

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

**Board of Directors
Meeting Minutes**

July 28, 2016

Present: Rachelle Cully, Gwenn David, April Hall, Whitney Hedgpeth, Farley McDonough, Anthony Mogck, Annie Schmitt, Lisa Quintana, Jay Rohrer

Absent: Justin Armour, Karen Cullen,

Guests: Joe Ribeiro, Jason Wells

Staff: Leslie Lewis

A regular meeting of the Manitou Springs Chamber of Commerce, Visitors Bureau & Office of Economic Development Board of Directors was held Thursday, July 28, 2016 in Manitou Springs City Hall City Council Chambers. The meeting was called to order at 8:33 a.m.

A. Action Item: Approval of June Meeting Minutes

Farley McDonough made a motion to approve the June meeting minutes as presented. April Hall seconded the motion and it was approved.

B. Action Item: Approval of June Financials

The Audit was completed and turned into the City Finance Director. The Audit will be reviewed by the Board in August or September.

The June financials reflect \$91,000 in Special Events revenue with the majority being from the Wine Festival. The Wine Festival gate was higher than expected so the revenue has surpassed the budget projection. The Ice Cream Social in July was a little higher than 2015 but it is not a high profit event.

Farley made a motion to approve the June Financials as presented. April seconded the motion and it was approved.

C. City Update

Jason Wells was invited to update the Board on items in the City beyond the Council information we receive from Councilman Rohrer and information we regularly receive from Chief Ribeiro. He believes CDOT is still planning to reopen the Highway 24 west end ramp at the end of August. CDOT has asked to be able to stage equipment for the east end overlay project in Hiawatha Gardens parking lot. No one was sure when the changes for the ADA ramps at intersections along Manitou Avenue were going to begin. Annie Schmitt reported the Fairmont mitigation project has begun. Jason reported the City had gotten a grant to do some work on Serpentine Drive but has learned that Serpentine is not City owned and a large portion of it is privately owned. The City can't use grant funds for private property. The grant funds were applied for as a culvert project but the current Public Works Director, Shelley Cobau, has determined they would be better used to raise the road bed so she is coordinating with the County to try to leverage the funds with the Rainbow Falls project to raise the level of road to be used as an exit in emergencies. The damage to Serpentine from the traffic as the only west end access to Highway 24 was discussed further.

Because the Tajine Alami sign is in the CDOT right of way, the City needs permission to make any changes. The Planning Department is speaking with CDOT about changes. A private business has inquired about getting on the sign. The variable message signs have had some bulbs out but have been repaired.

The City was not happy with the gardening contractor and terminated the contract with Brickman. The City put out an RFP for gardening services but did not receive the reply they hoped. The RFP included an organic pesticide and herbicide mandate which may have limited the response. The City is looking at taking a staff approach instead for maintenance of the garden beds. There will be a pitch to City Council for a Master Gardener/Cemetery Caretaker position. The lawn care in the parks is outsourced. The Chamber received and forwarded an email from a visitor who was very happy when they saw signs that the parks are pesticide free.

The County wants to devolve the portion of Manitou Avenue in the West Side Avenue Action Plan to Manitou Springs for long term maintenance. City Council will need to determine how it is going to work taking the area from the County's responsibility but without the large take over funds that they received when the State devolved much of that area to the County. The sidewalks will be the responsibility of the businesses. The URA is working to have that area be very special with lighting and public art. The Creative District is also involved in the upgrading of the area.

The City has hired Joy Vernon as the Events Coordinator. She is now coordinating with all of the departments involved to be the central point of contact to make sure nothing falls through the cracks. She is working 30 hours per week. The City has changed their personnel manual in line with the Affordable Care Act so that anyone working 30 hours per week is now considered full time. Everything, including reserving meeting space, now goes through Joy. The eventual goal is to have Joy be able to approve events as well as coordinating City functions with events.

Code Enforcement is changing in that it is becoming more complicated than it has been previously. The position will be shifted back under the Planning Department and animal control will be transferred to the Humane Society.

The City is using a mobile 311 system. Any issue that comes in is entered into this system and allows tracking from the first report to the point it is resolved.

City Hall doesn't have enough space for the employees it has. There was a study done that said the Police Department alone should be three times as large as it is. The Chief is anticipating hiring 3 additional patrol officers. The City looked at taking part of Memorial Hall but City Council determined City Council Chambers should be converted to office space.

The City has hired an architect to update the 2011 assessment done on Hiawatha Gardens building. They are also having a hazmat evaluation completed on the building. After the analysis, more of a determination will be done as to the future of the building. The City is going to spruce up the bus stop. The City still has \$350,000 in reserve for the property. The City has a 20 year lease purchase on the property. Council has put that on hold while they go through the evaluation and public process to determine the future of the building. Estimates for the parking lot would take all of the reserve funding. Clean up on the lot will be done as well.

Jason visited with the Metro Board recently. Gwenn reported they have voted to move forward with decking the Wichita lot. It will be a slow process but it is beginning to move. Staff mentioned the need for downtown building owner/employee parking. Farley asked when the contract for SP Plus is up for renewal and Jason thought it was another year or two. Parking around the Elementary School was discussed and clarified that DuClo is the only street in that area that is Residential Parking only.

The May Sales Tax Report was released and will be shared with the board. Jason noted that the sales tax through May this year was about the same as the sales tax for the full year in 2012.

Jason mentioned that staff had been talking about limiting the use of Memorial Hall for private events (weddings, parties) once part of that area is converted to Council Chambers. He suggested that City Council would need to have additional discussions on those items. Farley asked if a department could be moved to a separate location to free up space in City Hall for employees that need to be there. Councilman Rohrer mentioned that the decision was made based on what could be done the fastest for the least amount of money realizing it would be a short term issue.

D. Police Department Update

In the recent counterfeiting operation, there is a suspect. Chief Ribeiro urged everyone to use caution. The bills being passed now are passing the "pen" test. He asked businesses to hold on to the bills, when they know they have been given a fake bill, and call the police immediately. The Chief also asked businesses to call when they have a shoplifter. The Chief did not want to be seen as giving legal advice, but did say that Colorado has a Citizen Arrest provision so a business owner could make a Citizen Arrest and call the police. Lisa Quintana reported on a situation she had in which the property was returned. The Chief asked that they still be called if someone leaves. She also reported that shoplifting has been more prevalent this year. The Chief reported they are also seeing an increase in car break-ins this year and suggested everyone be warned to lock their cars and not to leave valuables in them.

The downtown foot patrols are continuing. City Council has authorized the additional officers through the Coffin Races. The zero tolerance enforcement policy also continues downtown. There are more citations when Manitou Springs officers are walking the downtown beat than when El Paso County deputies because there are City Ordinances that deputies cannot write tickets for. The Stage 1 fire ban is in effect which allows outdoor smoking only on Manitou Avenue and not on any other downtown streets.

The police dept is fully staffed but have one officer on medical leave, the detective on modified status and the 2 new officers in training so they are unable to work alone. They are seeing 40 – 60 calls for service per day which is very busy. They will be asking to hire 3 new officers in the City's mid year budget amendment and the Chief plans to request funding for an additional 3 officers in the 2017 budget.

The Chief did not have an update in the Comfort Inn armed robbery.

E. City Report

Jay Rohrer thought that Jason and Chief Ribeiro had done a great job of covering a lot of the update information. He did say he had noticed some things from the BID spring walk through that had not yet been completed and asked if there had been a report from Shelley with an update. Leslie will take the list and go through another walk and then follow-up with City staff.

Farley asked Jay who takes care of the parking lot at the City Pool. Farley mentioned there is a light that looks like it will fall on a car. Jason stated the repairs to the lighting and the foot bridge in Schryver Park is out for bid.

The Sidewalk Ordinance is coming up for 2nd reading and may have an impact on some businesses. City Council will also be reviewing the Obstruction Ordinance as well. Several members asked if there were provisions for businesses to have signs or their racks on the sidewalk. Jay did not believe there were provisions for businesses in the Ordinances. There were some provisions made with the ordinances with the BID. Leslie will look at those and ask Council how the ordinances work together.

Jay asked how Board Members felt about the zero tolerance policy. Those who expressed an opinion were in favor of it saying it had made positive changes in downtown. He then asked about the closing of the pavilion. Anthony reported that there are now families on the playground. There are also people using the picnic tables. Gwenn has heard the tables are dirty and need some cleaning. Leslie reported that we are not getting complaints on the bathrooms this year that we have had in previous years. More signage for the restrooms are needed.

The Affordable Housing task force is being formalized to become a City advisory board to work with staff and Council and advise on housing issues. The Micro-Hydro generation for the water treatment plant has been approved to move forward as a ballot issue. Jay pointed out that a fee would be less expensive for businesses than an increase. Council asked for more information but did ask staff to put a marker in for a ballot issue,

F. Creative District

Natalie Johnson reported that Arts Month is October. It received that designation through the National Endowment for the Arts. This will be the third year that the Pikes Peak Region has participated. Manitou will be offered discounted advertising for that. COPPeR (Cultural Office of the Pikes Peak Region) does a lot to promote Arts Month. Manitou Springs will host Artwalk weekend instead of Art Attack and try to make things more special.

Natalie met with Mayor Nicoletta. She encouraged the Creative District to request funding from City Council in the 2017 budget. Jason thought it might be good to use with a match from something else. He sent both Leslie and Natalie a link to the CTO matching grant program.

Natalie is still working on establishing contacts with the groups that will be working in the URA district.

Natalie is now working as the Community Liaison for Partners for Healthy Choices.

Gwenn and Natalie have talked about the Scarecrow Contest in Old Colorado City and wondered about getting Manitou Springs on board with a skeleton contest. Natalie will do research to find and price skeletons.

There may need to be funding for holiday decorations. Leslie will meet with Shelley and Brad. Farley mentioned that the Broadmoor periodically and maybe Manitou Springs should look into other communities that trade out lights and look to give them away. The events group that met talked about having a Holiday Lighting Contest.

The Pikes Peak Library District is reaching out as they start to plan the expansion of the Library. The presentation they have was reported as awesome by several members. Natalie felt the Board could reach out to Margaret Morris with things they see as community needs.

Natalie asked if there was a feel of whether businesses were getting involved through the Plan Manitou questionnaire. Board members were encouraged to fill out some of the survey questionnaire even if they can't fill out all of the pages. When Leslie dropped them off to businesses she suggested they find their priority issues and work through those first then if they have time work on other pages.

Natalie also reported that the Manitou Emergency Recovery Fund had some money available. They would like to at least match the City in funding body cameras for the police officers.

The Pikes Peak Makerspace is opening a second location in Colorado Springs. The second location will be over by the old Gazette building. They will have use of that space for two years. They will be building their membership with the understanding that members can use equipment at either location.

Start-up week is the last week of September. It is the 3rd or 4th year. The Art Center has been part of that and has a panel of support businesses that speak. Natalie thought the Chamber might want to be part of the panel to talk about the benefits of working with the Chamber as you are starting a business.

Natalie asked the state if Manitou Springs could get a Creative District sign on Highway 24 even though we did not receive official Creative District status from the state. Unfortunately she was told no.

Natalie thinks Sharon, Swirl, will take over the lead on the Mardi Gras Carnivale parade this year. Sharon was at the event committee meeting and they did discuss that. Natalie will be talking with her. Sharon thinks businesses should be asked for support of the event when they have money not in February.

G. URA

Farley reported the URA board had met with City Council to discuss sidewalk color choices. City Council chose to stay with the same color as the sidewalks in downtown Manitou Springs.

At the regular URA meeting, Sallie Clark was there. They were trying to figure out why the project is dragging and the price has gone from \$17 million to \$27 million because of the delays. The City and County are still trying to settle on lights. The county did put out an RFP for the Project Manager. Sallie would like to see the project well underway before her term ends.

H. Events

Staff is working on the Coffin Races. We are currently trying to contract for both Rock Ledge and Coronado for parking areas. We have a commitment from Rock Ledge but are waiting for Coronado to get back to us on their availability. We will be contracting with Manitou Springs School District for use of their buses. We are getting quite a few teams registering.

On August 25, the CVB is partnering with the CTO on a video that will feature Manitou Springs in a visit USA promotion. The CVB also talked about Manitou Springs in a radio interview that they did with Canada.

We received information on the 2017 CTO matching grant and will again apply for a grant. We are still in the midst of the grant we received for 2016 which we featured digital advertising in Texas. The results of that grant will need to be submitted in October at the same time the new application will be due.

With the May Sales tax, results show that gift shops are down while everything else is up. Mountain Living Studios is for sale, though Leslie doesn't believe the building is for sale, just the business. Leslie has heard that all of the spaces the Fords own do have leases but one may have fallen through. Leslie went in and spoke with the bartender in Pikes Peak Pub (where the Ancient Mariner was). The owner is from Breckenridge and is not spending a lot of time in Manitou Springs. Hell's Kitchen is serving pizza out of the old Marilyn's location. Business and how the weather impacts it was discussed. Neale Minch will do an analysis on the Sales Tax at the August meeting.

The event group had one meeting. Sharon Palmer-Earle (Swirl), Annie, and David Walker (Manitou Springs Heritage Center and Brew Festival) were there. A notice will be sent to everyone with the next meeting date.

Leslie asked about the Cog and the 125th Anniversary celebration. Whitney said the Cog had been experiencing mechanical issues but are hoping to get everything back up and running. June and July business was discussed.

Having no other business before the board, the meeting adjourned at 11:29 a.m.