



Draft Minutes
Vermont 250th Anniversary Commission
May 16, 2025
10:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
Microsoft Teams

Members Present: Tom Hughes
Jonah Spivak (arrived 10:41am)
Martin Mahoney
Laura V. Trieschmann
Paul Deslandes
Jim Brangan
Susan Evans McClure
Heather Pelham
Christopher Kaufman Ilstrup
Breanna Sheehan
Cathy Delneo (arrived 10:55am)

Members Absent: Steve Perkins
John Krueger
Izzy Provoncha

Staff: Lindsay Pacheco

Public: Heather Duhamel
Cynthia Shelton
Megan Albert

I. Welcome

Laura Trieschmann opened the meeting at 10:32am.

II. Changes to the Agenda

Jonah Spivak proposed adding the following items to the agenda:

- a. Attendance at America 250 event in DC – deadline June 30
- b. Vermont – Sharing the Spirit of America – July 8, 2026
- c. Sponsorship of the Ken Burns film “The American Revolution”

III. Public Comment

Cynthia Shelton from Thetford introduced herself, previously sent email to commission inquiring about the best practices for fundraising and public events. Laura forwarded the email to the team.

IV. Review and Approve Minutes

a. [March 14, 2025](#)

Martin Mahoney made a motion to approve the minutes; Susan Evans McClure seconded the motion.

V. Vermont Public Presentation

Heather Duhamel of Vermont Public presented on grants that are being offered through Vermont Public that will focus on education and the 250th anniversary. VT Public will be airing the Ken Burn's "American Revolution" film on November 16. To coincide with the film, they have received a \$10k grant to host early screenings of the film throughout the state. Screenings can take place in schools, libraries, town halls, etc. They also have toolkits to go along with the screenings, which leads to an educator's page. VT Public would like involvement from the education committee to evaluate submissions in student video "competition," as there may be the chance to have some of the video's air on TV.

VI. Grant Opportunities Plan

As discussed in last meeting, there is no funding expected for FY26. Laura will put in another proposal for FY27. The Commission will use the bulk of remaining funding to pass through to communities, historical societies, museums, nonprofits, etc. to do their work for the 250th. The first \$25,000 will be granted to Vermont Humanities to pass through using their existing grant program.

Christopher Kaufman Ilstrup shared that Vermont Humanities has started to reach out to communities and organizations that would be interested in 250th grant money, and has been met with positive feedback and interest. The project grant deadlines for up to \$5,000 will be in the summer and the fall so funds can be dispersed throughout the next year. There is also a smaller grant program that goes up to \$1,000. There are about 30 applications already received for the summer grant.

There are also 17 Champlain Valley National Heritage Area preservation grants underway in Vermont and New York. Grants for 2026 have been selected by the Lake Champlain Basin Program Steering Committee. There are 29 Vermont Covered grants underway, which are going through the Vermont Historical Society.

Susan Evans McClure shared that \$25,000 is expected to be granted by the federal organization for 250th opportunities at Vermont Arts Council. This will require a state match that hopefully can come from the state 250th fund, providing \$50,000 total. As the funding approvals are still in the works, the Commission will hold the matching funds.

VII. Agenda Additions

Spirit of America is a nationwide effort being spearheaded by Hawaii to have the reading of the Declaration of Independence happen in 2026 simultaneously on July 8, the day it was shared with public in 1776.

America 250 is providing subsidized stipends to send up to 2 commissioners to Washington, D.C. for the nationwide convening of 250th planners. The event will take place July 28-30. The deadline to register is June 30. Two members of the commission can attend.

VIII. Committee Updates

- a. Marketing & Public Outreach
Committee has not been meeting but is scheduled to meet next month.
- b. Research/Culture Committee
Newly combined committees between Research and History and Arts and Culture, meeting on Monday.
- c. School/Teacher
Smithsonian is doing a virtual educator's summit, and this year's theme is the 250th. Information will be shared with the commission.

IX. Additional Updates

- a. Thetford planning meeting – town met last week, and Cynthia Shelton brought up potential celebration for 250th anniversary. Select board will sign resolution in next week. Yearlong education festival was brought up as an idea.
- b. Anniversary events in Castleton and at Fort Ticonderoga happened earlier in the month, with great visitation and excitement despite rain.

X. Adjourn

- a. Next meeting July 18, 2025
- b. Meeting adjourned at 11:29am.