

DRAFT

Virginia American Revolution 250 Commission (VA250)

Full Commission Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, April 18, 2023, 10:30 am

Virginia Museum of History & Culture

Members in Attendance: Delegate Terry Austin (Chair), Senator Mamie Locke (Vice Chair), Chief Stephen Adkins, Edward Baine, Diane Bechamps, Gretchen Bulova, Christy Coleman, H. Benson Dendy III, David Duncan, Cliff Fleet, Delegate Hyland (Buddy) Fowler, Secretary Aimee Guidera, Peter Hedlund, Kathy Jordan, Julie Langan, Jerri Marr, Delegate Kenneth Plum, Katherine Rowe, Jackie Stone, Scott Stroh III, Stephen Light

Virtual Attendees: Jamie Bosket, Eric Monday

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

Attorney General Representative in Attendance: Ramona Taylor

Invited Guests: Staci Martin, Grants Director, Virginia Tourism Corporation (VTC)
Noah Salaah ad-Deen, Partnership & Marketing Grants Coordinator, VTC

Call to Order and Approval of Minutes

Delegate Terry Austin, Chairman, called the meeting to order and Ms. Wilson called roll call. A quorum was physically present.

A motion was made by Mr. Fleet and seconded by Chief Adkins 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 Chief Adkins and seconded by Ms. Stone to approve the minutes of the January 6, 2023, full commission meeting. A vote was taken and passed unanimously.

Chair's Report

Chairman Austin noted the importance of the affirmation of a resolution among the states gathered at "A Common Cause to All," that embodies the Commission's commitment to creating a multi-faceted commemoration that is meaningful for all Virginians and that celebrates the American spirit.

Chairman Austin further mentioned that legislation passed the 2023 General Assembly that establishes the commission as a legislative branch agency and extends its work to 2031.

Recap of A Common Cause to All: A Convening of States on the 250th Anniversary of the Call for Committees of Correspondence

Chairman Austin began his report by thanking the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation (CWF), Cliff Fleet, and Carly Fiorina for their role and investment in the successful *A Common Cause to All* kick-off weekend. He also recognized the collaboration between CWF, the VA250 commission, Virginia Museum of History and Culture, and the Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation.

Ms. Wilson highlighted the widespread media coverage and outreach accomplished as a result of the event. Articles appeared in *Time Magazine*, *Wall Street Journal*, and a reporter from the *NYTimes* attended, in addition to many local and regional papers and news stations who also reported on the event. Ms. Wilson summarized feedback received from the post-event attendee survey which was overwhelmingly positive. As a reflection of the success of the weekend, tentative dates have been outlined for conferences in March 2024 and 2025.

Mr. Fleet recognized the collective efforts between Colonial Williamsburg and the Commission in putting the event together. It got people excited across the organization, the state, and the country. Virginia established a leadership role among states in the 250th and there are many historical moments to lean into.

During discussion, Chairman Austin pledged the Commission's commitment to rising above divisiveness; uniting in purpose; ensuring that programs are representative and inclusive of all citizens and all stories; and continuing to progress forward, ever striving towards a more perfect Union.

VTC-VA250 Marketing Leverage Grant Recommendations

Ms. Martin presented the first round of Marketing Leverage Program grants received and recommended for approval by the Commission

1. Culpeper VA 250 Committee

- **Marketing program name:** *Culpeper VA 250 Branding*
- **Amount of award:** \$10,000
- **Amount of match from recipient:** \$13,500
- **Number of partners:** 3 (Culpeper Tourism and Economic Development [DMO], Museum of Culpeper History, Historic Germanna)
- **Description:** Design and build Culpeper VA250 website, featuring stories, galleries, calendar, recordings, media information. The Culpeper VA250 branding program is

focused on developing the assets necessary to communicate, inspire, and inform visitors on programming, special events, exhibits, historical sites, and artifacts as we come together to celebrate our complex history.

2. Louisa County

- **Marketing program name:** *Jack Jouett Trail*
- **Amount of award:** \$9,000
- **Amount of match from recipient:** \$9,000
- **Number of partners:** 3 (Louisa County Parks, Recreation, and Tourism [DMO], Louisa County Historical Society, Louisa County Chamber of Commerce)
- **Description:** Create a trail with interpretive signs marking Jouett's path. Nicknamed the "Paul Revere of the South," Jack Jouett made a dangerous 40-mile ride from Cuckoo Tavern in Louisa County to Monicello with news that the British were on their way to capture members of Virginia's government, including Thomas Jefferson.

3. Yorktown 250th Anniversary Commemoration Committee

- **Marketing program name:** *A Question of Religious Freedom: The 1773 Baptist Preacher Trials*
- **Amount of award:** \$1,500
- **Amount of match from recipient:** \$1,500
- **Number of partners:** 3 (York County [DMO], Watermen's Museum, 1781 Foundation)
- **Description:** Lecture/dramatic education program at the Watermen's Museum, panel exhibit, and historical pamphlet on the 1773 Baptist Preacher trials that occurred on June 4, 1773 at Chesterfield Courthouse. Achibald Cary was the magistrate presiding over the case of John Weatherford, with Patrick Henry serving as defense attorney. The multiple arrests and jail sentences between 1771 and 1773 caught the attention of all the colonies and helped fuel dissent against the crown. Preachers from many colonies and cultural communities traveled to Virginia to take part in the protest for religious freedom.

A motion was made by Mr. Dendy and seconded by Mr. Baine to approve the three grants as presented. A vote was taken and passed unanimously. The next round of VTC-VA250 grants will open May 18 and close July 18.

Marketing Report

Ms. Bechamps presented on the establishment of a Marketing Committee to support the efforts of the Commission. A comprehensive Marketing Plan has been developed with goals and metrics for building awareness for VA250. Virginia Tourism Corporation is committed to

assisting VA250 with tourism outreach, creation of a mobile app, and building channels in social media platforms that drive interest and engagement.

Development Report

Mr. Dendy thanked Dominion Energy for its Partnership investment in the Commission's programs through their commitment of \$1M over four years. He thanked Mr. Baine for his leadership on the Commission and for his commitment on behalf of Dominion Energy.

Mr. Dendy reviewed development efforts, which continue through prospect identification, personal visits, and proposals.

Staff Report

Ms. Wilson played the VA250 promotional video, reviewed key anniversary dates and plans in development, and provided an update on other activities:

1. Honorary Leadership Council: Chairman Austin and Vice-Chair Locke have invited Governor Youngkin and all former Virginia Governors to join the VA250 Honorary Leadership Council. Additional invitations will be forthcoming
2. Local VA250 committees: 97 localities have formed local committees. Staff will follow up with the remaining 37 localities, conduct information sessions, and continue to provide resources and technical assistance.
3. Logo requests: Staff creates customized logos for use by local committees and provides a limited-use provisional approval for use of the Commission's logo. The Commission reviewed logo requests to date, and there being no objection, assented to final approval of such requests.
4. Grants to local committees: In addition to the grant funding provided through VTC, staff is also working to create a grant stream through Virginia Humanities and the Virginia Commission for the Arts, to provide additional funds to communities across Virginia for the creation and promotion of events related to the 250th.
5. VHMC/JYF exhibition, *Give Me Liberty: Virginia and the Forging of a Nation*: An MOU has been executed between the Commission and VMHC and the first installment (\$500,000) has been paid in sponsorship of the joint exhibition and accompanying panel exhibit.
6. Mobile exhibition: Staff has identified a suitable tractor-trailer to lease for the mobile exhibition and will continue to develop the project, with an anticipated launch date of Fall 2024.

7. Revolutionary Road Trips with Darley: Award-winning travel journalist Darley Newman is creating a series of up to four episodes that will highlight historic sites across Virginia. Shows are broadcast on PBS and Amazon Prime and reach 330 million viewers, with an additional social media reach of 110,000 followers. Should plans for the program continue to develop with a statewide reach, up to \$10,000 may be invested from the Commission's marketing budget to support the project (each episode of which costs \$80,000), in return for sponsorship recognition, streaming links for incorporation on the VA250.org website, and promotional consideration.

President Rowe inquired about the 250th anniversary of Phi Beta Kappa at William & Mary. It was founded on the campus as an open debate society, dedicated to the freedom of inquiry. Commemorating the establishment would give Virginia the opportunity to be the anchor for college and university leaders to come together, and William & Mary to be the host.

2023 Meeting Dates

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

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 11:57 a.m.