

FINAL

**CITY OF LEBANON  
ARTS & CULTURE COMMISSION  
MINUTES February 24, 2026  
City Hall Council Chambers & LebanonNH.gov/Live  
6:00PM**

**MEMBERS PRESENT: (7/9)**      **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)  
   **Leonard Ridilla** (Citizen Rep)  
   **Gail Dokucu** (Alt)  
   **Honor Hingston** (Alt)

**MEMBERS ABSENT: (2/9)**      **Stevens Blanchard** (Ward 1 Citizen Rep)  
   **Jennifer Chambers** (Arts Org. Rep)

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

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**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Nick Gaffney called the meeting to order at 6:01 PM.

**Gail Dokucu and Honor Hingston were given voting privileges for this meeting.**

Paul Coats gave the RSA 91-A announcement.

**2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**A. January 27, 2026**

*Lee Ridilla MOVED to approve the January 27, 2026, Minutes as presented in the February 24, 2026, packet.*

*Seconded by Devin Wilkie.*

*\*The Motion was approved (6-0-1).*

*Honor Hingston abstained.*

**3. OTHER BUSINESS**

**A. PATCHWORK: CONNECTING THE PIECES, JUNE 28 - ELLEN AHERN**

Ellen Smith Ahern spoke about the project that was started last November and hopes to be completed by June. They are making a community quilt, with donated fabric, working at community quilting bees. They have been held at AVA and will be holding a bee at the Listen Center. She believes it is important to be holding the event outside of an art space to engage with a wide community. They will continue to use various spaces. They celebrate quilting skills and traditions from the backgrounds of different community members. It includes some of the performing arts, such as dance makers. The quilt will be used during the dances and will be exchanged across the country for two years. It is undecided what will happen to the quilt after that. They are working with the Norther Lights Guild members, a local quilting

program. They are hoping to have an event in June to celebrate the creation of this quilt. They will share quilts and exchange performances with a similar association in California. The tunnel is thought to be a good place to hold the celebration. It will have tables showing the craftsmanship of members from the Northern Lights Guild members, and there will be a temporary fabric mural on display. If all goes well, they may want to include music and food trucks.

This could also be a time to invite all the artists of the murals that are in the tunnel to meet the public and celebrate the completion of the murals in the tunnel. Hoping to highlight the arts and culture in Lebanon. This is also the nations 250 anniversary, it may be able to be part of this celebration with input from the Historical and Heritage Societies.

They discussed how the quilters can work together with Arts and Culture and garner the expertise of the members to help promote and develop the celebration. It will be held on June 28<sup>th</sup>. Members could help with the coordination, marketing and promotion. The quilters will have flyers that can be distributed. It is also a community celebration and a reason for people to gather.

The members discussed ways to involve additional community members who are working in the world of dance. They discussed how many performances should be included in this event. The most important aspect of an event is community involvement, in any number of ways, and a wide range of people and age groups. Appealing to many groups is one essential goal. Basically, a couple of hours is the time span that could include 3 to 4 performances, with a program every half hour, and still leave time to meet the artists and get close to the quilts and the art. There is also the possibility for a dance party after the performances as well. Dance films could be shown on the tunnel's walls. Food vendors are a topic for another time. They will discuss things further when it is closer to the time, but this puts the Commission on alert to keep it in mind for a summer event.

## **B. PLANNING BUDGET RELATED PROJECTS FOR THE YEAR**

The members are going to keep thinking about the items and ideas they want to consider throughout the year. They considered using a shared document to keep track of the ideas. Many ideas are captured during the minutes, but keeping track of the collection of ideas would ensure that no great idea is overlooked. They may work on establishing a share point document in the City system. It may be a good idea if one person was responsible for maintaining the list. Lucas will help collect ideas and others may keep some notes as well and collectively they will capture the ideas. They just want to be sure they are not conducting business outside of the meetings. Hopefully at the next meeting they can begin to capture ideas. Devin will work on what it takes to set up the share point document.

One point of discussion is determining if they should have a poetry contest again this year because it is a budget consideration. They will confirm if all the stamps they have already purchased are scheduled to be installed or are already installed. They may want to reach out to the winners of the poetry contests to inform them when the stamps are in place. They have the forms and applications that were previously developed that can be used for the next contest. A contest this year would be for the 2027 construction period. They own the stamps, and the stamps can be used a second time. Recently many sidewalks have been asphalt, so they want to consider where and when concrete sidewalks will be done by DPW.

The members discussed the sculpture in the new round about. It looks like a fountain cannot be included, but arts and recreation are part of supporting the art sculpture for the center of the area. They will look for other ways to get financial support for the round about sculpture. It is supposed to start construction in April.

## **C. 250<sup>th</sup> CELEBRATION: NEW AD HOC COMMITTEE**

Members were asked if anyone wants to be involved in contributing to ideas and implementing some grass roots ways of celebrating. The Heritage and Historical societies are involved, and right now it is an ad hoc group. Hopefully the Legion will become a part of this group.

**D. LEB ARTWAY MAP: LEE**

Lee spoke about the map that was created for the Lebanon Walk. There are a number of reasons why people come into Lebanon and Hanover. This map is the draft of a map that Lee created to encourage visitors and residents to explore Lebanon. These are all places that can be visited in any order, and a defined route is not necessary. Right now, there are 16 sites marked on the map. The sites were based on previous maps that have been around for many years and may need updating. The maps could be available in restaurants and many other public places. It is likely this is a map that is most useful when the weather is walkable. The members were very happy with the draft of the map. They discussed the places that are on the map and will do more work to see what places are included, and that all the places listed have some kind of artwork. They may want to determine what other places should be included and how and information should be included about the art. Perhaps areas that do not require a purchase to explore may need to be reconsidered, what areas can be accessed with no barriers, or are free. The places on the map may need to be asked if they want to be on the map. For example, Three Tomatoes has tear drops in the window and also has murals on the walls. Maybe the name of the art on the map is more important than the name of the business. It would be good to have a QR code where people can access to read more about each art object. They discussed whether architecture could also be on the map or just intentional installations. Perhaps a heritage and architectural walk is another map that should be developed. It was suggested that an annotation of where the poetry is on the sidewalks or some indication of art within the City No updates.

, and noting the tunnel art. Accessibility on the more information link would be helpful for people wanting to use the map. Artist names available would also be nice. For now, Lee will try to make it more art focused and to include artist names, but that may not be possible. They will look for ways to engage people and encourage them to use the URL code. Lee is asking members to email him with any additional suggestions and information to help develop the map. Everyone is enthusiastic about Lee's work on the map, and they look forward to the next rendition.

**4. COMMITTEE REPORTS****A. ARTS ORGANIZATION UPDATES**

- **LOH**

The Opera House events are underway with the winter spring shows. They are still announcing new shows that are coming including free, low-cost programming, and programming for seniors. They are planning the annual pride celebration, for its fifth year. Nexus returns in August. There are many opportunities for people to engage as volunteers. LOH is bringing presenters from across the world. This year's schedule has more shows than they have ever had before.

- **AVA GALLERY**

The High School Art opening is happening this Friday. It will be one of the busiest openings they have all year. The art will be up for at least 3 weeks. They will also be serving pizza tastings during the opening. AVA is also offering creativity workshops. This week it is working with pastels and the fee is \$25, all included. It is a studio experience to get people started in the arts. The workshops will be held monthly on the last Friday of the month, a different medium each month.

- **NE SCHOOL OF ARTS**

No updates.

- **UVMC**

UVMC has an April event coming up April 18th, with fiddlers and bread. It will be held at the Congregational Church. They are having an amazing faculty showcase in March. It is a benefit for their tuition assistance program. It is thought to be March 7. They also just launched a tune-up program, an opportunity for people who have engaged in music in the past and are not sure if or how they want to get back into music. It will be a 30-minute free lesson to see if an individual wants to engage in music again, and approach lifelong learning in the arts.

- **OTHERS**

No updates.

**B. CITY COMMITTEES**

- **CITY COUNCIL**

No updates.

- **DEI**

Taste of Traditions will be in June. It is scheduled for the 13<sup>th</sup>. Arts and Culture may want to be considering supporting this endeavor.

- **HERITAGE**

No updates.

**5. OPEN TO THE PUBLIC.**

No one from the public was present.

**6. ADJOURNMENT**

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

*Nick Gaffney Adjourned the meeting at 7:30 PM.*

Respectfully submitted,  
Linda Billings  
Recording Secretary