APPROVED Meeting Minutes for the USA 250 Celebration Steering Committee

For Thursday, 6/11/2026 7:00 PM Special Meeting

In Meeting Room 2

Attendees:

Pam Champlin

Todd Gelston

Debbie Langdon

Alan Ponanski (on Phone)

Karl Stofko

Susan Waide

Patti Lombardo

AGENDA

1. Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

2. Review of Agenda

3. Approval of Minutes – 6/5/26 Special 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?
     - Scroll Paper Sourced and ordered?
   - Tattoos, Stickers, Buntings, Banners, and Lawn Signs –
     - Tattoos and Stickers instead of small flags.
     - Buntings received and being placed. We have thirty 3' by 6' Buntings on hand.
     - Banners received and ready for installation. Two will go the Libraries. Three will be installed on the main roads.
     - A dozen Lawn Signs are on order.
   - Parking Plan, Busing Plan, ADA Parking, Police Plan, Road Closure Plan –
     - Need many signs of all types
   - 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 a third Food Truck?
- Festival Permit Approved !
- Dogs at the Event – Service Dogs and/or Pets
- 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
    - Received a $500 Donation from the Gelston House
- 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 7:05 PM

The first item was to approve the Meeting Minutes for the 6/5/26 Special Meeting. Debbie Langdon moved that the 6/5/26 Meeting Minutes be approved. Pam Champlin seconded the motion. The attendees voted unanimously to approve the meeting minutes.

Next, the attendees reviewed the latest detailed schedule for the entire Event. The latest Schedule is shown below. Note that currently there are 3 readers selected to read the Declaration of Independence. There is discussion that we might use just one reader. We may need to put more detail in the schedule and rehearse as well. The latest schedule is shown below:

9:30 AM --- Guests/Visitors start arriving

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, Debbie Langdon described the activities and stage sets planned for the Old Town Meeting Hall. In summary, the setting will be a recreation of the 1776 Continental Congress Assembly Hall, complete with tables, chairs, curtains and chandeliers. There will also be projection screen for a 20

minute video on the American Revolution. The benches in the Old Town Meeting Hall will be used for seating the video audience. The Grange Hall will focus on activities for kids with items such as the Washington Spy School and Benjamin Franklin Mail Stamps. The attendees were reminded that the Grange Hall needs to be cleared out by 3:30 PM to prepare for Kandie Carle's recital on Nathan Hale.

Debbie Langdon also has plans for a Tavern setting for a corner of the Dining Tent.

Next, the attendees discussed the scroll signing. Susan Waide has found a good scroll paper source along with pens for the scroll signing. However, there were many questions about how the scrolls will be signed and how long it will take to complete the signing. It was suggested that this entire scroll signing operation needs to be rehearsed and timed out. We will need volunteers for the Scroll Table to make sure that it goes smoothly.

Next, the attendees briefly reviewed the Tattoo Status. The outcome was that the application of tattoos and stickers needs to be worked out. We may need a separate table for this as well. Or combine the tattoos and stickers with the coloring books at the VFW / American Legion Tent.

Next, Todd Gelston reported that 3X6 Buntings have been installed on the libraries. They are also hung on the Old Town Meeting Hall and the Grange Hall. Six Banners have been received and placed at the 4 major entry points into East Haddam and one banner in front of each library. There is a banner on the front of the Grange Hall. Also, 24 lawn signs have been ordered. Twelve are expected to be received on the day after this meeting.

Next, the Plan 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. It was concluded that we need ADA parking near the Church. We should also have ADA parking in our parking lots. The Parking and Traffic volunteers need another meeting with East Haddam Police to work out more details.

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. Debbie showed samples of the Guide Map draft. We are waiting for the illustrator to complete production of the first Draft. This Draft will focus on pictures of the activity and not yet show location of the attraction.

Next, a brief discussion confirmed that the two food trucks and the one ice cream truck will be at our July 11 Event. The three Trucks are – Oz-N-Bones, Emily's, and Moma's Ice Cream. The consensus at the last meeting was to seek a fourth Truck. However, none can be found. Todd Gelston was asked to check with the Lions Club and ask if they want to bring their cooking trailer to the Event.

Lastly, it was suggested that the re-enactment needs rehearsal. It was suggested that a rehearsal be scheduled for Thursday, June 25 at 6:00 PM.

Motion to adjourn by Pam Champlin and seconded by Debbie Langdon. Motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 8:52 PM.

Meeting Minutes written by Todd Gelston.