



Virginia American Revolution 250 Commission (VA250) Full Commission Minutes

Friday, January 6, 2023, 11:00 am
Library of Virginia

Members in Attendance: Delegate Terry Austin (Chair), Senator Mamie Locke (Vice Chair), Chief Stephen Adkins, Edward H. Baine, Diane Bechamps, Jean Ann Bolling, Jamie Bosket, Leslie Greene Bowman, Gretchen Bulova, Christy Coleman, H. Benson Dendy III, Delegate Hyland (Buddy) Fowler, Sue Gerdelman, Secretary Aimee Guidera, Julie Langan, Jerri Marr, Delegate Kenneth Plum, Katherine Rowe, Jackie Stone, Scott Stroh, Sandra Treadway

Virtual Attendees: Senator Thomas K. Norment, Peter Hedlund

Staff in Attendance: Cheryl Wilson, Elizabeth Mancano, Patrick Daughtry, Trevor Grimm, Susan Nolan, April Chatmon

Call to Order and Approval of Minutes

Delegate Terry Austin, 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. Gerdelman to accept the attendance of members participating virtually as full participants with voting privileges. A vote was taken and passed unanimously.

Chairman Austin welcomed two members recently appointed by Governor Youngkin: Katherine Rowe of Williamsburg, to fill the vacancy caused by the resignation of Spencer Crew, and Jean Ann Bolling of Mechanicsville, to fill the vacancy caused by the resignation of Karin Wulf, who moved out of state and was no longer eligible to serve.

A motion was made by Mr. Dendy and seconded by Ms. Bowman to approve the minutes of the September 21 meeting. A vote was taken and passed unanimously.

Discussion of Joint VMHC/JYF Exhibition Proposal

Mr. Bosket presented the joint VMHC/JYF proposal for the Virginia 250 Exhibition, for which the Commission will serve as presenting sponsor (see Appendix A for full proposal).

Mr. Bosket highlighted aspects of the proposal, noting that it will be inclusive of all stories and contributions; will pivot on a spirit of inspiration, enthusiasm, and optimism; and will bring a lasting contribution to scholarship of the era. The exhibition in its entirety is projected to cost \$2 million, with the Commission's \$1 million sponsorship providing for a complementary panel exhibit to travel to local communities, as well as funding for the gallery exhibition itself.

After discussion and widespread consensus, a motion was made by Mr. Dendy and seconded by Chief Adkins that the exhibition proposal be approved. A vote was taken and passed unanimously.

Staff Report

Ms. Wilson provided an update on programs in development. The 2022 Annual Report to the Governor and General Assembly was provided to members and submitted for publication as required by statute.

Local committees: 80 localities have formed local VA250 committees. Of those, 37 governing bodies have passed resolutions of support for the local efforts. Staff provides resources and technical support to local committees, including: (i) a dedicated microsite within VA250.org; (ii) individualized logins to add events to the Statewide Calendar of Events; (iii) locality-specific logos; and (iv) press release templates.

Grants: The first round of VTC-VA250 Marketing Leverage Program grants closes January 24. Staff will join with VTC to evaluate grants, then provide recommendations (Award/Not Award) to the Executive Committee and/or full Commission.

Virginia Humanities grants are being developed, with supported activities including public programs or lectures, book talks, creation of digital archives with historical documents, and in-person or virtual exhibits.

A Common Cause to All: The Commission's first event will be held March 10-12, 2023, at the Williamsburg Lodge, with 250th planners invited from across the nation. Ms. Wilson reviewed a draft agenda and requested donated items for Welcome Bags. Members discussed adding representatives of the business community to the event but determined that the audience for this initial event should remain those tasked with planning the 250th in their state or locality. Future iterations of the program may include a broader audience.

For 2026: Revolutionary Legacies: The Omohundro Institute has provided its final report to the Commission on outcomes of the first of five annual conferences. The Commission's sponsorship provided funding for the pre-conference RevEd Teacher's Summit and webcasting/archiving of plenary sessions.

Ms. Mancano provided an update on marketing and communications efforts, including the continued build-out of VA250.org, which has developed into a robust, interactive website with a Statewide Calendar of Events, pages for each local committee, resources for planners, and much more. A comprehensive Marketing Plan is in development, in consultation with the Virginia

Tourism Corporation, with metrics and milestones that ensure continued audience engagement and growth. Diane Beschamps will lead the Marketing Workgroup, once the Marketing Plan becomes operational.

Mr. Daughtry and Ms. Nolan reviewed development efforts, which are coordinated through Virginia Commemorations, Inc., the 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation that serves as the fundraising arm of the commemoration.

2023 Meeting Dates

A schedule was set for meetings of the full commission as follows:

Tuesday, April 18, 2023, 10:30 a.m. – Virginia Museum of History and Culture

Tuesday, July 18, 2023, 10:30 a.m. – Location TBD

Tuesday, October 17, 2023, 10:30 a.m. – Location TBD

Friday, January 5, 2024, 10:30 a.m. – Location TBD

Adjournment:

There was no public comment. There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 12:15 pm.

Virginia 250 Exhibition Proposal

January 6, 2023

OVERVIEW

The Virginia Museum of History and Culture (VMHC) and Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation (JYF) propose to develop in partnership the signature exhibition for the Commonwealth of Virginia’s commemoration of the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. The exhibit will incorporate the key theme and four supporting elements identified and approved by the VA250 Commission. Specifically, the proposed exhibition acknowledges that Virginia’s history is America’s story: complex, promising, and a multicultural story that in the Revolutionary era was Native American, European, African and American, and is now so much richer for its continuing diversity.

Focusing on Revolutionary events in 1775 and 1776, this signature exhibition and its companion programming will embrace the rich history and narrative breadth of the era, and mark the origins of a revolutionary, world-changing new nation. It will survey the events that preceded and followed it and the people who contributed to its formation, with particularly focus on essential Virginia contributors like Washington, Jefferson, Henry, and others. Using the most compelling exhibition techniques coupled with art, artifacts and documents drawn from both museums’ collections, the exhibition will inspire a deep appreciation of the continental and global forces, and individual actions by iconic and ordinary people that brought about the model of democratic government that would be duplicated the world over.

GOALS

1. Primary Exhibition: Together in partnership, JYF and VMHC will conceive, design, produce, and install a major exhibition of approximately 5,000 square feet to be on display at the VMHC from approximately March 2025 through January 2026, and then on display at JYF from approximately April 2026 through January 2027.

2. Panel Exhibition: Together in partnership, JYF and VMHC will conceive, design, and produce a traveling panel version of the aforementioned exhibition that will be deployed for display across the state (and beyond as desired) from approximately March 2025 through December 2027.
3. Develop supporting tours, programs and/or educational materials to ensure the exhibition is as accessible to as many Virginians as possible.

SPECIFICATIONS

As stated above, the exhibition will have at its core, the primary theme and its supporting pillars of concepts. These are:

1. Virginia is a powerfully historical place, home to sites and stories essential to our American story.
2. The Revolutionary challenge continues.
3. Here in Virginia, the American Revolution was a war, and more than a war.
4. We can tell our history to reflect the fullest American story.

ESTIMATED COSTS

*These estimated costs are for preliminary planning purposes only

1. Exhibit Budget:
 - a. Exhibit Direct Expenses (design, fabrication, loans, permissions & rights, travel, etc. (not including JYF & VMHC staff support) = \$1,400,000
 - b. Exhibit Funding:
 - Virginia 250th Commission Requested Support = \$900,000
 - JYF contribution (via Exhibit rental from VMHC) = \$250,000
 - VMHC contribution = \$250,000
2. Panel Exhibit Budget:
 - a. Panel Exhibit Expenses (design, fabrication, travel, etc.) = \$100,000
 - b. Panel Exhibit Funding:
 - Virginia 250th Commission Requested Support = \$100,000
3. Other Expenses Outside of MOA:
 - a. Marketing & promotion by JYF & VMHC = approximately \$250,000
 - b. Programming by JYF & VMHC = approximately \$250,000
 - JYF & VMHC to fundraise to cover these additional costs as well as their contributions to the Exhibit Direct Expenses (approximately \$1,000,000 in total/\$500,000 for each institution).

MILESTONES

January 2023

Secure official vote and sponsorship of the VA250th Commission to support the effort at requested levels.

January 2023

Issue RFP for exhibition design partner and formalize working relationship between VMHC and JYF.

March 2023

Develop initial exhibition outline with preliminary list of possible events, people, artifacts, documents and images to be covered. Present to VA250th.

September 2023

VMHC and JYF each have secured at least \$125,000 of required funding from private sources to ensure planning and concepts for the exhibition.

October 2023

Exhibition conceptual renderings prepared

July 2024

All funds from VMHC and JYF have been secured from private sources