

Minutes for MVAF Post-Festival Meeting

MEETING DETAILS

Location: **Madison Valley Public Library Meeting Room**
210 Main Street
Ennis, MT 59729

Date/Time: **August 12, 2026, 10:00 AM**

ATTENDEES:

Louise Stevens, EAA President
Linda Maydak, EAA Vice President
Barbara Chalupa, EAA Treasurer
Lori Fink, EAA Secretary
Margie Reck
Barbara Gillispie
Chelsee Mahsman
Jenifer Corp
Sue Kinn
Kent Porterfield
Kathleen van Driessche
BJ Radell

CALL TO ORDER

This meeting was called to order at approximately 10:05 AM by Louise Stevens.

HANDOUTS

Three documents were distributed to attendees:

- **EAA August 12, 2026, Post-Festival Meeting Agenda**
- **MVAF 2026 Budget vs. Actual as of 8/11/26**
- **Vendor Survey Results 2026 MVAF**

PREVIOUS MEETINGS MINUTES

Minutes from the July 14, 2026, MVAF Organizational Meeting were posted on the EAA Website along with the MVAF Volunteer List/Worksheet

MOTION: A motion was made (Barbara Gillispie) and seconded to accept the July 14th meeting minutes as they appear on the EAA website. Motion passed unanimously.

SECRETARY'S NOTE: This was a very long meeting with wide-ranging discussion. I have tried to include the highlights. Anyone who would like to listen to all of the discussion can contact Lori Fink for a copy of the recording. Fair warning: It's about 2-1/2 hours long.

A. THANKS TO MADISON VALLEY BANK AND OTHERS

1. Kent P. and Sue K. were thanked for their work on the festival layout with a round of applause.
2. We usually thank Madison Valley Bank with baked goods for the venue as well as the raffle item display. This year we want to include First Interstate Bank and the Library.
3. Barbara G. can do some baking next week or the week after. Lori F. will help.

B. REVENUE AND EXPENDITURES

1. Barbara C. is waiting for invoices for all items marked Pending.
2. Anything in parentheses in the balance column signify spending over budget.
3. The over budget amount in the advertising column will be adjusted. We approved increasing that line item with funds from the unallocated budget amount at the last meeting.
4. It looks like we will end up spending approximately \$600 under budget.
5. Should we consider Sponsorships for the festival? We cannot increase the number of booths without moving to a different venue. We may have topped out on raffle ticket sales.
6. Kent suggests that we consider increasing booth fees instead. Costs increase each year and we haven't increased booth fees.
7. Booth fees and membership fees should be paid separately. This makes the booth fees the same for everyone.
8. Local sponsorships will probably be hard to get – the local businesses are constantly asked for money.
9. We should consider getting sponsors for the music and other items. We already have the MVWC sponsor the Family Activities Booth.
10. Kent had high praise for the SLAM Festival in Bozeman – very well run.

C. REVIEW OF VENDOR SURVEYS

1. There were 29 responses to the vendor survey.
2. Sales were up for most vendors, and most were also fine with their location.
3. Desired festival hours: a majority would like to start at 9:00 am and an even larger majority would like to end at 4:00 pm, chiefly due to the late afternoon storms we've had for the past several years.
4. Many vendors note that there is a significant slowdown in sales in the late afternoon hours, and many report that they often get customers as early as 9:00 even though we don't officially start until 10:00. It was noted that we will probably always have "early birds" no matter what time we start.
5. On the other hand, the kids' booth is busier in the afternoon.
6. Most of the open-ended comments were nothing new. However, several vendors expressed a desire for a map for attendees showing artists and booth locations. A fancy brochure would not be cost effective and needs too much lead time.
7. This is a good segue to the next agenda item, as festival software would solve this problem, as well as many others.

D. JURYING PROCESS RECOMMENDATIONS, SOFTWARE

1. Sue K. investigated three different programs:
 - a. The first one, which is used by several festivals including Mayfair, is cost prohibitive for us - \$9,000/year.
 - b. The second is used by festivals nationwide. The website lists all the festivals that use the program, making it easy for artists to search for ones in which they would like to participate.
 - c. The third one, Eventeny, would be very cost effective for us. They have a tiered pricing system, including a plan for very small art festivals. The free plan is very basic, but the Impact Plan they offer is \$720/year. It includes an application and jurying process, event mapping, help with sponsorship deals, raffles, etc. The Big Sky Artisan Festival uses this. We would have to submit a 990 to prove non-profit status.
2. Many other festivals charge non-refundable application fees. These fees would go a long way toward paying for The Impact plan referenced.
3. Our festival is very labor intensive to put on. Using event software would streamline our process immensely, especially by eliminating reliance upon USPS delivery. Artists don't pay until after they are juried into the show.
4. Our applications are declining. We need to look at attracting more artists.
5. Lori expressed that booth assignments should be done using a double-blind process to eliminate bias, and that no one that is involved in the jury process should be an arts festival applicant.
6. Keep in mind that the event software could also be used for Blooms and Brushes.
7. It would be wise to ease into this new application and jurying process. Baby steps.

MOTION: A motion was made (Lori Fink) and seconded (Chelsee Mahsman) for Sue Kinn to meet with the Eventeny representative and that the recorded presentation be forwarded to the EAA Board for review.

Motion passed unanimously.

E. RAFFLE RESULTS, RECOMMENDATIONS

1. A suggestion was made that when ticket buyers choose which prize they would like, they use a highlighter instead of circling the prize.
2. The raffle drawing was rushed at the end of the day due to the impending storm.
3. Should all the tickets be placed in the same bucket. Currently we use one bucket for each prize.
4. We should consider using two-part tickets that buyers put their name and number on and then place in the bucket of their choice.
5. We should also consider raising our raffle ticket price. We may sell less tickets but make the same amount of money. Many raffles charge \$5/ticket.

F. FESTIVAL LAYOUT/PLANNING FOR NEXT YEAR LAYOUT

1. Louise and Barbara G. walked through the park, and they believe that there may be room for one or two more booths. They will take a tarp one day to try and determine the actual number of booths that would fit.

2. The High School kids had a double table. Most of the time it was one student selling photographs. Also, no students helped with the festival even though they were asked to in exchange for the free booth space.
3. The map needs to be redone – using Google Map or another program. The trees have grown since the last map was made.

G. FESTIVAL TIME (9-4, 10-5, 10-4), RECOMMENDATIONS

1. We discussed this under the Survey Results agenda item.

H. CHILDREN'S FESTIVAL REVIEW, RECOMMENDATIONS

1. We scheduled the Family Activities Booth from 10-3:30, and it actually ran until 4:00.
2. About 70 kids had face painting done in the expanded time of four hours.
3. Having two tents helped with the space – it wasn't too crowded.
4. The area on the steps was great for visibility but there wasn't enough room for what Chelsea had planned, creating a safety concern on the steps.
5. We should consider moving this to where the High School booth was located this year although this location may be too loud.
6. The structured activities worked very well – having different options was popular.
7. Starting at 11:00 would be better.
8. There are some supplies left that Chelsea may use at the kids' garden in Blooms and Brushes.
9. The display racks (one time purchase) worked very well to display art pieces as they were drying, and we can use them every year.
10. The store worked very well – each child could take one gift and most also kept their art.
11. There were at least 40 participants in the activities.
12. We have about 16 tiles with which we can make a tile "quilt" to donate to the Nursing Home or Senior Center.
13. We will send a thank you letter to the Women's Club for the donation and the volunteers detailing how we spent the donation.
14. Kenyon Noble encouraged us to reach out for sponsorship of the kids' activities, including supplies.

I. PUBLICITY REVIEW, RECOMMENDATIONS

1. In short, the publicity worked! By all accounts attendance was up.
2. We need to make sure that we have enough posters for distribution. Should we consider going back to the larger size? In the past there often wasn't enough room to post them on public bulletin boards. This year, other people often covered our posters up. Perhaps instead of having the double event posters on bulletin boards, we could use them as handouts and stick to posters advertising one event.
3. Action Item: Our large banners are very dated. We should consider updating them and having four instead of three.
4. The advertisements were very well done and visible.

J. FOOD REVIEW, RECOMMENDATIONS

1. No discussion at this meeting due to time limitations.

K. MUSIC REVIEW, RECOMMENDATIONS

1. We had an extra musician for the afternoon due to unfortunate phantom unreceived email communications. The Board was not aware that there was already a booked musician and subsequently arranged for another performer. As a result, we ended up having to pay the original musician who didn't perform.
2. We need to make a policy about who can enter into contracts on behalf of the Ennis Arts Association.
3. Barbara C. suggested that the Treasurer must be involved, along with either the President or another Board Member.
4. This should lead to a larger discussion on contracts as we start our public arts projects. It may be time to get an attorney involved – at least for the larger contracts.
5. We may want to try to secure sponsorships for the music, as the performers are often asking for more payment than we can really afford.

L. VOLUNTEER NEEDS, RECOMMENDATIONS

1. We need more volunteers! Increasing our membership is a good first step.
2. The public art/murals will help to raise our visibility.

M. EQUIPMENT (TENTS) REPAIR/REPLACEMENT, RECOMMENDATIONS

1. A couple of our canopies need a few screws, nuts & bolts.
2. Action Item: We should check the equipment every year, perhaps in April, to give us time to repair or replace anything needed.

N. OTHER BUSINESS: BLOOMS & BRUSHES, MURAL

1. Blooms and Brushes needs more volunteers. One shift is 2.5 hours, and the volunteers can tour the gardens at no charge.
2. The volunteers can pick up their wristbands, etc. at the library between 8 and 9.
3. We had a lengthy discussion about jurying and booth layout, mostly about how to make it fair and keep the most people happy. We decided that these types of discussions aren't necessarily productive until we get a chance to examine the software and determine if we think it will work for us.

Next meeting will be Tuesday, September 8th, 10:00 AM at the library.

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at ~12:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Lori Fink, Secretary