Meeting Minutes for the USA 250 Celebration Steering Committee

For Friday, 9/18/2026 10:00 AM Special Meeting

In Meeting Room 1

Attendees:

Forrest Anderson

Pam Champlin

Todd Gelston

Alison Guinness

Alan Ponanski

Susan Waide

Patti Lombardo

Evelyn Morgen

AGENDA

1. Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance
2. Review of Agenda
3. Approval of Minutes – 7/28/26 Special Meeting
4. Vote on Donations to the 7/11/26 America 250 Event participants
5. Review and vote on Receipts and Invoices for Reimbursements
6. Planned Historical Celebrations for the Rest of the Year
7. What else can we do for America 250 Events? – Potential Fall Events?
8. Other items as necessary
9. Public Comment
10. Adjournment

Discussion

The Chairman, Todd Gelston declared that a quorum is present and called the Special Meeting to order at 10:04 AM.

The members in attendance reviewed the Agenda of this Special Meeting and found no issues.

The next item was to approve the Meeting Minutes for the 7/28/26 Special Meeting. Pam Champlin moved that the 7/28/26 Meeting Minutes be approved. Alison Guinness seconded the motion. Alison pointed out that her name only has one “l” in it. Also, “loads” should read “loans”. Alan Ponanski abstained due to his absence from the meeting. The remainder of the attendees voted unanimously to approve the meeting minutes as corrected.

Before discussing the reimbursements and the requested donations, the Chairman distributed a list of the expenses approved reimbursements and requested donations. The table is shown below:

YTD Expended and/or Anticipated Item	Amount			Approved Reimbursement or Donation
EH News	404			
Festival Permit	85			
2 Buntings	62			
Hanging Supplies for Buntings	11.99			
Set Building Materials	235.81			
Set Building Materials	63.88			
Set Building Materials	313.23			
Glow Exit Signs	26.98			
EH News	273			
Floor Fan	63.99			
Set Building Materials	125.16			
Custodian Overtime	344.42			
Police Private Duty Expenses	1287.5			
Electrical Power for AC Units	676.24			
Transportation Shuttles	3253.75			
Portbl Restrooms & Trash Recptls ($1000 less than Price)	1175			
Reinstalled Ceiling Fan	125			
EH News	206			
Reimbursed for Program Guides creation and printing	504.95			504.95
Reinbursed for Assembly Hall Re-creation and Kid's Events	1000			1000
Sub-Total		10237.9	10238	
Reimburse for Lawn Signs	324			
Reimburse for Banners	662			
Reimburse for Banners	162			
Reimburse for Banners	266			
Reimburse for Banners	112.5			
Reimburse for Banners	148.5			
Reimburse for Buntings	375			
Total Lawn signs, Banners, Buntings	2050	2050	*1750	*1750
No Reimbursement for AC Units	600	600	0	
Additional Reimbursement for Assy Hall & Kid's Activities	500	500	500	500
Donation - First Church	1000	1000	1000	1000
Donation - First Company	500	500	500	500
Donation - Drum & Fife Corps	500	500	500	500
Donation - Candie Carle for Nathan Hale Play	150	150	150	150
Grand Total		15537.9	14638	

* Reduced Reimbursement by $300.00

The Summary Table showed that there was sufficient money left to settle the reimbursements and provide sufficient donations to the principal participants in the America 250 July 11 Event.

After reviewing the Summary Expense Table, the attendees discussed the reimbursements and donations.

After some discussion the Committee attendees reached a consensus to donate any leftover monies to the Bicentennial/America 250 Scholarship Fund.

It was recognized that Karl went above and beyond for the Event. After some discussion it was decided to donate some amount to the Food Bank in Karl's name at the November 18 Event. It was felt that Karl would rather have any leftover money given to the Scholarship Fund instead of to him.

Patti Lombardo explained that the First Church anticipated a much larger crowd than the actual attendance. Therefore, the First Church did not recoup the expenses for bunting, water bottles, baked goods, and property improvements. After some discussion Pam Champlin moved that a $1,000.00 donation be given to the First Church for the Church's support of the America 250 July 11 Event. Susan Waide seconded the motion. The motion passed by 5 attendees in favor, o nays, and one abstention (Allan Ponanski).

Next, Allan Ponanski moved that Candie Carle be given a $150.00 donation for her Nathan Hale Play performed in the Grange Hall at the end of the July 11 Event. Susan Waide seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Next, Pam Champlin moved that Todd Gelston be reimbursed for $1,750.00 for his expenses for bunting, banners, and lawn signs. Alison Guinness seconded the motion. Todd Gelston abstained and the rest of the attendees voted in favor. Motion passed.

Next, the attendees considered providing an additional reimbursement of $500.00 to Debbie Langdon for expenses with the recreation of the Assembly Hall and the Kid's Activities. After some discussion, the attendees decided it was fair to provide an additional reimbursement because the committee's initial approval was for $1500.00 for Debbie's initial proposed plan. The Committee had previously approved a $1,000.00 reimbursement. Allan Ponanski moved that an additional reimbursement of $500.00 be given to Debbie Langdon. Susan Waide seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Next, a discussion among the attendees ensued on what to do with the leftover money after the reimbursements and donations are completed. Alison Guinness moved that after all the bills and reimbursements are washed out and the donations given, any excess money be given to the Bicentennial/America 250 Scholarship Fund. Forrest Anderson seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Next, Allan Ponanski moved that $500.00 donations be given each to the First Company Governor's Foot Guard and the Moodus Drum and Fife Corps. Pam Champlin seconded the motion. The motion passes unanimously.

Next, the attendees discussed how to minimize or eliminate the need for any more Committee meetings. Allan Ponanski moved that the Chairman be empowered by the USA 250 Celebrations Steering Committee to complete any further activities, decisions, or financial obligations incurred by the USA 250 Celebrations Committee. The motion was seconded by Forrest Anderson. This motion should end the need for any other meetings of this Steering Committee. The motion passed unanimously.

Next, Alison Guinness explained the plan to plant a scion of the Charter Oak Tree in Heritage Park. The young white oak is to planted on Sunday, November 8. Todd Gelston is to meet with Tom Worthley to review possible sites in or out of Heritage Park. The consensus was that it needs to be in the right location at Heritage Park. We will need to get Brad Parker's approval. The plan is ask Tom Worthley to oversee the planting of the tree. The Tree will need a cage around the trunk and branches to prevent deer browsing. Alison is to put an article in the East Haddam News about the tree planting.

Next, the attendees were updated on the status of the scroll signing. Alison has taken the scroll to Chestelm and will hand-off the scroll to Evelyn Morgen on September 22, 2026. Pam Champlin volunteered to shepherd the scroll on Election Day. Pam will put it in-place near the drinking fountain across from the military honor display in the Municipal Office Building Complex. She will monitor it from 6 AM to 10 AM. Alison volunteered to monitor from 4 PM to 6 PM. People are needed to facilitate the scroll signing from 10 AM to 4 PM. Pam will also re-font (larger and clearer) the Declaration of Independence and put it on display for all to read before and after signing the scroll.

Next, a short summary of future events:

11/8/26 – Planting of the Charter Oak Scion in Heritage Park

11/11/26 – Veteran's Day Event at the Rathbun Library

11/18/26 – Dr. Karl Sofko Event

Finally, Pam Champlin moved that the meeting be adjourned. Alison seconded the motion.

Motion passes unanimously. Meeting was adjourned at 11:04 AM.

Meeting Minutes were written by Todd Gelston.