

Great Falls
Municipal Band
Members Handbook



2025

525 Central Avenue
Suite L9
Great Falls, Montana 59401
(406) 899-9982

Mission

The purpose and mission of the Great Falls Municipal Band, Inc. is foster the development in the community of an appreciation of the musical arts, by promoting and producing, or causing to be produced, musical productions and entertainments, and by taking part in activities having that end in view. The organization will also operate concert bands and/or similar ensembles of varying size, to reaffirm the community position in instrumental music, to provide an opportunity for individual musical expression and growth among the membership, and to provide an opportunity for contact and association between and among musicians.

History

The Great Falls Municipal Band started in 1894 as the Black Eagle Band, formed by the town's biggest employer, the Boston Montana Consolidated Copper and Silver Mining Co. The Anaconda Company bought the smelter in 1910. The band then became affiliated with the city. The Band has performed concerts in the Gibson Park for 132 consecutive seasons making it one of the oldest bands in the nation (2025 season). Over the years, the Municipal Band has been in demand to play for assorted dignitaries, special events and dedication ceremonies. In the late 1930s the band played at the dedication of the Fort Peck Dam which was attended by President Franklin C. Roosevelt. The band also performed for the visits of John F. Kennedy and Ronald Reagan. Recently, the organization expanded to include the Community Band and the Community Jazz Band, groups whose mission was similar and congruent with

Governance

The Great Falls Community Bands, Inc. is comprised of three musical ensembles, the Great Falls Municipal Band, the Great Falls Community Band, and the Great Falls Community Jazz Band.

The organization is governed by a Board of Directors and is managed by a Personnel Director. There is also a Musical Director and the that advises the Board on matters as well. The Musical Director and the Personnel Director are non-voting members of the Board of Directors.

Performance Seasons

The Community Band has a Fall Season from roughly September-November, and then again Spring Season from January-May. There is a concert at the end of each season. Members are encouraged to play all year long, but may opt out of seasons if needed.

The Community Jazz Band has a Fall Season from roughly September-November, and then again Spring Season from January-May. There is a concert at the end of each season. Special events may be scheduled for this ensemble at the discretion of the Jazz Band Director.

The Municipal Band performs a Summer season from mid June-mid August with weekly performances at the Gibson Park Bandshell on Wednesday evenings at 7 pm.

Conductors

The Board of Directors, along with the Musical Director and Personnel Manager arrange for conductors of the ensembles.

Membership

New members for all organizations will go through a screening process.

Each ensemble has its own membership requirements. There is no fee to join any of the ensembles, but members must furnish their own concert attire.

The Community Band is open to all members with no audition, as long as they maintain attendance requirements.

The Community Jazz Band is open to members by invitation of the Jazz Band Director.

The Municipal Band is open to members by invitation of the Personnel Manager and Musical Director. Strict attendance requirements are required of the members in this ensemble due to the concert season being short and space on the Gibson Park Bandshell being limited. Members of this ensemble need to be solid musicians and proficient sight readers. They must practice new music on a weekly basis due to the weekly concert programs required of this ensemble.

Concert Attire

Community Band: White top, Dark pants, dark socks, dark shoes.

Jazz Band: Attire is at the discretion of the Jazz Band director. This may vary depending on the theme of the program or event.

Municipal Band: Members in this ensemble are required to wear the official Municipal Band polo shirt as well as tan pants for each concert. Tan shorts may be worn when the weather allows for cooler attire. Polo shirts may be purchased from the Band at the start of the season. Cost is \$32 for a polo (2025 pricing).

Rehearsals

The Community Band rehearses on Thursday nights from 7:00-8:30 pm. Location is New Hope Lutheran Church.

The Jazz Band rehearses on Wednesday evenings from 7:00-8:30 pm. Location is Great Falls High School.

The Municipal Band rehearses on Tuesday nights from 7:00-8:30 pm. Location is Times Square. Music rehearsed on Tuesday is performed on the following day (Wednesday) for the weekly concert.

Attendance

Regular attendance is crucial to the musical success of all the ensembles. Members need to commit to coming to rehearsals on weekly basis. If a Member needs to miss a rehearsal, the director of the Ensemble needs to be notified, as well as the Board President.

Municipal Band Members have stricter requirements:

Attendance is a priority—members must make every effort to play for concerts they have signed up for. Failure to not show up for assigned rehearsals and concerts is grounds for dismissal.

Municipal Band Members are required to attend the rehearsal prior to a concert.

Municipal Band Members are vested for the next season by playing 5 or more concerts of the previous season.

Vested players are on a "Core Players" list.

All other participants are placed on an "as needed" or "substitute" list for the next season and are not considered as members of the Great Falls Municipal Band.

A musician sub list of non-vested players will should be established that is utilized by the Music Director(s) to make sure each concert is adequately staffed.

Adults:

Membership in the **Municipal Band**, demonstrating playing ability OR Recommendation from a regional current music educator or professional musician on playing and reading ability.

Playing audition for the Music Director(s). Musicians that are members of the Great Falls Symphony or any other local Symphony or Winds of Montana do not need to audition.

Students:

Recommendation from current band director

Recommendation from private lesson teacher (must be taking lessons to be a member)

All-State placement or audition

Students should be used on instruments where the band is short section players.

Music

Programming decisions are in the hands of the conductor and Music Director

Performers who have lost music are responsible for its replacement.

Performers are to make appropriate notations on their music in pencil. These markings are to be erased after the performance. Markings by pen or marker or highlighter are viewed as destructive and the performer will be assigned appropriate repair or replacement fees.

The recording rights of the owners of the music copyrights will be respected. No recordings will be licensed or distributed without securing those rights.

Instrumentation and Equipment

Each member of the woodwind and brass sections in the ensembles are responsible to keep their instruments in proper playing condition.

Percussionists are required to furnish their own sticks and mallets. Occasionally percussionists may want to furnish their own accessory instruments depending on the instrumentation required for the performance. The Bands have percussion equipment that belongs to the band or is on loan to the band for use. These include timpani, crash cymbals, temple blocks, suspended cymbals, concert bass drum as well as many accessory instruments.

Jazz Band rhythm section members will need to furnish their own amps/cables for electric instruments at gigs. Drumset will need to be transported for gigs as well. Rehearsals at Great Falls High School may use the school instruments if the GFHS Band Director is in agreement to this.

Music stands need to be furnished by members of the Community Band and Municipal Band for rehearsals and concerts. Municipal Band members are encouraged to have heavy duty stands with clips/plexiglass to help manage sheet music with wind and other outside elements.

Performances

It is understood that performers are on public display during concerts. Behaviors should be appropriate representing therefore the entire organization.

Being on public display, defines the performers as also on public view. Pictures and Videos are expected from the audience. There is no expectation of privacy.

When performances involve minor aged individuals, publicity photographs and web presences will attempt to separate the name of the individual from the photograph/video. However, there is no guarantee nor safeguard to assure that protection.

Performances



www.greatfallsmunicipalband.org