



BOARD of DIRECTORS

Thursday, March 5, 2026
4:30 PM

DRAFT MINUTES

Present: Ryan Aylesworth, Kayleigh Budnick, Dwight Codr, Mario Conjura, Chris Kueffner, Nick Lanza, Toni Moran, Dan Prokop, Ron Schurin, Sean Vasington, Emily Wicks
Staff Present: Steve Ferrigno, Kathleen Paterson, Rosemary Watson

1. Call to order

Toni Moran called the meeting to order at 4:31 PM.

2. Opportunity for public to comment

The Board reviewed public comment submitted by Susan Moynihan of Mansfield regarding recruitment of a new bookstore for Downtown Storrs.

3. Approval of minutes from January 8, 2026

Ron Schurin moved to approve the minutes from January 8, 2026. Louis Goffinet seconded. The motion passed unanimously and the minutes were approved.

4. Report by the Executive Director

Steve Ferrigno offered brief updates on the Gameday Shuttle wrap-up and the upcoming free dental clinic at E.O. Smith High School. He also reported on the launch of MDP's "Mansfield Builds Business" initiative with a collaboration and networking event.

Kathleen Paterson summarized the 2026 Taste 2 Towns program and provided the directors with statistics on participation and reach. She described the efforts of the participating restaurants and the promotional and advertising work provided by representatives from Mansfield and Windham. Dan Prokop said that his restaurant had seen an increase in customer traffic during the promotion and that he thought the roll-out went very well.

Mr. Ferrigno provided updates on the closing of Nautical Bowls and upcoming business openings and expansions including Guac and Grill, Action Packed, and Dog House Subs.

5. Reports from the Committees

A) Festival

Emily Wicks said that the Festival Committee has resumed regular meetings and is preparing to offer a full slate of fun plans and entertainment at the 2026 celebration.

B) Governance

There were no updates from the Governance Committee.

C) Finance & Growth

Mario Conjura updated the Directors on the proposed budget, restructuring of the 270 funds, and the ongoing progress related to the MDP investment strategy.

D) Public Spaces Working Group

Sean Vasington said that the Public Spaces working group is working to perfect the outdoor dining furniture grant program before launch in the coming weeks.

Chris Kueffner suggested that MDP investigate the potential of administering small business loans to assist local businesses in getting established or expanding their operations. Ryan Aylesworth described the grants which the Town of Mansfield administered as part of ARPA funds allocation and raised concerns about the complications of managing loans as opposed to grants.

6. Discussion Items

a) 2027 Budget

Mr. Ferrigno summarized changes to income and expenses from the 2026 Budget. He discussed the earned interest on the MDP money market account and the potential to hire a part-time video intern. He highlighted MDP's objective of serving the entire town, not just Downtown Storrs, and said that the new budget reflects this change.

Mr. Conjura moved to adopt the budget for 2027 as proposed. Mr. Goffinet seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

b) Games on the Square Proposal

Rosemary Watson discussed activation opportunities for Betsy Paterson Square and summarized the proposal for lawn games purchase. The games would be available for supervised and event use as well as public lending as a collaboration with the MPL Library Express. Mr. Prokop suggested hosting a corn hole tournament or similar activities on BPS.

Mr. Kueffer moved to authorize \$550 to be spent on games and signage for the program. Mario Conjura seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

c) Gameday Shuttle Debrief and NCAA Women's Tournament Thoughts

Mr. Ferrigno highlighted statistics on Gameday Shuttle ridership. He commented on cost, trends, and ideas for improving the program if it continues next year.

The Directors discussed the pros and cons of offering the Gameday Shuttle during the NCAA Women's Basketball Tournament if Storrs is selected as a venue. Mr. Prokop suggested prioritizing UConn games and games scheduled later in the day. Mr. Ferrigno spoke to the marketing plan for targeting visitors at the tournament. Dwight Codr discussed the limitations of on-campus parking on weekdays.

Dan Prokop moved to approve the Tournament Gameday Shuttle at the discretion of the Executive Director depending on timing, matchups, and other factors yet to be determined. Mr. Codr seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

7. Correspondence and Communications

Mr. Kueffner thanked staff for compiling the news related to Downtown Storrs and Mansfield economic development.

8. Adjourn

Mr. Aylesworth moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Kueffner seconded. The motion passed unanimously and the meeting was adjourned at 5:28 PM.

Minutes respectfully submitted by
Rosemary Watson