

**CITY OF MANITOU SPRINGS
CITY COUNCIL**

Regular Meeting Minutes
606 Manitou Avenue
February 3, 2026

The City Council of Manitou Springs met in Regular Session on Tuesday, February 3, 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
Mayor Pro Tem Judith Chandler
Councilor John Shada
Councilor Julie Wolfe
Councilor Nate Nassif
Councilor Gloria Latimer

COUNCIL MEMBERS ABSENT FOR ROLL CALL:

Councilor Carey Storm (Excused)

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, except for Councilor Storm.

D. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

E. PUBLIC COMMENT ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Joan Stang, Volunteer Education Chair with Pedestrian and Cycle Manitou (PaC-MAN), requested Council's assistance in disseminating walk audit findings and safety education materials for motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians developed in collaboration with regional partners. She highlighted PaC-MAN's Safety Education Toolkit and online

resources and emphasized the goal of fostering a community culture of lawful and courteous road and trail use.

Jeremy Wilson, 1013 Modes Street, Colorado Springs, CO 80904, stated that he had unintentionally violated the City's street performance regulations by using an amplifier and asserted that the prohibition on amplified sound is unconstitutional. He argued that amplified performance is protected expressive activity in a traditional public forum and objected to restrictions on amplification and performance on public benches. He requested that the City review and revise the ordinance to ensure it aligns with constitutional free speech protections.

Mike Casey, 315 Crystal Hills Boulevard, stated that he owns a building across from the Wichita Parking Lot and expressed concern about how the potential dissolution of the Manitou Springs Metropolitan District (Metro) could impact parking rates. He explained that he and a residential tenant currently pay \$24 per month for parking and cautioned that significant increases could make parking unaffordable, jeopardizing his tenant's housing and his ability to lease the property and sustain his business. He asked whether monthly parking options would continue to be available, whether overnight parking would be allowed, and whether existing users might be grandfathered in.

City Administrator Denise Howell commented that the City would return to the same rates or lower that were in place before the Metro managed the lot, which would be less than current rates.

Mayor Johnson read a comment into the record from resident Curtis Crawley, who reported a negative experience with recent code enforcement actions related to his properties at 18 Delaware Road and 19 Fox Path Road. He expressed concern that the actions may not have followed proper notice protocols and could violate U.S. postal regulations and requested that any further enforcement or abatement actions cease immediately.

F. CONSENT CALENDAR

1. January 20, 2026 City Council Regular Meeting Minutes
2. January 23, 2026 City Council Special Meeting Minutes
3. Request to Change Michael Quintana from a Regular to Alternate Member of the Housing Advisory Board
4. Consideration of a Tavern Liquor License Renewal at 934 Manitou Avenue – Manitou Restaurant Group, Inc., d/b/a Border Burger Bar

It was noted that although the Border Burger Bar liquor license had a violation in the previous year, the case was closed with the State and no additional penalties could be applied. Council may request a hearing to review evidence against renewal.

Councilor Latimer moved to approve the consent calendar as presented. The motion was seconded by Councilor Nassif. The motion carried unanimously (6-0).

G. HEARINGS

1. Second Reading and Public Hearing of Ordinance No. 0126, An Ordinance of the City of Manitou Springs, Colorado, Adding a New Chapter 3.55 to the Manitou Springs Municipal Code to Implement a Cost Recovery Mechanism for Emergency and Non-Emergency Services Provided by the Manitou Springs Fire Department in Response to Accidents Involving Motor Vehicles

Fire Chief Keith Buckmiller explained that the ordinance is intended to help recover funds spent on high-cost events and emphasized that only the insurance companies would be billed, not the driver. He clarified that in the event of an uninsured driver a bill would not be generated.

There was a discussion about the City's ability to submit claims to insurance in the event there is no party at fault. City Attorney Jeff Parker advised that the City could adjust the language in the ordinance to bill the party causing the need for services.

Fire Chief Buckmiller noted that he prefers the term "traffic collisions" rather than "traffic accidents," emphasizing that drivers are responsible for exercising due care in hazardous conditions, such as black ice.

There was a brief discussion about the Police Department's involvement, during which Fire Chief Buckmiller confirmed that the Police Department does report to traffic collisions and would determine fault.

Mayor Johnson opened the public hearing at 6:29 PM. Due to no public comment, Mayor Johnson subsequently closed the public comment portion of the hearing.

City Attorney Parker suggested changing the word "accidents" in the ordinance title to "incidents".

Councilor Wolfe moved to adopt Ordinance No. 0126, An Ordinance of the City of Manitou Springs, Colorado, Adding a New Chapter 3.55 to the Manitou Springs Municipal Code to Implement a Cost Recovery Mechanism for Emergency and Non-Emergency Services Provided by the Manitou Springs Fire Department in Response to Accidents Involving Motor Vehicles as amended, to include the change in language as advised by the City Attorney, and to change the title of the ordinance from "accidents" to "incidents". The motion was seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Chandler. The motion carried unanimously (6-0).

2. Second Reading and Public Hearing of Ordinance No. 0226, An Ordinance of the City of Manitou Springs, Colorado, Amending Provisions in Chapter 12.04 of the Manitou Springs Municipal Code to Modify How Encroachments Into City Rights-Of-Way and Other City Owned or Controlled Property Are Processed For Review and Approval

Planning Director Fred Rollenhagen explained that all inadvertent existing encroachments would be heard and decided upon by the City Council and that the ordinance clarifies that the City Administrator would be the approval authority for other types of encroachments. He explained that applicants may appeal administratively approved encroachment decisions to City Council.

Councilor Wolfe expressed concern about the wording in the proposed revisions to Code Section 12.04.040, that stated the encroachments shall be approved by the City Administrator. She suggested that the language be updated to clarify that the applications are subject to City Administrator approval.

Mayor Johnson opened the public hearing at 6:38 PM. Due to no public comment, Mayor Johnson subsequently closed the public comment portion of the hearing

Mayor Pro Tem Chandler moved to approve Ordinance No. 0226, An Ordinance of the City of Manitou Springs, Colorado, Amending Provisions in Chapter 12.04 of the Manitou Springs Municipal Code to Modify How Encroachments Into City Rights-Of-Way and Other City Owned or Controlled Property Are Processed For Review and Approval. The motion was second by Councilor Latimer. The motion carried unanimously (6-0).

H. BUSINESS

1. Consideration of Resolution No. 0726, A Resolution Adopting An Updated Universal Fee Schedule

City Administrator Howell shared that it had been requested earlier in the day that staff adjust the Fee Schedule to highlight changes that are essential for the City Council to address during the meeting, separating them from other suggested changes.

Finance Director Rebecca Davis explained that the highlighted necessary changes were based on increased costs to the City, alignment with State statute or recently adopted ordinances. She added that the other suggested changes are mostly inflation increases.

There was a general discussion about the non-essential proposed changes, during which the consensus was that the Council would consider the changes at a later date.

Councilor Wolfe suggested a work session to review the broader fee schedule.

Councilor Latimer requested rationale be provided, particularly for the event fees and the Planning Department, before the City Council considers the additional fee changes at a later date. Finance Director Davis explained that changes in the Planning Department fees are largely based on personnel costs.

Councilor Shada expressed concern about the increase to the Fire Department search and retrieval of documents fee. He stated he would like to see all charges for the fee in the past year and suggested the change required more discussion.

Councilor Wolfe stated that she is in favor of postponing consideration of the Fire Department document retrieval fee, so that the Council can get more information about the cost for staff to do the work.

Mayor Pro Tem Chandler stated that she would like the postponed fees to have a date certain so that the Council could prepare and the community could provide input.

Councilor Wolfe suggested that the fees should be further discussed in March, after the election concerning the potential dissolution of the Metro, to allow the Council to address parking rates as well.

Mayor Johnson opened the floor for public comment at 7:01 PM.

Karole Campbell, with Mad Woman Marketing Strategies, shared that she is contracted to produce the Commonwheel Art Festival in 2026 and explained that major events such as the Commonweal Arts Festival begin budgeting and vendor negotiations months in advance. She noted that fees and budgets for the upcoming festival have already been set, and that unexpected increases could significantly disrupt planning and threaten the viability of events already underway. She urged Council to consider the timing and financial impacts during its work session.

Julia Wright, 106 Canon Avenue, shared that she has been a part of the Commonwheel art festival for 50 years, and requested that the vendor permit fee not be increased, noting that vendors are already facing higher costs. She emphasized the festival's long history, its significant contribution to city sales tax revenue, and warned that further fee increases could jeopardize the continuation of the event.

Mayor Johnson read a comment into the record from Visit Manitou Springs Executive Director Jenna Wells, who urged Council to reconsider continued increases to event fees. She noted recent increases to application and vendor fees and explained that, when combined with rising required service and operating costs, they place financial strain on long-standing nonprofit community events. She emphasized that these cumulative costs threaten the sustainability of free, community-defining events and requested that Council reconsider further fee increases for a second consecutive year.

Mayor Johnson closed the floor to public comment at 7:07 PM.

Councilor Shada moved to approve the proposed encroachment permit fee, postage fees, water meter installation fees and traffic collision reimbursement fees, and to direct staff to bring other proposed fee changes, including the proposed change to the Fire Department document retrieval fee, to the March 10, 2026 City Council Work Session for discussion. The motion was seconded by Councilor Wolfe. The motion carried unanimously (6-0).

Note for the Record – The City Council took a break at 7:08 PM and reconvened at 7:22 PM.

2. Direction on Community Engagement Budget

City Administrator Howell presented options for gathering community input. She noted that the City's prior Magellan Strategies survey had to be extended multiple times to achieve adequate participation. She outlined four approaches including an online survey, one in person meeting, multiple in person meetings, and a hybrid option combining both. She explained that surveys provide convenient, high-level feedback but are limited in two-way dialogue, while in person engagement supports education, discussion, and trust building, particularly around the budget. City Administrator Howell emphasized that business feedback could be included and tracked separately. She advised that the hybrid approach would offer the most comprehensive feedback.

There was a general discussion about the timeline for starting and completing any of the community engagement options. City Administrator Howell stated that the goal would be to launch a survey in the third week of March and have results by the end of May if the process does not require an extension to gather more input. She confirmed that the two less extensive options would take about 8 to 10 weeks once launched. She recommended waiting until at least mid-March to launch a survey, so that it does not get confused with the upcoming election.

Mayor Pro Tem Chandler expressed strong support for a hybrid approach, noting that it is worth the investment, and added her support for Magellan Strategies. She suggested two community engagement meetings.

Councilor Latimer emphasized the importance of engaging with the community, including the businesses. She stated that she would like for the Council to have input on the questions included on the survey to ensure that the City is able to get quality feedback and noted the high cost of the service. Councilor Latimer stated that she is in favor of a hybrid approach and acknowledged the urgency to get a survey out sooner rather than later. She suggested the City proceed with a survey and one informational meeting that could be recorded, rather than a community engagement meeting.

There was a brief discussion about paper surveys, during which City Administrator Howell confirmed that in-person surveys could be offered and remain confidential, as has been done in the past.

City Administrator Howell confirmed that the feedback could be broken up by ward, and that an informational meeting is an option, both of which have been done before.

Councilor Wolfe expressed concern that an in-depth process would delay the City's ability to make decisions to address budget cuts. She suggested meeting in March to consider changes prior to a community engagement process that would take several months. She noted that the City could adjust the 2026 and 2027 budgets after the process is complete.

City Administrator Howell clarified that the purpose of the engagement process is not to focus on the 2026 and 2027 budgets themselves, but to identify community priorities. She explained that understanding those priorities would guide future funding decisions and how resources are allocated.

Mayor Johnson stated she has heard from the community repeatedly that they want to participate. She stated that she is willing to complete the process to get community input before making changes. Mayor Johnson also suggested working with the Library District for help with filling out surveys.

Mayor Pro Tem Chandler requested that the community engagement plan be added to the February 28, 2026 City Council Retreat to discuss the framework in further detail. She noted that there are some core services that cannot be cut that the community needs to be aware of. She emphasized including businesses and suggested the Council consider one community meeting for businesses and one for residents.

Councilor Latimer expressed concern about waiting until February 28, 2026 to discuss the details of the survey, particularly the development of questions.

Councilor Nassif expressed support for the general process, particularly the opportunity to simplify financial reporting. He stated that his position largely hinges on the quality of the consultant and that he would prefer a well-respected consultant that would manage both the survey and the community engagement meetings.

Mayor Pro Tem Chandler suggested focusing on a survey first and revisiting the idea of community engagement meetings later, noting that time is of the essence.

Councilor Wolfe agreed with Councilor Latimer and suggested that the City Council should start considering survey questions early, so that they do not slow down the process. She added that it would be beneficial to mix businesses and residents during community engagement.

Mayor Johnson suggested that an experienced facilitator may be useful in the development of questions.

City Administrator Howell recommended that Council provide clear direction on whether to proceed with a survey or a survey combined with community meetings. She stated

that engaging Magellan Strategies would help develop appropriate questions and reduce assumptions by gathering factual data. She emphasized that once direction is given, staff can begin the necessary research and move the process forward.

There was a brief discussion about whether Magellan Strategies could manage both a survey and community engagement meetings. City Administrator Howell stated that she did not think they provided community engagement meeting services, but she could find out, and Magellan Strategies may be able to recommend a provider they have worked with before.

Councilor Latimer moved to direct the City Administrator to contract with Magellan Strategies for a written and text message survey of the residents' opinions pertaining to 2026 and 2027 budget issues with priorities determined by the City Council. The motion was seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Chandler. The motion carried unanimously (6-0).

Mayor Johnson shared that Councilor Storm had emailed to say that her preference would be at least one community engagement meeting in addition to the survey.

Mayor Pro Tem Chandler reiterated that she would like two community engagement meetings and agreed with Councilor Wolfe's suggestion to mix businesses and residents.

Councilor Latimer suggested conducting community engagement meetings after the survey begins circulating, so that early feedback might help direct the meetings.

Councilor Wolfe suggested an informational meeting before the launch of the survey to ensure that people are informed before taking the survey.

Mayor Pro Tem Chandler moved to direct the City Administrator to begin the process and return to Council with feedback on the earliest possible timeline for launching the community engagement process. The motion was seconded by Councilor Wolfe. The motion carried unanimously (6-0).

I. RECEIVE OR ACT ON COUNCIL CORRESPONDENCE

Councilor Wolfe shared that she was notified of an illegal sign at the Armadillo. She requested that City Staff address the code enforcement issue.

Councilor Latimer stated that the Great Fruitcake Toss was a success. Councilor Latimer shared that resident Linda Morlan started a printed version of community news and clarified that the newsletter is community run and not part of the City.

Councilor Nassif echoed sentiments about the Great Fruitcake Toss. He expressed appreciation for City Administrator Howell and Parks and Recreation Director Gillian Rossi for their help in repairing a balance beam at Schriver Park that is beloved by the community.

Mayor Pro Tem Chandler expressed appreciation for the City Administrator's assistance with a resident water meter installation issue.

Councilor Latimer shared that there is a survey circulating for the Route 3 Bus Line, regarding keeping the line free.

Mayor Johnson announced that the Pool Ribbon Cutting to reopen the City pool will be on February 9, 2026. She shared that Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments (PPACG) has an opening for a new community representative.

J. CITY ADMINISTRATOR REPORT

City Administrator Howell announced that registration for Citizens Academy is open online and that the educational program will start in March.

K. EXECUTIVE SESSION

1. An Executive Session to hold a conference with the City Attorney for legal advice pursuant to Section 5.1(c) of the City of Manitou Springs Home Rule Charter concerning *Manitou and Pikes Peak Railway Company v. City of Manitou Springs, Colorado*, El Paso County District Court Case No. 2025CV30766

Mayor Johnson read the purpose of the Executive Session into the record at 8:37 PM.

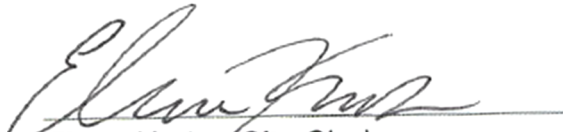
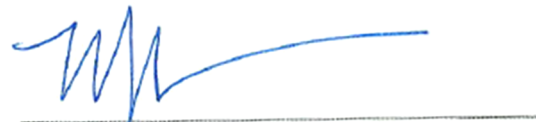
Councilor Nassif moved to enter the Executive Session for the stated purpose. The motion was seconded by Councilor Latimer. The motion carried unanimously (6-0).

The City Council moved back to Regular Session at 9:36 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, Mayor Pro Tem Chandler moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Councilor Wolfe. The motion carried unanimously (6-0). The meeting adjourned at 9:37 PM.

Attest:


Elena Krebs, City Clerk
Natalie Johnson, Mayor

If you need this document in an alternative format, such as large print, accessible PDF, or Braille, please contact the City Clerk's Office at cityclerk@manitouspringsco.gov or (719) 685-2554.