

Virginia Beach VA250 Committee

Meeting Minutes

Approved January 8, 2026

11 December 2025, 5:30 PM
Department of Planning and Community Development
Building 3, 2403 Courthouse Drive, Conference Room 110

ATTENDEES:

Members:

James B. Wood, Chair; Bobbie Gribble (arrived 5:35 p.m.), Secretary

C. Drummond Ball, Suzanne Camden, Al Chewning, Bill Curtis, Robert Dozier, Sharon Felton, Patrick Hannum, Kevin Kattwinkel, Becky Livas, Michael Winner

Staff Liaison:

Mark Reed (arrived 5:40 p.m.)

City Staff:

Kristen Bauer (departed 5:35 p.m.) Ellie Dauernheim (arrived 5:35 p.m.)

Public:

Jorja Jean

Florence Reese

Welcome

The Chair, Jimmy Wood, opened the meeting at 5:30 p.m. He welcomed the members of the Virginia Beach VA250 Committee (VB VA250) and members of the public. Mr. Wood noted that staff had been delayed returning from Richmond but would be here shortly.

Remote Participation Policy

Mr. Wood said we would not be considering the remote participation policy this evening.

Approval of Meeting Minutes – October 9, 2025

Mr. Wood requested VB VA250 members to review the minutes of the October 9, 2025 meeting. Sharon Felton made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Pat Hannum seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously.

Skirmish at Kemps Landing Event Recap

Drummond Ball provided a review of the Skirmish at Kemp's Landing event, which took place November 15 and 16 at City View Park. He said the set up for the encampment and the reenactment activities was excellent. There was plenty of room and it was a great open space. He said people are still talking about the event and they are hopeful that it can become a regular event.

Mr. Ball said the materials provided for the children for their scavenger hunt were used extensively. He said they were walking through the encampment and looking around to answer questions.

Mr. Ball said the Youth Virginia Regiment were able to make presentation to elementary students on the Friday before the event. He said Tallwood Elementary School really appreciated the demonstrations for the students.

Mr. Ball said the support from VB VA250 and the City's Parks and Recreation folks made for an excellent event.

Dr. Hannum said that Suzanne Camden had arranged for an interview with Tom Shaad of WAVY News 10. This resulted in a 30-minute news segment aired on their "History Through the Lens" segment. It was an interview by Tom Shaad with Ms. Camden and Dr. Hannum recorded on October 16. It aired on WAVY TV10 and WAVY+ internet TV at 11:00 a.m. on Monday, October 20. It is archived on the WAVY TV10 YouTube channel.

Dr. Hannum said the weather on Saturday (November 15) was near perfect for the ceremony sponsored by the Norfolk Chapter Sons of the American Revolution (SAR). He said over 30 patriotic organizations presented wreaths. State-level color guard and state-level officers from the SAR and the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) attended. He said they received numerous positive comments about the program and the event.

Mark Reed discussed the event logistics, attendance, and financial information.

Mr. Reed said two tents were rented. One covered the speaker area for the SAR ceremony and one was used for the VB VA250 information booth. We rented 175 chairs, which were primarily used for the SAR ceremony and the Sunday church service. The chairs supplemented the bleachers that were provided by Parks and Recreation at no cost. Several tables were also rented for use in the VB VA250 booth. Mr. Reed said we rented a sound system for the SAR ceremony and the reenactment narrative.

Mr. Reed said Parks and Recreation also provided us with looper tubes and weights for the events. With a rope fed through the loop at the top of each tube, these provided a barrier between the reenactment area and the public.

Mr. Reed said the primary cost of the event was the contract with the 7th Virginia Regiment for planning and implementation of the encampment, the demonstrations, and the reenactment. He said we had budgeted \$25,000 for the event and the total expended was about \$21,000. He said it would have been closer to the budgeted amount, but we couldn't work out the arrangements for event security.

Mr. Reed said it was a good deal of work for staff with set-up and logistics starting on Friday prior to the event. He said everything looked like it went smoothly for those in attendance. He thought the one thing that might need to be addressed is entry to the event. There were many places to enter from the parking lot and lot of people did not go past the VB VA250 booth.

Mr. Reed said his estimate for Saturday's attendance was about 500 people. His estimate for Sunday's attendance was about 150 people.

Mr. Ball said he thought those numbers are somewhat modest, and that attendance was higher. He agreed that the multiple entry points meant people often didn't have a program. He said he encouraged folks to visit the VB VA250 booth throughout the event.

July 4, 2026 - Event/Activity Ideas

Mr. Wood said he did not want to make decisions tonight on July 4th activity ideas. He said he and Mr. Reed have a meeting with William Younce of Beach Events tomorrow, December 12. He said at that point we will know more about their intentions and plans.

Mr. Wood asked if anyone had any event or activity ideas.

Dr. Hannum said he met with Mr. Reed and Florence Reese at Building 1. He said they looked for an appropriate place for the plaque Ms. Reese has designed to document the Patriot Officers from Princess Anne County. He said they identified a good potential location.

Dr. Hannum said the ceremony could potentially be held on the 4th or 3rd of July if we could get building access. He said July 2nd could also work. He noted that the 2nd is the day the Continental Congress approved the Declaration of Independence.

Mr. Chewning said an idea would be to find descendants of those named on the plaque and have them attend.

Suzanne Camden said she saw Suzanna's Midnight Ride ("Racing the Night") play at the oceanfront last summer. She said it would be good for that to be presented again, perhaps during the July 4 week. She noted it was performed by Virginia Beach students.

Mr. Chewning asked if anything was happening with an event for the tall ships. Mr. Wood said there is not.

Mr. Wood encouraged VB VA250 members to think about possible events. He said we should know more in January about funding and potential continuation of VB VA250 beyond 2026.

Funding Requests

Mr. Wood addressed recent funding requests. He said we have \$27,000 that needs to be committed before June 30. He asked Mr. Reed to review the requests.

Mr. Reed referred VB VA250 members to the information on the funding requests that was in the meeting packet. He discussed the following funding requests:

Great Bridge Chapter SAR - Skirmish at James's Plantation - February 2026

Mr. Reed said that last year VB VA250 provided funds for the SAR and DAR ceremony to commemorate the Skirmish at James's Plantation. He said the funding was used for facility rental for the event. The request we received is for the same amount, \$350, for facility rental. The event is coming up in February.

Nansemond Indian Nation - Rising Sun Pow Wow - May 2026

Mr. Reed said the Pow Wow is returning to Mount Trashmore in 2026. It will be in May again this year. He said they are requesting \$10,000 to assist with payments for performers and noted the costs are itemized in the funding request.

Norfolk Chapter SAR - Battle of Virginia Capes - September 2026

Mr. Reed said we have a request for funding for the September 2026 Battle of the Virginia Capes from the Norfolk SAR. He said VB VA250 has supported them the last two years with our donation providing for tent and chair rentals for this event. Mr. Reed noted that it will also be the 400th Anniversary of the French Navy.

NATO - Battle of the Virginia Capes Maritime Memorial Garden

Mr. Reed said NATO is planning a number of events and activities in conjunction with the French Navy's 400th anniversary. He said this is an opportunity to do something beyond July 4, 2026.

Dr. Hannum said the French Naval force has done some research on items that were never seen before. He said Ms. Camden attended a meeting at the Admiral's house where some of this was discussed. If we make the donation, we will get 10 to 20 copies of the book.

Mr. Reed said the request is for \$3,000 to \$5,000.

VB Restaurant Association - Digital Advertising Restaurant Week - January 2026

Mr. Reed said the request from the Virginia Beach Restaurant Association (VBRA) is for out of market advertising for VB Restaurant Week. The theme for the January 2026 promotion is "Taste and Traditions - a Culinary Experience by Land and by Sea." Mr. Reed said they will put our logo on their digital marketing. He said Council Member Remick suggested they reach out to the VB VA250 for a donation.

Thoroughgood Chapter DAR - Plaque for Revolutionary Officers from P.A. County

Mr. Reed said we have discussed this item at several previous VB VA250 meetings. He said the plaque will provide a permanent visible documentation of the Patriot officers from Princess Anne County who served during the Revolutionary War. We are hopeful it will be displayed at City Hall.

Mr. Wood said for the purposes of this evening's discussion, he would like to fund the Great Bridge Chapter SAR request, the Nansemond Indian Nation Pow Wow, the Virginia Beach Restaurant Association, and the plaque for the Officers from Princess Anne County. He said that totals \$16,350.

Ms. Camden made a motion for VB VA250 to fund the four requests as recommended by Mr. Wood. Mr. Ball seconded the motion. Mr. Wood called for discussion.

Kevin Kattwinkel asked about any other requests. Mr. Reed said no other new requests were received. Previous requests had been considered and were not approved for funding by VB VA250.

Mr. Wood called the question. The motion to fund the recommended requests was passed unanimously.

Continuation/Extension of Virginia Beach VA250 Committee

Dr. Hannum said he had a discussion with Mayor Dyer at the Skirmish at Kemp's Landing event. He said he told the Mayor that the VB VA250 commemorations should continue beyond July 4, 2026. The Mayor said his door is always open.

Dr. Hannum said he has arranged a meeting with the Mayor. Attendees from VB VA250 will be Dr. Hannum, Mr. Wood, Becky Livas, and Chris Pieczynski. The Mayor and our two City Council Liaisons - Dr Amelia Ross-Hammond and Worth Remick – are also expected to attend.

Mr. Ball observed that the VA250 events will continue well beyond 2026. He passed out a bookmark listing some of the future events.

Mr. Wood said our terms all expire July 2026. If VB VA250 continues to 2031, we need to have our committee members with terms like a regular committee that allows for appointees to rotate off. Mr. Wood said that many who attended the Skirmish at Kemp's Landing reenactment felt that it should happen every year. Mr. Ball said that the reenactors loved doing the event and would like to do it again.

Mr. Wood said currently our committee falls under Planning and Community Development. He said the support has been good, but Planning is not set up to manage events. He said this is something that should be shifted to a department like Cultural Affairs. Mr. Wood said it should become a Standing Committee through 2031.

Ms. Felton said she agreed with Jimmy. She said extending VB VA250 would give time to highlight the educational component. She would like education to be more of a part of it moving forward. Ms. Felton said she would like an affiliation with Cultural Affairs as they have already established an educational infrastructure.

Ms. Camden mentioned the need for marketing and generating tourism. She said she has talked to Yorktown about their commemoration in 2031. She stated, if it hadn't been for the Battle of the Capes, we would be British and we would not have Yorktown.

Mr. Reed noted that typically when a new appointed body is established, the terms are staggered among the members (1 to 3 years). Members can be reappointed to serve additional terms.

Old Business

Conflict and Independence - Request for relocation of Battle of the Capes Interpretive Sign
Mr. Reed said this needs to move forward through working with Parks and Recreation to identify a specific location along the north end of the Boardwalk. He said Dr. Hannum previously identified several potential locations between 35th and 40th Streets. He said he will coordinate a time to meet with Dr. Hannum at the oceanfront to look at potential locations. The options can then be forwarded to Parks and Recreation for review. The selected location would then be sent to the Mayor.

Countdown to 250

Mr. Kattwinkel said he has gotten articles of the events leading up to the 250th printed in the Local Sun and posted on the Historical Society's Facebook page. He said we do not have it on the City website. He said if it doesn't happen there, it is of little value.

Mr. Reed said he had not been able to work on getting it on the VB VA250 web page since the Skirmish at Kemp's Landing event. He said he would work on it.

Mr. Reed said he feels he has not been able to do as good a job supporting VB VA250 as he would like. He has many other responsibilities and working on the VB VA250 activities has negatively affected projects he is managing for Virginia Beach's historic preservation program. He noted that the Planning Department does not do events. He said he feels he was able to pull off a lot of things for the Skirmish at Kemp's Landing event; however, it was more than one person should do.

Mr. Ball said Mr. Reed has done a remarkable job of connecting the reenactment committee with the city, completing the necessary forms, and coordinating with the various departments. He noted that, at the end of the event, Mr. Reed stacked the 175 rental chairs.

New Business

Under New Business, Dr. Hannum provided information on the 2026 Virginia History Day. He said the Virginia History Day competition for District 6 will be held at the Military Aviation Museum in Virginia Beach on Saturday, March 21.

Dr. Hannum listed the cities and counties that are participating - Accomack, Chesapeake, Franklin City, Hampton, Isle of Wright, James City, Lancaster, Matthews, Middlesex, Newport News, Norfolk, Northampton, Northumberland, Poquoson, Portsmouth, Southampton, Suffolk, Surry, Sussex, Virginia Beach, Williamsburg, and York.

Dr. Hannum said winners at District 6 will go on to the State competition. He said the theme is "Revolution, Reaction, Reform, and History."

Adjournment

There being no other new business, a motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Al Chewning. The name of the member that seconded the motion was not recorded.

The meeting closed at 6:36 p.m.