

**CITY OF MANITOU SPRINGS  
CITY COUNCIL**

Regular Meeting Minutes  
606 Manitou Avenue  
September 1, 2026

The City Council of Manitou Springs met in Regular Session on Tuesday, September 1, 2026, at 606 Manitou Avenue, in the City of Manitou Springs, County of El Paso, and State of Colorado.

**COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT FOR ROLL CALL:**

Mayor Natalie Johnson  
Councilor Judith Chandler  
Councilor John Shada  
Councilor Julie Wolfe  
Councilor Nathan Nassif  
Councilor Carey Storm  
Councilor Gloria Latimer

**A. CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Johnson called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

**B. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

**C. ROLL CALL**

All members of the City Council were present for the roll call.

**D. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Councilor Latimer moved to approve the agenda as presented. The motion was seconded by Councilor Wolfe. The motion carried unanimously (7-0).

**E. PUBLIC COMMENT ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS**

Joan Stang, Manitou Springs Resident, provided an update regarding her 2022 traffic calming request for Crystal Park Road and expressed concern about ongoing speeding and aggressive driving in the neighborhood. She requested an update on traffic calming requests submitted to the City and assistance scheduling a meeting to discuss traffic calming in her neighborhood.

Ila Quinn, Manitou Springs Resident, expressed concern about the upcoming gas and electric project on Ruxton Avenue and stated that residents have requested an intervention plan since 2022 to prevent Pilot Knob Avenue from being used as an

access route to the Pikes Peak Cog Railway (COG), parking lots, and the Incline. She expressed concern about increased traffic, speeding, limited parking, and the lack of sidewalks, particularly given the children living on the block. She requested that the City develop a plan to address traffic access and safety concerns before the project begins.

City Administrator Denise Howell stated that a tentative date for a community conversation has been identified and that staff are working to secure a location. She anticipated that the meeting would be held during the first or second week of September.

## **F. CONSENT CALENDAR**

### **1. August 11, 2026 City Council Meeting Minutes**

**Note for the Record** – This item was pulled from the consent calendar as requested by Mayor Pro Tem Chandler.

### **2. August 18, 2026 City Council Meeting Minutes**

### **3. Republic Services Contract Amendment – Municipal Hauling**

**Note for the Record** – This item was pulled from the consent calendar as requested by Councilor Wolfe.

Mayor Pro Tem Chandler moved to approve the consent calendar as amended. The motion was seconded by Councilor Wolfe. The motion carried unanimously (7-0).

### **F1. August 11, 2026 City Council Meeting Minutes**

Mayor Pro Tem Chandler noted that she was not present for the August 11, 2026 meeting, therefore the vote outcome at the top of page 5 should be (6-0).

Councilor Wolfe moved to approve the minutes as amended. The motion was seconded by Councilor Storm. The motion carried (6-0), with Mayor Pro Tem Chandler recusing.

### **F3. Republic Services Contract Amendment – Municipal Hauling**

Councilor Wolfe suggested adding the contract expiration date of July 31, 2027, to the recitals of the amendment, in Section A. She noted that there had been several complaints about the contractor and that the contractor was the only bidder in response to the City's Request for Proposal (RFP). She stated that including the expiration date would make it easier for the public to know when the current contract expires.

There was a discussion about whether the contract included recycling. Parks and Recreation Director Gillian Rossi stated that recycling was included for the dumpsters located outside City Hall and the Public Services headquarters. She explained that recycling had been removed from the downtown and park trash cans due to high levels

of contamination, which resulted in most materials being sent to the landfill anyway. She acknowledged that the downtown and park bins are still labeled for recycling, which could be misleading, and stated that the labels could be changed.

Councilor Shada disagreed with the characterization that the materials in the downtown and park recycling bins were highly contaminated. He stated that photographs he had taken showed recyclable materials in the bins. He suggested that the City consider providing separate bins for specific recyclable materials, such as aluminum. Councilor Shada stated that he would vote against the contract and encouraged other Councilors to do the same, citing concerns that the contract did not reflect the community's values regarding recycling.

Director Rossi stated that the City had been working with Waste Connections for the past couple of years regarding recycling and that Waste Connections had recorded contamination in the downtown and park recycling bins.

Councilor Shada stated that the trash company has not attempted to recycle any of the material in the bins.

There was a discussion about the proposed contractor's willingness to provide recycling services. Director Rossi confirmed that Republic Services is willing to collect recycling from the downtown area. She explained that materials brought to the recycling facility cannot be processed as recycling if contamination exceeds 10% and would instead be transferred to the trash processing facility. She also clarified that Republic Services provides residential trash and recycling services for the City but does not currently provide municipal services.

Councilor Wolfe questioned whether Republic Services had experience with the City's municipal recycling bins and whether it would reach the same conclusions regarding contamination as the previous contractor.

Director Rossi stated that she had firsthand experience with substantial contamination in recycling bins during the summer. She noted that the recycling bins frequently contained mixed trash, including food and full cups of liquid. She offered to ask Republic Services whether the materials could be evaluated during the transition period.

Councilor Wolfe suggested that if recycling is an issue during the summer months, then the City could recycle 9 or 10 months out of the year.

Director Rossi confirmed that there is no fee if recycling is found to be contaminated.

Councilor Shada reiterated his concern that the City is not making a meaningful effort to recycle and suggested exploring alternatives, such as collecting specific recyclable materials separately. He also raised concerns that the bins have been labeled for recycling despite the materials being disposed of as trash.

Mayor Pro Tem Chandler stated that concerns about the City's recycling practices have been ongoing for several years. She described personally observing trash and recycling being collected together and expressed concern that the City has not been transparent with the community about its recycling practices. She agreed with Councilor Shada that the City should make a greater effort to provide recycling opportunities, noting that other similar tourist-based communities have implemented recycling through education and clear guidance. She suggested beginning with limited materials, if necessary, and supported reconsidering the contract to develop a plan that includes recycling services.

Jenny Johnson, General Manager of Republic Services, stated that Republic Services is willing to provide either trash and recycling services or trash-only services under the proposed contract. She explained that while Republic Services does not charge the City for contaminated recycling, high contamination levels can require additional transportation and disposal, increasing emissions. She emphasized Republic Service's commitment to sustainability and expressed a willingness to work with the City to develop an alternative solution if contamination is a concern.

There was a brief discussion about whether limiting public recycling bins to specific materials could reduce contamination. Republic Services General Manager Johnson stated that clear labeling could help reduce contamination but noted that public recycling bins typically experience higher contamination levels. She added that community education and outreach regarding acceptable and unacceptable recyclable materials could also help address the issue.

Councilor Wolfe suggested that the City consider limiting recycling bins to materials that are less likely to be contaminated, while the City works on a plan to educate the community.

There was a discussion about whether Republic Services had observed municipalities that were successful in reducing recycling contamination. General Manager Johnson stated that community outreach and education had resulted in reduced contamination, although it did not eliminate the issue. Additionally, she confirmed that pictures are most effective for informing the public on acceptable recycling materials.

Regarding the end date for the contract, City Attorney Zach Zalesne explained that the amendment already provides that the contractor will provide services through the end of the agreement's term. He advised that the expiration date is not included in the recitals because the original agreement controls the term and could be extended, making a specific date in the recitals potentially duplicative.

Councilor Shada moved to postpone the contract to return to the Council before October 1, 2026, and to refer the contract back to staff, so that a recycling plan could be included. The motion was seconded by Councilor Wolfe. The motion carried unanimously (7-0).

## **G. PRESENTATION**

### **1. Proclamation No. 1126, 2026 Creek Week**

Mary Wilson, Fountain Creek Watershed District Lead Outreach Coordinator, provided an overview of the Fountain Creek Watershed District and its mission to protect and enhance the health of the Fountain Creek Watershed. She highlighted the District's restoration, outreach, education, and volunteer programs, including Creek Week, the State's largest watershed-wide cleanup event. Wilson reported that Creek Week will take place September 26 through October 4, 2026, and encouraged residents to participate as crew leaders or volunteers. She noted that six cleanup events are planned in Manitou Springs and thanked the City for supporting the watershed-wide stewardship effort.

There was a brief discussion about larger restoration projects funded by Colorado Springs Utilities (CSU). Lead Outreach Coordinator Wilson highlighted the Southmoor Drive restoration project in the City of Fountain, completed in July 2025 at a cost of \$7,200,000. She explained that the project addressed significant erosion, sedimentation, and flooding issues that threatened nearby homes and businesses.

Lead Outreach Coordinator Wilson emphasized the importance of both recycling and properly disposing of waste, noting that materials that enter waterways are harmful regardless of whether they were originally intended for a landfill or recycling facility.

Councilor Shada read Proclamation No. 1126 into the record, proclaiming September 26 through October 4, 2026 as Creek Week.

Councilor Storm moved to approve Proclamation No. 1126. The motion was seconded by Councilor Latimer. The motion carried unanimously (7-0).

Linda Morlan, Manitou Springs Resident, expressed concern about deadwood in Fountain Creek.

Lead Outreach Coordinator Wilson stated that deadwood is not included in the Watershed's efforts due to the inherent risk with the large tools required for removal. She added that it is more of a focus in large creek restoration projects.

## **H. BUSINESS**

### **1. Planned Sign Program Permit PSP 2601 – Hwy 24 “Manitou Springs” Sign**

Executive Director Jenna Wells, Visit Manitou Springs, presented two options for the reverse side of the sign design for Council's consideration, one stating “Manitou Springs” and one stating “Thank you for visiting Manitou Springs”.

Councilor Wolfe expressed concern that the proposed sign could violate Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) regulations because it incorporates Visit Manitou Springs branding. She questioned whether the project should proceed before the applicable regulations are reviewed by the City Attorney, noting the risk of spending approximately \$60,000 on a sign that may need to be removed.

Public Services Director Ben Schmitt stated that CDOT had pre-reviewed the proposed sign and confirmed that it met their criteria. He explained that CDOT had reviewed the signage shown in the application, including the cursive lettering, text, background, and height, and had pre-approved the proposed design.

There was a discussion about branding, during which Director Schmitt confirmed that the current Visit Manitou Springs sign was not submitted to CDOT as part of the application. He added that he understood the branding provision to refer primarily to logos associated with specific businesses and stated that the City could raise the issue with CDOT to determine whether any changes to the proposed design would be necessary.

Executive Director Wells stated that the proposed signage does not exactly match the Visit Manitou Springs logo, and that she does not know to what percentage difference CDOT would consider the logo and the sign.

Councilor Latimer stated that she does not believe that branding is likely to be an issue.

Councilor Shada referenced federal signage regulations that he understood to restrict commercial logos, corporate sponsorships, and logos of nongovernmental organizations such as chambers of commerce and visitor bureaus. He noted that the staff memo referenced Visit Manitou Springs branding and stated that the proposed sign appeared virtually identical to the existing Visitor Center sign.

Councilor Wolfe stated that she prefers the “Manitou Springs” option for the reverse side of the sign, as many people driving by would not have visited the City.

Mayor Pro Tem Chandler stated her preference for the “Manitou Springs” option.

Councilor Latimer expressed support for the “Thank you for visiting Manitou Springs” option.

Councilor Shada stated that his preference would be for the sign to remain blank on the reverse side, as he felt that signage across the highway could distract drivers.

Councilor Nassif stated that he liked the overall design of the sign and preferred “Manitou Springs” on the reverse side. He acknowledged that drivers traveling in the opposite direction might reference the sign but expressed strong support for the quality and appearance of the design.

Planner Erin Ringsred clarified actions requested from the Council to move forward, including approval of the Planned Sign Program (PSP) 2601 with design and location. She added that CDOT will require a resolution to show City Council support.

Councilor Shada suggested that the City Attorney's office review the CDOT regulations related to branding and inquired about the Planning Departments view on the design related to branding.

Planner Ringsred stated that the Planning Department's review is based on the City's code which could be completely different from CDOT's definition of branding. She confirmed that the City has identified elements of Visit Manitou Springs branding in the proposed sign design.

Councilor Storm questioned whether having the City's legal team review the CDOT regulations and branding issue would be beneficial, when CDOT would evaluate the final application.

Director Schmitt stated that having the City Attorney review the matter would not be a good use of taxpayer dollars because CDOT would ultimately determine whether the cursive lettering constituted branding. He stated that he would obtain written confirmation from CDOT regarding its interpretation of the cursive lettering and bring the information back to Council.

Councilor Storm moved to approve the front sign design and direct staff to send an image of the Visit Manitou Springs logo to CDOT to compare to the proposed sign design and confirm that there is not a branding issue. The motion was seconded by Councilor Wolfe. The motion carried unanimously (7-0).

Councilor Storm moved to approve the "Manitou Springs" sign design option for the reverse side of the sign. The motion was seconded by Councilor Shada. The motion carried (7-0).

Director Schmitt reported that he evaluated three potential locations for monument signage. He stated that the existing location, the Crystal Hills Boulevard area, and a location on the eastbound side of Highway 24 near the Cave of the Winds exit are all acceptable, provided applicable CDOT clear zone requirements are met. He noted that the Crystal Hills Boulevard location would bring the sign closer to the jurisdictional boundary, while the existing location would require the sign to be placed behind guardrail or additional guardrail to be installed.

Councilor Shada expressed support for the Crystal Hills Boulevard location.

**Note for the Record** – The City Council took a break at 7:15 PM and reconvened at 7:26 PM.

Councilor Wolfe noted that the trees at the existing location could potentially obstruct the new sign if it is located east of the current position and behind the guardrail.

There was a discussion about nearby signs. Director Schmitt confirmed that the placement of the sign would need to meet CDOT requirements regarding the required distance between signs.

During a brief discussion about the sloped topography of the Crystal Hills Boulevard area location, Director Schmitt confirmed that the sign would be level with the highway.

Councilor Shada expressed concern about the safety and complexity of the existing location and the nearby highway exit. He inquired about the unofficial pull-off near the current sign.

Director Schmitt explained that unofficial pull-offs are not preferred by CDOT because they can create unsafe conditions. He confirmed that the sign's current location meets the technical requirements under which it was originally installed, although CDOT indicated a preference for guardrail improvements in the future. He added that if the sign is to be placed closer to the highway, then guardrail installation will be required.

There was a brief discussion about a third proposed location on the eastbound side of the highway. Director Schmitt stated that, while the City is focused on the westbound sign at this time, he identified a potential location for a secondary sign near Rainbow Falls for future consideration. He noted that the location is behind the guardrail, meets applicable requirements, and would place a monument sign ahead of a directional sign.

Councilor Nassif expressed concern about the proposed third location, particularly that placing the monument sign too close to a standard directional sign could cause drivers to overlook it. He suggested considering placement farther east and before the larger directional sign to give drivers more opportunity to see the sign.

Director Schmitt explained that moving the sign farther west would place it increasingly farther from the City's jurisdictional boundary as defined by the sign code.

Councilor Shada noted that there are currently no available funds in the budget for a second sign, and thanked Director Schmitt for following up on the inquiry regarding a location for a secondary sign.

Councilor Shada moved to approve the Crystal Hills Boulevard area location for the sign. The motion was seconded by Councilor Storm. The motion carried (7-0).

Councilor Storm moved to approve PSP 2601, under the condition that CDOT approved of the design. The motion was seconded by Councilor Latimer. The motion carried (7-0).



## **I. RECEIVE OR ACT ON COUNCIL CORRESPONDENCE**

Councilor Wolfe shared that Ila Quinn had requested that Council collectively ask CSU to provide flaggers to prevent traffic from using the side streets as alternate routes during the Ruxton Avenue project.

There was a discussion about the potential cost of requesting flaggers for specific locations. Councilor Wolfe stated that her understanding was that CSU had already committed to a certain number of flaggers, so the request would only identify preferred locations rather than require additional flaggers or expense.

Councilor Shada expressed support for requesting that CSU discourage traffic from using Pilot Knob Avenue or Capitol Hill Avenue as alternate routes during periods of congestion on Ruxton Avenue. He suggested that appropriate signage and flagger direction could help discourage traffic from using these neighborhood streets, particularly traffic coming from the COG or traveling up Ruxton Avenue.

Public Services Director Schmitt stated that the City could request signs directing traffic to use local access only but noted that flaggers would need clear guidance on how to determine who qualifies as local traffic.

Mayor Johnson suggested that City staff could manage the traffic issue.

Director Schmitt stated that the City would continue coordinating with the contractor to discourage traffic from using local roadways. He explained that a public engagement meeting is anticipated in October to discuss the project's neighborhood impacts and traffic control plan, which remains under development as right-of-way acquisitions and CDOT approvals are completed. He added that one point of contact will be established for the project.

Councilor Latimer emphasized the importance of providing timely notification through multiple channels for public engagement meetings, noting that the project could affect businesses and nearby residents. She expressed concern that Global Positioning System (GPS) navigation may direct traffic onto narrow neighborhood streets to avoid congestion near the COG.

There was a brief discussion about an interactive budget tool. City Administrator Howell confirmed that Council had previously provided direction to move forward with budget books and that an interactive tool is no longer being pursued.

Councilor Latimer requested that the purpose of City Council Open Mic Nights be clarified, noting that there was confusion about the City's role and differing expectations at the last Open Mic Night.

## **J. CITY ADMINISTRATOR REPORT**

City Administrator Howell shared that there is an Open House event at the Fire Department on Saturday, September 5, 2026.

## **K. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

1. An Executive Session to hold a conference with the City Attorney to receive legal advice pursuant to Section 5.1(c) of the Manitou Springs Municipal Charter, concerning the Paragon redevelopment agreement with the Manitou Springs Urban Renewal Authority

Mayor Johnson read the purpose of the Executive Session into the record at 8:01 PM.

Mayor Pro Tem Chandler moved to enter the Executive Session for the stated purpose. The motion was seconded by Councilor Latimer. The motion was carried unanimously (7-0).

The City Council moved back to Regular Session at 9:07 PM. Mayor Johnson confirmed the Executive Session was held solely for the stated purpose and that no formal decision was made.

## **ADJOURN**

With no other items to discuss, Councilor Latimer moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Councilor Shada. The motion carried unanimously (7-0). The meeting was adjourned at 9:08 PM.

Attest:

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Natalie Johnson, Mayor

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Elena Krebs, City Clerk

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