APPROVED Meeting Minutes for the USA 250 Celebration Steering Committee

For Wednesday, 7/01/2026 7:00 PM Special Meeting

In Meeting Room 3

Attendees:

Forrest Anderson

Pam Champlin

Todd Gelston

Allison Guinness

Debbie Langdon

Karl Stofko

Susan Waide

Patti Lombardo

Emmett Lyman

Evelyn Morgen

AGENDA

1. Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

2. Review of Agenda

3. Approval of Minutes – 6/11/26 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 – Results of Rehearsals.
    - Review of the Activities and Exhibits planned for the Old Town Meeting Hall and the Grange Hall
        - Have added Middle School students' exhibits.
    - Scroll Sourcing for the Signing Scrolls – Need detail plans for the scroll signing.
        - Scroll Paper ordered and received. Results of Rehearsals.
    - Tattoos, Stickers, Buntings, Banners, and Lawn Signs –
        - Tattoos and Stickers instead of small flags.
        - Buntings received and placed.
        - Banners installed.
        - Two dozen Lawn Signs have been installed.
    - Parking Plan, Busing Plan, ADA Parking, Police Plan, Road Closure Plan –
        - Need many signs of all types

        - Have an ADA Bus (Van)
    - Publicity Plan – Poster Placement, Press Releases, Articles, etc.
        - Where to place posters? In-town and out-of-town
    - Guide Map creation and review – Have decided to use the East Haddam Visitor's Guide (No Cost)
    - Food Truck Reservation Status, 10:00 AM Arrival Timing and location
        - Oz-N-Bones, Emily's, Moma's Ice Cream; Have added a fourth Food Truck ! (No Cost)
    - Festival Permit Approved !
    - Dogs at the Event – Service Dogs allowed. Request other dogs to stay home.
    - Portable Toilets – Near the Grange, Near the Church, and one at the Elementary School Parking Lot
    - Tables and Chairs for the Hospitality Tent – Need a volunteer leader for tables and chairs and a count
    - Tent Plan – 3 Tented Areas – Hospitality Tent, 1st Company Tent, Church Tents
    - Trash Barrel Plan – 15 Barrels and a Dumpster, also requested Recycle Barrels?
    - Budget and Expenses to-date
    - Total Estimated Cost covered by a single donor – Consumer Reports – A Tremendous Gift
    - $750 Stipend from America CT 250 -- Any volunteers to attend the 7/4/26 Recommitment Ceremony?
    - $500 Donation from the Gelston House
    - Visit in-Town organizations for communication of Event
    - Latest List of Volunteers and their assignments
    - Additional Seating for the Visitors and Guests
    - Requests for donations
5. Scholarship Enhancements and Communication
    - Fundraising Goal - $50K this year. Press Release is being reviewed
6. Review the status of other East Haddam 250th Anniversary Events
    - Potential Nathan Hale School House Exhibition
7. Other items as necessary
8. Public Comment
9. Adjournment

Discussion

Todd Gelston called the Special Meeting to order at 7:04 PM

The first item was to approve the Meeting Minutes for the 6/11/26 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 it has been agreed that there will be only 1 reader to read the Declaration of

Independence. And that reader is Steve Pozzato. And he will read from the lower pulpit. 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 13 times

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 (TBD – may go to the low 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 – by Steve P.

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. It was requested that a reason for the scroll signing should be placed next to the scroll. It was requested that this entire scroll signing operation needs to be rehearsed and timed out again. We will still 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. It was commented that the tattoos need to be carefully handled. Some parents may not like them. 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 all the banners are installed. 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, 22 lawn signs have been placed around town and 2 in Tylerville.

Next, the Plan for parking is to use the Elementary School parking lot and the Municipal Office Building Complex parking lot. Tim Carr and his team have developed 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.

Next, Publicity was discussed with comments similar to the last Committee meeting. The plan Is to use multiple mediums as much as possible. Peter Marteka has put an article in the East Haddam News at least every other 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. Due to schedule constraints, it was decided to distribute the East Haddam Visitor's Guide which includes a Guide Map. This Visitor's Guide is already available to the Committee at no cost. And the EDC has provided plenty of copies for distribution to the Event guests/visitors.

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, until now none could be found. Todd Gelston has since found a truck which serves Middle Eastern food. The Lions Club is not interested in preparing and selling food for the Event.

The rehearsal on Thursday, July 25 went well. Another Rehearsal is scheduled for Thursday, July 9 at 6:00 PM.

After more discussion it was determined that the following items need to be addressed:

1. Need more volunteers to support the activities in the Old Town Meeting Hall and the Grange Hall.
2. Need to clarify and confirm the Portable Toilet locations.
3. Need to confirm that the Political Party Exhibits will be non-political.
4. Need to communicate the reason(s) for people signing the scroll
5. The Wangunk Exhibit needs a pop-up tent.
6. A cell phone list for the volunteers and Committee members needs to be published.
7. Need a plan for installation of acoustic devices for the speakers and music.
8. First Church needs a Certificate of Insurance coverage by the Town of East Haddam.
9. Need traffic cones for the Church driveways.

Meeting adjourned by acclamation at 8:35 PM.

Meeting Minutes written by Todd Gelston.