



**Virginia American Revolution 250 Commission (VA250)
Full Commission Meeting Minutes**

Tuesday, October 15, 2024, 1:00 p.m.
General Assembly Building
House Room A (Lower level)

Members and Invited Participants in Attendance: Delegate Terry Austin (Chair), Senator Mamie Locke (Vice Chair), Delegate Alex Askew, Jean Ann Bolling, Douglas Bradburn, H. Benson Dendy, Cliff Fleet, Secretary Aimee Guidera, Peter Hedlund, Carly Fiorina, Jane Lammay, Julie Langan, Jerri Marr, Katherine Rowe, Jackie Stone, Scott Stroh

Virtual Attendees: Chief Stephen Adkins, Edward Baine, Jane Kamensky, Delegate Paul Krizek, Justice Elizabeth McClanahan, Eric Monday, Delegate Ken Plum

Call to Order and Approval of Minutes

Chairman Austin called the meeting to order at 1:05 p.m. and Ms. Wilson called roll. A quorum was physically present.

Chair's Remarks

Chairman Austin welcomed members and thanked them for the time and talent they lend to VA250. He noted that there have been two Executive Committee meetings since the Commission last met. He also reiterated to the Commission the importance of amplifying VA250 through the organizations they represent. Together with Vice Chair Locke, Honorary Chair Fiorina, Governor Youngkin, and General Assembly leadership, all public agencies and private organizations are requested to intentionally incorporate VA250 into their programs, branding, and marketing, as we join to amplify, coordinate, and create a multi-faceted statewide commemoration.

A motion was made by Mr. Dendy and seconded by Chief Adkins to approve the minutes of July 17, 2024, full commission meeting. A vote was taken and passed unanimously.

Remarks from VA250 National Honorary Chair

Carly Fiorina

Honorary Chair Fiorina gave a brief list of recent and upcoming events and commemorations. She reminded us of Chief Adkin's words from his 4th of July speech, "Learn your story, learn my story, learn our story". Remembering the "why" which is important to this commission as well as understanding why we are Americans.

Remarks from VA250 Vice Chair

Senator Locke

Senator Locke remarked on the presentation that Honorary Chair Fiorina and Ms. Wilson gave to the Senate Finance Committee presentation, which was wonderfully done. She remarked that letting

members know what VA250 is doing and what their investment is accomplishing will increase involvement.

VA250 Preservation Grant Fund

Julie Langan

Ms. Langan shared that the Virginia Department of Historic Resources has received a steady stream of requests (227). She provided an overview of the timeline, eligibility, and grant guidelines for eligible projects. \$20 million in the 2024-2026 Virginia biennial budget to initiate a grant program to support improvements at significant historic sites and history museums in Virginia in anticipation of the 250th anniversary of the American Revolution and the 1776 United States Declaration of Independence (the nation's semiquincentennial). Scoring the grant applications has begun and she would like to complete this process by the end of November and by the end of the year at the latest.

Plans for 250th Anniversary of George Mason's Declaration of Rights

Scott Stroh, Executive Director, Gunston Hall

Mr. Stroh gave an overview of the history of Gunston Hall and the 250th anniversary events planned to mark George Mason's Declaration of Rights on June 12, 2026 and Declaration Day 2026. The Commission will partner with Gunston Hall to present these milestone events.

Advisory Council Reports and Other Convenings

Tribal Nations Leadership Advisory Council

Chair: Chief Stephen R. Adkins, Chickahominy Tribe

Chief Adkins reported that he was working to schedule the next meeting, and there was nothing new to report at this time.

African American Advisory Council

Chair: Senator Mamie E. Locke

Senator Locke shared that the next meeting will be on October 29, 2024, at Fort Monroe. Meetings are being well attended and she is looking forward to continuing their work.

Education Steering Committee

Chair: Secretary Aimee Guidera

Secretary Guidera gave a report on the first in-person Education Steering Committee meeting held at the VMHC on October 1, 2024. It was attended by 30-35 people. She explained the roles of the sub-committees and their goals regarding education, and she invited Ms. Ramsey to give her thoughts. Ms. Ramsey thanked Secretary Guidera for organizing the group/meeting. Vice Chair Locke thoroughly enjoyed the meeting and is excited to bring these ideas to the schools. Ms. Wilson noted that the goal is to create life-long learners through the civics programs that are being planned.

Secretary Guidera gave an overview of the Reading Revolution Week in which legislators will be going to schools to read a predetermined Revolution-themed book to classrooms. The book will then be donated. A framed proclamation of Reading Revolution Week, signed by Governor Youngkin, was presented to Chairman Austin and Vice Chair Locke.

VAM Museums Collaborative

Co-Chairs: Karen Daly (Stratford Hall) and Scott Stroh (Gunston Hall)

Scott Stroh reported the next meeting will be in two weeks, and he will give a report following that meeting.

Convene the Conveners

Carly Fiorina

Honorary Chair Fiorina gave an overview of convening associations and organizations that have engaged with VA250 to harness their great networks across the Commonwealth. The small staff of VA250 can't be at all the events, and these conveners are developing a list of volunteers including veteran organizations that can be called to greet people at events and to give more information about VA250. Creating the opportunity to engage, educate, and inspire throughout the commemoration in their networks is an important part of VA250's mission.

Development Report

Ben Dendy, President, Virginia Commemorations, Inc.

Virginia Commemorations, Inc. has raised over \$4.6 million dollars in cash and in-kind contributions, with 11 proposals being considered totaling \$2.5 million dollars. In addition, VCI is in conversation with five new prospective donors. Mr. Dendy reported that a series of fundraising events are being planned across the state, with dates already scheduled in Hampton Roads and Charlottesville. VCI, Inc. held their annual meeting on August 29, 2024.

Staff Report

Cheryl Wilson

Ms. Wilson began by showing a video overview of the July 4th Celebration at the Capitol and mentioned the two July 4th celebrations are planned for 2025, both serving both the eastern and western portions of the state (Fort Monroe and Roanoke).

Analytics: VA250 By the Numbers

Ms. Wilson gave the following media report update:

Media impressions: October – October 1.02 Billion

Mobile museum requests: 200 requests coming from 89 localities

Brand Amplification

Ms. Wilson reported that the VTC partnership focus this Fall will be featuring the mobile museum launch, the VA1 conference and supporting the Lafayette tour and Yorktown Tea Party. Further, the VA250 license plate is now available for purchase on the DMV website and customized logos can be developed for all partners.

Programs in Development

Ms. Wilson provided an update on upcoming programs in development and invited members to share about their upcoming events as well.

- **Bray School** opening ceremony (Friday, November 1)
- **Yorktown Tea Party** (Thursday, November 7)
- **Lafayette’s Grand Tour** (Multiple locations, Fall 2024)
- **Launch of Mobile Museum** (TBD)
- **Fincastle Resolutions** (January 2025)
- **Opening of Give Me Liberty: Virginia and the Forging of a Nation** (VMHC)
- **St. John’s Church:** 250th anniversary of Patrick Henry’s “Give Me Liberty or Give Me Death” speech (March 22-23, 2025)
- **A Common Cause to All** (March 24-26, 2025)

New Proposals

Ms. Wilson shared information on the documentary “Resolved to Live and Die: The Revolutionary Roots of Southwest Virginia” (Blue Ridge PBS, PBS Appalachia, Wilderness Road Regional Museum and Town of Wytheville Department of Museums). VA250 will be giving \$50,000 to support statewide distribution.

Executive Committee Actions

Ms. Wilson gave an update on the Mobile Museum and showed the latest renderings. She also brought to the attention of the members a draft of the VMFA/JYF exhibition: Give Me Liberty: Virginia and the Forging of a Nation.

Following Ms. Wilson’s presentation, Mr. Dendy made a motion to approve en bloc the actions of the Executive Committee including approval of the proposed 2025 budget and allocation of funds for the Blue Ridge PBS documentary. Chief Adkins seconded the motion, Del. Austin called for the vote and it passed unanimously.

Other Business:

Delegate Austin shared that there would be new articles coming out about the 250th from Cardinal News.

Mr. Fleet shared an overview of upcoming events in Colonial Williamsburg, including Lafayette’s Grand Tour, the rededication of the Bray School, and coverage by CBS news on the work Colonial Williamsburg is doing to preserve and interpret history.

Adjournment

There was no public comment. There being no further business, a motion was made by Chief Adkins and seconded by Mr. Hedlund to adjourn the meeting at 2:05 pm.