

Virginia Beach VA250 Committee
Meeting Minutes
Approved September 11, 2025

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

ATTENDEES:

Members:

James B. Wood, Chair; Christi Lyons, Vice Chair; Chris Pieczynski, Vice Chair;
Bobbie Gribble, Secretary

C. Drummond Ball, Linda Carrington (5:45); Al Chewning; Robert Dozier, Patrick Hannum,
Kevin Kattwinkel, Michael Winner

Council Liaison:

Staff Liaison: Mark Reed

City Staff: Ellie Dauernheim

Welcome

The meeting was opened at 5:30 p.m. by Chair Jimmy Wood. Jimmy Wood began by giving a brief tribute to Bobby Melatti, who recently passed away. A moment of silence was held in his memory.

Approval of Meeting Minutes – July 10, 2025

Mr. Wood asked the members to review the minutes of the July 10, 2025 meeting. A motion was made by Pat Hannum to approve the minutes as presented. Al Chewning seconded the motion. The minutes were unanimously approved.

Past Events

Chris Pieczynski gave a report on National Lighthouse Day, an event that was held at the Cape Henry Lighthouses on August 7. He said 895 people climbed the newer lighthouse. VB VA250 provided funding for table and chair rentals and to support T-shirt design/production. Mr. Reed showed the t-shirt that was being sold. He said the design on the front was the one most of the members of VB VA250 had voted for. He showed the back of the shirt with the Virginia Beach VA250 design at the top of the shirt. Mr. Reed said Mr. Pieczynski, Christi Lyons, Pat Hannum, and Bobbie Gribble gave out a lot of information and VB VA250 swag to interested attendees during the event.

Upcoming Events

Mr. Reed gave a brief overview of upcoming events for VB VA250. He mentioned the “Racing the Night” play at the 13th Street Virginia Legends Stage, which has been running on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday nights since July 24 and will continue through August 16. He reminded the committee the last 3 days for the play to be presented is this week.

Mr. Reed said the Marquis de Lafayette event will be held at 17th Street Park on August 16. A character interpreter is portraying Marquis de Lafayette.

Mr. Reed said the Battle of the Virginia Capes Commemoration will be held on September 6 on Fort Story. Dr. Hannum said there will be a proclamation from the Mayor. Ms. Lyons asked if it would be appropriate to have the VB VA250 table at the event to give out swag. Dr. Hannum said he will find out if we can have a presence at this event.

Mr. Reed said there is planning underway for a commemoration of the 200th anniversary of Lafayette passing Cape Henry on September 10. The Lafayette Society contacted Mr. Reed for assistance with logistics. On September 10, 1825, Lafayette passed Cape Henry on his way back to France. They may want to commemorate it at 17th Street Park.

Old Business

Mr. Reed reported on the status of the VB VA250 Committee’s request for additional funding for FY26. After Jimmy Wood’s presentation to City Council in June, the City Manager requested City Staff to prepare a report on the additional funding being sought. Through consultation with the City Manager’s Office, the Planning Department wanted to keep the funding report straightforward for funds to go to their department. The City Manager did not want to include funding for Beach Events or Parks and Recreation (flagpole at Mt. Trashmore). He felt the appropriate city department should ask for those funds.

Mr. Reed said the City Council Staff Report went to the City Manager on Wednesday, so it probably went to City Council on Friday. The report asked for \$25,000 for the VB VA250 Committee to support events by local organizations and \$25,000 for the VB VA250 Committee to work with Sail250 Virginia to plan for a reception and boat tours in June 2026 when the ships are anchored off of the Lynnhaven Inlet.

Conflict and Independence Subcommittee

Dr. Hannum reported for the Conflict and Independence subcommittee.

He said a meeting was held with the Parks and Recreation Department (P&R) at City View Park on July 10 to discuss the planned Skirmish at Kemps Landing event to be held November 15 and 16. Mark Reed and members of VB VA250 met with 3 representatives from the 7th Virginia Regiment and 3 representatives from P&R. The P&R staff is being very supportive and cooperative.

Dr. Hannum said they went through a description of the planned event, including layout, set up, and schedule during the meeting. P & R said they will make sure the park's restroom facilities are well stocked prior to the event. Dr. Hannum said we may also want to consider renting some portable units.

Dr. Hannum said that Mr. Reed will perform most of the coordination with P & R and related agencies. He will contact Miss Utility in advance of the event to get utilities marked to ensure the encampment doesn't impact anything. P&R will prepare a basic application for the event. Once this is done, Mr. Reed will work to complete it and address any requirements for traffic control, medical support, etc. Dr Hannum said that Mr. Reed has set aside funding to cover these types of additional costs for the event.

Ms. Lyons has been working on publicity for the event. Dr. Hannum said the logistics for the event look doable.

Dr. Hannum informed the Committee that there will be a symposium on the American Revolution the Friday before the Kemps Landing event (November 14) at the Slover Library. There will be several speakers to talk about the Ethiopian Regiment. It is an opportunity to provide some substantial information of all that went on in Hampton Roads at that time. Dr. Hannum said the symposium is organizing a bus that will go to the Skirmish of Kemps Landing reenactment, among other sites. Mr. Reed said he would send information out to the Committee members on the symposium.

Drummond Ball said he has tried to contact re-enactors to represent Black soldiers. Becky Livas said she has a personal contact of a re-enactor. Mr. Reed will follow up to get the contact information for that individual.

Ms. Lyons said she will work to encourage students on the Historic Preservation Commission's Student Leaders Committee to participate. She said they will put together a scavenger hunt that will encourage young people who attend to interact with re-enactors.

It was noted the VA250 Museum trailer is not expected to be at the Kemps Landing event. Mr. Ball said it will be at the Battle of Great Bridge a few weeks later.

Mr. Reed spoke on the request for relocation of the Battle of the Capes interpretive sign. He said Superintendent Jerri Marr of the Colonial National Historical Park had gone to look at the sign. She asked where we want to move it. Mr. Reed said he responded that the VB VA250 Committee is currently just looking to make a recommendation to the Mayor's Office of a location where it could be moved in response to a letter from the Rochambeau Route group. He informed Superintendent Marr that the Committee is planning to recommend that it be placed along the VB Boardwalk between 35th and 40th Streets. Mr. Reed said we will want to let the Brock Environmental Center know about these discussions if NPS is okay with relocation.

Kevin Kattwinkel addressed plans for the Countdown to 250. He said that it realistic to do something weekly rather than daily. The daily approach is too ambitious. He said there should be 30 stories that are good to tell.

Mr. Kattwinkel had some sample paragraphs that can be easily read to review. It is felt it would be helpful to have graphics to make the stories more interesting. Mr. Reed said he would send out copies of Mr. Kattwinkel's materials to the Committee members.

Mr. Kattwinkel said we need to find an outlet for issuing the stories. He said he contacted the Virginian-Pilot and hasn't received a response. He has contacted the schools and said the 6th and 11th grades would be most relevant.

Some of the members suggested other potential location to place these stories. These included WHRO, City of VB, Local Sun Magazine publication, and the Historical Society's Facebook page.

Ms. Florence Reese was not in attendance so there wasn't additional information on the plaque about the Princess Anne County Militia Officers. Dr. Hannum said he has corresponded with Ms. Reese. At this time, she isn't interested in sharing the data because she wants to copyright the information.

New Business

Under New Business, Dr. Hannum informed the Committee about a planned visit of Nathalie and Philippe de Gouberville on October 18. Ms. de Gouberville is a direct descendant of General Rochambeau. This year marks Rochambeau's 300th birthday. Dr. Hannum said Suzanne Camden is chairperson for the activity. He said they are not sure how big we would make it.

Dr. Hannum noted that there will be a tour that will include the sign at the Brock Center, historical marker on Shore Drive, and the deGrasse statue at Cape Henry. He said a knowledgeable individual will be a tour guide. Councilman Remick will be invited to attend as he has a connection to the family.

There was nothing to report for the Civil Liberties and Rights subcommittee.

For the Indigenous Peoples subcommittee, Mike Winner said he wasn't sure what the status of a Pow Wow at the oceanfront in 2026 might be with the passing of Bobby Melatti. Mr. Reed said he anticipates that there will be another event held at Mt. Trashmore next year.

For the Events subcommittee, Mr. Wood said he and Mr. Reed will talk to Mr. Younce to see what the participation and support is for events at the oceanfront. The history festival may not be the priority for them that it was for Mr. Melatti. Now that Bobby Melatti is not with us, there is a seat open on VB VA250 potentially for someone from Beach Events.

Adjournment

Mr. Wood said the next meeting of the VB VA250 Committee will be on September 11 at 5:30 p.m. The meeting closed at 6:45 p.m.