



**CITY OF MANITOU SPRINGS
MANITOU ARTS, CULTURE, AND HERITAGE BOARD**

Regular Meeting Minutes
Remote Meeting via Zoom
January 22, 2026

A. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL (Also Determine Voting Status of Alternates)

Chair Routon called the Manitou Arts, Culture, and Heritage (MACH) Board meeting to order at 5:03 PM.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT FOR ROLL CALL:

Chair Ralph Routon
Vice Chair Kinsey Watts
Board Member Wren Almitra
Board Member Mark Lee
Board Member Marcus Medina
Board Member Peter Sommers
Alternate Board Member Lisette Casey
Alternate Board Member Gerald Mitchell
Alternate Board Member Jason Wells

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT FOR ROLL CALL:

Board Member Neale Minch (Excused)

B. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Board Member Lee moved approve the agenda as amended to move item F1, Tier 1 Presentations (Hiawatha Gardens, Manitou Library, Manitou Art Center, Manitou Springs Heritage Museum, Miramont Castle, to be after Public Comment. Board Member Medina seconded the motion. The motion was carried (6-0).

C. PUBLIC COMMENTS NOT ON THE AGENDA

Board Member Sommers thanked the City Clerk's Office for completing the minutes up to present.

F1. Tier 1 Presentations (Hiawatha Gardens, Manitou Library, Manitou Art Center, Manitou Springs Heritage Museum, Miramont Castle)

City Administrator Denise Howell stated that the Manitou Springs Library is not requesting funding this year, as they still have funds from the previous year in an

assigned account should they need anything. She presented on the Hiawatha Gardens project and pointed out that the construction is estimated to start in late 2028, therefore the requested funds could be dispersed equally to other applicants, or as MACH sees fit.

Director of the Manitou Art Center (MAC) Natalie Johnson presented on the mission, vision and purpose of the MAC. She shared accomplishments in 2025, as well as goals for 2026. Director Johnson reported that the MAC received a community development block grant of \$40,000 to improve Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) access. Grant funding is intended to be used for staff pay, maintenance, and more.

Michelle Anthony with the Manitou Springs Heritage Museum presented on 2025 accomplishments, as well as 2026 goals. Continuing the University of Colorado Colorado Springs (UCCS) intern program, exhibits for upcoming events, Ghost Tours, records entry and adopting updated policies and instructions were highlighted. The grant funds for 2026 would be used mainly for the UCCS Work Study Program. Long term goals were also shared.

Peggie Yager with Miramont Castle presented that the mission has not changed from previous years. 2025 accomplishments included improvements to some interior rooms, floors and window restoration. 2026 objectives include restoration of other rooms and floors including the Nuremberg exhibit room, servant stairwell and an employee bathroom.

D. REPORTS – CITY COUNCIL LIAISON & STAFF

1. City Staff Report

Finance Director Rebecca Davis confirmed that the timeline for the results of the MACH budget are still on target for early February.

2. City Council Liaison Report

Council Liaison Judith Chandler thanked the MACH board for allowing her to continue as Liaison. She reminded the Board that the Hiawatha Gardens project is a two phase project and has been in the works for 10 years, with phase one finally starting in 2026. City Council has a special meeting coming up to discuss the Ballot Measure included in the March 3, 2026 election for the dissolution of the Metropolitan District and the City of Manitou Springs' plan for parking should that pass.

3. Board Member Report on Attended Events

Board Member Sommers reported that he attended Art in Action at the MAC and stated MACH support was mentioned.

Council Liaison Chandler attended Packs for the Homeless and stated that it was a wonderful event. She confirmed that 492 backpacks were filled.

E. CONSENT CALENDAR

1. September 25, 2025 Minutes

Board Member Watts moved to approve the September minutes as amended to correct a formatting error in the Section D header. Board member Lee seconded the motion. The motion carried (6-0).

2. October 23, 2025 Minutes

3. December 4, 2025 Minutes

Board Member Lee moved to approve the October and December minutes as presented. Board Member Sommer seconded the motion. The motion carried (6-0).

F. BUSINESS

1. Tier 1 Presentations (Hiawatha Gardens, Manitou Library, Manitou Art Center, Manitou Springs Heritage Museum, Miramont Castle)

Note for the Record – Item F1 was moved after Public Comment during the Approval of Agenda portion of the meeting.

2. Unresolved grant eligibility questions from early review

Regarding the Archeology Day Art project grant application for the Garden of the Gods (GOG) visitors center, Board Member Sommers suggested that the issue should be whether the artist and the project benefit Manitou Springs and that the applicant be a resident or secure a pass-through. There was discussion regarding the requirements. The overall concern is ensuring the project benefits Manitou Springs. Board Member Mitchell suggested that the project could be moved to the bottom of the list of grants, not discrediting it until all other grants more qualified were considered and possibly revisited if money was left to grant. Chair Routon suggested the discussion be tabled and revisited during the next meeting.

Chair Routon mentioned the Drum Circle applicant was not a resident, though the Drum Circle is a Manitou Springs event. Board Member Lee stated that he would most likely recuse himself. He shared that Lisa volunteered to write the grant but there are Manitou residents that are involved and could potentially serve as a pass-through.

Chair Routon noted there are two applicants related to Indigenous Peoples Day. Chair Routon stated that the Board has specific language regarding multiple applicants

related to the same event. There was discussion surrounding the eligibility of more than one applicant to celebrate the same event. The consensus was to send an email to both applicants to better understand the purpose of each event.

Chair Routon discussed the numerous applications that do not specify a location, site or permission. Other eligibility questions and concerns were discussed regarding certain applications for varying reasons. Applications discussed were:

- Mindfulness
- Fiber Art Class
- Parenting Village Circle
- Saving Black History Mural
- Women's Freedom Museum
- Manitou Springs Pride Fest
- Direct Mail Connection
- Manitou to Waltham Stairs Beautification.
- Pawnee Pollinator Garden

There was discussion regarding the need for permission from the City in certain applications that wasn't apparent.

Board Member Almitra suggested that guidelines might need to be highlighted within applications to specify requirements such as location. It was mentioned that if the Board was to consider giving one applicant a chance to revise or correct an application, it should be given to all. Chair Routon stated he would send all of the applicants in question an email asking for clarification.

3. Recusals for Board Members to self-report or ask for Board input

Chair Routon recused from Art on the Avenue. Board Member Lee recused from the Drum Circle and Upstairs at the STACC. Board Member Sommers recused from the Women's Freedom Museum and the MAC. Board Member Medina spoke for Board Member Wells due to technical difficulty and stated he is recusing from the Comedy Fest. Board Member Medina recused from the MAC. Board Member Almitra recused from the Flying Pig Album and Release Show.

4. Pikes Peak Bulletin – Discussion on how to proceed with no completion report

Chair Routon stated he contacted the Bulletin to remind them of the deadline for a completion report and received no response. He recommended the Board refer to the September minutes to prepare for conversation at the next meeting regarding how to handle this issue. He did confirm they did not apply for a 2026 grant.

5. Decide whether to invite any Tier 2 applicants to appear before the Board on January 29, 2026

Chair Routon suggested inviting Upstairs at the STACC, mainly due to the grant amount requested. Board consensus was to invite them to the next meeting.

There was discussion regarding the multiple event applications for Indigenous Peoples Day. The consensus was that multiple applicants for the same type of event should be considered. Chair Routon agreed to reach out to both applicants to clarify the intent.

6. Vote on MACH Board Officers for 2026-2027

Chair Routon confirmed that any changes to the Board positions will take place after the grant approval cycle.

Board Member Almitra stated she is stepping down from the Secretary role.

Chair Routon nominated Board Member Watts for Secretary and Board Member Sommers for Vice Chair. He also volunteered to remain Chair.

Board Member Lee moved to reelect Ralph Routon as Chair. Vice Chair Watts seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously (6-0).

Chair Routon moved to elect Peter Sommers as Vice Chair effective after the grant approval cycle. The motion carried unanimously (6-0).

Chair Routon moved to elect Kinsey Watts as Secretary effective after the grant approval cycle. The motion carried unanimously (6-0).

G. DISCUSSION OF TOPICS FOR A FUTURE BOARD MEETING

There was no discussion.

H. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Routon adjourned at 7:37 PM.

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