membership, Visitors Guide participation, and invoicing; discussed eventual need for membership management software and automated renewals/payment options.
- Membership criteria: discussed adding language confirming all applications are reviewed/approved by the board and developing internal criteria guidance (including for lodging-specific vetting practices and other potential concerns).

Action/Follow-up: Staff to revise the membership packet reflecting agreed edits (including opt-in language and simplified category structure concepts) and return a draft for review.

6. Recesses

- The meeting took a short break at **9:57 a.m.** and reconvened at **10:07 a.m.**
- The meeting recessed again at **11:43 a.m.** and reconvened at **11:53 a.m.** (Angela Wilks departed at 11:43 a.m. and was not present for the remainder of the meeting.)
- A short break was taken at **1:34 p.m.** and the meeting reconvened at **1:43 p.m.**

7. Old Business

2026 Budget Amendments / Discussion

The board discussed potential 2026 budget scenarios and timing relative to City budget actions, including:

- Need to evaluate impacts based on the City’s budget and ballot outcomes before finalizing significant amendments.
- Planning for board presence at the City’s budget retreat and identifying coverage times among directors.
- Identifying potential questions to be prepared to answer during City discussions (value of services, financials, reserves rationale, comparable community outcomes, etc.).
- Community advocacy strategy: encouraging member businesses to attend public comment and/or email City Council with specific impact stories and examples of value.
- Considering whether to schedule a special board meeting in early December focused solely on budget adjustments, with follow-up at the regular December meeting if needed.

Action/Follow-up: Staff/board to monitor City budget schedule and coordinate advocacy outreach; staff to prepare supporting materials/handouts and draft a member email template encouraging personalized outreach.

8. Unscheduled Appearances

No unscheduled appearances were addressed.

9. Adjournment

Motion: To adjourn.

- **Moved by:** Ted Johnston
- **Seconded by:** Farley McDonough
- **Vote:** All in favor.

The meeting adjourned at **2:05 p.m.**