



Virginia American Revolution 250 Commission Meeting Minutes
Virginia Museum of History and Culture
July 6, 2022
10:00 am

Commission Members in Attendance: Delegate Terry Austin (Chair), Senator Mamie Locke (Vice Chair)*, Steven Adkins, Jamie Bosket*, Leslie Greene Bowman, Christy Coleman, Ben Dendy, David Duncan, Cliff Fleet, Delegate Buddy Fowler, Sue Gerdelman, Peter Hedlund, Jerri Marr, Eric Monday, Senator Tommy Norment*, Deputy Secretary McKenzie Snow, Jackie Stone, Scott Stroh (*Attended virtually)

Staff in Attendance: Cheryl Wilson (Executive Director), Elizabeth Mancano (Deputy Director)

Attorney General Representative in Attendance: Ramona Taylor

Call to Order and Approval of Minutes

Delegate Austin provided a call to order and called the roll. A quorum was physically present. A motion was made by Mr. Monday and seconded by Delegate Fowler to accept the attendance of members participating on Zoom as full participants with voting privileges. A vote was taken and passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Mr. Monday and seconded by Ms. Coleman to ratify the actions of the previous Executive Committee meeting, electing Delegate Austin as Chair and Senator Locke as Vice-Chair. A vote was taken and passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Ms. Coleman and seconded by Mr. Monday to approve the minutes of the March 18 and May 13 full commission meetings. A vote was taken and passed unanimously.

Commission Bylaws

Ms. Taylor provided an overview of Commission bylaws, which follow had been circulated for several months. Mr. Dendy suggested to strike the line requiring the bylaws to be amended every four years, as the Commission is scheduled to sunset in 2027. A motion was made by Mr. Monday and seconded by Chief Adkins to adopt the bylaws as amended. A vote was taken and passed unanimously.

Staff Update

Ms. Wilson provided an update of activities of the Commission. Each locality in Virginia has been requested to form a Local VA250 Committee to coordinate and work with the state commission. A map was displayed of all localities having currently established a VA250



presence, including those that have passed a formal resolution of support. Commission members asked to receive a list of all local leaders who received the email from staff regarding local committees and contacts. Ms. Wilson also noted that the VA250.org website will be operational this week with splash page and info request form only. Additional pages and material will be added in the coming weeks and months.

Strategic Plan

Ms. Wilson walked members through the Strategic Plan, including a complete listing of programs in development to date (see Appendix A). A motion was made by Mr. Monday and seconded by Mr. Dendy to approve the Strategic Plan as presented. A vote was taken and passed unanimously.

VA250 Signature Program: Kickoff event / Committee of Correspondence 250th (March 10-12, 2023)

Ms. Wilson reviewed details of the national Kickoff Event being planned to commemorate the 250th anniversary of Virginia's Committee of Correspondence, to be held March 10-12, 2023. Planners from across the state and nation will gather in Williamsburg, on a dual-track agenda, to discuss the opportunities of the semiquincentennial, as well as collaborative opportunities and common themes.

There was discussion that the date of the anniversary event collides with the Virginia Association of Museums annual meeting, and Ms. Wilson was directed to convene a group to work out a plan to mitigate this conflict. The group would consist of commission members, Cliff Fleet, Christy Coleman, Jamie Bosket and Scott Stroh.

A motion was made by Mr. Monday and seconded by Chief Adkins to approve the agenda as presented. A vote was taken and passed unanimously.

Advisory Council

A motion was made by Delegate Fowler and seconded by Chief Adkins to defer discussion of Advisory Council membership until next meeting, as members may be interested in submitting additional names as potential Advisory Council members. A vote was taken and passed unanimously.

**Next Meeting**

Ms.. Wilson was asked to poll the members for suitable dates for a meeting the week of September 19, and was asked to schedule the meeting for 11:00 a.m.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 11:20 a.m.



APPENDIX A

Programs in Development

At a meeting held on July 6, 2022, the Virginia American Revolution 250 Commission approved a Strategic Plan to guide the commemoration, as well as approved a slate of programs to be developed, which will evolve over time, but is offered initially as follows:

- I. **Signature Events and Programs:** The Commission will sponsor signature events and programs to commemorate the 250th, in keeping with the stated goals, which currently include:
 - i. **Kickoff event** (March 11-12, 2023)

Virginia will mirror the Committees of Correspondence, by inviting colleagues in other states, state commissioners, representatives of Virginia local VA250 committees, and key stakeholders to spend a weekend of mutual learning and collaboration in Colonial Williamsburg March 11-12.

As this will be the first gathering of states to mark the 250th, Virginia will lead the nation by inviting collaboration, sharing information, and seeking ways to partner during the semiquincentennial, signaling our commitment not only to a meaningful commemoration for Virginia, but for every state and the nation. The product of the gathering will be a resolution of mutual support, collaboration, and partnership.
 - ii. **Signature Conferences**
 - a. 2022: “For 2026: A Five-Year Conference Series,” in partnership with Omohundro Institute, William & Mary, and Colonial Williamsburg:
 - b. 2026: Partnership with Monticello on the meaning of the Declaration of Independence
 - iii. **Museum and traveling exhibition:** Multi-part museum exhibition with at least two traveling components (mobile museum and panel exhibition) to travel to schools, historic sites, museums, and special events as a centerpiece of the commemoration. The exhibition will focus on the 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.

iv. **Special events** – Examples include:

- i. **Committees of Correspondence 250th** (March 11-12, 2023)
- ii. **Sail 250** (May – June 2026): Six-port sail docking in Alexandria and Norfolk
- iii. **Tall Ships America**
- iv. **“Let Freedom Ring”** (July 4, 2026):
 1. Statewide naturalization ceremony at key locations with big-name speaker simulcast of keynote speech (Monticello, Mount Vernon, Montpelier, Colonial Williamsburg, State Capitol, Red Hill, Gunston Hall, Stratford Hall, etc.)
 2. Statewide tolling of bells at a certain time
 3. Massive fireworks show at key locations, parades, etc.

II. Statewide 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: Local committees may be composed of representatives from tourism, education, economic development, museums, historic sites, local historical and cultural groups, universities and colleges, Tribal representatives, the governing body, and other stakeholders.

The Commission will lead the linkage, coordination, and collaboration of museums, battlefields, park service sites, and historic sites across the Commonwealth, and support their programming, through:

- Creating a dynamic website with a master interactive calendar for local partners to upload events, programs, historic sites etc. The website will 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.
- 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 maintain communication with America 250 and other national groups, ensuring that Virginia events and programs have national prominence, and partnering where appropriate.

III. Grant Program: The Virginia American Revolution 250 Commission will offer grant-funding opportunities to partners and Local 250 Committees using a three-tiered approach as follows:

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 the Virginia Tourism Corporation (VTC) or Virginia Humanities (VH); and/or (iv) amplification of partner event at Commission-sponsored programs/events, social media, website, etc.

1. Grants offered by the Virginia Tourism Corporation support marketing for 250th related events and activities, including the placement of Road to Revolution and similar road signs.
2. Grants offered by Virginia Humanities support content development for 250th related events and activities
3. Grant criteria will follow the normal criteria established by VTC and VH

b. **VA250 Signature Partner Program/Event** - A program or event primarily developed by a partner organization that involves funding of up to \$25,000 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 partners, develop the statewide reach of the program, and staff, support, and promote the program as one of its own.

Criteria:

- i. The program must offer a statewide reach and involve at least three partner organizations
- ii. There must be a lasting legacy or digitally archived component
- iii. The program is not eligible for a VA250 grant administered by VH or VTC, but is of significant import and lasting value to the commemoration



Example: “For 2026” Conference partnership with Omohundro Institute, College of William and Mary, and Colonial Williamsburg

- c. **VA250 Signature Program/Event** – A major program, exhibition, or event with statewide reach that is either (i) planned, developed, funded, and promoted by the Commission or (ii) developed by a partner organization in full cooperation with the Commission and promoted as one of its Signature Programs/Events.

Example: Museum and traveling exhibitions developed by partner agencies

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

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

- 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
- Traveling exhibition that goes directly to schools, with supplemental materials that correspond to SOL points