



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

Special Meeting Minutes
Remote Meeting via Zoom
February 12, 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 5:01 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

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT FOR ROLL CALL:

Board Member Neale Minch (Excused)
Alternate Board Member Gerald Mitchell
Alternate Board Member Jason Wells (Joined at 5:08 PM)

Board Member Lee moved to promote Lisette Casey to a voting member in absence of Board Member Minch and Alternate Board Member Wells to vote in the event of any recusals from grants during the meeting. Vice Chair Watts seconded the motion. The motion carried (6-0).

B. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Vice Chair Watts moved to approve the agenda as presented. Board Member Sommers seconded the motion. The motion carried (7-0).

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. January 29, 2026

Board Member Lee moved to approve the minutes as presented. Board Member Medina seconded the motion. The motion carried (7-0).

D. PUBLIC COMMENTS NOT ON THE AGENDA (please limit comments to three minutes)

There was no public comment.

E. REPORTS – CITY COUNCIL LIAISON & STAFF

1. City Staff Report (Rebecca Davis)

Finance Director Davis reported on financials for the MACH board including Sales tax reported through December 31, 2025. She stated that she budgeted to receive \$270,600 for Tier 1 and actually received \$282,602. For Tier 2, she had budgeted \$139,400 and actually received \$145,585. She confirmed that the Board can safely spend the projected budget of \$162,675 on the grant awards.

Note for the Record – Board Member Wells joined the meeting at 5:08 PM.

2. City Council Liaison Report (Judith Chandler)

Council Liaison Chandler reported that the Ribbon Cutting and Reopening of the City Pool and Fitness Center was a success. She also reported that City Council approved 4 additional sirens for fire safety and the fire mitigation assessment proposal at the work session held on January 10, 2026. Two new ordinances will be presented to City Council, including the Colorado Wildfire Resiliency Code adoption and the 2021 International Fire Code. It was noted that there will be a community meeting at the Manitou Springs Elementary School on January 13, 2026, at 5:00 PM. John Wiess will be hosting the meeting to discuss topics such as ideas for the Penny Arcade as well as acquiring Tubby's Turnaround to become a small grocery store. There will also be discussion following the meeting at the Manitou Art Center (MAC) from 6:30 PM to 8:00 PM.

Council Liaison Chandler also mentioned that Saturday, January 14, 2026, is the Mumbo Jumbo Gumbo Cookoff and the Carnivale Parade, as well as an open meeting at the Carnegie Library being held by the Metropolitan District (Metro) to discuss the 5A vote. She reiterated that the City Council did pass a resolution supporting the dissolution of the Metro and another resolution, agreeing on an employee parking benefit program.

F. BUSINESS

1. Status Report on grants in question or withdrawals (Ralph Routon)

Chair Routon clarified that the application submitted by Sharrie Nicholson-Perry for Indigenous Peoples Day was withdrawn. He stated that there was some confusion

about the event and a misunderstanding that the other applicant wasn't going to apply, which led her to apply.

Chair Routon noted two projects that carried over from last year and extended into the current cycle, the Rocky Museum Archive project for \$2,500 and the Manitou Springs Death Café for \$750. He shared that there was an update from David Ball of the Rocky Museum after the first of the year and the Board should have an emailed copy. He also reported that he had spoken to Janine Scott of Death Café, and she explained what has been done so far. He added that it shouldn't be anything that will cause a problem for the Board.

Chair Routon recalled that the conversation regarding the grant request for Upstairs at the STACC had lots of questions, some of which were unable to be answered at that time. He stated it might be important to reach out to the applicants, Nancy Fortuin and Susan Watkins, to see where they stand for a potential lease and any further details related, to ask for any update on the plan for adding bathrooms upstairs. Board Member Lee stated that the committee for this project will be meeting February 13, 2026. Chair Routon and Council Liaison Chandler will follow up with the applicants and report back to the Board.

2. Discuss the process of reaching the target for Tier 2 Decisions

There was discussion about how the grant process is handled by some of the board members to help with developing a strategy in weighing applications. Chair Routon shared that an email was sent to the Board with examples and reminded the Board that these are not to sway decisions or practices. He shared some statistics from previous years' grant cycles to give everyone an idea of how complex the process can be. He reminded the Board that there are 41 grants to consider and that everyone should feel open to discussing their opinion on each moving forward. It was mentioned that the process that has worked in the past was to start at each end of the list to vote for or against grants that got either the lowest or highest score, then move to the grants that garnered more in depth discussion. The consensus of the board was to continue with that strategy.

3. Consider possible rejections of some grant application and consider regular grants with the highest ratings from board members.

Chair Routon called for informal "up or down" votes on each Tier 2 Mini-Grant application. An "Up" vote indicated consensus to retain the application for further consideration, while a "Down" vote indicated consensus to remove it from consideration.

- **The Blair** - Down
- **Parenting Village Center** – Down
- **Heels** – Down
- **The Captain's Log** – Down

- **The Women’s Freedom Museum** – Board Member Sommers and Alternate Board Member Casey recused.
Board Member Wells motioned to partially fund the Women’s Freedom Museum grant request at \$3,000, with a request for more clarity about sights for the art pieces. Board Member Medina seconded the motion. The motion carried (5-1) with Chair Routon opposed.
- **2027 29th Annual Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Unity Festival** – Board Member Sommers motioned for partial funding of the 2027 29th Annual Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Unity Festival grant request at \$1,000. Board Member Lee seconded the motion. The motion carried (6-1) with Chair Routon opposed.
- **Manitou to Waltham stairs beautification project** – Down, with Alternate Board Member Wells recusing.
- **Creative Cooking Classes and Comped Tickets to Farm to Table Dinners** – Vice Chair Watts motioned for partial funding of the Creative Cooking Classes and Comped Tickets to Farm to Table Dinners grant request for \$1,700. Board Member Sommers seconded the motion. The motion carried (7-0).
- **Saving Black History in Manitou Springs** – Down
- **The Historic Voices of Manitou Springs podcast** – Down
- **Art on the Avenue** – Chair Routon recused.
Vice Chair Watts motioned to fully fund the Art on the Avenue grant request. Board Member Wells seconded the motion. The motion carried (7-0).
- **2027 Manni Awards and potluck dinner** – Chair Routon recused.
Board Member Sommers motioned to fully fund the 2027 Manni Awards and potluck dinner grant request. Vice Chair Watts seconded the motion. The motion carried (7-0).
- **Pawnee Pollinator Garden** – Up, fully funded, with Board Member Lee recusing.
- **FAB LAB** – Up, fully funded
- **Music at the Commonwheel Art Festival on Labor Day Weekend** – Up, fully funded, with Board Member Sommers opposed.
- **Manitou Monster Project** – Up, fully funded
- **2027 Manitou Springs Carnivale parade (34th Annual)** – Up fully funded
- **Lantern Parade** – Up, fully funded, with Board Member Sommers opposed.
- **Manitou Springs Indigenous Peoples’ Day Celebration 2026** – Up, fully funded

4. Discuss expectations for February 19 meeting, and possibly February 26.

Chair Routon stated that the discussions coming for the next two meetings will be more in depth and somewhat tough. He stated that he will be preparing an email for the Board before the next meeting to assist with making these tough decisions. He mentioned that he believes the Board should be able to get through most of the remaining grants at the next meeting but anticipates it will need to carry over to February 26, 2026.

5. Update on the Pikes Peak Bulletin 2025 completion report

Chair Routon shared that he spoke with Warren Epstein from Pikes Peak Bulletin and that he apologized for not having the completion report by now.

G. BOARD CORRESPONDENCE

There was no discussion.

H. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Routon adjourned the meeting at 7:12 PM.

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