

FINAL

**CITY OF LEBANON
ARTS & CULTURE COMMISSION
MINUTES January 27, 2026
City Hall Council Chambers & LebanonNH.gov/Live
6:30PM**

MEMBERS PRESENT: (6/8) **Nick Gaffney** (Chair; Citizen Rep Ward 3,)
Devin Wilkie (City Council, Heritage Commission)
Claire Geno (AVA Arts Org. Rep)
Jennifer Chambers (Arts Org. Rep) **Online**
Leonard Ridilla
Honor Hingston (alt) **Online**

MEMBERS ABSENT: (2/8) **Lucas Mendelsohn** (Vice Chair; LOH Arts Org. Rep)
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.

Gail Dokucu is attending as a guest and is hoping to join the Commission.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. December 9, 2025

Devin Wilkie MOVED to approve the December 9, 2025, Minutes as presented in the January 27, 2026 packet.

Seconded by Claire Geno.

**The Motion was approved (5-0).*

3. OTHER BUSINESS

A. BUDGET

• **Priorities for 2026**

The 2026 budget is \$8000, roughly \$4000 for art and \$4000 for projects or events. There may be costs in the future for the sidewalk poems, if they are stamped in areas where no sidewalk work is being done. Some poems were stamped by DPW in 2025, but one will be stamped again as it did not turn out right. As yet, not all the stamps have been used, so there are poems that still need to go in concrete. Some sidewalks are being done in asphalt, so the commission may have to take additional steps and invest to get the poems stamped in concrete. If there is sidewalk work already being done by DPW, they do not need to cover any additional expenses.

Part of the 2025 budget was used for buying art supplies, to fund an artist for the festival on Storrs Hill, support of events in the holiday celebration, and to purchase the picnic tables for that project. Around June the members will try to look at the budget and plan ahead where they want to spend money.

Public art is a major focus of this commission. They will continue to look for locations where art can be displayed and then work on recruiting artists. The Tunnel has attracted many artists that are showing interest in creating public art. The Commission is thinking of developing a list of artists who are interested in creating public art. There has been a lot of social media and conversations about the work the Commission has been doing, and the tunnel is becoming a draw. The Commission is talking about developing a map of public art in Lebanon. They could create maps and add some virtual digital information. The students at NESAs could be involved in getting the map started and will work with Leonard to move the project along. They hope to create an inexpensive map.

The members discussed having an event in June to bring the arts to Lebanon. Lucas is not present but is working on that event.

The members are going to determine what projects DPW has planned and how many poems are waiting to be used. They need that information before deciding if they will have a poetry contest this year.

There are scholarships in the community for athletics and other ventures, but there are no scholarships for art students. Ms. Chambers would like to pursue the idea of developing an art scholarship.

- **Planning: How to plan expenses proactively throughout the year**

This will continue to be discussed.

4. COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. ARTS ORGANIZATION UPDATES

- **LOH**

No one was present. Rocky Horror Picture Show is this weekend and there is a full slate of programs coming up. They are offering a free show for the Grateful Dead.

- **AVA**

The opening reception for the high school student exhibition is 2/27 from 5:00 to 7:00 PM. It is one of the most inspirational evenings to watch these young artists. More exhibitions are currently hung and will be taken down on 2/14. Summer camps are under discussion. There is a lot of space at AVA, and they would like to make it available to other organizations that need some space for public gatherings and they would like groups to have an opportunity to find a home at AVA. Art labs are expanding to include teenagers with disabilities. NESAs is offering an elective class at AVA, and it is popular amongst students.

AVA is part of the Rotary and Dan Nash from the Economic Vitality Committee would like to come to this meeting.

- **UVMC**

No one was present.

- **OTHERS**

NESAs has many upcoming events such as camps and special evenings and formal dinners. NESAs has been growing in student registrations.

The Business Events group is looking to create a brochure or document that lists all the events that are happening in the community. It will collect all that information in one place. It will be more than just arts events. In a few months there will be a regional calendar of events.

The new Recreational Coordinator has been selected, and the Staff are continuing to bring the person on as a City employee. The new hire will be working on how to celebrate the 250 years of the birth of the nation and how it can be celebrated in Lebanon. Hopefully it will involve many other organizations other than this Commission.

B. CITY COMMITTEES

- **City Council**

No updates.

- **DEI**

No updates.

- **Heritage**

No updates.

5. OPEN TO THE PUBLIC.

No one from the public was present.

6. ADJOURNMENT

- A. Next Meeting: February 24, 2026, at 6:00 PM.**

Nick Gaffney Adjourned the meeting at 7:24 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Linda Billings
Recording Secretary