



**CELEBRATE MANSFIELD FESTIVAL COMMITTEE  
MEETING**

**Tuesday, March 14, 2023 at 5:00 PM**

**MINUTES**

**Attendance:** Chair Emily Wicks, Christine Ballestrini, Virginia Walton (left at 6:04 PM)

**Absent:** Louis Goffinet, Colby Trembley

**Staff:** Cynthia van Zelm, Kathleen Paterson, Joshua Stern

**1. Call to Order**

Chair Emily Wicks called the meeting to order at 5:01 PM.

**2. Public Comment**

There were no public comments.

**3. Approve Minutes from February 21, 2023**

Christine Ballestrini made a motion to approve the Special Meeting Minutes of February 21, 2023. Ms. Wicks seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

**4. Review Partnership Sponsored Events/Committee Tasks**

Cynthia van Zelm said Magdalena Pawlowski has been hired as Event Coordinator and will work part time from March 27 through mid-May, when she will transition to full time.

The Committee discussed a list, included in the meeting packet, of potential Festival activities and the members assigned to take the lead in organizing them. Activities discussed included:

- UConn Dining cooking demos
- Magic performance by Pete Haddad
- Puppetry/clown performance – **Ms. Wicks will talk with Anthony Sellitto.** Ms. van Zelm and Ms. Wicks said the goal is for the performances for the kids' area and other smaller performances to be mostly settled by June.
- Chalk drawings – Ms. Wicks said Louis Goffinet reached out to Noah Yilmaz, who is interested.
- Scarecrow decorating contest – Ms. van Zelm said the contest should be advertised earlier in the year. Committee and staff members discussed the steps of organizing the contest, with Ms. van Zelm noting that someone needs to be assigned to run the contest on the day of the Festival.
- Cornhole tournament – The Committee discussed booths that might be able to host the cornhole tournament. Kathleen Paterson said that several years ago, a UConn student group hosted a cornhole tournament at UConn's Student Recreation Center as a fundraiser. **Committee members will continue to brainstorm people to reach out to about the tournament.**
- Agility course – **Ms. Ballestrini will reach out to one of the Mansfield PE teachers about participating in this event**
- Restaurants and food booths:
  - The Committee discussed giving restaurants the option of participating without having booths by offering discounts for Festival attendees or special menu items. Virginia Walton asked if participating restaurants could participate in the Festival's sustainability efforts by using washable or compostable plates and utensils.

# MANSFIELD DOWNTOWN PARTNERSHIP

Business and Community

- Ms. Paterson wondered if instead of food booths, restaurants would be allowed to have tables in front of their storefronts to give out samples or take orders for food that would be prepared indoors. **The Partnership staff will follow up with Eastern Highlands Health District about the requirements for food samples or tables.**
- Ms. Paterson said food trucks are another option. Ms. Wicks said she would like to give restaurants multiple options for participation before bringing in food trucks.
- Ms. Ballestrini wondered how to encourage Festival attendees to pass by the restaurants in University Plaza, Storrs Commons, and the Dunkin' building, possibly through a scavenger hunt or similar activity to encourage movement. Ms. Wicks suggested a sign listing the food venues in the downtown. Ms. Ballestrini said if the restaurants are allowed to have sample tables, a scavenger hunt could take the form of a sample tour, possibly with a raffle.
- Ms. Wicks expressed a desire to reach out to more of the club sports teams. **Mr. Goffinet will reach out to the E.O. Smith Crew team. Ms. Paterson will follow up with Kyle Muncy about UConn athletics involvement.**

The Committee also reviewed ideas that had been discussed to mark the 20<sup>th</sup> annual Festival:

- Recording stories about what people love about Mansfield:
  - The Committee discussed possible people and organizations to reach out to about this idea, including WHUS and the Historical Society. They also discussed what the end goal of the project would be and whether the stories would be recorded during the Festival or ahead of time.
  - **Ms. Wicks or Joshua Stern will reach out to people involved at WHUS about their potential involvement**
  - **Ms. Wicks or Ms. Ballestrini will reach out to UConn Digital Media and Design**
- Mural of what people love about Mansfield – The Committee discussed the possibility of installing a mural on the panels surrounding the pickleball courts currently being built. Ms. Ballestrini thinks Youth Services led a similar effort at a playground in town. The Committee ultimately concluded that a project involving recording stories would be more doable in this timeframe than a mural.

## 5. Review Booth Activities

Ms. Paterson said the Committee had previously discussed encouraging the booths to host activities or offer giveaways, such as balloon animals. She said Save the Date postcards will be sent soon to past participants and suggested that the members review the list and add any additional businesses or organizations they think should be invited. The list contains all participants that have had booths at the Festival over the last 20 years, not including ones that have closed or moved. It also contains a list of the downtown businesses that have not had booths and some other potential new participants.

**Ms. Paterson will send the Save the Date cards to the past participants by March 31** and formally announce the Festival in early April. Ms. Paterson and Ms. Wicks suggested breaking up which committee members will follow up with which potential participants. **Committee members will review the list and begin adding any new businesses or organizations, or signing up to contact specific ones, by March 31.**

## 6. Review Sponsors and Committee Follow-Up

Ms. van Zelm noted the list of potential sponsors to whom the Partnership sends the solicitation and sponsorship form each year. She said the fund balance for the Festival is in good shape and the

downtown property owners have already committed \$7,000. Ms. Wicks suggested that **committee members will review the list of potential sponsors and note which ones they would be willing to contact, and/or which ones should be taken off the list, by March 31.**

Ms. Walton left the meeting at 6:04 PM.

### **7. Review Deadlines**

Ms. Paterson displayed and reviewed a list of deadlines for recruiting sponsors, recruiting and arranging booths, the scarecrow contest, and posters and other printed materials. Ms. Wicks and staff members discussed the deadlines for the scarecrow contest and decided to keep the deadline for participants at the same time, but announce the contest earlier. Ms. Paterson reviewed the general PR schedule and said the Save the Date postcards are ready to order. **She will send the list of deadlines to the Committee members.**

### **8. Discuss New Committee Members**

The Committee discussed potential new members, with Ms. Wicks saying it would be helpful for teachers and business owners to be represented on the Committee. Ms. van Zelm said Board President Kyle Muncy would like to see two to three additional Committee members. Nominees would need to be approved by the Governance Committee.

Ms. Paterson said she met with Sarah Kaufold from Consonare Choral Community, who expressed interest in helping coordinate a choral performance to open the Festival. Committee and staff members briefly discussed possible themes for the musical selections.

### **9. Adjourn**

Ms. Ballestrini made a motion to adjourn. Ms. Wicks seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 6:31 PM.

*Minutes prepared by Joshua Stern*