

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

**Board of Directors  
Meeting Minutes**

**August 27, 2015**

**Present:** Justin Armour, Karen Cullen, Rachelle Cully, Gwenn David, Tim Haas, Christina Larsen, Farley McDonough, Annie Schmitt, Julie Vance

**Absent:** Ken Jaray, Marcy Morrison

**Guests:** Chief Joe Ribeiro, Jason Wells

A regular meeting of the Manitou Springs Chamber of Commerce, Visitors Bureau & Office of Economic Development Board of Directors was held on Thursday, August 27, 2015 in Manitou Springs City Hall, City Council Chambers. President Karen Cullen called the meeting to order at 8:32 am.

**A. City Update**

Chief Ribeiro and Jason Wells were invited to the meeting to discuss issues in downtown. Chief Ribeiro reported that as Manitou Springs is having its best tourist season, with that comes increase in panhandlers. He further stated his colleagues in places such as Denver, Golden, and Colorado Springs are seeing the same increases and issues. In the first 18 days of August, Manitou Springs PD issued 56 citations for drug use, blocking sidewalks, and aggressive panhandling. In 2010-2011, the PD had approximately 6,000 calls for service. This year, they are on track to respond to 12,000 calls and have only increased the dept. the equivalent of one half person. They currently have 2 vacancies and one officer on injury status. For a dept. to handle the level of call volume they are seeing, they should have 16 patrol officers and Manitou Springs has 10 with two vacancies. Chief Ribeiro's goal was to have 8 hours a day of walking patrol in downtown and they have been doing 5½ hours per day. Councilwoman Nicoletta brought the idea to Council to augment the police dept. by using a private security company downtown. That company works in downtown Colorado Springs as well so they know many of the people hanging out in Manitou Springs. There are two security officers working 8 hours per day. Julie Vance asked if the security officers worked together or if they could be split. Chief Ribeiro explained that they work at the same time but can be in different areas in town. The security company can respond to minor issues but the police should always be called first. Chief Ribeiro explained Passive, Active, and Aggressive Panhandling. Chief Ribeiro and Jason Wells explained that our current ordinances are as far as the City Attorney is comfortable with pushing Constitutional Rights of people. If someone challenges the ordinance on constitutional grounds, Chief Ribeiro stated the City would have to show that active panhandling has a negative impact on business.

The ACLU gets involved when they hear that a community is working on new ordinances on panhandling or sit/lie as Colorado Springs is currently working on. Tim Haas stated the City needs to enforce what we do have as ordinances. Chief Ribeiro said one of the challenges has been businesses need to sign complaints and be willing to testify when they witness violations because when the panhandlers see a uniformed officer they only passively panhandle. If the new security service sees the violation, they can be the witness. Julie asked what the issue was in filling the vacancies. Chief Ribeiro said the dept has high standards and are not a "second chance" agency. Very thorough background checks are run. Manitou Springs is still surrounded by agencies that pay significantly higher wages but it is not entirely a pay issue. Chief Ribeiro would like to see Manitou Springs become more of a second career option for officers ready to retire from El Paso County Sheriff's Office and Colorado Springs PD.

Karen asked if any additional funds have been received from the state as when Amendment 64 was passed the Governor said there would be additional funds for law enforcement in areas where recreational marijuana was sold. Chief Ribeiro said Manitou Springs has a comfortable local tax on marijuana and it is budget season. Jason Wells said there is money coming in from the state but it is not earmarked for law enforcement. Chief Ribeiro stated one of the challenges with budget is Manitou Springs is up to 8 million dollars in flood mitigation and has to provide a 25% match so the additional funds evaporate quickly.

Tim asked about the people selling merchandise on the sidewalk. Chief Ribeiro said an exchange of money needs to be seen and business owners can take video of the sale of merchandise. Tim also asked about people leaning against the kiosks and was told if the panhandler just has a sign it is passive panhandling which is not illegal. It was said that businesses could call the security service and let them know the panhandlers are making their customers uncomfortable and they will come and speak with the panhandlers.

The board discussed camping ordinances for the people who are living in the mountains west of town. Several jurisdictions are potentially involved depending on if the camps are in the County, the City, on private property or in the national forest areas.

The Chief was asked if the “no smoking in parks” ordinance could be enforced in the Cheyenne Pocket Park area. He said the boundaries of the pocket park would have to be better defined and if they are enforcing no smoking with the people who hang out in that area, they would also have to enforce with the visitor.

Karen brought up the issue of the trash and janitorial services and asked how that is being addressed. The City has taken janitorial in-house and suggested that possibly Greg Springman, the new head of Public Services be invited to the next Chamber board meeting. Springs Waste provides trash service in downtown. Public Services will empty the trash cans additionally when needed. Brian and Natasha, the two people cleaning the sidewalks for the BID, have reported to Councilwoman Nicoletta that they have seen the trash cans empty in the morning and businesses fill them with the business trash. The cleanliness of and signage for the restrooms were discussed.

Jason Wells and Chief Ribeiro were thanked for their time and information.

In addition to the security company and the in-house janitor, Councilwoman Nicoletta told the board that the sign ordinance has been clarified on the neon signs which cannot be flashing. Councilwoman Nicoletta has requested a work session to discuss not only bigger and better trash cans but also adding recycle cans in the downtown district. A lot of residents are requesting public recycle options if they live somewhere that it is not available.

**B. Action Item: Approval of May Meeting Minutes**

Farley McDonough made a motion to approve the May meeting minutes. Julie Vance seconded the motion and it was approved.

**C. Action Item: Approval of June Meeting Minutes**

Farley made a motion to approve the June meeting minutes. Gwenn David seconded the motion to approve and it was approved.

**D. Action Item: Approval of July Meeting Minutes**

Julie Vance made a motion to approve the minutes of the July meeting. Gwenn seconded the motion and it was approved.

**E. Action Item: Approval of July Financials**

Tim reported that he believes we are in a strong financial position reviewing the balance sheet. Tim asked if we still anticipated receiving additional funds for the grant on the revenue side. We are on track on the revenue side and anticipate the expense side to continue to rise as the year goes on. Some of the Marketing expenses are committed but have not yet been spent. Tim brought up the need for the board to determine the amount of money that needs to be carried in reserves prior to the next budget year.

Julie made a motion to approve the July financials as presented. Farley seconded the motion and it was approved.

**F. Action Item: Adopt Conflict of Interest Policy**

The Conflict of Interest policy is included in the by-laws so it doesn't need to be adopted by the board but does need to be signed by all board members as well as committee members. Tim asked if the Conflict of Interest Policy also covers Board members not representing a position of the Board unless the organization has taken a position on a particular topic. While that is not covered in the policy, it is covered in board orientation.

**G. Action Item: Adopt a Resolution of Authority to Executive Committee**

A draft of a Resolution authorizing the Executive Committee to meet on behalf of the Board of Directors and make decisions in the absence of a quorum had been sent to the board for review. Farley made a motion to approve and adopt the resolution authorizing the Executive Committee to meet on behalf of the Board of Directors in the absence of a quorum. Tim seconded the motion and it was approved. The Resolution was passed around for Board signatures.

**H. Action Item: Set Fall Retreat Date**

Looking at how busy the Board members are, it was determined that the retreat should be held in early October. The agenda will be limited but it will be set for a half day meeting. After discussion, the Board set Wednesday, October 7 as the date. Tim will check the availability of the conference room at the Garden of the Gods Trading Post. The meeting will be set to begin at 8:30 am.

**I. Summer Business Discussion**

Most businesses are saying they have had a very good season. Concern was expressed that some days there are as many panhandlers as guests and that people may decide not to come back to Manitou Springs in the future. Several businesses have had repeat guests who have said they will not come back because of the problems of the homeless and or vagrants. With merchants having their busiest year on record, Chief Ribeiro again stated so is the police dept. The Chief will be asking City Council to approve additional funding in his budget for the hiring of additional officers and asked businesses to support that request.

The Board explained the importance of the break out of the sales tax into the industry segments so we have a better understanding of how each segment is doing to Councilwoman Nicoletta.

**J. Marketing and Website Update**

Karen reported the marketing task force is continuing the remarketing ads as well as pay per click ads. The commercial is complete. There were several versions create to run in different venues. The marketing task force is going to write a grant application to air the commercial out of state in 2016. The commercial would need to be "tweaked" a little to encompass shots from the region as the grant app would have to have a regional approach. Leslie will send the links to the commercials to the board. It will be posted as it is now on youtube and on facebook, as well as possibly airing in the Denver market. There are some funds available, through the grant, for television in addition to the holiday budget.

**K. URA Update**

As Marcy was not available; Farley was asked if she could provide an update as she is also on that

Board. The board is in early stages of working on zoning code changes with the planning dept. to make the code a little more flexible for development. The URA Board would like to incentivize development in the area but have it fit with the feedback received in the public process. They have finished a mapping toolkit so information is available, through the URA site in the City's website, on each property that shows things such as water lines, electric lines, etc. It also shows the square footage and property contact. Farley believes that information will be "live" in October.

It has been reported in the papers that with the Westside Avenue Action Plan, the west end of it has been cut. There is still talk between the Mayor and the County to try to have that portion (under the overpass to Sinclair) included in the funding. The County is also telling the URA they won't be including some things such as colored concrete in the sidewalks, art pedestals, and lights that match downtown so the URA is prepared to put some funding into those amenities. They had previously budgeted \$60,000.00 to the creek walk area.

George James contacted Leslie regarding the County repaving the Avenue the last week of August. He is upset with both the chamber and the City for allowing the project to go forward and create traffic issues for visitors at the end of the high season. The City received very little notice of the County plan for the repaving. George did get the County project stalled until after Labor Day weekend. This is a temporary overlay, designed to last two years, prior to the Westside Avenue Action Plan. Chief Ribeiro said there is an effort to have them put the striping in the three lane configuration to be able to test that option.

Greg Springman, Director of Public Services, came into the meeting. The Board introduced themselves. Greg will be invited to the next board meeting.

#### **J. Additional Marketing Information**

Karen and Leslie met with Wendy Wilkinson of Wilkinson Brown. There have been several situations recently, the flood and the panhandling articles, in the press that would be nice to have some public relations help. There is money in the contract labor budget. Wendy is working on public relations articles on SunWater Spa and we can piggy back with that effort for additional exposure in editorial content. Wendy's bid, to work with us for the next 4 months, is \$7,500.00. Wendy lives in Manitou Springs and knows and loves Manitou Springs. Wendy has a photographer that she will be using for the revitalization article she will be working on. The photographer costs can be incorporated in the grant funding. Karen shared some of Wendy's previous work for SunWater Spa.

#### **L. Special Events**

There are currently 32 teams registered for the coffin races. In 2014, we ran 70 coffins. Staff has contacted the company that takes care of parking and transportation for Territory Days and will be working with them. Coronado High School Parking lot is not available that day so we are looking for additional large parking lots on the west side of Colorado Springs. We have the Manitou Springs High School parking lot but the Middle School has a football game so we will need additional volunteers to assist with parking and make sure people do not park at the Middle School or on the hill. Staff is getting prices on recycling cans as well as a dumpster and additional trash cans for the coffin races and events in the park. Rock Ledge Ranch is one possible option for parking. Staff is not sure if other parking areas are needed. The sooner we can get the word out that we have additional out of Manitou Springs parking, the better luck we will have at getting people to use the service. With the additional residential only parking areas, it will be even more of a challenge for people to find parking locations. Early estimates are the additional parking and transportation fees are going to be approximately \$7,000.00. The event is weather dependent and if the weather is bad, we won't need all of the additional services we are putting in place. Staff is also working on the "party in the park" after the event again. Bristol Brewing is on board. Karen suggested a "call for volunteers" be put out.

Farley asked if anyone had been involved in the Facebook conversation regarding the lack of recycling at the Ice Cream Social. Annie Schmitt mentioned the concern in a previous board meeting but no one had

seen or participated in the facebook conversation. Nicole Nicoletta is researching the boxes that can be used for trash, recycling, and food scraps for the Brew Fest in October. Staff will check into the trash services with Waste Management as well as Springs Waste for the Coffin Races. We are loaning the fencing to the Heritage Center for the Brew Fest on October 3.

Staff filled out the application for Soda Springs Park for Clayfest. Mark Wong is supposed to pick it up and get it turned in.

The Commonwheel Labor Day Festival is still in need of volunteers if anyone is available.

Annie is going to do the Fruitcake Toss again. Chelsy, Colorado Springs CVB, had a writer looking for information on the Fruitcake Toss. Staff referred them to Annie. Annie said HGTV Magazine is doing a big Christmas issue and including the Fruitcake Toss in their "15 Quirky Events". "Dinner and a Movie" is going to do a "blurb" on the Fruitcake Toss as well. Leslie did let Annie know the date of the start was 1996 not 1995 as is on the chair.

#### **M. Executive Director's Report**

Between August 11 and October 1, Diamond Tours is bringing 24 tour buses into town. Rachele Cully let staff know the information about the Townhouse on the handout the buses receive is incorrect. It will be changed immediately.

Lisa Poffenberger will be reducing her hours to one of the weekend days. She is now teaching 5 days per week. We originally began staying open on Sundays through the winter to accommodate the Monarch promotion. Sunday numbers will be looked at. Every month in 2015 numbers have been up over the previous year. Someone will be hired to fill the other weekend day at least for a while.

Staff reported there are several volunteers who are having medical issues. There has been a notice for volunteers in the Pikes Peak Bulletin and on 211 but not much response from those locations.

National Geographic has been filming for a memory map segment of "Brain Games". They had a horse on the sidewalk by Cheyenne Spring in addition to a drum circle in that area. Due to last minute location changes, the businesses that were impacted did not have any previous notice.

The BID has not only Brian and Natosha cleaning the sidewalks, but also has Brandon Lee power washing the sidewalks. They seem to spend a lot of time cleaning between the Mate Factor and Cheyenne Spring.

Everyone should have received their visitors guide listing from 2015 for changes to the 2016 issue.

Pikes Peak Country Board begins meeting again in September.

Everyone who donated to the basket going to the Governor's Conference on Tourism was thanked for their donation. The basket value is going to end up over \$1,000.

There is a Summit House Public Process Task Force. Marcy is sitting on the group as a member of the Advocacy group that pushed for a new summit house. Jay Rohrer attended the first meeting as neither Leslie nor Karen was available. He would like to stay involved. The next meeting of that group is September 1. Everyone should watch for the public meetings and give input into the design of the new summit house.

#### **N. Unscheduled Appearances**

Chief Ribeiro occasionally has visits from people who sell things such as kids coloring books on crime prevention. They pay for those with merchant advertising through the community. Julie reported the

businesses get hit up a lot by the school and don't really need anything else. They put Manitou Springs Police Dept.'s name on the cover.

Farley let businesses know that the School District will be asking the voters for a mill levy increase. Leslie has heard there is a statute in Colorado that would allow non-resident property owner voting rights. It is being looked into further and as soon as Leslie has additional information, it will be shared with the board. The School District has been defunded by \$9 million since 2008. The Board discussed school funding and Amendment 64 only allows money for capital improvements not operating costs. Julie saw a segment on the morning news that reported none of the districts in El Paso County will qualify for any of those funds.

Having no additional business before the board, Farley made a motion to adjourn at 11:00 am. Julie seconded the motion and it was approved.