

**CITY OF MANITOU SPRINGS
CITY COUNCIL**

Regular Meeting Minutes
606 Manitou Avenue
December 2, 2025

The City Council of Manitou Springs met in Regular Session on Tuesday, December 2, 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 (Via Zoom)
Councilor Judith Chandler
Councilor John Shada
Councilor Julie Wolfe
Councilor Nancy Fortuin
Councilor Michelle Whetherhult

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.

D. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

E. PUBLIC COMMENT ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

There was no public comment.

F. CONSENT CALENDAR

1. October 21, 2025 City Council Minutes
2. November 18, 2025 City Council Minutes
3. Reappoint Justin Wilson to the City Planning Commission

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

G. BUSINESS

1. Consideration of Resolution No. 1625, A Resolution of the City of Manitou Springs City Council, Urging the Registered Electors of Manitou Springs Metropolitan District to Vote "YES" on the City's Plan for Dissolution of the Metropolitan District

Councilor Whetherhult moved to adopt Resolution No. 1625, A Resolution of the City of Manitou Springs City Council, Urging the Registered Electors of Manitou Springs Metropolitan District to Vote "YES" on the City's Plan for Dissolution of the Metropolitan District. The motion was seconded by Councilor Chandler. The motion carried unanimously (7-0).

2. Consideration of Approval of Easement Agreement for Crown Castle Towers 09 LLC; 338 Alpine Trail

Planning Director Fred Rollenhagen presented the easement and explained that the agreement would allow use of a telecommunications facility that is encroaching on potentially city-owned property. He shared the property owners of 338 Alpine Trail, Crown Castle Towers, provided staff with a 2015 survey which shows an encroachment on a road known as Pine Tree Path. He added that Crown Castle Towers offered \$2,500 to the City based on fair market value and the time the City's Attorney and staff have spent on the issue.

Councilor Fortuin moved to approve the Easement Agreement and accept the \$2,500 based on the fair market value and City Attorney and staff time expended. The motion was seconded by Councilor Wolfe. The motion carried unanimously (7-0).

3. Consideration of Resolution No. 1525, A Resolution Adopting an Updated Universal Fee Schedule

Finance Director Rebecca Davis presented the proposed updated Universal Fee Schedule, which included changes to the water, sewer, and storm drainage rates, increases to the Memorial Hall rental rates, and removal of several fire service fees for services that are no longer provided.

There was a brief discussion about Storm Drainage and Flood Management Utility fees. Finance Director Davis confirmed that the new fee would be \$22 and stated that she would follow up with clarification on the comments in the section.

There was a discussion about Memorial Hall Rental Fees, during which Finance Director Davis explained that the fee schedule indicated that the hourly rate would be applied for up to two hours and beyond two hours that the all-day rate would apply.

City Administrator Denise Howell noted that Memorial Hall is not usually available for rent Monday through Friday, because of Council and Board meetings in the facility.

Councilor Wolfe suggested removing the words “2 hours” following Monday through Friday on the fee schedule, rather than leaving the fee undefined past two hours.

There was a discussion about additional facility rental fees, during which City Administrator Denise Howell clarified that Memorial Hall fees are based on time, while other facility fees may be based on the number of people. She suggested discussing the facility rental fees with the appropriate staff present at a future meeting.

Councilor Shada moved to postpone Resolution No. 1525, A Resolution Adopting an Updated Universal Fee Schedule to December 11, 2025, and that questions be submitted to staff. The motion was seconded by Councilor Chandler. The motion carried unanimously (7-0).

4. First Reading of Ordinance No. 2325, an Ordinance Adopting the Annual Budget and Appropriating Funds for Fiscal Year 2026 and Amending the Annual Budget for Fiscal Year 2025

Finance Director Davis presented the proposed budget and stated the only changes since October 15, 2025, were the addition of lease purchase payments in the sewer fund and the mobility and parking fund. She noted that the proposed budget includes the Manitou and Pikes Peak Cog Railway (COG) reimbursement and suggested that the Council would need to be specific in their motion on how the funds should be allocated. Finance Director Davis emphasized that the City is in a time of concern, and depending on reserves to maintain essential services. She stated that the city is committed to ensuring the dependency does not become a recurring solution. She shared that staff cuts reduced 2026 expenses by 5.6%, and that staff continues to look for reductions. Finance Director Davis stated that the priority for the coming year must be identifying and securing new revenue sources. She added that community engagement will be essential during the next several months.

There was a general discussion about changes to the budget previously discussed, during which Councilor Fortuin indicated that \$2,000 was expected to be included in the budget for the Housing Advisory Board (HAB), and Councilor Wolfe noted that the Council had discussed allocating the \$690,000 under Economic Development for the COG reimbursement to wildfire mitigation.

Councilor Chandler expressed disappointment in the process used during the November 22, 2025, Budget Retreat. She stated that although Council heard recommendations for reductions, Council did not have the opportunity to discuss or propose cuts, which she felt was their responsibility. She added that she is opposed to approving the budget because the City is falling below comfortable reserve limits.

There was a discussion about appropriate reserve limits. Finance Director Davis explained that per the Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB), best practice is to maintain reserves based on a percentage of the City's expenditures or revenues, whichever is higher. She noted that the previously mentioned five million dollars was likely referenced during a time when expenditures were higher.

Councilor Chandler cautioned that a single emergency in 2026 could significantly strain the City's finances. She noted that concerns appeared to shift toward the 2027 budget after the failure of Ballot Issue 2A and emphasized that 2026 remains equally, if not more, concerning.

Mayor Graham noted that without the shift of \$690,000 from the COG reimbursement to wildfire mitigation the reserves would meet the five million dollar target. He announced that February 24, 2026, City Council Work Session is planned to be dedicated to the budget. He added that there will be two community meetings prior to the work session, on February 19, 2026, from 5:30 PM to 8:00 PM and on February 21, 2026, from 9:00 AM to 11:30 AM. Mayor Graham commented that most City spending happens when construction begins in the springtime.

Councilor Wolfe clarified that the reserve would reach five million dollars only if the Council chooses not to set aside funds for wildfire mitigation or a tax refund to the COG. She recalled that the dollar amount was recommended based on the fact that the City is small, with fewer resources and less revenue to rely on. She emphasized the importance of a higher reserve in the event of a major emergency.

Mayor Graham opened the floor for public comment at 6:47 PM.

Diana Selinas, 134 Crystal Park Road, expressed confusion about the COG reimbursement and noted that the funds seem to be a large part of the budget. She inquired if the City chose not to allocate funds to fire mitigation, whether it would be required to reimburse the COG.

Mayor Graham closed public comment at 6:53 PM.

Councilor Wolfe recommended that the Council clarify that rather than reimbursing the COG that they chose to allocate the same dollar amount to wildfire mitigation pursuant to paragraph 15, at the Council's discretion. She explained that the city is expected to determine whether allocating tax reimbursement funds to the COG is reasonable and in its best interest, with discussion and a formal vote documenting the rationale.

Councilor Fortuin reiterated that the \$2,000 for HAB was intended to be included in the budget previously and noted that it was a relatively small amount to ask for.

Councilor Wolfe stated that she would rather wait until February to consider the \$2,000 for HAB along with several other items.

Councilor Shada moved to approve the 2026 Proposed Annual Budget subject to removing \$690,000 from the Economic Development line dedicated to the COG reimbursement, bringing the line to zero, and reallocating the funds to a new Wildfire Mitigation line under Assigned Funds within the General Fund, as well as adding \$2,000 to the Planning Department for HAB from the reserves. The motion was seconded by Councilor Fortuin. The motion carried (5-2) with Councilors Wolfe and Chandler as dissenting votes.

Councilor Wolfe moved to approve the 2025 Amended Annual Budget as presented. The motion was seconded by Councilor Fortuin. The motion carried (7-0).

H. HEARINGS

1. Continuation of Second Reading and Public Hearing of Ordinance No. 1925 Concerning Accessory Dwelling Units, Occupancy Limits for Dwelling Units, and Parking Restrictions for Multifamily Residential Development

Planning Director Rollenhagen presented the ordinance, reminded everyone that the City Council had referred the ordinance to the City Planning Commission (CPC) to review the section regarding Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs), specifically to provide a recommendation about construction in front yards and conversion of covered parking spaces. CPC's recommendation was to prohibit ADUs in the front yard and set the minimum front setback for a detached ADU at the rearmost façade of the primary residence. It was recommended that the restrictions on covered parking spaces be eliminated from the ordinance. Director Rollenhagen clarified the ordinance language presented, explaining that the intent of CPC was to specifically prohibit detached ADUs in front yards, and that the word "detached" should be added to the front yard restriction. He added that a letter was provided by HAB recommending that the City Council not adopt restrictions on ADU's in front yards, in covered parking spaces and on parcels with multiple residences.

There was a brief discussion about whether a duplex could have an ADU, based on the definition in the ordinance. Director Rollenhagen clarified that an ADU would be accessory to a single-family detached dwelling only, indicating a duplex would not qualify.

Director Rollenhagen confirmed that height restrictions are set in tables organized by each zoning district.

Councilor Wolfe expressed concern that an ADU can potentially be taller than the primary dwelling if still within the height restriction of the zoning district. She proposed adding a sentence in Section 18.04.3.7(B)(3) stating that in no event shall the ADU exceed the height of the principal dwelling unit.

City Attorney Harvey noted that State Law does not allow ADU restrictions to be more stringent than those for the primary dwelling. He advised that limiting an ADU's height to that of the primary dwelling is appropriate.

Mayor Pro Tem Johnson suggested revisiting a prior discussion regarding allowing ADUs in front yards where existing structures already exist, noting that some small buildings could be converted without impacting the neighborhood.

Councilor Wolfe stated that she was in favor of following CPC's recommendations.

There was a discussion about parcels with multiple single-family residences during which Director Rollenhagen clarified that an ADU is intended to be allowed only where there is one primary single-family residence. He noted that other zoning districts permitting multifamily housing remain subject to existing code requirements.

Councilor Chandler expressed support for CPC's recommendations and Director Rollenhagen's suggestion to specify "detached" in the front yard ADU restriction. She noted that prior discussions about adding or expanding front-yard structures had become confusing and emphasized that the ADU ordinance is a pilot that can be revisited if it proves too restrictive.

Councilor Fortuin stated that she did not expect a significant increase in ADU construction and suggested that the Council could revisit the code if concerns arise. She referenced the HAB letter, which stated that the proposed restrictions do not improve safety, protect neighborhood character, or support housing needs. Councilor Fortuin expressed opposition to including restrictions on front-yard ADUs and conversion of covered parking spaces, stating that the restrictions are unnecessary.

Councilor Wolfe expressed concern that the proposed definition of an ADU was not clear and suggested changing the wording.

Note for the Record – The City Council took a break at 7:42 PM and reconvened at 7:53 PM.

City Attorney Harvey recommended that an ADU could be defined in the ordinance as a subordinate attached or detached dwelling unit that provides complete independent living facilities for one or more individuals located on the same lot that contains a single proposed or existing single-family dwelling that includes facilities for living, sleeping, cooking, and sanitation.

Mayor Graham opened public comment at 7:59 PM. Due to no public comment, Mayor Graham subsequently closed the public comment portion of the hearing.

Councilor Wolfe moved to replace the definition in Section 18.04.3.7(A) with the definition recommended by the City Attorney. The motion was seconded by Councilor Chandler. The motion carried unanimously (7-0).

Councilor Wolfe moved to amend Section 18.04.3.7(B)(3) to add a sentence to the end stating that in no event shall the ADU exceed the height of the principal dwelling unit.

The motion was seconded by Councilor Whetherhult. The motion was carried (6-1), with Councilor Fortuin as the dissenting vote.

There was a brief discussion about whether the language recommended by CPC would allow ADUs in the side yard, during which Planning Director Rollenhagen clarified that setting the front setback for detached ADUs at the rearmost façade would prohibit detached ADUs in the side yard.

Mayor Pro Tem Johnson reiterated that she would like the Council to consider at a minimum allowing preexisting structure ADU conversion and side yard ADUs.

Councilor Wolfe moved to replace Section 18.04.3.7(E) with “Detached ADUs shall not be placed in front yards. The minimum front setback for a detached ADU shall be the rearmost façade of the primary residence.” The motion was seconded by Councilor Chandler. The motion carried (4-3) with Councilors Fortuin and Whetherhult, and Mayor Pro Tem Johnson as the dissenting votes.

Councilor Wolfe moved to delete Section 18.04.3.7(F) as recommended by CPC and renumerate the sequential code appropriately. The motion was seconded by Councilor Chandler. The motion carried unanimously (7-0).

Councilor Shada moved to approve the Ordinance 1925, Concerning Accessory Dwelling Units, Occupancy Limits for Dwelling Units, and Parking Restrictions for Multifamily Residential Development as amended. The motion was seconded by Councilor Wolfe. The motion carried (6-1), with Councilor Fortuin as the dissenting vote.

I. RECEIVE OR ACT ON COUNCIL CORRESPONDENCE

Mayor Graham shared that the City Employee Appreciation Breakfast is on December 3, 2025 and Breakfast with Santa Claus will be on December 13, 2025 in Memorial Hall from 8:00 AM to 10:30 AM, sponsored by the Kiwanis Club. He announced that the Holiday Parade is on Sunday, December 7, 2025 at 6:00 PM.

J. CITY ADMINISTRATOR REPORT

City Administrator Howell reported that the City Pool is not expected to open until the end of January, due to additional work that is needed.

K. EXECUTIVE SESSION

1. An Executive Session to discuss a Personnel Matter regarding an employee, pursuant to 5.1(a) of the Manitou Springs Municipal Charter. This executive session concerns the annual performance review of the City Administrator.

Mayor Graham read the purpose of the Executive Session into the record at 8:16 PM.

Councilor Chandler moved to enter the Executive Session for the stated purpose. The motion was seconded by Councilor Fortuin. The motion carried (7-0).

Note for the Record – Mayor Pro Tem Johnson left the meeting at 8:16 PM.

The City Council moved back to Regular Session at 9:15 PM. Mayor Graham confirmed the Executive Session was held solely for the stated purpose and that no formal decision was made.

L. RETURN TO OPEN SESSION/BUSINESS

1. Formal Action Relative to 2025 City Administrator's Performance Evaluation

It was noted that the City Administrator and Department Heads agreed not to accept a pay increase in 2026. The City Council expressed appreciation for the gesture during a time of fiscal austerity.

Mayor Graham moved for the City Council to formally recognize the December 2023 increase of the City Administrator's severance allowance to ten months, effective immediately. The motion was seconded by Councilor Chandler. The motion carried unanimously (6-0).

ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 9:16 PM.

Attest:


Elena Krebs, City Clerk


John Graham, Mayor

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