USA 250 Celebration Committee

Meeting Minutes

Friday, 3/13/2026 10:00 AM Meeting

**Attendees:**

Pam Champlin

Todd Gelston

Debbie Langdon

Patty Lombardo Guest

Alan Ponanski

Susan Waide

Karl Stofko

Cindy McGrath Guest

**AGENDA**

1. Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

2. Approval of Agenda

3. Appointment of Temporary Chairman

4. Election of Chairman and Secretary

5. Approval of Minutes: 3/6/26 Meeting Minutes

6. Review the Plan for the July 11 Re-enactment of the Signing of the Declaration of Independence.

    1. Both the Moodus Drum and Fife Corps and the First Company Governor's Foot Guard have committed to attend our Event

    2. Suggested Schedule Details – Start at 11:00 AM with the First Company Governor's Foot Guard playing the Star Spangled Banner, followed by the Moodus Drum and Fife Corps . Then the reading of the Declaration of Independence. Then the signing starts. Concurrently, the 1st Company Foot Guard and the Moodus Drum and Fife play a concert.

    3. Ordering Flags, Buntings and Banners

    4. Purchasing Scrolls and Pens

    5. Food Truck Status – We need to schedule/reserve Food Trucks now

    6. Parking Plan – Need to layout the Parking Potential

    7. Portal Toilets – Requests have been submitted to Jansky, Inc.

    8. Publicity Plan – Articles in EHN, Advertising in Media

    9. Potential Donors - We need a solid plan of the Event before a Donor will commit

    10. Grant submittal Status – One Grant submitted, than another?

    11. Review of the Activities planned in the Old Town Meeting Hall and the Grange Hall

12. Total Estimated Cost to-date for the Declaration of Independence Re-enactment Event

13. Potential Events later in the Summer and Fall

14. Depth of Water at the Goodspeed Opera House Dock

15. Other items as necessary

7. Public Comment

8. Adjournment

## Discussion

Todd Gelston called the meeting to order at 10:02 AM. He reported that the proper title for our Committee is USA 250 Celebration Committee. The third item on the Agenda was the appointment of a Temporary Chairman to lead the election of committee officers – Chairman and Secretary. Mr. Gelston appointed Alan Ponanski as the Temporary Chairman. The Temporary Chairman asked for nominations for Chairman. Susan Waide nominated Todd Gelston and Debbie Langdon seconded the nomination. There were no other nominations. The nominations were closed. The Temporary Chairman called for a vote and the attendees voted unanimously to elect Todd Gelston Chairman. Next, the Temporary Chair asked for nominations for Secretary. Todd Gelston nominated Debbie Langdon for Secretary and Susan Waide seconded the nomination. There were no other nominations. The nominations were closed. The Temporary Chairman called for a vote and the attendees voted unanimously to elect Debbie Langdon Secretary. After the election of officers Todd Gelston discharged the Temporary Chairman.

Next, Alan Ponanski moved that the Meeting Minutes for the 3/6/26 Meeting be approved. Pam Champlin seconded the motion. Meeting Minutes approved unanimously.

Next, the attendees developed the Schedule Details for the July 11 Event as follows:

10:00 AM --- The Greeters arrive to be ready for the visitors

10:30 AM --- The Steeple Bells ring

10:45 AM --- Presentation of Colors by the First Company Governor's Foot Guard

11:00 AM --- The First Company Governor's Foot Guard plays the Star Spangled Banner

11:15 AM --- The Moodus Drum & Fife Corps plays their chosen score

11:30 AM --- Karl Stofko rings the Schoolhouse Bell

11:35 AM --- Todd Gelston reads Welcome and Proclamation

11:45 AM --- Karl Stofko reads history of this Declaration of Independence

12:00 Noon --- Name TBD performs the Reading of the Declaration of Independence

12:30 PM --- Todd Gelston invites visitors to sign the parchment scroll while the organ plays

12:30 PM --- Visitors begin signing of the Scroll and walking to the Food Trucks

1:00 PM --- First Company Governor's Foot Guard plays their Concert

2:00 PM --- Moodus Drum & Fife Corps plays their Concert

3:00 PM --- Karl Stofko starts the Cemetery Tour

3:00 PM --- Visitors tour the exhibits and displays in the Old Town Meeting Hall and the Grange Hall

5:00 PM --- Event Activities cease.

From the discussion on the Schedule these comments were made:

- The sequence of steps/activities is more important than the timing.
- The Moodus Drum & Fife may want to rehearse their movements
- Can we get costumes for the Greeters?
- Todd Gelston to wear a costume?
- Shall we hand out programs? Like the EHFD 75th Anniversary?
- Do we need a tent in the leaching field area?
- Where shall the Ambulance park?

Next, on the Agenda, Todd Gelston summarized the Flags, Buntings and Banners Plan as follows:

Flags – What sizes do we need? i.e. for giving away, hanging on buildings, putting on poles, etc.

Buntings:

1. 24" X 48" ---- 16 for the interior of the Church, 8 to 12 for the exterior of the Church
2. 24" X 48" ----- 14 for the exterior and interior of the Old Town Meeting Hall
3. 24" X 48" ---- 14 for the exterior and interior of the Grange Hall
4. 24" X 48" ---- 28 (Guess) for the exterior of the Goodspeed Opera House

Banners:

1. For the Memorial Day Marchers: 96" X 36 " ----- Single sided
2. For the Memorial Day Marchers: 108" X 36" ---- Single sided
3. For the GOH or Gelston House: 120" X 48" ---- Single sided

Lauren P. is working to get prices of the above through Goodspeed Station at cost.

Next, the attendees addressed the need to reserve the Food Trucks as soon as possible.

After some discussion about the need for the Food Trucks to be profitable from their participation in the Event, it was decided that they can arrive as early as 10:00 AM and stay until 5:00 PM. It was decided that we should invite 3 food trucks and one ice cream truck. Pam Champlin volunteered to contact these food trucks – Frank's Catering, Oxen Bones (name?), Twin Beaks, and Mama's Ice Cream.

Next, the attendees used an aerial map to review where the vehicles can park and cannot park. Also, where the Bands can play (between Town Street and the slope going up to the front of the Church. The Food Trucks will park on the rise in front of the Old Town Meeting Hall. A medium to large tent will be put over the leaching field area to the southeast of the Church.

Next, Todd Gelston summarized the Portable Toilet Plan as follows:

1 ADA Unit

5 Standard Units

2 Handicap Accessible Units

2 Wash Stations

Todd Gelston submitted a request for quote from a local Supplier.

Next, Susan Waide reviewed the Publicity Plan for the July 11 Event and all of the other Events. The Plan is to use posters, press releases, articles in the East Haddam News, etc. She has already created a beautiful poster that was reviewed by the attendees.

Next, the attendees discussed what is needed for donors to donate. After some discussion, it was agreed that a potential donor is looking for a well thought-out plan that will attract a large number of visitors to the Event. The next question is what will be the estimated cost. A few potential donors have already inquired and these are the questions that they are asking. Sponsorships need to also be addressed.

Alan Ponanski is in the process of submitting a CT – Humanities Quick Grant. However, there are qualifiers that need to be satisfied before a grant can be officially submitted.

Finally, before we ran out of time, Debbie Langdon described what she has planned for the activities in the Old Town Meeting Hall and the Grange Hall. These are some of the items:

- "Prager University Road to Liberty"
- History of the 1st Company Governor's Foot Guard
- History of the Moodus Drum & Fife Corps
- Delegate signing tables scene
- Others that will be addressed at our next meeting

The Chairman asked for a motion to adjourn. Alan Ponanski made the motion to adjourn. Pam Champlin seconded. Motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 12:05 PM.

Meeting Minutes written by Todd Gelston