

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

**Board of Directors
Meeting Minutes**

November 19, 2015

Present: Justin Armour, Karen Cullen, Gwenn David, Tim Haas, Farley McDonough, Marcy Morrison, Annie Schmitt, Julie Vance, Nicole Nicoletta

Absent: Rachelle Cully, Ken Jaray

Guests: Natalie Johnson, Nancy Wilson

Staff: Leslie Lewis

A regular meeting of the Manitou Springs Chamber of Commerce, Visitors Bureau & Office of Economic Development Board of Directors was held on Thursday, November 19, 2015 in the City Council Chamber of Manitou Springs City Hall. The meeting was called to order at 8:36 a.m. by President Karen Cullen.

Karen announced that we just learned that we were approved for the 2016 CTO Marketing Grant.

A. Action Item: Approval of October Meeting Minutes

Farley McDonough made a motion to approve the October meeting minutes as presented. Gwenn David seconded the motion and it was approved.

B. Action Item: Approval of October Financial Statements

Balance Sheet and Income Statements were sent out. Tim Haas reported there are some changes being made and the Executive Committee is refining how much should be carried year to year in reserves which will be finalized for additional discussion next month. The Balance Sheet shows the organization is in a strong cash position. Leslie made some changes to the numbers on the Income Statement that gives a better idea of where the accounts are. Tim would like to evaluate the information that is on the statements and wants to simplify what is presented for next year. The revenue is close to what was budgeted and the expenses are below what was budgeted.

Karen reported that the Marketing Task Force decided, based on timing, to take \$15,000 that was budgeted for the video and carry that to next spring instead.

Marcy Morrison made a motion to approve the Financial Statements as presented. Justin Armour seconded the motion and it was approved.

C. Action Item: Approval of New & Renewing Members

Leslie added Revitalizing Waters to the list of Renewing Members that had been sent out. Revitalizing Waters recently purchased Hoity Toity, a homebased business. They will be operating Hoity Toity (Fine Lotions) from a remodeled house on El Paso. Anne Stinson, representing The Ancient Mariner and Marilyn's requested, and was given, a refund of her membership investment recently paid for 2016. She is angry with the Chamber for hosting the "Party in the Park" following the Coffin Races

and felt it hurt her business this year. Tim made a motion to approve the New & Renewing Members list with the addition. Marcy seconded the motion and it was approved.

D. Presentation: Creative District/Economic Development

Introductions were made. Nancy Wilson is working as a consultant, through the Colorado Creative Industries, as part of the grant application awarded to Manitou Springs as part of the Creative District planning. She is a Manitou Springs resident as well. They offered handouts which included the vision and objectives for “Art and Culture” and “Economic Development” as part of the Manitou Springs Forward Vision & Planning Guide as a background. There were synchronicity between what the Creative District was designed to do and what the community said was important when the Vision & Planning Guide was created. The Creative District was formed under the Manitou Springs Arts Council, which is a 501(c)3, but needs more support than they can offer. In looking at other ideas of how to run the district for the most impact for the community, Ralph Routon suggested that a lot of what they do is economic development based and they should be reaching out to the Chamber. Natalie explained more about how the Creative District works including the start-up funding for the first 2 years and status of becoming a fully fledged district. The Creative District Task Force is working on a Strategic Plan. The Creative District initiative was created as a economic development strategy for the State of Colorado.

The concept that the Creative District is working on is based on the Downtown Partnership and is made up of a lot of organizations working together to accomplish things that none of them could on their own. Natalie has met with the City of Manitou Springs (Jason Wells currently and will be meeting with Council) which can be the fiscal agent assisting with things such as payroll, the Arts Council which has the 501(c)3 for grant applications, the Chamber for support around economic development and the Art Center which provides a lot of in kind services, including location. Natalie stated she wanted to keep the Creative District separate from the Art Center. Nancy stated that the proposal would include a half time director for the Creative District and the committee is looking at Natalie possibly filling that role as well as her role as Executive Director for the Manitou Art Center. The MAC position is currently full time but could change to a part time role with someone else picking up some of the duties. Nancy had heard the Chamber board had discussed economic development in their retreat and since that is part of the Creative District mission felt it might be an opportunity for collaboration to accomplish something.

Marcy asked what they were asking from the Chamber and Nancy responded that they are requesting \$20,000 that would provide a half time director to do economic development in Manitou Springs. They will be creating a job description for the position. They will be looking to create a board made up of representatives from the City, the Chamber, the MAC, the Arts Council and some of the members of the Creative District Task Force. Farley McDonough stated that when she was first approached she thought it had a lot of potential as since she came on the board they have been talking about what to do with the economic development aspect. Nancy Wilson suggested it might be set up as a pilot program for a year to test how it works. Julie Vance asked what the ultimate goal is. The Vision, Mission, and Goals of the Creative District were handed out and what economic development could include such as creating artist workspace, continue the development of the “walkable” community, parking and transportation solutions, signage, and continue to enhance the look of the community as you drive in. Natalie talked about the book “The Rise of the Creative Class” and how people now choose where they want to live and attracting the creative class to the area. Nancy also brought up tourist that are looking for culture experiences stay longer and spend more money.

Marcy asked about the City's involvement and what they were committing to but since there have not been discussions with Council yet, answers could not be provided at this time. The City is putting \$10,000 into the Creative District through unfunded requests. Tim suggested the BID be included as well and expressed concern that the groups not work at cross purposes. Natalie felt strong communication would be a key to success. There is discussion about expanding the boundaries gateway to gateway which can be done any time before July. Karen told Nancy and Natalie that timing is good for their approach to the Chamber with this as we are working on the budget now.

E. City Update

Nicole Nicoletta was congratulated on becoming Mayor elect. She reported that the Budget was passed on 1st reading. The Police Chief wants to use more of an ambassadorial style for security next year using students from the Criminal Justice Program at Pikes Peak Community College. Nicole believes the police department is still 3 to 4 officers short of full staff. No one has heard any comments on cleanliness of restrooms lately. Marcy asked what percentage increase City staff was receiving overall. Nicole thought it might be 6% but was not sure. She did say the increases still won't bring some of them to the minimum level for their position compared to other communities. These increases could be a 3 year process. Merit based increases are being discussed and in the works for the City. Nicole added that some staff will be receiving a 2.6% COLA.

Nicole asked if the carolers had been hired for the holiday season and said there is money in the Community Projects fund line that could be applied for. Marcy asked if additional decorations might be needed. Lighting was discussed. The arches were discussed as well. Leslie will contact Brad Walters and ask what decorations are available for the arches as well as about lighting. Marcy did point out it might be a little late for this year.

F. Discussion & Action Item: ManiAwards

The ManiAwards are planned for January 28, 2016. This will be the 3rd year for this Community Awards event. Last year the Chamber contributed \$500 towards the awards. Karen was presenting the request for support again this year on behalf of Ken Jaray. She believes the contribution will be less this year. Ken would also like the Chamber board members to submit nominations for the awards. Karen will send the nomination form to everyone. They need to be back by November 30. Farley asked if they could get a list of previous winners. Karen thought the amount needed for awards this year will be between \$300 and \$500. Marcy made a motion to spend up to \$400 on the ManiAwards. Gwenn seconded the motion and it was approved.

G. Discussion & Action Item: Scholarship Request

Farley is current president of the Manitou Springs Education Foundation, a 501(c)3 that was established in 1998. Their mission is to support students and faculty and partner with the larger community to support the school district. The MSEF partnered with the BID to originally create the student art banners in downtown. They are revamping the art banners this year as well as the scholarship program.

After discussion, Tim made a motion to spend \$1,000 from Economic Development toward the scholarship program created by the Manitou Springs Education Foundation. Julie seconded the motion and it was approved.

H. Discussion: Parking

There will be a work session between City Council and the Parking Authority Board. When Leslie has the date, she will let the board know.

I. Marketing Update

The Marketing Task Force is wrapping up the year but has a lot of holiday advertising coming out. The Colorado Public Radio campaign is continuing. There will be television advertising on KRDO that we will be getting email addresses from and Manitou Money as giveaways. We have the carolers scheduled for the weekends and Santa and gift wrapping on Saturdays and Sundays from Noon – 4:00 pm.

The MTF is also reviewing the contract from Anna Mekeel to continue the social media advertising. There were some questions on the contract which have been answered. Ken will be sending a clause to be included for dispute resolution and the board will then receive a revised contract.

The MTF is working on the revisions to the commercial for the grant and will be working on their 2016 budget. The grant is focused on digital marketing efforts in Texas. We received letters of support from Pikes Peak Country Attractions, the Cliff House, and Red Craggs.

J. Discussion & Scheduling ED Review

The forms for Leslie's review were emailed to board members. The sections highlighted were from 2014 and covered Economic Development. Karen thought that it was decided last year not to include that in the review as there aren't goals set or direction in place. Karen requested the forms be returned by November 30 so the Executive Committee can get together and consolidate the responses. The forms will be resent to the board.

K. Events

The transportation had issues in that we did not have nearly enough buses for the number of people wanting to take them in from the Rock Ledge parking area. For 2016 we will not only need more transportation available, but will need a staff member or key volunteer working only on transportation and not be traveling between the parking locations throughout the event. We will be working with Jim Weir again and hope the middle school parking area may be available as well.

Julie added that it would be nice to find a way to expand the race course to allow more people to see what is going on. Karen reported that we will also be bringing in some bleachers and creating a VIP seating area. We would like to expand the barricaded area to keep the crowd back as this became a safety issue. Karen thought it was positive that more businesses opened earlier to try to get event goers in earlier. Julie reported that Bianca hands out discount coupons that day for people to come back another day.

For event participants that hand out printed pieces before the event and during the parade, staff is going to only allow that if they have staff available to pick up the trash at the end of the event. Karen suggested that we create a piece with as many businesses that want to give out a discount or information and charge the businesses to advertise on it.

The City has approved hiring a $\frac{3}{4}$ time person to coordinate events for the City. This person will work with citizens having private events in city facilities but also work with event organizers to make sure everything is coordinated and taken care of.

Leslie is unsure of Karissa's plans following the baby's arrival. She may not be employed and just assist with events the day of the event. Karissa has been working on getting the 2016 events on on-line calendars and has gotten information out on the Gumbo Cook-off. Spencer Wren, the Cog Railway, is going to be a \$500 sponsor for the Gumbo Cook-off, February 6.

Friday is Shop Manitou Friday which started out of Commonwheel and the 3rd Friday Art Walk. Juanita talked with many businesses to get them to stay open late that evening. Wendy Wilkinson took that and expanded it to an all-day event and is working with KRDO on a pre-tape segment for that event.

Wendy has also recently worked with a writer for Encompass Magazine. She spent the night at the Cliff House and had breakfast at Good Karma. Mitzi Pasternak took them on a guided tour of the mineral springs and a watsu treatment. Barbara, the writer, is going to also work on getting Manitou Springs as one of the small town features in the fall 2016 feature. Jennifer Mulson, the Gazette, is also going to do a tour of the mineral springs and the spa and write an article. Wendy is also talking to Vicki Dimond about a Manitou Springs Revitalization article in Colorado Springs Style magazine in 2016. Leslie was on the noon news on Tuesday talking about Shop Manitou Friday, Small Business Saturday, Santa and the Monarch promotion.

Additional documentation has been submitted to OEDIT for that grant. The contact we have had is leaving so we will have a new contact for that grant. They were requesting all bills be submitted by October 31, however part of the items in the grant application are for our holiday advertising.

December 8 is the volunteer lunch. Board members were asked to save that date. The details, including location are being finalized and will be sent as soon as they are available. December 10 is the "Crush" and additional information will be sent on that as well.

Brittany has been working on the holiday advertising banners and the 2016 visitors guide.

The office will be closed on Thanksgiving day and Lisa will be working on Friday. The Monarch ski promotion is already going on so we are accepting receipts from November 15 through mid-March. There are some blackout dates around Christmas but none on spring break this year.

We have a field study guide that was created by 5th graders from the Colorado Springs School that includes photos and descriptions of plants and trees in the area.

Having no additional business before the board, the meeting adjourned at 10:50 a.m.