

FINAL

**CITY OF LEBANON
ARTS & CULTURE COMMISSION
MINUTES December 9, 2025
City Hall Council Chambers & LebanonNH.gov/Live
6:30PM**

MEMBERS PRESENT: (5/6) **Nick Gaffney** (Chair; Citizen Rep Ward 3,)
 Lucas Mendelsohn (Vice Chair; LOH Arts Org. Rep)
 Devin Wilkie (City Council, Heritage Commission)
 Claire Geno (AVA Arts Org. Rep)
 Jennifer Chambers (Arts Org. Rep)

MEMBERS ABSENT: (1/6) **Stevens Blanchard** (Ward 1 Citizen Rep)

STAFF PRESENT: (1) **Paul Coats** (Director Recreation, Arts and Parks)

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Nick Gaffney called the meeting to order at 6:31 PM.

Paul Coats gave the RSA 91-A announcement.

Two guests attended the meeting and are awaiting appointment to the Commission, Leonard Ridilla and Honor Hingston.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. October 28, 2025

Lucas MOVED to approve the October 28, 2025, Minutes as presented in the December 9, 2025 packet, with spelling corrections.

Seconded by Devin Wilkie.

**The Motion was approved (3-0-2).*

Lucas, Devin and Nick voted yea.

Jennifer and Claire abstained.

3. OTHER BUSINESS

A. Tunnel Art

The signs for the tunnel are printed and will be mounted soon. Allison's tunnel project is complete. The alcove still has some work to be finished. Emily still has to complete her piece and is waiting for the City to help mount her work. It is the chalk board underneath the pizza place.

Jennifer Chambers said they would like to do their Spring show in the tunnel, and they will work with Paul to help make that happen. It is hoped it will include an evening performance in the first week of June, exhibition of the students' art, and perhaps food trucks. The school has staging now, which would allow a performance in the tunnel. It is great that the area is covered.

The Middle School mural will not start until the third trimester. The teacher working with the students on the tunnel is Mr. Dan Masi.

B. Member Recruitment

Jennifer Chambers, from the New England School of the Arts, was welcomed to the Commission. That fills the last arts organization seat. The Commission will have one City Counselor, three arts organizations representatives, three citizens of which two seats are filled, and two alternatives. At the January City Council meeting, appointments will be considered and added. If they are all appointed it will be a full roster.

The members discussed when appointments and terms expire. Citizens are appointed for 3-year terms. Arts organization members are appointed for 1 year. Appointments are staggered and alternate throughout the cycle for continuity on the Commission. The current appointments will be confirmed for everyone.

C. Budget

The holiday, 'tis the season' was last weekend. The reports are not submitted yet, but it was a busy weekend for arts organizations as well. The ice sculpture was created and is still on the green. People enjoyed watching the sculptor carve the snowman. There will be another opportunity to watch a carving at the Full Moon Fiesta, the progressive ski dinner held at Storrs Hill.

Arts and Culture also spent budget funds on decorating cookies. All the ingredients came from local sources. It was a lot of fun and people joined in. It was not of the same caliber as the gingerbread houses last year, but cleanup was way easier.

Printed information and signs for the art walkways may need to be updated and recreated next year, as it is extensive to complete by the end of this year. Right now, it represents public art on display, but it also recognizes local arts organizations within downtown. The map would be in a new form, and it would be easy to read. They are committed to updating it and recreating it.

The members discussed how to use social media to support the arts programming of the Commission. Right now, there is the Lebanon Art Ways, that has a nice logo, and the commission can follow the model to create something similar. They can also assist in getting more things posted on that site. They missed a lot of opportunities to post things this last year. Jennifer offered some suggestions to help generate Instagram postings. She offered to share the marketing and branding guide that they hired a firm to develop, for the commission to use as a template.

Staff did not accomplish hiring new musicians for the winter farmer's market. There is one market remaining, and the vendors and customers are happy, but staff were unable to take on new tasks to make the musicians happen at the markets this season.

The same budget is requested by the Commission for the upcoming year. This year the entire budget has not been spent. One reason is they did not do the poetry contest. There may be around \$4000 remaining. If the work is all happening in the upcoming year, it is not appropriate to pay for it from this year's budget unless a contract requires it. The members discussed ways they can responsibly manage the budget and make it useful to the arts each year. They hope to start spending and committing funds earlier in the year because they now have enough experience to estimate what the current regular events cost. Committing funds earlier in the year may give them more options to use the funds.

The Rec Dept could be authorized to use money from the budget for some of the proposals, such as the art walk, the Full Moon Fiesta, and something for the New Year. Jennifer suggested the Commission look at Budget Print for some of the printing. Another idea is to purchase some art materials for people to use, such as the art library.

Nick Gaffney MOVED to allow to Rec Department to use additional funds for printing, music, and other arts related projects using funds from the remaining budget.

Seconded by Claire Geno.

Unanimously approved.

For the January meeting Paul and Nick will work on generating a list of things the Commission will take up in 2026 and setting goals for the upcoming year. The members will be asked to review and offer additional ideas. They are committed to support a cultural event such as the Taste and Traditions Festival and to continue to build on that event.

4. COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Arts Organization Updates: LOH, AVA, UVMC, and others present

Nick reminded everyone there were many events this weekend. Claire said AVA is wrapping up the year. They are hitting 6 months with the new executive director. Winter classes are going on. On January 16 the next exhibition will be opening. The Holiday exhibit ends December 23. She also mentioned AVA is a member of Upper Valley Arts Organizations and suggested that if an arts organization is not currently a member, to please join to help build the arts community. The Mud Room story telling event is December 11, 2025. AVA held a great open house on Saturday. Around 500 people came out. The open house started about noon and then people moved to the green for the lighting.

LOH held two shows simultaneously on Saturday. It was amazing, but there was so much going on it was hard to keep up. There have been many events at LOH this year. Lebanon High School students performed at LOH on Sunday. There was a show across the street at the church. The upper valley circus performed at LOH this year. There are new decorative lights that shine on the building and are lighting up the outside walls of the building. There is one more big show before the end of the year, the Woods Brothers on the 13th. And Rebels North will be held at LOH this December, and it will be their last show. The LOH Free Movie Series will be coming back to the community. Four movies including a silent film will be shown in the new year.

Jeniffer Chambers said because they are so new they are looking for ways to connect with Lebanon during the holiday celebrations. Historically they have been performing in Hanover during the holidays. Their students are eager to be involved in the Lebanon community. It is fun and great to help build the community. Their students would be interested in doing something on the whole wall, that is the lower wall of the parking lot. They are thinking about cartooning. This will be the first year they are graduating senior students.

Paul mentioned that new picnic tables are needed and the arts school could help build the tables and paint them. The members discussed buying the tables or materials from this year's budget.

B. City Council, DEI, Heritage

Hopefully the City budget will be passed next week.

The members discussed holding the meetings at 6:30 on the fourth Tuesday until the new members can discuss what changes may be made. Recently there have been no meetings in April, June and August.

5. OPEN TO THE PUBLIC.

No one from the public was present.

6. ADJOURNMENT

A. Next Meeting: January 27, 2026

Nick Gaffney Adjourned the meeting at 7:32 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Linda Billings
Recording Secretary