



DRAFT

Virginia American Revolution 250 Commission (VA250)

Full Commission Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, July 18, 2023, 10:30 a.m.

Virginia Museum of History and Culture

Reynolds Leadership Center (2nd floor)

Members in Attendance: Senator Mamie Locke (Vice Chair), Chief Stephen Adkins, Edward Baine, Diane Bechamps, Douglas Bradburn, Jean Ann Bolling, Jamie Bosket, Gardner Hallock, David Duncan, Clifford Fleet, Delegate Hyland (Buddy) Fowler, Sue Gerdelman, Secretary Aimee Guidera, Peter Hedlund, Kathy Jordan, Julie Langan, Jerri Marr, Delegate Kenneth Plum, Katherine Rowe, Jackie Stone, Scott Stroh

Virtual Attendees: Christy Coleman, Chief Anne Richardson

Staff in Attendance: Cheryl Wilson, Elizabeth Mancano, Susan Nolan, Patrick Daughtry, Trevor Grimm, Katherine Dabney

Invited Guests: Margaret Hancock, Executive Director, Virginia Tourism Corporation

Call to Order and Approval of Minutes

Senator Mamie Locke, Vice Chair, called the meeting to order and Ms. Wilson called roll call. A quorum was physically present.

A motion was made by Chief Adkins and seconded by Ms. Stone to accept the attendance of members participating virtually as full participants with voting privileges. A vote was taken and passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Mr. Fleet and seconded by Ms. Stone to approve the minutes of the April 18, 2023, full commission meeting. A vote was taken and passed unanimously.

Chair's Remarks

Senator Mamie Locke welcomed everyone and gave regrets from Chairman Austin that he was unable to join the meeting due to pressing commitments in Richmond.

Update on Programs in Development

Give Me Liberty: Virginia and the Forging of a Nation: VHMC and JYF Joint Exhibition

Jamie Bosket announced that a sponsorship agreement had been reached for the development of the signature exhibition for the commemoration. This exhibition will be a great experiment, with a traveling component moving around the state throughout the commemoration. VMHC is in close collaboration with the Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation on its development.

Mr. Bosket reported that Solid Light had been selected to lead the project. They have deep expertise in creating exhibits for museums including recently at the American Civil War Museum. Leadership met at the Yorktown Victory Center recently to talk with community historians and other stakeholders. An all-star list of historians from across the state and beyond have signed on to assist in the development of the exhibit. A mock-up of the exhibit should be ready to be shared at an upcoming meeting.

A Common Cause to All: A Convening of States

2024: Monday, March 18 – Wednesday, March 20

2025: Monday, March 24 – Wednesday, March 26

Cliff Fleet shared that another national planning meeting had been scheduled for March 2024 to discuss the 2026 events with representatives from as many states as possible. Currently CW is focused is on planning for 2024 and 2025, with an emphasis on drawing inspiration from our current achievements and programming to lead the way for other states. Colonial Williamsburg is pleased to host, and the intention is to make attendance free with financial support from the Foundation.

Virginia Commission for the Arts – VA250 Creative Community Partnership Grant

Margaret Hancock, Executive Director, Virginia Commission for the Arts

Ms. Hancock provided an update on grant funding available through the Virginia Commission for the Arts, which includes 800 grants annually totaling \$5.2 million. This agency is the sole state entity dedicated to investing in the arts and supports 150 fellow artists. Funding primarily comes from the National Endowment and the Virginia General Assembly.

VCA operates in all Virginia regions and offers various grants including Partnership Grants, Impact Grants, and Artist Engagement Grants.

During discussion, Chief Adkins inquired about the level of participation from counties. It was noted that some of the larger communities do not apply. Out of the total 134 counties, 117 have shown some level of participation. Ms. Hancock confirmed that Federal organizations are not eligible to apply.

Secretary Guidara shared that VCA falls under the Secretary of Education, and Ms. Hancock has played a transformative role in its development. Agencies have been asked to outline their support for the VA250th celebration as part of their contributions.

A motion was made by Ms. Stone and seconded by Delegate Plum to add a joint VA250-VCA grant to the funding sources available to localities. A vote was taken and passed unanimously.

Marketing Report

Diane Bechamps, Chair of the Commission's Marketing Workgroup, provided several updates:

- An overhaul of an existing VTC history app is underway for the 250th commemoration. The primary goals are to raise awareness and educate the public about events, as well as foster community engagement in the commemoration.
- VA250.org and social media efforts have shown a significant increase in activity, approximately 30%.
- A request was made for museums and organizations to connect and tag "VA250" to help spread awareness.
- The 250th staff is actively tracking media coverage using Quorum.

Staff Report

Cheryl Wilson provided a staff report with the following key points:

1. The Honorary Leadership Council, led by VA250 National Honorary Chair, Carly Fiorina, has secured all nine former Governors' participation and support for the 250th commemoration.
2. The Mobile Museum Experience is in progress in collaboration with SPEVCO. It will showcase Virginia's history as a fundamental part of America's story, highlighting localities unique stories, and special places. Museums have been encouraged to share resources and content, and this tech-forward mobile experience is expected to launch in Fall 2024.
3. 250 Across the Nation: America 250 invited the VA250 Commission to present information on plans in Virginia during its June 12 meeting. Ms. Wilson, presenting virtually, broadly outlined broadly plans to highlight Virginia's history as America's story. Commission members commended the plans in development.
AASLH continues to serve as a national coordinator of 250th planners and has recently published "Making History at 250," a case study involving five states. The report praises Virginia's leadership role in convening states through "A Common Cause to All."

4. 250 Across the Commonwealth: In Virginia, 118 localities have formed committees for the 250th planning. Efforts to engage with and support local communities are ongoing with staff offering resources and technical assistance.
5. Grant Updates: Three VA250 grant streams are available to support local efforts, in partnership with Virginia Tourism Corporation (VTC), Virginia Humanities (VH), and the Virginia Commission for the Arts (VCA). Currently, the first round of Virginia Humanities grants are open until September 8th.

President Rowe from W&M discussed the idea of creating a physical legacy for Virginia's commemoration and its potential impact on visitation. The discussion focused on the criteria for such a legacy. It was suggested that a small working group be formed to brainstorm and outline applications for this physical legacy. Criteria were being considered, with an emphasis on leveraging Virginia's distinctiveness, and readiness for implementation.

Highland was mentioned as an example, highlighting the need for maintenance to accommodate an increase in visitors. President Rowe offered to host the working group, should it be constituted by the Chair.

Next meeting dates

Tuesday, October 17, 2023, 10:30 a.m. – State Capitol
Friday, January 5, 2024, 10:30 a.m. – State Capitol

Adjournment

There was no public comment. There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:41 a.m.