Approved Meeting Minutes for the USA 250 Celebration Steering Committee

For the Wednesday, 4/22/2026 7:00 PM Special Meeting

In Meeting Room 3

Attendees:

Terri Anderson-Murray

Todd Gelston

Alison Guinness

Debbie Langdon

Patrick Murray

Alan Ponanski

Karl Stofko

Susan Waide

AGENDA

1. Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance
2. Approval of Agenda
3. Approval of Minutes for Tuesday, April 14, 2026 Special Meeting
4. Review the Plan for the July 11 Re-enactment of the Signing of the Declaration of Independence.
    - Summary Review of the Detailed Schedule for entire Event – See Meeting Minutes
    - Review of the Activities and Exhibits planned for the Old Town Meeting Hall and the Grange Hall
    - Signing Scrolls
    - Flags, Buntings and Banners – Design, Size, Costs, Delivery Dates
    - Parking Plan, Police Plan, and DOT Status for Road Plan -
    - Publicity Plan – Latest Poster, Press Release, Articles, etc.
    - Food Truck Reservation Status, Timing and location
    - Tables and Chairs for the Hospitality Tent
    - Tent Plan – 2 Tented Areas
    - Total Estimated Cost for the July 11 Event
    - Funding Plan – Good News
    - Visit all in-Town organizations for communication of Event
    - Meeting Scheduled for Volunteers and their task assignments
5. Review the status of other East Haddam 250th Anniversary Events
    - Potential Nathan Hale School House Exhibition

- “Amistad” Visit Status

6. Memorial Day Parade Plans and what the other organizations are doing
7. Scholarship Enhancements and Communication
8. Other items as necessary
9. Public Comment
10. Adjournment

Discussion

Todd Gelston called the Special Meeting to order at 7:01 PM.

The Chairman asked for a motion to approve the 4/14/26 Meeting Minutes. Patrick Murray moved that the 4/14/26 Meeting Minutes be approved. Susan Waide seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Next, the attendees did a summary review of the detailed schedule as shown in the 4/14/26 meeting minutes. After a brief review of the schedule, there was one change which is the hour for Kandie Carle’s Nathan Hale Recital. There were no other comments. The revised Schedule is shown below:

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

10:00 AM --- The Moodus Drum & Fife starts playing their chosen score

10:30 AM --- The Steeple Bell Rings

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

11:00 AM --- The First Company Governor’s Foot Guard gets seated and/or stands in the Balcony

11:00 AM --- The Moodus Drum & Fife Corps plays the Star Spangled Banner

11:15 AM --- The First Company Governor’s Foot Guard plays their chosen score.

11:30 AM --- Karl Stofko rings the School House Bell

11:35 AM --- From the High Pulpit 1st Selectman Todd Gelston reads the Welcome & Proclamation

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

12:00 Noon --- Three people (TBD) read the Declaration of Independence starting with a GOH Actor

12:30 PM --- Todd Gelston invites visitors to sign the parchment scroll, organ plays a selected score

12:30 PM --- Visitors began signing of the scroll and then begin walking to the food vendors.

1:00 PM --- Moodus Drum and Fife Corps performs their Concert.

2:00 PM --- The First Company Governor’s Foot Guard performs their Concert.

3:00 PM --- Karl Stofko starts the Cemetery Tour with a map of the Revolutionary gravestones

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

4:00 PM --- Kandie Carle begins her Nathan Hale Recital.

5:00 PM --- Event Exhibits and Activities cease.

The attendees emphasized that we need to keep things simple.

Next, Debbie Langdon reviewed the recreation of the Assembly Room, including the furniture and various artifacts. Also, a sealing wax kit for kid's activities. There may be a clip from the 1776 Musical that was produced by the Goodspeed Opera House that we can play in Old Town Meeting Hall.

Debbie reported that all display items can get in the door of the Old Town Meeting Hall. The pieces for her display include Jefferson's writing chair, a full set of chairs, and panels. The chairs are being shipped from a New Hampshire chair company. The panels need to be fabricated. Debbie mentioned that she might be able to set-up a 1/48th scale of the Assembly Hall. In the Grange Hall there will be a representation of the Washington – Culpeper Spy School. A kid's activity would be for them to use the letter wax sealer. Before 4 PM the Grange Hall needs to be cleared for Kandie Carle's Nathan Hale Recital.

A discussion started on needing more volunteers. A volunteer open house was suggested.

The stock material for the scrolls to be signed can be obtained from Lauren P.

Patti Lombardo has ordered 2' X 4' Buntings for the Church and other Buildings. We may need to order more. Todd Gelston is working on the Banner for the Memorial Day Parade. The Banner will be either sleeved or have grommets.

With parking at the High School, it was suggested that we probably need toilet facilities at the parking lot. We may need more shuttle buses also.

Susan Waide has a press release for the Memorial Day Parade. We need to make sure that more people can march behind our banner in the Parade.

We need to make sure that Emily's can provide breakfast also. We now have 2 food trucks and one ice cream truck.

We now need a separate tent for the First Company Governor's Foot Guard in addition to the 2 sets of tents already being provided.

There was some discussion about the Yankee Cider Booth at the Event. Patrick Murray volunteered to clarify the plan for Yankee Cider and the legal requirements.

It also was requested that the site have stand-by ambulance service. Todd Gelston volunteered to ask the EHAA.

Another unknown is how many tables and chairs are needed. We need to an inventory of how many tables and chairs we have already and how many we need.

There was no Public Comment.

Debbie moved that the meeting be adjourned. Susan Waide seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Meeting Minutes written by Todd Gelston.