CITY OF MANITOU SPRINGS
CITY COUNCIL

Special Meeting Minutes
606 Manitou Avenue
February 11, 2025

The City Council of Manitou Springs met in Regular Session on Tuesday, February 11, 2025, 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 John Graham
Mayor Pro Tem Natalie Johnson
Councilor John Shada
Councilor Julie Wolfe
Councilor Nancy Fortuin

COUNCIL MEMBERS ABSENT FOR ROLL CALL:

Councilor Judith Chandler (Excused)
Councilor Michelle Whetherhult (Excused)

A. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Graham called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

B. ROLL CALL

All members of the City Council were present for the roll call, except for Councilor Chandler and Councilor Whetherhult.

C. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mayor Pro Tem Johnson moved to approve the agenda as presented. The motion was seconded by Councilor Fortuin. The motion carried unanimously (5-0).

D. BUSINESS

1. <u>Consideration of Resolution No. 0425, A Resolution of the City of Manitou Springs, Colorado, Applying for the Dissolution of the Manitou Springs Metropolitan District</u>

City Attorney Jeff Parker explained the purpose of the resolution which is for the City Council to submit an application to the Metropolitan District (Metro) requesting its dissolution. He stated that the resolution requesting dissolution of the Metro is the first step in initiating a mandatory legal process. Under the Special District Act, the City of Manitou Springs can seek the Metro's dissolution, and once requested, the special district has 60 days to file petition with the district court, including a plan for dissolution. The city is required to intervene and can submit its own plan for dissolution to best serve the interests of the community. The dissolution plan would cover matters such as payment of debts, continuation of services, and disposition of assets. He added that if the plan cannot be agreed upon by both parties, then the district court will order an election.

There was a brief discussion about how the resolution would be delivered to the Metro Board, in which City Attorney Parker shared that he would provide the Metro Board's Attorney with the resolution and advised that the city deliver a copy to one of the Board Members as well. He confirmed that a $300 cash bond would need to be delivered with the resolution.

Mayor Pro Tem Johnson made a statement on behalf of the City Council. She stated that the city has tried to collaborate with the Metro Board, while not always fruitful, the work and volunteer time managing the Metro Parking Facilities is recognized. She added that the Council believes it is time to manage the assets in a more coordinated fashion and that she hopes that the change can lead to bolstering the Business Improvement District (BID) or result in the formation of a new downtown beautification board. She noted the importance of ensuring that the voice of the business community is not lost during the process. She stated that if the city and Metro can agree on a shared vision through the resolution, then they can work on a mobility plan together.

Mayor Graham made a statement regarding the history of the special district, the relationship between Metro and the city, and hopes for improved operations. He noted that the district was established in 1989 to establish and manage a public parking lot, and the Metro Board's success in accomplishing said mission. He added that the city and Metro had an Intergovernmental Agreement since the District's formation in which both parties coordinated much of the operations together, and that the agreement was recently dissolved. He stated that the city has established its own parking operations and that the City Council feels the Metro's original purpose has been fulfilled, therefore it would be in the community's best interest to consolidate the parking lots. He shared that the BID, which is largely in the same area as Metro, has expenses greater than their revenues and added that it would be beneficial to consider how Metro's assets might be directed to support the BID.

Mike Casey, 315 Crystal Hills Boulevard, inquired whether the resolution was the result of extensive discussions and commented that the action considered by the Council seems aggressive and abrupt. He noted that there are some good points in the memorandum for the resolution, such as combining finances, and questioned why the cons section on the memorandum stated there are none. He asked how the properties owned by the Metro would be handled. Mr. Casey suggested that the Council postpone their decision to allow for more conversation and consideration of alternative options prior to agreeing to the resolution.

Mayor Graham stated that the relationship between Metro and the city has been contentious and devolving for some time. He noted that the city had allocated funds to remodel the Wichita Parking Lot bathrooms, bringing them into ADA compliance and shared that the Metro Board had requested that the city pay Metro to rent the bathrooms after the Intergovernmental Agreement was mutually dissolved. He stated that the city did not anticipate that the Metro Board would decide to shut down the bathrooms, with the indication of tearing them down to replace them with parking spots, when the city refused to pay rent for the bathrooms. Mayor Graham added that the events revolving around the bathrooms did contribute to motivations to consider requesting the dissolution of Metro.

Councilor Wolfe clarified that the city would not have to pay anything to acquire the parking lots, since the district is a quasi-governmental entity within the city. She explained that the intention of consolidating the parking finances and operations was to support a more streamlined and efficient process.

City Attorney Parker stated that when dissolving a special distract that was formed by a court order, there needs to be a court order to dissolve the district.

Councilor Fortuin shared that the consideration to request the dissolution of the special district is not a sudden decision as the Council has had multiple discussions on the matter. She announced that the Metro Board is having an election in May of 2025, so if anyone is interested in serving on the board, they may talk to the Metro Board and turn in a nomination packet.

Councilor Shada noted that when special districts are completely within the boundaries of a municipality, they have to be approved by the City Council when established, along with the district court process. He stated that the original service plan included both public parking and a river walk, and the Metro did not contribute to the development of a riverwalk. He shared that the original service plan is still available on the city website.

Councilor Shada moved to approve Resolution No, 0425, A Resolution of the City of Manitou Springs, Colorado, Applying for the Dissolution of the Manitou Springs Metropolitan District. The motion was seconded by Councilor Wolfe. The motion carried unanimously (5-0).

E. ADJORN SPECIAL SESSION

With no other items to discuss, Councilor Shada moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Johnson.

The meeting adjourned at 6:28 p.m

Attest:

Elena Krebs, City Clerk

John Graham, Mayor