



**American Revolution 250 Commission Meeting Minutes
Virginia Museum of History and Culture**

March 18, 2022

10:00 am

Commission Members in Attendance: Christy Coleman (Interim Chair), Jamie Bosket (Interim Vice Chair)*, Steven Adkins, Ed Baine, Diane Beschamps, Gretchen Bulova, Ben Dendy, David Duncan*, Cliff Fleet*, Sue Gerdelman*, Peter Hedlund, Kathy Jordan, Julie Langan, Eric Monday, Jackie Stone*, Scott Stroh, Karin Wulf* (*Attended virtually)

Staff in Attendance: Cheryl Wilson (Executive Director)

Call to Order and Approval of Minutes

Ms. Coleman, Interim Chair, provided a call to order and called the roll. A quorum was physically present. A motion was made by Mr. Monday to accept the attendance of members participating on Zoom as full participants with voting privileges. The motion was seconded by Mr. Baine and agreed to unanimously.

Mr. Monday noted a correction to the minutes of January 14 regarding the name of the Virginia State Bar. A motion was made by Mr. Stroh to approve the minutes as amended. The motion was seconded by Mr. Monday and agreed to unanimously.

Legislative and Budget Amendment Update

Mr. Dendy provided an update on legislation affecting the Commission. House Bill 6 (Ware) and Senate Bill 22 (Locke) passed both houses of the General Assembly and have been enrolled for the Governor's signature. During the legislative process, a compromise was reached on legislative appointments, adding three members of the House of Delegates and two members of the Senate to the Commission, effective July 1, 2022, bringing the total membership to 27.

The budget was not adopted before the 2022 Regular Session adjourned, so a Special Session will be called. Mr. Dendy noted that the Commission will not receive the full funding of \$15 million that was requested, but legislators signaled continued support for future years of the commemoration.

Staff Update

Ms. Wilson provided members with an update on staff activities, including:



- **Website and Social Media:** Purchase of website name (VA250.org) for five years, with redirects of VirginiaRev250.org/.com/.net at VAREv250.org/.com/.net for one year. After finalizing formation details of Commemorations, Inc., the 501(c)(3) corporation supporting the work of the commemoration, staff will contract with a web developer and begin development of a website. In addition, a Facebook page has been created (Virginia American Revolution 250 Commemoration)
- **US250:** Meetings with America 250 continue, including the History Education Advisory Council, which provided a good rubric for consideration of programs; State Commission Convening with other state representatives; Community Conversations, and periodic communication with A250 state coordinators Kelsy Millay, Grace LeFevre, and Shawn McBurney.
- **Outreach:** Ms. Wilson and Mr. Stroh participated in a panel at the Virginia Association of Museums annual conference in early March, with more than 50 participants from museums and historic sites across the state who expressed enthusiasm and brainstormed ways for their institution to participate during the commemoration.
- **VA250 Staffing and Budget:** The first priority in staffing will be hiring a Deputy Director (an ad for which is currently posted), followed by a Marketing Specialist, Development Officer, and Executive Assistant in July, when the FTEs become available. After those staff members come on board, hiring will be on an as-needed basis, once it becomes apparent where additional expertise or assistance is needed.
 - The FY23 budget for VA250 includes:
 - The hiring of staff positions noted above
 - \$65,000 seed funding for the marketing office
 - \$65,000 seed funding for the fundraising office
 - \$60,093 for a kick-off event
 - \$300,000 in grant funding as outlined in the Strategic Plan below (VTC, VH, and Commission grants)
- **Strategic Plan:** Members held an initial discussion of a draft Strategic Plan, which will be refined over the next few months, forming the basis of the Commission's work. A primary goal of the Commission is to convene and facilitate a Commonwealth-wide commemoration, multi-faceted and inclusive of multiple partners and representatives of diverse individuals, histories, stories, and communities that define Virginia. That goal will be achieved through a six-part approach, which includes:
 - I. **Coordination:** The Commission will coordinate, encourage, support and amplify activities across the Commonwealth, including (i) programs and activities at museums, battlefields, National Park service sites, and historic



sites across the Commonwealth; (ii) local Virginia 250 committees; (iii) other states' 250 efforts; and (iv) the national America 250 Commission.

Local 250 committees: The Commission will lead the linkage, coordination, and collaboration of museums, battlefields, park service sites, and historic sites across the Commonwealth through:

- i. Requesting formation of local VA250 committees, in line with the goals and themes established by the Commission. Local committees will be composed of representatives from tourism, education, economic development, museums and historic sites, local historical and cultural groups, universities and colleges, Virginia tribes in the locality, and the governing body.
- ii. Create a dynamic website with a master interactive calendar for local partners to upload events, programs, historic sites etc. The website will also have overlays of historic trails (Road to Revolution, Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route, Network to Freedom sites, etc.) to make it easy to plan travel through Virginia.
- iii. Establishing a matching grant program for local committees and museums (through partnership with VTC and VH)
- iv. Encouraging local committees to plan programs, hold listening sessions and community discussions that amplify the goals and themes of the commemoration.

Other State Commissions: The Commission will monitor other states' planning and activities, maintaining contact, collaborating and partnering when appropriate, and sharing information.

Federal Commission: The Commission will communicate with the U.S. Semiquincentennial Commission (America 250 – “Inspiring the American Spirit”), ensuring that Virginia events and programs have national prominence, and partnering when appropriate.

- II. **Signature Events and Programs:** The Commission will sponsor signature events and programs to commemorate the 250th, in keeping with the stated goals, which may include:
- a. Partnership on Signature Conference series (2022-2026)
 - b. Multi-part museum exhibition with traveling component (mobile exhibit, panels) to travel to schools, historic sites, museums, and special events as a centerpiece of the commemoration. The exhibition will focus on social and legal revolution as well as military, and may include replicas of historic



documents. The mobile exhibition will be used as a gateway to state – helping visitors determine where to go next to learn more – and incorporate a way for visitors to connect directly and contribute their story (e.g., oral history, Ancestry genealogy search in partnership with local SAR and DAR chapters, document digitization, etc.)

- c. Special events – including a kickoff event, events to mark significant anniversaries, July 4, 2026 major statewide commemoration, and Sail 250

III. Education: The Commission will partner with schools and educational institutions to supplement K-12 education through programs which may include:

- Traveling exhibition that goes directly to schools, with supplemental materials that correspond to SOL points
- Multi-partner Teacher Institutes and teacher resources
- Robust education content aggregator on website as a one-stop resource for educators
- Essay contest on theme topics to engage students

IV. Marketing and Communication: Unified coordination and messaging through:

- Logo identification and branding
- Establishment of a dynamic and interactive website (VA250.org)
- Social media
- Interactive calendar of events and network of historic sites across the state
- Articles/logo in Virginia tourism website and Welcome Centers, Virginia Capitol Connections, museum publications, talks at museums and to community groups, etc.

V. Grant Program: The Commission will approve and provide grant-funding opportunities to partner organizations with a three-tiered approach:

- a. **VA250 Partner Program/Event** – A program or event by a Local VA250 Committee or partner organization that involves (i) use of the Commission’s logo; (ii) placement of event on the VA250 Statewide Calendar of Events; (iii) apply for/awarding of a matching grant of up to \$10,000 through the programs administered by VTC or Virginia Humanities; and/or (iv) amplification of partner event at Commission-sponsored programs/events, social media, website, etc.
- b. **VA250 Signature Partner Program/Event** - A program or event primarily developed by a partner organization that involves significant funding by the Commission to expand a singular program to achieve a broader statewide



reach. The Commission will enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the primary planning partner, develop the statewide reach of the program, and staff, support, and promote the program as one of its own. Examples include “For 2026” Conference Series; museum exhibition that travels; multi-partner summer Teacher Institutes, with site visits, held at locations across the state; First Baptist Church founding

- c. **VA250 Signature Program/Event** – A major statewide program or event that is planned, developed, funded, and promoted by the Commission.

In addition, the Commission will highlight, promote, and encourage participation in other existing grant programs, including those by VTC, Virginia Humanities and VMHC (Commonwealth History Fund)

- VI. **Fundraising:** The Commission will partner with private entities, foundations, and corporations and other philanthropic organizations to support the programmatic aspects of the commemoration and further its educational reach. Support will include gifts, grants, donations, in-kind contributions through the 501(c)(3) corporation, Virginia Commemorations, Inc.

During discussion of the Strategic Plan, members noted that local VA250 committee activities would be eligible for ARPA funding, which should be highlighted in the communication to the governing body requesting formation of local committees.

Ms. Beschamps summarized the three-pronged grant proposal as funding to focus on marketing (VTC), content development (VH), and partnerships (VA250)

Discussion of Advisory Council and Workgroups

The Executive Committee will consider membership of the Advisory Council and provide recommendations to the full commission in May.

New Member and Vacancy

Ms. Coleman noted that The Honorable Aimee Guidera, Secretary of Education, has become an ex officio member of the Executive Committee and Commission by statute.

Due to the resignation of Spencer Crew, a vacancy exists on the Commission in a position that is nominated by the VMHC and appointed by the Governor. The VMHC will submit a name for nomination and staff will assist in shepherding the appointment to the Office of the Governor.



Public Comment and Announcements

Ms. Coleman shared recent articles and court filings on legal matters concerning America 250. Members advised a cautiously watchful approach to the unfolding issues and requested review of the provisions of the MOU that the Commission entered into with America 250, particularly as relates to logo use and brand identification.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Adjournment

A motion was made by Mr. Dendy to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Mr. Baine and agreed to unanimously.