

Great Falls  
Municipal Band  
Operations Handbook  
And  
By-laws



*Adopted January 2026*

525 Central Avenue  
Suite 19  
Great Falls, Montana 59401  
(406) 899-9982

## Mission

The purpose and mission of the Great Falls Municipal Band, Inc. is to 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 sizes to reaffirm the community's position in instrumental music, to provide opportunities for individual musical expression and growth among the membership, and to foster contact and association among musicians.

## History

The Great Falls Municipal Band began in 1894 as the Black Eagle Band, formed by the town's largest 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 Gibson Park for 132 consecutive seasons, making it one of the oldest bands in the nation (as of the 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 President Franklin D. Roosevelt attended. 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 missions were similar to and aligned with the Municipal Band.

## Governance

1. The Great Falls Community Bands, Inc. currently comprises three musical ensembles: the Great Falls Municipal Band, the Great Falls Community Band, and the Great Falls Community Jazz Band.
2. A Board of Directors governs the organization. A Personnel Director manages the organization. There is also a Musical Director who advises the Board on pertinent matters. The Musical Director is a non-voting member of the Board of Directors.
3. The organization's By-Laws are available at the conclusion of this handbook.

4. All contracts for performances, membership, financial transactions, and site venues are entered into and concluded by the Board of Directors and require the signatures of the President and Treasurer.
5. The Board of Directors is responsible for the maintenance, expansion, and insurance of the music library.
6. The Music Director shall make purchases and replacements of music with the approval of the Board of Directors if the cost exceeds the budgetary limit.
7. Decisions from the Board of Directors may be appealed directly to the President and the Music Director for adjudication. The President will then make a binding final decision.
8. The pursuit of funding by grants, government agencies, or private sources will be directed by the Board of Directors and overseen by the President and a designated grant writer/fundraiser.
9. Group fundraising activities may be approved, provided that at least 50% of the activity results in a benefit to the organization.
10. The Board of Directors will engage in and commit to Memos of Understanding with rehearsal and performing facilities, clearly stating roles and responsibilities. The Board Secretary will maintain these at the Municipal Band Offices.
11. The Board of Directors will participate in regional and national organizations that further their mission.
12. The Board of Directors will engage in an agreement that supports, guarantees, and respects the copyright holders of the performed compositions. This arrangement may involve securing a license to do so.
13. The Great Falls Community Bands, Inc. may expand its mission to include new ensembles as the times change and warrant.

14. The Great Falls Community Bands, Inc. may add to its performing events smaller groups of musicians, professional guests, non-professional guests, and soloists as it sees fit.
15. As a public entity, the financial and operating procedures of The Great Falls Community Bands, Inc. are always open to inspection and examination with due notification. These records will also include all donations and contributions to the organization.
16. In all areas of public discourse and discussion, the Board President shall serve as the organization's official representative and spokesperson.

## Performance Seasons

1. The Community Band has a Fall Season from roughly September to November, and then a Spring Season from January to May. There is a concert at the end of each season. Members are encouraged to play year-round, but may opt out of seasons if needed.
2. The Community Jazz Band has a Fall Season from roughly September-November, followed by a 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.
3. The Municipal Band performs a Summer season from mid-June to mid-August with weekly performances at the Gibson Park Bandshell on Wednesday evenings at 7 pm.

## Conductors

1. The Board of Directors, along with the Musical Director and Personnel Manager, arranges for conductors of the ensembles.
2. The Community Band has a conductor for the Fall and Spring Seasons, sometimes with rotating duties among two conductors if needed.

3. The Jazz Band has one conductor leading this Ensemble for the entire season.
4. The Municipal Band currently uses a rotating roster of conductors for its weekly programming.
5. The Board of Directors may compensate conductors for their services on a pre-determined rate.
6. It is the responsibility of each conductor to research and examine, and to arrange the procurement of, copyright permissions for performances.

## Membership

1. New members of all organizations will undergo a screening process.
2. 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.
3. The Community Band is open to all members, with no audition required, provided they meet attendance requirements.
4. The Community Jazz Band is open to members by invitation of the Jazz Band Director.
5. The Municipal Band is open to members by invitation of the Personnel Manager and Musical Director. Strict attendance requirements are in place for members of this Ensemble due to the short concert season and limited space on the Gibson Park Bandshell. Members of this Ensemble need to be solid musicians and proficient sight readers. They must practice new music weekly due to the Ensemble's required weekly concert programs.

## Concert Attire

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

2. Jazz Band: Attire is at the discretion of the Jazz Band director. This performance presentation may vary depending on the program or event's theme.
3. 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. These required polo shirts are available for purchase from the Band at the start of the season. Cost is \$32 for a polo (2025 pricing).

## Rehearsals

1. The Community Band rehearses on Thursday nights from 7:00 to 8:30 pm. Location is New Hope Lutheran Church.
2. The Jazz Band rehearses on Wednesday evenings from 7:00-9:00 pm. Location is Great Falls High School, currently.
3. The Municipal Band rehearses on Tuesday nights from 7:00-8:30 pm. Location is Times Square. The Wednesday concert depends on this rehearsal for its success.

## Attendance

1. Regular attendance is crucial to the musical success of all the ensembles. Members need to commit to attending rehearsals on a weekly basis. A member needs to notify the Ensemble director when absent.
2. **Municipal Band Members** have stricter requirements:
  - a. Attendance is a priority—members must make every effort to play in concerts they have signed up for. Failure to show up for assigned rehearsals and concerts is grounds for dismissal.
  - b. Municipal Band Members are required to attend the rehearsal prior to a concert or receive prior approval from the Personnel Director.

- c. Municipal Band Members playing five or more concerts of the previous season are vested members.
- d. Vested players are on a "Core Players" list.
- e. All other participants are placed on an "as needed" or "substitute" list for the next season and are not considered members of the Great Falls Municipal Band.
- f. A musician sub-list of non-vested players will be established and utilized by the Music Director and Conductors to ensure each concert is adequately staffed.
- g. Adults:
  - i. Membership in the Municipal Band is by a demonstration of playing ability, OR, a recommendation from a regional current music educator, OR, by a professional musician vouching for and having knowledge of the candidate's playing and reading ability, OR, playing in an audition for the Music Director(s).
  - ii. Musicians who are members of the Great Falls Symphony, OR, any other local symphony, OR, Winds of Montana, do not need to audition.
- h. Students:
  - i. Student participation in the Municipal Band is by recommendation from current band director, OR, recommendation from private lesson teacher (must be taking lessons to be a member), OR, All-State placement or audition.
  - ii. Students should be used on instruments where the band is short section players.

## Instrumentation and Equipment

1. Each member of the woodwind and brass sections in the ensembles is responsible for keeping their instrument in proper playing condition.
2. Percussionists must furnish their own sticks and mallets. Sometimes, percussionists may want to provide their own accessory instruments depending on the instrumentation needed for the performance. The Bands have percussion equipment that belong to the Band or is on loan to the Band for use. These may include timpani, crash cymbals, temple blocks, suspended cymbals, a concert bass drum, and many other accessory instruments.
3. Jazz Band rhythm section members will need to furnish their own amps/cables for electric instruments at gigs. The drum set will need to be transported for gigs as well. Rehearsals at Great Falls High School may use the school instruments if the Great Falls High School Band Director agrees to this.
4. 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 use heavy-duty stands with clips/plexiglass to help manage sheet music from wind and other outdoor elements.

## Music

1. Programming decisions are in the control and purview of the concert conductor and Music Director.
2. Music from the current library may be lent to other organizations with the approval of the Librarian and the President. This lending will have a start and return date. This action will be noted and recorded.
3. Music may be borrowed from other organizations and must be returned in excellent condition at the specified time and destination.
4. Performers who have lost their music are responsible for replacing it.
5. Performers are to make appropriate pencil notations on their music. We encourage that these markings be erased after the performance. Markings made with pen, marker, or highlighter are considered

destructive, and the performer will be charged appropriate repair or replacement fees.

6. The Librarian and the Board may engage services to transcribe from performance scores the missing parts.
7. The Board of Directors, in consultation with the appropriate conductor and the Music Director, commissions new works for an ensemble to perform.

## Performances

1. It is understood that performers are on public display during concerts. Behaviors should be appropriate representing therefore the entire organization.
2. 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.
3. When performances involve minor-aged individuals, publicity photographs and web presences will attempt to separate the individual's name from the photograph/video. However, there is no guarantee or safeguard to ensure that protection.
4. The recording rights of the owners of the music copyrights will be respected. No recordings will be licensed or distributed without securing those rights.
5. The Great Falls Municipal Band, Inc. may be contracted and engaged to participate in public events and ceremonies, such as special events and parades, upon submission of a request and the Board's approval.

## Electronic Presence

1. The Great Falls Municipal Band, Inc., will maintain a web presence and a domain. The current domain expires in 2033. It has a ten-year domain contract.

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2. The leadership of the Great Falls Municipal Band, Inc., will have and maintain email contact provided by the organization. There is an expectation of proper behavior when using electronic media.