APPROVED Meeting Minutes for the USA 250 Celebration Steering Committee

For the Friday, 6/5/2026 10:00 AM Special Meeting

In Meeting Room 1

Attendees:

Forrest Anderson

Todd Gelston

Debbie Langdon

Alan Ponanski (on Phone)

Karl Stofko

Susan Waide

AGENDA

1. Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

2. Review of Agenda

3. Approval of Minutes – 5/13/26 Special Meeting and 5/28/26 Meeting

4. Review the Plan for the July 11 Re-enactment of the Signing of the Declaration of Independence.
    - Review of the Detailed Schedule for entire Event – See Meeting Minutes
        - Order and Timing of Music Performances
    - Review of the Activities and Exhibits planned for the Old Town Meeting Hall and the Grange Hall
    - Scroll Sourcing for the Signing Scrolls – How are we going to do it.? - Where and How many tables are needed?
    - Flags, Buntings and Banners –
        - Tattoos instead of small flags.
        - Buntings received and being placed, Do we need more Buntings?
        - Banners received and on order.
    - Parking Plan, Busing Plan, ADA Parking, Police Plan, Road Closure Plan -
    - Publicity Plan – Poster Placement, Press Releases, Articles, etc.
        - Where to place posters? In-town and out-of-town
    - Guide Map creation and review – Introduction and Actual Map
    - Food Truck Reservation Status, 10:00 AM Arrival Timing and location

        - Oz-N-Bones, Emily's, Moma's Ice cream, add Thena Pita Bar?
    - Festival Permit Status
    - Portable Toilets – Near the Grange, Near the Church, and one at the Elementary School Parking Lot
    - Tables and Chairs for the Hospitality Tent – Need an official Count
    - Tent Plan – 3 Tented Areas – Hospitality Tent, 1st Company Tent, Church Tents
    - Trash Barrel Plan – 15 Barrels and a Dumpster
    - Budget and Expenses to-date
    - Total Estimated Cost covered by a single donor – Consumer Reports – A Tremendous Gift
    - One $750 Stipend from America CT 250 Commission
        - Need Volunteers to attend the Recommitment Ceremony on July 4
    - Visit in-Town organizations for communication of Event
    - Latest List of Volunteers and their assignments
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5. Scholarship Enhancements and Communication
    - Fundraising Goal - $25K this year and another $25K next year

6. Review the status of other East Haddam 250th Anniversary Events
    - Potential Nathan Hale School House Exhibition
    - "Amistad" has cancelled – Ship not ready to sail yet
7. Other items as necessary
8. Public Comment
9. Adjournment

Discussion

Todd Gelston called the Special Meeting to order at 10:15 AM

The first item was to approve the Meeting Minutes for the 5/13/26 Special Meeting. Debbie Langdon moved that the 5/13/26 Meeting Minutes be approved. Alan Ponanski seconded the motion. The attendees voted unanimously to approve the meeting minutes.

Next, the Chairman called for approval of the Meeting Minutes for the 5/28/26 Special Meeting. Debbie Langdon moved that the 5/28/26 Meeting Minutes be approved. Susan Waide seconded the motion. The attendees voted unanimously to approve the meeting minutes.

The attendees did a summary review of the detailed schedule. There have been a few minor revisions since the last meeting. The key input is that the 1st Company Governor's Foot Guard is to start their Concert at 12 Noon. Also, the Moodus Drum & Fife Corps needs to carefully rehearse their participation in the beginning of the re-enactment. We may need to put more detail in the schedule.

The revised Schedule is shown below. Please note the changes in the timing of the Concerts for both the 1st Company Band and the Moodus Drum & Fife Corps:

10:00 AM --- The Moodus Drum & Fife playing in front of Meeting House entertaining guests as they arrive

10:15 AM --- The Church Steeple Bell Rings

10:30 AM --- Town Street is closed to Traffic

10:30 AM ---Ringing of School House Bell by Dr. Karl Stofko from center front doors of meeting house to alert guests the ceremony will be beginning soon (11:00 AM)

Guests continue to be ushered in until 10:40 AM

10:50 AM --- Todd, Karl and readers file into front of sanctuary to be seated and Todd goes up to the high pulpit.

10:50 AM --- Moodus Drum & Fife proceed into the narthex with the color guard.

10:55 AM --- Presentation of Colors by Moodus Drum & Fife. Marching in from Front Center Doors down center aisle to the altar.

11:00 AM --- Todd to ask everyone to rise for the Pledge of Allegiance

11:02 AM --- The Star-Spangled Banner performed by the Moodus Drum & Fife from the narthex. Color Guard to exit at end to drum beat.

11:05 AM --- Welcome & reading of the Proclamation from the high pulpit by East Haddam First Selectman Todd Gelston

11:10 AM --- The History of the Declaration of Independence by Karl Stofko

11:25 AM --- Reading of the Declaration of Independence – 3 Readers

11:55 AM --- Guests are asked to exit and join in signing of the Scroll to re-enact what our forefathers did in 1776 in the signing of the Declaration of Independence. Let us recommit ourselves to the timeless promise of Liberty and Justice for All.

Guests file out to sign scrolls on tables outside on 8 ft tables (placement TBD)

12:00 Noon --- The 1st Company Governor's Foot Guard starts their concert with the National Anthem (Star-Spangled Banner) under the front tent.

1:00 PM --- Announce at end of the First Company Governor's Foot Guard concert that the Moodus Drum & Fife concert will begin at 1:15 PM near the big tent next to the Grange Hall.

Food Trucks will be ready to serve. Old Town Hall and Grange Hall opened for guests.

Announcement made that the cemetery tour will begin 3:00 PM and guests should be making their way over to the white shed along the stonewall towards the back of First Church parking lot 15 minutes prior.

Remind guests that at 4:00 PM the Drama of Nathan Hale in movies & stage begins with Kandie Carle.

Next, the attendees discussed the scroll signing. Specifically, what is a good source for the Scroll Paper. Attendees discussed how shall people start and finish signing of the scroll. Susan Waide volunteered to determine a reliable source for the scroll material.

Next, the attendees briefly reviewed the Tattoo Status. Pattis has purchased 500 Tattoos and stickers for distribution at the Event. Small Flags have been dropped. The attendees suggested rules for the Tattoos such as on the Arm only and with parents' permission. It was suggested that we put the Tattoos with the VFW coloring books.

We have received sixteen 3 by 6 Buntings. One was given to the First Church. The remaining 15 will hung on the Old Town Meeting Hall and the Grange Hall.

Three 7 by 3 Banners have been received and five 8 by 4 banners are on order with expected receipt by next week.

Next, The Plan B for parking is to use the Elementary School parking lot and the Municipal Office Building Complex parking lot. Tim Carr is developing signage for no parking spaces, the parking lots, and detours for the road closures. The attendees briefly discussed ADA parking. Do we need Handicap Access for Busing? The Parking and Traffic volunteers need another meeting with East Haddam Police.

Next, Publicity was discussed. The plan Is to use multiple mediums as much as possible. Peter Marteka is to put an article in the East Haddam News every week. The bookmark ad will be put in the EHN as much as possible dependent on cost. Posters will be distributed as much as possible.

Next, the Guide Map was discussed. We are waiting for the illustrator to produce the first Draft. This Draft will focus on pictures of the activity and not show only approximate location.

Next, it was requested that the Food Trucks be confirmed. Three Food Trucks – Oz-N-Bones, Emily's, and Moma's Ice Cream. The consensus was to seek a fourth Truck right now.

Next, Debbie Langdon gave an overview with some detail of the sets and activities planned for the Old Town Meeting Hall and the Grange Hall. She described in more detail the activities for the Kids in the Grange Hall including letter wax stamping. There were a few questions. Her biggest concern was getting preparation work done to a reasonable completion schedule. She needs logistical help for:

- Access and Keys to the two Buildings
- Technical Help
- Table Monitors to minimize liability
- Set fabrication

Next, the Scholarship Committee plans to have a table in one of the tents for collecting donations. The Goal for the Scholarship should be $50K which would enable a $1,000 yearly scholarship.

Motion to adjourn by Debbie Langdon and seconded by Alan Ponanski. Motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 12:03 PM.

Meeting Minutes written by Todd Gelston.