



American Revolution Commission (VA250)

African American Advisory Council Meeting

Tuesday, August 19, 2025, 2:00 PM

VA Assembly Building

Richmond, VA

MEETING MINUTES

Call to Order and Welcome

The Honorable Mamie E. Locke, Chair

Senator Mamie Locke opened the meeting at 2:02 PM, welcoming in-person and virtual attendees. She acknowledged the passing of distinguished AAAC member, Judge Rohulamin Quander who passed away August 18, 2025 with a moment of silence.

Remarks from VA250 Executive Director

Cheryl Wilson

Cheryl Wilson provided a recap of the Forth at the Fort, state wide kickoff to the VA250; this gathering at Fort Monroe is VA250's largest event to date; 24,000 attendees, 43 Virginia localities, 15 states, 2,500 livestream viewers, 75K+ website views. Full Grand Ceremony archived on VA250.org. The event set a strong tone for VA250's mission to educate, engage, and tell inclusive stories. Planning will now focus on July 4, 2026. No questions raised.

Cheryl provided an update on the Mobile Museum Experience, to date the MME has engaged in 32 events, and provided education experiences at 28 schools (6 Title I), 16,000+ visitors from 33 states & 7 countries. Second Mobile Museum was authorized; and will follow DOE Superintendent Regions and focus on underserved communities. Goal: equitable school access and regional historical focus. Marketing will be largely local and participation from legislators to attend when in their district. Commitment to remaining nonpartisan and telling the full history, regardless of national politics.

Updates from VA250 Sr. Advisor

Eola Dance

Eola provided an invitation and reminder to join VA250 at the annual African Landing Day Commemoration to be held August 23, 2025 at Continental Park, Fort Monroe. A press release & run-of-show were distributed. Key activities included the Tucker Family Jazz Scholarship Fundraiser (ticket required), Fort Monroe guided tours, and the Project 1619 international bell ringing and Sunrise Cleansing Ceremony. Eola reminded the group to share 2026 Juneteenth events and initiatives, citing the Virginia Fort Monroe to Galveston Proclamation as an opportunity to connect with the Education Steering Committee and MME. Event info should be sent to Trevor

Grimm & Jeremy Martin for promotion. Eola introduced and invited to guest to present opportunities:

Paula Mann-Agnew greeted the council and discussed the potential for the Amistad replica ship to participate in Sail250 remaining docked over the Juneteenth commemorations. Desire for historically accurate and inclusive storytelling and in response to inclusive representation among tall ships currently scheduled. Del.McQuinn emphasized the opportunity to include Richmond and statewide communities in the engagement strategy and the question was raised: what is the appropriate role for VA250 during Sail250?

Michael Legato greeted the council and introduced a portrait project “Lives of Meaning” highlighting often unknown, unsung, or hidden stories of descendants of Native Americans, African Americans, women, youth, and immigrants; this proof of concept initiative originated at James Madison’s Montpelier providing a treatment for film projects engaging historic sites and monuments that tell the story of the making of America. Meant to inspire, this strategic communications opportunity focuses on opportunities for healing, Member Connie Harshaw asked where additional information can be found and the presentation will be provided to all members.

Other Business and Adjournment

The Honorable Mamie E. Locke, Chair

The closing discussion urged engagement from universities and businesses. Connie Harshaw reminded the group of the Let Freedom Ring Gala (Williamsburg, Nov 8, 2025) – theme “*Stronger Together*”; and honors First Baptist Church restoration Bray School Updates: students returning; Oct 24–25 seminar on Lord Dunmore’s Proclamation. Please join the opportunity to walk or run with VA250 Collective Journey team (6.19k or 16.19k) during the 4th Annual Run Richmond 1619 race Saturday September 27th, unique partnership opportunities are in development with the Djimon Hounsou Foundation, Fort Monroe Foundation, and VA250. Select VA250 when you register at <https://runsignup.com/Race/VA/Richmond/RunRichmond1619#>; and participate in the Community Quilt Project (Steve Prince): “America’s Birthday Quilt” (250 feet long) to be unveiled July 4, 2026; participatory community art project. And Cheryl reminded members of VA250’s volunteer list/newsletter for engagement. The meeting adjourned at 3:10 PM.

Advisory Council Members Present:

The Honorable Mamie E. Locke, *Chair, Senate of Virginia*

The Honorable Deloris McQuinn, *Virginia Delegate*

Connie Matthews Harshaw (virtual), *Board President, Let Freedom Ring Foundation, First Baptist Church*

Patrice Lewis, *Government Affairs Manager, Gentry Locke Attorneys*

Dr. Cassandra Newby-Alexander (virtual), *Professor of Virginia Black History and Culture, Norfolk State University*

Phyllis Terrell, *Director of Communications, Fort Monroe*

Guests of the Council Present:

Paula Mann-Agnew, *Amistad Discovery*

Michael Legato, *Lives of Meaning*

VA250 Staff Members:

Cheryl Wilson, Executive Director

Kevin Hampton, Assistant Director of Education & Programs

Eola Dance, African American Advisory Council Advisor

Jeremy Martin, Logistics and Meetings Coordinator