

**CITY OF MANITOU SPRINGS
CITY COUNCIL**

Regular Meeting Minutes
606 Manitou Avenue
November 18, 2025

The City Council of Manitou Springs met in Regular Session on Tuesday, November 18, 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 Judith Chandler
Councilor John Shada
Councilor Julie Wolfe
Councilor Nancy Fortuin

COUNCIL MEMBERS ABSENT FOR ROLL CALL:

Councilor Michelle Whetherhult (Excused)

A. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Graham 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, except for Councilor Whetherhult.

D. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Councilor Chandler moved to approve the agenda as presented. The motion was seconded by Councilor Fortuin. The motion carried unanimously (6-0).

E. PUBLIC COMMENT ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Greg Wellens, with Adventures Out West, read a letter regarding the recent defeat of Ballot Issue 2A. He requested that the City Council form a working group consisting of council members, city staff, and representatives of the business community to collaborate on addressing the City's financial challenges. He emphasized the shared interest in Manitou Springs' long-term success and encouraged meaningful dialogue as

the City considers future budget decisions and potential ballot measures. He stated the letter was submitted on behalf of several Manitou business owners and campaign committee members.

F. POLICE DEPARTMENT AWARDS

Commander Corey Sevene announced that three awards were being presented to individuals recognized by supervisors or other city personnel. Evidence Specialist Ryan Karcher was presented with a Certificate of Appreciation for her service as backup Public Information Officer during a period of heightened communication needs. Commander Sevene noted that she volunteered for the role and performed it with professionalism, reliability, and responsiveness under pressure.

Sergeant Leo Strand presented School Resource Officer Gary Johnson with a Commander Citation for his professionalism, dedication, and service to the Manitou Springs School District. Sergeant Strand noted that Officer Johnson is a trusted and valued presence on campus, regularly supporting students at school and at events, engaging with families, and providing guidance to students in need.

Corporal Jeffrey Schulke recognized Officer Michaela Robertson for her determination and dedication in identifying impaired drivers and presented her with a Chief's Commendation. He noted that Officer Robertson made approximately 60 Driving Under the Influence (DUI) arrests in 2025, with an additional 20 completed while training new officers, accounting for more than half of the department's total DUI arrests for the year. Corporal Schulke commended her proactive policing, thorough investigations, and commitment to public safety, stating that she sets a strong example for fellow officers.

Mayor Graham thanked the Police Department on behalf of the City Council, noting that their work goes beyond law enforcement to fostering community, safety, and a sense of home in Manitou Springs.

Note for the Record – The City Council took a break at 6:12 PM and reconvened at 6:14 PM.

G. CONSENT CALENDAR

1. Presentation of Warrants
2. October 7, 2025 City Council Minutes

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

3. Consider Reappointing Cory Sutela to the Mobility and Parking Board
4. Consider Reappointing Karl Stang to the Mobility and Parking Board
5. Consider Reappointing Bill Koerner to the Mobility and Parking Board
6. Consider Reappointing Luke Prince to the Mobility and Parking Board

Councilor Chandler moved to approve the consent calendar as amended. The motion was seconded by Councilor Fortuin. The motion carried unanimously (6-0).

G2. October 7, 2025 City Council Minutes

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

H. BUSINESS

1. Consider Appointing Avrie Tomsik to the Historic Preservation Commission

Laura Kindseth, Chair of the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) introduced Applicant Avrie Tomsik. Chair Kindseth highlighted Applicant Tomsik's bachelor's degree in architecture, her professional experience with an architectural firm in Colorado Springs, and her strong skills in reviewing construction documents, understanding modern building techniques, and assessing existing structures.

Applicant Tomsik shared that she has lived, studied, and worked in Manitou Springs her entire life. She explained that she developed an early interest in historic preservation during her college studies, where she focused on place-keeping and adaptive reuse. She expressed a desire to bring a younger perspective to the HPC, encourage community involvement, and help protect both local heritage and environmental sustainability.

Councilor Fortuin moved to appoint Avrie Tomsik to the HPC. The motion was seconded by Councilor Wolfe. The motion carried unanimously (6-0).

2. Discussion Regarding Complaints Concerning Council Member Shada's Alleged Conduct

Mayor Graham explained that concerns were raised in a previous meeting about Councilor Shada's conduct, including a letter requesting his resignation. He shared that the Council received many comments from residents and acknowledged public frustration. He clarified that the Council cannot remove or suspend a councilmember and that Councilor Shada's alleged actions are not applicable to the censure process in the City Code. Mayor Graham explained that only voters can remove a council member through a recall.

Councilor Shada stated that he does his best to serve the community, acknowledging that he sometimes falls short. He noted that he was elected by the voters and intends to continue serving unless the electorate chooses to remove him.

Councilor Wolfe expressed disappointment that the item was placed on the agenda, stating that the Council has experienced far more heated behavior during meetings without similar action being requested. She stated that disputes between individuals outside Council proceedings are not Council's business and cautioned against turning the matter into an investigative or accusatory process. She added that while disagreements and tempers occur, Council typically moves on to focus on its work, and she does not believe the situation warrants Council time or review.

Mayor Graham opened the floor for public comment.

Farley McDonough, with the Board of Directors for Visit Manitou Springs, read aloud a letter from the board, which was included in the packet.

Brenda Gillan, 6 Spencer Avenue and owner of The Art of Being Calm, stated that she is both a professional colleague and close friend of Councilor Shada. She expressed her support for him, noting that in the nine years she has known him, he has consistently demonstrated reliability, trustworthiness, and a calm, kind demeanor. She stated that she does not believe he would ever physically threaten anyone and shared examples of his neighborliness and community helpfulness, including assisting residents, supporting elderly neighbors, and helping her personally and professionally.

Angela Copeland-Wilks, owner of Manitou Winery and a board member of Visit Manitou Springs, appealed to Council as both a business owner and chamber representative. She stated that Councilor Shada's alleged behavior has been embarrassing for the business community and frequently circulated on social media. She expressed concerns about his conduct in relation to chamber matters and requested that he resign. She suggested that, if he does not resign, he should recuse himself from all future chamber-related discussions and decisions.

Ron Elgen, member of the Colorado Springs Parks and Recreation Advisory Council, stated that he had a recent interaction with Councilor Shada at an event at the Pikes Peak Cog Railway. He described the exchange as unprofessional, demeaning, and disrespectful for an elected official, and expressed concern about Councilor Shada's ability to appropriately manage his conduct in an official capacity. He encouraged Council and Councilor Shada to consider whether this behavior aligns with the expectations of the position.

Sally Fitzgerald, 143 Deer Path, stated that she has known Councilor Shada for over 20 years and believes there are multiple perspectives to every incident. She acknowledged that everyone has flaws and shared a personal example of Councilor Shada's kindness. She expressed that, in her experience, he has shown compassion and a genuine heart.

Mayor Graham closed the floor to public comment.

Councilor Chandler stated that all elected and appointed officials should uphold high standards of professionalism and stewardship. She said that it was inappropriate for Council to be placed in a position to evaluate alleged incidents that members did not witness and noted she regretted supporting the item being added to the agenda. She emphasized that there is a defined process for situations of this nature and that residents who have lost confidence in an elected official have the right to initiate a recall. She also stated strong opposition to anyone, especially non-residents, suggesting that any councilor recuse themselves from budget-related matters.

Councilor Wolfe stated that Ila Quinn, who was unable to attend, asked her to convey that she opposes any recommendation for Councilor Shada to resign and considers him an upstanding citizen who has been helpful to her and to the community.

Mayor Pro Tem Johnson agreed that Council's role is not to act as judge or jury but stated she does not condone the alleged behavior. She noted that the only appropriate action available to Council would be to request an investigation to clarify the allegations. She added that while she has valued working with Councilor Shada, she is troubled by the idea that community members may have been hurt by their interactions with him.

Mayor Graham acknowledged ongoing community concerns and repeated allegations involving Councilor Shada, noting that these issues have contributed to a lack of public confidence. He reiterated that Council has limited authority and that the decision ultimately rests with the voters. He also raised concerns about the city's potential liability if Council takes no action. While recognizing both positive and negative interactions he has observed involving Councilor Shada, he emphasized the importance of restoring confidence and minimizing discord for the next Council. He stated that an independent, third-party investigation would be the most objective way to address the situation and stated he would support moving forward with one.

Councilor Fortuin stated that she would support an investigation.

Councilor Chandler expressed opposition to an investigation, noting that no legal charges have been brought against Councilor Shada and that she does not have firsthand knowledge of the incidents described. She affirmed that residents have the right to pursue a recall.

Councilor Wolfe stated that she is strongly opposed to an investigation, citing budget constraints and expressing concern about spending taxpayer funds on incidents that occurred outside Council chambers. She disagreed with suggestions that the City could face liability in such circumstances, characterizing the concern as unfounded.

Councilor Shada agreed with Councilor Wolfe.

Mayor Graham commented that Council sentiment was split on pursuing an investigation and that a formal vote would likely result in a tie and therefore fail.

I. RECEIVE OR ACT ON COUNCIL CORRESPONDENCE

Councilor Chandler commended the Climate Action Work Group for hosting an outstanding potluck and awards event.

Councilor Wolfe raised a safety concern on Lovers Lane, noting a missing concrete barrier along an otherwise protected section above the creek. She stated the gap poses a significant hazard and requested temporary or partial protective measures, such as cones, markings, or an additional block that still allows stormwater flow. She asked that staff evaluate options to reduce the risk and consider immediate safety measures.

Mayor Graham noted that many areas in Manitou Springs have similar cliff or drop-off hazards but agreed the concern was worth reviewing.

City Administrator Denise Howell explained that staff has evaluated the site and that a permanent barrier cannot be installed without disrupting stormwater flow. The gap has existed for more than a decade, and similar conditions exist elsewhere along the road. She confirmed that staff can place an orange cone there as an interim safety measure until the full Lover's Lane improvements are completed.

Mayor Graham suggested exploring a temporary, portable chain-link barrier that would allow water to pass through while preventing falls.

J. CITY ADMINISTRATOR REPORT

City Administrator Howell reported on the following:

- The Greeni Awards were a success. Two employees were awarded the Canopy Award.
- The Turkey Shoot, hosted by the Fire Department, raised substantial funds.
- The Creek Walk Ribbon Cutting, which was earlier in the day, was a success.
- Discounted parking rates will be offered during the holiday season to support the local business community.
- City Council will have a budget meeting on Saturday, starting at 9:00 AM in Memorial Hall. The meeting is open to the public, but there will be no public comment.

Mayor Graham announced that the first reading of the budget ordinance will be on December 2, 2025 and the second reading and public hearing will be on December 11, 2025. He explained that Council does not usually take public comment during first readings, but with the limited time to get the budget approved they will be taking public comment during first reading for the budget ordinance.

K. EXECUTIVE SESSION

1. An Executive Session to determine positions relative to matters that may be subject to negotiations, develop a strategy for negotiations, and/or instruct negotiators, pursuant to Section 5.1(d) of the City of Manitou Springs Municipal Charter, concerning a personnel matter.
2. An Executive Session to hold a conference with the City Attorney pursuant to Section 5.1(c) of the City of Manitou Springs City Charter, concerning the dissolution of the Manitou Springs Metropolitan District.

Mayor Graham read the purpose of the Executive Session into the record at 6:58 PM.

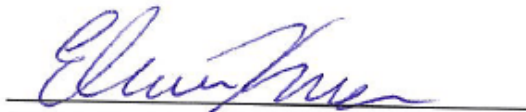
Mayor Pro Tem Johnson moved to enter the Executive Session for the stated purpose. The motion was seconded by Councilor Chandler. The motion carried (6-0).

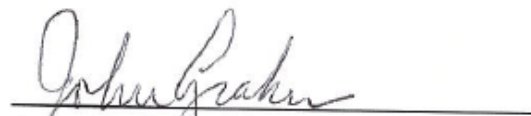
The City Council moved back to Regular Session at 8:01 PM. Mayor Graham confirmed the Executive Session was held solely for the stated purpose and that no formal decision was made.

ADJOURN

Mayor Pro Tem Johnson moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Councilor Chandler. The motion carried unanimously (6-0).
The meeting adjourned at 8:01 PM.

Attest:


Elena Krebs, City Clerk


John Graham, Mayor

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