

FINAL

**CITY OF LEBANON
ARTS & CULTURE COMMISSION
MINUTES April 28, 2026
City Hall Council Chambers & LebanonNH.gov/Live
6:00PM**

MEMBERS PRESENT: (8/9) **Nick Gaffney** (Chair; Citizen Rep Ward 3)
 Lucas Mendelsohn (Vice Chair; LOH Arts Org. Rep)
 Devin Wilkie (City Council, Heritage Commission)
 Jennifer Chambers (Arts Org. Rep)
 Claire Geno (AVA Arts Org. Rep)
 Leonard Ridilla (Citizen Rep)
 Honor Hingston (Alt)
 Gail Dokucu (Alt)

MEMBERS ABSENT: (1/9) **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 6:00 PM.

Gail Dokucu was given voting privileges for this meeting.

Paul Coats gave the RSA 91-A announcement.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. March 24, 2026

Devin Wilkie MOVED to approve the March 24, 2026, Minutes as presented in the April 28, 2026, packet.

Seconded by Jennifer Chambers.

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

Claire Geno abstained as she was not present at the meeting.

3. OTHER BUSINESS

A. ARTWALK MAP: LEE

Lee presented the new map showing the members' recommended edits to the map. He limited the points of interest to accessible art, that did not require entering businesses. Accessibility was added to the route and access to the tunnel; some road names were included. The Astronomer outside of the AVA was added. Next steps are to upload photos of the art and gather the names of the artists who created the art and possibly a QR Code linking to the artist. Some colors were changed on the map. Lee is asking for edits and a decision about where to place the maps.

For the June event they may print some in-house for handouts. For a permanent handout, they will look for an artist to help develop a more professional map. Lee has some ideas for the ideal look he would like to see, based on other maps he has seen. They also discussed making a large bulletin board of the map to display at the table during the event. They discussed making different sizes of maps to make them usable. Several accessibility route alternatives were discussed, to avoid steps and steep inclines. The normal pathway would also be identified for those who do not need to use an accessibility route. Alternatives were discussed for combining the routes on one map and keeping it from being confusing.

This map will be useful for what they want for the June 28th event. And they will continue to add and develop the map to the final creation. It will give them time to finesse the map and handout. They may consider having two maps, one for Lebanon and one for West Lebanon. They also talked about adding a larger map on the reverse side that highlighted other things to see in each area, such as the skate park. They discussed adding sidewalk poetry to the map. Lee will do a mockup of the West Lebanon art sometime in the future.

It was discussed whether the art map may be available by the June 13th Taste and Tradition festival. It is planned to have it ready by then.

B. SIDEWALK POETRY CONTEST

Paul provided some of the past materials that were used to advertise the contest and a call to poets, the last time they had a poetry contest in 2024. It contains a link that directs the reader to the rules. Paul confirmed that all of the 2024 winners are in the stamps at Kilton Library. This is a great time to have a contest for the 2027 installation. In the previous stamps at Kilton Library, the authors of the poems are not identified in the stamp. There is no recollection of a decision to exclude the name of any of the poets, it may have been a space-related concern for the stamps. Paul suggested that they may want to limit the number of characters as a smaller number made the stamps easier. The rules for 2024 are listed below.

2024 Rules:

Poems should be a maximum of 275 characters including spaces. Poems will be broken into lines to fit on the selected sidewalk spaces (estimated around 30 characters, including spaces, per line) if they are not already.

Each person may submit a maximum of 2 poems, please.

Poems should be appropriate for a general audience as they will be seen by a range of people and will be presented by the City of Lebanon and Lebanon ArtWays.

To submit poetry, please complete this form. Poems may be submitted in any language, but the literal English translation must also be provided if the poem is not in English. All poems must be typed. Poems will be accepted through May 31, 2024, by 11:59 PM EST. and will be judged following the closing date.

They discussed making a small committee to help staff develop the contest rules to run in summer 2026. They thought perhaps maybe 225 characters, or a limited length of each poetry line. Line cut edits are done to make the poem fit on the size of the stamp.

C. The 4th of July : FACE PAINTING AND /OR ART MAKING TABLE

There will be fireworks on July 2 instead of July 4. The fireworks will be on Storrs Hill and are provided by a donation from Norvis.

On July 2 there will be multiple events with entertainers, jugglers, music, a small play, and the first front porch music event. It is also the Lebanon Farmers Market Day. It will be a huge day on 7/2/26.

On July 4, there will be a race, the parade, a cookout, and face painting. The students at NE School of Arts will be asked if they want to do face painting during the event.

D. SHAREPOINT SITE – DEPOSITORY

- artwork photos, list of potential projects

Perry Eaton from IT sent an email to each member with access to create an account to use the SharePoint site. There is an ArtWalk folder and it contains pictures of most of the art in the ArtWalk. There is also a place to keep track of events and opportunities to attend additional events. Members are asked to log on to the depository. It is only available to members. It is reasonable to add ideas to be brought up at the next meeting.

E. CITY HALL LOWER LOBBY / LOH PUBLIC ART: Lucas Mendelsohn

There used to be art in City Hall, including a large mural that took up a large space in the lower lobby. Since the renovations there is a large open space on the upper section of the wall in the lower lobby. The building used to have public art in the building, and it was inspiring to City employees and visitors. Lucas discussed ideas of art that could be displayed. He suggested limiting the number of transitions of art, maybe changed after several months of display, to keep the task simpler. It would create an inviting space, much as it had been in the past. They discussed some of the challenges of hanging art in such a high place and what efforts it would require to maintain this art space. Lucas received support for this idea from the Commission members, and he will continue the discussion with the City.

F. TUNNEL PIERS MURAL PROPOSAL

This proposal is from a middle school student. She provided a drawing and the proposal. She is incorporating an awareness of mental health challenges. Paul also mentioned a new NH grant. This project likely meets the goals of the grant. They discussed the value of matching a mural artist with a middle school student, thus providing an educational opportunity. Previously there was a stipend for the artist and an allowance for materials has been provided. The arts grant is due soon and they are considering applying. Members will reach out to other mural artists and teachers who might be interested in helping the student. Paul will check if there are still funds available from the City to pay for the artists and materials. If the grant offers enough, they may be able to do more than one mural and may not require City funds. The grant does not appear to require matching funds.

4. COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. ARTS ORGANIZATION UPDATES

- **LOH**

Two outstanding women artists will be presenting May 28 and 29. Friday, June 12 is the PRIDE celebration and a dance party. Tickets are on sale. Nexus is in August. LOH is working with AVA for a Pride gallery exhibition in June. It is open to LGBTQ applicants only, hoping to expand the Pride community through the arts.

- **AVA GALLERY**

A lot is going on at AVA. They have a new website. There are some new indoor murals. The library has new paint and images. There are upcoming May events: a show in Gallery 3, and exhibitions on the main floor. There are artist talks coming up with the exhibitions, including tea talks. There is an exhibition opening this Friday, called Gathering Constellations that is in conjunction with West Central Behavioral Health in support of mental health awareness in the month of May. They are hosting some community events like Dinner Club and will be hosting a Creative Economy Social Hour.

- **NE SCHOOL OF ARTS**

Two seniors are graduating this spring. Graduation is on the same date as the Taste and Tradition in mid-June. The school is applying for many grants. They are interested in creating a mural along the parking area where there now is graffiti. They are running a June Ballet series. Summer programming still has openings, and they have new student applicants for next year.

The picnic tables will be painted June 8, outside the tunnel, on the Mascoma Greenway bridge.

- **UVMC**

May the 16th and 17th is the big singing play festival, which has a culminating Suzuki showcase concert in City Hall. They have so many things that happen during that weekend. There's busking, music ensembles, student recitals, song sharing, an instrument petting zoo, and drum circles. So there will be music all around downtown Lebanon all weekend.

- **OTHERS**

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: May 26, 2026, at 6:00 PM.

B. There will possibly be a meeting June 23, 2026. They could take July off and talk about meeting in August. They will talk about how the remaining meetings will be organized this year.

Nick Gaffney Adjourned the meeting at 7:19 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Linda Billings
Recording Secretary