

**Manitou Springs Chamber of Commerce, Visitors Bureau
& Office of Economic Development (iManitou)**

Board of Directors

**Meeting Minutes
September 27, 2012**

Present: Tim Haas, Ken Jaray, Marcy Morrison, David Symonds, Julie Vance,
John Webster, Matt Carpenter

Guests: Laura Ettinger, Cylinda Walker, Natalie Johnson

Staff: Leslie Lewis, Roger Miller, Floyd O'Neil, Sarah Foley

A regular meeting of the Manitou Springs Chamber of Commerce, Visitors Bureau & Office of Economic Development (iManitou) was held on Thursday, September 27, 2012 in the City Council Chambers of City Hall. The meeting was called to order at 8:35 a.m. by President Tim Haas.

A. Action Item: Approval of August 23 Meeting Minutes

John Webster made a motion to approve the minutes of the August 23 meeting as presented. Marcy Morrison seconded the motion and it carried.

B. Action Item: Approval of August Financials & Budget Update

John explained that iManitou is on target with the projected revenue shortfall. He expressed concern that revenue items such as the Event Title Sponsorship is still approximately \$10,000 short of projection. John reported that the EDC Funds are offset with the EDC expenses. On the expense side, concern was expressed that the postage costs will continue to rise and that item will be over budget. Staff will create a year-end adjustment to move some of the postage costs to the appropriate department (administration, membership, events) which will reduce the postage expense. John reported that postage costs are supposed to increase in 2013.

Ken asked why Special Events Title sponsorship was so low and if those were funds yet to be received. Roger reported that we will be adding funds from the Golf Tournament as well as some from the Emma Crawford Coffin Races. Roger projected an additional \$3,000 from the Golf Tournament with \$4,500 in revenue and \$1,500 being given to the Manitou Springs Fire Department. Roger reported he is talking with Rock Star regarding Coffin Race Sponsorship. The proposal Coca-Cola came back with was only to offer discounts to the businesses on their purchases of product and anything above those sales would be given to iManitou. Roger felt that would not be acceptable to the businesses. He is projecting a total of \$9,000 in revenue for Event Title Sponsorship.

Roger and Brittany will be going to visit businesses regarding sales of membership and advertising options for the web sites next week.

Roger reported the EDC Regional Grant should be coming in mid-October. He also reported there may be a separate EDA Grant. He received the application for that grant and will be getting it in next week. That is a \$10,000 grant.

Dave asked if t-shirt sales are included in the Office Income category. The category includes the Manitou Card. Roger reported the new Restaurant Card is complete. The Manitou Money that was purchased by Care & Share is a “wash” and provides no income to iManitou. The Restaurant Card will be sold by the schools however; the Football team is selling a card that was not produced by iManitou.

Dave requested a breakdown of the revenue centers be created each month that would explain the financial report and asked if a spreadsheet could be created that will include a tab for each month. He also requested a Special Event report that will give income and expenses for each event.

The Board discussed adjusting the interest revenue for the 2013 Budget. One of the CDs from the Bank at Broadmoor recently matured. John reported that because it is a 13 month CD it receives a low interest rate however; the funds are available if needed and may be withdrawn (leaving \$500) without a penalty. The Board decided, by consensus, to leave the money in the CD for the time being.

Ken asked what is included in PI (Protected Income) Account on the Balance Sheet. It was explained that it include the money from Care & Share as well as dues and visitors guide advertising paid for 2013. The Manitou Money is still being handed out by Care & Share. Matt asked if the funds not redeemed by the end of December would become income for iManitou and was told technically it would but previously staff has extended the deadline for people upon request and has paid merchants when they bring it to the office past the expiration date.

Dave made a motion to accept the financials as presented. John seconded the motion and it was approved.

C. Action Item: Approval of New & Renewing Members

John made a motion to accept the New & Renewing Members as presented. Julie seconded the motion and it was approved.

D. Presentation: Library Ballot Initiative

Laura Ettinger and Cylinda Walker attended the meeting to present information regarding the Ballot Initiative on behalf of the Friends of the Library. Basic information on the initiative was handed out with the campaign collateral being available next week. Laura explained that she is President of the Friends of the Library. A few years ago, the Friends of the Library learned that the budget for the Library was precarious and could end up with deep cuts in funding. To make sure the Library was sustainable, options were explored to rely less on City funding. After a lot of research, five options were explored further and eventually presented to City Council. Council agreed with the Friends of the Library that the best option was to join PPLD (Pikes Peak Library District). A task force was created to work with PPLD to craft an IGA and get the initiative on the ballot. Because the current funding comes through the City General Fund, Laura reported the

Library is always one disaster away from only being open part time. By joining PPLD many new programs and technologies will be available.

Ken asked if the IGA was available for citizens to review. Laura stated it is being finalized. Matt let Board members know the Draft of the IGA is available on the City website as a document in the meeting packet when it was presented. Additional questions were asked about operation of the Library if it becomes part of PPLD.

The mil increase and the financial impact were discussed. There was discussion regarding the way the financial impact has been presented as a 2 mil increase. Because the mil is going down by 2, the library is a 4 mil increase but will be offset by the decrease. Marcy stated, as a Library Patron of 50 years, it seems every few years the City says they aren't sure they have enough money for funding the Library and people react and it always receives funding. Marcy doesn't believe there is a possibility of the Library closing because of the resident protest that would be held. Laura stated that they didn't want to use fear rhetoric but because of the strong emotional tie to the town and the building, she believes people react emotionally. She believes the Friends would rather send the message that this is a turning point. Cylinda expressed that the Library may be sustained but it won't be able to grow under the City.

Marcy stated that she would like to see the Lease prior to voting on the initiative so she is aware of the commitments by PPLD. Cylinda asked how many Board members had attended the Community meetings regarding the merger. The representatives from PPLD have been available to answer questions at those meetings. Cylinda reported that there is another meeting October 3.

Laura reported that as soon as she receives approval from Jack Benson, she will put the Lease Agreement and IGA on the Friends of the Library website. Staff requested notification when they are available and will notify Board members.

Marcy asked about the proposed improvements without expansion of the outside of the building. Laura reported that PPLD's budget is already set for 2013 and reported that they will lose money the first year because of the amount they will have to spend to bring the technology up to date and in line with their systems. There are negotiations on maintenance and upgrades and who will be responsible for what. PPLD has had an inspector go through the building. Laura believes PPLD will be addressing the ADA compliance concerns and further stated it would be ideal to work on those compliance issues with the expansion from a cost standpoint.

Tim asked if it was known what the dollar amount raised would be if the initiative passes. Natalie stated that she believes the projection is just under \$200,000 and the estimate to operate the library will be approximately \$230,000. Matt stated that he believes that a mil is between \$59,000 and \$60,000 so the total is closer to \$240,000 that will be raised. Natalie stated that the PPLD has a 15 year budget so it would be possible to see their projections that far out. Tim then asked if Matt knew if property tax breakout is approximately 2/3 business and 1/3 residential. He then stated that his concern is the economy and understands that several businesses have already failed, directly or indirectly, as a result of the Waldo Canyon Fire. He further stated that he understands there will be 9 businesses up for sale by the end of business today. He stated personally he is not opposed to merging and gaining efficiencies but that his fear is for the

burden being placed on the business community. Julie stated that many of the business owners don't have a vote because they do not reside in Manitou Springs.

Laura will speak with Jack Benson and ask if she can release the IGA and Lease Agreement to the Board of Directors.

Laura was asked what would happen if the initiative fails. She stated the Friends of the Library would have to explore other options for making the Library sustainable.

Cylinda pointed out that the Library becoming part of PPLD would benefit the school district in that they are currently paying for access to data bases that would become accessible through PPLD. Cylinda expressed concern that if the initiative fails, the Library will be able to provide concerts on the lawn and story time for children but not the technology that is needed for students. She went on to say she buys Manitou first to support the community. She wants businesses to be sustainable. She understands that businesses pay more in tax than residents but feels because the businesses chose to build a business here they also chose to support the community and need to bring the library to the level it needs to be instead of a historic building on a hill. She stated she feels that is part of their responsibility as a business owner. Marcy responded by saying she is not a business owner but has been a resident for many years and shares Cylinda's philosophy of buying in Manitou but in defense of the business owners, whether they live in town or not, they have been very supportive of the schools and the children and you cannot find a better group of business owners. Cylinda said she understands that the businesses are supportive of the students and the schools. Marcy said she started the conversation so the public would be exposed to the precise financial arrangements being made with the mil levy and she supports the idea of doing something with the Library but she is concerned about knowing more about the arrangement and wants the businesses to be aware.

Tim thanked both Laura and Cylinda for coming. He did point out that based on the number of people who visited the Library; it costs the City \$6.43 in tax money every time someone walks in the door.

Laura will let staff know later today Jack Benson's response to sending out the IGA and Lease before they are finalized.

E. Presentation: Creative Industries District

Natalie Johnson explained that Copper is responsible for Arts and Cultural promotion in the Pikes Peak Region. Working with other groups, such as the Manitou Springs Arts Council and the BAC, Natalie is working on putting together a Cultural District and a resolution to designate September as Arts and Culture Month.

Dave asked if iManitou was still paying Copper for membership. Staff explained that there is \$1,500 in the budget however we have not received an invoice for this year. In 2010, the City provided additional funds to cover the costs of Copper and it was paid in 2011. Copper does not rank in the top 10 referral sources for our web site. Staff has not talked with Copper in a while to determine what can be done to increase the exposure received through that site. Ken asked how Manitou, as a community, can participate in Copper other than the financial aspect. Natalie explained that PeakRadar is part of Copper. Copper created a Peak Arts Card which the BAC participated in and received \$2,200 from the program. Natalie is working with Copper to design

an Art Ambassador Program to train people who are not part of the arts community and they will be able to represent arts on other Boards. There is currently no one on the Copper Board from Manitou. Staff stated that events in Manitou are submitted to Peak Radar and many of the large events have been featured events on PeakRadar.

Natalie, Bianca Codiga, and Tracy Miller have been working on building the Arts community and getting the galleries to work closer together for promotion. The Creative Industries Designation will help with marketing and receiving grants.

Prior to the web site presentation, Tim asked Roger to give an update of the meeting with Jack and Rebecca that he, Leslie and Marcy attended. Roger put together a review of what iManitou does as well as the impacts of requesting additional funding from the City. Roger created a document for presentation and felt it was a good meeting with Jack. The request will be part of the budget discussion with City Council. Since that time, the Mayor has asked to have a work session with the iManitou board to go through the presentation. Roger was unsure if it has been scheduled for October 9 but will let the Board know when the date is confirmed. Marcy felt Jack was amenable to having the discussion and felt it was a friendly chat.

F. Website Presentation: manitousprings.org

Tim requested a recap of the manitousprings.org website – where we are, why we made the changes and what has been done to improve the site. Roger asked Floyd and Sarah to put together information for the Board. He also reported that the mobile site is complete. We will continue to add widgets and tweaks to improve the site but everything can be done in-house now. Sarah was introduced to the Board. She recently graduated with a Graphics Arts background. Sarah handed out an information sheet on the site with the changes as well as having a presentation on screen.

Floyd explained that the previous site was built in a platform called Business Catalyst. Business Catalyst is a great program, created by Adobe, for retail and ecommerce services. It is not the type of platform that you build other types of websites, such as informational sites or tourism sites. We moved to a Word Press platform which is an open platform. More than ten thousand plug-ins are available that expand its functionality and more are being developed every day. If a plug-in is not available, it can be developed easily.

Floyd recapped many of the issues with the previous site and the need for changes. He emphasized that the problems were not cosmetic or things the public saw. The problems were on the back side in the administrative areas. The Visitor Information form in Business Catalyst required an email in order to submit a request for the guide. Problems with that were some people don't have email and others don't want to give out their address. Additionally, we received some requests with bogus email addresses. We don't know the impact of people who chose to just leave the site and not call for the guide. Business Catalyst was unable to change that feature. The reporting process to get the lodging reports to properties was also very cumbersome. The request form that the volunteers are given to send out guides were confusing in that the address was not always clear for definition as to what was street and City information. The new form gives better definition to the address as well as has less ink on the page so it is saving money on printing.

The calendar of events was also a major problem. Floyd requested that there be a true calendar on the site and what we had was a calendar on the community site which was more of a blogging site. We could put our event on the site, however, because anyone could add to that site, our events very quickly dropped to the bottom of the page and were difficult to find. Staff had to also monitor the site to remove events that were not in our area or posts that were inappropriate for the site. Chamber staff did not have input into the development of the previous site as to the necessary features as that site was being developed.

Sarah said Word Press is the system being taught through schools around the country. Word Press is a simple system that all staff can access the backend and make member changes easily. Sarah explained we can send reports to advertisers on the site on the frequency we choose (weekly, monthly). The new site allows people to opt in for blast emails on upcoming events and allows staff to target visitors coming at any particular time.

Sarah ran through the navigation buttons and the additional capability of adding specials members are offering or discount coupons they provide. There is a Vacation Planning tab that includes recommended time it takes to enjoy attractions. Staff will be working on developing itineraries for one day, three day, and five day vacations. The itineraries will also be geared by ages of children and adventure level. The new site also allows includes links to reservation pages for lodging and attractions.

Julie pointed out the difference in the amount of information on several of the property pages. She suggested there should be a charge for the additional information being on the site. The Board discussed having a defined number of characters that will be included in the membership fee and then charge for the additional photos and text.

Tim thanked Sarah and Floyd for the presentation and told them he appreciated the information they provided. Roger asked the Board to look at the site in more depth following the meeting. The final invoice for Crystal Peak Design came in under the approved budget.

Roger said staff would do a presentation on the imanitou.com site at the October meeting.

G. Unscheduled Appearances

Ken brought up the Board Opening and asked about forming a nominating committee. There is an opening on the Board because of the resignation of Jack Johns. Jack's term would have expired at the end of the year as does Ken's term (Ken is eligible to serve an additional term). A letter will be sent to the membership letting them know of the openings. Ken and Marcy will be on the committee and are meeting with someone who is interested in serving on the Board.

The BID Board also has openings that need to be filled. Anyone interested in serving on the BID Board need to be a property owner or lease property within the BID boundaries.

Having no additional business before the Board, the regular meeting adjourned at 10:37 a.m. and the Board went into an Executive Session.